

Bridging the Waves: A Study of Gender Dynamics and Career Experiences Among Women Seafarers

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Abstract - This research paper explores the perspectives of women seafarers regarding their experiences in the traditionally male-dominated maritime industry. Through qualitative interviews, this study aims to understand the unique challenges and opportunities women face at sea. Key themes identified include workplace discrimination, gender dynamics, work-life balance, and career progression. The findings highlight the significant barriers to entry and advancement that women encounter, such as limited mentorship opportunities and systemic biases. Despite these challenges, many women express job satisfaction due to the adventurous nature of seafaring and the sense of community. The study also underscores the importance of supportive networks and policies that promote gender equality on board ships. The insights gained from this research provide valuable implications for industry stakeholders to enhance the work environment for women seafarers, fostering greater diversity and inclusion. Recommendations for future research include longitudinal studies to track changes over time and the examination of specific interventions aimed at improving conditions for women in maritime roles.

Keywords: Bias, Female, Maritime, Seafarers, Women

I. INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry has been a cornerstone of global trade and commerce for centuries, yet it remains one of the most gender-segregated professions. Women seafarers represent a small fraction of the workforce, often facing unique challenges in a male-dominated environment. Despite increasing awareness and efforts to promote gender equality, the representation and experiences of women in seafaring roles have not been extensively documented. Understanding the perspectives of women seafarers is crucial for addressing the barriers they encounter and creating a more inclusive workplace.

Given the nuanced and deeply personal nature of the experiences of women seafarers, this study employs a qualitative research approach utilizes a phenomenological approach, which focuses on understanding how individuals experience and make sense of their work environments. In recent years, initiatives to increase the participation of women in seafaring have gained momentum, driven by the recognition that diversity enhances organizational performance and innovation. However, the pace of change has been slow, and many women continue to face significant obstacles in their professional paths. This paper addresses critical questions about the factors that influence women's experiences on ships and the strategies that can facilitate a more equitable work environment.

By highlighting the voices of women seafarers, this research contributes to the broader discourse on gender equality in the maritime sector. It also provides valuable insights for policymakers, maritime organizations, and educational institutions aiming to foster a more inclusive and supportive industry for future generations of women seafarers.

A. Background Information on Women in the Maritime Industry

The maritime industry, a vital component of global trade and economic development, has historically been dominated by men. Traditionally, seafaring was considered a male profession due to the physically demanding nature of the work, long periods away from home, and the challenging living conditions at sea. Women's participation in this field has been limited, with cultural stereotypes and gender norms further discouraging their involvement.

In recent decades, however, there has been a gradual shift towards greater gender inclusivity in the maritime industry. Various international bodies and maritime organizations have recognized the need to promote diversity and empower women seafarers. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), through initiatives like the Women in Maritime program, has been instrumental in advocating for gender equality and encouraging women's participation in the industry. These efforts aim to break down barriers and create more opportunities for women at sea and in maritime-related roles onshore.

Despite these advancements, women still constitute a small percentage of the global seafaring workforce. According to the International Transport Workers' Federation, women make up only about 2% of the world's 1.2 million seafarers. The majority of these women are employed in the cruise sector, where service roles predominate, while fewer are found in cargo shipping or in positions of authority on ships.

The challenges faced by women in the maritime industry are multifaceted. These include gender discrimination, limited access to training and career advancement opportunities, and a lack of role models and mentors. Women seafarers often encounter stereotypes that question their capabilities and commitment, and they may face isolation and harassment on board ships. Additionally, balancing the demands of a seafaring career with family and personal responsibilities can be particularly challenging for women, given societal expectations.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from industry stakeholders, including shipping companies, educational institutions, and government agencies. Policies and practices that promote a supportive and inclusive work environment are crucial for attracting and retaining women in the maritime. Providing equal opportunities for training, career development, and leadership roles can empower women to thrive in this sector. This research paper delves into the perspectives of women seafarers, highlighting their experiences, challenges, and contributions to the maritime industry. By understanding their unique viewpoints, the industry can move towards a more equitable future where women play an integral role in shaping the maritime landscape.

