Future Seafarers: Harnessing STCW-Compliant Training Innovations for Indonesia's Global Maritime Leadership

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Abstrak

Industri maritim global menghadapi krisis tenaga kerja, dengan perkiraan kekurangan 89.000 awak kapal pada tahun 2026 dan tingkat pergantian tenaga kerja sebesar 15% per tahun. Di Indonesia, negara kepulauan terbesar di dunia yang bercita-cita menjadi pusat maritim global, tantangan meliputi rendahnya sertifikasi internasional (hanya 400.000 awak kapal dibandingkan dengan 4 juta dari Filipina) dan keterbatasan pelatihan berbasis teknologi, dengan hanya 25% dari 50 politeknik maritim yang dilengkapi dengan simulator. Untuk mengatasi krisis ini, bab ini mengkaji solusi pelatihan inovatif yang sesuai dengan STCW—simulator realitas virtual (VR), program bahasa Inggris maritim, dan platform e-learning digital. Mengacu pada data empiris dari laporan industri (misalnya BIMCO, UNCTAD) dan kebijakan Indonesia (misalnya Peraturan Presiden No. 34 Tahun 2022), bab ini menganalisis implementasi pelatihan di politeknik seperti Surabaya dan Batam serta kolaborasi global dengan Singapura. Temuan menunjukkan pelatihan VR meningkatkan kompetensi pelaut sebesar 25% dan mengurangi kecelakaan sebesar 20%, sementara e-learning meningkatkan akses di daerah terpencil sebesar 40%. Pelatihan bahasa Inggris maritim mengatasi kegagalan komunikasi yang terkait dengan 70% insiden. Rekomendasi meliputi investasi $5 juta dalam simulator VR, memperluas kemitraan IMO-Singapura untuk melatih 1.000 pelaut hingga 2026, dan mengintegrasikan teknologi ke dalam kurikulum untuk mendukung visi Indonesia sebagai pusat maritim global hingga Mei 2030.

Kata Kunci: Krisis Tenaga Kerja, Pelatihan, Simulator, Maritime English, E-Learning

Abstract

The global maritime industry faces a talent crisis, with a projected shortage of 89,000 seafarers by 2026 and a 15% annual turnover rate. In Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation aiming to become a global maritime hub, challenges include low international certification (only 400,000 seafarers compared to 4 million from the Philippines) and limited technology-based training, with only 25% of 50 maritime polytechnics equipped with simulators. To address the crisis, this chapter examines innovative, STCW-compliant training solutions—virtual reality (VR) simulators, maritime English programs, and digital e-learning platforms. Drawing on empirical data from industry reports (e.g., BIMCO, UNCTAD) and Indonesian policies (e.g., Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022), it analyzes training implementation in polytechnics like Surabaya and Batam alongside global collaborations with Singapore. Findings show VR training enhances seafarer competency by 25% and reduces accidents by 20%, while e-learning increases access in remote areas by 40%. Maritime English training addresses communication failures linked to 70% of incidents. Recommendations include investing $5 million in VR simulators, expanding IMO-Singapore partnerships to train 1,000 seafarers by 2026, and integrating technology into curricula to support Indonesia's maritime hub vision by May 2030.

Keywords: Talent Crisis, Training, Simulator, Maritime English, E-Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry is the backbone of global trade, facilitating over 80% of world trade volume through sea routes, equivalent to approximately 11 billion tons of goods annually (UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). This critical sector supports the global economy by efficiently transporting raw materials, manufactured goods, and energy resources across continents. However, the industry faces a pressing challenge: a global maritime talent crisis characterized by a looming shortage of qualified seafarers and persistently high turnover rates. According to the BIMCO/ICS Seafarer Workforce Report, the world could face a shortfall of 89,000 seafarers by 2026 if current trends continue, driven by an ageing workforce, declining interest among younger generations, and increasing operational complexities (BIMCO/ICS, 2021). This crisis threatens the sustainability of maritime operations, with potential disruptions to global supply chains and economic stability.

In Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation with over 17,000 islands and a strategic position straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the talent crisis is particularly acute. Indonesia aspires to become a global maritime hub, a vision articulated by President Joko Widodo as the Poros Maritim Dunia (Global Maritime Fulcrum). This ambition is supported by policies such as Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022, which outlines a strategic action plan for maritime development through 2025 (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022). However, Indonesia's maritime human resources lag significantly behind global competitors. Only 400,000 Indonesian seafarers are active in the international market, starkly contrasting the 4 million from the Philippines and 1.2 million from India (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017). This gap is compounded by an 11.24% unemployment rate among maritime vocational graduates in 2018, with 60% failing to meet international certification standards due to inadequate training. These statistics highlight a critical mismatch between Indonesia's maritime aspirations and the current state of its seafarer workforce.

The Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), provide the global benchmark for seafarer training, certification, and watchkeeping. Updated through the 2010 Manila Amendments, STCW mandates competencies in technical skills (e.g., navigation, engine operations) and non-technical skills (e.g., safety management, cross-cultural communication) to ensure safe and efficient maritime operations (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). Despite its global adoption, Indonesia's implementation of STCW-compliant training faces significant hurdles. Only 25% of the country's 50 maritime polytechnics are equipped with modern training facilities, such as navigation simulators, and many instructors lack experience on contemporary vessels (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023; Setiawan, 2021). Outdated pedagogical approaches and limited access to technology-based training exacerbate the challenge, leaving Indonesian seafarers less competitive in the global market.

Several interconnected factors drive the global maritime talent crisis. First, the ageing seafarer workforce is a significant concern, with 27% of seafarers projected to retire by 2030 (BIMCO/ICS, 2021). Second, the industry struggles to attract younger generations due to perceptions of harsh working conditions, long periods away from home, and limited career progression. Third, the advent of Industry 4.0 technologies, such as Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), electronic navigation systems (e.g., ECDIS), and AI-based predictive maintenance, demands new skill sets that traditional training programs often fail to address (Jovic, M., 2022). These technologies have increased operational efficiency by up to 15% but require seafarers to master complex digital tools, a notably pronounced gap in developing nations like Indonesia (Zhao, 2022).

In Indonesia, additional local challenges compound the global crisis. The high unemployment rate among maritime graduates (11.24% in 2018) reflects a disconnect between educational curricula and industry needs. For instance, (Nurseyid, 2020) found that many maritime academies in Indonesia rely on outdated curricula that do not incorporate STCW-mandated competencies, such as Bridge Resource Management (BRM) or Crew Resource Management (CRM). Furthermore, only 40% of Indonesian seafarers possess adequate maritime English proficiency, a critical skill for international operations, contributing to communication-related incidents, which account for 70% of maritime accidents (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023; Zhang, 2022). Infrastructure limitations are another barrier, with only 12 of 50 maritime polytechnics equipped with VR simulators as of 2024, limiting training capacity to 200–500 students per institution annually (Setiawan, 2021).

The Indonesian government has recognized these challenges and taken steps to address them. Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022 outlines 10 programs for developing maritime human resource competencies, including training for 309–453 personnel in the Marine and Fisheries Police Corps (KorPolairud) and the adoption of technology-based training platforms like the HR Development Command Center (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022; Antara News, 2023). International collaborations, such as the February 2025 MoU with Singapore, have also facilitated training for 300 Indonesian seafarers in advanced simulator facilities, achieving an 85% satisfaction rate (MPA, 2025). These initiatives demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to enhancing its maritime workforce, but significant gaps remain in scaling these efforts to meet global demand.

This chapter explores innovative, STCW-aligned training solutions to address the maritime talent crisis, focusing on Indonesia's context as of May 2030. Specifically, it examines three key innovations: (1) virtual reality (VR) simulators, which enhance navigational and operational skills by up to 25% and reduce accidents by 20% (Chen, 2022); (2) maritime English and non-technical skills training, addressing the 70% of incidents linked to communication failures (Zhang, 2022); and (3) digital e-learning platforms, which increase training access in remote areas by 40% (Li, 2023). These innovations are critical for preparing Indonesian seafarers to compete in the global market, where demand for skilled professionals is growing amid technological and environmental transitions, such as the shift to net-zero shipping (Zhao, 2022).

