



Occupational Risks and Coping Mechanisms of Filipino Seafarers

C/M Pedro Elizer D. Diocos^{1,*}

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 Aug 2025;
in revised form 12 Sep 2005;
accepted 24 Dec 2025.

Keywords:

occupational risks, coping
mechanisms, seafarers

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study was conducted to identify the occupational risks and coping mechanisms of seafarers. The respondents of the study were 85 seafarers chosen using convenience sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire, which has undergone validity and reliability testing was used to gather the data. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to analyze the data. Results showed that seafarers were found to be subjected to numerous occupational risks, with work-related stress and exposure to dangerous working conditions as the most significant threat. Seafarers reported high involvement in a range of coping methods including communication with family and friends, time management, physical fitness, camaraderie building, and hobbies/leisure activities. To summarize, seafarers are under a lot of stress related to work and work in unsafe conditions. Therefore, it is very important to introduce better welfare programs for seafarers that meet their individual needs and improve their well-being.

© SEECMAR | All rights reserved

1. Introduction.

Seafaring is considered as one of the fastest growing profession and it plays an important part in the global market and trade. The Philippines ranked as the top provider of seafarers for both officers and ratings making the country as the foundation of the shipping industry. Filipino seafarers have long earned the trust and confidence of shipowners globally for their professionalism, hard work, resilience, and ability to adapt to multicultural work environments onboard. Seafarers are highly sought because of their skills, diligence and commitment. For decades, Filipino seafarers have been at the heart of the global maritime workforce. On ships that cross the world's busiest oceans, it is common to hear Filipino voices on the bridge, in the engine room, and across the decks. The Philippines is widely recognized as the world's leading supplier of maritime professionals. Today, an estimated 500,000 to 600,000 Filipino seafarers serve onboard international vessels, making up nearly a quarter of the global maritime workforce. From container

ships to tankers and cruise vessels, Filipino crew members play a critical role in keeping global trade moving (Galapon, 2026). Seafaring is a vital yet highly demanding profession, particularly for many Filipinos whose careers are impacted by its challenges. Prolonged working hours, fatigue, poor nutrition, limited exercise facilities, isolation, and unhealthy habits contribute to health risks. As ships serve as both workplace and home, these factors make life at sea especially difficult for seafarers (Prisno III, 2011, as cited in Manalo et al., 2015; International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015). Long hours away from families were just one hardship; cramped quarters, dangerous conditions, limited healthcare, and even discrimination posed formidable challenges. Despite these harrowing challenges, Filipino seafarers demonstrate unwavering resilience. They persevere, driven by their deep-rooted work ethic, dedication, and professionalism (Paunan, 2023). These qualities are the very pillars that uphold the global maritime industry. In response to these difficulties, seafarers adopt various coping mechanisms to maintain their physical and mental well-being. Peer support is one of the most common strategies, as strong camaraderie among crew members helps reduce feelings of loneliness and homesickness (Sampson & Ellis, 2019). Seafarers and their family members agreed on how important internet connectivity has become to life at sea. The ability to main-

¹Marine Officer at Magsaysay Maritime Corporation. Master in Marine Management Major in Maritime Affairs. Iloilo State University of Fisheries Science and Technology. Philippines.

*Corresponding author: Pedro Elizer D. Diocos. E-mail Address: pegddiocos@gmail.com.

tain closer connection with loved ones can undoubtedly have a very positive impact on seafarers' wellbeing, as it can be an invaluable source of support and strength during long months of separation (ISWAN, 2024). Engaging in leisure activities such as watching movies, listening to music, or exercising when possible also helps alleviate stress and improve mental health (Carotenuto, 2012). Moreover, religious practices and personal reflection are reported coping strategies, especially among Filipino seafarers, who often rely on faith to manage adversity (Slišković, 2017). As a seafarer, the researcher believes that identifying the occupational risks encountered at sea and the coping mechanisms seafarers use to manage these challenges has the potential to strengthen the well-being of maritime professionals. By understanding both the hazards and the strategies seafarers employ, such as peer support, maintaining communication with family, engaging in leisure activities, and relying on personal faith, this study proposes practical insights that may lead to tangible benefits for seafarers, the maritime industry, and society at large. Thus, this research was conducted.

1.1. Statement of the Problem.

This study was conducted to examine the occupational risks encountered by seafarers and their coping mechanisms. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the occupational risks seafarers face as a whole and when grouped according to age, rank, job department, and years of sea service?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of seafarers as a whole and when grouped according to age, rank, job department, and years of sea service?
3. What program for seafarers can be develop based on the findings of the study?

