THE ROLE OF MARITIME LABOUR EMPLOYER TRUST IN MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Abstract

The Standard of Training, Certificate and Watchkeeping (STCW) has been recognize by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as one of the important factors in ensuring the safety of ships and its crew, as well as, to reduce maritime accident rate which is largely contributed by human error. But in spite of the extensive and through work done by IMO and its Member States, there were a negative perspective towards the Maritime Education and Training (MET) system and the competency of seafarers. Thus, developing a comprehensive policy and strategic model of the Maritime Education and Training (MET) system that can be effectively monitored to achieve an effective Maritime Labour Employers' (MLE) trust is important. This study reveals that the key factors are comprises of; implementation of International Convention; institutions' efficiency; and, seafarers' competency that affect the MLEs' trust in the MET system. In this study the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique is used as a tool, to explain the relationship that may exist among the elements of the systems by using the trust item (ability, benevolence and integrity) to measure trustworthiness and incorporating them into the competency based education and training (CBET). The result from the structural model confirmed that the perceived implementation of the International Convention and perceived MET institutions' efficiency has an effect on the maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system. However, perceived implementation of an International Convention and perceived seafarers' competency is not found to have a significantly direct effect on the maritime labour employer's trust in the MET system. Thus, one of the strategies is to develop a policy in order to achieve an effective Maritime Education and Training system. This is to support the maritime communities in progressing towards a more sustainable development in the MET in the context of enhancing the maritime education policy.

Keywords:*Trainig, modeling,MET systems,IMO,seafarers and maritime.*

Back ground of study

The seafarers' competency has been considered an important factor in ensuring the safety of ships and its crews. This is one of the factors recognized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in dealing with the maritime accidents due to human elements, and as a result, the IMO put a lot of effort in the establishment and revision of the Standard of Training, Certificate and Watchkeeping (STCW) 1978 for seafarers to reduce maritime accident rate which largely contributed by human error in approximately 80 to 85 percent of maritime accidents (Baker & McCafferty, 2005). In view of the standard on seafarers' competency which was been revised in 2010 in Philippines to accommodate the fast growing technology on board ship and to anticipate qualified officer to effectively man and operates ships, the problem on

'shortage of seafarers' still remain intimidating to the worldwide supply of seafarers which was estimated to be 624,000 officers and 747,000 ratings in 2010 based on the numbers holding STCW certificates and this issue, especially the shortage of ship officers about one percent compared to ratings will continue to dominate until 2020 (BIMCO, 2010). In addition, sufficient educational and training opportunities especially for seafarers are required and it is crucial to develop the labour, skills and expertise required by the maritime industry sector (Othman & Bruce, 2011).

The Resolution 7 adopted by IMO was a result of the work of the IMO Conference of Parties to the International Convention on STCW in 2010. It states that the overall effectiveness of selection, training and certification processes can only be evaluated through skills, abilities and competence exhibited by the seafarers during the course of their service on board ship. Hence, the resolution has provide recommendation that the administration to make arrangement to ensure that shipping companies establish criteria and processes for the selection of seafarers exhibiting the highest practicable standards of technical knowledge, skills and professionalism. Employers normally seek people who can add value to their organization; they hire the right person and not a piece of paper qualification (Limkokwing, 2012). The Resolution 7 of the STCW amended in 2010 suggests that employer should only determine the 'right person' after hiring that person for a period of time and putting resources to evaluate those seafarers' skills, abilities and competence.

Two important factors that affect skills, ability and competence are education and training, and competency based education and training (CBET) is a perfect example of learning higher-level skills, the acquisition of generalizable knowledge, and the understanding and development of broad based courses (Burke, 1989). The role of knowledge transfer to the job requirement and acquiring competence lies in the maritime education and training (MET) institutes that comply with STCW, and which has the criterion for courses to be CBET according to Harris, Guthrie, Hobart, & Lundberg (1995). But according to Alainati, AlShawi, & Al-Karaghouli, (2009), the maritime education and training system had not help any knowledge transfer to the job requirement, but instead, it focus on passing competency examinations (Emad & Roth, 2008).

