

# Challenges and Opportunities of Climate Change for Female Seafarers – Cases in Taiwan

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# Outline

- 1 Impact of Climate Change on Female Seafarers
- 2 Gender-Based Challenges Faced by Female Seafarers
- 3 Renewable Energy : New Opportunities in Taiwan
- 4 Navigating Towards Gender Equality: Actions and Strategies

# 1

## Impact of Climate Change on Female Seafarers

# Rerouted : Navigational Shifts Due to Climate Change

The drop in water levels in the Panama Canal has led to changes in navigation routes, requiring ships traveling between the west and east coasts of the United States to bypass South America, thereby extending the voyage.



# Climate Change : A Double-Edged Sword

## Challenges

Extreme weather increases health risks and workload for seafarers. Uncertain schedules and isolation impact mental well-being.

## Opportunities

Emerging offshore wind power sector creates new job prospects. Taiwan's strategic position as a wind energy hotspot offers growth potential.

# Health Risks in a Changing Climate

1

## Physical Health

Increased injuries due to extreme weather conditions. Higher risk in illnesses during prolonged voyages.

2

## Mental Health

Extended periods at sea lead to isolation and loneliness. Uncertainty and stress contribute to anxiety and depression.

3

## Long-term Impact

Cumulative effects of stress and physical strain may lead to chronic health issues.

# 2

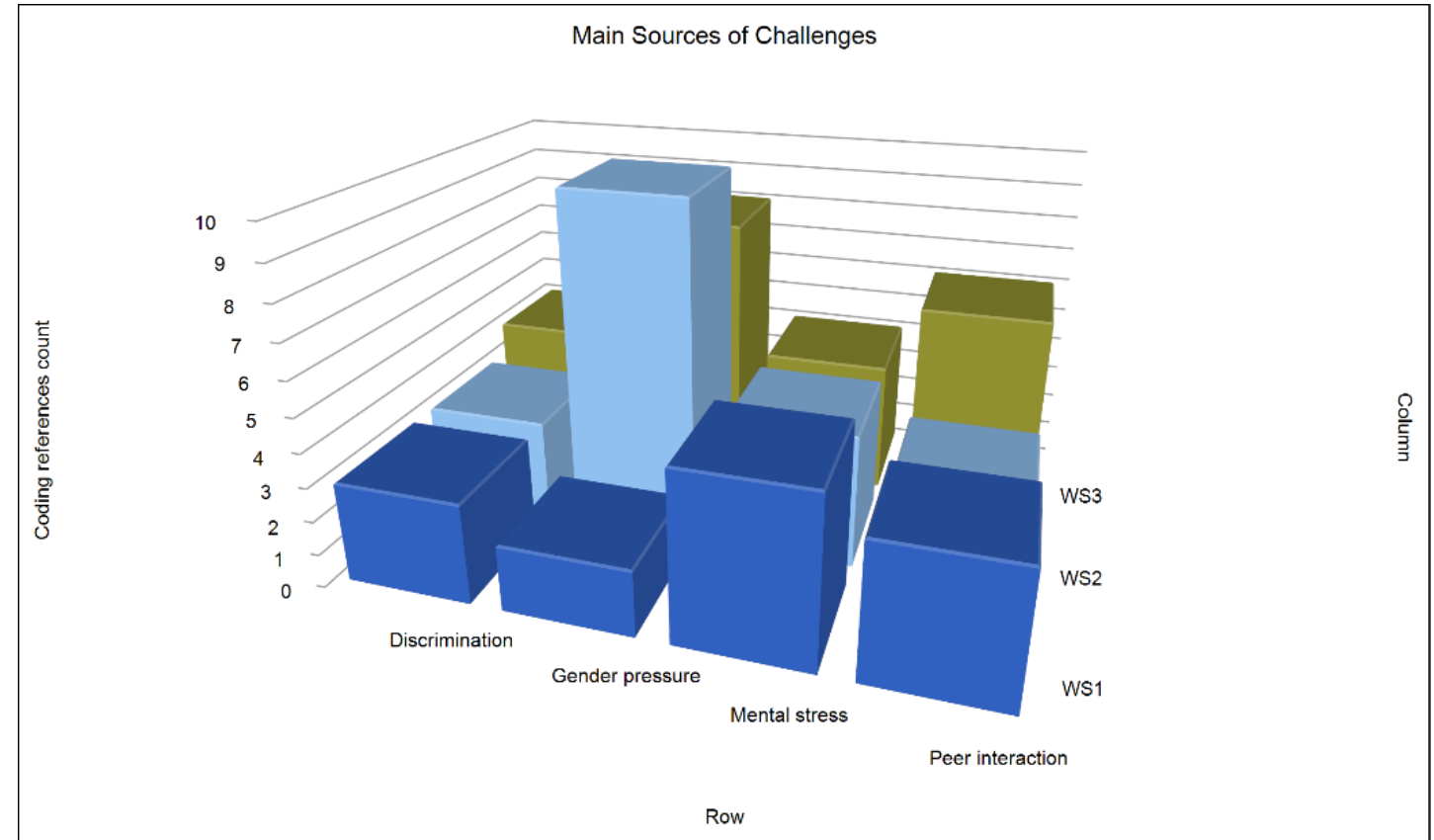
## **Gender-Based Challenges Faced by Female Seafarers**