The chapter also analyses the implementation of these innovations in Indonesian maritime polytechnics, such as those in Surabaya and Batam, where simulator adoption has increased STCW compliance to 80% among graduates (Setiawan, 2021). By leveraging empirical data from industry reports, government policies, and academic studies, the chapter comprehensively assesses how Indonesia can bridge the talent gap. It concludes with actionable recommendations, including increased investment in training infrastructure, expanded global partnerships, and curriculum reforms to align with Industry 4.0 and STCW standards. By addressing these challenges, Indonesia can enhance the competitiveness of its seafarers, strengthen its position as a global maritime hub, and contribute to the sustainability of the maritime industry by May 2030.

The global maritime talent crisis has been a central research focus over the past five years, driven by a growing mismatch between seafarer supply and demand. (BIMCO/ICS, 2021) report that the maritime industry faces a projected shortage of 89,000 seafarers by 2026, with a 15% annual turnover rate attributed to an ageing workforce, where 27% of seafarers are expected to retire by 2030 and declining interest among younger generations due to perceptions of challenging working conditions (BIMCO/ICS, 2021). This crisis threatens the sustainability of global trade, which relies on maritime transport for over 80% of its volume, equivalent to 11 billion annually (UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). The increasing complexity of maritime operations, driven by digitalization and environmental regulations, further exacerbates the demand for skilled seafarers (Jovic, M., 2022).

Digitalization, particularly the adoption of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) and advanced navigation systems like the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS), has transformed the skill requirements for seafarers. (Jovic, M., 2022) highlight that traditional training programs often fail to address these advanced technological skills, leaving seafarers unprepared for modern vessels equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. For instance, AI-based predictive maintenance can improve fuel efficiency by 10% but requires seafarers to analyse complex data, a skill not adequately covered in conventional curricula (Zhao, 2022). The Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) updated through the 2010 Manila Amendments, provide a global framework for seafarer training, emphasizing both technical skills (e.g., navigation, engine operations) and non-technical skills (e.g., safety management, cross-cultural communication) (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). However, the implementation of STCW standards varies widely, particularly in developing nations, where infrastructure and pedagogical limitations hinder progress (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023).

The maritime talent crisis is particularly pronounced in Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation with ambitions to become a global maritime hub. (Nurseyid, 2020) note that maritime education curricula often fail to align with industry needs, resulting in unemployable graduates. For example, 60% of maritime vocational graduates 2018 did not meet STCW certification standards, contributing to an 11.24% unemployment rate among them, (Nurseyid, 2020; Setiawan, 2021) found that only 30% of Indonesia's 50 maritime academies have STCW-compliant simulator facilities, limiting practical training opportunities to approximately 200–500 students per institution annually. This infrastructure gap is a significant barrier to producing globally competitive seafarers, with Indonesia contributing only 400,000 seafarers to the international market compared to 4 million from the Philippines (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017).

Global collaborations have emerged as a critical strategy to address these gaps. The Indonesia-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), extended in February 2025, has facilitated access to advanced training facilities, with 300 Indonesian seafarers trained in Singapore's simulator centres, achieving an 85% satisfaction rate (MPA, 2025). Such partnerships highlight the potential of international cooperation to enhance STCW-compliant training. Additionally, technological innovations are transforming maritime education. (Chen, 2022) demonstrate that virtual reality (VR)-based training enhances seafarer competency by 25% and reduces maritime accidents by 20%, particularly in navigation and crisis management scenarios. Similarly, (Li, 2023) report that e-learning platforms increase training access in remote areas by 40%, a critical factor for Indonesia's 17,000 islands, where traditional training centres are often inaccessible (Li, 2023).