The amendment on STCW in 2010 is aimed to enhance the seafarer's competency and this has been the responsibility of the Member State, a party in the Convention that was given the task to implement and execute it. But nevertheless, it is the employers' responsibility to ensure that the seafarer whom they engage is qualified (ISM, 2002). No matter how many amendments made by the IMO on the STCW, a negative perspective towards the credibility of a licence still exist among employers, whereby they could not trust a seafarer who holds a particular license is competent for the position, hence they practice a doubling up strategy until they gained confidence on that seafarers' capabilities (Sampson, Gekara, & Bloor, 2011). Doubling up strategy is indeed an additional cost to the company which have to pay two persons' salary for one person productivity. Alternatively, to achieve the goal of reducing the manning cost, shipping companies worldwide employ crews from countries where labour cost is low (Theotokas & Progoulaki, 2007), but this pose another problem where it may lead to the entry of incompetent seafarer into the labour market with consequent risks to shipping and to crew safety (Sampson et al., 2011).

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate the factors that are affecting Maritime Labour Employers' trust in the MET system. This study also seeks to reveal its effect on the MLEs' trust through model generating and theory testing. This study is driven to answer the following research questions;-

What are the factors that affecting the maritime labour employers' trust in the maritime education and training (MET) system?

Do these factors have positive effect on the maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system?

The three trust items (ability, benevolence and integrity) were used to measure trustworthiness. The results from the structural model confirmed that the perceived implementation of the International Convention and perceived MET institutions' efficiency has an effect on the maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system. However, perceived implementation of an International Convention and perceived seafarers' competency is not found to have a significantly direct effect on the maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system.

Theory and hypotheses

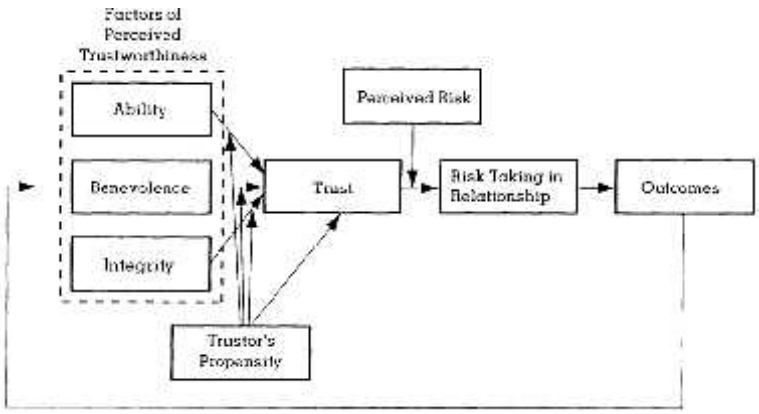
In order to understand what are the factors that affects the employer that they could not trust a seafarer holding a particular license is deemed competent for the position, that resulted in practising a doubling up strategy until they gained confident on that seafarers' capability (Sampson et al., 2011) show how important it is to define 'trust'. Trust is defined as a confidence in the reliability of a person or a system (Oxford, 2009). Trust in seafarer's competency can also be expressed as trust in a particular seafarer's characteristics that is required in order to perform well in their job and these characteristics have been categorised as aptitudes, abilities, and knowledge, where all can be improved or enhanced through education and experience (Alainati et al., 2009).

What is this 'trust' in a system? Since seafarers' competency is a result of education and training which was designed and adopted at international level by the IMO, implemented, enforced and monitored by the Member States, and delivered by the MET institutions, it can be represented as the maritime education and training (MET) system. Thus, the trust in the MET system can also be understood as confidence in the reliability of a maritime education and training through implementation of the competency base education and training system to produce competent seafarers.

In the study on a supply chain environment, trust is assumed to directly affect organizational performance (Ha, Park, & Cho, 2010). If the trust of shipping company which is the employer (buyer) of seafarer is able to be determine, then according to Ha et al., (2010) we may assume that this trust may directly affect the performance of that employer and the maritime education and training (MET) system of an organization which, can also be considered as a supplier. By revealing the most important factor in the MET system, we may use the maritime labour employers' trust as an indicator for MET field that requires managerial decision making role to enhance performance that may be beneficial to many.

