



Pirates Attacks on Visiting Vessels Along Nigerian Waters

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to investigate pirates' attacks on visiting Vessels along Nigerian waters. Many are carried out mostly at Anchorage or during passages involving maritime workers, vessel operators, and boat drivers. Questionnaire was used for data collection and a sample of 149 was collected and studied. The data obtained was descriptively analyzed Simple percentages and frequency count. The result of this study indicates the following factors as responsible for maritime piracy: environmental deprivation and illegal fishing; corruption, poor governance; lucrateness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks; poverty and unemployment; links to onshore criminal networks; and legal and jurisdictional weakness. The study further presents ways which piracy affect maritime activities of which the result of this study indicates that maritime piracy activities can affect maritime activities by preventing foreign investments and partnerships; Chances of reaping the benefit of the global maritime sector suffers a setback; and by reducing vessel traffic leading to reduced volume of business and revenue for the various ports. The study identifies existing security measures to efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian water ways to include controlled by adopting security surveillance have influenced sea business operation; availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways influence maritime business and operations; Investment in satellite Monitoring and Surveillance System have reduced piracy attacks. Based on these results, the study concluded that maritime piracy activities has significant negative impacts on maritime activities and therefore need to be eradicated. Based on this result, the study recommends that seafarer should not disclose that ship's route or cargo especially when they are on in port. The study further recommends that security be improved to constantly monitor the sea areas that are prone to piracy.

Keywords: pirates attacks, visiting Vessels on Nigerian waters

Introduction

Maritime piracy is one of the most notorious crimes in the maritime industry and a major threat to maritime security. It causes huge financial loss to the maritime sector and physical harm to crew members and travelers alike. Piracy attacks in Nigerian waters and the Gulf of Guinea involve cases of armed robbery at sea, with pirates boarding and raiding the ship while in port or from small speedboats while the vessel is in motion (Essien, 2015). These pirates pose a significant threat to the crew as they are usually armed with sophisticated weapons like AK47 rifles and rocket-propelled grenades that enable them hijack vessels and reroute them to locations of their choice (Economist, 2019). Oil is not the only thing pirates are after on a vessel, as they hope to take hostages to attract huge ransom.

Nigeria has been rated top among countries with issues of piracy, which has become a phenomenon that can occur at any time deemed fit by the pirates. Piracy is a universal crime that hinders the free movement of ships transporting humans or goods. Usually heavily harmed, they hijack vessels and redirect them away from their route till ransom is paid. Piracy in Nigeria became rampant post slave trade era and with the boom in oil business. Jimoh (2015) linked piratical activities to oil theft. The rationale behind this relationship was that the sale of oil was profitable and thus a major attraction which influenced the capture of vessels on high seas with the intent to either sell off the goods or demand for ransom.

To this end, maritime piracy is described as an activity threatening the national security (IMB, 2009). On a global level, they are a threat to the economy of many countries, leading to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), calling out every maritime nation to implement drastic measures against these rising threat that has made safe sailing almost impossible. In Nigeria, victims of piracy are usually sea business operators such as fishing trawlers, speed boat drivers, and petty traders. The piracy attacks on this group of people has dwindled the local fishing economy and threatened a great worth of fishing exports. Given the foregoing, it becomes important to safeguard the seas and waterways against all forms of piracy, as well as enhance the socio economic activities of the maritime business operators and national economic growth (Ochai, 2013).

Statement of research problem

In recent years, the Nigerian waterways have been seen as very unsafe for seafarers, given the level of piracy activities that take place. The result of this insecurity has been huge losses to the economy as a result of the attack on visiting boats (Ojoye, 2019). The increasing attacks of pirates among other criminal activities are a source of concern to maritime administration, given the threat it poses to maritime transportation. In summary, the higher the frequency in pirate attacks, the more discouraged investors become. Maritime transport is important to the every country's economy operation and transport infrastructure. Thus with the rising attacks of pirates on visiting boats into Nigeria's territorial waters, a disincentive is created to the flow of foreign investment which is important to the development of the economy. To this end, this study is undertaken with the view to investigate the effect of Pirates attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters.

Research objectives

Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. Identify the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters
2. Assess if piracy activities affect maritime activities
3. Determine if existing security measures have efficiently curbed piracy activities along Nigerian waterways
4. Identify strategies that can curb piracy attacks on visiting boats.

Research questions

1. What are the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters?
2. In what ways do piracy activities affect maritime activities?
3. Do existing security measures efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian waterways?
4. What strategies can be adopted to curb piracy attacks on visiting boats?