Non-technical skills, particularly maritime English proficiency and crew resource management (CRM), are equally vital. (Zhang, 2022) found that 70% of marine incidents are linked to communication failures, with non-anglophone seafarers, including many from Indonesia, struggling to meet STCW language requirements. Only 40% of Indonesian seafarers have adequate maritime English proficiency, limiting their employability on international vessels (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023). (Yang, 2021) emphasize that CRM training, which focuses on teamwork and crisis management, improves operational safety by 30%. Recent initiatives, such as Indonesia's HR Development

Command Center, have trained 1,500 seafarers via e-learning platforms in 2023, demonstrating the potential of digital solutions to scale STCW-compliant training (Antara News, 2023). Furthermore, (Wang, 2023) highlights the cost-effectiveness of VR simulators, which cost $50,000 per unit compared to $200,000 for conventional simulators, making them a viable option for resource-constrained institutions.

These findings provide a robust foundation for developing innovative, STCW-compliant training strategies. By integrating advanced technologies like VR and e-learning, enhancing non-technical skills, and leveraging global partnerships, Indonesia can address its maritime talent crisis and align with its *Poros Maritim Dunia* vision. The literature underscores the need for a holistic approach that combines technological innovation with pedagogical reform to prepare seafarers for the demands of the global maritime industry by May 2030.

2. METHOD

The global maritime talent crisis has been a central research focus over the past five years, driven by a growing mismatch between seafarer supply and demand. (BIMCO/ICS, 2021) report that the maritime industry faces a projected shortage of 89,000 seafarers by 2026, with a 15% annual turnover rate attributed to an ageing workforce, where 27% of seafarers are expected to retire by 2030 and declining interest among younger generations due to perceptions of challenging working conditions (BIMCO/ICS, 2021). This crisis threatens the sustainability of global trade, which relies on maritime transport for over 80% of its volume, equivalent to 11 billion annually (UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). The increasing complexity of maritime operations, driven by digitalization and environmental regulations, further exacerbates the demand for skilled seafarers (Jovic, M., 2022).

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The maritime talent crisis is particularly pronounced in Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation with ambitions to become a global maritime hub. (Nurseyid, 2020) note that maritime education curricula often fail to align with industry needs, resulting in unemployable graduates. For example, 60% of maritime vocational graduates 2018 did not meet STCW certification standards, contributing to an 11.24% unemployment rate among them, (Nurseyid, 2020; Setiawan, 2021) found that only 30% of Indonesia's 50 maritime academies have STCW-compliant simulator facilities, limiting practical training opportunities to approximately 200–500 students per institution annually. This infrastructure gap is a significant barrier to producing globally competitive seafarers, with Indonesia contributing only 400,000 seafarers to the international market compared to 4 million from the Philippines (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017).

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3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The global maritime talent crisis poses a significant challenge to the maritime industry, facilitating over 80% of international trade, equivalent to 11 billion tons of goods annually (UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). In Indonesia, a nation with over 17,000 islands and ambitions to become a global maritime hub (Poros Maritim Dunia), the crisis is particularly acute due to low international certification rates, outdated training infrastructure, and high unemployment among maritime graduates. This section analyzes the context of the talent crisis in Indonesia, explores STCW-compliant training innovations, and presents a case study of their implementation in Indonesian maritime polytechnics, supported by empirical data and recent policy developments as of May 29, 2025.

3.1 Context of the Maritime Talent Crisis in Indonesia

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation with over 17,000 islands, is strategically positioned in global maritime trade, facilitating over 80% of world trade volume through its sea routes (UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). Yet, the country faces a significant maritime talent crisis that undermines its ambition to become a global maritime hub (*Poros Maritim Dunia*), as envisioned by President Joko Widodo. Empirical data reveal that Indonesia lags in global seafarer supply, with only 400,000 seafarers active internationally compared to 4 million from the Philippines and 1.2 million from India (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017). This gap reflects systemic challenges in training and certification, positioning Indonesia as a minor player in the global maritime workforce despite its geographic advantage.

A critical issue is the high unemployment rate among maritime vocational graduates, which reached 11.24% in 2018, significantly above the national average. Approximately 60% of these graduates fail to meet the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) standards, primarily due to inadequate training facilities and outdated curricula (Nurseyid, 2020). The STCW, established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), mandates competencies in navigation, engine operations, and non-technical skills like safety management (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). However, only 25% of Indonesia's 50 maritime polytechnics are equipped with technology-based training facilities, such as navigation simulators, limiting practical training to 200–500 students per institution annually (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023). This infrastructure deficit restricts the production of STCW-certified seafarers, exacerbating unemployment and underemployment.

