

**Sea Piracy and Maritime Assets Development in Nigerian Port Authority, Rivers State , Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the impact of security risk of business operations on maritime assets development in Rivers State. The study was guided by six objectives, six research questions and six null hypotheses. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 839 senior and junior staff of Rivers Port, and Onne Port. Stratified sampling method was used to select 271 samples for the study. A validated structured questionnaire titled Security Risk and Maritime Asset Development Questionnaire (SRMADQ) was used to collect data for the study with a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings from this study among others showed that sea piracy had high level of negative impact on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State, and sea robbery had high level of negative impact on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State. The tested hypotheses among others revealed that there was no significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea piracy on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State, and there was no significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea robbery on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it was the recommendation among others that to mitigate the impact of sea piracy on business operations in Nigeria and its resultant impact on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State; port authorities should avoid discussing and disclosing ship or cargo route while in Port, and to mitigate the impact of sea robbery on business operations in Nigeria and its resultant impact on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State; harbor pilot should keep constant watch in areas prone to piracy.

**Keywords:** *Sea Piracy, Maritime Assets Development , Maritime Port Facilities Development, Maritime Domestic Vessel Development*

**Introduction**

Maritime transportation in Nigeria represent a complex structure in the country's transportation system in many ways, due to the fact that it provides a number of inter-related and inter-connected activities such as ship-harbour (that is pilotage, dredging, provision of berth, maintenance of navigable channels, stevedoring etc.), there is also ship – port interface (loading and unloading of cargoes, freight and services) and port – land interface (delivering cargo to and from the connected hinterland). These different functions require different strategies, approaches and organizations (Brown, 2008). However, the management of all business operations must be seriously taken into account in maritime transportation policy and planning responses. Hence, the efficiency or inefficiency of the maritime sector affects profoundly the cost of import as well as the competitiveness of export; which in turn would hinder the development of the maritime assets of the country. Directly and indirectly, the maritime transport sector is a large employer of labour (both skilled and unskilled). However, if indirect employment generated through the maritime sector such as insurance, customs, haulage, clearance and logistics, storage, free zones activities, sorting out the incoming and outgoing cargo, industrial and other value added activities are considered (Igbokwe, 2001). In view of the above, Nigeria has a great potential for an extremely buoyant maritime industry and to enjoy these benefits, it is vital that the Nigerian maritime transport system operate a risk-free business operation that would improve commercial

profitability and a sustainable security of business operators and operation in the maritime industry. But incidentally, the issue of sea piracy is on the rise. The rising pace of this menace has not only undermined the operational effectiveness and efficiency of maritime operators, it also contributed in the sluggish development of the sectors' critical assets. This is because no business minded investor would want invest his capital in an insure environment or business. In fact the general notion is that maritime domain is inherently fragile.