Factor of trustworthiness

Three characteristic which often explain a major portion of trustworthiness is ability, benevolence and integrity of which each contributes a unique perceptual perspective from which to consider the trustee (Mayer & Davis, 1995) as shown in Figure 1.



Source: Mayer & Davis (1995)

Figure 1: Model of Trust

Mayer and Davis (1995) then explained that; 'Ability' is a group of skills, competencies, and characteristic that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain. The domain of the ability is specific because the trustee may be highly competent in some technical area, affording that person trust on tasks related to that area; 'Benevolence' is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive. Benevolence suggests that the trustee has some specific attachment to the trustor; and the relationship between 'integrity' and trust involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable.

Research Hypotheses

The research model of this study is illustrated in Figure2, a conceptual model of the three factors hypothesized to have direct effect on the development of maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system. Based on that conceptual model, this study is designed to systematically examine the factors that are expected to influence the MLEs' trust in the MET system using SEM. The conceptual model is proposed based on the six criterions of the competency-base education and training explained by Harris et al. (1995) and the factors are; *Implementation of Convention* (the perceived implementation of International Convention); *Institutions' efficiency* (the perceived maritime education and training institutions' efficiency); *seafarers' competency* (the perceived seafarers' competency); and *MLEs' trust* (maritime labour employers' trust in the MET system).

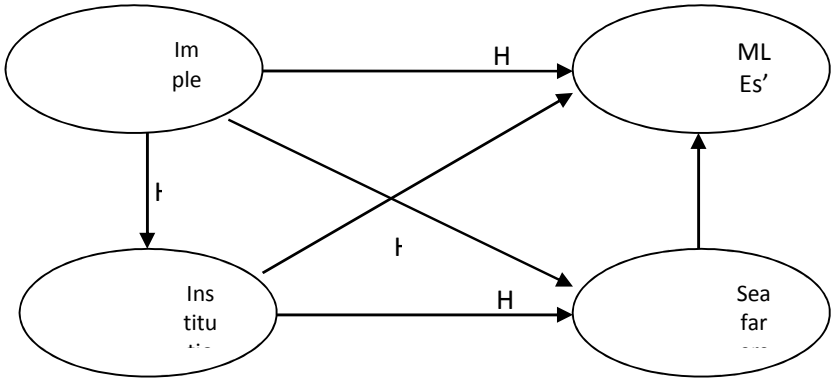


Figure 2: A conceptual model of MLE Trust in MET system

The implementation of International Convention is an important factor that may affect the MLEs' trust in the MET system, since MET system was initially established through adoption of the International Convention by the authority of a country. The Convention also provides a set of standards to be complied by the MET Institutions. Harris et al. (1995) pointed out that the first three CBET criterions are the *outcome*, *curricular* and the *delivery* criterion. The International Convention (STCW78) not only provide standards for MET Institution but also a standard to be achieved by the trainee or soon to be a seafarer as explained by (Harris et al., 1995) where the *assessment* criterion (the fourth criterion) should measure performance demonstrated against a specified competency standard. Only successful trainee that has demonstrated all prescribe competencies should obtain a credential or statement of which is recognized within the national framework. These are the fifth and sixth criteria which is the *reporting* and *certification* criterion. This research seeks to examine the perceived implementation of International Convention on MLEs' trust in the MET system, thus the hypothesizes of this research are as follows;

H_{1a}: Perceived implementation of International Convention has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust in the MET system.
H_{1b}: Perceived implementation of International Convention has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust of the perceived MET institutions' efficiency in MET system.
H_{1c}: Perceived implementation of International Convention has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust of the perceived seafarers' competency in the MET system.

