The Relationship Between Professional, Self-Care and Career Development for Social Workers in Palestine

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Abstract

Career development of the social worker is one of the pillars of human development which contributes with other professions and specializations in achieving goals.Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to two main aspects: self-care and professional development .The social workers who work for Palestine's social development directorates in the Gaza Strip were the subject of this article.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between social workers' professional growth, and self-care.

Methods: A purposeful sample of 84 social professionals from Palestine was gathered. The structural equation modeling method of partial least squares was applied PLS-SEM.

Results: The link between professional, self-care and career growth for social workers was examined using a few assumptions. This study supports the statistically significant link between social workers' professional, personal self-care and career advancement. Increased heights of SC lead to higher CD among social workers.

Conclusions: The research team believes that the directors of social development directorates in the Gaza Strip and the world should give great importance to the self-care and professionalism of social workers to achieve their career development. These findings can provide direction for directors of social development directorates to deal with social workers who lack professional and self-care services in their work.

Keywords: Professional, self-care, career development, PLS-SEM, social workers, Palestine.

العِلاقةُ بينَ الرِّعايَةِ المِهْنيَّةِ والذَّاتيَّةِ والتطوُّر الوظيفيِّ للأَخصّائيِّينَ الاجتِماعيِّينَ في فِلَسطين

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الملخص

يُعتبر التطوُّر الوظيفيُّ للأخصائيِّ الاجتماعيِّ أحد ركائز التنمية البشرية التي تسهم مع المهن والتخصصات الأخرى في تحقيق الأهداف، لذا، كان لا بُدَّ من الاهتمام بجانبيْن أساسيَّيْن، هما: الرعاية الذاتية والمهنية في مجال التطور الوظيفي، وموضوع هذا المقال هم الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون العاملون في مديريات التنمية الاجتماعية بقطاع غزة.

الأهداف: الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التحقق من العلاقة بين التطور الوظيفي للأخصائيين الاجتماعيين والرعاية الذاتية والمهنية المقدمة لهم.

المنهجيَّة: جمعت عيِّنة قصديّة مكوَّنة من (84) أخصائي اجتماعي في مديريات التنمية الاجتماعية بقطاع غزة. وطبقت طريقة نمذجة المعادلة الهيكلية للمربعات الصغرى الجزئية PLS-SEM.

النتائج: تمَّ فحص العلاقة بين الرعاية الذاتية والمهنية والتطور الوظيفي للأخصائيين الاجتماعيين باستخدام بعض الافتراضات، تدعم هذه الدراسة وجود علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الرعاية الذاتية والمهنية للأخصائيين الاجتماعيين والتطور الوظيفي؛ حيث تؤدي زيادة الرعاية الذاتية والمهنية إلى ارتفاع مستوى التطور الوظيفي بين الأخصائيين الاجتماعيين.

الخُلاصة: يرى الباحثون أنَّ مدراء مديريات التنمية الاجتماعية في قطاع غزة والعالم يجب أن يعطوا أهمية كبيرة للرعاية الذاتية والمهنية للأخصائيين الاجتماعيين لتحقيق تطورهم الوظيفي. يمكن لهذه النتائج أن توفر التوجيه لمديري مديريات التنمية الاجتماعية للتعامل مع الأخصائيين الاجتماعيين الذين يفتقرون إلى الخدمات المهنية والرعاية الذاتية في عملهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرعاية الذاتية والمهنية، التطوير الوظيفي، PLS-SEM، الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون، فلسطين.

Introduction

The career development of the social worker is one of the pillars of human development which contributes with other professions and specializations in achieving goals, so it was essential to be mindful of two main aspects self-care and professional in the arena of functional effort, and therefore, social workers are considered the real axis on which the profession of social work is based in achieving its objectives and confirming its effectiveness, it also performs the required professional role through its professional practices (Mohammed, 2019).

The provision of services in Palestine has undergone significant evolution over the years, shaped by a complex interplay of historical, political, social, and economic factors, the evolution of service provision in the Palestinian context reflects a resilient response to enduring challenges, driven by innovation, community empowerment, and strategic partnerships. While significant progress has been made, ongoing political and economic obstacles continue to shape the landscape of service delivery in Palestine, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts and international solidarity in addressing Palestinian challenges and advancing sustainable development goals(Jamali&Abu-Zahra, 2017).

