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Well-being and Coping Strategies Among Navigators in Relation to Occupational Burnout – Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The maritime sector is a professional field with high exposure to psychosocial stress factors, which can significantly influence psychological well-being and can lead, over time, to the development of occupational burnout, both because of the isolated and unpredictable work environment and as a result of the complex responsibilities associated with operating maritime vessels (Carotenuto et al., 2022). Isolated working conditions, long hours, lack of social contact, especially with family, and the permanent risks associated with the maritime environment contribute to an increased risk of burnout among this professional group (Oldenburg et al., 2019). Given these issues, analyzing the relationship between the coping strategies adopted by seafarers, their level of burnout, and their well-being has become and continues to be an increasingly important topic in contemporary research, as it is associated with professional performance, workplace safety, and staff retention (Brooks et al., 2022).

In the literature, occupational burnout is recognized as a negative reaction to chronic professional stress, manifesting itself through emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In maritime professional environments, this phenomenon is accentuated by factors such as distance from family, lack of privacy, and work–life conflict (Carotenuto et al., 2022).

The model proposed by Ryff (1989) reflects a set of characteristics that contribute to the optimal functioning of the individual, including: autonomy, positive relationships, purpose in life, and personal growth. In difficult occupational conditions, such as those in navigation, maintaining a state of well-being can be an essential protective factor for mental health (Diener et al., 2018).

In this sense, coping strategies—defined as cognitive and behavioral mechanisms used by individuals to deal with stressors—play an essential role in regulating the negative impact of occupational stress on well-being (Folkman, 2013).

Keywords: cognitive and behavioral mechanisms; emotional exhaustion; maritime environment; professional stress; state of well-being;