Literature review

Maritime piracy is a serious crime that involves illegally seizing properties, attacking and kidnapping seafarers and vessels, hijacking ships, robbing and diverting vessels for personal, economic and political motive, in which there are negative consequences on the travelers either in international waters or within a shore of a country (Attard, 2014; Hassan & Hassan, 2017). Modern pirates usually commit robbery. Modern pirates usually commit robbery by embarking on ships through force, stealing vessels, or holding cargo and crews for ransom. Piracy in Nigeria is an occurrence which happens at any time, and at any given chance, which the pirates consider fit. With mobile phone technology, these pirates who are mostly male youths can get hold of their required targets (Nwalozie, 2020). The activities of pirates on Nigerian waters have caused economic disruption that is affecting the country's image at the international scene and obstructing national development (Hassan, 2015).

Factors that encourage piracy in Nigeria according to Rohwerder (2016) include:

- Environmental deprivation and illegal fishing which have endangered the livelihoods of coastal communities, making piracy a tempting option.
- Lucrativeness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks.
- Poverty and unemployment which can make people vulnerable to partaking in piracy, even though poverty alone does not clarify the prevalence of piracy.
- Links to onshore criminal networks which have resulted in increased piracy.
- Corruption, poor governance and the political situation in Nigeria have contributed to flourishing piracy in Nigerian waters.

Empirical studies

Udensi et al., (2014) carried out a sociological discourse on national security and maritime piracy in Nigeria by means of secondary data from International Maritime Bureau (IMB) to show the severity and pattern of piracy in Nigeria waterways. They established that though corruption is the major reason for maritime piracy and insecurity in Nigeria, election malpractices explicitly arms the pirates with weapons directly or indirectly. Essien and Adongoi (2015), in an empirical study on sea piracy and security challenges of maritime business operation in Bayelsa State, Nigeria concluded that there is a need to provide sufficient security for facilitation of sea business operations in Nigeria.

Jimoh (2015) investigated lethal piracy and offshore violence in Nigeria and findings showed that unemployment among Nigeria had undoubtedly driven their involvement in illegal activities for the sole purpose of making money in the Niger Delta such as sea piracy, drug trafficking, hostage-taking, armed robbery, gangsterism and oil bunkering. Bayelsa State was the only state that recorded a higher number of death tolls offshore, including those brought about by maritime piracy.

Ezeozue (2019) explored the piratical challenges in the Nigerian ocean space and what it implies for national security and it was revealed that increased attacks of sea pirates and illegal activities on Nigerian waters can be trailed to legal and jurisdictional weakness, poverty and shortage in the Niger Delta area, lack of legitimate employment underfunded law enforcement, and specifically the observed corruption within the security system.

Theoretical framework

Routine Activity Theory

The routine activity theory describes crime as a product of the collective result of three important elements which are: Potential offenders or persons who are motivated to commit crimes; Suitable targets (the existence of things that are of some economic value and which can be effortlessly transported) and Absence of capable guards or persons who can prevent a crime from taking place (Essien&Adongoi, 2015). These form the factors that prompt the occurrence of pirate attacks in Nigerian waters. According to this theory, the handiness of appropriate targets and the lack of expert security networks to safeguard territorial waters are constant motivating factors for continued sea piracy. On this basis, the attack on visiting boats by pirates can be ascribed to poor maritime security. Opportunity is an important factor in determining whether people turn to piracy or not as highlighted by Shane et al. (2015), and increasing the perceived determination to commit, increasing the likelihood of being apprehended and reducing the anticipated rewards are useful steps in preventing maritime piracy.

Methodology

The study purposively selected Apapa wharf to conduct this study, given its popularity as one of the largest ports in Nigeria. A random sampling technique was used in selecting 150 respondents for the study comprising of maritime workers, vessel operators, and speed boat drivers. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection, which was structured using a four point likert scale format. The data obtained was descriptively analyzed Simple percentages and frequency count.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

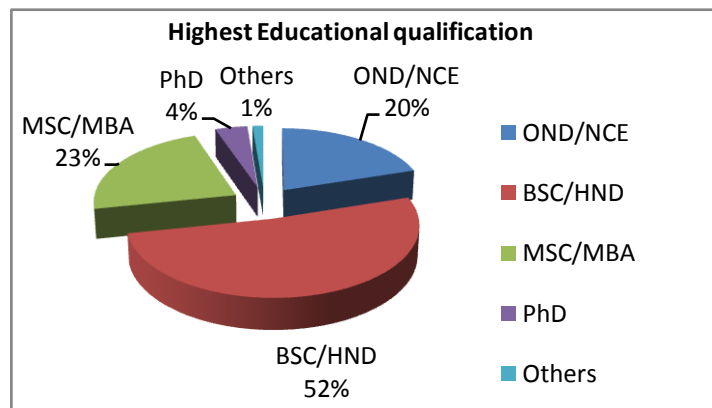
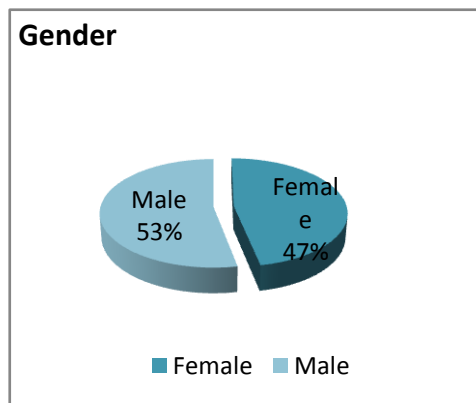
Demographic Data