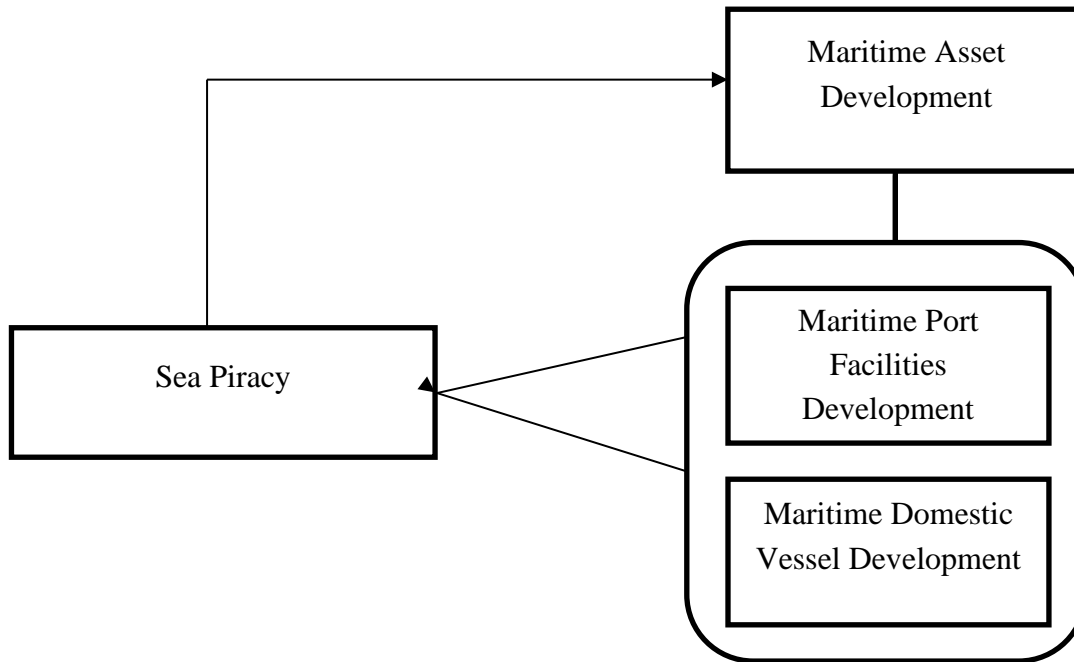
Therefore, it safe to argue that despite the potentials of the maritime sector, Nigeria has not fully harness its assets. However, after a review of several studies relating to the subject discussed, it was observed that numerous challenges have plagued the maritime industry, especially, hindering it from developing its assets, thus the study argues that the sea piracy may have some form of impact on the development of the maritime asset in Nigeria. Most of the study cited on maritime had focused on maritime security, trend in maritime piracy, importance of the maritime transport to the economy amongst others; however, their studies did not cover the content, geographical and unit scope same as the present study. Therefore to fill this identified gap, this study empirically examines the relationship between sea piracy and maritime asset development in Rivers State

### **Statement of the Problem**

For several years maritime transport had continually experienced commercial and security threats to its business operations, which has been largely due to Policy inconsistency. The issue of inadequate policy formulation and implementation has consequently resulted to the debate on the contribution of business operations on maritime asset development in Nigeria. The poor implementation of the nation's Cabotage Act 2003 was one of the factors militating against the growth and development of the Nigerian Maritime sector. It combines with poor implementation of the international port state control policy to encourage the visit to the Nigerian port by aged vessels with archaic handling facilities. In addition, the concessionaires condemned the proliferation of tank farms around the port locations, especially in Lagos, saying that they are constituting commercial and security risk to the ports and their users.

In the marine industry although there has been significant growth towards safety, security and risk assessments or risk-based strategies such as marine insurance and regulations to avoid the risks of damage to properties and the environment or the prospect of premature death caused by accidents etc, the moves toward managing the risks which are linked directly to the business operations and decision making processes have been very slow. Furthermore in the marine industry most perceptions on the methodologies and frameworks of dealing with commercial and security risks, and issues have been view to be designed for assessment rather than their management. This trend reveals the fact that in different marine industry sectors such as logistics and shipping there is a lack of coherent risk management framework or methodology from which to understand the risk-based decisions especially for the purpose of design, construction, operation, management and even decommissioning of the marine related applications. These possess threats to business operations in the maritime sector, and the need to implement policies that would foster profitable business operations and in a security risk-free environment becomes imperative, so as to foster assets development in the maritime sector in Nigeria. Exploiting weaknesses in port security is central to these crimes. The associated costs reduce the competitiveness of those affected, including the ports. So long as threats to trade exist, port security which is related to the commercial profitability of business operations as well; will remain as essential to port operations as cargo and good labor relations.

### Conceptual Framework



**Fig.1: Conceptual Framework of Sea Piracy and Maritime Asset Development**  
Source: Desk Research, 2021

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between sea piracy and maritime asset development in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the impact of sea piracy on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State.

2. Examine the impact of sea piracy on maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the impact of sea piracy on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State?
2. What is the impact of sea piracy on maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between sea piracy and port facilities development in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between sea piracy and maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State.

