



Integration of Law Enforcement and Human Resource Management to Enhance Work Ethics in the Maritime Sector

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Work ethics in the maritime sector are determined not only by formal regulations but also by moral awareness and human resource management that fosters professional responsibility. This study aims to understand how the integration between maritime law enforcement and human resource management contributes to the formation of work ethics within the maritime environment. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in depth interviews with seafarers, port authority officials, and HR managers from several national shipping companies. Thematic analysis was employed to uncover patterns of values, perceptions, and ethical practices shaped within the maritime work context. The findings reveal that the effectiveness of law enforcement depends not only on strict regulations but also on the extent to which legal principles are internalized through a fair and transparent HR management system. The alignment between regulatory and managerial practices fosters an ethics based work culture, reflected in compliance, team solidarity, and moral responsibility for maritime safety. This study highlights the importance of synergy between normative and humanistic approaches in maritime governance and provides implications for developing ethics training policies and strengthening legal awareness among Indonesian seafarers.

Keyword: *maritime law enforcement, human resource management, work ethics, shipping*

1. INTRODUCTION

Inrecent years, various incidents and international audit findings have shown that the implementation of work ethics and safety principles in the shipping sector is still weak. For example, the report of International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in 2023 found many cases of manipulation seafarers' working hours logbook and late payment of wages on ships flagged by developing countries, including Indonesia and Philippines. Furthermore, the results of Port State Control in the Asia Pacific region released by the Tokyo MOU (2022) show that violations of work and rest provisions remain one of the most common findings during ship inspections. This phenomenon demonstrates the existence of global regulations such as the Maritime Labor

Convention (MLC 2006) and International Safety Management (ISM) Code has not been fully followed by strong work ethics practices in the field. These facts indicate that although various global regulations have been comprehensively designed, their implementation still faces serious challenges at the operational level, both in terms of legal aspects and human resource management.

The shipping sector is heavily regulated by national and international regulations, such as the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. Both legal instruments are designed to ensure safety, welfare, and decent working conditions for seafarers worldwide. However, numerous studies have shown that the effectiveness of these regulations depends heavily on the extent to which their principles are implemented at the operational level (Fotteler, Jensen, & Andrioti, 2018; Fotteler, Bygvraa, & Jensen, 2020). While the MLC 2006 provides a robust legal framework for maritime labor protection, significant gaps remain between normative standards and actual practices on board ships, particularly regarding the supervision of working hours, health, and rest entitlements of seafarers.

On the other side, Bhattacharya's (2012) study on the implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code emphasized that the success of a safety management system depends not only on administrative compliance but also on the ethical awareness and moral responsibility of individuals on board. When regulations are applied formally without internalizing ethical values, the potential for behavioral deviations arises, such as the manipulation of safety data or violations of working hours. This phenomenon is also reflected in the research of Fotteler et al. (2020), who found that violations of work and rest provisions remain common despite increasingly stringent oversight through port state control. Therefore, a legal approach that emphasizes sanctions and audits needs to be complemented by strengthening organizational culture and human resource governance that fosters ethical awareness from within.

Research by Teperi, Lappalainen, Puro, and Perttula (2018) provides an interesting perspective by emphasizing the importance of safety culture artifacts as tangible indicators of regulatory success. They found that safety improvements in the shipping sector are determined not only by technical compliance, but also by shared values, communication, and managerial involvement in decision making. This means that participatory, transparent, and learning oriented human resource governance plays a key role in integrating legal policies with the ethical behavior of seafarers. This approach encourages the formation of a work culture that not only adheres to regulations but also upholds moral responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of seafarers.

Furthermore, Mišković, Ivče, Hess, and Koboević (2022) highlighted that seafarers' perceptions of the quality of safety oversight are strongly influenced by human factors, such as leadership, communication, and clarity of responsibilities. These findings reinforce the point that effective law enforcement requires the support of an HR system capable of internalizing ethical values into daily practice. Therefore, the integration of the legal framework and HR governance is a crucial foundation for building an ethical and sustainable work culture in the shipping sector. This study seeks to broaden understanding of the synergistic relationship between legal compliance and ethical HR governance and offers new insights into how balancing regulations and human values can enhance the professionalism of Indonesian seafarers.