In this study, 150 questionnaires were distributed but only 149 were duly answered and returned and thus constitute the actual sample size for the study. The analysis and result was based on this sample size.

Demographic information of the respondents

The pie chart above presents the gender of the participants of the study. The chart above shows that 53% of the respondents were male and the female made up 47% of the respondents.

The pie chart shows the highest educational qualification of the participants which cut across several level between OND/NCE with 20% through PhD with 4%.



1. What are the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters?

Table 1: The factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters

Statements		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
Environmental deprivation and illegal fishing	F	79	61	0	9	93.8
	%	52.9	40.9	0	6.0	
Corruption, poor governance	F	55	80	3	11	90.5
	%	36.9	53.6	2.0	7.4	
Lucrativeness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks	F	67	68	11	3	90.6
	%	45	45.6	7.4	2.3	
Poverty and unemployment	F	69	58	12	10	85.2
	%	46.3	38.9	8.0	6.6	
Links to onshore criminal networks	F	70	51	10	16	87.8
	%	46.9	34.2	6.7	12.0	
legal and jurisdictional weakness	F	69	58	12	10	93.2
	%	46.3	38.9	8.0	6.6	

Field Survey (2021)

The result of this study with above 80% of the respondents identified the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters: Environmental deprivation and illegal fishing; Corruption, poor governance; Lucrativeness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks; Poverty and unemployment; Links to onshore criminal networks; and legal and jurisdictional weakness. The finding of this study indicates supports the result from the study supports Rohwerder (2016) and Jimoh (2015) respectively whose study indicated similar result.

2. In what ways do piracy activities affect maritime activities?**Table 2: The ways by which piracy activities affect maritime activities**

Statement		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
It prevents foreign investments and partnerships	F	70	51	10	16	87.8
	%	46.9	34.2	6.7	12.0	
Chances of reaping the benefit of the global maritime sector suffers a setback	F	58	67	13	11	83.8
	%	38.9	44.9	8.7	7.4	
Reduces vessel traffic leading to reduced volume of business and revenue for the various ports.	F	70	68	3	8	92.5
	%	46.9	45.6	2.0	5.4	

Field survey (2021)

Table 2 above presents the respondents opinion on ways by which piracy activities affect maritime activities. The result from the analysis indicates that maritime piracy activities can affect maritime activities by preventing foreign investments and partnerships (87.8%); Chances of reaping the benefit of the global maritime sector suffers a setback (83.8%); and by reducing vessel traffic leading to reduced volume of business and revenue for the various ports (92.5%). This shows that piracy activities affect maritime activities.

3. Do existing security measures efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian waterways?**Table 3: The existing security measures to efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian water ways**

Statements		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
Security surveillance have influenced sea business operation	F	69	58	12	10	85.2
	%	46.3	38.9	8.0	6.6	
Availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways influence maritime business and operations	F	70	60	10	9	87.1
	%	46.9	40.2	6.7	6.0	
Investment in satellite Monitoring and Surveillance System have reduced piracy attacks	F	55	67	13	14	81.8
	%	36.9	44.9	8.7	9.4	
Frequent patrols on the waters and seaward defence boat for surveillance purposes have curbed piracy activities	F	59	68	11	11	85.6
	%	39.6	45.6	7.4	7.4	

Field Survey (2021)

The table above presents the respondents' opinion on the existing security measures to efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian water ways. The result presented in table 3 above indicates that above 81% of the respondents agreed to all the items in the table. This indicated that pirate activities can be controlled by adopting security surveillance have influenced sea business operation; availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways influence maritime business and operations; Investment in satellite Monitoring and Surveillance System have reduced piracy attacks; Frequent patrols on the waters and seaward defence boat for surveillance purposes have curbed piracy activities.