### **Theoretical foundations**

The study utilized failed state theory in analyzing nexus of the study variables. The failed state theory was coined by Helman and Ratner (1993) and later expanded by Zartman (1995) which summarily espoused that state is a failure or characterized as failed states when they failed to deliver their essential primary responsibilities to the populace. In failed states, it is not the presence of anarchy or war that is considered, but the failure of the government to discharge its duty accordingly is also considered in this regard. In a situation where the government failed to provide the basic needs of its citizens, failed to secure their lives and properties, injustice prevailed and corruption, the citizens are prone to crime and criminal activities which will further endanger lives in these kinds of states. Maritime piracy and sea robbery in Nigerian waters can be understood from the perspective of a failed state because the Nigerian government for several decades allows for the collapse of infrastructure, Nigeria is the headquarters of world poverty in 2019, it has the highest corruption incidence and a low ranking in Corruption Perception Index and all other indicators of well-being show negativity in Nigeria. The citizens resorted to crimes including piracy and sea robbery as an alternative to survival.

IMB (2018) reported that 29% of the total global maritime piracy is in Nigeria and that is alarming. It has been connected with the unavailability of strong regulations and agency that can take decisive measures and actions against the pirates. The country is the poverty headquarters of the world according to the United Nations Development Report in 2019. With such a heavy bottom poor population and deprivation, it means the state is a failed one being a rich oil-producing country. Failure of a state can lead or open all doors of crimes including piracy for the subjugated to survive and for the simple fact that there is no authority to apprehend the criminals and bring them before the law.

### **Concept of Sea Piracy**

Piracy is an age-long phenomenon with a rich history (Tuerk, 2012). In spite of this, it is an act that is little understood, ill-defined and often trapped in controversies (Burnett, 2003). Several academic definitions of piracy exist as there are scholars across different academic disciplines over different historical epochs. As for legal definition, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) Article 101 defines piracy as follow: Piracy consists of any of the following acts: (a)

any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State; (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft; (c) any act inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b), UNCLOS (1982).

The origin of contemporary piratic activities in the GoG can be traced to the boom in the price of oil in the 1970s (De Montclos, 2012); a position further corroborated by Murphy (2013) in his discussion of the ‘cement armada’ episode in Nigeria, which followed the oil boom of the 1970s. That said, Onuoha (2013b, p. 271) contend that much of what is termed piracy in the GoG is ‘armed robbery against ships, because the attacks occur inside the twelve-mile boundary that lies within the coastal state’s area of responsibility’. Contrarily, Ikoh (2013, p. 6) maintained that though the conditions that breed these attacks can be found onshore, most of the pirate attacks take place on the high sea. Indeed vessels and tankers farther afield the sea has come under attack. The controversy notwithstanding, the obvious reality is that both the coastal waters (especially those of the Niger Delta of Nigeria, Togo, and Benin) and sea of the GoG offer a comfortable operational zone for piratic operations.

Piracy in the West African coast has evolved over time in both dynamics and scope, though there is no exactitude as to the date of transition and progression (Alli, 2005a). However, there seem to be noticeable patterns in its progression, which have been interpreted, differently by scholars of maritime piracy in the region. Alli (2015a), identifies seven phases in the evolution of piracy in the GoG: 1) opportunistic sea robbery; 2) hijacking using speedboats by gangs armed with heavy weapons; 3) surgical operations and organized crime by 2009; 4) hunt for vessels to attack with great violence; 5) Full scale piracy characterized by the use of mother-ship to launch further attacks; 6) regional threat and development of piracy networks; and 7) use of sophisticated weapons such as machine guns as attacks became more daring. Elsewhere, he identifies three piratic phases namely the; opportunistic phase, insurgency-piracy phase and full scale piracy (Alli, 2014). However, in piracy operation, there are eight layers of activities, between target selection and disposal of cargo (Onuoha 2012). The eight-layered process is indicative of a complex interaction of actors, and anchored on or job specialization among gang members Onuoha (2013). Alli (2015a)’s categorization also highlights the sophistication and networked nature of interaction that has attended the growth and development of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. These attributes further reinforce the nature of maritime security in the GoG, and justifies a consideration of the phenomenon as an organized crime as being carried out in this study.

