

From Classroom to Quarterdeck: Vocational Identity Formation and Industry Apprenticeship Experiences Among Maritime Vocational High School Students in Jakarta

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Abstract. Maritime vocational high schools serve as the earliest institutional gateway into Indonesia's seafaring workforce, yet how adolescent students construct a professional maritime identity during industry apprenticeship (*Praktik Kerja Industri, Prakerin*) remains underexamined relative to research on tertiary-level cadets. This study investigates how maritime vocational high school students in Jakarta experience the transition from classroom instruction to shipboard or port-based apprenticeship placement, and how this transition shapes their vocational identity, career commitment, and readiness for further officer-track education. A qualitative design was employed, drawing on semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 24 students who had completed *Prakerin* placements, supplemented by 6 vocational teachers and 5 industry supervisors. Thematic analysis identified four dominant findings: provisional vocational identity construction during placement, a persistent gap between classroom simulation and workplace demands, mentorship quality as the strongest determinant of identity consolidation, and family and socioeconomic background shaping career persistence independently of placement quality. Findings extend career construction theory into Indonesian maritime vocational education and carry direct implications for apprenticeship curriculum design, industry partnership structures, and early-stage career guidance.

Keywords: vocational identity; maritime education; industry apprenticeship; career construction theory

1. INTRODUCTION

A sixteen-year-old student who has spent three years studying knot-tying, watchkeeping theory, and maritime regulation in a classroom, and who then steps onto an actual quarterdeck for the first time, crosses a threshold that classroom assessment cannot measure and that curriculum documents rarely acknowledge as consequential in its own right. This threshold, the transition from simulated to lived professional practice, is where a maritime career either takes root as a durable professional identity or begins to loosen before it has properly formed, and it occurs years earlier in the Indonesian system than most maritime education research examines. Indonesia's maritime vocational high schools, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Pelayaran, function as the earliest formal gateway into the country's seafaring workforce, feeding both direct workforce entry and progression toward tertiary officer-track education, yet the industry apprenticeship period, *Praktik Kerja Industri*, through which this gateway actually operates has received markedly less scholarly attention than the analogous placement experiences of tertiary maritime cadets (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Sulistiana et al., 2025).

This asymmetry in research attention is not merely an oversight; it reflects a broader tendency within maritime education research to treat vocational identity as something cadets

and officers already possess by the time they enter formal study, rather than as something actively constructed during the earliest and most formative encounters with professional practice. Career construction theory offers a corrective to this assumption. Super's (1980) life-span, life-space theory of career development established that vocational identity develops through a sequence of exploratory and formative stages rather than arriving fully formed, with adolescence constituting a period in which occupational self-concept is actively tested against lived experience rather than merely anticipated in the abstract. Savickas's (2005) subsequent elaboration of career construction theory sharpened this insight for contemporary, non-linear career contexts, arguing that vocational identity is narratively constructed through the individual's active interpretation of career-relevant experiences, including, centrally, early workplace exposure of exactly the kind a Prakerin placement provides. Ibarra's (1999) research on professional identity transition adds a further, precise concept directly applicable to adolescent apprenticeship: the "provisional self," a professional identity an individual tries on temporarily and tests against feedback and lived experience before either adopting or discarding it, a framing that reconceives the Prakerin placement not as a terminal assessment of student readiness but as a genuinely formative episode whose outcome, commitment or disengagement, is not predetermined by prior classroom performance.

The contextual reality within which this identity formation occurs in Indonesia is distinctive and demanding. Maritime vocational high school students are typically between fifteen and eighteen years of age during their apprenticeship placements, a developmental stage at which professional identity work occurs alongside, and is inevitably entangled with, adolescent identity development more broadly (Erikson, 1968). These students are placed into working environments, shipboard or port-based operations, that operate under adult occupational norms, hierarchical authority structures, physical demands, and safety-critical responsibility, that few other vocational sectors ask adolescents to enter directly. The maritime industry's own competency literature has documented that even adult, tertiary-level cadets report significant cognitive and adjustment demands during their first sustained sea practical training experience (Simanjuntak, 2024), a finding that raises a reasonable expectation that adolescent vocational students, with less developed self-regulatory capacity and less occupational experience generally, encounter this transition with at least comparable, and plausibly greater, adjustment demands.