4. What strategies can be adopted to curb piracy attacks on visiting boats?

Table 4: Factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters

Statement		SA	A	D	SD	% in agreement
Recruitment of youth leaders and ex-militants into the joint taskforce and surveillance team	F	79	53	10	6	88.6
	%	53.0	35.6	6.7	4.0	
Prosecution, sanction and punishment of armed bandits in line with extant laws	F	55	67	13	14	81.8
	%	36.9	44.9	8.7	9.4	
Introduction of radar technology to monitoring the sea	F	59	68	11	11	81.2
	%	39.6	45.6	7.4	7.4	
Investment in coast guard services	F	69	64	12	4	89.2
	%	46.3	42.9	8.0	2.6	
Employment of complementary security apparatus in addition to the Nigerian Navy	F	70	51	10	18	87.8
	%	46.9	34.2	6.7	6.0	

Field Survey (2021)

The table above presents the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters. 88.6% of the respondent supports the statement "Recruitment of youth leaders and ex-militants into the joint taskforce and surveillance team"; 88.6% agreed the statement 'Prosecution, sanction and punishment of armed bandits in line with extant laws'; 81.2% agreed to the statement "Introduction of radar technology to monitoring the sea"; 81.2% agreed to the statement "Investment in coast guard services"; 89.2% agreed with the statement "Employment of complementary security apparatus in addition to the Nigerian Navy".

Conclusions and Recommendations

Maritime piracy is one of the most notorious crimes in the maritime industry and a major threat to maritime security. It is a universal crime that impedes free movement of ships transporting humans or goods. Usually heavily harmed, they hijack vessels and redirect them away from their route till ransom is paid. Piracy in Nigeria became rampant post slave trade era and with the boom in oil business. It causes huge financial loss to the maritime sector and physical harm to crew members and travelers alike. The result of this study indicates the following factors as responsible for maritime piracy: environmental deprivation and illegal fishing; corruption, poor governance; lucrateness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks; poverty and unemployment; links to onshore criminal networks; and legal and jurisdictional weakness. The finding of the study supports Rohwerder (2016) and Jimoh (2015) respectively whose study indicated similar result. The study further presents ways which piracy affect maritime activities of which the result of this study indicates that maritime piracy activities can affect maritime activities by preventing foreign investments and partnerships; Chances of reaping the benefit of the global maritime sector suffers a setback; and by reducing vessel traffic leading to reduced volume of business and revenue for the various ports. The study identifies existing security measures to efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian water ways to include controlled by adopting security surveillance have influenced sea business operation; availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways influence maritime business and operations; Investment in satellite Monitoring and Surveillance System have reduced piracy attacks; Frequent patrols on the waters and seaward defence boat for surveillance purposes have curbed piracy activities. Based on these results, the study concluded that maritime piracy activities has significant negative impacts on maritime activities and therefore need to be eradicated. Based on this result, the study recommends that seafarer should not disclose that ship's route or cargo especially when they are on in port. The study further recommends that security be improved to constantly monitor the sea areas that are prone to piracy.

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**PIRATES ATTACKS ON VISITING BOATS ALONG NIGERIAN WATERS
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Dear Respondent,

I am carrying out a study on "Pirates attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters", and you have been chosen to be part of the study. This questionnaire is only for academic purposes. Kindly select the response which applies to you and all information will be kept confidential

SECTION A

Gender

Male

Female

Educational status:

Masters degree

Degree /HND

OND

First school leaving certificate

Others (specify)

SECTION B

Instructions: Please tick (✓) as appropriate where

SA = Strongly Agree (SA), A = Agree, D = Disagree (D), SD = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Key: Strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
RQ1	What are the factors that influence piracy attacks on visiting boats along Nigerian waters?				
1	Environmental deprivation and illegal fishing				
2	Corruption, poor governance				
3	Lucrativeness of oil cargo theft and ransom from hostages taken during attacks				
4	Poverty and unemployment				
5	Links to onshore criminal networks				
6	legal and jurisdictional weakness				
RQ2	In what ways do piracy activities affect maritime activities?				
7	It prevents foreign investments and partnerships				
8	Chances of reaping the benefit of the global maritime sector suffers a setback				
9	Reduces vessel traffic leading to reduced volume of business and revenue for the various ports.				
RQ3	Do existing security measures efficiently curb piracy activities along Nigerian waterways?				
10	Security surveillance have influenced sea business operation				
11	Availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways influence maritime business and operations				
12	Investment in satellite Monitoring and Surveillance System have reduced piracy attacks				
13	Frequent patrols on the waters and seaward defence boat for surveillance purposes have curbed piracy activities				
RQ4	What are the strategies that can curb piracy attacks on visiting boats?				
14	Recruitment of youth leaders and ex-militants into the joint taskforce and surveillance team				
15	Prosecution, sanction and punishment of armed bandits in line with extant laws				
16	Introduction of radar technology to monitoring the sea				
17	Investment in coast guard services				
18	Employment of complementary security apparatus in addition to the Nigerian Navy				