THE IMPACT OF PSYCHOANALYTIC SESSIONS ON REDUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AMONG PASSPORT DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES IN THE INDEPENDENT ZAKHO ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the impact of psychoanalytic sessions on reducing psychological stress among employees of the Passport Department in the Independent Zakho Administration. The study employed a quasi-experimental method based on a pre-test/post-test single-group design. The research sample consisted of 11 employees selected purposively based on specific inclusion criteria. The psychoanalytic intervention consisted of 15 daily sessions lasting 45 minutes each, conducted over three weeks from February 2 to February 20, 2025. Results showed statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test measurements in favor of stress reduction, with very large effect sizes ($\eta^2 = 0.894$, d = 2.341) indicating the high effectiveness of psychoanalytic sessions in reducing workplace psychological stress among passport department employees.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic Sessions, Psychological Stress, Passport Department Employees,

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dampak sesi psikoanalisis dalam mengurangi stres psikologis di antara karyawan Departemen Paspor di Pemerintahan Zakho Independen. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuasi-eksperimental berdasarkan desain kelompok tunggal pra-tes/pasca-tes. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 11 karyawan yang dipilih secara sengaja berdasarkan kriteria inklusi tertentu. Intervensi psikoanalisis terdiri dari 15 sesi harian yang masing-masing berlangsung selama 45 menit, yang dilakukan selama tiga minggu dari tanggal 2 Februari hingga 20 Februari 2025. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik antara pengukuran pra-tes dan pasca-tes yang mendukung pengurangan stres, dengan ukuran efek yang sangat besar ($\eta^2 = 0,894$, d = 2,341) yang menunjukkan efektivitas tinggi sesi psikoanalisis dalam mengurangi stres psikologis di tempat kerja di antara karyawan departemen paspor.

Kata Kunci: Sesi Psikoanalisis, Stres Psikologis, Karyawan Departemen Paspor.

Introduction

Psychological stress in workplace environments has become one of the most significant challenges facing employees in various organizational sectors, particularly in government institutions that provide direct services to citizens[1]. The passport department represents a critical government facility that requires employees to work under considerable pressure due to heavy workloads, complex administrative procedures, and continuous interaction with citizens who may be experiencing their own stress related to documentation processes. Research indicates that chronic workplace stress can lead to decreased job performance, increased absenteeism, various mental health issues, and reduced overall organizational effectiveness[2].

The Independent Zakho Administration operates within unique administrative and political circumstances in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which may contribute additional stressors for government employees[3]. The passport department within this administration handles essential documentation processes for citizens, making the psychological well-being of its employees crucial for effective service delivery and maintaining public satisfaction with government services. Recent studies have highlighted the urgent need for evidence-based interventions to address workplace stress in government sectors, particularly in regions experiencing ongoing political and economic challenges[4].

Psychoanalytic therapy, rooted in comprehensive theoretical frameworks and evolved through decades of clinical practice, offers a deep approach to understanding and treating psychological distress by exploring unconscious patterns and internal conflicts that contribute to stress responses[5]. Contemporary psychoanalytic approaches have been adapted to include brief therapy models suitable for workplace

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[1] K. S. Bhui, S. Dinos, S. A. Stansfeld, and P. D. White, "A synthesis of the evidence for managing stress at work: A review of the reviews reporting on anxiety, depression, and absenteeism," *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, vol. (2012).

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[3] B. M. Qadir, S. Z. Abdullah, and H. L. Majeed, "Diversification and economic growth in emerging economies: The Kurdistan of Iraq experience," *Eurasian Journal of Management & Social Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 2, (2023), 33-60.

[4] B. A. Saeed and N. P. Shabila, "Stress and anxiety among physicians during the COVID-19 outbreak in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region: An online survey," *PLOS One*, vol. 15, no. 7, (2021).

[5] E. A. Brett and J. P. Wilson, "Psychoanalytic contributions to a theory of traumatic stress," in *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*, J. P. Wilson and B. Raphael, Eds. New York: Springer, (1993), 61-74.

interventions, focusing on helping individuals understand unconscious behavioral patterns and emotional responses that contribute to stress while providing practical tools for better stress management[6]. The therapeutic relationship itself becomes a crucial element for healing, as emphasized by Jung's understanding that "only what someone truly is has healing power"[7].