Despite this, the empirical record on how Indonesian maritime vocational high school students actually navigate this transition is thin. The Indonesian maritime education literature

has documented, at the tertiary level, gaps between competency frameworks taught in classrooms and the actual, sustained cognitive and operational demands of shipboard training (Simanjuntak, 2024), and has separately documented that Indonesia's traditional and domestic shipping sector relies substantially on crew members whose formal competency preparation lags behind the technical and regulatory demands they encounter in practice (Sulistiana et al., 2025). Neither line of research, however, examines the vocational high school apprenticeship period specifically, nor asks how the identity-formation process theorized by Super, Savickas, and Ibarra actually unfolds for adolescents navigating this particular, high-stakes early professional threshold. Research on mentorship and workplace socialization more broadly has established that the quality of supervisory relationship during an early career placement substantially shapes whether that placement consolidates or undermines a novice's professional commitment (Kram, 1985), a finding with obvious relevance to Prakerin but one that has not been tested within the Indonesian maritime vocational context specifically.

The problem this creates is not merely an academic gap; it has direct workforce and policy consequence. Indonesia's maritime vocational high schools are producing the population from which a substantial share of the country's future domestic seafaring workforce, and a smaller but consequential share of its future officer-track tertiary maritime students, will be drawn. If the Prakerin period functions poorly as an identity-consolidating experience, whether because of mentorship quality, a classroom-workplace gap, or unaddressed socioeconomic barriers to persistence, then the pipeline feeding Indonesia's maritime workforce is losing talent, or producing under-committed entrants, at its very earliest and most correctable stage, before either the students or the system have invested the far larger resources tertiary maritime education requires. Understanding this stage empirically, rather than assuming it functions adequately because it exists as a mandated curricular component, is therefore both a scholarly and a practical necessity.

This study addresses this gap by investigating how maritime vocational high school students in Jakarta experience the transition from classroom instruction to industry apprenticeship placement, and how this experience shapes their vocational identity, career commitment, and readiness for further officer-track education. Four questions follow directly. First, how do students describe and interpret their vocational identity before and after Prakerin placement, and does this interpretation reflect the provisional, actively constructed process career construction theory anticipates? Second, what gap, if any, exists between the

competencies and expectations classroom instruction prepares students for and the actual demands of shipboard or port-based placement? Third, what role does mentorship quality during placement play in shaping whether students' vocational identity consolidates toward continued maritime career pursuit or toward disengagement? Fourth, how do family and socioeconomic factors shape career persistence independently of, or in interaction with, placement experience itself?

The rationale for this study is threefold. Theoretically, it extends career construction theory and the concept of provisional professional identity, developed and validated substantially in adult and tertiary-education populations, into an adolescent, vocational-secondary population whose developmental stage and institutional context differ meaningfully from the populations in which these theories were originally tested (Super, 1980; Savickas, 2005; Ibarra, 1999). Empirically, it addresses a population, maritime vocational high school students during Prakerin, that existing Indonesian maritime education research has left substantially unexamined relative to tertiary cadets (Simanjuntak, 2024; Sulistiana et al., 2025). Practically, it offers maritime vocational high schools, industry placement partners, and Indonesian vocational education policy makers an evidence base for redesigning apprenticeship curriculum, mentorship structure, and early-stage career guidance specifically around how vocational identity actually forms during this period, rather than around an assumption that a mandated placement automatically produces committed, work-ready graduates. The remainder of this paper reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, sets out the study's qualitative method, presents and discusses the findings, and concludes with their implications for maritime vocational education policy and practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocational identity, as used in this study, denotes an individual's stable, self-endorsed sense of the goals, interests, and competencies that define their occupational self-concept, a construct Super (1980) positioned as developing progressively across a sequence of life stages, growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, with adolescence corresponding centrally to the exploration stage, in which occupational self-concept is actively tested against real-world feedback rather than assumed in advance. This developmental framing matters because it positions vocational identity not as a fixed trait students either possess or lack upon entering vocational education, but as an outcome actively shaped by the quality and content of the exploratory experiences, including apprenticeship placement, students undergo during this stage.

Savickas's (2005) career construction theory extends Super's developmental framework into a more explicitly narrative and constructivist register, arguing that individuals construct vocational identity through the stories they tell about their career-relevant experiences, with these narratives actively integrating, reinterpreting, or discarding specific episodes according to how well those episodes fit the emerging self-concept. This narrative framing is analytically useful for the present study because it treats the Prakerin placement not merely as a competency-transfer episode, whether a student successfully learned shipboard procedure, but as a narrative episode a student must actively interpret and integrate into an evolving professional self-story, an interpretation that can diverge from, and is not fully predicted by, the placement's objective competency outcomes alone.