B. Importance of Studying Women Seafarers' Perspectives

Understanding the perspectives of women seafarers is essential for addressing the unique challenges they face in the maritime industry and for fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment. Despite advancements in gender equality, the maritime sector remains predominantly male, and the voices of women seafarers are often marginalized. Here are key reasons why their perspectives are crucial:

1) Identifying Systemic Barriers: Examining the experiences of women seafarers helps identify systemic barriers such as gender discrimination, harassment, and unequal career

opportunities. By understanding these challenges, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to eliminate obstacles and promote a fair working environment.

2) Enhancing Workplace Safety and Well-being: Women seafarers face distinct safety and well-being concerns, ranging from inadequate facilities to lack of support in addressing harassment. Studying their perspectives provides insights into these issues, enabling the development of policies and practices that enhance safety and support for all seafarers.

3) Informing Policy and Practice: Research on women seafarers' experiences contributes valuable data for policymakers and industry leaders. This information can guide the creation of gender-sensitive policies and initiatives that support women's participation and advancement in maritime careers.

4) Promoting Diversity and Innovation: A diverse workforce brings varied perspectives that drive innovation and problem-solving. By valuing and incorporating the insights of women seafarers, the maritime industry can benefit from a wider range of ideas and approaches, leading to more effective solutions and improved performance.

5) Supporting Recruitment and Retention Efforts: Understanding the motivations and challenges faced by women seafarers can help in developing effective recruitment and retention strategies. By addressing the factors that influence women's decisions to enter and remain in the industry, organizations can create more appealing career paths and reduce turnover.

6) Fostering a Culture of Inclusion: Highlighting the experiences of women seafarers emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive culture that respects and values all employees. This cultural shift can lead to improved morale, collaboration, and job satisfaction among diverse crews.

By focusing on the perspectives of women seafarers, this research aims to contribute to meaningful changes in the maritime industry, ensuring that women are not only included but are also empowered to thrive in their careers at sea.

C. Research Questions

RQ1: How do women seafarers experience gender bias in the workplace, and what are the most common forms of subtle and overt discrimination they encounter at sea?

RQ2: How does gender-based disparities manifest in the opportunities available to women seafarers, particularly with regard to promotions and access to challenging assignments?

RQ3: What coping strategies do women seafarers employ to manage the work-life balance challenges associated with the maritime profession?

RQ4: How does life at sea impact the mental health of women seafarers, and what mental health resources and support systems do they find most effective in managing stress and isolation?

RQ5: What cultural shifts have women seafarers observed in terms of gender equality, and what challenges remain in changing deeply ingrained stereotypes within the maritime industry?

RQ6: How do women seafarers define and experience a sense of achievement in their careers, and how does overcoming industry-specific obstacles influence their overall job satisfaction?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The maritime industry has historically been male dominated, with women representing only a small fraction of the seafaring workforce. As interest in gender diversity grows, more attention is being paid to the experiences of women at sea. This literature review examines existing qualitative research on women seafarers, focusing on their workplace experiences, challenges, and perspectives.

A. Overview of Existing Research on Women in the Maritime Industry

A thorough examination of the literature on women in the maritime industry reveals a complex landscape marked by endeavors to advance gender equality, empower women, and tackle the obstacles encountered by females in this historically male-dominated field. The World Maritime University (WMU) has played a pivotal role in formulating policies to boost the involvement of women in the maritime transport sector (Lares, 2017). Initiatives such as the Program for the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector have focused on encouraging member states to create opportunities for women in the shipping industry (Bhirugnath-Bhookhun & Kitada, 2017). Research has investigated the impact of automation technology on gender equality in the maritime industry, offering recommendations to enhance gender parity and align with international strategies for women's empowerment (Kim et al., 2019).

