

Social Sustainability of the Maritime Workforce at Jakarta Maritime Academy: Perceptions of Cadets, Lecturers, and Veteran Officers

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Abstract

Social sustainability within maritime educational institutions represents a critical yet underexplored dimension of workforce development, particularly in archipelagic nations such as Indonesia. This study investigates social sustainability perceptions among key stakeholders at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP) Jakarta, encompassing cadets from three majors, former seafarer-lecturers, veteran officers, management lecturers, industry practitioners, and former senior transportation officials. Employing a qualitative multi-stakeholder methodology with thematic analysis and cross-group comparisons, data were gathered from 71 respondents. Findings reveal a moderately positive overall sustainability profile, with community and peer relations rated highest and participatory governance scoring lowest. Veteran officers and seafarer-lecturers consistently report lower institutional satisfaction, revealing systemic gaps in recognizing transitional maritime professionals. The study contributes a stakeholder-driven framework for social sustainability reform in Indonesian maritime academies, with significant implications for institutional governance, workforce empowerment, and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals. Recommendations include participatory governance mechanisms and structured career pathways for experienced officers.

Keywords: Social Sustainability, Maritime Workforce, Maritime Education, Stakeholder Perceptions, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The survival and growth of any nation's maritime sector depend not merely on the vessels it operates or the trade routes it commands, but on the human beings who sustain, teach, and navigate those systems. Yet the social conditions within which maritime professionals are trained, retained, and developed remain one of the most underexamined dimensions of maritime institutional research. In Indonesia — an archipelagic nation of more than 17,000 islands, where the sea is both a cultural identity and an economic lifeline — the social sustainability of the maritime workforce is inseparable from the country's broader ambitions for blue economy development and maritime power. Institutions such as Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP) Jakarta, operating under the Ministry of Transportation, carry a dual mandate: to produce technically competent seafarers and to act as engines of national maritime social development. How effectively these institutions sustain the social well-being of their own workforce — cadets, lecturers, and veteran officers alike — has profound consequences for the quality of maritime education in Indonesia and beyond.

Social sustainability, as a foundational pillar of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, demands systematic attention to equitable access, institutional welfare, participatory governance, and the empowerment of professional communities (Arslan et al., 2023). In the maritime sector, social sustainability extends far beyond environmental compliance and regulatory adherence; it encompasses the lived professional experiences of those who teach, learn, and serve within maritime institutions. Caesar (2024) argues persuasively that without a resilient, socially supported workforce, the maritime industry cannot fulfill its economic, environmental, or operational obligations. This argument gains added force in the context of Indonesian maritime education, where the Ministry of Transportation's human resource agenda intersects with the institutional realities of government-run maritime academies operating in a rapidly changing industry environment (Dien & Cuong, 2024).

Existing research on maritime education has concentrated predominantly on curriculum reform, digital transformation, and the integration of green shipping technologies into training programs (Simanjuntak et al., 2025; Cahyadi et al., 2025; Khabir et al., 2025). While these contributions are valuable, they largely neglect the social sustainability of institutional workforces — the conditions of welfare, career development, governance participation, and professional identity that shape the daily experience of maritime educators, veteran officers, and cadets. Barasa et al. (2025) take steps toward addressing this gap by examining the integration of health and sustainability competencies in maritime education, yet their focus remains on curricular content rather than on institutional social conditions. Boonadir et al. (2022) and Jeevan et al. (2022), in separate studies of Malaysian maritime institutions, call for more integrated, multi-stakeholder assessments of maritime education quality and sustainability, noting the tendency of existing research to rely on single-group or externally sourced data.

The research problem this study addresses emerges from this intersection of practical urgency and scholarly gap: How do cadets, lecturers, and veteran officers at STIP Jakarta perceive the social sustainability of the maritime workforce within their institution, and what institutional factors shape these perceptions? The specific objectives are threefold. First, the study assesses stakeholder perceptions across five social sustainability indicator clusters: institutional welfare and working conditions, career development and professional pathways, participatory governance and voice mechanisms, community and peer relationships, and alignment with national and international sustainability standards. Second, it compares perceptions across different respondent groups to identify convergences and divergences that illuminate how institutional social sustainability is differentially experienced. Third, it develops a stakeholder-driven, empirically grounded framework for institutional reform capable of guiding STIP Jakarta and comparable Indonesian maritime academies toward enhanced social sustainability.