High turnover rates, estimated at 15% annually, further compound the crisis, Poor working conditions, including long periods at sea, low wages compared to global standards, and limited career development opportunities, drive seafarers to leave the profession or seek employment abroad, often in non-maritime sectors. Additionally, only 40% of Indonesian seafarers possess adequate maritime English proficiency, a key STCW requirement, contributing to communication failures linked to 70% of marine incidents (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023;Zhang, 2022). The rapid adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies, such as AI-based predictive maintenance and Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), demands advanced skills that most Indonesian seafarers lack, further widening the competency gap (Jovic, M., 2022).

Government initiatives, such as Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022, aim to address these challenges by outlining 10 maritime human resource development programs, including technology-based training for 309–453 personnel (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022). However, implementation is hindered by limited funding and a shortage of qualified instructors, with 60% lacking experience on modern vessels (Nurseyid, 2020). These challenges highlight the urgent need for innovative, STCW-compliant training solutions to enhance Indonesia's seafarer competitiveness and support its maritime hub vision by May 2030.

3.2 STCW-Compliant Training Innovations: VR-Based Simulator Training

To address Indonesia's maritime talent crisis, training programs must align with the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), which mandate competencies in technical skills like navigation and non-technical skills like Bridge Resource Management (BRM), as outlined in the 2010 Manila Amendments (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). Virtual reality (VR)-based simulator training is a key innovation to enhance seafarer competency, offering immersive, safe environments to practice complex scenarios. This approach is critical for Indonesia, where only 400,000 seafarers are active internationally compared to 4 million from the Philippines, and 60% of maritime vocational graduates fail to meet STCW standards (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017; Nurseyid, 2020).

VR simulators enable seafarers to train in realistic conditions, such as navigating extreme weather, managing engine failures, or coordinating emergency responses, without real-world risks. (Chen, 2022) report that VR training improves navigational competency by 25% and reduces maritime accidents by 20%, as it allows the repeated practice of high-stakes scenarios that enhance decision-making under pressure. In Indonesia, the adoption of VR technology is limited. The Semarang State Maritime Polytechnic, one of the country's leading institutions, operates only two navigation simulators, serving just 200 of 1,000 students annually due to capacity constraints (Setiawan, 2021). Nationally, only 12 of 50 maritime polytechnics have VR simulators as of 2024, restricting access to STCW-compliant practical training (Setiawan, 2021).

VR simulators are cost-effective compared to traditional systems. A VR unit costs $50,000, significantly less than the $200,000 required for conventional simulators, and can train up to 500 students annually compared to 200 (Wang, 2023). This scalability is vital for Indonesia's 17,000 islands, where training infrastructure is unevenly distributed. Proposed strategies to expand VR-based training include:

a. Developing 20 additional low-cost VR simulators by 2025, funded through the $5 million allocated under Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022, which prioritizes maritime human resource development (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022).
b. Integrating STCW-mandated modules, such as BRM and Engine Room Resource Management (ERM), into VR training to enhance teamwork and operational efficiency, aligning with global standards (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020).
c. Partnering with state-owned shipping companies like Pelindo to finance 10 new simulators across polytechnics in Surabaya, Batam, and Manado, potentially increasing training capacity by 50% (Setiawan, 2021).
d. Collaborating with Singapore, leveraging the February 2025 MoU, to train 300 additional Indonesian seafarers in advanced VR facilities, building on the 85% satisfaction rate achieved in prior programs (MPA, 2025).

Maritime English and Non-Technical Skills Training

STCW emphasizes non-technical skills, such as cross-cultural communication and crisis management, which are critical for international ship operations. Notably, 70% of marine incidents stem from communication failures, with non-anglophone seafarers struggling to meet STCW standards. Only 40% of seafarers in Indonesia have adequate maritime English proficiency. Innovations include:

a. AI-based mobile apps for maritime English training cost $10,000 to develop and reach 10,000 seafarers annually.
b. Role-playing simulations for Crew Resource Management (CRM), improving teamwork by 30%.
c. Online non-technical skills training, as implemented by Singapore Maritime Academy, increasing STCW compliance by 15%.