Ibarra's (1999) concept of the provisional self supplies a further, precise mechanism for understanding this integration process specifically during early-career transition. Ibarra's research on professionals transitioning into new roles found that individuals experiment with provisional versions of a prospective professional identity, testing these against feedback from role models, mentors, and the broader professional environment, before either consolidating a version of that identity as authentic or discarding it in favor of a different self-concept. Applied to adolescent maritime apprenticeship, this framework predicts that a student's Prakerin experience functions as a trial of a provisional maritime professional self, with the consolidation or abandonment of that self depending substantially on the quality of feedback and role modelling the placement provides, rather than on the student's prior classroom aptitude alone. Erikson's (1968) broader theory of adolescent identity development contextualizes why this trial process carries particular weight at this specific developmental stage: adolescence is theorized as the period in which identity formation, occupational and otherwise, is developmentally central, meaning that the maritime professional identity work Prakerin demands is occurring simultaneously with, and is not separable from, the broader identity consolidation adolescence generally involves.

Workplace mentorship theory supplies the study's third theoretical anchor, directly relevant to this study's third research question. Kram's (1985) foundational research on mentoring at work identified two distinct functions mentors provide, career-development functions, including sponsorship, coaching, and exposure to visibility-generating tasks, and psychosocial functions, including role modelling, counselling, and acceptance-and-confirmation, with the psychosocial function specifically implicated in identity consolidation

during early-career transition. This distinction matters for interpreting Prakerin mentorship specifically, since a supervisor might provide adequate career-development mentoring, teaching correct procedure, assigning genuine tasks, while providing minimal psychosocial mentoring, the role modelling and confirming feedback career construction theory identifies as critical to provisional-identity consolidation, producing a placement that transfers competency without necessarily consolidating identity.

The empirical maritime education literature, while not addressing vocational high school apprenticeship directly, establishes relevant contextual evidence. Simanjuntak's (2024) research on cognitive load management among maritime cadets found that even tertiary-level students entering sustained sea practical training for the first time experience significant cognitive and adjustment demands that classroom preparation does not fully anticipate, a finding that plausibly generalizes, with likely greater intensity given the younger population's less developed self-regulatory capacity, to vocational high school students entering Prakerin. Sulistiana et al.'s (2025) research on competency and certification gaps among traditional shipping seafarers in South Sulawesi documented that formal training standards for domestic coastal crew have lagged behind operational technology and regulatory demands, leaving many crew members reliant on informally acquired, experience-based competency, a structural condition that shapes the actual workplace environment into which vocational apprentices are placed and that may itself widen the classroom-workplace gap this study's second research question investigates. Xi et al.'s (2025) empirical research on safety culture among ship deck officers found that culture, transmitted substantially through supervisory behaviour and peer socialization rather than through formal instruction, predicts safety-relevant behaviour directly, a finding relevant to understanding Prakerin as a socialization episode with consequences extending beyond identity formation narrowly construed into the safety-culture formation this study's broader research programme has examined at later career stages.

The socioeconomic dimension this study's fourth research question addresses has a distinct theoretical grounding in the sociology of education. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital, the embodied, objectified, and institutionalized resources a family transmits that facilitate or constrain educational and occupational attainment, offers a framework for understanding why students from families with prior maritime occupational exposure, a parent or relative who is a seafarer, for instance, might experience Prakerin placement differently, and potentially more successfully, than students without such inherited

familiarity, independently of the placement's objective quality. This framing reconceives family and socioeconomic influence not merely as a background variable but as a substantive factor shaping how the identity-construction process this study investigates actually unfolds for different students.