Self-care is a complex interplay of bodily, mental, emotional, and spiritual actions that a person engages in to maintain or enhance their health (Carroll et al., 1999). The social worker is in constant need of acquiring more knowledge, skills, and experience, which refines his professional personality so that he is more able to manage his responsibility and contribute to a more effective role in improving professional practice, a person who enters a profession is required to abide by the ethics of the profession because society makes him trustworthy to provide services of value, and they cannot be available unless his behavior is wrapped in certain standards. Social workers must be dealt with not only as representatives of the role that social work plays as a profession in society, but rather as a human resource that must be invested and well managed and its capabilities and skills discovered and developed, bearing in mind that they are resources with different and changing needs and motives, and they have the desire to satisfy their needs not only material ones but also spiritual (Soliman, 2021).

Taking care of oneself is crucial to controlling psychological and occupational stress more positively, and thus the social worker becomes more able to deal with the pressures of life. self-care works in relieving stress and helps in following a healthy lifestyle, it is considered the key to improving the mood and reducing anxiety, emotion and psychological stress resulting from the professional conflicts and problems of the clients that the social worker deals with, which leads to neglecting their needs, and thus they are exposed to the risk of psychological stress, frustration, low self-esteem, feelings of lack of self-confidence and inability to achieve(Rashed & Snoubar, 2020).

Providing self-care makes the social worker feel satisfied with himself and his personal and professional life, and this helps to improve the quality of their professional performance, which contributes to a sense of psychological well-being and enhances psychological holdout in the long term (Baraghithi, 2022). This results in an increase in the competence of the social worker's career development in various aspects such as professional knowledge, professional skills, and capabilities necessary to manage practical and professional life experiences, development competencies include the capabilities necessary to make correct professional decisions, to create a professional network that enables the social worker to define professional goals and career development for him (Rosinante & Ashkanani, 2022).

Career development is achieved during the professional care of the social worker through formal or informal programs through which managers at the senior management level and managers at the middle management level assist the less experienced social workers in several ways, such as giving them advice on their career path and helping them to overcome professional problems in the foundation social institutions or organizations.

The dimensions of professional care are functional support, which include sponsorship, supply of information, assistance in achieving professional goals, psychological and social support, personal support, personal stimulation, friendship, and mutual trust through which the social worker's career development can be achieved and eliminate/overcome the problems they are exposed to it (Al-Ghassab, & Al-Rabi'an, 2012).

Since social work did not begin to develop as a profession or academic field until the 1990s, there hasn't been any research done on the connection between professional and self-care and career development in Palestine. Following the signing of the Oslo Accords and the Palestinian Authority's sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, social work has been initiated as a profession and academic authority with autonomous sociopolitical advances.

The social worker's continuous exposure to the experiences of pain and problems that clients face day after day makes them more vulnerable to psychological and social problems that can exacerbate with professional conflicts that result

from their lack of knowledge of the life and professional methods that address these conflicts, and thus leads to a decrease in the morale of the social worker and his satisfaction with his work (Mohammed, 2014; Farghali, 2018). The continuously deteriorating socioeconomic and security conditions in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip after 1967, resulted in a gradual increase in the demand for qualified social work graduates, particularly through the international humanitarian aid programs before the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994. Over the 1980s and early 1990s, the prevalence of emergency food and cash resulted in introducing the social work profession to the public as the profession of coupon distribution. Over the years, social work intervention models (in the emergency and development realms) evolved towards a more relevant framework for the Palestinian context. However, Palestinian social work education and training programs in the five universities did not pick up these models and never integrated them into their curricula, as confirmed by different participants in this research (Faraj, 2017, P. 171). Therefore, the issue of career development occupies great importance in the social work profession, as professional burdens may affect the job convictions of the social worker and also affect his performance of his roles with the required competence.

In light of the rapid changes in the business environment and the accompanying pressures, organizations are paying attention to adopting modern administrative concepts for social institutions, in order to achieve competitive advantage by increasing the noticeable interest in their human resources by adopting the concept of self-care and professional because of its effective impact on improving professional performance and career development for the social worker (Abdullah, 2015). The current paper focusing on the concept of professional and self-care has received valuable and welcome attention, by taking care of the social worker's personal and professional requirements.

Since the social work is one of the professions that comprises many fields and is interested in performing direct and indirect services, and exercises its professional work directly with clients, it is essential to provide self-care and professional services for social workers to improve their performance in the workplace. In light of the above, the current study seeks to determine the relationship between self-care and professional of social workers in Palestine and its contribution to their career development.