Digital and E-Learning Platforms

Industry 4.0 demands proficiency in technologies like Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) and AI-based predictive maintenance. report that e-learning enhances training access in remote areas by 40%, which is critical for Indonesia's 17,000 islands. The Ministry of Marine Affairs HR Development Command Centre trained 1,500 seafarers via e-learning in 2023. Strategies include:

a. STCW-based e-learning courses for safety training cost $5 per student compared to $50 for in-person training.
b. AI training for operational data analysis, improving fuel efficiency by 10%.
c. Partnerships with platforms like Coursera to deliver STCW courses, reaching 5,000 Indonesian seafarers annually.

3.3 Case Study: Indonesian Maritime Polytechnics

Indonesia's 50 maritime polytechnics are critical to addressing the maritime talent crisis, which sees the country lagging with only 400,000 seafarers active internationally compared to 4 million from the Philippines (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017). As of May 29, 2025, only 25% of these institutions have technology-based training facilities, such as navigation simulators, limiting their capacity to produce seafarers meeting Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) standards(ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023). Despite these challenges, several polytechnics have implemented innovative training programs, demonstrating the potential to enhance seafarer competitiveness and support Indonesia's ambition to become a global maritime hub (*Poros Maritim Dunia*).

The Surabaya State Maritime Polytechnic, one of Indonesia's largest, trains 1,200 students annually. Since adopting navigation simulators in 2022, 80% of its graduates have met STCW standards, a significant improvement from the 60% national average where many graduates fail due to inadequate training (Setiawan, 2021;Nurseyid, 2020). The simulators enable practical navigation and Bridge Resource Management (BRM) training, aligning with STCW's 2010 Manila Amendments (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). However, capacity constraints limit access, with only 300 students utilizing the simulators annually, highlighting the need for expanded infrastructure (Setiawan, 2021).

In Batam, maritime English training has proven transformative. A program leveraging AI-based mobile apps increased the number of STCW-certified seafarers from 500 in 2020 to 800 in 2024, a 60% growth (Antara News, 2023). This addresses a critical gap, as only 40% of Indonesian seafarers meet STCW's maritime English proficiency requirements, contributing to communication failures linked to 70% of marine incidents (ILO (International Labour

Organization), 2023;Zhang, 2022). The program's success is attributed to its scalability, costing $10,000 to develop and reaching 1,000 seafarers annually, offering a model for other polytechnics (Li, 2023).

International collaboration has further bolstered training efforts. The Indonesia-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), extended in February 2025, enabled 300 Indonesian seafarers to train in Singapore's advanced virtual reality (VR) simulator facilities, achieving an 85% satisfaction rate and full STCW compliance (MPA, 2025). VR training enhances competency by 25% and reduces accidents by 20%, making it a vital tool for modern maritime education (Chen, 2022). This partnership, supported by Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022, underscores the value of global cooperation in addressing Indonesia's infrastructure gaps (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022).

Despite these successes, challenges persist. Only 12 polytechnics have VR simulators, and 60% of instructors lack experience on modern vessels, limiting training quality (Setiawan, 2021;Nurseyid, 2020)Funding remains a barrier, with VR simulators costing $50,000 per unit (Wang, 2023). Scaling solutions include leveraging the $5 million allocated under Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022 to install 20 additional simulators, training 500 instructors through IMO partnerships by 2026, and expanding e-learning to reach 10,000 seafarers annually (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022;Antara News, 2023). These efforts can position Indonesia's polytechnics as leaders in STCW-compliant training by May 2030.

3.4 Implementation Challenges

Despite the promise of STCW-compliant training innovations like virtual reality (VR) simulators, maritime English programs, and e-learning platforms, significant challenges hinder their implementation in Indonesia's maritime polytechnics, critical for addressing the talent crisis where only 400,000 seafarers are active internationally compared to 4 million from the Philippines (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017). As of May 29, 2025, these barriers threaten Indonesia's ambition to become a global maritime hub (*Poros Maritim Dunia*). Below, three key challenges and proposed solutions are discussed and supported by empirical data.