The theoretical foundation underlying this study rests on psychoanalytic understanding of stress as manifestation of internal psychological conflicts and unresolved tensions that often stem from early life experiences and unconscious defense mechanisms[8]. According to modern psychoanalytic theory, workplace stress frequently reflects deeper psychological patterns related to authority relationships, performance anxiety, interpersonal dynamics, and unconscious fears of failure or rejection. By addressing these underlying psychological factors through structured therapeutic sessions, individuals can develop more effective coping strategies and achieve lasting reductions in overall stress levels. This process involves developing trust in the therapeutic relationship, which requires courage and forms the basis for sustainable healing and personal growth[9].

The significance of this study lies in its potential contribution to understanding effective interventions for workplace stress management in government settings, particularly within culturally specific contexts of the Middle East[10]. The findings may inform policy decisions regarding employee wellness programs, provide evidence for implementing psychoanalytic interventions in similar organizational settings, and contribute to the growing body of literature on culturally adapted therapeutic approaches. Furthermore, this research addresses an important gap in literature regarding application of psychoanalytic methods in non-Western governmental

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[6] F. N. Busch, M. Rudden, and T. Shapiro, *Psychodynamic treatment of depression*. (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2009).

[7] C. G. Jung, *Die heilende Kraft in uns: Weisheiten und Einsichten*, F. Alt, Ed. (Ostfildern: Patmos Verlag, 2023).

[8] E. A. Brett and J. P. Wilson, "Psychoanalytic contributions to a theory of traumatic stress," in *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*, J. P. Wilson and B. Raphael, Eds. New York: Springer, (1993), 61-74.

[9] V. Kast, *Vertrauen braucht Mut: Was Zusammenhalt gibt*, 2nd ed. (Ostfildern: Patmos Verlag, 2023).

[10] P. Bolton, L. Michalopoulos, A. M. Ahmed, L. K. Murray, and J. Bass, "The mental health and psychosocial problems of survivors of torture and genocide in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq: A brief qualitative study," *Torture: Quarterly Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture*, vol. 23, no. 1, (2013), 1-14

contexts where traditional therapeutic approaches may need modification to align with local cultural values and practices.

Literature Review

Government employees face unique stressors that distinguish their work experience from private sector environments, including increased public scrutiny, bureaucratic constraints, political pressures, and the responsibility of serving diverse citizen needs within limited resource frameworks[11]. These stressors are particularly pronounced in departments handling critical documentation services where errors can have significant consequences for citizens' lives and legal status. Research examining work stress causes in public organizations has found that organizational factors such as management practices, workload distribution, and structural issues are primary contributors to employee stress[12].

The physiological and psychological impacts of chronic workplace stress have been extensively documented through longitudinal research studies. Prolonged exposure to occupational stressors leads to measurable alterations in stress hormone levels, increased prevalence of anxiety and depressive disorders, cognitive impairment affecting decision-making capabilities, and physical health problems including cardiovascular issues and compromised immune system functioning[13]. These manifestations often reflect psychosomatic responses where body and mind signal distress when traditional medical approaches fail to identify clear physical causes[14]. Within government employment contexts, stress-related mental health issues create cascading effects that influence not only individual employee wellbeing but also

[11] K. S. Bhui, S. Dinos, M. Galant-Miecznikowska, B. de Jongh, and S. Stansfeld, "Perceptions of work stress causes and effective interventions in employees working in public, private and non-governmental organisations: A qualitative study," *BJPsych Bulletin*, vol. 40, no. 6, (2016) 318-325.

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[13] X. Zhou, Y. Goryakin, P. Pacdao, M. Suhrcke, and L. Feng, "Work stress, mental health, and employee performance," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 13, (2022).

[14] A. Kugelstadt, *"Dann ist das wohl psychosomatisch!" Wenn Körper und Seele SOS senden und die Ärzte einfach nichts finden - Alles zur Psychosomatischen Medizin.* (Munich: Goldmann, 2022).

organizational effectiveness, public service quality, and citizen satisfaction with government services[15].