Literature review

The following is a summary of the several research that the authors analyzed and that addressed professional and self-care for social workers:

The study of Farghali (2018). aimed to identify the effect of practicing a behavioral training program in the casework method to develop professional self-care for social workers in the school field. The study found that there were statistically significant differences between the scores of the experimental group and the control group on the professional self-care scale.

The study of Acker's (2018) aimed to determine the relationship between self-care strategy and job satisfaction. A study of 649 social workers was conducted to assess the impact of self-care on job satisfaction. The study concluded that there is a relationship between self-care strategies and job satisfaction.

Miller et al. (2019) determined the level of personal and professional care provided by social workers employed in childcare. The descriptive study used the social survey method, which involved sampling 623 social workers nationwide. Although the study found that social workers engage in some self-care, the findings also highlighted the need for greater organizational support and attention to self-care for social workers in the childcare industry.

The study of Mavridis et al (2019) aimed to identify and describe stress and self-care reported among frontline family service providers including social workers, this descriptive study relied on the social survey methodology of (99) working family members enrolled in a strength-based training program. The study found that high levels of work-related stress were frequently identified among frontline family service providers, in response to this problem, some child service organizations encouraged the family to use self-care practices to cope with the pressures inherent in these functions.

Cuartero & Vidal (2019) conducted a descriptive study with a sample of 270 social workers. The study's objectives were to identify the harmful health effects that social workers are exposed to as a result of their empathy when listening to clients, as well as to determine the effectiveness of self-care practices for social workers. The study's conclusions showed that the social workers' personal and professional self-care practices increase their satisfaction and lower their levels of empathy fatigue. Improving social workers' self-care practices will benefit social workers, clients, and the institution.

Hricová et al. (2020) whose study concluded that satisfaction with salary, nature of work, operating procedures, and co-workers as well as psychological self-care may prevent further burnout in times of high stress.

The study of Shepherd & Newell (2020) aimed to determine the stress and emotional health of social workers and the effects of self-care practice. The descriptive study relied on the social survey method for a sample of 45 social workers. The study found that social workers who practiced more self-care had better physical health, less stressful emotional health, and higher satisfaction with empathy.

Gómez-García et al. (2020) came to the conclusion that many aspects of burnout and job satisfaction are highly correlated with various personal and professional traits. This study demonstrates that there is a statistically significant link between work satisfaction and burnout parameters.

The aim of the study of Miller et al. (2021) was to learn more about the self-care routines of Polish social workers. The sample size for this study consisted of 250 social professionals. The participants got a modest degree of self-care, according to the overall results, and they still require more attention.

Babatunde (2022) study aimed to investigate the relationship between professional self-care and burnout of social workers in public secondary schools in Ikorodu, North Lagos State, the study was based on an exploratory research design, and a sample of sixteen social workers in public secondary schools in Lagos State, the results of the study revealed that social workers suffer from a high level of mental fatigue resulting from work-related stress and that professional self-care has a positive effect on reducing social workers' fatigue.

Here's an analysis of the provided studies on self-care and social workers, highlighting their areas of agreement and disagreement:

Similarties:

All studies explore the importance of self-care for social workers' well-being and job satisfaction. Most studies acknowledge the high-stress nature of social work and its potential to lead to burnout. There's a general agreement that self-care improves social workers' mental and emotional health and job satisfaction.

Differences:

Sample Size and Location: Studies vary significantly in sample size and location (Palestine, Poland, Spain, USA, etc.). This can influence the generalizability of the findings.

Studies by Miller et al. (2019) and Mavridis et al. (2019) highlight the need for organizational support for self-care practices. This aspect is not explored in all studies. Cuartero & Vidal (2019) emphasize the positive impact of self-care on clients and institutions, which is not a central theme in all studies.

Aims and hypotheses.

This study aims to examine the connections between professional care (PC), self-care (SC), and career development (CD). Drawing from the studies examined in the preceding part, we put forth the subsequent conjectures:

H1. There is a strong and positive correlation between PC and CD. The model presupposes that a consistent rise in PC may cause a rise in CD.

H2. There is a strong and positive correlation between SC and CD. The model presupposes that a continuous rise in SC may result in an increase in CD.

