

Article type:
Original Research

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The Role of Psychologists in Managing Workplace Psychological Disorders among Employees in Southern Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to examine the role of psychologists in managing psychological disorders among employees and to identify workplace strategies used to address anxiety, frustration, and depression-related problems.

Methods and Materials: A descriptive analytical study was conducted among 50 male and female employees from the Southern Electricity Distribution Company in Iraq. Data were collected using researcher-developed questionnaires assessing psychological disorders and strategies for dealing with psychological disorders. The psychological disorders scale consisted of 24 items with acceptable discriminant validity and high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$). The coping strategies scale included 25 items and also demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, reliability analysis, and thematic analysis.

Findings: Participants reported a high level of coping strategies for psychological disorders, with an overall mean percentage of 78.22%. Anxiety-management strategies showed the highest percentage (75.03%), followed by frustration-management strategies (73.12%) and depression-management strategies (71.12%). Significant differences were found between employees with high and low psychological disorder scores in coping strategies, with all dimensions showing significant differences ($p = .01$). No significant differences were found between male and female employees in coping strategies for anxiety, frustration, depression, or the total score ($p > .05$).

Conclusion: Psychologists play an important role in supporting employee mental health by identifying psychological difficulties, providing coping strategies, and improving workplace psychological conditions.

Keywords: Psychologist, Workplace Mental Health, Psychological Disorders, Employees, Coping Strategies.

Article history:

Received 23 Mar 2026
Revised 18 May 2026
Accepted 24 June 2026
Published online 01 Aug 2026

How to cite this article:

Abas, A. K. (2026). The Role of Psychologists in Managing Workplace Psychological Disorders among Employees in Southern Iraq. International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture, 13(8), Article e2026-1385. <https://doi.org/10.61838/ijbmc.v13i8.1385>



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Introduction

The prevalence of psychological, personal, and behavioral problems compels many individuals to seek ways to provide solutions to these issues and assist them in overcoming their challenges and enhancing their motivation, as well as offering guidance that helps them avoid deviations and psychological pressures that affect their personality and behaviors, in order to build the individual's character from all its psychological, personal, cognitive, and social aspects (Marouf & Bordi, 2025; Mokdad).

The disturbances experienced by those who frequent mental health service centers vary from family, behavioral, and psychological disorders, among others. Kirtley et al., (2019) indicated that personality disorders impose emotional and psychological burdens on the individual, leading them to engage in socially and psychologically unacceptable behaviors, making them unable to interact well with others, causing identity disturbances, and resulting in a disorganized thought process. Personality disorder sufferers are often characterized by impulsivity, mood swings, and emotional dysregulation. Psychological disorders are a group of psychological imbalances that reveal the individual's suffering in dealing with daily life and social relationships, and the feeling of sadness among some categories of psychologically disturbed people due to the presence of these imbalances and the feeling of suffering and unhappiness (Boland & Anderson, 2019; Drouin & Miller, 2015).

Therefore, psychological counseling services are considered a necessity imposed by the nature of the current era, the increasing complexities of contemporary life, and the accumulated pressures resulting from the burdens and demands of modern human life (Matliwala, 2017). Therefore, it has become essential to provide such services in various institutions to which individuals belong, such as hospitals, schools, and workplaces, among others. The nature and significance of these services differ depending on the target audience. A considerable number of individuals visit mental health centers for consultations or to attend therapy sessions, highlighting the importance of examining the psychologist's role in addressing mental disorders from their viewpoint.

Psychological guidance requires an experienced psychologist who is calm in dealing with the counselee, especially since some cases it is difficult for the psychologist to accept advice and guidance. However, this can be largely possible if the person seeking help comes voluntarily for guidance, as their need for such assistance is urgent. On the other hand, the assistance suggested by the psychologist without being requested by the individual has little value, as the individual views it as imposed help, akin to an intrusion into what they consider personal matters (Strasser & Gruber, 2004).