Based on the background and literature review above, it appears that there is still a gap between the international legal framework and human resource management practices in the field, particularly in efforts to build an ethical work culture in the shipping sector. This situation raises the need to understand how aspects of law enforcement and human resource governance can interact and reinforce each other in the context of maritime organizations. Therefore, this study focuses on examining how the implementation of maritime law enforcement relates to work ethics in the shipping sector, as well as how human resource governance practices contribute to the formation and strengthening of ethical values in the onboard work environment. Furthermore, this study also seeks to uncover how the integration of the legal system and human resource policies can create an ethical, sustainable work culture that supports the professionalism of seafarers in the modern shipping industry.

Maritime Law Enforcement

Maritime law enforcement is a fundamental aspect in ensuring the safety, security, and welfare of workers in the shipping sector. The main international legal frameworks are the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. These two instruments establish minimum standards regarding working conditions, rest hours, health, and the responsibilities of ship operators for the safety of seafarers. A study by Fotteler, Bygvraa, and Jensen (2020) shows that the effectiveness of the MLC 2006 depends not only on the substance of the regulations but also on the implementation and oversight mechanisms carried out by national maritime authorities. Meanwhile, Bhattacharya (2012) emphasized that although the ISM Code strengthens safety systems, its success remains highly dependent on the leadership and moral commitment of management, as well as the discipline of seafarers in consistently implementing safety procedures.

In a global context, maritime law enforcement has evolved not only as a form of administrative compliance but also as an instrument for protecting human rights at sea. Chang and Khan (2023) position the 2006 MLC as a significant milestone in the protection of maritime workers' rights, highlighting its relevance to the principles of social justice and human dignity. However, research by Mantoju (2021) shows that at the operational level, seafarers often face obstacles in accessing these rights, primarily due to weak reporting mechanisms and differing interpretations of regulations across countries. Pyć (2016) also emphasizes that the effectiveness of maritime law enforcement depends heavily on each country's national legal commitment to consistently applying international standards and integrating them into its domestic legal system.

Furthermore, research by Bhatia, Carrera Arce, and Baumler (2024) revealed a gap between reported work hour compliance data and Port State Control inspection results, indicating manipulation and disparity in the implementation of work and rest provisions in the field. These findings indicate that a legal approach that emphasizes audits and sanctions alone is insufficient to foster ethical behavior and true compliance. Therefore, maritime law enforcement needs to be understood as a normative process that is oriented not only toward fulfilling formal regulations but also toward fostering ethical values and awareness among seafarers and ship managers. An approach that balances regulation and organizational morality is believed to create a more equitable, safe, and sustainable shipping system. For regulations and ethical values to be truly internalized in seafarers' work behavior, an human resources governance system is needed that

focuses not only on compliance but also on establishing a just, participatory, and well being oriented organizational culture.

Human Resources Governance And Work Ethics in the Shipping Industry

Human resource governance plays a crucial role in translating legal regulations into fair, transparent, and employee focused organizational practices. According to Teperi, Lappalainen, Puro, and Perttula (2018), a strong safety culture in shipping organizations is fostered through the active involvement of managers and seafarers in safety related communication, learning, and decision making. In this context, human resource governance encompasses ethical recruitment policies, safety based training, a transparent whistleblowing system, and leadership that fosters moral accountability. Mišković, Ivče, Hess, and Koboević (2022) also emphasize that the quality of safety oversight is significantly influenced by leadership behavior and effective communication within the ship's organizational hierarchy. Therefore, sound human resource governance serves as a bridge between the enforcement of formal regulations and the internalization of ethical work values. Effective implementation of human resource governance ultimately not only improves organizational efficiency but also plays a central role in shaping and maintaining seafarers work ethics.