Two important factors that affect skills, ability and competence are education and training, and Competency Based and Training (CBET) is perfectly compatible with the learning of higher-level skills, the acquisition of generalizable knowledge, and the understanding and development of broad based courses (Burke, 1989). The role of knowledge transfer to the job requirement and acquiring competence lies in the maritime education and training (MET) institute in complying with STCW. Davy and Noh (2011) in their study suggested that a careful consideration and implementation of strategies would significantly improve the effectiveness of training programs, and by reviewing the details of each strategy it is possible to fulfil the needs of the industry and be in line with the IMO standards. In this study, this research also seeks to investigate the relationship of MET institutions' efficiency towards MLEs' trust and seafarers' competency. Thus the hypothesizes are;

H_{2a}: Perceived MET institutions' efficiency has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust in the MET system.
H_{2b}: Perceived MET institutions' efficiency has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust of the perceived seafarer's competency in MET system.

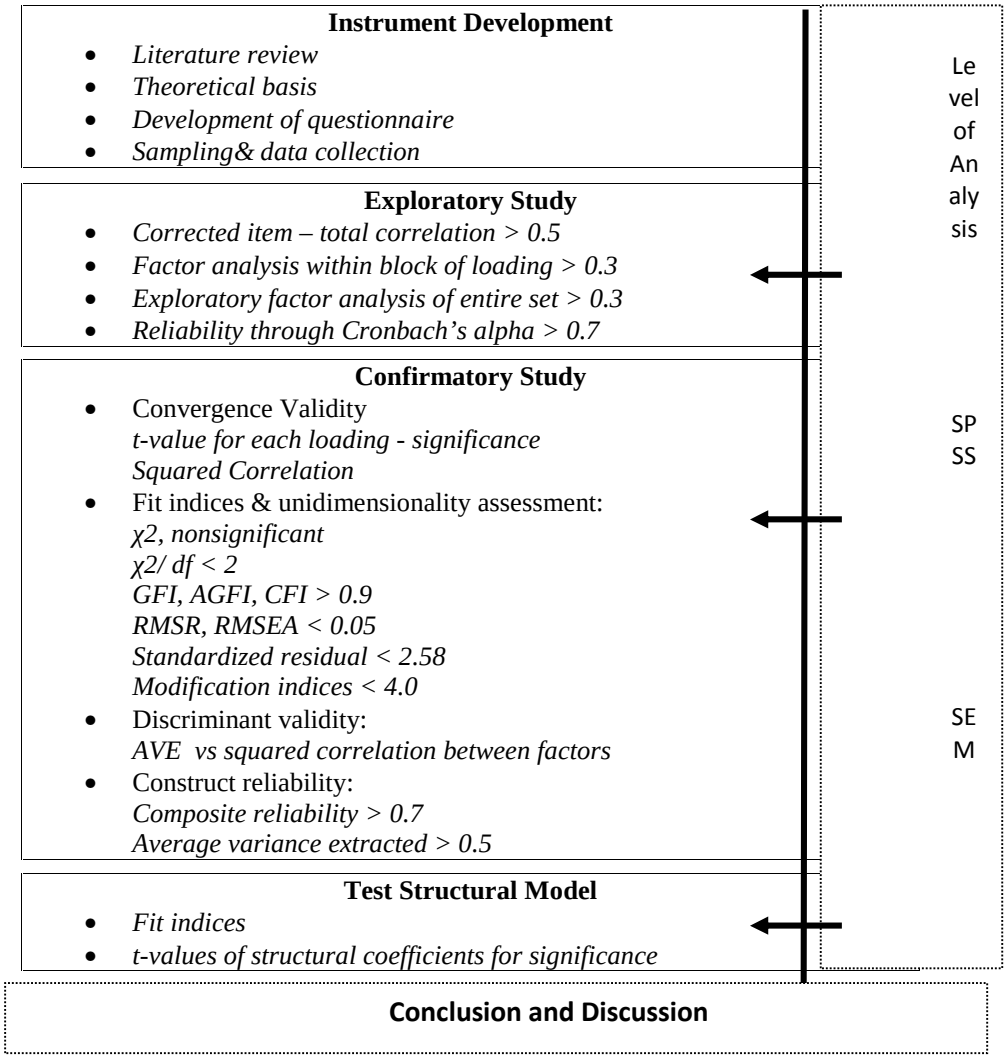
Besides that, this study also seeks to examine the relationship between seafarers' competency and MLEs' trust. As mentioned in others case studies, even though there is a continuous amendment by the IMO on the STCW, a negative perspective towards the credibility of a licence still exist among the employer that they could not trust a seafarer holding a particular license is deem competent for the position, hence the practice of doubling up strategy until they gained confident on that seafarers' capability (Sampson et al., 2011). Putting into consideration of a statement by the IMO stating that an overall effectiveness of selection,