Contemporary psychoanalytic therapy has evolved significantly from its classical Freudian origins, developing into sophisticated therapeutic approaches particularly well-suited for addressing complex workplace psychological challenges. Modern psychoanalytic theory recognizes that current psychological difficulties often stem from unconscious patterns established in early relationships and life experiences, which individuals may unconsciously recreate in their professional environments[16]. Object relations theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how early attachment patterns and internalized relationship dynamics influence current workplace interactions and stress responses, suggesting that individuals often transfer unresolved conflicts from past relationships onto current authority figures and colleagues[17].

Central to modern psychoanalytic practice is the understanding of transference and countertransference dynamics within the therapeutic relationship. Contemporary understanding presents an intersubjective and relational approach where both therapist and client contribute to the emergence of transference relationships and enactments within therapeutic interactions. This contemporary understanding moves beyond traditional notions of therapeutic neutrality to recognize that therapeutic relationships require authenticity, vitality, and naturalness to be truly effective[18]. This perspective is particularly relevant for workplace interventions where employees may unconsciously recreate problematic authority relationships within the therapeutic setting, providing opportunities for insight and change.

Ego psychology represents another significant development within psychoanalytic theory, focusing specifically on strengthening individuals' adaptive capacities and developing more effective psychological defenses against stress. This

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[15] S. Sood, "Workplace stress: A neglected aspect of mental health wellbeing," *Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, vol. 22, no. 1, (2018) 1-3.

[16] E. A. Brett and J. P. Wilson, "Psychoanalytic contributions to a theory of traumatic stress," in *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*, J. P. Wilson and B. Raphael, Eds. New York: Springer, (1993), 61-74.

[17] P. Sharma, "Encounters with the universal and cultural in psychoanalytic psychotherapy," *Psychological Studies*, vol. 56, no. 3, (2011), 304-310.

[18] S. Bettighofer, *Übertragung und Gegenübertragung im therapeutischen Prozess*, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2022).

approach emphasizes building ego strength through insight development, helping individuals recognize their unconscious defense mechanisms, and developing more mature coping strategies that can be applied across various life domains[19]. Research has demonstrated that interventions based on ego psychology principles are particularly effective for addressing workplace anxiety, improving emotional regulation, and enhancing overall psychological resilience in demanding professional environments[20].

The integration of body-oriented approaches within psychoanalytic frameworks has gained increasing recognition, particularly through developments in understanding embodied emotions and their role in psychological healing. Emotional processing can be enhanced through attention to physical sensations, breathing, movement, and intentional embodiment practices[21]. This approach recognizes that workplace stress manifests not only in psychological symptoms but also in physical tensions, blocked emotions, and somatic complaints that require attention to the body-mind connection for effective resolution.

Brief psychoanalytic therapy models have gained considerable attention for their applicability in workplace and organizational settings where time constraints and practical considerations require focused, goal-oriented interventions[22]. These approaches maintain core psychoanalytic principles while adapting techniques to achieve meaningful therapeutic outcomes within limited timeframes. Short-term psychoanalytic therapy typically focuses on specific presenting problems, uses active therapeutic techniques, and emphasizes the development of insight and coping skills that can be immediately applied to current stressors while addressing underlying psychological patterns that contribute to ongoing difficulties.

The application of psychoanalytic approaches within Middle Eastern and Kurdish cultural contexts requires careful consideration of cultural factors that may

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[22] F. N. Busch, M. Rudden, and T. Shapiro, *Psychodynamic treatment of depression*. (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2009).

significantly influence therapeutic effectiveness and client engagement. Cultural adaptation involves acknowledging and incorporating traditional values, religious beliefs, family structures, and communication patterns that differ from Western norms where psychoanalytic therapy was originally developed[23]. Successful cultural adaptation requires therapists to understand local concepts of mental health, traditional healing practices, social hierarchies, and cultural attitudes toward psychological intervention while maintaining the essential therapeutic elements that make psychoanalytic approaches effective[24].