### **Maritime Asset Development**

The role of maritime transportation in the context of the economic, political, social and historical development of different developed, underdeveloped, or developing countries is undeniable of very great importance to each nation. Before the appraisal of Maritime Transportation in Nigeria, it is necessary to discuss the history of the Maritime Industry in Nigeria. The idea of shipping as the catalyst of developing the economy is not a new theory as Adam Smith saw the shipping industry as one of the stepping stones to economic growth. He wrote: A business working in a country town without links to the outside world can never, he argued, achieve high levels of efficiency because it’s the very small market will limit the degree of specialization (Adam, 2005).

In the mid-1950s, Nigeria’s first indigenous shipping line the “Nigerian Line” was established by Patrick Osoba as a joint venture with the Finnish firm, Nordstrom and Company. In 1959, the Nigerian Shipping Line Limited (NNSL) was established by the Nigerian Government; with Palm Lines Ltd. and Elder Dempster Ltd. as technical partners who were bought out in 1961 (Ugochukwu, 2000). The major attributes and characteristics associated with the maritime transportation industry

particularly against the background of the appearing obliviousness harrowing policies encompassing this sector. The operations of the maritime sector can be roughly divided into land operations and shipping operations. The shipping industry with its shipping companies offers the shipping operations, which are the key element in maritime transport. The key actors of the land operations of the maritime sector are port authorities, who maintain the port infrastructures, and port operators, who handle the cargo operations related to loading and discharging of vessels (Jensen 2017; Polemi 2018).

The maritime sector is a part of a global and continuously changing network (Kallion-pää et al. 2013). There are two terms used to identify the different actors and operations of the maritime sector. It can be identified with the term Maritime Global Critical Infra-structure (MGCI), which includes all of the infrastructures, such as, ports and straits that have the ability to inflict over boundary and multi-sector impacts on the society of a nation in terms of disturbance. MGCI includes all the systems and assets that rely on specific maritime activities and are capable to internationally impact security, global economic security, public health and safety (Kajitani et al. 2013.) The Maritime Transport System (MTS) highlights the criticality of the maritime sector to global economy. MTS includes ports, waterways, and their intermodal operators, such as, port authorities, port operators and customs (DiRenzo et al., 2015; Polemi 2018).

### **Maritime Port Facilities**

Ports form the center point of operations related to shipping and other maritime operations. Ports comprise critical intermodal nodes in cargo and passenger transport net-works and significant border control points, which highlights the importance of installed and effective security policies (Andritsos & Mosconi 2010). Due to the connectivity of ports between countries, they are seen as strategically interfaces within the maritime sector. It is difficult to identify ports comprehensively due to their various activities, which are dependent on the size of the port and the offered services (Trujillo & Tovar 2007). Port facilities play an important trade facilitation role to landlocked countries; fishing and tourism are important sources of income and employment to littoral and island economies; the sea is an important source of oil, gas and minerals; and, the sea has been used for connecting cables and pipes for data services and mobile telephone connectivity.

Traditionally, a port contains a port authority, port superstructure, such as cranes and conveyors, and infrastructure, loading and unloading functions, storage facilities, and in-tra-port operations (Brooks & Cullinane 2007). Port authority plays an essential role in the international trade and within the maritime sector (Chiappetta 2017) and has the responsibility to maintain and take care of the main land areas and basic infrastructures (Ojala 1990; Helmick 2008). The role of port authority in governing the regionalization phase can differ a little according to the type of port exploitation. When the state of a municipal government represents the port authority, it is responsible for the land access infrastructure. In this case, the port authority is seen as a landlord, who provides the infrastructure to various operators, for example, carriers, shippers, and transport operators (Notteboom & Rodrigue 2005).