Infrastructure Limitations: Only 12 of Indonesia's 50 maritime polytechnics have VR simulators as of 2024, restricting access to STCW-mandated practical training in navigation and Bridge Resource Management (BRM) (Setiawan, 2021). With only 25% of polytechnics equipped with technology-based facilities, training capacity is limited to 200–500 students per institution annually, far below the demand to produce STCW-certified seafarers (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023). This gap contributes to the 60% of maritime vocational graduates who fail to meet STCW standards, exacerbating the 11.24% unemployment rate among them (Nurseyid, 2020). **Proposed Solution:** Allocate $5 million from Presidential Regulation No. 34 of 2022, which prioritizes maritime human resource development, to purchase 20 additional VR simulators by 2025, increasing training capacity by 50% across polytechnics like Surabaya and Batam (Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2021-2025, 2022;Setiawan, 2021).

Lack of Qualified Instructors: Approximately 60% of maritime educators lack operational experience on modern vessels equipped with Industry 4.0 technologies like AI-based predictive maintenance or Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS), undermining training quality (Nurseyid, 2020). This deficiency limits the effective delivery of STCW-compliant curricula, particularly for non-technical skills like Crew Resource Management (CRM) (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2020). **Proposed Solution:** Implement International Maritime Organization (IMO)-led instructor training programs, targeting 500 educators by 2026. These programs, modelled after Singapore's successful initiatives, can enhance instructor competency in VR and digital training methods, ensuring alignment with STCW standards (MPA, 2025). Partnerships with global maritime academies can facilitate knowledge transfer, as demonstrated by the 85% satisfaction rate in the 2025 Indonesia-Singapore MoU (MPA, 2025).

High Costs: VR simulators, while cost-effective compared to conventional units, still require $50,000 per unit, a significant investment for resource-constrained polytechnics (Wang, 2023). Developing AI-based maritime English apps and e-learning platforms also incurs costs, estimated at $10,000 and $50,000, respectively (Li, 2023). **Proposed Solution:** Forge partnerships with state-owned shipping companies like Pelindo and international firms to fund e-learning and simulator initiatives. For instance, Pelindo's investment in 10 simulators could train 5,000 additional seafarers annually, while e-learning partnerships with platforms like Coursera can reduce per-student costs from $50 to $5, reaching 10,000 seafarers by 2026 (Setiawan, 2021;Antara News, 2023).

These solutions, leveraging policy support and global collaboration, can overcome implementation challenges and ensure that Indonesia's polytechnics produce competitive, STCW-certified seafarers by May 2030.

4. CONCLUSION

The global maritime talent crisis, characterized by a projected shortage of 89,000 seafarers by 2026 and a 15% annual turnover rate, poses a significant threat to the maritime industry, which underpins over 80% of global trade (BIMCO/ICS, 2021;UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), 2023). In Indonesia, where only 400,000 seafarers are active internationally compared to 4 million from the Philippines, this crisis is exacerbated by low Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) compliance, outdated infrastructure, and an 11.3% unemployment rate among maritime graduates (Budi Karya Sumadi, 2017). However, STCW-compliant training

innovations—virtual reality (VR) simulators, maritime English programs, and digital e-learning platforms—offer transformative solutions to enhance seafarer competitiveness and support Indonesia's ambition to become a global maritime hub (*Poros Maritim Dunia*).

VR-based simulators have proven highly effective, improving navigational competency by 25% and reducing maritime accidents by 20% by providing immersive training in navigation and Bridge Resource Management (BRM) (Chen, 2022). In Indonesia, the Surabaya State Maritime Polytechnic's adoption of simulators since 2022 has enabled 80% of its 1,250 students to meet STCW standards, a model for other institutions (Setiawan, 2023). Maritime English programs address a critical gap, as only 34% of Indonesian seafarers meet STCW language requirements, contributing to communication failures linked to 70% of incidents (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023;Zhang, 2022). The Batam Maritime Academy's AI-based mobile app increased certified seafarers by 60%, from 500 to 800, between 2020 and 2024, demonstrating scalability (Antara News, 2024). E-learning platforms have also enhanced training efficiency, increasing access by 40% in remote areas and reducing costs from $10 to $5 per student, with the HR Development Command Center training 1,800 seafarers in 2024 (Li, 2023;Antara News, 2025).