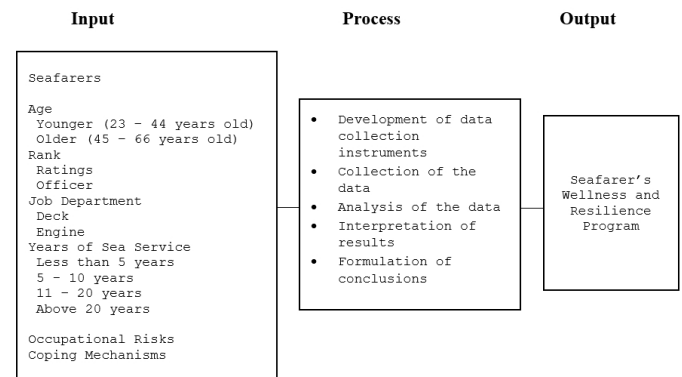
2. Theoretical Framework.

This study was anchored on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984). The transactional model of stress and coping is a cognitive model, which conceptualizes stress and coping as a process based on changing cognitive appraisals. The transactional model of stress and coping is a theory in psychology that focuses on how people feel about their environment as they deal with stress and the ways they choose to cope. According to the model, stress does not occur from an event but from the transaction, or interactions, between people and their environment. Stress results when the demands people face outnumber the resources they have at their disposal to address those demands. People use the process of appraisal, or self-evaluation, to determine whether a situation is stressful. Coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral methods that people employ to manage stress. The transactional model of stress and coping provided a critical boost in the field of cognitive psychology, the study of mental processes. The model emphasizes the key role of appraisal in shaping people's behavior and emotions (Kivak, 2020).

3. Conceptual Framework.

This study identifies common problems faced by Filipino seafarers and the strategies they use to manage these challenges.

Figure 1: The paradigm shows the inputs, processes, and outputs.



Source: Author.

4. Review of Related Literature.

4.1. Occupational Risks.

Seafarers are essential to the global economy, enabling 90% of international trade, yet they face numerous challenges that jeopardize their well-being and safety (Larsen, 2021). Previous studies indicate that the most important stressors in the seafaring population are long-term separation from home and families, loneliness and social isolation, work-related stressors (high workload and long working hours, low control and work-role conflict), and environmental stressors related to life on board. (Slišković & Penezić, 2015). The demanding nature of ship-board life—characterized by strict hierarchies, rotating shifts, and limited rest—often leads to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and severe mental health issues (Chung et al., 2017; Mellbye & Carter, 2017). Moreover, according to Brooks & Greenberg (2022), seafaring has frequently been reported to be a 'risky occupation' in terms of both physical and mental health. Individuals working in seafaring professions are exposed to various stressors in the workplace, including social isolation, exposure to poor physical conditions and long work hours. According to Gregorio (2012), common health problems among seafarers include hypertension, musculoskeletal pain, heart attacks, and sexually transmitted infections. These are exacerbated by poor nutrition, limited exercise opportunities, substance use, and a lack of consistent healthcare access (International Transport Workers' Federation [ITF], 2015). Female seafarers are particularly vulnerable to harassment and discrimination (Hedding, 2013, as cited in Manalo et al., 2015). Occupational risks such as maritime disasters, exposure to communicable diseases and hazardous substances, and poor treatment options for cardiovascular issues persist as stressed by Oldenburg et al. (2010). Preventive strategies, including improved hygiene, better first-aid training, and stronger mental health education are

essential to address these concerns (Abila & Acejo, 2021). Filipino seafarers agree that even though the job offers financial opportunity, it also comes at the cost of emotional stress and health risks. The seafaring lifestyle involves constant partings and reunions, often leading to homesickness, poor communication, and conflict due to cultural and language differences onboard (Thomas et al., 2010, as cited in Manalo et al., 2015). Many seafarers opted towards land-based alternatives due to the increasing paperwork, stricter maritime regulations, and inadequate social support (PINOY OFW, 2014). Mohit (2019) emphasized that long-term health concerns such as UV exposure, poor ventilation, and continuous noise add to the physical and psychological burden of life at sea. Seafaring remains a high-risk and mentally taxing profession despite advancements in occupational safety on board (Short-Fact, 2019).