Figure 1 displays the proposed set of correlations based on relationships, which are founded on the hypotheses.
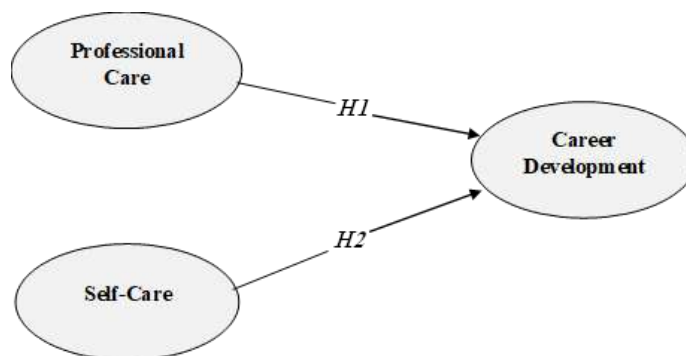
Figure 1: Hypothesized causation model

Procedures and Methods

Enrollment of participants and a declaration of ethics

The study design used for the study was cross-sectional. At first, all inquiries and guidelines for completing the surveys, together with details on the aim of the study, were delivered to the higher authorities of the Ministry of Social Development in the Gaza Strip. After this, the researchers obtained the approval of the Ministry of Social Development to start collecting data from social workers. In February 2023 A survey was then distributed to 84 social workers targets of this study working in the development directorates of the northern Gaza Strip and Gaza governorate, along with a request for their participation in the study and a guarantee of confidentiality, to allay any concerns that could have surfaced about the goals of the study, the application of the findings, or the completion of the instrument.

Measurement instruments

This measurement tool is made up of twenty-two items and has three subscales meant to assess the PC (seven items, e.g. Promotion opportunities are available to everyone, the Directorate seeks to develop the professional expertise of employees), SC (seven items, e.g. The directorate helps me get rid of negative feelings, the Directorate motivates employees to work through innovation and creativity) and CD (eight items, e.g. I am satisfied with my current professional position).The survey's respondents assigned a score to each item on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 ('Strongly Disagree') to 5 ('Strongly Agree'), based on how frequently they had encountered the circumstance it described during the last year. Cronbach's alpha values for the internal reliability analyses showed high values for the SC (α =0.887) and CD (α =0.834) scales and lower values for the PC (α =0.798) scale. In our study, alpha Cronbach's coefficient (α) was α = 0.840 for the whole test.

Limitations and upcoming studies

Due to a set of issues with the empirical design, the results of this study should be evaluated with care. First, to discover potential causal correlations between various factors among social workers, future research should be undertaken utilizing longitudinal designs, as the cross-sectional design limits the interpretation of causal linkages between variables.

Second, the results might not apply to all Palestinian social workers because the survey was voluntary, and the sample was made up of people who voluntarily chose to participate. Thirdly, the sample size of Palestinian social workers was limited (84), increasing the sample size would be one way to lessen this issue in subsequent studies. Last but not least, the self-administered questionnaire raises the possibility of biases. Despite their genuine sentiments, participants have a propensity to answer research instrument questions in a way that is deemed to be most favorable in terms of contemporary societal norms and standards, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2009). Data collection from many sources would be one way to lessen this issue in future study.

Data analysis

A purposeful sample of 84 social professionals from Palestine was gathered. The structural equation modeling method of partial least squares (PLS-SEM), SPSS, and SmartPLS were used to analyze the data. The sample was also given a descriptive analysis in SPSS. A structural equations model was presented to verify and compare the theories that were put forth. Because it is a widely used technique to calculate structural equation models (Hair et al., 2013), we employed modeling using partial least squares structural equations (PLS-SEM) approach. Thus, theoretically validated additive and linear causal models may be tested, PLS-SEM, in social science research, a second-generation multivariate data analysis approach is frequently used. SmartPLS was used to conduct this study (Ringle et al., 2015). In a single process, the measurement and structural model's parameters were calculated. Nevertheless, the guidelines set forth the findings were subsequently presented by Chin (2009) and Hair et al. (2013), who evaluated the parameters' statistical significance and the measurement model first, respectively. As a result, this method guarantees the measurements' validity and dependability.