Robust government policies and international collaboration bolster these innovations. Presidential Regulation No. 15 of 2025, an updated framework from the 2022 version, allocates $10 million to expand maritime training infrastructure, including 20 new VR simulators across 50 polytechnics (Updated Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2025-2030., 2025). The Indonesia-Singapore MoU, renewed in February 2025, trained 350 seafarers in advanced facilities, achieving an 85% satisfaction rate and full STCW compliance (MPA, 2025). These efforts have increased Indonesia's certified seafarers by 12% since 2020, positioning the nation to address the talent crisis effectively (Antara News, 2024). By May 29, 2025, Indonesia has a unique opportunity to lead maritime human resource development in Southeast Asia through a holistic approach. Continued investment in VR and e-learning technologies, coupled with teacher training for 80% of the 600 instructors lacking modern vessel experience, can bridge the competency gap (Nurseyid, 2020). Scaling global partnerships, such as with the IMO to train 1,200 seafarers annually by 2027, will further enhance Indonesia's maritime prowess, ensuring a sustainable, competitive workforce that supports the *Poros Maritim Dunia* vision and global trade resilience (IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2024).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address Indonesia's maritime talent crisis and support its Poros Maritim Dunia vision, the following STCW-compliant training recommendations are proposed. They leverage technology and global partnerships to enhance seafarer competitiveness by May 29, 2025.

Allocate $10 Million for VR Simulators: The government should increase its 2025 budget allocation to $10 million, up from $5 million, under Presidential Regulation No. 15 of 2025, to acquire 20 virtual reality (VR) simulators for maritime polytechnics (Updated Action Plan for Indonesia's Maritime Policy 2025-2030., 2025). Costing $50,000 per unit, these simulators can train 500 students annually, compared to 200 with conventional systems, improving navigational competency by 25% and reducing accidents by 20% (Wang, 2023;Chen, 2022). This investment targets polytechnics in Surabaya, Batam, and Manado, addressing the 75% of institutions lacking modern facilities (ILO (International Labour Organization), 2023).

Integrate STCW Modules into E-Learning: Maritime institutions must embed STCW modules, including Bridge Resource Management (BRM) and maritime English, into e-learning platforms, targeting 10,000 seafarers annually by 2026. E-learning reduces costs from $50 to $5 per student and increases access by 40% in remote areas, as demonstrated by the HR Development Command Center's training of 1,800 seafarers in 2024 (Li, 2023;Antara News, 2024). Platforms like Coursera can scale delivery, building on Surabaya's pilot reaching 5,000 students (Setiawan, 2021).

Expand IMO and Singapore Collaborations: Indonesia should deepen partnerships with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Singapore to train 1,200 seafarers by 2027, up from 1,000 by 2026. The February 2025 Indonesia-Singapore MoU trained 350 seafarers with an 85% satisfaction rate, offering a model for scaling (MPA, 2025). IMO-led programs can also train 500 instructors, addressing the 60% lacking modern vessel experience (Nurseyid, 2020;IMO (International Maritime Organization), 2024).

Fund Non-Technical Skills Training: Shipping companies, such as Pelindo, should invest $2 million annually to fund non-technical skills training, including Crew Resource Management (CRM), to improve seafarer retention by 10%. CRM enhances teamwork by 30%, critical as 70% of incidents stem from communication failures (Yang, 2021)(Zhang, 2022). This can reduce the 15% turnover rate.

Develop AI-Based Maritime English Apps: Invest $100,000 to develop AI-based mobile apps for maritime English, targeting 20,000 users by 2026. Batam's app increased certified seafarers by 60% (500 to 800) from 2020–2024, addressing the 34% proficiency rate(Antara News, 2024;ILO (International Labour Organization), 2025). These apps ensure STCW compliance and global employability.

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