4.2. Coping Mechanisms.

Seafarers encounter a uniquely challenging work environment that combines physical risks, emotional stress, and social isolation. Given the occupational hazards, coping mechanisms play a crucial role in helping them maintain their psychological and emotional resilience while at sea. Research indicates that the use of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies is common among seafarers in response to chronic stress, long periods of isolation, and limited social interaction (Slišković, 2017). One of the most commonly used coping strategies is peer support. According to Sampson and Ellis (2019), camaraderie among crew members is instrumental in reducing feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and anxiety. Informal conversations, shared recreational activities, and mutual assistance create a support system that buffers psychological stressors. This peer bonding is particularly crucial in multicultural crews, where shared experiences can transcend language and cultural barriers. Maintaining strong family relationships while navigating a seafaring career can be challenging. Open communication, regular check-ins, and creating special moments when together can help bridge the distance. Utilising technology for video calls, sharing experiences, and understanding each other's roles can also foster understanding and connection (ISWAN, 2024). For many Filipino seafarers, in particular, regular communication with family members is not only a coping strategy but also a reminder of the purpose behind their work (Manalo et al., 2015). The latest Seafarers Happiness Index 2023Q4 revealed some bright side in this respect, with more signs of investment in seafarer wellbeing and welfare, including better connectivity. The experiences shared by seafarers regarding connectivity at sea offered a mixed picture, showing various challenges and positive aspects. For many seafarers, having reliable internet access is crucial as it allows them to connect with their families. They expressed happiness when they can chat, have video calls, and stay updated about their loved ones' lives. Being away at sea, they value the opportunity to communicate regularly and feel closer to home, helping them stay connected despite the distance (The Mission to Seafarers, 2024). Engagement in recreational activities such as watching movies, listening to music, exercising, and reading also helps reduce stress levels onboard (Carotenuto, 2012).

These leisure activities allow seafarers to temporarily detach from the demands of their duties and reclaim a sense of personal space. However, the availability of such facilities often varies depending on the type of vessel and company policies. Religious practices and spirituality are another significant source of coping, especially for Filipino seafarers. Prayer, meditation, and reading spiritual texts help foster inner peace and resilience amid adversity (Slišković, 2017; Thomas et al., 2010). These personal rituals serve not only as emotional support systems but also as culturally relevant methods for meaning-making in the face of hardship. Despite these coping mechanisms, challenges remain. Mental health support onboard ships is still limited, and stigma surrounding psychological issues often prevents individuals from seeking help (Oldenburg et al., 2010). Therefore, scholars and policymakers advocate for the integration of formal mental health education, improved access to psychological services, and company-level wellness programs as part of the seafaring culture (Abila & Acejo, 2021).

5. Methodology.

5.1. Research Design.

This study utilized the descriptive research method. Descriptive research is collecting information from a group of people to describe some aspects or characteristics of the population of which that group is a part (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012).

5.2. Respondents.

The respondents of the study were 85 seafarers for the year 2025, regardless of their employment status (onboard or vacation).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents.

Category	F	%
Entire Group	85	100.00
Age		
Younger (23 – 44 years old)	45	53%
Older (45 – 66 years old)	40	47%
Rank		
Ratings	48	57%
Officer	37	43%
Job Department		
Deck	61	72%
Engine	24	28%
Years of Sea Service		
Less than 5 years	8	9%
5 - 10 years	14	17%
11 – 20 years	36	42%
Above 20 years	27	32%

Source: Author.

5.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique.

Convenience sampling was utilized in choosing the respondents for the study. Locating and contacting seafarers can be difficult due to their global mobility and often limited internet

access. Thus, convenience sampling allowed the researcher to reach a target population quickly.

5.4. Research Instrument.

A researcher-made instrument was utilized to gather the data. It identified the risks encountered by seafarers while onboard and their coping mechanisms. A four-point Likert scale based on the degree of agreement with '1 – strongly disagree', '2 disagree', '3 – agree to '4 strongly agree' was employed. The instrument had undergone face and content validation. It was pilot-tested to establish the instrument's reliability, and the reliability coefficient of .905 using Cronbach Alpha indicated that the questionnaire was reliable. The responses were summed up, and the mean scores was computed. The following scale of means and their description was utilized to determine the risks and coping mechanisms of the respondents:

Table 2: Scale of means and descriptive interpretation.

Means of Scale	Descriptive
3.25–4.00	Very High
2.50–3.24	High
1.75–2.49	Low
1.00–1.74	Very Low

Source: Author.

5.5. Data Gathering Procedure.

Upon securing permission, the questionnaire was distributed electronically through Google Forms. Respondents were provided with a comprehensive overview of the study's nature, aims, and potential benefits. Collected data was systematically tallied, recorded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

5.6. Data Analysis Procedure.

The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed with the use of the following statistical tools.

- Frequency counts or Percentages. Frequency counts or Percentages were used to determine the profile of the respondents as to age, rank, job department, and length of sea service.
- Mean. Mean was utilized to determine seafarers' risk.
- Standard Deviation. Standard Deviation was employed to determine the deviation of the scores from the mean.

5.7. Ethical Considerations.

The respondents were not subjected to harm in any way. The protection of the privacy of the research respondents was ensured. In handling the data, an adequate level of confidentiality was taken into consideration.

6. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data.