The rationale for this investigation is both scholarly and policy-driven. Institutionally, the presence of veteran officers and former seafarers as lecturers at STIP Jakarta creates a professional configuration that is unique among educational settings: individuals who have spent careers at sea now occupy teaching roles within an institutional environment designed primarily around pedagogical, not operational, values. Yu et al. (2025), in their study of competency-based transition education frameworks for marine superintendents, demonstrate that the career transition from seafarer to shore-based educational professional is a structurally under-supported process in most maritime institutions in Asia. The failure to address this transition systematically means that the experiential knowledge of veteran professionals — one of the most valuable assets a maritime educational institution can possess — is neither recognized nor leveraged effectively. This represents a significant gap with consequences for educational quality, staff retention, and institutional social cohesion.

At the national development level, Putri (2024) emphasizes that Indonesia's blue economy aspirations depend critically on the quality and institutional sustainability of its maritime human capital. Riniwati et al. (2022) demonstrate the cascading effects of institutional human resource policy on coastal community development, arguing that gender-equitable and socially sustainable maritime institutions generate positive externalities for the wider communities they serve. When institutional environments fail to support the social well-being of their workforce — whether through inadequate welfare provisions, opaque career pathways, or exclusionary governance structures — the consequences are not confined to the institution itself but ripple outward to affect educational quality, cadet motivation, industry confidence, and ultimately Indonesia's position in the global maritime labor market.

The significance of this research is further amplified by the limited empirical evidence available on how different stakeholder categories within a single maritime institution differentially perceive social sustainability. Multi-stakeholder approaches in maritime education research remain rare, with most studies drawing on homogeneous samples of students, seafarers, or managers (Garay-Rondero & Issa Zadeh, 2025; Malau et al., 2025). By simultaneously engaging cadets across three academic majors, former seafarer-lecturers, veteran officers, management lecturers, industry practitioners, and former senior transportation officials, this study generates a panoramic view of institutional social sustainability that is far more complete than any single-group inquiry could produce. This multi-stakeholder depth, grounded in the specific institutional context of STIP Jakarta, constitutes the study's primary scholarly contribution and its most immediate practical value.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design rooted in the interpretive paradigm, recognizing that perceptions of social sustainability are socially constructed, institutionally situated, and context-dependent in ways that quantitative instruments cannot adequately capture (Simanjuntak et al., 2025; Barasa et al., 2025). The study was conducted at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP) Jakarta, purposively

selected as the primary site due to its status as Indonesia's flagship government maritime academy under the Ministry of Transportation, its diverse stakeholder composition, and its institutional mandate to serve national maritime human resource development objectives.

The population encompasses all institutional stakeholders at STIP Jakarta with direct or indirect relationships to maritime education and workforce conditions. The sample was drawn purposively to maximize representational heterogeneity across professional roles and levels of institutional experience. The total sample comprises 71 respondents: 20 cadets from the Nautical Science major, 20 from the Marine Engineering major, and 20 from the Port and Shipping Management major; 10 former seafarers currently serving as deck and engine lecturers; 8 lecturers in management and shipping; 5 veteran officers; 3 former senior transportation officials; and 5 maritime industry practitioners. This configuration was deliberately designed to capture perspectives from those who teach, learn, administer, and employ maritime graduates — enabling the comprehensive triangulation of stakeholder viewpoints that Caesar (2024) identifies as essential for understanding sustainable maritime workforce dynamics. The inclusion of veteran officers and former seafarers as distinct respondent categories reflects the study's specific concern with transitional professional identities, a dimension highlighted by Yu et al. (2025) as critically underexamined in the regional maritime education literature.

