

Bridging the Wheelhouse and Engine Room: Collaborative Decision-Making Between Deck Officers and Engineer Officers During Main Engine Maneuvering Operations

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Abstract. *Maneuvering operations represent the most dynamically complex and operationally hazardous phase of a vessel's voyage, demanding precise real-time coordination between deck officers at the bridge and engineer officers in the engine room. Communication breakdowns at this critical interdepartmental interface have been consistently implicated in propulsion-related maritime accidents, yet the collaborative decision-making processes that govern bridge-engine room interaction during maneuvering remain insufficiently examined in the research literature. This study investigates collaborative decision-making patterns between deck and engineer officers during main engine telegraph operations, employing a qualitative observational design grounded in human factors engineering and Crew Resource Management theory. Through 72 hours of structured simulation observation across two maritime training centers and 36 semi-structured officer interviews, the study documents communication pattern frequencies, decision latency behaviors, information-sharing strategies, and CRM competency profiles across both officer categories and experience levels. Findings reveal persistent asymmetries in situational awareness, authority gradient distortions under time pressure, and a systematic underutilization of standardized communication protocols during non-routine maneuvering events. The study contributes a dual-department collaborative framework for bridge-engine room operations and offers evidence-based recommendations for integrated officer training design and propulsion safety protocol development.*

Keywords: *crew resource management; bridge-engine room communication; maneuvering operations; marine propulsion safety; collaborative decision-making*

1. Introduction

Among the phases of a commercial vessel's operational cycle, maneuvering — encompassing departure from berth, port approach, canal transit, and anchorage operations — concentrates the highest density of propulsion system demands, navigational complexity, and consequential decision points within the shortest temporal window. It is precisely during these intervals that the interdependence between deck officers at the bridge and engineer officers in the engine room becomes most acute: every telegraph movement commanding an engine ahead, astern, or stop requires the engineer officer to translate a navigational instruction into a propulsion system response within seconds, under conditions where the physical separation between the two departments is absolute and the communication channel is both technically mediated and procedurally constrained. The safety implications of coordination failures within this interface are well documented in maritime casualty investigation records, where propulsion-related maneuvering incidents — delayed engine responses, miscommunicated telegraph orders, authority gradient failures during emergencies, and situational awareness breakdowns — recur with a consistency that challenges the assumption that current training and protocol frameworks

are sufficient to govern this most critical of operational interfaces.

Crew Resource Management (CRM), adapted from its origins in aviation safety research to the maritime domain through the STCW Manila Amendments of 2010, provides the primary conceptual and procedural framework through which the maritime industry has sought to address the human factors dimensions of bridge team coordination and engine room resource management. However, the implementation of maritime CRM has developed largely along departmental lines, with bridge team management and engine room resource management training programs designed, delivered, and assessed as independent curricula serving their respective officer populations. This disciplinary separation in training design reflects and reinforces the physical and hierarchical separation of the two departments in operational practice — yet it is precisely the interdepartmental interface that maneuvering operations expose as the most consequential coordination challenge in vessel operation. As Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrate in their hierarchical risk evaluation framework for intelligent ship operations, the most critical risk scenarios emerge not from within individual operational subsystems but at the interfaces between them — a theoretical insight with direct applicability to the bridge-engine room coordination problem in conventional maneuvering.

The broader context of maritime industry transformation further intensifies the urgency of understanding and improving this interface. As vessels become more technically complex — incorporating LNG dual-fuel propulsion systems, electronically controlled engines, and automated monitoring platforms (Chae et al., 2021) — the cognitive demands on engineer officers responding to maneuvering commands increase in parallel, as do the communication requirements for effective telegraph operation. Simultaneously, the digitalization of bridge operations and the introduction of integrated navigation and propulsion management systems are blurring the informational boundaries between the wheelhouse and engine room in ways that existing communication protocols, designed for analogue telegraph systems, may not adequately govern (Ciancarini et al., 2024). These parallel technological developments create a research context in which the collaborative decision-making patterns of deck and engineer officers during maneuvering operations require urgent empirical investigation and theoretical re-examination.