6.1. Occupational Risks by Seafarers.

Seafarers were found to be exposed to numerous occupational risks, with work-related stress ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .841$) and exposure to dangerous working conditions ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .951$) cited as the most significant factors impacting their well-being. Errors/mistakes could result in injuries or death ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .751$). Longer work hours ($M = 2.75$, $SD = .907$) were also the concerns of seafarers. The results were presented in Table 3. Considered as low risks by seafarers were confined living spaces ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .868$), limited access to friends and family while at sea ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .857$), infectious diseases ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .962$), and periods of seasickness ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .813$). This is supported by Galapon (2026). According to him, life at sea can be demanding. Long contracts, fatigue, isolation, and homesickness are common experiences for many crew members. Multinational crews bring cultural diversity, but they can also create communication challenges and social pressures onboard.

Table 3: Risks Encountered by Seafarers as a Whole.

Risks	Mean	SD	Description
1. Longer work-hours	2.75	.907	High
2. Intensive Labor	2.54	.854	High
3. High Pressure/High-Paced Environment	2.62	.896	High
4. Confined Living Spaces	2.49	.868	Low
5. Increased Risks of Illnesses	2.53	.939	High
6. Periods of Seasickness	2.43	.813	Low
7. Exhaustion	2.65	.842	High
8. Limited Access to Friends and Family While at Sea	2.49	.857	Low
9. Errors/Mistakes Could Result in Injuries or Death	2.78	.751	High
10. Piracy	2.73	.544	High
11. High load of work-related stress	2.94	.841	High
12. Multinational crews	2.70	.849	High
13. Limited access to shore leave and recreational activities	2.65	.940	High
14. Exposure to dangerous working conditions	2.80	.951	High
15. Infectious diseases	2.46	.962	Low

Source: Author.

The study revealed a difference between younger and older seafarers regarding job risks. Younger crew considered long hours ($M = 2.73$) the most challenging aspect, while their older ones perceived work-related stress ($M = 3.20$) as the main threat. In an analysis of sick leave data (Brooks & Greenberg, 2022), psychological diagnoses affected mostly the youngest age group (30 and under) and decreased with each age category, similarly, the majority of mental illness claims were made by personnel under the age of 40. Younger staff were also found to experience significantly more self-directed violence (e.g. self-harm, suicidal ideation), depression, stress, sleepiness, distress, work-related burnout and mental fatigue than older staff, whilst psychological capital (defined as a set of resources including self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience) appeared to increase significantly with age.

Table 4: Risks Encountered by Seafarers when Grouped According to Age.

Risks	Mean	Description Younger	Mean	Description Older
1. Longer work-hours	2.73	High	2.77	High
2. Intensive Labor	2.37	Low	2.73	High
3. High Pressure/High-Paced Environment	2.45	Low	2.82	High
4. Confined Living Spaces	2.45	Low	2.55	High
5. Increased Risks of Illnesses	2.43	Low	2.64	High
6. Periods of Seasickness	2.51	High	2.34	Low
7. Exhaustion	2.59	High	2.70	High
8. Limited Access to Friends and Family While at Sea	2.41	Low	2.59	High
9. Errors/Mistakes Could Result in Injuries or Death	2.65	High	2.93	High
10. Piracy	2.57	High	2.91	High
11. High load of work-related stress	2.69	High	3.20	High
12. Multinational crews	2.46	High	2.61	High
13. Limited access to shore leave and recreational activities	2.55	High	2.75	High
14. Exposure to dangerous working conditions	2.67	High	2.03	Low
15. Infectious diseases	2.20	Low	2.75	High

Source: Author.

Despite some differences in stress levels (ratings: $M = 2.83$, officers: $M = 3.08$), work-related stress emerged as a significant concern for both ratings and officers. While officers perceived periods of seasickness ($M = 2.40$) as a low risk, ratings minimized the potential threat of infectious diseases ($M = 2.32$).

Table 5: Risks Encountered by Seafarers when Grouped According to Rank.

Risks	Mean	Description Rating	Mean	Description Officer
1. Longer work-hours	2.62	High	2.93	High
2. Intensive Labor	2.43	Low	2.68	High
3. High Pressure/High-Paced Environment	2.40	Low	2.85	High
4. Confined Living Spaces	2.40	Low	2.63	High
5. Increased Risks of Illnesses	2.45	Low	2.70	High
6. Periods of Seasickness	2.45	Low	2.40	Low
7. Exhaustion	2.55	High	2.78	High
8. Limited Access to Friends and Family While at Sea	2.43	Low	2.58	High
9. Errors/Mistakes Could Result in Injuries or Death	2.66	High	2.95	High
10. Piracy	2.57	High	2.95	High
11. High load of work-related stress	2.83	High	3.08	High
12. Multinational crews	2.42	Low	2.60	High
13. Limited access to shore leave and recreational activities	2.62	High	2.68	High
14. Exposure to dangerous working conditions	2.74	High	2.88	High
15. Infectious diseases	2.32	Low	2.65	High

Source: Author.