The research instrument is a semi-structured interview guide organized around five independent variable clusters serving as primary sustainability indicators: institutional welfare and working conditions, career development and professional pathways, participatory governance and voice mechanisms, community and peer relationships, and alignment with national and international sustainability standards. The dependent variable is the perceived level of social sustainability within the institution. Indicators are operationalized through sub-questions addressing the adequacy of welfare provisions, availability of career advancement opportunities, degree of staff and cadet participation in institutional decision-making, quality of interpersonal and collegial relationships, and institutional awareness of SDG-related policies. A supplementary five-point Likert-style rating embedded within interview protocols allows for quantitative triangulation of qualitative findings. Documentary analysis of institutional welfare policies, staff development plans, and curriculum frameworks provides an additional evidentiary layer, while field notes recorded throughout data collection support contextual interpretation. Arslan et al. (2023) validate the multi-indicator approach to social sustainability measurement in maritime labor settings, directly informing this study's indicator framework.

Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews conducted on-site at STIP Jakarta over a four-week period. Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, was audio-recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data analysis followed a three-stage thematic process informed by Cahyadi et al. (2025) and Barasa et al. (2025). In the first stage, thematic analysis was applied to categorize transcripts into competency development and sustainability themes through open, axial, and selective coding. In the second stage, cross-group comparisons were systematically conducted among the six respondent categories to identify commonalities and divergences in perceptions of social sustainability indicators. In the final stage, narrative synthesis was employed to develop a cohesive explanatory account integrating emergent themes into a coherent institutional framework aligned with the original research questions.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Results

The findings across all 71 respondents reveal a broadly positive yet differentiated picture of social sustainability at STIP Jakarta. Table 1 presents aggregated mean scores across the five sustainability indicator clusters, rated on a five-point scale (1 = Very Poor; 5 = Excellent), as reported by respondents during structured interview segments.

Table 1. Social Sustainability Indicator Scores by Respondent Group (Mean, 5-Point Scale)

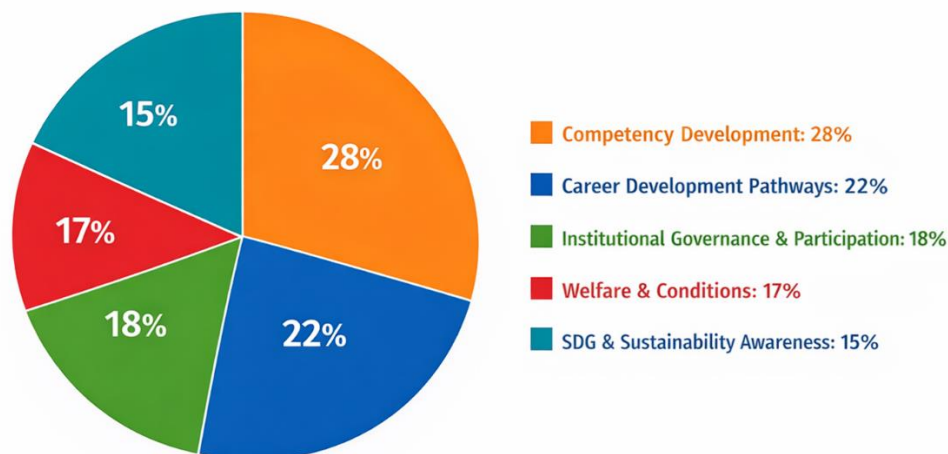
Indicator	Cadets (n=60)	Seafarer- Lecturers (n=10)	Veteran Officers (n=5)	Mgmt. Lecturers (n=8)	Industry (n=5)	Officials (n=3)	Overall Mean
Institutional Welfare & Conditions	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.75
Career Development Pathways	3.4	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.42

Participatory Governance	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.15
Community & Peer Relations	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.10
SDG Policy Alignment	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.32
Overall Mean	3.56	3.36	3.16	3.78	3.94	3.88	3.55

The overall institutional mean score of 3.55 indicates a moderately good level of perceived social sustainability. Community and peer relations scored highest across all groups (overall mean: 4.10), reflecting strong collegial bonds and supportive peer communities within the institution. In contrast, participatory governance scored the lowest (3.15), signaling that most stakeholders — particularly veteran officers (2.80) and seafarer-lecturers (3.00) — feel insufficiently included in institutional decision-making processes.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis — Dominant Themes and Key Concerns by Respondent Group