Work ethics in the shipping context relates to a set of moral and professional values that govern the behavior of seafarers in carrying out their duties. Values such as responsibility, discipline, honesty, and solidarity form the foundation for a safe and productive work environment. Fotteler, Jensen, and Andriotti (2018) revealed that seafarers tend to assess the quality of work life not only in terms of compensation or benefits, but also by the extent to which the organization demonstrates an ethical commitment to their wellbeing. Similarly, research by Alver, Erol, and Canca (2024) found that consistent implementation of a professional code of ethics can improve seafarers' performance and motivation through the internalization of moral values within the organizational culture. In the social context on board a ship, work ethics also plays a role in building healthy interpersonal relationships and preventing destructive behavior. Boström and Österman (2022) emphasized that the courage of seafarers to reject unethical behavior such as intimidation, harassment, or abuse of power, is an essential component of a just work culture. A work environment free from bullying and harassment has been shown to improve the psychological safety and morale of seafarers. Fan et al (2023) added that psychological factors, including mental well being and perceptions of fairness, are closely related to ethical behavior and compliance with safety procedures at sea.

Within the framework of ethical compliance, ethical behavior is not merely the result of legal oversight, but rather the internalization of moral values through organizational systems and leadership with integrity. Progoulaki and Roe (2011) emphasize that the cultural diversity of seafarers demands a managerial approach that is sensitive to social values and cross cultural moral responsibility, so that solidarity and respect can grow in a multinational work environment. Thus, a strong work ethic not only prevents manipulative practices such as falsifying work time logbooks or ignoring safety standards (Tokyo MOU, 2022) but also serves as a foundation for creating an ethical, inclusive, and sustainable shipping culture. Therefore, the formation of a sustainable work ethic cannot be separated from the synergy between law enforcement and human resource governance, which mutually reinforce each other in creating a work system with integrity in the shipping sector.

Integration of Law Enforcement and Human Resource Governance

Integration between law enforcement and human resource (HRM) governance is key to realizing an ethical and sustainable work culture. This approach assumes that legal regulations provide an external normative framework, while HRM governance serves as an internal mechanism that implements legal values in organizational behavior and policies. Fotteler et al. (2020) demonstrated that regulatory effectiveness increases when shipping companies adopt values based HRM systems and moral accountability. Ugrinov, Čočkalo, and Bakator (2025) reinforce this view by asserting that sustainable human resource management (SHRM) practices in the maritime supply chain foster a balance between regulatory compliance and improving worker wellbeing. A sustainable HRM approach enables legal principles, such as seafarer safety and wellbeing, to be translated into recruitment, training, and supervision policies oriented toward social responsibility and transparency.

Furthermore, Theotokas, Lagoudis, and Raftopoulou (2024) revealed that digital transformation in the shipping industry requires close integration between legal compliance and HRM strategies to ensure organizations remain adaptive to changes in global work systems. In this context, ethical HR governance plays a crucial role as a means of internalizing law through policies that foster a sense of responsibility, fairness, and openness. Karakasnaki (2024) adds that ethical leadership and green HRM practices contribute to sustainable social performance by establishing an organizational culture that places ethics and sustainability at the heart of decision making. Similarly, Ceresia (2025) emphasizes that the implementation of sustainable HRM principles not only strengthens compliance with international trade governance but also builds moral awareness and law abiding behavior among the cross border workforce. Therefore, the integration of legal systems and HR governance not only strengthens formal compliance structures but also fosters collective ethical awareness, which serves as the foundation for a fair, safe, and sustainable maritime work culture. A conceptual understanding of the relationship between legal regulations, HR governance, and work ethics needs to be tested through empirical findings to illustrate the real dynamics occurring in the field. Therefore, the next section describes the methodological approach used in this study.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which is to deeply understand the meaning, process, and dynamics of the integration of law, human resource governance, and work ethics in the shipping environment. An interpretive paradigm is used to explore how actors in the shipping sector, particularly seafarers, HR managers, and maritime regulators, interpret the application of international legal regulations and the moral values that underlie their work behavior. A case study design was used to examine the phenomenon of law and HR integration in the context of shipping organizations in Indonesia that have adopted the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. This design allows researchers to comprehensively understand the interrelationships between actors (legal authorities, HR management, seafarers) and the dynamics of the implementation of work ethics and safety policies. This case study is a multiple case study, involving

several merchant shipping companies and manning agencies operating domestically and internationally.