Despite these initiatives, challenges persist, as indicated by studies highlighting a gender gap and stereotypes against women in the maritime industry, particularly in sectors like shipping and ports (Samanalie, 2023). The importance of acknowledging women's contributions has been emphasized, with programs like the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector (IWMS) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) aiming to tackle this issue (Arulnayagam, 2020). Barriers to the employment of women seafarers have been identified, pointing to the prevalence of masculine norms and values in the seafaring occupational culture that can influence women's behavior and attitudes (Kitada, 2020). Research has also explored social aspects of the maritime industry, such as the difficulties encountered in the education and training of seafarers in the era of autonomous shipping, stressing the necessity of holistic approaches to address these challenges (Meštrović, 2024). Studies have examined the experiences of women married to seafarers, shedding light on the shifts in attitudes, values, and daily life resulting from their spouses' professions (Katsounis et al., 2020).

Investigations into the code of behavior at sea for women seafarers have highlighted the significance of managing shipboard identity in navigating the male-dominated maritime environment (Kitada, 2013). Furthermore, studies have delved into the impact of a seafaring lifestyle on the partners of seafarers, revealing the stress and challenges faced by the partners of Australian seafarers and underscoring the need for support systems for families in the maritime industry (Foster & Cacioppe, 1986). Research on the career expectations and choices of maritime undergraduate students has

been conducted to gain insights into the motivations guiding individuals towards maritime careers (Lau et al., 2021). Additionally, studies have explored barriers to career advancement in the maritime industry, outlining potential career trajectories for seafarers and identifying impediments to transitioning between different sectors (Barnett et al., 2006). Studies have also examined the educational requirements of cadets in maritime education, emphasizing the importance of addressing English literacy and communication challenges among new cadets entering the maritime industry (Simanjuntak, 2024). The role of women in the Turkish and global maritime industry has been scrutinized, shedding light on the contributions and challenges faced by women in this sector (Başak, 2015).

Factors influencing the acceptance and utilization of information systems within the maritime industry in developing countries have been investigated, highlighting the significance of technology adoption for enhancing efficiency in ocean trade (Wiafe et al., 2019). In conclusion, the existing body of research on women in the maritime industry reflects a growing acknowledgment of the necessity to promote gender equality, empower women, and address the challenges and barriers faced by women in this sector. Efforts by institutions like the WMU and the IMO, in conjunction with academic studies focusing on various facets of the maritime industry, contribute to a deeper understanding of the issues at hand and pave the way for more inclusive and diverse maritime practices in the future.

B. Discussion of Gender-Related Challenges in Seafaring

Gender-related challenges in seafaring encompass a variety of issues that impact women working in the maritime industry. Research sheds light on the challenges faced by women managers in Eastern and Southern Africa within the maritime sector, highlighting the barriers to career progression and gender disparities (Bhirugnath-Bhookhun & Kitada, 2017). The study emphasizes the need to address these challenges to promote gender equality and empower women in maritime careers. Furthermore, a study by Kim et al. (2019) explores the impact of automation technology on gender parity in the maritime industry, indicating that technological advancements present both opportunities and challenges for women in the sector (Kim et al., 2019). As the industry evolves with autonomous technologies, it is crucial to ensure that gender disparities are not exacerbated and that women have equal access to opportunities for career advancement.

Moreover, the research by Macneil and Ghosh (2016) delves into the gender imbalance in the maritime industry, identifying impediments and offering recommendations to address the disparities that women face in this male-dominated field (MacNeil & Ghosh, 2016). The study underscores the importance of initiatives and strategies to promote inclusivity and diversity within the maritime workforce. Additionally, Singh (2024) highlights gender inequality as one of the social issues faced by the fish and fisheries sector globally, emphasizing the need to address this challenge along with environmental and economic issues. Gender disparities in seafaring not only affect women's career progression but also contribute to broader social and economic inequalities within the maritime industry. In conclusion, gender-related challenges in seafaring encompass issues such as career progression barriers, gender disparities, and the impact of technological advancements on gender parity. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to promote gender equality, empower women in maritime careers, and create a more inclusive and diverse workforce within the maritime industry.