Respondent Group	Primary Theme	Secondary Theme	Key Concern Raised
Cadets — Nautical (n=20)	Competency Development	Career Pathway Clarity	Unclear post-graduation career routes
Cadets — Engineering (n=20)	Technical Training Adequacy	Welfare & Facilities	Equipment adequacy and dormitory conditions
Cadets — Port Mgmt. (n=20)	Industry Relevance	Participatory Learning	Lack of real industry exposure
Seafarer-Lecturers (n=10)	Professional Identity	Institutional Recognition	Undervaluation of sea-service experience
Veteran Officers (n=5)	Knowledge Transfer Role	Institutional Clarity	Ambiguity in formal institutional function
Mgmt. Lecturers (n=8)	Curriculum Alignment	SDG Awareness	Limited sustainability content integration
Industry Practitioners (n=5)	Graduate Competency	Industry-Academia Gap	Mismatch between training and industry needs
Former Officials (n=3)	Governance Reform	Policy Implementation	Slow institutional adaptation to policy change



Distribution of Primary Thematic Concerns Across All Respondents (n=71):

Discussion

The overall sustainability mean score of 3.55 provides an initial indication that STIP Jakarta has established a functionally supportive institutional environment. This figure, however, only captures a broad perspective and does not fully encapsulate the nuances that emerge when the data are analyzed more closely. While this mean score suggests that the institution is meeting certain baseline sustainability standards, the data reveal significant variances that demand further attention. As noted by Caesar (2024), maritime institutions in developing economies often reach a certain threshold of sustainability but continue to grapple with structural challenges. These challenges are particularly evident in areas such as participatory governance and the infrastructure supporting career development. The nuanced interpretation of these findings underscores the complexities that a single aggregate figure like the overall sustainability score cannot fully represent.

One of the most striking contrasts in the data comes from the relationship between community and peer relations (with a high score of 4.10) and participatory governance (with a notably lower score of 3.15). This difference provides a critical insight into the institutional dynamics at play within STIP Jakarta. It suggests that while the institution has fostered strong community ties and peer relationships among its members, the formal institutional mechanisms for inclusive and participatory decision-making are underdeveloped. This divide points to an area where institutional reforms are necessary for ensuring that social sustainability is not only achieved but also maintained and nurtured in the long term. It is clear that STIP Jakarta has succeeded in cultivating relational capital among its members, but this strength has not been fully translated into formal governance structures that enable broader, inclusive participation in decision-making processes.

Moreover, the consistently lower scores observed among veteran officers (mean: 3.16) and seafarer-lecturers (mean: 3.36) compared with management lecturers (mean: 3.78) and industry practitioners (mean: 3.94) highlight another important finding. This gap in scores is not merely an incidental observation but a significant one that carries both practical and theoretical implications. The findings align directly with Yu et al. (2025), who argue that the career transitions of experienced maritime professionals into shore-based educational roles are systematically under-supported in many maritime institutions across Asia. This observation is particularly pertinent to the context of STIP Jakarta, where seafarer-lecturers, despite their invaluable operational expertise, face significant challenges in integrating their professional backgrounds with the institution's academic framework. The pedagogical theory that these educators bring to the classroom is undeniably important, but it becomes evident that it cannot fully replace the hands-on experience they have gained through years of maritime practice. The data suggest that the institution has not yet fully recognized the value of this expertise within its governance structures, nor has it adequately integrated this knowledge into the career development frameworks designed for its faculty.

Further corroborating this finding, Dien and Cuong (2024) document a similar trend in Vietnamese maritime institutions, where experienced officers transitioning into educational roles face institutional environments that are better suited to conventional academics than to maritime practitioners. The challenges faced by seafarer-lecturers at STIP Jakarta reflect this broader regional trend, suggesting a systemic issue in maritime human resource development. This disconnect between the hands-on experience of seafarer-lecturers and the academic structures they are required to navigate points to a significant gap in the way that institutional policies support the integration of experienced maritime professionals into shore-based educational roles.