This research was conducted at four international merchant shipping companies and two manning agencies based in Indonesia. All companies have adopted the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code as part of their seafarer safety and welfare management systems. The study participants consisted of 21 informants, including 12 seafarers (8 men and 4 women), 6 HR managers, and 3 national maritime authority officials. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria being a minimum of five years of experience in the shipping industry and direct involvement in HR management or the implementation of maritime legal regulations. Interviews were conducted face to face and online over a three month period, with an average duration of 60–90 minutes per session. Field data was supplemented by observations at shipping company offices and analysis of internal documents such as HR policies, safety audit reports, and Port State Control results. Based on the results of the thematic analysis (Hoang et al, 2025), three main themes were found that explain how law enforcement and HR governance interact in shaping work ethics in the shipping sector, namely: 1) formalistic law enforcement, 2) HR governance as a mechanism for internalizing legal values, 3) the formation of work ethics through legal and HR synergy. Data validity was maintained through several strategies: 1) triangulation of sources and methods, namely comparing interview results with documents and observations, 2) member checking, by asking informants for confirmation of the researcher's initial interpretations, 3) audit trail, by systematically recording the entire process of data collection, reduction, and interpretation. 4) peer debriefing, namely discussing findings with fellow researchers to ensure consistency of analysis. Meanwhile, regarding ethical considerations of the study, this study adheres to the principles of social and organizational research ethics, including: 1) voluntary consent (informed consent) from participants, 2) protection of identity and data confidentiality, 3) nonmaleficence, namely ensuring that participation does not have a negative impact on the career, reputation, or safety of participant.

3. DISCUSSION

The research findings show that the implementation of maritime law regulations in many shipping companies still focuses on administrative compliance and formal certification. While audits, inspections, and inspections by Port State Control are conducted periodically, these activities often focus solely on document completion rather than on changes in crew behavior. Several seafarers noted that compliance is often situational (emerging during an audit and then easing afterward). This phenomenon demonstrates how legal compliance has not been internalized as a moral value, but rather is still understood as a procedural obligation to avoid sanctions

“When a port state audit comes, everyone immediately completes the paperwork. But after that, it's back to business as usual. What matters is that the paperwork is complete, not that behavior changes.” (AT, Chief Officer, 42 years old).

“We know about the work and rest hours regulations at MLC, but in reality, they don't work. Sometimes the logbook is simply adjusted to appear compliant” (MS, AB, 35 years old).

This formalistic tendency highlights a gap between regulations and daily practices on board ships. On the one hand, companies strive to meet legal standards to pass audits and obtain certification; on the other, seafarers face operational pressures that make it difficult to effectively implement the rules. The tension between productivity demands and compliance obligations often leads to ethical compromises, such as manipulating work hour data or ignoring rest periods. An official from the Directorate of Shipping acknowledged that formal oversight doesn't always capture the human dimension of legal enforcement:

"We have regulations and an audit system, but if the human resources management on board isn't supportive, the results are just a formality. Humane oversight is still lacking" (HR, Shipping Directorate, 50 years old).

These findings confirm the study by Bhatia et al. (2024), which found a data disparity between work compliance reports and field inspection results. This phenomenon indicates that maritime law enforcement remains compliance based, where compliance is driven by fear of sanctions, rather than moral awareness. As a result, seafarers' safety and welfare standards are often implemented symbolically, without any fundamental attitudinal change. In this context, the law loses its transformative power because it does not address the realm of values and behavior. This analysis aligns with the views of Fotteler et al. (2020), who assert that the effectiveness of regulations such as the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code depends heavily on the extent to which the moral values behind them are internalized by shipping organizations. Strong laws without the support of organizational culture and ethical leadership will only foster administrative compliance, not moral compliance. Therefore, law enforcement in the shipping sector needs to be understood not merely as a control system, but as a normative and educational process that fosters ethical responsibility in every individual on board.