training and certification processes can only be evaluated through skills, abilities and competence exhibited by the seafarers during the course of their service on board ship (STCW, 2010), thus the hypothesize is;

H_3: Perceived seafarers' competency has a positive effect on a MLEs' trust in the MET system.

Research Methodology

The research steps, methods and references in this chapter which includes exploratory analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural model test are adopted from the methodological framework suggested by Lu, Lai, & Cheng (2007) as shown in Figure 3. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS and AMOS software.



Source: Lu, Lai, & Cheng (2007)

Figure 3: Methodological frameworks for analyzing MLEs' Trust

Survey Questionnaire

The design of questionnaire followed the trust-item used by Mayer and Davis (1999), which was widely utilized in trust research. It consists of three sub-constructs; ability, benevolence and integrity which are the factors of perceived trustworthiness. The questionnaire that was prepared took into consideration the field of study and targeted population, before being scrutinized by two experts from a local university as shown in Appendix. To measure trust, this study uses a survey questionnaire method that requires a set of answers from the respondents. The scoring is made consistently throughout the questionnaires ranging from '1: strongly disagree' to '5: strongly agree'. The respondent will have to choose the score provided by answering each question to the best of their judgement. These questions are design to capture the attitudinal and behaviour of the respondent (Babbie, 2010). While Likert scale is ordinal, if it is well presented, then it is likely the Likert scale can approximate an interval-level measurement, and corresponding variables can be used in SEM (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013).

Measurement Unit

Maritime labour employer has been chosen as the unit of analysis in this study. This study was designed to include any rank that comes from the maritime labour employer. Thus, the targeted respondent may consists of managerial, operational and support rank in the maritime labour employer. The purpose to have a mixture of ranking is to get a wide range of perception of trust towards MET system. Another reason was to ensure that respondents who had experience as seafarer and had once walked through the MET system him or herself to also be part of the survey. Even though, experience will not be used as a control item or group, their perception may have impact on the entire population of respondent.

Sampling and data collection

The sampling technique and data collection is designed to a targeted population which were participants of the International Maritime Conference, where representative from maritime labour employer were expected to attend. The conference was organized by Maritime Department an agency under the Ministry of Transport of Malaysia in conjunction with to implement the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The maritime labour employer has been identified and categorized as: (1) Shipping, (2) Government, (3) Classification, (4) Insurance and (5) Academic.

A survey research probably the best method available to the social science and is also considered to be an excellent tool for measuring attitudes and orientation in a large population (Babbie, 2010). Taking into consideration that survey research has its limitation on its response rate, first step taken, was to approach the organizer to seek for approval to conduct survey during conference by submitting an official letter. Secondly, in order to ensure high return rate of the survey forms the assistance from master of ceremony for the conference was sought to announce to the participants that survey was being conducted. The third step was for the master of ceremony to give gentle and humble reminder periodically to the participants to fill up the questionnaire form. And finally, each completed survey form was collected personally from participants during each session break. Each participant who returned the completed survey form was greeted with warm appreciation.

Data screening and treatment

From the record of participant list acquired from the organizer, it shows 144 participants attended the conference. As a result, there are 73 survey forms received from the participants.

However, only 70 responses retained after data screening and treatment conducted bringing to the response rate of 48.61 percent as shown in Tableble 1. Missing value treatment (for reasonable limit, i.e., less than 5%), option is available such as mean replacement, expectation-maximization algorithm and nearest values. Alternatively, researchers can opt for deleting all observations with missing value, which, however, decrease variation in the data and may introduce biases when certain groups of observation have been deleted systematically (Hair et al., 2013). The result shows that three survey forms have many missing value (more than 80%). Missing value data occur when respondent either purposely or inadvertently fails to answer one or more question(s). When the amount of missing data on a questionnaire exceeds 15%, the observation it typically removed from the data file (Hair et al., 2013). Hence, respective respondents were removed from the data set.