### **Domestic Vessel**

Maritime companies include, for example, stevedoring companies, which can be seen as a company, which a port operator can hire to provide the machinery, hire the laborers to work the vessel, and control the execution of the loading of cargo, which will leave the terminal (McNicholas 2008). Together with ports, the shipping industry is seen as the blood vessels of international trade and as the facilitator of the global economy's expansion (Christiansen et al. 2013).

IMO (2014) has identified the different ships of the shipping industry. Just to mention a few amongst the many different ships: a passenger ship is considered to be a ship which carries more than twelve passengers, a cargo ship is roughly identified to be any ship, which is not a passenger ship and a tanker is one of the many forms of cargo ship, which is structured to carry in bulk of liquid cargoes of an inflammable nature. Therefore, domestic vessels includes; oil tankers, bulk (and

combination) carriers, general cargo ships, container ships, and "other ships", which includes "liquefied petroleum gas carriers, liquefied natural gas carriers, parcel (chemical) tankers, specialized tankers, reefers, offshore supply, tugs, dredgers, cruise, ferries, other non-cargo". General cargo ships include "multi-purpose and project vessels and roll-on/roll-off cargo" (Hoffmann, et al., 2016).

### **Sea Piracy and Maritime Assets Development**

Essien (2015) investigated sea piracy and security changes of maritime business in Bayelsa State, South-South, Nigeria. To achieve the objective of this study, three research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted and the study population comprises sea business operators in the State. Sample of 215 sea business operators in 9 waterfronts in Bayelsa State was selected by simple random sampling and "Sea Piracy and Security Challenge Questionnaire SPSCQ" developed by the researcher was used in data collection. This instrument was validated and tested to be reliable using Cronbach alpha reliability method. The reliability coefficient of 0.08 was obtained for the whole instrument. Research hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) was used to enhance data analysis and all hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The result showed a significant negative effect of pirate attacks on sea business operation. Also, the effect of sea robberies was obtained to be negative while sea security surveillance showed a significant positive effect on sea business operation.

Onyeabor (2018) examined the history of maritime activities in Nigeria and level its impact to the Nigeria economy. The study x-rayed some problems and challenges that hinder the full realisation of the potentials of maritime transportation. Some of the identified problems and challenges include insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate capital for investment and maintenance of ships, poor incentives for investors, lack of indigenous carrier vessels, sea unworthiness of such indigenous vessels where they are available, and poorly integrated water transport systems. Solutions as to the way forward in enhancing the potentials of the sector as a prime mover in Nigeria's economy were also discussed, especially on how the implementation of two important legislation the Coastal and Inland Shipping (Cabotage) Act 2003 and Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Act 2007 should enhance the fortunes of maritime transportation. The provisions of this legislation are appraised to understand their intents and effects towards changing the trend of domination of the maritime transportation industry by foreign vessels and owners. The study concludes by recommending that the government doubles her effort in addressing gaps in actualisation the intention of participation of indigenous shippers in maritime transportation. Ndikom et al. (2017) critically assessed the maritime industry in Nigeria, its challenges and prospects for policy issues. The study reviewed the structural nature, situational contents, abrasive occasional inconsistencies, current challenges and prospects of the Nigerian Maritime industry policy issues. This, over the years, had skewed the development and efficiency of this critical cash-cow industry that firmly holds the beacon of hope and survival of a developing economy like Nigeria. This is because, amongst all the modes of transport, the Maritime industry got the worst hit in terms of poor quality funding, policy inconsistencies and lack of support from the government. This is clear in the non –availability of a functional shipping policy in place to checkmate the fraudulent sharp practices and vices that usually erupts within the confines of the system. This has in no measure, promoted the pervasive nature of foreign domination of the industry in the carriage of our local generated cargo against the interest of the indigenous stakeholders. Lack of political will to enforce the implementation of some of the initiated government policy in this industry is a strong factor for concern and consideration. This is because, the industry is one that promotes mediocrity and lack of technical and professional expertise, as that is a very key factor for not having a functional shipping policy.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design according to Nwankwo (2013) involved the gathering of facts about an investigative situation, state, or event. In general, a descriptive research design referred to any development field study that systematically collects, analyzes and synthesizes quantitative data on a large representative sample population, therefore, this design was considered suitable, because the study is in the non-contrived setting. The population of the study was 839 staff of the Nigerian Port Authority branches in Rivers State. However, a sample size 271 was drawn using Taro Yamene formula, In data gathering, structured questionnaire administration was designed used, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was adopted for the data analysis.