C. Identification of Research Gaps this Paper Aims to Address

To identify research gaps related to women seafarers, it is essential to consider the existing literature and pinpoint areas that require further investigation. The study by Belcher et al. (2008) emphasizes the underrepresentation of women in the seafaring profession, with only 1-2% of the world's seafarers being women (Dellinger, 2008). This statistic underscores the need for research to delve deeper into the reasons behind this gender disparity and explore strategies to increase female participation in the maritime industry. Kitada (2020) discusses barriers to the employment of women seafarers, including occupational cultural barriers, lack of awareness, and slow policy development. This highlights the necessity for research to focus on developing effective policies and strategies aimed at recruiting and retaining women in seafaring roles. Additionally, the study by Stannard et al. (2015) addresses the health and welfare of women seafarers, pointing out specific health challenges faced by female crew members (Stannard et al., 2015).

Further research could explore comprehensive health and well-being initiatives tailored to the unique needs of women seafarers. Moreover, Tang (2023) analyzes stakeholders' suggestions for achieving gender equality in seafaring, reflecting the challenges and barriers faced by women in the industry (Tang, 2023). This opens up avenues for research to investigate the implementation and effectiveness of these suggested changes in promoting gender equality and empowering women seafarers. Additionally, Yassin et al. (2022) highlight mental health challenges faced by female seafarers, including stress, depression, and anxiety. Further research could delve into interventions and support systems specifically designed to address the mental health needs of women in maritime roles. Furthermore, Kitada (2013) research on women seafarers' shipboard identity management sheds light on how the occupational culture of seafaring influences women's behavior and attitudes. This prompts further exploration into the impact of masculine norms on women seafarers and strategies to foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Additionally, Dragomir et al. (2018) discuss the role of women leaders in shipping as role models for women seafarers. Future research could investigate the influence of female leadership in promoting gender diversity and empowering women within the maritime industry. In conclusion, the identified research gaps include the need for studies focusing on increasing female representation in seafaring, developing effective recruitment and retention strategies, addressing health challenges specific to women seafarers, implementing gender equality initiatives, supporting mental health well-being, navigating occupational cultural barriers, and exploring the impact of female leadership in the maritime sector.

III. METHODOLOGY

Studying women's perspectives as seafarers through qualitative methodology can provide rich, detailed insights into their experiences, challenges, and contributions within a traditionally male-dominated field. Since this would be a Unique reality, qualitative data analysis would be utilized. By employing a qualitative methodology, the study can deeply explore and illuminate the multifaceted experiences of women seafarers, contributing valuable knowledge and advocating for improvements in the maritime industry.

A. Research Design

Using a phenomenological approach to explore and understand the lived experiences of women seafarers. This approach will help uncover the essence of their experiences at sea, focusing on how they perceive and make sense of their roles in a male-dominated industry.

Objectives:

- To explore how women seafarers experience gender bias in the workplace and identify the most common forms of subtle and overt discrimination they encounter at sea.
- To examine how gender-based disparities manifest in the opportunities available to women seafarers, with a specific focus on promotions and access to challenging assignments.
- To investigate the coping strategies employed by women seafarers in managing the work-life balance challenges associated with the maritime profession.
- To assess the impact of life at sea on the mental health of women seafarers and identify the mental health resources and support systems they find most effective in managing stress and isolation.
- To explore the cultural shifts observed by women seafarers in terms of gender equality and the challenges that remain in changing deeply ingrained stereotypes within the maritime industry.
- To understand how women seafarers define and experience a sense of achievement in their careers, and how overcoming industry-specific obstacles influences their overall job satisfaction.

B. Data Collection Methods

Conducting semi-structured interviews with female seafarers to gather personal stories, insights, and reflections. This allows for flexibility in exploring topics that arise during the conversation. Organizing focus group discussions with groups of female seafarers to encourage dialogue, shared experiences, and collective insights while fostering a sense of community.

C. Sampling Techniques

Using purposive sampling to identify a diverse group of female seafarers based on age, rank, type of vessels, and geographical location to capture a wide range of experiences. There are four lady navigational officers in Sri Lanka, the study would aim to speak to all four of them. This range allows for depth and richness in data collection while remaining manageable for detailed analysis.

D. Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis: Identify themes and patterns within the data, focusing on the unique experiences and challenges faced by women in the maritime industry. Develop a coding framework to categorize and interpret key elements of the data. This may involve both inductive and deductive coding methods. Nvivo software would be utilized for this purpose. **Narrative Analysis** utilised to Analyze the stories told by women to understand how they construct their identities and experiences within a male-dominated field.