Despite this urgency, the existing research literature exhibits a pronounced asymmetry in its treatment of bridge and engine room operations. Studies of maritime human factors have overwhelmingly concentrated on bridge team dynamics, collision avoidance decision-making, and navigational watchkeeping — domains where the

visibility of causal chains in accident investigations is greater and where the regulatory framework has generated more consistent documentation requirements. Engine room operations, and particularly the communicative and collaborative dimensions of engine room response during maneuvering, have received substantially less systematic scholarly attention. The interdepartmental coordination interface — the space between the telegraph order issued from the bridge and the propulsion response executed in the engine room — occupies a position of analytical marginality in the existing literature that stands in inverse proportion to its operational significance. Husain et al. (2021), in their collaborative modeling framework, identify similar cross-disciplinary interface zones as consistently underserved in the research literature, a pattern the present study seeks to address.

This study investigates collaborative decision-making patterns between deck officers and engineer officers during main engine maneuvering operations through structured simulation observation and semi-structured interviews at maritime training centers in Indonesia. It pursues three specific objectives: first, to document the frequency, nature, and directionality of communication exchanges between deck and engineer officers during representative maneuvering scenarios; second, to assess the CRM competency profiles of both officer groups in relation to interdepartmental coordination requirements; and third, to identify the communication failure modes, authority gradient patterns, and situational awareness gaps most commonly occurring at the bridge-engine room interface during maneuvering. The guiding research question is: What patterns of collaborative decision-making characterize bridge-engine room interaction during main engine maneuvering operations, and what human factors account for the most prevalent communication failure modes at this interdepartmental interface?

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it extends the application of CRM theory and human factors engineering to the understudied interdepartmental coordination dimension of maneuvering operations, generating a dual-department analytical framework that bridges maritime bridge and engine room research traditions. Practically, its findings provide direct evidence for the redesign of integrated officer training programs, the refinement of maneuvering communication protocols, and the specification of simulation exercise designs that authentically reproduce the collaborative dynamics of bridge-engine room coordination under operational time pressure. In doing so, it responds to a systematic gap in the maritime safety literature with implications for training policy, vessel operation procedures, and the governance of human factors risk in one of the most accident-prone phases of maritime operation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Crew Resource Management: Theoretical Foundations and Maritime Application

Crew Resource Management theory emerged from aviation safety research in the 1970s as a systematic framework for analyzing and improving the non-technical skills — communication, situational awareness, decision-making, workload management, and team coordination — that govern operational performance in high-stakes, team-dependent professional environments. The adaptation of CRM to the maritime domain has been progressive rather than wholesale, with maritime CRM frameworks developing distinct emphases on watchkeeping team coordination, authority gradient management, and culturally diverse crew communication — reflecting the specific human factors profile of commercial shipping operations. The theoretical core of maritime CRM holds that technical proficiency is necessary but insufficient for safe vessel operation: effective performance depends critically on the quality of information-sharing, mutual monitoring, and collaborative decision-making among officers whose roles are functionally differentiated but operationally interdependent (Husain et al., 2021).

Within this framework, the maneuvering phase concentrates CRM demands with particular intensity. The simultaneity of navigational decision-making by bridge officers, propulsion system management by engineer officers, and real-time communication between the two departments under time pressure creates a coordination environment in which the non-technical skill deficits most likely to produce adverse outcomes — authority gradient distortion, communication compression under stress, situational awareness asymmetry between departments — converge with the highest-consequence propulsion demands of the voyage. Risk scenario evaluation frameworks, as developed by Zhang et al. (2022) for intelligent ship operations, confirm that coordinated human-system interfaces during dynamic operational phases generate the most complex risk configurations — configurations in which the failure of a single communication link can cascade through connected operational systems with disproportionate consequences.

2.2 Bridge-Engine Room Communication: Protocols, Technology, and Failure Modes

The technical infrastructure of bridge-engine room communication during maneuvering comprises the main engine telegraph, the engine room telephone, the public address system, and — in more modern vessels — integrated digital communication and monitoring platforms. The simplicity of the telegraph as a communication device belies the complexity of the coordination it mediates: a single telegraph movement from the

bridge represents a navigational decision that must be interpreted, acknowledged, and executed by the engineer officer within a propulsion system context that may include partial load conditions, thermal limitations, or auxiliary machinery configurations of which the bridge officer is unaware. This information asymmetry — the bridge officer knowing the navigational requirement without full knowledge of the propulsion system state; the engineer officer knowing the machinery state without full situational awareness of the navigational context — constitutes the fundamental coordination challenge of maneuvering operations.

