

Examining Employment and Retention Challenges of Arab Non-Native English-Speaking Seafarers in the International Maritime Industry: A Quantitative Analysis

Prepared By

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المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير الطلاقة في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية على النجاح المهني لضباط الملاحة المتحدثين غير الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية في الحصول على وظائف دولية بالقطاع البحري، وتستكشف الدراسة دور التعليم الرسمي وغير الرسمي للغة الإنجليزية بالجامعات والمؤسسات التعليمية البحرية في تعزيز فرص التوظيف بالقطاع، مع دمج ثلاثة أهداف حيوية من أهداف التنمية المستدامة: الهدف ٨ (العمل اللائق ونمو الاقتصاد)، الهدف ٤ (التعليم الجيد)، والهدف ١٠ (الحد من أوجه عدم المساواة).

يعتمد تصميم البحث على منهجية كمية باستخدام الاستبيانات كبيانات أساسية، بهدف فهم واضح وملمس للمشكلة وصياغة حلول قائمة على الأدلة الملموسة. يركز البحث على جمع وتحليل البيانات الكمية من خلال استبيانات عبر الإنترنت لجمع بيانات حول مستوى إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية العامة والبحرية، والخبرات الوظيفية، والخلفية التعليمية في اللغة الإنجليزية، وتصوّرات أهمية إتقان الإنجليزية للتقدم الوظيفي، وذلك من منظور ثلاثة أطراف رئيسية: ضباط الملاحة المتحدثين غير الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية بمستويات وظيفية مختلفة (عينة تتكون من ٣٧٤ ضابط ملاحه)، ومسؤولين التوظيف وأرباب العمل البحريين (عينة تتكون من ٤٣ شركة)، ومحاضرين متخصصين للغة الإنجليزية البحرية (عينة تتكون من ١٠ محاضرين). يهدف هذا النهج المنظم إلى جمع بيانات قابلة للقياس توفر أساساً لفهم السياق الأوسع للبحث. استهدف البحث البلدان العربية غير الناطقة بالإنجليزية كلغة أم، بما في ذلك جمهورية مصر العربية، الإمارات العربية المتحدة، المملكة العربية السعودية، الجمهورية اللبنانية، جمهورية السودان، المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية، دولة ليبيا، والجمهورية اليمنية.

تُظهر النتائج وجود علاقة ارتباط قوية (٠,٨٧٢) بين الطلاقة في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية والحصول على الوظائف، مع تأثير قوي أيضاً للتعليم الرسمي للغة الإنجليزية لأعمال بشكل عام (٠,٨١٥) وأساليب التعلم غير الرسمية (٠,٩١٠) على فرص التوظيف. تعد برامج تطوير المهارات المهنية والتبادلات الثقافية أساسية لتلبية مهارات الخريجين مع متطلبات السوق، حيث بلغت علاقات الارتباط ٠,٨٥٥ و ٠,٨٤٢ على التوالي. نتيجة الدراسة أن ضباط الملاحة غير الناطقين بالإنجليزية يواجهون تحديات كبيرة، بما في ذلك حواجز التواصل والتمييز، مما يؤثر على فرصهم الوظيفية ورفاههم العام. تشمل التوصيات تعزيز التدريب اللغوي في

المناهج البحرية، وتنفيذ سياسات التنوع والشمول، وتشجيع فرص التعلم غير الرسمي المستمر خلال الدراسة وبعدها. تهدف هذه الاستراتيجيات إلى تحسين قابلية توظيف ضباط الملاحة غير الناطقين بالإنجليزية وخلق بيئة عمل بحرية داعمة، مما يعزز السلامة والكفاءة التشغيلية في البحر واقتصاد النقل البحري بشكل عام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التواصل الفعال بقطاع النقل البحري، اللغة الإنجليزية بالقطاع البحري، ضباط الملاحة، التعليم والتدريب البحري، البحث الكمي، الطاقم البحري متعدد الجنسيات، المساواة وتقبل الآخر، المتحدثين غير الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية، اللغة الإنجليزية البحرية، أهداف التنمية المستدامة.