Synthesizing these perspectives, several patterns and one clear gap emerge. Career construction theory and the provisional-self concept establish that vocational identity formation during adolescent apprenticeship should be understood as an actively constructed, feedback-dependent process rather than a fixed outcome of prior aptitude (Super, 1980; Savickas, 2005; Ibarra, 1999). Mentorship theory identifies the specific mechanism, psychosocial rather than merely career-development mentoring, through which this construction process is most directly shaped by placement quality (Kram, 1985). The Indonesian maritime education literature confirms that sustained workplace transition imposes real adjustment demands even on more mature, tertiary-level populations, and that the domestic shipping environment into which apprentices are placed carries its own structural competency gaps (Simanjuntak, 2024; Sulistiana et al., 2025). And Bourdieu's cultural capital framework supplies the theoretical grounding for treating family and socioeconomic background as a substantive, rather than merely confounding, factor in this process. What remains absent is any study applying this integrated framework, career construction theory, provisional identity, mentorship theory, and cultural capital, directly to Indonesian maritime vocational high school students during their Prakerin placement specifically. This is the gap the present study occupies, and the conceptual position it adopts treats vocational identity consolidation as the outcome jointly produced by the interaction between placement mentorship quality and each student's pre-existing cultural-capital resources, mediated by the classroom-workplace gap each student individually experiences and narratively interprets.

3. METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design, selected because the research questions concerned how adolescent students actively construct and narratively interpret vocational identity during a specific developmental and institutional transition, a phenomenon requiring rich, interpretive data rather than predetermined quantitative measurement (Savickas, 2005). The study was conducted at a maritime vocational high school in Jakarta with an established industry apprenticeship partnership network, selected because its Prakerin programme

provided access to students with recently completed shipboard or port-based placement experience directly relevant to this study's research questions; the school is identified generically rather than by name in keeping with standard ethical practice for research involving minor participants.

The population comprised three groups. Twenty-four students who had completed Prakerin placements within the preceding academic year supplied the primary data source, selected because their recent, direct placement experience made them best positioned to describe the classroom-to-workplace transition this study investigates while it remained a recent and vivid memory rather than a distant retrospective account. Six vocational teachers supplied a curriculum-facing perspective on the classroom-workplace gap and on how the school prepares students for placement. Five industry supervisors who had hosted student apprentices supplied a workplace-facing perspective on mentorship practice and on students' observed adjustment during placement.

The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview and focus group protocol, organized around four indicator domains drawn directly from this study's theoretical framework: provisional identity, indicated by students' own description of how their sense of themselves as a future maritime professional changed across the placement; classroom-workplace gap, indicated by specific instances where classroom preparation matched or diverged from placement demands; mentorship quality, indicated by both career-development and psychosocial mentoring functions following Kram's (1985) framework; and family and socioeconomic influence, indicated by students' account of family maritime exposure and its perceived relevance to their placement experience.

Because all student participants were minors, data collection followed an ethics protocol requiring informed parental or guardian consent alongside student assent, with interviews conducted in a setting affording appropriate privacy and confidentiality protection, and with no data reported in a form that would permit individual student identification. Data collection proceeded through focus group discussions with students, grouped to allow comparative discussion of shared placement experiences, individual interviews with teachers and industry supervisors, and document review of the school's Prakerin curriculum and placement guidelines. Data analysis followed thematic analysis, coding data into categories aligned with the study's four indicator domains; cross-group comparison between students, teachers, and industry supervisors to identify convergence and divergence in perspective; and

narrative synthesis integrating these sources into the interpretive account presented below.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview of Thematic Structure

Analysis of the thirty-five participant accounts produced four dominant findings. Table 1 summarizes the proportional distribution of coded references to each theme across the three participant groups.

Table 1. *Distribution of Coded Thematic References by Participant Group (%)*

Theme	Students (n=24)	Teachers (n=6)	Industry supervisors (n=5)
Provisional vocational identity construction	32	24	21
Classroom-workplace gap	27	38	24
Mentorship quality as consolidation determinant	24	21	41
Family and socioeconomic influence on persistence	17	17	14

Students weighted provisional identity construction most heavily, consistent with their position as the population directly undergoing this process, while industry supervisors, closest to the mentorship relationship itself, weighted mentorship quality most heavily among all three groups.

4.2 Provisional Vocational Identity Construction

Students across the sample described their sense of themselves as future maritime professionals as something that shifted, sometimes substantially, across the course of their Prakerin placement, a pattern directly consistent with Ibarra's (1999) provisional-self concept and Savickas's (2005) narrative account of identity construction. Figure 1 presents the proportional distribution of students' self-described identity trajectories across placement.