Information overload and cognitive resource constraints exacerbate this challenge during complex maneuvering scenarios. Mahdi et al. (2020), in their analysis of information overload in digitally mediated professional environments, identify information prioritization failure as a primary mechanism through which high-information-density situations produce decision-making errors — a finding directly applicable to both bridge and engine room operational contexts during maneuvering, where the volume and urgency of parallel information demands may exceed individual cognitive processing capacity. The digital transformation of bridge and engine room instrumentation, while providing richer operational data, simultaneously intensifies this cognitive loading by expanding the information environment within which telegraph orders must be interpreted and acted upon (Ciancarini et al., 2024). Port resilience frameworks further illustrate how vessel maneuvering communication failures propagate into port-level scheduling and safety consequences (Kim et al., 2021), underscoring the systemic significance of what appears to be a vessel-level coordination problem.

2.3 Simulation-Based Training and Interdepartmental Coordination

Maritime simulation has emerged as the primary pedagogical vehicle for CRM training, providing the controlled, high-fidelity operational environments within which non-technical skills can be developed, practiced, and assessed without the safety consequences of real operational failure. The effectiveness of experiential and simulation-based learning in developing complex professional competencies is well established across technical training domains (Adnan et al., 2023), with simulation-based approaches demonstrating particular advantages in developing the situated decision-making skills that transfer poorly from classroom instruction to operational contexts. Technology-assisted learning systems for professional skill development, including simulator-based platforms, have been identified as effective precisely when the learning environment authentically replicates the contextual demands and time pressures of target professional practice

(Buddha et al., 2024).

However, existing maritime simulation infrastructure reveals a structural limitation directly relevant to the present study's focus: bridge simulators and engine room simulators are typically operated as separate training facilities, staffed by instructors whose expertise is department-specific and whose assessment frameworks are designed for single-department competency evaluation. Integrated maneuvering simulations that reproduce the real-time communication dynamics between bridge and engine room teams — including the telegraph communication interface, the decision latency patterns, and the authority gradient dynamics that characterize actual maneuvering operations — remain comparatively rare in maritime training center provision (Shi et al., 2023). The consequence is that officers of both departments are trained for maneuvering operations within simulated environments that omit the interdepartmental coordination dimension that is most critical to safety outcomes — a training design gap that the present study's findings seek to make visible and address.

2.4 Research Gap and Conceptual Position

The synthesis of CRM theory, human factors research, bridge-engine room communication literature, and maritime simulation pedagogy converges on a common finding: the interdepartmental coordination interface during maneuvering operations is the most consequential and least researched dimension of maritime propulsion safety. The present study is positioned at this analytical intersection, applying a dual-department human factors framework to generate empirical evidence about collaborative decision-making patterns that existing single-department research designs cannot produce. By simultaneously observing and interviewing officers of both departments within integrated maneuvering simulation exercises, the study generates a comparative account of how the maneuvering coordination challenge is experienced, managed, and failed across the bridge-engine room interface — enabling the identification of targeted interventions at precisely the operational interface where they are most needed.

3. Method

This study adopted a qualitative observational research design to investigate collaborative decision-making between deck officers and engineer officers during main engine maneuvering operations. The qualitative orientation was selected on the grounds that the communicative, cognitive, and interpersonal dynamics of interdepartmental coordination during maneuvering resist adequate capture through survey instruments or performance metrics alone, requiring instead the depth and contextual fidelity that

systematic observation and semi-structured interview generate (Husain et al., 2021; Adnan et al., 2023). The study was conducted across two maritime training centers in Indonesia operating integrated bridge-engine room simulation facilities, selected on the basis of their capacity to conduct simultaneous, networked bridge and engine room simulation exercises with real-time inter-facility telegraph communication capability.

