

THE INFLUENCE OF SEAFARER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION SYSTEM QUALITY ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT PT CEMERLANG MAKMUR ABADI

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Abstract

Effective human resource management is a cornerstone for operational sustainability, particularly in the maritime industry, which demands high precision and strict adherence to safety protocols. This study investigates the influence of the recruitment and selection systems on the operational performance effectiveness of seafarers at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi. Employing a quantitative approach and analyzing data from 60 seafarer respondents using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the findings reveal that the recruitment system has no significant influence ($t=1.050$, $p>0.05$) on operational performance. Conversely, the selection system demonstrates a positive and significant influence ($t=2.511$, $p<0.05$). This result strongly suggests that the in-depth screening process during the selection phase plays a far more critical role than the initial candidate attraction process. The practical implication is the necessity of optimizing the selection process to ensure the competence of seafarers, which ultimately enhances productivity, efficiency, and work safety.

Keywords: *Recruitment, Selection, Operational Performance, Human Resource Management, PLS-SEM*

Abstrak

Manajemen sumber daya manusia yang efektif merupakan landasan bagi keberlanjutan operasional, khususnya di industri maritim, yang menuntut presisi tinggi dan kepatuhan ketat terhadap protokol keselamatan. Studi ini menyelidiki pengaruh sistem rekrutmen dan seleksi terhadap efektivitas kinerja operasional pelaut di PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan menganalisis data dari 60 responden pelaut menggunakan Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), temuan menunjukkan bahwa sistem rekrutmen tidak memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan ($t=1,050$, $p>0,05$) terhadap kinerja operasional. Sebaliknya, sistem seleksi menunjukkan pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan ($t=2,511$, $p<0,05$). Hasil ini sangat menunjukkan bahwa proses penyaringan mendalam selama fase seleksi memainkan peran yang jauh lebih penting daripada proses awal penarikan kandidat. Implikasi praktisnya adalah perlunya mengoptimalkan proses

seleksi untuk memastikan kompetensi pelaut, yang pada akhirnya meningkatkan produktivitas, efisiensi, dan keselamatan kerja.

Kata Kunci: *Rekrutmen, Seleksi, Kinerja Operasional, Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia, PLS-SEM*

INTRODUCTION

a. Background

The maritime industry serves as a vital artery for global and domestic trade, with its operational efficiency being a key determinant of economic stability (Mangkunegara, 2019). The success of this sector is fundamentally dependent on the quality of its human resources, particularly its seafarers. The entry point for securing this talent is through robust recruitment and selection processes. Recruitment is defined as a systematic activity designed to identify and attract potential candidates (Rivai, 2020), while selection is the subsequent process of evaluating and choosing the individuals who best fit the job requirements (Sedarmayanti, 2019).

PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi, a company specializing in general trading and fuel oil distribution, critically relies on the competence of its seafarers to maintain smooth operations. However, the company has faced empirical challenges, including a high seafarer turnover rate of 12% in early 2024 and frequent operational delays and minor incidents. These issues point to a performance gap, where actual operational outcomes fall short of expected standards, likely due to a mismatch between seafarer competencies and job demands.

This gap raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the existing recruitment and selection procedures. Is the recruitment system effectively attracting qualified candidates? Furthermore, is the selection process rigorous enough to filter and choose the most competent individuals? This research aims to address these questions by meticulously analyzing the partial influence of recruitment and selection on operational performance.

b. Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned background, this study formulates the following research questions:

1. Does the seafarer recruitment system have a significant influence on operational performance at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi?
2. Does the seafarer selection system have a significant influence on operational performance at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1 Grand Theories

This study is underpinned by two primary grand theories relevant to human resource management: the Human Resource Theory and the Person-Job Fit Theory.

a. Human Resource Theory

Human Resource Theory, championed by scholars like McGregor (1960) and Maslow (1954), posits that people are an organization's most valuable asset. This theory argues that investing in human capital, particularly through meticulous recruitment and selection processes, leads to superior organizational performance. Recruitment is seen as a proactive process to attract individuals with high potential and motivation. Selection, in turn, is a critical phase for ensuring that the chosen individuals possess not only the technical competencies but also the values and cultural alignment to succeed within the organization. Thus, the quality of human resources acquired through these processes directly contributes to the achievement of a company's strategic objectives.

b. Person-Job Fit Theory

The Person-Job Fit (P-J Fit) theory posits that employee performance is optimized when there is a strong congruence between an individual's characteristics (knowledge, skills, abilities, values) and the demands and requirements of the job (Kristof-Brown, 2005). In the context of this study, this theory is highly relevant as it underscores the importance of the selection process. An effective selection process is designed to identify the extent to which a candidate possesses the necessary attributes to succeed in the specific role of a seafarer. When the selection process successfully establishes a strong P-J Fit, operational performance, measured by productivity and safety, is expected to improve significantly.

c. Operational Variable Definitions

Recruitment is the process of seeking and attracting qualified individuals to fill vacant positions. Handoko (2018) defines it as the process of finding and gathering a pool of capable applicants. The indicators of recruitment include the availability of job vacancy information, the variety of recruitment sources, and the effectiveness of the initial screening process.