## Fig. 1

### Main Source of Challenges

Interviewees stated that the challenges of working at sea come from **discrimination, gender pressure, mental stress, and peer interaction**, with **gender pressure being the most significant factor**.

Fig. 1 presents data from interviews with respondents, analyzed through matrix coding.





## Discrimination

WS1: I have a particularly vivid impression of a time when we were preparing to enter port and everyone was busy. As we were getting the ladder ready, the third officer on board looked at me and directly shouted over the intercom, "There's no one here, send someone."

WS3: You get looked down upon. They say things like, "You don't know anything, so what are you doing as a third officer?" They all think that as a woman, you're just there to be a decorative figure.

## Mental stress

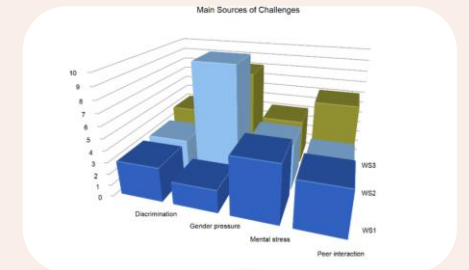
WS2: I felt that my sense of despair was growing faster while on the ship. Our satellite internet was unstable, and day after day, it really felt quite lonely and boring. The male seafarers would focus their attention on me. They didn't bully me, but they would talk privately and make jokes at my expense when I wasn't around.

WS3: I really couldn't take it anymore, so I told the chief mate that the captain had slapped my butt, and I just couldn't stand it. When I disembarked, I turned off my phone and didn't go home. I cried every day and had nightmares. Eventually, I went to see a psychologist, and it turned out I had PTSD.

## Gender pressure

WS1: I once received a call, and as soon as the person heard my voice and realized I was a woman, he immediately said, "Sorry, we're not hiring women right now." I was just stunned.

WS2: If I reported any harassment, the company's investigation would involve both me and the harasser being removed from the ship to return for questioning. In the end, it could be that I'm sidelined while the harasser continues working.



## Peer interaction

WS2: If you act more lively, people might think you're just trying to flirt. I've definitely heard similar rumors. But if you're more polite, they might feel you're hard to approach, or they could think you're proud just because you're a woman. When I'm on the ship, my emotions can get affected by this, which might impact my mental health."

# Persistent Challenges: Discrimination and Stereotypes

1

## Gender Stereotypes

Women often face exclusion and undervaluation onboard. Some report being treated as "decorative figures" rather than capable professionals.

2

## Pressure to Outperform

Female seafarers feel compelled to work harder than male colleagues. This constant pressure contributes to increased stress and burnout.

3

## Social Dynamics

Maintaining professional relationships can be challenging. Women must navigate complex social situations while preserving their authority.