E. Ethical Consideration

Ensure informed consent was obtained from all participants, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity by not disclosing identities or sensitive information.

F. Validation and Trustworthiness

1) ***Credibility***: Enhance credibility through triangulation, using multiple data sources such as interviews, field notes, and relevant literature to corroborate findings.

2) ***Dependability***: Maintain an audit trail documenting the research process, decisions made, and changes to the methodology to ensure transparency and dependability.

3) ***Transferability***: Provide rich, detailed descriptions of the context and participants to enable readers to assess the applicability of findings to other contexts. Ensure informed consent

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the qualitative data gathered from interviews with women seafarers, several key themes and patterns emerged. These themes illustrate the multifaceted experiences of women at sea and provide insights into the challenges and opportunities they encounter. The themes are organized as follows:

A. Gender Dynamics and Discrimination

1) ***Subtle and Overt Biases***: Participants reported experiencing both subtle and overt gender biases. Many women highlighted instances where their capabilities were questioned, often being assigned tasks deemed more suitable for their gender. These biases created a need for women to constantly prove their competence.

2) ***Workplace Harassment***: Harassment both verbal and non-verbal, was a recurrent issue. Many women shared stories of facing inappropriate behavior from male colleagues, which affected their sense of safety and well-being.

B. Career Progression and Barriers

1) ***Lack of Mentorship***: A significant barrier identified was the lack of mentorship and role models. Women expressed the need for guidance and support to navigate the male-dominated industry, noting that mentorship opportunities were limited.

2) ***Unequal Opportunities***: Participants frequently noticed disparities in opportunities for advancement. Despite qualifications and experience, women found themselves overlooked for promotions and challenging assignments.

C. Work-Life Balance

1) ***Challenges of Long Deployments***: Long periods at sea were cited as a major challenge, making it difficult to maintain personal relationships and family connections. This aspect of the job often led to feelings of isolation and stress.

2) **Coping Strategies:** Women seafarers developed various strategies to cope with work-life balance issues, such as maintaining regular communication with family through digital means and forming supportive relationships with fellow crew members.

D. Safety and Well-being

1) **Perceived Safety:** Many participants expressed concerns about their safety on board, both in terms of physical working conditions and the risk of harassment. Women emphasized the need for better safety measures and protocols.

2) **Mental Health:** The isolation and pressures of seafaring were noted to impact mental health. Women highlighted the importance of mental health resources and support systems to help them manage stress and maintain well-being.

E. Inclusion and Organizational Culture

1) **Efforts Toward Inclusivity:** Some participants observed positive changes in organizational efforts to promote inclusivity, such as diversity training and awareness programs. However, these efforts were often seen as insufficient or superficial.

2) **Cultural Shifts:** Women noted that cultural changes are gradually occurring, with younger generations of seafarers showing more openness to gender equality. Nevertheless, deeply ingrained stereotypes persist, requiring ongoing efforts to address

F. Personal Motivation and Job Satisfaction

1) **Passion for the Sea:** Despite the challenges, many women expressed a deep passion for their work and a strong affinity for life at sea. The adventure and unique experiences associated with seafaring were key motivators for remaining in the industry.

2) **Sense of Achievement:** Women highlighted the sense of achievement they felt in overcoming obstacles and succeeding in a demanding environment. This sense of accomplishment contributed significantly to their job satisfaction.

The themes identified in this study underscore the complex and varied experiences of women seafarers. While significant challenges remain, there is also evidence of resilience and determination among these women to carve out successful careers at sea. Addressing the barriers they face requires a multifaceted approach that includes policy changes, organizational support, and cultural shifts within the maritime industry. By amplifying the voices of women seafarers, this research aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion in the maritime sector.

G. Discussion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of women's perspectives on their seafaring careers, shedding light on their unique experiences, challenges, and aspirations within the maritime industry. The findings offer valuable insights into gender dynamics at sea, career progression, work-life balance, safety, well-being, and organizational

culture. This discussion contextualizes these findings within the broader literature and explores their implications for the maritime industry.