The study revealed differing risk perceptions between deck and engine personnel. The deck crew identified a high load of work-related stress ($M = 2.90$) as a significant concern (high risk), while illnesses ($M = 2.33$) were considered less worrisome (low risk). Engine personnel, on the other hand, prioritized longer work hours ($M = 3.19$) as a significant risk (high risk), while the high-pressure environment ($M = 2.02$) was perceived as less concerning (low risk). Table 3c presents the results. Brooks and Greenberg (2022) explained that whilst many studies found a significant relationship between rank or role and mental health, there was no consistent pattern identifiable to this due to the variety of different roles and outcomes.

Table 6: Risks Encountered by Seafarers when Grouped According to Job Department.

Risks	Mean	Description Deck	Mean	Description Engine
1. Longer work-hours	2.58	High	3.19	High
2. Intensive Labor	2.37	Low	2.96	High
3. High Pressure/High-Paced Environment	2.51	High	2.02	Low
4. Confined Living Spaces	2.46	Low	2.58	High
5. Increased Risks of Illnesses	2.33	Low	3.04	High
6. Periods of Seasickness	2.48	Low	2.31	Low
7. Exhaustion	2.55	High	2.88	High
8. Limited Access to Friends and Family While at Sea	2.46	Low	2.58	High
9. Errors/Mistakes Could Result in Injuries or Death	2.69	High	3.04	High
10. Piracy	2.67	High	2.88	High
11. High load of work-related stress	2.90	High	3.04	High
12. Multinational crews	2.44	Low	2.35	Low
13. Limited access to shore leave and recreational activities	2.70	High	2.50	High
14. Exposure to dangerous working conditions	2.70	High	3.04	High
15. Infectious diseases	2.39	Low	2.65	High

Source: Author.

Those with less than 5 years agreed that the physical discomfort of seasickness ($M = 3.23$) as the top risk, while those with 5-10 years of service were most concerned about exposure to dangerous working conditions ($M = 3.25$). Longer work hours ($M = 3.08$) became a leading concern for seafarers with 11-20 years of experience, while a high load of work-related stress ($M = 3.23$) appeared as the top risk for experienced ones with over 20 years of service. This implies that seafarers' faced a variety of risks depending on their years of sea service. For those who had just joined the seafaring profession, seasickness is a major problem that affects their quality of life and productivity. For experienced seafarers, the causes of their stress is on their workload, multiple responsibilities, leadership roles and team coordination. The results were contradicted by Brooks and Greenberg (2022). Longer seafaring experience was significantly associated with lower levels of stress and fatigue. However, longer time in the Navy was associated with higher stress in surface fleet, although not submariners while two studies found no association between experience and emotional exhaustion or wellbeing.

Table 7: Risks Encountered by Seafarers when Grouped According to Years of Sea Service.

Risks	M Less than 5 years	D	M 5 -10 years	D	M 11-20 years	D	M Above 20 years	D
1. Longer work-hours	1.50	VL	3.00	H	3.08	H	2.53	H
2. Intensive Labor	1.50	VL	3.00	H	2.67	H	2.40	L
3. High Pressure/High-Paced Environment	1.50	VL	3.00	H	2.77	H	2.53	H
4. Confined Living Spaces	1.50	VL	2.25	L	2.77	H	2.53	H
5. Increased Risks of Illnesses	1.13	VL	2.75	H	2.72	H	2.53	H
6. Periods of Seasickness	3.23	H	2.50	H	2.38	L	2.53	H
7. Exhaustion	2.00	L	3.00	H	2.72	H	2.53	H
8. Limited Access to Friends and Family While at Sea	1.50	VL	2.75	H	2.46	L	2.67	H
9. Errors/Mistakes Could Result in Injuries or Death	2.00	L	3.50	VH	2.74	H	2.67	H
10. Piracy	2.00	L	3.00	H	2.62	H	2.93	H
11. High load of work-related stress	2.00	L	3.00	H	2.87	H	3.23	H
12. Multinational crews	3.00	H	2.50	H	2.79	H	2.83	H
13. Limited access to shore leave and recreational activities	2.50	H	2.50	H	2.62	H	2.80	H
14. Exposure to dangerous working conditions	2.00	L	3.25	H	2.87	H	2.67	H
15. Infectious diseases	1.50	VL	2.75	H	2.38	L	2.67	H

Source: Author.