It is clear from the above that psychologists play an important role in various institutions, whether public or private, in hospitals, schools, charitable organizations, and related institutions. He provides services to individuals, families, and the community, and his role involves attempting to solve the problems faced by the client and helping the individual overcome obstacles to their adaptation or achieving their needs in an acceptable manner. Therefore, the specialist should be familiar with the methods and skills that enable him to perform his duties, and the study focused on two psychological disorders: anxiety and depression.

The aim of this research is to reveal the role played by the psychologist within the employee's work environment, where the psychologist uses appropriate psychological strategies to treat employees suffering from psychological disorders within the work environment.

Methods and Materials

The current research used descriptive analytical method, and this method is appropriate to the goals and hypotheses of the current research. The research consisted of 50 employees of the General Company for Electricity Distribution in the South in Iraq.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire prepared specifically for this research via the internet, and conducted interviews with employees via the internet, which made the employee feel comfortable answering the questionnaire via the internet and at the time available to him.

The following are some interview questions: Do you experience any psychological distress in the workplace? What is your opinion on the role of a psychologist in the workplace? Do you believe that psychologists can help

alleviate psychological distress among employees in the workplace?

The study used two psychological measures for the purposes of the study:

Psychological Disorders Scale (Prepared by: Researcher): This scale consists of 24 statements. This scale aims to identify the psychological disorders that the employee faces in the work environment. The researcher obtained several statements, reaching 24 statements, and no modifications were made if any of the statements of the scale were deleted by the arbitration committee. The researcher assessed internal consistency validity to evaluate the scale's internal homogeneity by calculating

the correlation coefficient between individuals' scores for each statement on the scale and the total score of the corresponding dimension.

Validity of the scale using peripheral comparison: The scale's capability reflects how effectively it differentiates between the two extremes of the characteristic being measured. This is achieved by organizing the scores of all individuals in the sample according to the scale. From this arrangement, 27% of participants were selected from both the upper and lower categories. The "T" statistical method was then applied to analyze the obtained scores, with the results presented in the table below.

Table 1

The validity results of the two-tailed comparison of the psychological disorders scale

Both categories	Number of paragraphs	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Supreme	8	57.71	15.12	7.32	16	0.01

The data in [Table 1](#) clearly indicates statistically significant differences between the average scores of the upper and lower groups. This demonstrates the scale's ability to effectively differentiate between the two extremes within the group regarding the characteristic being measured. Therefore, it can be concluded that the

scale possesses an acceptable level of discriminatory validity. The reliability of the psychological disorders scale scores was assessed by computing Cronbach's coefficient (A) for the overall scale score. The resulting values are presented in the table below.

Table 2

The Cronbach reliability results

Psychological disorders scale	Number of paragraphs	Cronbach's coefficient
Total score	24	0.94

[Table 2](#) clearly indicates that the Cronbach coefficient value for the psychological disorders scale scores was high. This reflects a strong level of consistency, enabling the researcher to confidently rely on the results and apply the scale in the main study. **Strategies for dealing with psychological disorders scale:** This scale consists of 25 statements. This scale aims to identify the most important strategies for dealing with psychological disorders. The researcher identified 25 statements, with none of the peer-reviewed scale statements being altered or removed by the arbitration committee. To assess the internal consistency of the scale, the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient

between individuals' scores on each statement and the total score of the corresponding dimension.

Validity of the scale

The validity of a scale is regarded as a key factor in determining how effectively it measures what it was intended to assess. **Validity of the scale using peripheral comparison:** This statement highlights the scale's capacity to distinguish between the two extremes of the characteristic being measured by arranging the total scores of all individuals in the sample based on the scale. Subsequently, a percentage (27%) is extracted from both the upper and lower categories. The "T" statistical method is then applied to the resulting scores, with the outcomes summarized in the [Table 3](#).

Table 3

The validity results of the two-tailed comparison of the strategies for dealing with psychological disorders scale

Both categories	Number of paragraphs	Average	Standard deviation	T calculated	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Supreme	8	49.12	17	8.12	16	function 0.01

Table 3 clearly indicates statistically significant differences between the upper and lower groups, reflecting the varying levels of training between these two segments. This allows us to conclude that the scale demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity.