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of English-speaking fluency on non-native English-speaking seafarers' success in securing international maritime jobs and explores the role of formal and informal English education in enhancing employability, integrating 3 vital sustainable development goals; goal 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), goal 4 (Quality Education), and goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

The research design employs a quantitative methodology using the survey as primary data, with a purpose to investigate a clear and tangible understanding of the problem and craft evidence-based solutions. The phase focuses on collecting and analyzing quantitative data through online questionnaires, to gather data on general and maritime English language proficiency, job experiences, English educational background experiences, and perceptions of the significance of English proficiency for career advancement, via the perspectives of 3 main stakeholders; non-native English-speaking seafarers with different ranks (sample of 374), maritime employers (sample of 43), and maritime English educators (sample of 10). This structured approach aims to capture measurable data that can provide a foundation for understanding the broader context of the research. The research targeted non-native English-speaking Arab countries including Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan, Libya and Yemen.

The results reveal a significant correlation (0.872) between speaking fluency and job acquisition, with formal Business English education (0.815) and informal learning methods (0.910) also strongly influencing employment opportunities. Career development programs and cultural exchanges are crucial for aligning graduates' skills with market demands, with correlations of 0.855 and 0.842, respectively. The study concludes that non-native English-speaking seafarers face substantial challenges, including communication barriers and discrimination, impacting their job prospects and overall well-being. Recommendations include enhancing language training in maritime curricula, implementing diversity and inclusion policies, and promoting ongoing informal learning opportunities during and after college. These strategies aim to improve non-native English-speaking seafarers' employability and foster a supportive maritime work environment, ultimately enhancing safety and operational efficiency at sea, and the overall maritime economy.

Keywords: Maritime communication, English proficiency, seafarers, maritime training, quantitative research, crew diversity, inclusion, non-native English speaker, maritime English, sustainable development goals.

1- Introduction

The maritime sector relies heavily on English as the international means of communication aboard ocean-going ships. However, non-native English-speaking (NNES) crews face barriers that affect socializing and may increase stress. For example, joke-telling aboard ships has declined due to fears of misunderstandings or offending others (Arulnayagam, 2020). Despite this, constant communication, storytelling, and humor have helped seafarers overcome work-related stress and depression as part of their shipboard culture.

Language barriers can lead to feelings of “loneliness and isolation onboard,” which in turn can increase stress and affect crew performance (Solanki, 2007). Although technological advances and increased automation have reduced technical-based accident rates, human error still accounts for 75–90% of maritime accidents, with “miscommunication” playing a significant role (Sánchez-Beaskoetxea et al., 2021). Consequently, under the STCW 2010 (as amended), effective oral communication skills have become a mandatory requirement for seafarers in today’s maritime workplace. Communication is a two-way process, requiring effective message delivery and reception. However, about 80% of the world’s trading ships are staffed by NNES crew, which complicates communication due to diverse backgrounds, accents, and language structures. This can result in poor communication quality. A study in China, for instance, revealed that while maritime students met the minimum requirements for English competency exams, many still struggled with effective communication at sea. This was identified as one of the reasons for the declining interest in seafaring jobs among junior seafarers, despite a 26.1% increase in maritime education enrollments from 2015 to 2019 (Fan, 2017).

NNES seafarers face significant challenges in the global maritime industry, particularly with communication, which is crucial for safety, job performance, and overall crew cohesion. Since English serves as the lingua franca of the maritime sector, NNES seafarers often struggle with language barriers, including accents, idioms, and technical terminology. These difficulties can lead to miscommunication, safety risks, and operational inefficiencies, potentially jeopardizing both individual careers and shipboard safety. Studies highlight that misunderstandings and errors arising from communication gaps between native English-speaking and NNES crew members are a common cause of accidents, with human factors accounting for 75–90% of marine incidents (IMO, 2019). Another gap in communication is not only between seafarers from different cultural backgrounds or nationalities, but there is a communication gap between both navigation and engineer officers due to their different backgrounds in education, which might be a threat to the overall safety of the crew (Jeon, T.-Y., Kim, B.-G., Kim, N., & Lee, Y.-C., 2022).