6.2. Coping Mechanisms.

The most utilized coping mechanism is communication with loved ones and family ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .608$). This implies

that having strong emotional connections with family members significantly helps seafarers manage stress, loneliness, and isolation while on board. Thus, there is a need to empower seafarers and their families to make constructive use of the internet to navigate the emotional and practical challenges of prolonged separations in a mutually supportive way. ISWAN (2024) stressed that the advent of online connectivity has led to seafarers being much more acutely aware on a day-to-day basis of the difficulties and challenges that their loved ones are experiencing thousands of miles away at home. For some seafarers, the sense of powerlessness that can result from being unable to provide practical, on-the-ground support to family members can have a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. Other coping mechanisms include time management ($M = 2.86$), physical fitness ($M = 2.80$), building camaraderie ($M = 2.73$) and hobbies and leisure activities ($M = 2.52$). The findings show the importance of social connection, structured routines, physical wellness, and leisure in maintaining seafarers' mental health and resilience. Coping strategies were also used to adapt to on-board life, such as leisure activities, social wellness (e.g. talking to the crew about their day and forming relationships with others), physical wellness (e.g. food and a healthy regime) and intellectual wellness (e.g. books and learning), as well as using onboard sport and game facilities, communication with family, relaxing and listening to music (Brooks & Greenberg, 2022). According to Slišković and Penezić (2015), the main intervention strategies in reducing stress and diminishing the occupational health risk among seafarers should focus on reducing the main occupational stressors and risks (primary measures). On the basis of the main stressors reviewed, the main primary interventions in seafaring should include: reduction in long separations from families (i.e., shorter durations of stay on board), minimizing fatigue (through reduction of long working hours, increased number of crew and unbroken periods of rest and sleep), improvements in quality of life on board (improvements in telecommunications, nutrition and recreational opportunities, as well as the promotion of social events on board), and educations on healthy life style.

Table 8: Coping Mechanisms of Seafarers as a Whole.

Coping Mechanisms	Mean	SD	Description
1. Communication with loved ones and family	3.31	.608	Very High
2. Building camaraderie	2.73	.678	High
3. Hobbies and leisure activities	2.52	.775	High
4. Physical fitness	2.80	.652	High
5. Time management	2.86	.701	High

Source: Author.

Communication with loved ones as vital coping tools is very highly prioritize by both younger ($M = 3.33$) and older ($M = 3.30$) seafarers. Younger seafarers lean more on physical fitness ($M = 2.92$). Older seafarers show greater use of time management ($M = 2.89$) and camaraderie ($M = 2.80$) as stress-relief strategies. Young ones have the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and liveliness, and with enough energy to enjoy leisure time or to cope with stressors while older ones believe that effective time management plays a crucial role in reducing stress and promoting mental well-being.

Table 9: Coping Mechanisms of Seafarers when Grouped According to Age.

Coping Mechanisms	Mean	Description Younger	Mean	Description Older
1. Communication with loved ones and family	3.33	Very High	3.30	Very High
2. Building camaraderie	2.67	High	2.80	High
3. Hobbies and leisure activities	2.49	Low	2.55	High
4. Physical fitness	2.92	High	2.66	High
5. Time management	2.84	High	2.89	High

Source: Author.

Communication with loved ones is consistently very high among both ratings ($M = 3.36$) and officers ($M = 3.25$). Ratings engage more in physical fitness ($M = 2.91$) and time management ($M = 2.91$) as coping strategies. Officers show slightly lower scores in leisure ($M = 2.48$), likely due to heavier workload and command responsibilities. Time management and physical fitness are valued coping tools across both groups.

Table 10: Coping Mechanisms of Seafarers when Grouped According to Rank.

Coping Mechanisms	Mean	Description Rating	Mean	Description Officer
1. Communication with loved ones and family	3.36	Very high	3.25	Very high
2. Building camaraderie	2.89	High	2.53	High
3. Hobbies and leisure activities	2.55	High	2.48	Low
4. Physical fitness	2.91	High	2.65	High
5. Time management	2.91	High	2.80	High

Source: Author.

Communications with loved ones and family coping strategy is very highly used by both departments ($M = 3.28$, $M = 3.38$), showing the universal importance of emotional connection with family and loved ones for maintaining mental well-being. Deck crew report better use of physical fitness ($M = 2.84$) and time management ($M = 2.99$) than engine crew. Engine crew rely less on hobbies ($M = 2.46$), which may suggest fewer opportunities for relaxation or more demanding job routines.

Table 11: Coping Mechanisms of Seafarers when Grouped According to Job Department.

Coping Mechanisms	Mean	Description Deck	Mean	Description Engine
1. Communication with loved ones and family	3.28	Very high	3.38	Very high
2. Building camaraderie	2.72	High	2.77	High
3. Hobbies and leisure activities	2.54	High	2.46	Low
4. Physical fitness	2.84	High	2.69	High
5. Time management	2.99	High	2.54	High

Source: Author.

Communication with loved ones is highly valued across all service groups, with seafarers with 11–20 years showing the highest use ($M = 3.54$). This suggests that maintaining strong emotional support networks remains essential regardless of career stage. Building camaraderie remains a consistently high coping mechanism for all groups, though scores slightly decline with more years in service. Hobbies and leisure activities are the lowest among seafarers with less than 5 years ($M = 2.13$).