# The Hidden Challenge: Mental Health



## Isolation

- Being one of few women aboard intensifies feelings of loneliness. Limited social support induces mental health issues.



## Persistent Vigilance

- Female seafarers are often in a constant state of vigilance, remaining alert against harassment or inappropriate behavior. This ongoing pressure leads to mental exhaustion, further impacting their job performance and overall well-being.



## PTSD

- Experiences of harassment or bullying can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. This may have long-lasting impacts on the career.

# Voices from Taiwan :

## Female Seafarers' Experiences

1

### Gender Pressures

Women report feeling constant pressure to prove their competence. This leads to overworking and stress-related health issues.

2

### Discrimination

Experiences of subtle and overt discrimination are common. This affects job satisfaction and career progression.

3

### Peer Interactions

Navigating relationships with male colleagues is challenging. Women struggle to balance professionalism with social integration.

# 3

**Renewable Energy :  
New Opportunities in Taiwan**





# Emerging Opportunities in Renewable Energy



## 1 Government Incentives

Taiwan's post-2012 policies have spurred growth in offshore wind power. This creates new job opportunities for skilled maritime professionals.

## 2 Global Recognition

Taiwan is becoming a key player in the global wind energy market. This attracts international investment and expertise.

## 3 Diverse Workforce Needs

The expanding sector requires a range of skills. This opens doors for women in various roles, from technical to managerial positions.

# Opportunities



The offshore wind energy industry, being closer to land, offers seafarers the appeal of internet access and reduced loneliness. According to SW4's interview, the industry values professional skills over gender, maintains transparent communication, and has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. This sector is willing to provide opportunities for women, with a significantly higher proportion of female seafarers compared to traditional commercial shipping.

The interviewee, SW4, currently works in the wind energy industry as the chief mate on a Service Operation Vessel (SOV). She has 8 years of experience on bulk carriers and 2 years in SOV maritime operations.



**WS4 :**

*I really felt that it was completely different from my experience in bulk shipping. Here, you can go home every day, which is possible with CTVs, although some CTVs only allow you to go home once every two weeks during peak season. I joined an SOV, which is essentially an offshore hotel or service vessel that transports technicians to wind turbines for maintenance work.*

*The company treats us equally, as professionals. It's all about expertise; there's no need to mention gender. We speak in terms of our professional skills, and it's all the same—gender equality. There's no sexual harassment; if it does happen, it's quickly addressed because we absolutely do not tolerate that. We report it to our supervisors, who then report it to the company. Communication is very transparent. The charterers also do not tolerate it; if they see any harassment towards our crew, they will report it to our company as well. Everything is extremely transparent, and all matters are handled with clarity.*

# Unexpected Opportunities

## Wind Energy Vessels vs. Trad. Commercial Ships

Features	Wind Energy Vessels	Trad. Commercial Ships
Stay Duration	Less than 2 weeks	6-9 months
Network Service	High quality	Only stable at port
Gender Equality	Focus on Professional skills	Gender bias exists
Sexual Harassment Policy	No tolerance	Poor handling





# 4

## **Navigating Towards Gender Equality : Actions and Strategies**

# Recommendations: Charting a Course for Change

## Short-term Actions

Introduce incentives for shipping companies to hire female seafarers. Establish clear anti-discrimination policies and reporting mechanisms onboard.

## Long-term Strategies

Improve onboard culture and prove gender equality education for seafarers.

## Industry Collaboration

Foster partnerships between shipping companies, educational institutions, and government agencies. Create a unified approach to promoting gender equality.

# Sailing Towards a Brighter Future

1

## Embrace Change

Climate challenges create opportunities for industry transformation. Female seafarers can lead in emerging sectors like offshore wind energy.

2

## Collective Action

Addressing discrimination requires commitment from all maritime stakeholders. Together, we can create a more inclusive and prosperous industry.

3

## Empower Women

Supporting female seafarers' professional development benefits the entire maritime sector. Their unique perspectives and skills are invaluable in navigating future challenges.



**Thank you for listening !**