Proposition 1: Formalistic maritime law enforcement will only result in administrative compliance if it is not balanced with human resource governance that is oriented towards values and social justice.

Human resources (HR) managers play a highly strategic role in bridging the legal aspects and work behaviors of seafarers. They serve not only as supervisors of administrative compliance but also as moral agents, instilling ethical values and professional responsibility through communication, training, and role models. For most shipping companies interviewed, compliance with maritime regulations such as the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC 2006) and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code is no longer understood simply as a formality, but as part of an effort to build integrity and wellbeing in the workplace. One HR manager described this approach through a routine activity called an ethics briefing, which aims to build moral awareness before seafarers begin work.

"We don't just discuss the rules, but also the meaning behind them. For example, why it's important to get enough rest, or why reporting must be honest. We call this program an ethics briefing before the crew on boards." (SL, HR Manager, 38 years old).

This statement demonstrates a paradigm shift from a compliance based legal approach to a human centered, values driven approach. HR plays a role not merely as policy implementers but as facilitators, connecting legal norms with the moral

conscience of the crew. This effort is reinforced by a transparent and secure reporting policy, as conveyed by one informant:

“The company provides a safe reporting channel, so if any of our employees feel they've been treated unfairly, they can report it without fear.” (RD, HR Superintendent, 44).

These practices demonstrate that HR systems can function as a mechanism for internalizing law into organizational practice. This approach aligns with the concept of sustainable human resource management (SHRM) in maritime supply chains (Ugrinov, Čockalo, & Bakator, 2025), which emphasizes the importance of balancing regulatory compliance with workforce wellbeing. In other words, the sustainability of maritime organizations is determined not only by the strength of regulations but also by the ability of HR systems to foster moral and social values among workers. Furthermore, the digital era of shipping brings new challenges to HR governance. The use of digital systems to monitor working hours, report violations, or assess performance is considered capable of increasing efficiency, but at the same time, it can create ethical gaps if not balanced with a humane approach. A safety manager explained:

“We now use an app to record working hours, but sometimes crews just fill them in because the system is just a formality. So, a human approach is still needed.” (YN, Safety Manager, 40 years old).

This statement emphasizes that digitalization in management does not automatically create transparency or integrity; it must be accompanied by the development of an ethical organizational culture. This is consistent with the findings of Theotokas et al. (2024), who stated that digital transformation in shipping is only effective if accompanied by the development of moral awareness and a culture of transparency at all levels of the organization. From the thematic analysis, it can be concluded that ethical HR governance functions as an internal governance system that transforms legal norms into concrete behavior. The ethical HR governance approach (Karakasni, 2024) and sustainable HRM (Ceresia, 2025) reinforce the understanding that ethical leadership and participatory HR policies play a crucial role in fostering fairness, accountability, and social responsibility in shipping organizations. Thus, HR serves not only as the implementer of legal policies but also as the guardian of moral values, ensuring that maritime law is implemented humanely and meaningfully.

Proposition 2: Sustainability and ethics based human resource governance serves as a legal internalization mechanism that transforms external regulations into organizational values.

A strong work ethic in shipping organizations is formed when legal regulations and human resource (HR) governance systems operate harmoniously. Research shows that seafarers comply not solely due to external pressure or fear of sanctions, but rather due to a growing moral awareness and sense of responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of all. For them, fair treatment and a humane approach from the company are key factors that foster moral motivation to work with integrity and dedication.

“We obey the rules not because we fear sanctions, but because we know it's for our own safety. If the company is fair, we work wholeheartedly.” (FK, 2nd Engineer, 36 years old).