Selection is the subsequent stage of recruitment, where the company evaluates candidates to choose the most suitable individual. Siagian (2015) explains selection as a decision-making process to determine who to hire or reject. Indicators of selection include the congruence of qualifications, technical competency tests, interview results, and health examinations.

Operational Performance is defined as the work results or achievements attained by individuals in carrying out their duties. According to Rivai and Sagala (2020), performance is the outcome of an action, measured against pre-established standards. High operational performance in the maritime industry is a reflection of efficiency and safety. Its indicators include work productivity, time efficiency, work safety, and the quality of work output.

2. Prior Research

Previous studies on the relationship between recruitment, selection, and performance have yielded varied results. La Ode Abdul Halik et al. (2024) found that recruitment had a positive but not significant influence on performance, whereas selection had a significant influence. Conversely, a study by Fabiola et al. (2023) showed that recruitment and selection, when considered simultaneously, had a significant influence. This research is also supported by Scopus Q1-indexed studies, such as the one by Widayat et al. (2023), which emphasizes that effective talent management practices, including selection, positively correlate with organizational performance.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical foundation and prior research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: The recruitment system has a significant influence on the operational performance of seafarers at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi.
- H2: The selection system has a significant influence on the operational performance of seafarers at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a causal design. This approach was chosen to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables. The study's population consists of all seafarers at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi. A sample of 60 respondents was selected using a purposive sampling technique, where respondents were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research.

Primary data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire (1-5). The questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the indicators for each variable. Prior to its use, the research instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. Validity was assessed using *loading factors* and *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE), while reliability was assessed using *Composite Reliability* (CR) and *Cronbach's Alpha*.

Data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS software. This method was chosen for its suitability for small sample sizes and its non-reliance on assumptions of data normality. The analysis was performed in two stages: 1) Evaluation of the *outer model* (measurement model) to ensure validity and reliability, and 2) Evaluation of the *inner model* (structural model) to test the hypotheses by examining path coefficients (p-values or t-statistics).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 Results of Data Analysis

The outer model evaluation confirmed that all indicators met the established criteria for validity and reliability. The *loading factors* were above 0.70, AVEs were above 0.50, and CRs were above 0.70, validating the instrument for measuring the research variables.

The inner model testing yielded the following findings for the hypotheses:

- Influence of Recruitment (X1) on Operational Performance (Y): The path coefficient was -0.082, with a t-statistic of 1.050. As this value is below the threshold of 1.96, H1 is rejected.
- Influence of Selection (X2) on Operational Performance (Y): The path coefficient was 0.423, with a t-statistic of 2.511. As this value is above the threshold of 1.96, H2 is accepted.

2. Discussion

The findings provide a deep understanding of the dynamics of recruitment and selection within the maritime industry.

a. Influence of Recruitment on Operational Performance

The rejection of hypothesis H1 indicates that the recruitment system at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi does not significantly influence operational performance. This finding is consistent with La Ode Abdul Halik et al.'s (2024) study, which also found a non-significant relationship between recruitment and performance. This can be interpreted to mean that while the recruitment process succeeds in attracting a pool of candidates, it is not yet effective in directly impacting the quality of seafarer work. According to the Human Resource Theory (Handoko, 2018), recruitment is merely the initial stage of creating a candidate pool. The ultimate quality of the workforce is largely determined by the selection process. If the recruitment strategy fails to attract candidates with superior skills and experience, its direct impact on performance will be minimal.

b. Influence of Selection on Operational Performance

Conversely, the acceptance of hypothesis H2 confirms that the selection system has a positive and significant influence on operational performance. This finding is strongly supported by the Person-Job Fit Theory (Kristof-Brown, 2005), which emphasizes that a strong match between an individual's attributes and job demands leads to optimal performance. The rigorous selection process at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi, encompassing physical and mental health checks, technical competency tests, and comprehensive interviews, acts as an effective filter. By successfully choosing candidates who are best suited for the job, the company ensures that each seafarer possesses the capabilities needed to work productively, efficiently, and safely. Consequently, selection is the most critical stage in the HR management cycle, with a direct bearing on the company's operational success. This finding is further reinforced by Scopus Q1-indexed studies such as Widayat et al. (2023) and Yusuf et al. (2022), which highlight the importance of strategic selection processes in enhancing performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusion

1. The seafarer recruitment system at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi does not have a significant influence on operational performance.
2. The seafarer selection system at PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi has a positive and significant influence on operational performance.

2. Recommendations

1. For the Company: It is recommended that PT Cemerlang Makmur Abadi's management allocate greater resources to optimize its selection system. This can involve updating selection criteria, utilizing more precise competency assessment tools, and providing training to recruiters for conducting more in-depth evaluations. Furthermore, the company should refine its recruitment strategy to focus on attracting high-quality candidates, for instance, through partnerships with maritime educational institutions or professional associations.

2. For Future Research: Future studies are advised to expand the scope by incorporating mediating variables such as *job fit* or moderating variables like training and development. The use of qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews with HR managers, could also provide richer insights into the challenges and best practices in recruitment and selection.

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