Findings

Characteristic statistical

The average age of the 84 participating social workers was 34.1 years, with 51.2% of them being male. (48.8 percent female) with an average age of the women was 35.2 years. Most of the professionals' educational qualifications are a bachelor's degree (88.1 percent, n=74), and 59.5 percent (n=50) their place of work is in the Directorate of Social

Development in Gaza City. More than one-third of those surveyed (42.9 percent, n=36) had been in their years of experience ranged from 10 to less than 15 years. According to the Ministry of Social Development's demographic report for professionals working in 2023, the study sample's characteristics, including gender, age, education, and professional experience, were comparable to those of the overall population of social workers in directorates of social development in the Gaza Strip, every participant provided informed consent.

Evaluation of measurement model

To validate the measurement model, the next steps were taken: (1) calculating the factorial load for reflective constructs (PC, SC, and CD) to determine the item's individual reliability; and (2) determining the construct's validity. To assess whether the questionnaire was sufficiently reliable, many experiments were done to determining whether or not to accept a certain item as a component of a reflective construct was the aim of the first test. For the items to fulfill this purpose, they must have a factorial load (λ) or simple correlations of at least 0.707. (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Due to weak loads (≤ 0.7), four items (PC_01, SC_01, CD_04, and CD_05) were removed. The residual item loads, however, were higher than 0.7. The remaining items were included in this study because of their role in ensuring content authenticity (AVE = 0.5; P_C = 0.7). The results are shown in Table 1.

The Composite Reliability Index (P_C) and Cronbach's alpha (α) were used in the second test to evaluate the construct's internal consistency. Based on applying the recommendation of Hair et al. (2013), 0.7 is proposed as a reference value for both P_C and α. Table 1's findings demonstrate the dependability and excellent internal consistency of each variable. A PLS instrument that was generated using the AVE was shown to be reliable thanks to the convergent validity test. The AVE coefficient for reflecting structures was higher than 0.5, as shown in Table 1, which summarizes the results. These recommendations suggested that every AVE measure was valid.

Table 1: Measurement tool for structural models: convergent validity and reliability.

Construct	Measurement item	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
	PC01	Item deleted[a]			
	PC02	.825			
	PC03	.887			
PC	PC04	.702	.798	.893	.649
	PC05	.858			
	PC06	.889			
	PC07	.884			
	SC01	Item deleted[b]			
	SC02	.762			
	SC03	.748			
SC	SC04	.779	.887	.912	.596
	SC05	.792			
	SC06	.800			
	SC07	.826			
	CD01	.827			
	CD02	.778			
	CD03	.869			
CD	CD04	Item deleted[c]	.834	.892	.581
	CD05	Item deleted[d]			
	CD06	.821			

Construct	Measurement item	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
	CD07	.892			
	CD08	.733			

PC_0l: Promotion opportunities are available to everyone in the directorate; PC_02: The Directorate provides the opportunity for vocational training to develop job performance; PC_03: The Directorate's administration follows up the functional tasks of the employees during work; PC_04: The Directorate holds periodic meetings to discuss the professional problems of the workers; PC_05: The directorate provides opportunities to apply scientific knowledge during work; PC_06: The Directorate provides workers with professional advice when needed; PC_07: The Directorate seeks to develop the professional expertise of employees; SC_01: The employees of the directorate suffer from a state of occupational fatigue; SC_02: The directorate contributes to providing self-care services for workers; SC_03: The directorate helps me get rid of negative feelings resulting from work; SC_04: Practicing activities helps relieve the psychological stress of workers during work; SC_05: The Directorate works to improve the professional atmosphere for workers; SC_06:The Directorate contributes to the growth of the cognitive and emotional side of the workers in order to obtain a balanced professional personality; SC_07: The Directorate motivates employees to work through innovation and creativity; CD_01: The Directorate is interested in improving the professional performance of employees and their career advancement; CD_02: I feel satisfied with my current professional standing; CD_03:The Directorate offers vocational programs that contribute to increasing the professional production of workers; CD_04: I am marginalized in career advancement from management; CD_05: The Directorate works to improve the material incentives for workers; CD_06: The administration provides employees with all the tools and facilities for career advancement; CD_07: The administration is keen to achieve social justice among employees; CD_08: I feel a sense of belonging to the directorate in which I work; CA: Cronbach's alpha; CR, composite reliability; AVE: variance extracted .

a PC_01, bSC_01, cCD_04,dCD_05 were deleted due to low factorial loadings.

Table 2: Measuring instrument: discriminant validity.

	PC	SC	CD
PC	.858		
SC	.771	.773	
CD	.762	.752	.806

Diagonal: square root of the average variance extracted (AVE).