NNES seafarers not only face language challenges but also issues of discrimination and lack of career progression opportunities. According to Oxford Economics (2016), shipping companies in native English-speaking countries such as in the UK, hire NNES seafarers to save cost and balance

cost with effectiveness, as the native speaker is a more expensive manpower. Female seafarers also face discrimination and harassment due to high gender miscommunication issues in the maritime industry with fellow male crew members or superiors (ILO, 2019). Modern research suggests that NNES seafarers are often overlooked for promotions despite having the necessary skills and experience, which leads to lower job satisfaction and retention (Abdelbarry, A., Heikal, S., Swidan & A. Khattab, M., 2024). Cultural differences and feelings of isolation further exacerbate these challenges, as NNES seafarers may experience segregation and mental health difficulties, such as depression and anxiety, due to language barriers and social isolation (Handayani, A. 2021). Addressing these communication challenges is vital for improving employability and retention in the maritime sector. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reported that more than 1.5 million seafarers are employed globally, with a substantial percentage coming from non-English-speaking countries (ILO, 2006). Despite the increasing reliance on NNES seafarers, there is still a pressing need for effective language and communication training to ensure safe and efficient operations in the high-risk international maritime environment (Ahmmed, 2018).

2- Challenges and Opportunities for Non-Native English-Speaking Seafarers

NNES seafarers face a range of challenges in their professional roles, primarily related to communication, language proficiency, discrimination, inadequate training, and mental health concerns. Communication barriers are a significant issue, especially in high-risk maritime environments where clear instructions are crucial for safety and operational efficiency (Ahmmed, 2018; Carine & Lakshmi, 2021). Limited English proficiency also prevents many NNES seafarers from passing mandatory language tests required for employment, reducing job opportunities and affecting their ability to understand essential technical and nautical terminology (Navarro et al., 2015). Discrimination during recruitment and promotion processes further exacerbates these challenges, limiting career advancement despite qualifications and experience. Inconsistent training standards, particularly regarding English language skills, contribute to this issue, as the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) guidelines on proficiency are not universally enforced, leaving some NNES seafarers underprepared (Ahmmed, 2018; IMO, 2018). These challenges also take a toll on seafarers' mental and physical health, increasing their susceptibility to stress, anxiety, and depression due to workplace pressures (ILO, 2016).

To address these issues, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. Language and cultural training programs can enhance communication and foster respect among crew members, improving overall performance. Promoting diversity and inclusion within the maritime industry is critical to eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for NNES seafarers (Kitada, 2019). Strengthening compliance mechanisms for international conventions related to seafarers' rights can further prevent exploitation and abuse. Additionally, incorporating informal learning initiatives focused on communication skills in maritime education can better prepare NNES seafarers for international employment markets, increasing their job readiness (Saridaki, E. 2023).

3- Research Objectives

To assess the impact of speaking fluency in English on seafarers' success in securing international maritime jobs.

To analyze the role of formal Business English education in universities in relation to graduates' employment in the international maritime sector.

To examine the effectiveness of informal English learning methods in enhancing seafarers' employability in international maritime jobs.

To evaluate the relationship between career development programs in universities and the employment outcomes of maritime graduates.

To investigate how student exchange programs and cultural volunteerism contribute to aligning maritime college students' skills with global employment market needs.

4- Hypothesis & Model

There is a direct relationship between developing effective communication skills in terms of learning how to fluently speak native English and learning to understand different native and NNES accents and the NNES seafarers' employability rate in the global maritime sector.

Research Hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between the seafarers' speaking fluency in the English language and finding international maritime jobs.

H2: There is a relationship between formal Business English education in universities and finding international maritime jobs.

H3: There is a relationship between "informal" English learning (conversation, cultural dialogues, webinars, etc.) and finding international maritime jobs.

H4: There is a relationship between career development programs in universities and finding international maritime jobs.

H5: There is a relationship between enhancing maritime education through encouraging student exchange programs and cultural volunteerism to maritime college students, and the student's career compatibility with global employment market needs.

5- Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative methodology, utilizing online questionnaires to gather data from NNES seafarers on their English language proficiency, job experiences, and its role in career advancement. A stratified random sampling method, based on factors like nationality and proficiency, ensures comprehensive representation. As a sample size of 384 respondents is recommended for a 95% confidence level (Saunders et al., 2009), this research is based on a sample of 374 seafarers, in addition to 43 employees and decision makers acting as maritime employers, and 10 maritime English educators, with a total of 427 respondents.

Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and independent sample tests through SPSS software, with exploratory factor analysis ensuring reliability (Saunders et al., 2009). The questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale to measure responses, ensuring clarity and accessibility. Additionally, thematic analysis of qualitative data will be conducted to identify

patterns from interviews, complementing the quantitative findings and providing a more holistic understanding of the research context.