This statement illustrates the transformation of compliance from formal, control based compliance to compliance rooted in moral values and ethical awareness. Companies that implement HR policies based on fairness, transparency, and wellbeing

have a significant impact on shaping the ethical behavior of crew members. When crew members perceive a balance between work demands and concern for their human wellbeing, values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility naturally develop as expressions of trust and loyalty to the organization.

“In the past, many people pretended to fill their breaks. Now, after ethics and safety awareness training, we understand better why honesty is important. The captain doesn't get angry when he says he's tired.”(NA, Deck Cadet, 25 years old).

The quote above shows that ongoing values based training programs play a crucial role in strengthening ethical understanding among seafarers. Seafarers' willingness to admit weaknesses, communicate honestly, and respect physical limits demonstrates the emergence of a more open and respectful work culture. In this context, HR plays the role of a values facilitator, not only ensuring administrative compliance with regulations but also creating space for moral reflection for individuals and teams.

These findings demonstrate that work ethics is not simply the result of implementing regulations, but rather a product of synergy between the legal system and the HR system. Law provides the external normative structure that regulates safety standards and labor rights, while HR serves as the internal moral engine that instills the values of responsibility, solidarity, and honesty in daily work activities. The integration of the two creates a new form of compliance called ethical compliance, namely compliance driven by moral awareness, rather than merely procedural compliance.

Proposition 3: The integration of the legal system and human resource governance creates a form of ethical compliance, where seafarers obey the rules out of moral awareness, not structural coercion.

This analysis aligns with Bhattacharya's (2012) view, which asserts that safety and work ethics in the maritime sector cannot be maintained solely through formal legal instruments, but rather through moral commitment and a supportive organizational culture. Karakasnaki (2024) adds that ethical leadership and green HRM can strengthen social values within an organization, enabling individuals to work not only to meet targets but also to maintain the dignity of their profession and the common good. Thus, the synergy between law and human resources produces a sustainable work ethic, where compliance and moral awareness are two sides of a single value chain. Laws enforced with a humanistic approach, and human resources managed with an ethical perspective, will foster a maritime work culture that is fair, safe, and dignified.

Proposition 4: An ethical and sustainable maritime work culture is formed through the synergy between a firm legal system and a humanistic human resource system, which together foster collective moral awareness.

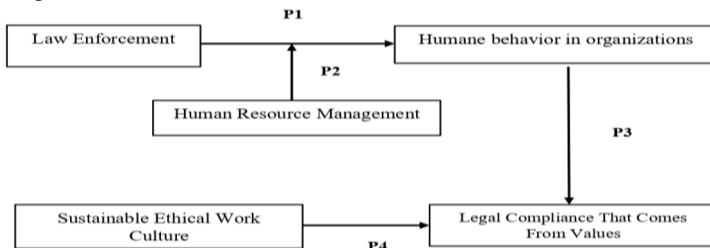


Figure 1. Dynamic model of Maritime Law Enforcement, Human Resource (HR) Governance, and Work Ethics in the Shipping Industry.

Based on the results of the thematic analysis and the formulated propositions, this study produces a conceptual model that illustrates the dynamic relationship between maritime law enforcement, human resource (HR) governance, and the formation of work ethics in the context of the shipping industry. This model demonstrates that the effectiveness of maritime law enforcement is determined not only by the strength of regulations but also by the ability of the HR system to internalize ethical values into organizational behavior.

The synthesis of this research's findings confirms that law enforcement in the maritime context cannot be separated from the quality of human resource governance oriented toward human values. This finding reinforces Bhattacharya's (2012) view that the effectiveness of implementing the International Safety Management (ISM) Code depends on the internalization of safety and fairness values in crew behavior, not solely on procedural compliance. Similarly, Chang and Khan (2023) explain that the 2006 Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) positions compliance with legal standards as part of the advancement of human rights at sea. Thus, the integration of the legal system and human resource governance creates a pattern of compliance rooted in ethical awareness, not fear of sanctions. This research model demonstrates that when law enforcement is implemented through the principles of justice, transparency, and respect for human dignity, humane behavior within the organization develops as a moral response to a fair and trustworthy system.