Table 1: Characteristic of respondent

		Profile of respondent (n = 70)	
Characteristic of the respondent		Frequency	Percentage
Nationality	Malaysian	67	95.7
	Non-Malaysian	2	2.9
	Not available	1	1.4
Sector	Government	9	12.9
	Classification	2	2.9
	Insurance	3	4.3
	Shipping	53	75.7
	Academic	1	1.4
	Not available	2	2.9
Rank	Management	44	62.9
	Operational	24	34.3
	Support	1	1.4
	Not available	1	1.4
Ex-Seafarer	Yes	33	47.1
	No	36	51.4
	Not available	1	1.4

Correspondents from participants of 'Malaysian National Maritime Conference 2013: Maritime Labour Convention 2006' which was held on May 23, 2013 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Structural Equation Modelling

After having enough evidence that the proposed measurement model is reasonably fit to the data collected through steps of analysis in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), measures are taken to conduct assessment for the final SEM (Figure 3). The measurement model is then turned into final SEM based on the conceptual model of trust in the MET system. Overall, the model fits with the data evaluated using common model goodness-of-fit measure estimated by AMOS. From the results it showed that the proposed measurement model is reasonably fit with the data collected. Based on the data, AMOS estimation of our model showed a value of 1.125 in the chi-square to degree of freedom ratio, which is satisfactory with respect to the recommended value of less than 2.0. The model is also assessed using other fit indices; goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and modification index (MI). The model exhibited a fit value exceeding or close to the commonly recommended threshold for the respective indices.

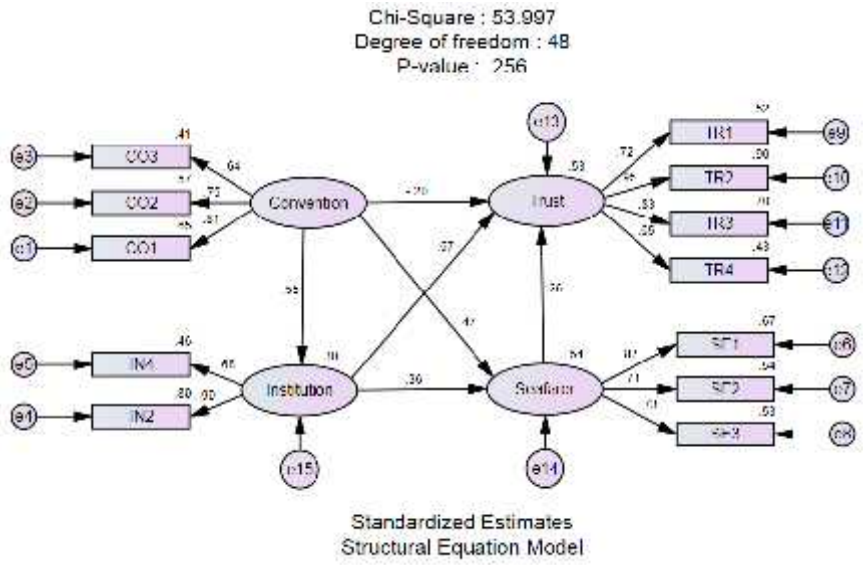


Figure 3: The final structural equation modelling

Hypothesis Testing

The critical ratio (C.R) value is a *t*-value obtained by dividing the estimated of the covariance by its standard error. A value that exceeding 1.96 or smaller than -1.96 represents a level of significance of 0.05. The range value for reliability is between 0 and 1. Computations of the final SEM for each construct are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of the structural equation modelling