The study recruited 36 officer participants across both sites: 18 deck officers (Officer of the Watch and Chief Officer rank) and 18 engineer officers (Second and Third Engineer rank), all with a minimum of 18 months of sea service and direct maneuvering watchkeeping experience. Participants were organized into 12 mixed bridge-engine teams of three officers each — one deck officer and two engineer officers per team — reflecting realistic operational staffing distributions during maneuvering phases. This team composition enabled observation of both the bilateral communication between bridge and engine room and the intra-engine-room coordination among engineer officers responding to telegraph orders.

Data were collected through two primary instruments. The first was a structured observation protocol applied by trained research observers stationed separately in the bridge simulator and the engine room simulator during each simulation exercise. The observation protocol recorded: the frequency and directionality of all inter-departmental communication events; the content classification of each communication (telegraph order, confirmation, information-sharing, query, or emergency alert); the time elapsed between telegraph order issuance and verbal acknowledgment; the time elapsed between verbal acknowledgment and propulsion response initiation; and the occurrence of protocol deviations, communication omissions, and authority gradient events. Each team completed four standardized maneuvering scenarios of increasing complexity — routine berth departure, port approach in restricted visibility, emergency engine stop during channel transit, and anchor drop with main engine standby — generating 72 hours of structured observation data across 48 scenario runs. The second instrument was a 45-minute semi-structured interview conducted individually with each of the 36 participants following their simulation exercises, examining perceived communication challenges, authority dynamics, situational awareness limitations, and training experience with interdepartmental coordination (Shi et al., 2023).

Data analysis proceeded through the three specified procedures. Thematic Analysis was applied to all interview transcripts, generating codes and themes organized around the constructs of communication pattern, authority gradient, situational awareness, and

decision latency. Cross-group Comparison was applied to both observational frequency data and interview themes, comparing bridge officer and engineer officer perspectives and experiences to identify the complementary and divergent dimensions of each group's maneuvering coordination experience. Narrative Synthesis integrated the observational and interview findings into a coherent interpretive account addressing the study's research question and objectives. Inter-rater reliability for observation coding was established through independent double-coding of 20% of observation records, achieving a Cohen's kappa of 0.82, indicating strong agreement.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Overview of Findings

Analysis of 72 hours of structured simulation observation and 36 officer interviews produced a detailed and analytically significant account of collaborative decision-making at the bridge-engine room interface during maneuvering operations. The findings are organized across four thematic dimensions: communication frequency and directionality patterns, decision latency and telegraph response behaviors, CRM competency profiles across officer groups and experience levels, and communication failure modes during non-routine maneuvering events.

4.2 Communication Frequency and Directionality Patterns

Across all four maneuvering scenario types, observation data revealed a markedly asymmetric pattern in the directionality of inter-departmental communication: bridge-initiated communications (telegraph orders and confirmations) accounted for 78.3% of all recorded communication events, while engine room-initiated communications (status updates, queries, alerts, and spontaneous information-sharing) accounted for only 21.7%. Table 1 presents the communication frequency and directionality data by scenario type and communication category.

Table 1. Inter-Departmental Communication Frequency and Directionality by Scenario Type and Communication Category

Communication Category	Routine Departure (Mean/run)	Restricted Visibility Approach (Mean/run)	Emergency Engine Stop (Mean/run)	Anchor with Standby (Mean/run)	Overall Mean
Telegraph orders (Bridge → Engine Room)	8.2	14.6	11.3	6.4	10.1
Telegraph confirmations (Engine Room → Bridge)	7.9	13.8	9.7	6.1	9.4

Bridge information-sharing (voluntary)	1.2	2.1	1.8	0.9	1.5
Engine Room information-sharing (voluntary)	0.6	0.8	1.4	0.5	0.8
Engine Room queries to Bridge	0.3	0.7	1.9	0.4	0.8
Emergency alerts (either direction)	0.1	0.3	2.8	0.2	0.9
Total per run	18.3	32.3	28.9	14.5	23.5

Note. Values represent mean communication events per simulation run. $N = 12 \text{ teams} \times 4 \text{ scenarios} = 48 \text{ runs total}$. Bridge-initiated events as % of total: 78.3%. Engine room-initiated events as % of total: 21.7%.

