

Mindful Self-Care, Coping, and Meaning in Life: An Examination of the Professional Quality of Life and Well-Being among Individuals who Support and Provide Services to Refugees

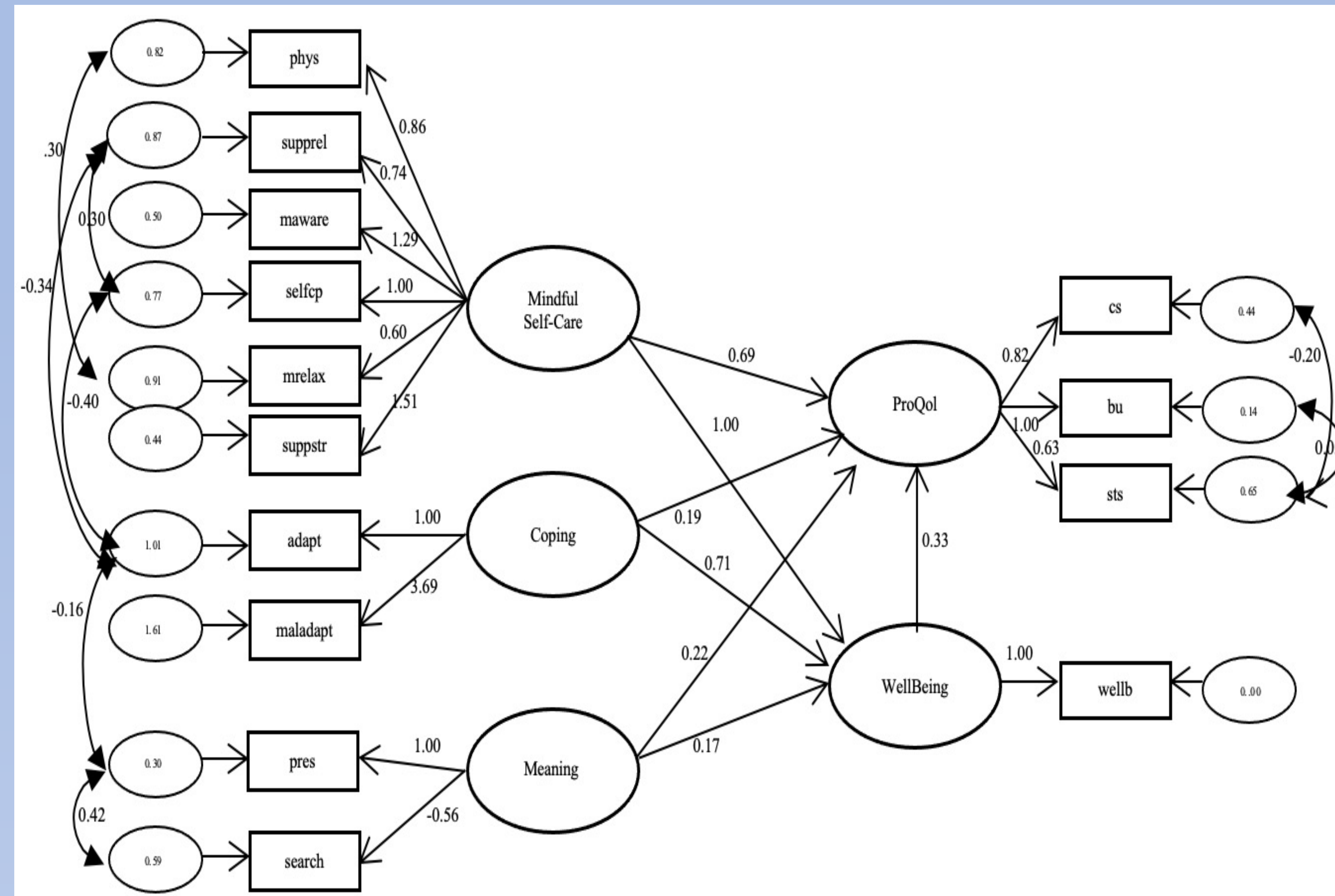
INTRO

The lived experiences of refugees are unique because they have an increased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, due to the traumatic events they experience during exile along with the stressors of adjusting to a new country and acculturation stress (Brooks, 2019). There is well-documented research on the negative mental health outcomes for social workers and other mental health providers as a result of frequently working with traumatized clients (Bride, 2004; Dagan, et al., 2015; Owens-King, 2019). Recently, researchers have begun to examine the experiences of refugee resettlement workers, interpreters, and caregivers who provide services to refugee communities (Akinsulure-Smith et al., 2018; Espinosa, et al., 2019; Khalsa et al., 2020; Kjellenberg et al., 2013; Lusk & Terraza, 2015; Mehus & Becher, 2016; Posselt et al., 2019), however the research is still limited. Many studies focus solely on a single group who work with refugee communities including but not limited to resettlement workers, interpreters, and rescue workers, whereas the current study hopes to look at individuals who assist with refugee resettlement, but also healthcare providers who work directly with refugee clients. In order to understand how to best support these professionals, it is first necessary to examine what factors contribute to well-being and professional quality of life. Once we know this, it is possible to create programs and trainings to meet the needs of professionals who may be in need of extra support due to the demands of their work.

METHODS

Individuals who work with refugees (n = 148) completed an online survey evaluating factors that contribute to professional quality of life and well-being. 47.3% of the participants had 1-3 years of experience working with refugee communities. Participants completed the Professional Quality of Life Scale-V (ProQol), the World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5), the Mindful Self-Care Scale (MSCS), the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and the Brief COPE, in addition to general demographic information.

Figure 1: Final SEM Model



CONCLUSION