1) Gender Dynamics and Discrimination: The study reveals that women seafarers frequently encounter gender-based biases and discrimination, consistent with previous research (Kitada, 2010; Pike & Broadhurst, 2019). Women's reports of subtle and overt biases reflect the persistent challenges they face in proving their competence in a male-dominated field. This aligns with the findings of Zhao et al., (2017), who also noted that gender discrimination affects women's career advancement. Addressing these biases is crucial for creating a more equitable work environment. Initiatives to foster a culture of respect and challenge entrenched stereotypes are necessary to improve gender dynamics on board.

2) Career Progression and Barriers: The lack of mentorship and unequal opportunities for advancement identified in this study echo the barriers highlighted by Belcher et al., (2003) and Zhao et al., (2017). Women seafarers' experiences of being overlooked for promotions and challenging assignments underscore the need for targeted support systems. To facilitate career progression, maritime organizations should implement structured mentorship programs and ensure equitable access to career development opportunities. Such measures can help bridge the gap in career advancement and support women's professional growth.

3) Work-Life Balance: The challenges related to maintaining work-life balance, including long periods away from home, resonate with the findings of Thomas (2004) and Shabaka et al., (2020). Women seafarers' strategies for coping with these challenges, such as maintaining digital communication with family, highlight their resilience and adaptability. However, these coping mechanisms also point to the need for improved support structures to help seafarers manage the demands of their profession. Policies that address family support and flexible deployment options could significantly enhance work-life balance for women in the maritime industry.

4) Safety and Well-being: Concerns about safety and mental health, as reported by participants, align with previous studies by Ellis et al., (2012) and Kitada & Langåker (2017). Women's perceptions of inadequate safety measures and the impact of isolation on mental health emphasize the need for enhanced safety protocols and mental health support. Maritime organizations should prioritize creating safer working conditions and providing access to mental health resources to support the seafarers' overall well-being of the seafarers.

5) Inclusion and Organizational Culture: The study's findings on organizational efforts towards inclusivity and the slow cultural shifts in the maritime industry reflect the observations of Zhao et al., (2017) and MacNeil & Ghosh (2017). While there are signs of progress, deeper cultural changes are required to fully embrace gender diversity. Training programs, awareness campaigns, and policies that promote inclusivity should be reinforced to foster a more supportive and equitable environment for women seafarers.

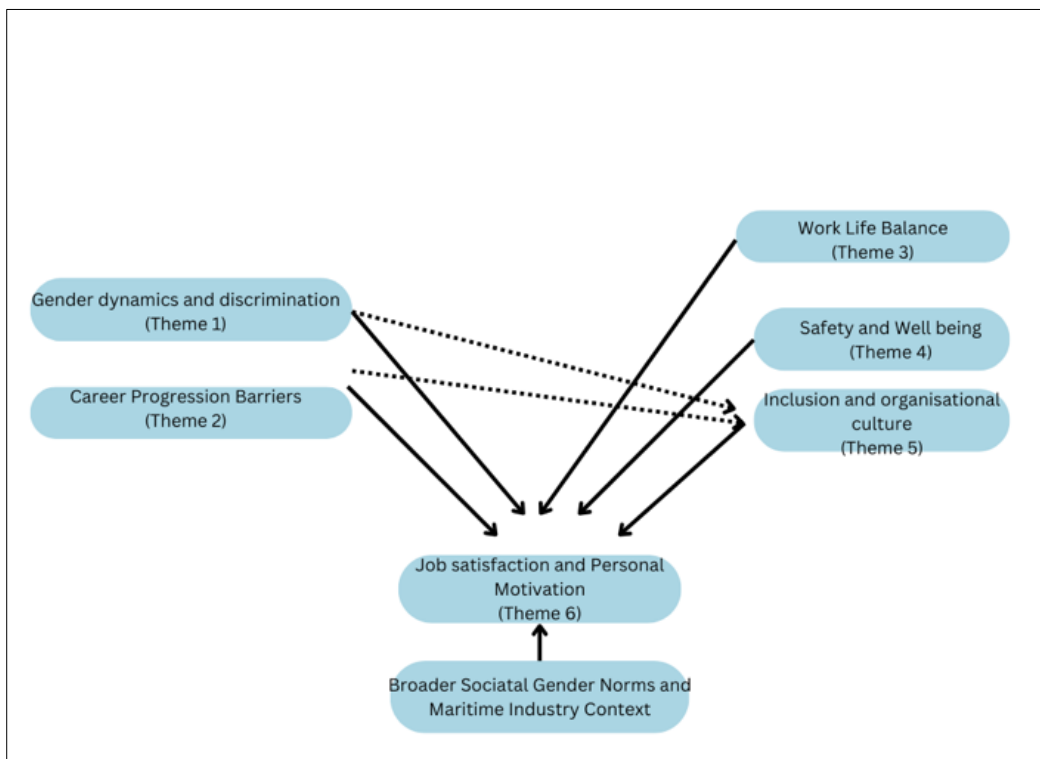
6) Personal Motivation and Job Satisfaction: Despite the challenges, the passion and sense of achievement reported by women seafarers highlight their commitment to their