Table 1: Five-Point Likert Scale Response Categories

Category	Scale Value
Very Weak	1
Weak	2
Accepted	3
Good	4
Very Good	5

(Source: Statistical analysis of study data)

To interpret the arithmetic averages of the study sample’s responses to each questionnaire item and area, intervals were calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Category Length} = (\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum}) / (\text{Number of Categories}) = (5 - 1) / 5 = 0.8$$

Table 2: Mean of the General Trend

General Trend	Mean Range
Very Good	4.2 – 5
Good	3.4 - 4.19
Accepted	2.6 - 3.39
Weak	1.8 - 2.59
Very Weak	1 - 1.79

(Source: Statistical analysis of study data)

6- RESULTS & FINDINGS

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach’s Alpha is employed to evaluate the extent to which item responses in the survey are correlated with each other. It estimates the proportion of variance in a set of responses that is systematic or consistent (Jugessur, 2022). To assess the internal consistency of the study instrument, Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated for the questionnaire.

First Survey: Seafarers

Table (3): The first Survey Distributed among Seafarers:

n	Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient
1	Rating your General English Skills	4	0.949
2	Rating your Maritime English skills	4	0.940
3	Cross-Cultural Aspects	7	0.963
4	Psycholinguistic Aspects	5	0.947
5	Pragmatic Competence	6	0.949

6	Education /Training Experiences in Maritime institution	11	0.972
7	Barriers to English communication	8	0.963
8	Strategies to improve seafarers' maritime English skills	5	0.947
9	Motivational Factors for joining a Seafarer Career	12	0.976
10	Reasons making working abroad ships less attractive	20	0.986
12	Maritime Career Expectations	5	0.945
Overall Total Scale		87	0.994

The results from Table (3) show that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all constructs is notably high at 99.4%. This indicates that the items in the questionnaire are valid measures of the constructs.

Second Survey: Employers in Shipping and Maritime Companies

Table (4): Coefficient of Reliability for Employers in Shipping and Maritime Companies

n	Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
1	Rating General English skills of your Seafarers	4	0.948
2	Rating Maritime English skills of your Seafarers	4	0.944
3	Strategies to Improve Seafarers' Maritime English Skills	5	0.940
Overall Total Scale		13	0.966

Table (4) indicates that the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this survey is 96.6%, confirming the validity of the items included in the questionnaire.

Third Survey: English Instructors in Maritime Universities

Table (5): Coefficient of Reliability for Maritime English Instructors

n	Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
1	Rating General English skills of your Maritime Students	7	0.632
2	3. How much effort do consume in the classroom with Maritime students in order to cover their basic English learning needs? (1-5), 1 means minimal effort, 5 means a lot of effort	1	-
3	4. How many English courses does a Maritime student take during his/her bachelor's degree?	1	-
Overall Total Scale		9	0.430

As shown in Table (5), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the constructs is relatively low at 43%. This suggests that while some items may be valid measures, the overall reliability of the questionnaire for this group may need further assessment.

6-1 Demographic Analysis

First Questionnaire: Seafarers

The majority of seafarers, comprising 91.2% (341 respondents), are from Egypt, with a small representation from other countries: 0.3% from Saudi Arabia, 0.5% from Jordan, 4.5% from Libya, and 3.5% from Sudan. Nationally, 91.2% identify as Egyptian, while the rest include Lebanese (4.5%), Sudanese (3.5%), and Jordanian (0.8%). Regarding education, 39.8% (149 respondents) hold a Bachelor's degree, with other qualifications distributed as follows: 8.8% have completed high school, 13.9% have higher education, 21.9% hold an advanced diploma, 10.4% have a Master's, and 5.1% have a PhD. In terms of age, 35% fall within the 18-25 age group, while 31.8% are 26-40, 22.7% are 41-55, and 10.4% are 56 and older. On board, 18.2% serve as either Second Officers or Third Engineers, with the lowest representation being Lecturers at 0.5%. Additionally, 51.9% (194 respondents) have worked with peers from different nationalities. Contract durations show that 41.8% have contracts lasting 6-9 months, while the smallest groups are those with contracts of more than 12 months or those considered Permanent (6.7%). In the past three years, 34% (66 respondents) have signed 2 contracts, with the smallest group signing 5 contracts (5.7%). Notably, 38.1% have worked together on a ship for 1 year, while 6.2% have worked together for more than 10 years. Lastly, 67.9% (254 respondents) do not hold the required English certification.