Hypotheses	Variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Results
H_{1a}	Convention → Trust	-0.195	0.193	-1.010	**Not-Supported**
H_{1b}	Convention → Institution	0.551	0.165	3.339	Supported
H_{1c}	Convention → Seafarer	0.470	0.174	2.701	Supported
H_{2a}	Institution → Trust	0.566	0.197	2.873	Supported
H_{2b}	Institution → Seafarer	0.365	0.151	2.417	Supported
H_3	Seafarer → Trust	0.361	0.217	1.664	**Not-Supported**

χ^2=53.997 (ρ=0.256), *df*=48, χ^2/df =1.125, GFI=0.890, AGFI=0.821, CFI=0.984, RMSEA=0.043, TLI=0.978

Results and discussion

The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between the implementation of International Convention and institutions' efficiency. This finding suggests that if an International Convention has a new amendment, it will have an effect on institutions' efficiency or performance. The impact of institutions' efficiency on seafarers' competency is importance, thus suggests MET institutions to revisit their programs offered to seafarers in order to meet the updated requirements.

There is a positive relationship between institutions' efficiency and MLEs' trust and suggest that, if MET institutions wishing to increase the MLEs' trust, MET need to take account of their own performance or efficiency and the compliance with the International Convention through CBET programs that produce qualified and competent seafarers. The implementation of International Convention somehow does not have a direct effect on the MLEs' trust in the MET system. Similarly, the effect of seafarers' competency on a MLEs' trust in the MET

system is not significant in this study. This shows that seafarers' competency which is a result from education and training does not have direct effect on the MLEs' trust in the MET system.

In this study, through literature and SEM results suggested that the true measurement of competency lies in the hands of the maritime labour employers. The implementation of International Convention has proven to have a significant direct positive effect on the institutions' efficiency and seafarers' competency, but it has no direct effect on MLEs' trust in the MET system. It is also evident that the institutions' efficiency has a significant direct positive effect on MLEs' trust in the MET system. Therefore the MET institution administrators should pay alert to practices that will only increase the effectiveness of their programs but is consider insufficient if it does not consider the actual condition and compliances of the International Convention as well as the MLEs' trust.

Conclusion

This research is expected to make an important contribution in the field of MET, SEM application in the maritime field, as well as literature with findings on MLEs' trust in the MET system. Thus, this study indicates that the MLEs' trust is an important indicator or feedback that can be used to further enhance the current MET system and its policies. This study also suggests that the MET institution to re-evaluate current training methods, focus on the role of education in improving seafarers' competency and be in line with the International Convention as well as the MLEs' trust. Hence, our findings call for future researchers and interested parties towards enhancing the current MET system and its policies.

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Appendix

The scoring is made consistently throughout the questionnaires ranging from '1: strongly disagree' to '5: strongly agree'

SN	Kindly mark (√) in the box provided where you feel appropriate and not what other expects or thinks.	1	2	3	4	5
1	The international convention related to seafarer's education, training, competency, welfare and protection is sufficient to satisfy current maritime needs.					
2	The international convention related to seafarer's education, training, competency, welfare and protection are just and fair to both seafarer and ship owner.					
3	The international convention related to seafarer's education, training, competency, welfare and protection is legally implemented and enforced.					
4	Malaysian Maritime Education and Training is highly efficient in producing competent seafarer.					
5	Highly effective Maritime Education and Training is also very beneficial to the ship owner.					
6	A highly efficient MET institution that has a modern training methodology such as: training in modern technology (electronic chart, ECDIS); distance learning and web base learning, producing competent seafarer will attract sponsorship program from shipping company.					

7	Education and training for seafarers is being stressed for the purpose of safety of life, cargo and the environment.					
8	Seafarers of officer level which had their education and training at the Malaysian MET institution is very capable of performing his/her job.					
9	Seafarers of officer level which had their education and training at the Malaysian MET institution is very concerned about the company's welfare.					
10	Sound principles seem to guide a seafarers' behaviour of officer level which had their education and training at the Malaysian MET institution.					
11	Only seafarers who met the minimum age requirement are engaged on board by this company.					
12	Only seafarers that are medically fit to perform their duties at sea are engaged by this company.					
13	Only qualified and certified seafarers are engaged to work on board ship by this company.					
14	Seafarers can make complaints without fear of being victimized.					