

RESTRICTED

ABSTRACT

The study emphasises the significance of the SLAF in conducting maritime air operations with regard to the opportunities, threats and challenges faced by the state. The researcher's effort is to identify the loopholes in the readiness, the potentiality of SLAF in conducting maritime air operations and finding the ways to upgrade the standards. Identifying the current maritime threats and to understanding the current capabilities of the Air Power projection by the SLAF within the area of responsibility were formulated as the key research questions in the study. In addition, the two questions whether the SLAF is using its Air Power capabilities sufficiently and whether SLAF requires dedicated weapon platform for maritime air operations-- are posed to be answered. The four objectives covered the current capabilities and the limitations of the three armed forces involving in maritime operations; SLN, SLCG and SLAF in order to overcome the challenges and threats and to achieve opportunities that were identified in the maritime security affairs. The research questions were planned to be answered by an analysis of data collected through semi structured interviews with the executive branch officers of the three armed forces SLN, SLAF and SLCG. The data were analysed in a thematic platform and were coded for the researcher's purpose. The researcher was able to draw conclusions from the data analysis. The opportunities, threats and challenges that the country confronts with regard to maritime affairs were identified by the data gathered. In addition, SLAF was recognised as the main Air Power projector in the maritime operations, its capability in achieving the opportunities and in converting the threats and challenges to the benefits was identified. The participants held the point of view that the current weapon platform of the SLAF should be upgraded to a possible extent and that it is extremely important to cooperate with the SLN in conducting maritime air operations with the limited resources available.

Keywords: Maritime Air Operations, Maritime affairs, Weapon platform