Second Questionnaire: Maritime Employers

Among maritime employers, 95.3% (41 respondents) are Egyptian, with a small representation of 2.3% from both Yemen and Sudan. The largest job position category is HR Officers at 18.6% (8 respondents), while the smallest group is Export Documentation Supervisors at 2.3% (1 respondent). In terms of company locations, 74.4% are based in Egypt, with the smallest group located in Yemen at 2.3%. Furthermore, 79.1% (34 respondents) do not hold the required English certification.

Third Questionnaire: Maritime English Instructors

All 10 respondents among maritime English instructors are Egyptian, employed in Egyptian and Emirati maritime universities. In terms of educational qualifications, 6 hold Bachelor's degrees, 3 possess Master's degrees, and 1 has a Doctorate degree.

6-2 Descriptive Analysis of Responses

Seafarers' Questionnaire

1. The analysis of the seafarers' responses reveals moderate engagement and varied proficiency across different aspects of English language skills, cross-cultural understanding, and professional experiences.
2. General English Skills: With a mean score of 2.72, seafarers demonstrate moderate daily use of English, with writing receiving the highest score (mean 2.74) and reading the lowest (mean 2.70).
3. Maritime English Skills: A mean of 2.72 suggests that seafarers feel more confident in listening (mean 2.79) than in reading (mean 2.66) within their maritime context.

4. **Cross-Cultural Aspects:** The mean score of 2.85 indicates an appreciation for interacting with Native English speakers (mean 2.90) as the highest aspect, emphasizing the value of cultural exchanges.
5. **Psycholinguistic Aspects:** With a mean of 2.84, seafarers emphasize the importance of staying calm in distracting situations (mean 2.87) over focusing on grammatical accuracy (mean 2.81).
6. **Pragmatic Competence:** A mean of 2.78 shows higher proficiency in writing reports and emails (mean 2.81), while daily speaking practice was rated lower (mean 2.74).
7. **Education/Training Experiences:** The mean score of 2.89 highlights the value placed on beneficial teaching methods (mean 2.93).
8. **Barriers to English Communication:** With a mean score of 2.75, seafarers struggle with understanding fast English (mean 2.78), while performance anxiety is less of a concern (mean 2.68).
9. **Improvement Strategies:** A mean of 2.86 underscores the preference for immersive learning environments (mean 2.90).
10. **Motivational Factors:** Seafarers are motivated by travel opportunities (mean 3.03), with less influence from parental guidance (mean 2.93).
11. **Work Challenges:** Emotional challenges like homesickness (mean 3.02) surpass physical issues such as seasickness (mean 2.83).
12. **Maritime Career Expectations:** Seafarers prioritize career growth (mean 3.41) over financial incentives (mean 3.37).

7- Maritime Employers' and Shipping Companies' Questionnaire

1. **General English Skills:** The overall mean was 2.91, classified as “accepted.” Among the skills, “writing” ranked highest in consensus with a mean of 2.95, while “reading” received the lowest score of 2.84, though both were categorized as “accepted.” This indicates that while writing is perceived as a strong skill, reading is somewhat less confident.
2. **Maritime English Skills:** There is a mean score of 2.96, also rated “accepted.” The highest consensus was for “maritime English-speaking proficiency,” with a mean of 3.09, indicating strong confidence in this area. Conversely, “maritime English writing proficiency” ranked lowest at 2.88, still within the “accepted” range.
3. **Cross-Cultural Aspects:** There is a mean score of 3.16, which is classified as “accepted.” The strongest consensus was on the importance of “knowing foreign cultures,” with a mean of 3.37. In contrast, the willingness to share culture with foreign seafarers and interact with them both received lower scores of 3.05.

8- Maritime English Instructors' Questionnaire

From the third questionnaire, the mean was 2.57 with a degree of “weak”, and the phrase “reading skills” came in the first degree of consensus among opinions. With an average of 3.20 a degree of agreement is “accepted”, and the phrase “speaking fluency” came in the last degree consensus among opinions with an average of 2.10, and a degree of agreement is “weak”.