Finally, the discriminant's validity needs to be evaluated. The (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) approach was applied to this goal. Based on the notion that a model's constructions need to vary more with their constituents than with other constructs, this strategy is proposed. Table 2 demonstrates that the square root of the AVE was higher than the correlation between the variables in this regard.This indicates that all constructions had a stronger relationship with their own objects than they did with those of other constructs.\

Figure 2: shows the Measurement tool for structural models: convergent validity and reliability.
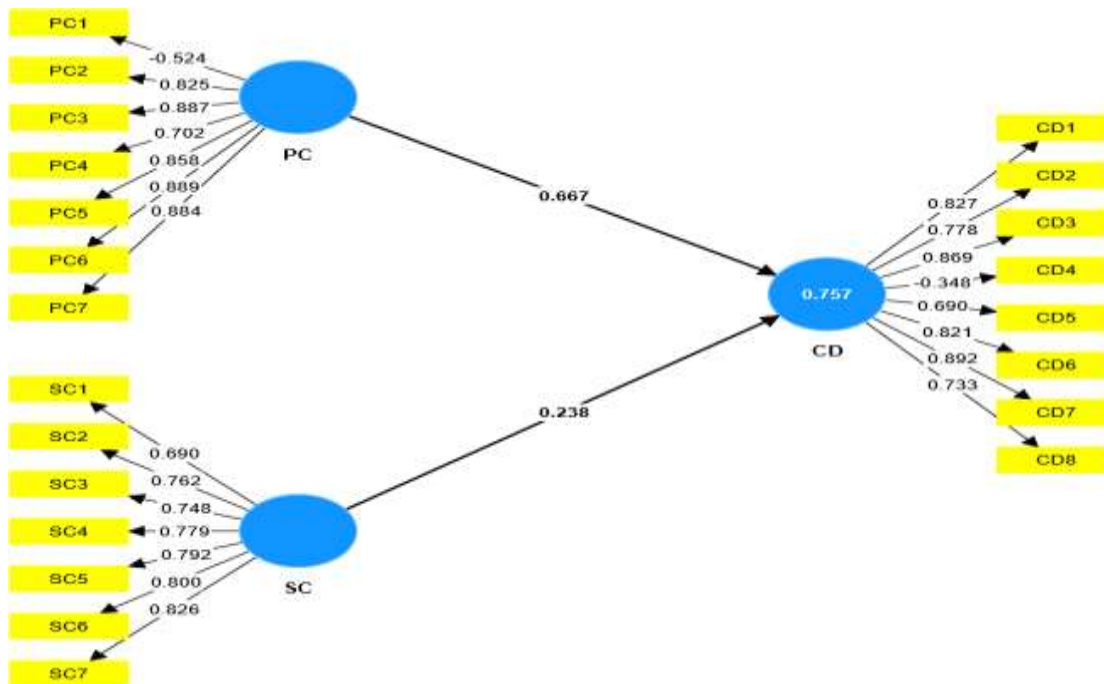

Figure 2: Structural model

Evaluation of structural model

Following the validation of the constructs' validity and reliability, a study was conducted to examine the relationship between the constructs and the endogenous variables' predictive potential. As a result, we evaluated the significance and type of the correlations (hypotheses) among the various variables. Two fundamental indicators were used in this assessment: The model's predictive power is indicated by the explained variance (R2), and the normalized path coefficients (β), which demonstrate the degree to which independent and dependent variables are connected(Johnson et al., 2006).

For the model to have any predictive potential, the dependent variables' R2 must be greater than or equal to 0.1 because Lower numbers don't reveal much information (Falk & Miller, 1992). The following reference values were developed by Chin (1998): 0.67 is considered "substantial," 0.33 is considered "moderate," and 0.19 is considered "weak." This model's R2 values (R2 = 0.741) demonstrated a significant degree of predictive power for the variable CD. These outcomes are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Explanation of variance summary (R^2). Test of StoneGeisser (Q^2).

Construct	R^2	Q^2
CD	.741	.727

Table 4: Structural model results.