Table 12: Coping Mechanisms of Seafarers when Grouped According to Years in Service.

Risks	M Less than 5 years	D VH	M 5 -10 years	D H	M 11-20 years	D VH	M Above 20 years	D H
1. Communication with loved ones and family	3.38	VH	3.06	H	3.54	VH	3.13	H
2. Building camaraderie	3.00	H	2.56	H	2.90	H	2.53	H
3. Hobbies and leisure activities	2.13	L	2.56	H	2.69	H	2.37	H
4. Physical fitness	3.25	VH	2.81	H	2.87	H	2.57	H
5. Time management	3.38	VH	2.88	H	2.72	H	2.90	H

Source: Author.

7. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

7.1. Summary of the Findings.

This study generated the following findings:

1. Seafarers were found to be exposed to various occupational risks, with work-related stress and exposure to dangerous working conditions cited as their most significant challenge. The younger crew struggle with long hours, and the older ones with work-related stress. Ratings feel the workload pressure and officers the leadership burden. The deck crew is stressed out with high load of work stress; the engine crew is worried about long shifts. Newhires hate seasickness, mid-career fear dangers, experienced ones have apprehensions on stress and long hours.
2. The findings clearly indicate the critical role of connectivity onboard in managing stress, isolation, and mental fatigue associated with maritime work. Overall, seafarers demonstrate high engagement in various coping strategies, including time management, physical fitness, building camaraderie, and hobbies or leisure activities.
3. A Seafarers' Wellness and Resilience Program (SWaRP) can be developed to address the occupational risks and enhance the coping mechanisms of Filipino seafarers.

7.2. Conclusions.

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Seafarers face diverse occupational risks. This demands immediate attention due to their exposure to high levels of work-related stress and risky work environments. Risks faced by seafarers have revealed that the current welfare programs are still inadequate to weather the threats of their working environment. It is necessary to develop and implement enhanced welfare programs that equip seafarers with effective coping mechanisms.
2. To maintain their well-being, seafarers actively engage in a variety of coping strategies. They rely on communication with loved ones, as well as consistent use of time management, physical fitness, building camaraderie, and leisure activities as mechanisms to overcome various occupational risks. These coping mechanisms not only support their mental health but also contribute to sustaining motivation, productivity, and resilience in a demanding and often isolating work environment. A structured and culturally responsive program is urgently needed.

3. Improving the well-being of seafarers is not only a matter of individual health—it is a critical investment in the safety, productivity, and sustainability of the global maritime industry. There is a need to strengthen measures protecting the rights, safety, and welfare of Filipino seafarers.

7.3. Recommendations.

In light of the findings and results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Maritime school administrators can foster a supportive and educational setting that equips future seafarers not only for professional success but also the emotional and mental skills for safeguarding their well-being and effectively managing the unique challenges of a seafaring career.
2. Manning agencies need to invest in mental health resources. They may ensure the health, safety and well being of all onboard through good and effective health and safety policies.
3. Shipowners to provide adequate recreational facilities onboard ship such as recreational spaces, gymnasiums, recreational computers, libraries, televisions, radios and DVD players.
4. MARINA is encouraged to review and update existing regulations continuously. It is suggested to analyze current regulations on health and safety of seafarers onboard and provide sustained efforts to strengthen protection mechanisms for seafarers' human rights, safety, and well being.
5. A comprehensive Seafarer's Wellness and Resilience Program (SWaRP) to enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of seafarers by addressing occupational risks and strengthening coping mechanisms.

7.4. Seafarer's Wellness and Resilience Program (SWaRP).

7.4.1. Objective.

To develop and implement a culturally relevant, evidence-based Seafarers' Wellness and Resilience Program (SWaRP) that addresses the occupational risks Filipino seafarers face and strengthens their coping mechanisms to promote long-term physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Declaration of AI and AI-Assisted Technologies.

The author used Chat GPT and Gemini to assist with language refinement, proofreading grammar, improving sentence flow, suggesting alternative phrasing and reference management in preparing this manuscript. All AI-generated content has been thoroughly reviewed and edited by the author to ensure academic integrity. The author takes full responsibility for upholding the highest academic standards by ensuring the accuracy of the contents and rigor of the entire manuscript.

Table 13: Seafarer's Wellness and Resilience Program (SWaRP): program components.