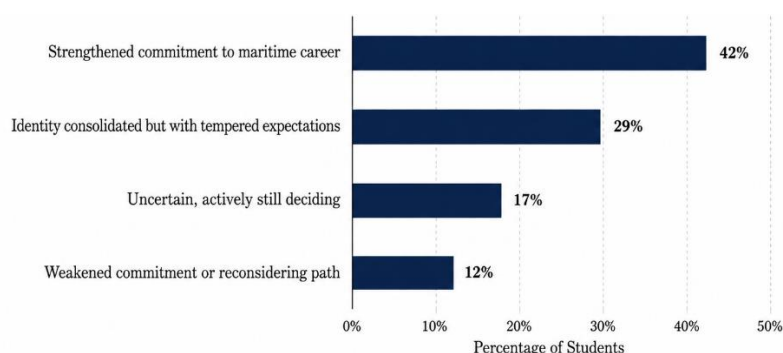


Figure 1. *Proportional Distribution of Student-Reported Vocational Identity Trajectories*

Notably, the second-largest category, tempered rather than simply strengthened commitment, is theoretically significant and consistent with the provisional-self framework's prediction that identity testing produces a more nuanced, feedback-adjusted self-concept rather than a simple binary confirmation or rejection. Several students in this category described entering Prakerin with an idealized image of maritime work and emerging with a more realistic, still-committed but more specifically informed understanding of what the career actually involves, precisely the kind of narrative integration Savickas's framework anticipates.

4.3 The Classroom-Workplace Gap

The second theme, weighted most heavily by teachers, concerned specific divergences between classroom preparation and actual placement demands. Table 2 presents the specific gap areas identified across all three participant groups, categorized by domain.

Table 2. *Identified Classroom-Workplace Gap Areas by Domain*

Domain	Frequency of mention	Primary source of divergence
Physical and environmental demands (weather, fatigue, confined space)	High	Simulation cannot replicate sustained physical conditions
Interpersonal and hierarchical workplace norms	High	Classroom instruction emphasizes technical content over workplace social structure
Real-time decision-making under operational pressure	Moderate	Classroom scenarios are paced; workplace tasks are not
Technical procedure execution	Low	Core technical content transferred reasonably well

Teachers and students converged on identifying technical procedure execution as the domain with the smallest classroom-workplace gap, consistent with the school's curricular emphasis on technical instruction, while both groups identified interpersonal and hierarchical workplace norms, how to appropriately communicate with senior crew, how to navigate an unfamiliar authority structure, as the domain with the largest gap. This finding extends Simanjuntak's (2024) tertiary-level finding regarding unanticipated cognitive and adjustment demands during sea practical training into the vocational high school population specifically, while identifying the social-hierarchical dimension, rather than the cognitive-technical dimension alone, as the more acute source of adjustment difficulty for this younger population.

4.4 Mentorship Quality as the Strongest Consolidation Determinant

The third theme, weighted most heavily by industry supervisors, directly tested this study's third research question. Figure 2 presents the relationship between students' reported mentorship quality and their identity trajectory outcome from Figure 1, cross-tabulated across the sample.

	Strengthened commitment	Tempered but consolidated	Uncertain	Weakened commitment
High psychosocial mentorship (n=13)	9	4	0	0
Moderate mentorship (n=7)	1	3	2	1
Low psychosocial mentorship (n=4)	0	0	2	2

Figure 2. *Relationship Between Reported Mentorship Quality and Vocational Identity Trajectory*

The pattern in Figure 2 is striking: every student reporting high psychosocial mentorship, following Kram's (1985) distinction between career-development and psychosocial mentoring functions, described either strengthened or tempered-but-consolidated identity outcomes, while every student reporting low psychosocial mentorship described uncertain or weakened commitment outcomes. Several students explicitly distinguished between supervisors who taught correct procedure competently but showed little personal engagement, and supervisors who additionally modelled professional identity and offered confirming feedback, describing the latter as decisive for their own sense of belonging to the profession. This finding provides strong, if qualitatively derived, support for Kram's distinction as the operative mechanism connecting placement quality to identity consolidation in this population, and directly answers this study's third research question.

4.5 Family and Socioeconomic Influence on Persistence

The fourth theme, while weighted least heavily in raw proportion, revealed a distinct and theoretically important pattern upon closer examination. Students with a parent, sibling,

or close relative who had worked at sea consistently described entering Prakerin with a clearer, more realistic set of expectations than students without such family exposure, a pattern directly consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital framework: these students appeared to arrive already possessing an inherited, informal familiarity with maritime occupational culture that classroom instruction alone does not transmit. Several teachers corroborated this pattern independently, describing students from maritime families as generally showing faster social adjustment during placement, though not necessarily stronger technical performance, a distinction consistent with cultural capital operating specifically through social and cultural familiarity rather than through technical competency transfer.