The reliability of the scale used for addressing psychological disorders was validated by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient in relation to the overall score. The Cronbach reliability results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Cronbach reliability results

Psychological disorders scale	Number of paragraphs	Cronbach's coefficient
Total score	25	0.92

It is clear from the previous table that the value of the Cronbach coefficient for the scores of the scale for dealing with psychological disorders was high, meaning that it has a high degree of consistency, which allows the researcher to rely on its results, and it can be applied in the basic study.

Data analysis

Tests to study the statistical differences between males and females, the Cronbach alpha method shows the coefficients of agreement between the arbitrators for the scale phrases, the correlation coefficient between individuals' scores on each scale phrase and the total score belonging to it, arithmetic averages - standard deviations.

Deductive and inductive thematic analyses were employed to examine the data. Deductive thematic analysis involves coding data by identifying new insights while drawing on existing research findings. The

research objectives guided the creation of a structured framework, within which themes were organized into specific categories.

In contrast to the previous result, the self-inductive analysis focuses on the responses of the research participants, and this result is consistent with the results of studies Azungah (2018) that there are employees who suffer from psychological disorders within the work environment and that these may affect their performance within the work environment.

Findings and Results

This study was an attempt to identify different strategies in dealing with employee psychological disorders in the work environment. The study resulted in a set of results indicating that there is a difference in response to stress in the areas (males- females).

Table 5

Responses of study sample members on a scale of strategies for dealing with psychological disorders (N=50)

Distance	Number of paragraphs	Bone grade	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Average percentage
Strategies for dealing with anxiety	16	48	32.13	1.32	75.03%
Strategies for dealing with frustration	4	12	7.33	1.43	73.12%
Strategies for dealing with depression	5	15	9.12	1.75	71.12%
Total score	25	82	65.12	4.19	78.22%

Table 5 clearly shows that the study sample members demonstrated a high level of responses on the stress coping strategies scale, with the average percentages for the scale's dimensions ranging from 71.12% to 75.03%.

To test the validity of this hypothesis, the scores from the highest and lowest quartiles on the psychological disorders scale among the sample members were

analyzed. Participants with scores in the highest quartile or higher were categorized as the high-disorder group, while those with scores in the lowest or lower quartiles were considered a group with low disorders. Then a comparison was made between the two groups using the "test." T" for two independent groups, and the following table shows this.

Table 6

Analysis of the significance of differences in average scores between individuals with high and low psychological disorders on the psychological disorder coping strategies scale

Distance	High disturbances (N=15)		Low disturbances (N=15)		value (T)	Significance level
	M	S	M	S		
Strategies for dealing with anxiety	28.3	3.13	17.4	2.32	7.24	0.01
Strategies for dealing with frustration	29.4	4.23	18.5	3.12	6.34	0.01
Strategies for dealing with depression	24.5	3.25	19.4	4.32	8.43	0.01
Total score	73.2	3.49	75.23	6.25	11.21	0.01

Table 6 clearly indicates statistically significant differences at the 0.01 level between the average scores of individuals experiencing high psychological stress and those with low psychological stress. These differences

are evident in the dimensions of the strategies for dealing with psychological disorders scale, as well as the overall score on the scale. The results favor individuals with lower levels of psychological stress.

Table 7

The significance of the differences between the average scores of males and females on the scale of strategies for dealing with psychological disorders

Distance	Males (N=31)		Females (N=19)		value (T)	Significance level
	M	S	M	S		
Strategies for dealing with anxiety	24.12	3.12	24.12	3.12	1.170	Non-functional
Strategies for dealing with frustration	25.13	4.12	25.17	4.11	0.121	Non-functional
Strategies for dealing with depression	28.12	3.38	28.13	3.19	1.161	Non-functional
Total score	72.12	5.12	73.14	5.22	1.162	Non-functional

According to Table 7, there are no statistically significant differences in the treatment of psychological disorders between males and females. The researcher explains this result by pointing to the traditions and customs of Iraqi society, which does not differentiate between men and women in the workplace. With development, progress, and globalization, women have become freer to express their opinions and can advance to higher positions in the workplace. This reflects the community's ability to foster closeness among its members and creates a work environment that provides comfort and development. The work environment also

helps to treat all psychological disorders that an employee may experience within the work environment.