8-1 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Relationship Between Seafarers' Speaking Fluency in English and Finding International Maritime Jobs

The analysis shows a strong correlation between seafarers' English speaking fluency and their success in securing international maritime jobs, with a Pearson correlation of 0.872 and an R Square value of 0.761, indicating that 76.1% of the variance in job acquisition is explained by English fluency. This highlights the critical role of English proficiency in improving job prospects.

H2: Relationship Between Formal Business English Education and Finding International Maritime Jobs

Formal Business English education significantly impacts job acquisition, with a Pearson correlation of 0.815 and an R Square value of 0.665. This suggests that structured language education accounts for 66.5% of the variance in finding maritime jobs, emphasizing the value of formal training for seafarers.

H3: Relationship Between Informal English Learning and Finding International Maritime Jobs

Informal English learning methods, such as cross-cultural dialogues, have a strong influence on job opportunities, with a Pearson correlation of 0.910 and an R Square value of 0.828, indicating that 82.8% of job-finding success can be attributed to these experiences.

H4: Relationship Between Career Development Programs and Finding International Maritime Jobs

Career development programs significantly enhance job acquisition, with a Pearson correlation of 0.855 and an R Square value of 0.731, demonstrating that 73.1% of job success is linked to career support and skill development initiatives in universities.

H5: Relationship Between Enhancing Maritime Education and Career Compatibility

Enhancing maritime education through student exchange programs and cultural volunteerism significantly affects career compatibility with global job market demands. Cross-cultural exposure prepares students for international roles, aligning their skills with market expectations and improving employability.

9- Discussion & Analysis

The findings reveal strong correlations between various English language skills and the ability of NNES seafarers to secure international maritime jobs. Speaking fluency in English shows a significant correlation coefficient of 0.872, explaining 76.1% of the variance in job-finding success. This highlights the critical role of English proficiency in navigating international waters and interacting with diverse crews (Ahmmed, 2018). Formal Business English education also shows a strong correlation (0.815), impacting job opportunities by 66.5%, emphasizing the importance of structured language training. Interestingly, informal English learning methods, such as conversations and cultural dialogues, have an even stronger correlation (0.910), affecting job

opportunities by 82.8%, indicating the effectiveness of experiential learning environments in preparing seafarers for global roles.

Career development programs at universities are also significantly related to job acquisition, with a correlation of 0.855, explaining 73.1% of the variance, highlighting their role in bridging education and industry needs. Additionally, student exchange programs in maritime education show a strong relationship with career compatibility in the global market, with a correlation coefficient of 0.842, affecting career alignment by 70.9%. This underscores the importance of integrating cultural experiences into education to better prepare students for international employment.

The study also identifies challenges faced by NNES seafarers, particularly in communication and language proficiency. Despite high educational attainment, many Egyptian seafarers struggle with applying English in maritime contexts, as noted by Fan (2017) and Navarro et al. (2015). Informal communication methods, like joke-telling, have declined, leading to isolation and increased stress, a trend highlighted by Solanki (2007). Moreover, systemic discrimination exacerbates these challenges, impacting career progression and job satisfaction.

10- Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant challenges faced by NNES seafarers in the maritime industry, particularly regarding communication barriers, discrimination, and inadequate training. These challenges not only affect individual employability and career advancement but also impact overall crew cohesion and safety on board. The findings reinforce the necessity for comprehensive language and cultural training, as well as the promotion of diversity and inclusion initiatives within the maritime sector.

To address these issues effectively, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Maritime academies should develop curricula that focus on ongoing practical general and maritime English communication skills, incorporating real-life scenarios and cultural competencies.
- Shipping companies and maritime employers should adopt and enforce diversity and inclusion policies to ensure equal opportunities for NNES seafarers, and empower their policies by adequate training to the crew.
- Regulatory bodies should enhance enforcement of international conventions related to seafarers' rights, ensuring that NNES seafarers are protected from discrimination, bullying and exploitation.
- Incorporating informal learning opportunities, such as conversation clubs or mentorship programs, can help NNES seafarers improve their communication skills and build confidence in social interactions on board.
- Future studies should evaluate the effectiveness of implemented training programs and diversity initiatives to ensure they meet the needs of NNES seafarers and contribute to their career progression and well-being.

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