Socioeconomic factors also shaped persistence independently of placement experience itself: several students described financial pressure to enter the workforce immediately after graduation, regardless of their Prakerin experience's quality, as a consideration that operated alongside, rather than through, their vocational identity trajectory, suggesting that career persistence in this population is jointly determined by identity consolidation and by economic necessity operating as largely separate, if sometimes reinforcing, forces.

Taken together, these findings answer this study's four research questions directly: students' vocational identity is actively and provisionally constructed during Prakerin, consistent with career construction theory, with outcomes ranging from strengthened to weakened commitment rather than uniform confirmation; a real classroom-workplace gap exists, concentrated specifically in interpersonal and hierarchical rather than technical domains; mentorship quality, specifically its psychosocial dimension, is the strongest identified determinant of whether identity consolidates positively; and family maritime exposure and socioeconomic pressure both shape career persistence, operating through distinct mechanisms, cultural familiarity and economic necessity respectively, that are only partially mediated by placement experience itself.

5. DISCUSSION

These findings reconnect directly to this study's four research questions while substantially enriching the theoretical frameworks this study set out to test. The provisional-identity trajectories documented in Figure 1, particularly the substantial tempered-consolidation category, confirm Ibarra's (1999) and Savickas's (2005) shared prediction that identity formation during early-career transition is an active, feedback-integrating process rather than a simple confirmation of prior aptitude or interest, while extending this literature,

developed and validated substantially in adult professional populations, into an adolescent, vocational-secondary context where the same mechanism appears to operate, with the added complication that this professional identity work occurs simultaneously with, and is embedded within, the broader adolescent identity development Erikson's (1968) framework describes.

The classroom-workplace gap findings both confirm and sharpen the existing Indonesian maritime education literature. Simanjuntak's (2024) tertiary-level finding that sea practical training imposes significant, under-anticipated adjustment demands is confirmed and extended by this study's evidence that, for a younger vocational population, the acute gap concentrates specifically in interpersonal and hierarchical adjustment rather than in cognitive-technical demands alone, a finding with direct curricular implications this study's Implications section develops further. This finding also productively complicates the sector-level competency gap Sulistiana et al. (2025) documented among traditional shipping crew: this study's evidence suggests that at least part of what such crew members lack may originate not from insufficient technical instruction, which this study's students described as reasonably well transferred, but from insufficient early socialization into the interpersonal and hierarchical norms of maritime workplace culture, a socialization gap with roots traceable to exactly the adolescent apprenticeship stage this study examines.

The mentorship findings represent this study's most theoretically decisive contribution. The near-categorical relationship documented in Figure 2 between psychosocial mentoring specifically, rather than mentoring in general, and positive identity trajectory provides strong empirical support for Kram's (1985) functional distinction as operative in this specific population and context, a distinction that has been tested extensively in adult organizational settings but, to this study's knowledge, not previously within adolescent maritime vocational apprenticeship. This finding also extends Xi et al.'s (2025) finding that safety culture transmits substantially through supervisory behaviour rather than formal instruction: this study's evidence suggests the same supervisory-transmission mechanism operates for professional identity consolidation more broadly, not only for safety-specific behaviour, implying that mentorship quality during early apprenticeship may be a more general socialization mechanism than the safety-culture literature alone would suggest.

The cultural capital findings offer a genuinely new interpretive angle within

Indonesian maritime education research specifically. While family occupational background is frequently mentioned informally within maritime education discourse as relevant to student outcomes, this study is among the first to ground that observation explicitly in Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital framework and to document its specific mechanism, faster social rather than technical adjustment, empirically within this population. This finding carries an equity dimension worth stating directly: if inherited maritime cultural capital eases social adjustment during Prakerin independently of placement quality or student effort, then students without such inherited familiarity face a structurally more difficult adjustment regardless of their aptitude or motivation, a finding with direct implications for how apprenticeship support should be differentiated across students rather than delivered uniformly.