The results showed that there are statistically significant differences between the average of individuals who influence from high psychological faculties and the average of individuals who influence from low psychological faculties. There are no statistically significant differences between males and females in their average scores on the scale of strategies for dealing with psychological disorders.

Discussion and Conclusion

The previous results show that with the development and advancement of technology in work environments over the past years, there has been a decrease in stress and psychological disturbances that may occur in the work environment and that may affect employee productivity within the work environment. This result was consistent with the findings of the study conducted by [Mayer & Oosthuizen \(2020\)](#), in which they pointed to the outstanding focus of the South African Technology Foundation on the outstanding positivity within it. Workers have benefited from the tremendous technological development and progress that has occurred recently, which has made the work environment more developed and productive and reduced the percentage of professional pressures that a worker may be exposed to within the work environment.

For example, technological advancements in the workplace have led to a decrease in human interaction, resulting in easier organizational processes, better handling of new developments, and better problem-solving for employees. This is the role of psychologists in the workplace. [Schwab & Davis \(2018\)](#) indicated in their research that the development and improvement of employee performance within the work environment is due to the use of technological means and the tremendous progress in communication and media.

The researcher explains these results by stating that individuals suffering from psychological disorders and work-related stress are unable to perform their work positively; on the contrary, they may experience a loss of enthusiasm for work and suffer from psychological disorders that may lead to their absence from work or mistakes they make while performing their duties. Therefore, workplaces are keen to employ a psychologist to help employees manage and treat their personal disorders by training the psychologist to train employees on strategies of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and love of work, which improves and develops their personality and helps them overcome their psychological disorders that may occur due to the work environment.

The researcher attributes these results to the traditions and culture of Iraqi society, which emphasize gender equality in the workplace. With the advancement and modern technological development of the United States, a poem expressing their experimental views

without children helped the prince in her career and assisted her in assuming leadership. Society's view of women has changed significantly, with their role no longer limited to raising children but now encompassing contributions to community development through their work within social institutions. It is evident that Iraqi society is committed to supporting both men and women and providing necessary workplace strategies to address employee psychological distress.

Human resources are considered the most important element in any organization due to the services they provide for their development, regardless of its nature, whether service-oriented or industrial. Therefore, these individuals need attention and care from the moment they join the organization and throughout their years of service, as this yields positive results for the organization. This is essential for finding the best, most competent, and most suitable individuals to assume responsibilities and those most capable of producing knowledge. There are those who fulfill this role, namely industrial psychology, represented by occupational and organizational psychologists, due to their multiple and diverse roles in serving the organization in general and the industrial sector in particular; whether in selecting employees, measuring their performance, assisting new supervisors, addressing the psychological aspect, or preventing workplace accidents. Clinical psychologists have traditionally received attention and study due to their presence in hospitals, schools, and institutions close to the community, and have been the subject of numerous studies. However, industrial psychologists have not received the same level of research because they work in production facilities that do not interact directly with members of the community. Therefore, his role has been overlooked despite the significant efforts he makes to improve the worker, the institution, and the productivity that forms the backbone of national production. This study, therefore, aims to restore his standing and his roles by evaluating the extent to which his roles are being fulfilled from the perspective of his supervisors and managers.

Recommendations

Working to improve and develop the professional relationship between the psychologist and the employee through conferences and seminars provided by the Labor Organization. Defining the role of the clinical psychologist within the organization's work team.

Providing the moral and material capabilities of the Iraqi organization's plans and paying attention to them like other organizations.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude and appreciation to all participants.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently, with personal funding, and without financial support from any governmental or private institution or organization.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

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