The number of people worldwide who are displaced continues to increase and this is why additional research on the experiences of this population is pivotal for developing evidence-based programs to support the professional quality of life and well-being of individuals who provide support and services to refugee communities. For next steps, it is necessary to use these results, which demonstrated that increased engagement with mindful self-care practices and fostering meaning in one's life can impact one's professional quality of life and overall well-being. Based on these results, researchers can incorporate them into clinical interventions aimed at supporting individuals who work with refugee communities.

RESULTS

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used and covariances were added based on the model. Our full SEM model demonstrates acceptable model fit based on SEM standards All statistics, the RMSEA (0.08), CFI (0.91), and GFI (0.897) met recommended criteria, except for χ^2 . There was a significant positive direct effect of MSC behaviors on ProQol so that more engagement in MSC predicted higher ProQol ($\beta = .69, p < .001$). MSC behaviors also demonstrated a significant direct relationship on well-being so that higher engagement in MSC predicted higher well-being ($\beta = 1.07, p < .001$). There was a significant positive direct effect of coping experience on well-being so that more use of coping predicted higher well-being ($\beta = .71, p < .001$). Coping experience demonstrated a positive, non-significant effect on ProQol. There was a significant positive direct effect on perceived meaning in life on ProQol so that more meaning one finds in life predicted higher ProQol ($\beta = .22, p < .001$). Perceived meaning in life also demonstrated a significant direct relationship on well-being so that the more meaning one finds in life predicted higher well-being ($\beta = .17, p < .05$). There was a significant positive direct effect of levels of well-being on ProQol so that higher levels of well-being predicted higher ProQol ($\beta = .33, p < .001$).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study support past research with this population and expand findings, particularly in regards to mindful self-care behaviors. Specifically, this is the first study to examine one's engagement with mindful self-care behaviors and how these impact both ProQol and well-being in this population. The results suggest that ProQol can be directly affected by one's degree of engagement in mindful self-care behaviors, presence and search for meaning in life, and subjective well-being. The results also suggest that subjective well-being can be directly affected by one's degree of engagement in mindful self-care behaviors, presence and search for meaning in life, and coping experiences.