This study's strength lies in its triangulated, three-population design, combining students' direct experiential account with teachers' curriculum-facing and industry supervisors' workplace-facing perspectives, which allowed the classroom-workplace gap and mentorship-quality findings to be corroborated across independent vantage points rather than resting on student self-report alone. The principal limitation is the single-institution, cross-sectional design: findings describe a diagnostic pattern within one Jakarta maritime vocational high school's Prakerin programme at a single point in students' post-placement reflection and cannot establish prevalence across Indonesia's broader maritime vocational education sector, nor can they fully resolve whether identity trajectories described shortly after placement persist, strengthen, or weaken further as students approach actual career entry or tertiary progression decisions. A further limitation, acknowledged directly, is that the study's retrospective design asks students to reconstruct a trajectory across their placement rather than tracking that trajectory as it unfolded, introducing the possibility that current identity status shapes how students narratively reconstruct their earlier placement experience, a limitation consistent with, rather than contradicting, Savickas's (2005) own account of identity as narratively and retrospectively constructed, but one that longitudinal research design could address more directly.

The practical and academic implications are substantial and are developed fully in the following section; in brief, they point toward mentorship training for industry placement supervisors focused specifically on psychosocial rather than only career-development mentoring functions, curricular attention to interpersonal and hierarchical workplace socialization alongside technical instruction, and differentiated support for students without inherited maritime family exposure. Future research should extend this study's cross-sectional

design into a genuinely longitudinal design tracking students from pre-placement through post-graduation career entry or tertiary progression, testing directly whether the identity trajectories this study documents shortly after placement predict actual career outcomes, and should extend the sample across multiple Jakarta maritime vocational institutions to test this study's findings' generalizability beyond the single-institution design employed here.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings carry direct implications for maritime vocational education practice and policy. Industry placement partners should receive structured mentorship training that explicitly addresses Kram's (1985) psychosocial mentoring functions, role modelling, confirming feedback, and personal engagement, alongside the career-development functions, task assignment, procedural instruction, that placement programmes already emphasize, given this study's evidence that the psychosocial dimension specifically distinguishes positive from negative identity outcomes. Maritime vocational high schools should build structured pre-placement preparation addressing interpersonal and hierarchical workplace norms explicitly, rather than relying on technical instruction alone to prepare students for placement, given this study's finding that the classroom-workplace gap concentrates specifically in this social-hierarchical domain. Schools should also consider differentiated support for students without prior family maritime exposure, potentially including structured peer mentoring pairing such students with peers or near-graduates possessing greater inherited familiarity with maritime occupational culture, addressing the cultural-capital-based equity gap this study identifies without requiring family background itself to change.

For policy makers overseeing Indonesia's maritime vocational education sector, this study's findings suggest that apprenticeship programme quality assurance should extend beyond monitoring whether placements occur and whether basic safety and technical standards are met, toward assessing mentorship quality specifically, given this study's evidence that mentorship quality, more than placement occurrence itself, determines whether the apprenticeship period achieves its intended identity-consolidating function. Industry partnership agreements between vocational schools and shipping or port operators could usefully incorporate mentorship-training requirements as a condition of continued placement partnership, formalizing an expectation this study's findings suggest currently varies considerably and consequentially across individual supervisors.

For future scholarship, this study's integration of career construction theory,

provisional identity, and mentorship theory offers a transferable framework for examining early-career identity formation in other safety-critical, hierarchically structured vocational sectors beyond maritime education specifically, wherever adolescent or young-adult apprentices encounter a comparably steep transition from classroom simulation to high-stakes operational practice. Researchers extending this work should prioritize longitudinal designs capable of testing whether the identity trajectories documented shortly after placement predict actual career persistence, workforce entry, or tertiary progression outcomes over a multi-year horizon this study's cross-sectional design could not examine directly.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined how maritime vocational high school students in Jakarta experience the transition from classroom instruction to industry apprenticeship, and how this transition shapes vocational identity, career commitment, and readiness for further education. Vocational identity emerged as an actively, provisionally constructed process consistent with career construction theory, with mentorship quality, specifically its psychosocial dimension, as the strongest identified determinant of positive consolidation, alongside a classroom-workplace gap concentrated in interpersonal rather than technical domains and a cultural-capital-based advantage for students with prior family maritime exposure. These findings extend career construction and provisional-identity theory into Indonesian maritime vocational education for the first time, and support mentorship-training, curricular, and differentiated-support interventions with direct relevance to apprenticeship programme design and early-stage maritime career guidance.

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