careers. These findings are consistent with Germain (2018) and Pike (2019), who noted that personal motivation and job satisfaction play a significant role in women’s continued participation in seafaring. Recognizing and celebrating these positive aspects can help enhance job satisfaction and retention in the industry.

H. Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework integrates multiple theories with findings to explain how gender, organizational culture, and individual motivations interact to shape the career experiences of women seafarers. It provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine the barriers and enablers of success, offering a foundation for analyzing qualitative data and addressing research questions on gender dynamics, career progression, safety, work-life balance, and personal motivation.

Figure 1. Conceptualisation



Source: Authors’ compilation.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study’s findings suggest several implications for maritime practice and policy. For Policy Development Maritime organizations should develop and implement policies that address gender discrimination, provide mentorship opportunities, and enhance safety and mental health support. For Cultural Change Promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect is essential for improving the work environment for women seafarers. Training and awareness programs should be expanded to support this cultural shift. For Support Structures Enhanced support structures, including family support initiatives and flexible

deployment options, are needed to improve the work-life balance and overall well-being for seafarers.

This research provides a nuanced understanding of the perspectives of women seafarers, illuminating the complexities of their experiences in a predominantly male-dominated industry. Through qualitative analysis, several key themes have emerged that highlight both the challenges and the strengths of women in maritime careers. Women seafarers face significant gender-based challenges, including discrimination, harassment, and barriers to career advancement. These issues are consistent with existing literature, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to promote gender equity and inclusivity within the maritime industry. The persistence of these challenges points to systemic issues that require comprehensive and sustained interventions, such as targeted mentorship programs, equitable career development opportunities, and robust anti-discrimination policies.

The study also reveals that maintaining work-life balance is a critical concern for women at sea. Long periods away from home strain personal relationships and contribute to feelings of isolation. Effective strategies for managing these challenges include improved family support systems and policies that offer flexibility in deployment. Addressing these needs is essential for enhancing the overall well-being and job satisfaction of women seafarers. Safety and mental health are other crucial areas highlighted by this research. Women seafarers frequently express concerns about inadequate safety measures and the impact of isolation on their mental health. This underscores the need for maritime organizations to implement stronger safety protocols and provide accessible mental health resources to support the well-being of all seafarers.

Despite these challenges, the passion and dedication of women seafarers are evident. Their commitment to their careers and their ability to navigate and overcome obstacles reflect their resilience and determination. Recognizing and celebrating these strengths is vital for fostering a positive and supportive work environment.

In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of addressing the unique needs and experiences of women seafarers to create a more equitable and inclusive maritime industry. By implementing effective policies, promoting cultural change, and enhancing support structures, the maritime sector can improve the career experiences of women and benefit from a more diverse and skilled workforce. The insights gained from this study contribute to the broader discourse on gender equality in maritime careers and provide a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at advancing the role of women in the industry.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to track changes in women's experiences over time and evaluate the impact of implemented policies and interventions. Additionally, research exploring the perspectives of women in different maritime roles and cultural contexts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

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