Hypothesis	Suggested effect	Path coefficients	t-value (bootstrap)	p-value	Support
H1: +PC → + CD	+	.667***	10.474	.000	Yes
H2: +SC → + CD	+	.238***	3.768	.000	Yes

We utilized the values discovered in the path coefficients (β) to ascertain the extent to which exogenous components of dependent constructs explain variance. Chin (1998) states that for these values to be deemed significant, they must rise to at least 0.2. It should be mentioned that, according to Hair et al.'s (2013) recommendation, the nonparametric bootstrap technique was applied in conjunction with a replacement resampling process. For two-tailed tests, the commonly used critical values are 1.65 (significance level = 10%), 1.96 (significance level = 5%), and 2.57 (significance level 1%). Table 4 indicates that a hypothesis was significant.

We found that there was a positive and significant association between PC and CD among social workers when we looked at the relationships between the two Career Development aspects (βPC → CD = 0.667; t=10.474; p < 0.01), supporting hypothesis H1. A positiveand significant connection was observed between SC and CD (βSC → CD = 0.238; t=3.768; p < 0.01), this concurs with hypothesis H2.

The Q2 parameter, also known as cross-validated redundancy or the Stone-Geisser technique was used to gauge the predictive strength of constructs that were dependent on the model. This test was conducted with the blindfold method applied. Since values greater than zero signify that the model's predictability is significant. (Sellin&Versand, 1995), for parameter Q2 to have predictive validity, it must be greater than zero. (Chin, 1998). The Q2 value satisfies this requirement, as seen in Table 3. Consequently, the model's predictive significance concerning endogenous latent variables was validated.

Finally, the mean discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations (variances and covariances) is the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which we computed using the standard error of the residual (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013).To ensure the fit of the structural model, we calculated the GOF index "match quality index".It is a general indicator defined as follows: $GOF = \sqrt{(\overline{R^2} * \overline{AVE})}$The value of $\overline{R^2} = 0.899$ ، $\overline{AVE} = 0.609$. Therefore, the GOF value is equal to 0.672, which is higher than 0.36 according toWetzels et al. (2009)which indicates the fit of the proposed structure of the model.

Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction, the aims of this study were twofold: (1) to analyze the relationships between professional care (PC) and (2) to analyze the relationships between self-care (SC) and career development (CD). By employing a sample of 84 Palestinian social professionals, these goals have been met. We have been able to assess the instrument's validity and reliability as well as the structural model's prediction capacity and relationships thanks to the PLS-SEM technique.

Our results provide credence to the literature review on the connections between professional care (PC), self-care (SC), and career development CD. Specifically, we found that social workers who exhibit high levels of both PC and SC also tend to have high levels of CD. Some of the correlations found in this research between the PC and CD and job satisfaction have also been validated by earlier literature review. For instance, several studies have found that social workers' satisfaction levels are higher when they engage in personal and professional self-care activities. Additionally, improving self-care practices would help social workers, clients, and the organization. (Acker, 2018; Cuartero & Campos-Vidal, 2019; Babatunde, F. 2022).

Social work practitioners' PC, SC, and CD were shown to have several linkages (possible relationships) according to the structural equation model used in this study. The results indicate a substantial and favorable association between PC, SC, and CD. Social workers who have high PC levels also tend to have high CD scores, according to many studies on the subject. Many authors have endorsed this relationship (Mavridis et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021; Shepherd & Newell, 2020).However, in samples of social workers and child protection workers, some research has not established tackled the expected link between PC, SC, and CD.Miller et al. (2019)The study aimed to identify the personal and professional care of social workers working in childcare, the study concluded that social workers participate in a small amount of self-care, and the findings highlight the need for social workers who work in childcare facilities to get greater organizational assistance as well as greater attention to self-care.

The findings of this study offer new, pertinent information to the corpus of existing research on PC and SC among social workers. Social workers experience unpleasant emotions as a result of the loss of PC and SC in social service organizations, which ultimately has a detrimental effect on CD.

The limited engagement in self-care can be attributed to several factors specific to Gaza. The stressful work environment, characterized by exposure to trauma and limited resources, can leave social workers feeling overwhelmed and depleted. Additionally, social work programs and employers may not equate professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to prioritize self-care effectively.

Conclusions

Social workers in Palestine play a vital role in supporting vulnerable communities. However, their demanding work environment can lead to burnout. This study provides evidence in favor of the proposed paradigm, which postulates that greater PC levels among social workers result in higher CD levels. Moreover, greater levels of SC cause social workers' CD levels to rise. Therefore, the research team believes that the directors of social development directorates in the Gaza Strip should give great importance to the self-care and professionalism of social workers to achieve their career development and support it with more informative methods. This could include workshops on stress management techniques and mentorship programs to support career advancement.

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