Another critical element of the study is the high score for community and peer relations (4.10). This metric reflects the social capital that has been developed within STIP Jakarta, particularly through the institution's ability to foster strong collegial bonds. While these relationships represent an important asset, the study suggests that they could play an even more central role in the institution's sustainability strategy. According to Bolmsten and Kitada (2020), agile social learning can serve as a mechanism for overcoming weak formal governance structures by creating informal channels for participatory decision-making. In other words, the strong peer communities at STIP Jakarta are not merely a reflection of social well-being but also represent an untapped resource that could be used to drive institutional reform. If the leadership at STIP Jakarta is able to harness these community bonds effectively, they could serve as a catalyst for broader institutional changes, particularly in the area of participatory governance.

The findings regarding competency development (28%) and career pathway clarity (22%) underscore the centrality of professional development in the broader conversation on institutional sustainability at STIP Jakarta. These two themes emerge as the primary concerns among all respondent groups, reinforcing the idea that social sustainability within the institution is closely intertwined with the adequacy of its professional development infrastructure. This result is consistent with findings from Barasa et al. (2025) and Cahyadi et al. (2025), who observe that perceived educational sustainability among Indonesian maritime cadets is strongly shaped by the clarity and credibility of the professional pathways available to them post-graduation. For STIP Jakarta, this means that the sustainability of the institution is not merely a matter of educational quality but also depends heavily on the effectiveness of career development programs and the clarity with which students can see their paths toward successful professional careers.

This concern is particularly acute among Port and Shipping Management cadets, who cite insufficient exposure to real industry practices as a significant obstacle to their career readiness. This finding suggests that the management program at STIP Jakarta may be particularly vulnerable in terms of career pathway articulation. The lack of direct industry exposure is an issue that warrants immediate attention, as it has the potential to undermine the credibility and relevance of the program. Strengthening the institution's partnerships with the maritime industry and enhancing the practical experiences available to students could mitigate this vulnerability and strengthen the overall sustainability of the program.

A key contribution of this research is its multi-stakeholder design, which enables a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of social sustainability within a maritime institution. Most previous studies on maritime institutional sustainability have been limited to single-group assessments or external evaluations, which fail to capture the differential experiences of sustainability across various professional roles within the institution. By engaging multiple stakeholder groups—veteran officers, seafarer-lecturers, management lecturers, industry practitioners, and cadets—this study provides a richer, more internally valid account of the social sustainability challenges faced by STIP Jakarta. Furthermore, the triangulation of data sources—interviews, documentary analysis, and observations—adds credibility to the findings and strengthens the overall validity of the research.

Based on these findings, the study recommends three priority institutional interventions aimed at improving sustainability. First, it is essential to establish formal participatory governance mechanisms, such as consultative bodies that include veteran officers and seafarer-lecturers as permanent members. This would help address the gap in participatory governance, ensuring that the perspectives and expertise of all stakeholders are integrated into institutional decision-making processes. Second, the development of career development frameworks that explicitly recognize sea-service experience as institutional capital is necessary. This would involve creating professional pathways that support the transition of seafarers into educational roles, ensuring that their expertise is valued and properly integrated into the institution's academic framework. Third, the study recommends a review of welfare provisions for cadets, particularly in the Engineering major, to ensure that these provisions align with industry benchmarks and meet the needs of students in this field.

Finally, future research should extend this inquiry longitudinally to assess the impact of the proposed institutional reforms on social sustainability perceptions over time. This would provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of these interventions and offer a basis for comparative studies with other Indonesian maritime academies. Understanding the evolving dynamics of institutional sustainability will be crucial for maintaining and improving the quality of maritime education in Indonesia in the years to come.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated social sustainability perceptions among 71 stakeholders at STIP Jakarta, encompassing cadets from three majors, seafarer-lecturers, veteran officers, management lecturers, industry practitioners, and former senior transportation officials. The overall sustainability profile — mean score 3.55 on a five-point scale — indicates a moderately positive institutional environment, with community and peer relations as the strongest dimension and participatory governance as the most significant weakness. Veteran officers and seafarer-lecturers consistently recorded lower sustainability scores than other groups, exposing critical institutional gaps in the recognition and integration of transitional maritime professionals. These findings contribute a stakeholder-differentiated social sustainability framework for Indonesian maritime higher education and provide evidence-based recommendations for governance reform, career pathway development, and welfare enhancement. Future research should expand this work to other national maritime institutions to assess generalizability and comparative transferability.

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