Core Area	Key Interventions	Intended Outcomes
1. Mental Health Support	- Tele-counseling (Tagalog/Filipino-speaking professionals) / - Peer mentoring on-board / - Mental health awareness workshops	Improved emotional resilience, reduced depression and burnout
2. Physical Health & Fitness	- Simple onboard exercise programs / - Regular health monitoring (e.g., BP, weight) / - Healthy lifestyle kits / - Recreational spaces	Reduced physical strain and lifestyle-related illnesses
3. Family Connection	- Internet access support (e.g., subsidized Wi-Fi) / - Scheduled "video call hours"	Decreased homesickness and emotional stress
4. Cultural and Spiritual Care	- Provision of Filipino spiritual resources / - Prayer time or quiet space onboard / - Celebrations of Philippine holidays	Strengthened sense of identity, faith, and social cohesion
5. Recreational Engagement	- Movie and karaoke nights / - Group games and activities	Boosted morale and onboard camaraderie
6. Time Management & Coping Skills	- Training on work-life balance / - Use of digital planners	Greater control over routines, reduced fatigue, and improved productivity

References.

Abila, S. S., & Acejo, I. (2021). Mental health at sea: Understanding seafarers' coping mechanisms. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 48(7), 900–915. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03088839.2020.1856361>.

Brooks, S. K., & Greenberg, N. (2022). Mental health and psychological wellbeing of maritime personnel: A systematic review. *BMC Psychology*, 10(1), Article 139. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00850-4>.

Carotenuto, A., Molino, I., Fasanaro, A. M., & Amenta, F. (2012). Psychological stress in seafarers: A review. *International Maritime Health*, 63(4), 188–194.

Chung, Y. S., Lee, P. T. W., & Lee, J. K. (2017). Burnout in seafarers: Its antecedents and effects on incidents at sea. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 44(7), 916–931. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03088839.2017.1366672>.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Galapon, B. (2026). The real strength of Filipino seafarers: Discipline, family, and resilience. *Maritime Fairtrade*. <https://maritimefairtrade.org/the-real-strength-of-filipino-seafarers-discipline-family-and-resilience/>.

Gregorio, E. R. (2012). The Filipino seafarers' lived experiences aboard international shipping vessels: A basis for health promotion intervention. *Acta Medica Philippina*, 46(3), 67–74. <https://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/news/seafarers-and-the-maritime-sector-a-quest-towards-safety-and-security>.

International Seafarers' Welfare & Assistance Network. (2024, July 15). Reinventing relationships between seafarers and their families in a digital era. ISWAN. <https://www.iswan.org.uk/news/reinventing-relationships-between-seafarers-and-their-families-in-a-digital-era/>.

International Transport Workers' Federation. (2015). Health, safety, and well-being of seafarers onboard. <https://www.itfglobal.org/en>.

Kivak, R. (2020). Transactional model of stress and coping. EBSCO Research Starters. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/psychology/transactional-model-stress-and-coping>.

Larsen, S.L. (2021). Seafarers and the Maritime Sector: A Quest Towards Safety and Security.

Larsen, S. L. (2021). Seafarers and the maritime sector: A quest towards safety and security. *Global Maritime Forum*. <https://www.globalmaritimeforum.org/news/seafarers-and-the-maritime-sector-a-quest-towards-safety-and-security>.

Lazarus, R., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. New York: Springer.

Manalo, A.R., Mercado, N., Paragas, D., Tenorio, J.C., & Dotimas, J. (2015). The challenges of Filipino seafarers onboard: Basis for work life balance. *LPU–Laguna Journal of International Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 3, No. 1. <http://lpulaguna.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/6.THE--CHALLENGES-OF-FILIPINO-SEAFARERS-ONBOARD.pdf>.

Mellbye, A., & Carter, T. (2017). Seafarers' depression and suicide. *International Maritime Health*, 68(2), 108–114. <https://doi.org/10.5603/IMH.2017.0020>.

Oldenburg, M., Baur, X., & Schlaich, C. (2010). Occupational risks and challenges of seafaring. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 52(5), 249–256. <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.K10-004>.

Paunan, J.C. (2023). Future of Filipino Seafarers. *Philippine Information Agency*. <https://pia.gov.ph/news/2023/06/26/future-of-filipino-seafarers>.

PINOY-OFW.com (2014). Filipino Seafarers Quit Their Job: Here are 8 Reasons Why. <https://www.pinoy-ofw.com/news/33682-reasons-why-filipino-seafarers-quit-their-job.html>

Sampson, H., & Ellis, N. (2019). Seafarers' mental health and wellbeing. *Cardiff University Seafarers International Research Centre*. <https://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk>

Slišković, A. (2017). Occupational Stress in Seafaring. In: MacLachlan, M. (eds) *Maritime Psychology*.

Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45430-6_5.

Slišković, A., & Penezić, Z. (2015). Occupational stressors, risks and health in the seafaring population. *Review of Psychology*, 22(1–2), 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.21465/rp0022.0004>.

The Mission to Seafarers. (2024). Seafarers happiness index: Quarter 4 2023. <https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/seafarers-happiness-index>.

Thomas, M., Sampson, H., & Zhao, M. (2010). Finding a balance: Companies, seafarers and family life. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 30(1), 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0308883042000326100>.