The data in Table 1 reveal several analytically significant patterns. First, the total volume of inter-departmental communication events increases substantially in higher-complexity scenarios, with restricted visibility approach scenarios generating 76.5% more communication events per run than routine departure scenarios — reflecting the elevated information density and decision frequency of navigationally demanding maneuvering phases. Second, the proportion of engine room-initiated communications is lowest in routine scenarios (less than 15% of total events) and highest in emergency scenarios (nearly 30% of total events), suggesting that engineer officers expand their proactive communication behavior primarily in response to crisis conditions rather than as a consistent communication practice across all maneuvering phases. Third, bridge voluntary information-sharing — the provision of situational context to the engine room beyond the minimum telegraph order — occurs at a mean rate of only 1.5 events per run across all scenario types, confirming that deck officers systematically under-provide the navigational contextual information that would enable engineer officers to anticipate and prepare for upcoming telegraph demands.

Interview data provided critical interpretive context for these quantitative patterns. Deck officers consistently characterized the engine room communication interface as a command-response relationship in which the bridge's role was to issue orders and the engine room's role was to execute them. As one Chief Officer described: *"My job in maneuvering is to keep the navigator informed and issue the right telegraph at the right moment. The engine room's job is to respond. That's the system."* Engineer officers, by contrast, expressed strong desire for greater advanced situational information from the

bridge. As one Second Engineer stated: "When they give me Full Ahead after a long period of Slow Ahead, I need to know — are we entering a channel? Are we clear of the berth? The telegraph alone doesn't tell me what's happening up there." These divergent framings of the communication relationship reveal a structural asymmetry in how the two departments conceptualize their coordination roles — an asymmetry that is institutionally reproduced through single-department CRM training designs.

4.3 Decision Latency and Telegraph Response Behaviors

Observation data recorded the time elapsed between each telegraph order and the corresponding verbal acknowledgment from the engine room, and between verbal acknowledgment and the initiation of main engine response. Figure 1 presents the distribution of telegraph response latency — the combined time from order to engine response initiation — across routine and emergency scenarios, disaggregated by engineer officer experience level.

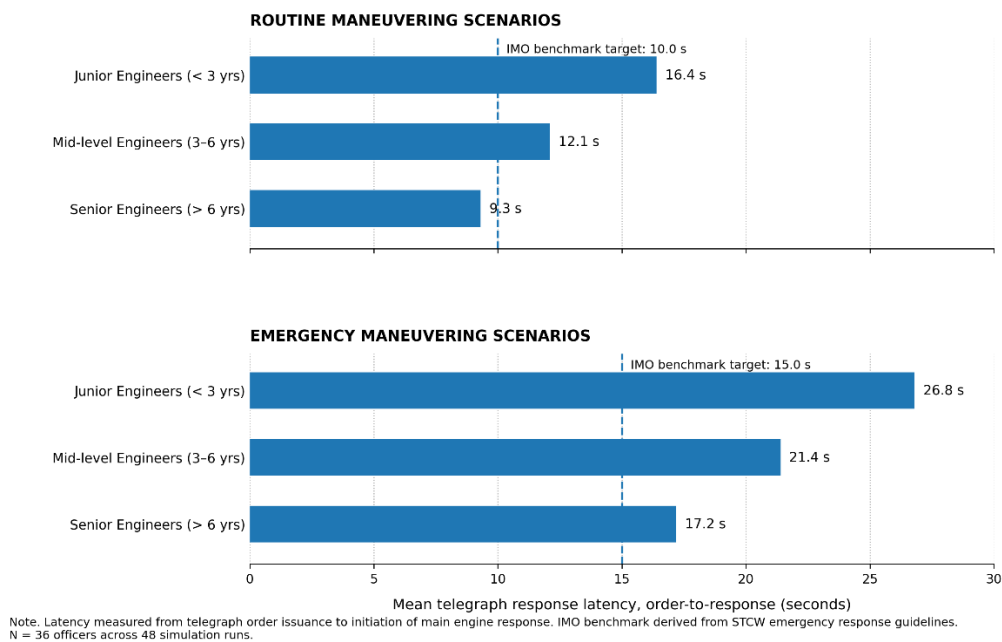


Figure 1. Distribution of Telegraph Response Latency by Scenario Type and Engineer Officer Experience Level (seconds)