Furthermore, the research findings also demonstrate that human resource governance that integrates sustainability principles and human values contributes to the formation of a consistent ethical work culture. This aligns with the ideas of Ugrinov, Čockalo, and Bakator (2025) on Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM), which emphasizes the balance between regulatory compliance and the internalization of sustainability values in maritime organizational practices. In a similar context, Boström and Österman (2022) highlight that clarity of values and the courage of crew members in facing injustice are the foundation for creating an ethical and healthy work environment. This synthesis reinforces the proposition that legal compliance rooted in values is not merely the result of external enforcement, but rather a manifestation of moral awareness that grows through fair and supportive human resource governance. Thus, a sustainable ethical work culture is formed as a logical consequence of the interaction between a strong legal system, fair human resource governance, and human behavior based on human values.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the effectiveness of maritime law enforcement is strongly influenced by the quality of human resource (HR) governance based on the values of humanity, justice, and sustainability. The analysis shows that formalistic law enforcement only results in administrative compliance if it is not accompanied by an ethical and participatory HR governance system. Conversely, when maritime legal regulations are internalized through humanistic HR policies, values based training, and consistent moral communication, a new form of compliance emerges that stems from ethical awareness, rather than structural pressures. The integration of the legal system and HR governance creates a synergy that forms a sustainable ethical work culture, where seafarers comply with the rules out of a sense of moral responsibility for the

safety, justice, and dignity of the profession. Thus, law and HR function as two mutually reinforcing systems: law provides the external normative structure, while HR serves as the internal moral engine that ensures legal values are realized in concrete behavior. The conceptual model generated by this study confirms that the success of the legal system in the maritime sector lies not in the strictness of sanctions, but in its ability to build collective awareness through just, transparent, and value-oriented HR governance. These findings are supported by ethical leadership and Sustainable Human Resource Management theories, which emphasize the importance of moral role models, employee wellbeing, and humanitarian values in human resource governance (Karakasnaki, 2024; Ceresia, 2025). These findings also align with the human centered safety culture approach, which places humans at the center of a culture of safety and sustainable work compliance (Ugrinov et al., 2025; Theotokas et al., 2024). Therefore, the effectiveness of maritime law requires an integration of regulatory and humanistic approaches in human resource management.

Suggestion based on the results of this study include the need for greater synergy between maritime law enforcement agencies, shipping companies, and HR units in building a compliance system that is values oriented, not merely administrative. Maritime ethics training programs need to be continuously integrated into HR policies, with an emphasis on moral awareness, crew welfare, and organizational fairness. Furthermore, audit and inspection systems should not only assess compliance documents but also evaluate the behavioral dimensions and work culture on board. A humanistic approach to HR governance, which prioritizes empathy, moral communication, and psychological support, will strengthen the effectiveness of maritime law and foster an ethical and sustainable work culture in the shipping industry.

This research is limited by its context and methods. Data were obtained from a number of shipping companies and manning agencies in Indonesia, so the findings are more reflective of national conditions and may not necessarily represent global practices in the shipping industry. Furthermore, the qualitative approach with a limited number of participants makes the research results interpretive and not broadly generalizable. Access to internal company documents also depends on management permission, so certain dimensions such as power dynamics, gender, and ethical leadership practices may not be fully captured.

Future research is recommended to broaden the context of the study by conducting comparative studies across countries or across types of shipping companies to understand variations in the implementation of human resource governance and maritime law enforcement within different cultural and regulatory frameworks. A mixed methods approach can be used to combine in depth qualitative analysis with broader quantitative validation. Furthermore, it is important to delve deeper into the role of ethical leadership, gender experiences, and the influence of digital management in shaping seafarers' compliance and work ethics to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how the synergy of law and human resource governance can create an ethical and sustainable maritime work culture.

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