The role of trust in therapeutic relationships becomes particularly crucial in cross-cultural contexts. Trust is fundamental for human coexistence and requires courage to develop, especially in complex situations where individuals have experienced betrayal or disappointment[25]. In workplace interventions, building trust involves not only the therapeutic relationship but also restoring confidence in organizational systems and interpersonal relationships that may have been damaged by chronic stress and conflict.

Group psychoanalytic therapy offers particular advantages for workplace interventions as it allows participants to explore interpersonal dynamics, receive peer support, share common experiences, and develop social skills within a structured therapeutic environment[26]. Group formats can be particularly effective for government employees who share similar work stressors and organizational challenges, providing opportunities for mutual support and collective problem-solving while maintaining the depth of psychoanalytic exploration. The group setting also allows for examination of authority relationships, peer interactions, and social dynamics that directly parallel workplace experiences[27].

Research on workplace mental health interventions has consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for structured psychological interventions, with

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[23] V. Koç and G. Kafa, "Cross-cultural research on psychotherapy: The need for a change," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol. 50, no. 1, (2019), 100-115.

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[26] I. D. Yalom, *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

[27] A. Fenster, "Group therapy as an effective treatment modality for people of color," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, vol. 46, no. 3, (1996), 359-372.

meta-analytic studies showing moderate to large effect sizes for various therapeutic approaches[28]. Psychoanalytically-informed interventions have shown particular effectiveness for addressing complex psychological issues that underlie chronic workplace stress, including perfectionism, authority conflicts, interpersonal difficulties, and deep-seated fears of failure or rejection. A systematic review of group therapy research demonstrated that group interventions are as effective as individual psychotherapy across multiple conditions[29].

The durability of improvements following psychoanalytic interventions has been demonstrated through longitudinal studies showing sustained benefits extending well beyond the completion of formal therapeutic sessions[30]. Studies examining stress management interventions have shown that psychodynamic approaches can maintain their effectiveness over extended follow-up periods, with one study demonstrating continued benefits at 9-year follow-up[31]. This suggests that psychoanalytic interventions may provide more lasting change compared to purely symptom-focused approaches.

Contemporary perspectives from Jungian analytical psychology add important dimensions to understanding workplace stress and healing processes. Jung's work emphasizes that psychological suffering often relates to a lack of meaning in life, and that seeking healing requires willingness to engage with questions of purpose and significance[32]. This perspective suggests that effective workplace interventions must address not only symptom reduction but also help individuals discover meaning and purpose in their professional roles and responsibilities.

The work from decades of research in personal psychology, therapy, and cultural analysis contributes important insights that inform understanding of how

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[28] K. M. Richardson and H. R. Rothstein, "Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta-analysis," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 13, no. 1, (2008), 69-93.

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[31] H. Limm, H. Gündel, M. Heinmüller, B. Marten-Mittag, U. M. Nater, J. Siegrist, and P. Angerer, "Long-term effectiveness of a stress management intervention at work: A 9-year follow-up study based on a randomized wait-list controlled trial in male managers," *BioMed Research International*, vol. 2017, (2017), 2853813.

[32] C. G. Jung, *Die heilende Kraft in uns: Weisheiten und Einsichten*, F. Alt, Ed. (Ostfildern: Patmos Verlag, 2023).

individual psychological development intersects with broader social and organizational contexts[33]. These perspectives are particularly relevant for government employees who must navigate complex relationships between personal fulfillment and public service obligations[34].

The theoretical framework for this current study integrates contemporary psychoanalytic theory with workplace stress research, organizational psychology principles, and cultural adaptation considerations specific to the Middle Eastern context[35]. This integration proposes that structured psychoanalytic sessions can help government employees understand and modify unconscious patterns contributing to workplace stress, develop more effective coping mechanisms, improve interpersonal relationships, and achieve lasting reductions in psychological distress while enhancing overall job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. The approach is particularly relevant for regions like the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where employees face unique cultural and political stressors that require culturally sensitive interventions[36].

Research Methodology

1. Research Method

The current research employed a quasi-experimental method based on a pre-test/post-test single-group design. The Psychological Stress Scale was administered as a pre-test to the experimental group, after which the psychoanalytic intervention program was applied during the period from February 2, 2025, to February 20, 2025. Upon completion of the program, a post-test was administered to determine the effect of the psychoanalytic sessions on reducing psychological stress among passport department employees.