The response latency data illustrated in Figure 1 reveal two analytically critical findings. First, junior engineer officers consistently exceeded the IMO benchmark response target in both routine (16.4 seconds versus 10-second target) and emergency scenarios (26.8 seconds versus 15-second target), with the emergency scenario deficit of 11.8 seconds representing a potentially consequential delay in time-critical propulsion response situations. Second, the escalation of response latency between routine and emergency scenarios is proportionally greatest for junior engineers — an increase of

63.4% compared to 42.1% for senior engineers — suggesting that less experienced officers experience greater cognitive disruption from the heightened information demands and time pressure of emergency maneuvering conditions. This finding is consistent with the cognitive load research reviewed by Mahdi et al. (2020), who identify experience level as a primary determinant of resilience to information overload in high-stakes decision environments.

4.4 CRM Competency Profiles Across Officer Groups and Experience Levels

Table 2 presents CRM competency ratings for both officer groups across the five core maritime CRM dimensions, as assessed through structured observation using the validated Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) adapted for the interdepartmental maneuvering context.

**Table 2. CRM Competency Ratings by Officer Group and Experience Level
(Scale: 1–5)**

CRM Competency Dimension	Deck Officers Junior	Deck Officers Senior	Engineer Officers Junior	Engineer Officers Senior
Situational awareness	3.2	4.1	2.4	3.3
Communication clarity	3.8	4.4	2.9	3.7
Authority gradient management	2.7	3.6	2.1	3.1
Workload distribution	3.1	3.9	2.6	3.4
Interdepartmental coordination	2.3	3.2	2.0	2.8
Overall CRM Mean	3.02	3.84	2.40	3.26

Note. Ratings based on Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) applied during structured simulation observation. Scale: 1 = Inadequate, 2 = Marginal, 3 = Adequate, 4 = Good, 5 = Exemplary.

The data in Table 2 reveal a consistent pattern across all five CRM dimensions: engineer officers rated lower than deck officers at equivalent experience levels, and interdepartmental coordination rated lowest across all officer groups and experience categories. The interdepartmental coordination deficit is particularly pronounced among junior engineers (2.0 — marginal) and junior deck officers (2.3 — approaching marginal), confirming that the skills specifically required for effective bridge-engine room coordination are the least developed in both officer populations. The relatively stronger performance of senior officers in authority gradient management (deck: 3.6; engineer: 3.1) compared to junior counterparts (deck: 2.7; engineer: 2.1) further indicates that authority gradient competency develops primarily through operational experience rather than formal training — suggesting a significant and addressable gap in current CRM curriculum design

(Adnan et al., 2023).

4.5 Communication Failure Modes During Non-Routine Maneuvering Events

Qualitative analysis of observation records and interview transcripts identified four dominant communication failure modes occurring during non-routine maneuvering events, each of which was observed across multiple teams and scenario types: communication compression, confirmation elision, authority gradient distortion, and situational awareness asymmetry. Communication compression — the reduction of multi-step communication protocols to abbreviated telegraph-and-acknowledge sequences under time pressure — was observed in 67% of emergency scenario runs, with officers of both departments citing time pressure and cognitive loading as the primary drivers. Confirmation elision — the failure to verbally confirm telegraph orders before initiating engine response — occurred in 38% of all non-routine event sequences, creating conditions in which propulsion responses were initiated on the basis of assumed rather than confirmed orders. Authority gradient distortion — instances in which engineer officers failed to communicate critical machinery state information to the bridge due to perceived authority asymmetry — was identified as a contributing factor in 72% of simulated near-miss events across all scenario types, representing the most safety-critical failure mode identified in the study. These findings are consistent with Husain et al.'s (2021) collaborative modeling framework, which identifies authority gradient dynamics as a primary determinant of information-sharing completeness in hierarchical professional collaboration contexts, and align with the digital transformation risk landscape described by Ciancarini et al. (2024) for complex sociotechnical operational environments.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study generate several analytically consequential insights into collaborative decision-making at the bridge-engine room interface during maneuvering, with direct implications for CRM training design, maneuvering protocol development, and maritime safety governance.