#### Data Analysis

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between sea piracy and maritime port facilities development in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Summary of Independent T-Test Analysis on the Difference in the Response from Staff of Rivers and Onne Port on the Impact of Sea Piracy on Maritime Port Facilities Development in Rivers State**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	$t_{cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Sig.	Remark
Rivers Port	143	16.08	1.93	255	0.80	1.96	0.42	NS
Onne Port	114	16.28	2.14					

*NS- Not Significant*

Source: SPSS Computation, 2021

Table 4.7 indicates that  $t_{cal} = 0.80$ ,  $df = 255$ , and  $t_{tab} = 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.42$ . Therefore, since  $t_{cal} < t_{tab}$  and  $P > 0.05$ , then, it implies that there is no significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea piracy on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State. Hence, the null hypothesis one is retained at the 0.05 level of significance, while the alternate hypothesis that states that there is significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea piracy on maritime port facilities development in Rivers State is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between sea piracy and maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Summary of Independent T-Test Analysis on the Difference in the Response from Staff of Rivers and Onne Port on the Impact of Sea Piracy on Maritime Domestic Vessel Development in Rivers State**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	$t_{cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Sig.	Remark
Rivers Port	143	16.42	2.19	255	3.14	1.96	0.00	S



Onne Port            114        15.56        2.16

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**S- Significant**

Source: SPSS Computation, 2021

Table 4.8 indicates that  $t_{cal} = 3.14$ ,  $df = 255$ , and  $t_{tab} = 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.00$ . Therefore, since  $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$  and  $P < 0.05$ , then, it implies that there is significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea piracy on maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State. Hence, the null hypothesis two is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance, while the alternate hypothesis that states that there is significant difference in the response from staff of Rivers and Onne port on the impact of sea piracy on maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State is retained.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study corroborate with Essien (2015) whose study indicated significant negative effect of pirate attacks on sea business operation. Also, the effect of sea robberies was obtained to be negative while sea security surveillance showed a significant positive effect on sea business operation. It also supports the study conducted by Osemwege (2019) whose study revealed that indigenous participation in the Nigerian Shipping industry was low due to some challenges. Some of the identified challenges include policy inconsistency, limited stakeholder involvement, sea piracy, inadequate capital investment and stringent credit facilities. Similarly, our finding reinforce Nwalozie (2020) study revealed that criminal activities like piracy have been a significant disadvantage to the development of the Nigerian maritime sector. More , the findings of this study is in alignment with Toakodi et al. (2019), whose study revealed that the activities of sea robbers in the region, if left unchecked, will have adverse effect on the number of international and domestic tourists as well as impact negatively on coastal and maritime tourism.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Banking on the findings of the study which hold that sea piracy frustrates assets development of the maritime sector great in Rivers State, Nigeria. Based on this finding, it was concluded that if the menace of sea piracy in Nigeria waterways is not urgently tackled, the sector may not be attractive to critical stakeholders to invest their resources in the development of its critical assets for optimum performance. Therefore, it was recommended that to mitigate the impact of sea piracy on business operations in Nigeria and its resultant impact on maritime domestic vessel development in Rivers State; effort of coastal States in tackling sea piracy should be supported by the regional and the international community to be effective on a global basis.

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