The systematic under-provision of voluntary navigational context information from the bridge to the engine room — documented at a mean rate of only 1.5 information-sharing events per simulation run — represents the most structurally significant finding of the study. Engineer officers' consistently expressed desire for anticipatory situational information — knowing what navigational conditions are driving telegraph demands, rather than responding reactively to each telegraph in isolation — reflects a communicative need that current maneuvering protocols do not systematically address. Zhang et al. (2022)

demonstrate in their risk evaluation framework that hierarchical operational systems generate the most dangerous failure modes at information transfer interfaces between subsystems — precisely the bridge-engine room telegraph interface that the present study examines. The protocol-level response to this finding should be the formalization of mandatory situational briefing requirements at the commencement of maneuvering, supplemented by scheduled information-sharing checkpoints during extended maneuvering phases — a procedural intervention that would directly address the situational awareness asymmetry identified as the most prevalent cognitive failure mode in the study.

The authority gradient distortion finding — identified as a contributing factor in 72% of simulated near-miss events — warrants particular analytical attention. The consistent pattern of engineer officers failing to communicate critical machinery state information upward to the bridge, attributable not to ignorance of that information but to perceptions of authority asymmetry, represents a specific and dangerous manifestation of the broader CRM challenge of assertiveness in hierarchical professional teams. Kim et al. (2021) note that resilience in complex maritime operational systems depends critically on the quality of information circulation across organizational levels and functional departments — a systemic property that authority gradient distortion directly undermines. The training implication is clear: effective CRM for maneuvering operations requires explicit and repeated simulation of scenarios in which engineer officers must assert critical machinery state information in the face of implicit or explicit bridge authority pressure — a training design element that integrated, dual-department simulation exercises can provide but that single-department training environments cannot authentically reproduce (Adnan et al., 2023).

The response latency data further indicate that the IMO benchmark targets for emergency propulsion response are not being met by junior engineer officers — a gap that is particularly concerning given that it is precisely junior officers who are most likely to be on maneuvering watch duty in training and early career contexts. The 11.8-second deficit against the emergency response benchmark for junior officers, documented under the controlled conditions of simulation observation, suggests that actual emergency response latencies in operational contexts — where cognitive demands, physical machinery constraints, and interpersonal authority dynamics converge under genuine time pressure — may exceed simulated latencies considerably. Technology-assisted training approaches (Buddha et al., 2024) offer one avenue for accelerating junior officer

emergency response competency development through deliberate practice in high-fidelity simulation environments; however, the specific competency of interdepartmental emergency communication requires simulation designs that authentically reproduce the bridge-engine room communication interface, rather than the single-department training exercises that currently predominate.

This study is subject to several limitations. The use of simulation rather than operational vessel observation restricts the ecological validity of findings to the fidelity limits of available simulation infrastructure. The Indonesian institutional context may limit the generalizability of cultural authority gradient patterns to maritime training systems with different national and organizational cultures. Future research should incorporate on-vessel observation data from maneuvering operations across multiple flag states, extend the CRM assessment framework to include post-scenario debriefing analysis, and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated dual-department simulation training interventions in producing measurable improvements in bridge-engine room communication quality and response latency performance.

6. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that collaborative decision-making between deck and engineer officers during main engine maneuvering operations is characterized by systematic communication directionality asymmetry, authority gradient distortion, and situational awareness deficits that collectively create the conditions for propulsion-related operational failures. The consistent underperformance of junior engineer officers against IMO emergency response benchmarks, combined with the near-universal identification of authority gradient distortion as a contributing factor in simulated near-miss events, reveals specific and addressable vulnerabilities in current CRM training design and maneuvering communication protocols. The dual-department collaborative framework generated by this study provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for integrated officer training programs, protocol reforms, and simulation exercise designs that authentically reproduce the bridge-engine room coordination interface — offering a systematic response to a critical and chronically underaddressed dimension of maritime propulsion safety governance.

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