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[34] J. Rattner, *Tagebuch im hohen Alter*, vol. III. (Gießen: Verlag für Tiefenpsychologie, 2020).

[35] P. Bolton, L. Michalopoulos, A. M. Ahmed, L. K. Murray, and J. Bass, "The mental health and psychosocial problems of survivors of torture and genocide in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq: A brief qualitative study," *Torture: Quarterly Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture*, vol. 23, no. 1, (2013), 1-14

[36] B. A. Saeed and N. P. Shabila, "Stress and anxiety among physicians during the COVID-19 outbreak in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region: An online survey," *PLOS One*, vol. 15, no. 7, (2021).

2. Research Population and Sample

Research Population: The research population consisted of all employees working in the Passport Department of the Independent Zakho Administration. The population included employees distributed across various administrative and service positions within the department, representing different levels of responsibility and experience in government service delivery.

Research Sample: The research sample was purposively selected from employees showing signs of moderate to high psychological stress in the passport department. Initially, 15 employees were identified as potentially suitable for the study. The inclusion criteria required that employees: (1) be officially employed full-time in the passport department for at least one year, (2) demonstrate moderate to high stress levels as identified by preliminary screening using the Psychological Stress Scale, (3) provide written consent for participation in the study, and (4) be available to attend all scheduled intervention sessions. For exclusion criteria, 4 employees were excluded from the initial sample: 2 employees due to concurrent participation in other psychological interventions, 1 employee due to extended medical leave during the intervention period, and 1 employee for not meeting the required conditions for participation in the psychoanalytic program. This resulted in a final sample of 11 employees (7 males and 4 females), with ages ranging from 28 to 45 years (M = 36.2, SD = 5.4), and work experience in the department ranging from 1 to 8 years (M = 4.1, SD = 2.3).

3. Research Tools: Psychological Stress Scale for Workplace Settings

The researcher utilized a validated psychological stress scale specifically adapted for workplace environments, constructed according to scientific procedures followed in developing psychological measures. After reviewing relevant literature and previous studies and conducting an exploratory survey, six basic dimensions were identified for the scale: work-related anxiety, interpersonal stress, emotional exhaustion, job demands pressure, role ambiguity, and organizational factors.

Initially, 42 items were formulated and distributed across the six dimensions, then presented to 10 specialized experts to verify their validity. All items received an agreement percentage exceeding 80%, indicating face validity.

The scale was administered in its initial form to an exploratory sample of 32 employees to extract the psychometric properties. Based on statistical analysis results, some items that did not meet the required psychometric conditions were excluded.

The final version of the scale consisted of 35 items distributed across the six dimensions, with five-point response options: Always (5 points), Often (4 points), Sometimes (3 points), Rarely (2 points), Never (1 point). The scale's reliability coefficient using the test-retest method was 0.89, indicating excellent internal consistency and stability over time.

4. Psychoanalytic Intervention Program

The researcher designed a psychoanalytic intervention program aimed at reducing psychological stress among passport department employees. The program consisted of 15 daily sessions conducted over a period of three weeks, with each session lasting 45 minutes, during the period from February 2, 2025, to February 20, 2025. The program sessions included a variety of psychoanalytic techniques and activities covering the following areas: establishing therapeutic alliance and creating safe space for exploration, exploring individual stress patterns and unconscious responses to workplace challenges, identifying defense mechanisms and their role in workplace stress responses, examining transference patterns in authority relationships and colleague interactions, working through interpersonal conflicts and communication patterns, developing insight into repetitive behavioral patterns that contribute to stress, integrating psychological insights with practical coping strategies, and consolidating therapeutic gains with planning for continued self-reflection and stress management.

5. Statistical Methods

The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0 to process the research data, employing the following statistical methods: paired samples t-test to compare pre-test and post-test means, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations, Cohen's d calculation for effect size determination, eta-squared (η^2) calculation for proportion of variance explained, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and confidence interval calculations for mean differences.

6. Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted after obtaining formal ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board at the University of Zakho. Official approval was granted to facilitate the researcher's fieldwork in the passport department. Prior to data collection, informed written consent was obtained from all participating employees, explaining the nature of the research, its objectives, and the intervention program's activities. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences affecting their employment status. All collected data were treated confidentially and used exclusively for research purposes, with participant anonymity strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

To verify the research hypothesis, comprehensive statistical analysis was conducted on data collected from both pre-test and post-test measurements to determine the effectiveness of psychoanalytic sessions in reducing psychological stress levels among passport department employees. The researcher conducted paired samples t-test analysis and calculated effect size measures to determine both statistical and practical significance of the intervention. The data analysis revealed highly significant improvements in psychological stress reduction, supporting the effectiveness of the psychoanalytic intervention program.

Table 1: Results of Paired Samples T-Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Psychological Stress Measurements

Variable	Descriptive Statistics			Paired Differences			Statistical Test Results			
	Measurement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	Std. Dev. Difference	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
Psychological Stress	Pre-test	147.82	9.236	19.455	2.758	0.832	23.387	10	0.000	Highly Significant
	Post-test	128.36	7.592							

The statistical analysis reveals highly significant differences between pre-test and post-test psychological stress measurements. The pre-test means of 147.82 (SD = 9.236) decreased substantially to 128.36 (SD = 7.592) in the post-test, representing a mean reduction of 19.455 points. The calculated t-value of 23.387 with 10 degrees of freedom is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that psychoanalytic sessions produced statistically significant reductions in psychological stress levels among

passport department employees. These findings align with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of psychoanalytic interventions for workplace stress reduction[37]. The substantial decrease in stress scores suggests that the intensive daily format of psychoanalytic sessions provided participants with meaningful therapeutic benefits that translated into measurable improvements in their psychological well-being. The magnitude of change observed in this study exceeds typical outcomes reported in workplace intervention literature, indicating the particular effectiveness of culturally adapted psychoanalytic approaches in this Middle Eastern governmental context[38].

Table 2: Effect Size Analysis: Cohen's d and Eta-Squared (η^2) for Intervention Impact

Effect Size Measure	Calculated Value	Small Effect	Medium Effect	Large Effect	Very Large Effect	Interpretation	Practical Significance
Cohen's d	2.341	0.2	0.5	0.8	1.0+	Very Large Effect	Exceptional Impact
Eta-Squared (η^2)	0.894	0.01	0.06	0.14	0.20+	Very Large Effect	89.4% Variance Explained
Statistical Power	0.999		Power Analysis			Excellent Power	Highly Reliable Results

The effect size analysis demonstrates exceptional practical significance for the psychoanalytic intervention. Cohen's d value of 2.341 substantially exceeds the threshold for very large effects (d ≥ 1.0), indicating that the average participant experienced stress reduction equivalent to more than two standard deviations of improvement. The eta-squared value of 0.894 reveals that approximately 89% of the variance in stress reduction can be attributed to the psychoanalytic intervention, representing extraordinarily high practical significance. This exceptional effect size aligns with theoretical expectations regarding the depth and comprehensiveness of psychoanalytic interventions. Unlike surface-level stress management techniques, the psychoanalytic approach addressed fundamental psychological patterns and unconscious dynamics that contribute to workplace stress responses[39]. The intensive

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[37] K. M. Richardson and H. R. Rothstein, "Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta-analysis," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 13, no. 1, (2008), 69-93.

[38] V. Koç and G. Kafa, "Cross-cultural research on psychotherapy: The need for a change," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol. 50, no. 1, (2019), 100-115.

[39] E. A. Brett and J. P. Wilson, "Psychoanalytic contributions to a theory of traumatic stress," in *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*, J. P. Wilson and B. Raphael, Eds. New York: Springer, (1993), 61-74.

daily format likely contributed to the accelerated therapeutic benefits by maintaining continuous therapeutic momentum and allowing for deeper exploration of psychological material[40].

Table 3: Comprehensive Intervention Effectiveness Summary with Clinical Significance Indicators

Outcome Measure	Pre-Intervention			Post-Intervention			Change Analysis			Clinical Significance	
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Absolute Change	% Reduction	95% CI	Effect Classification	Clinical Impact
Psychological Stress Scale	147.82	9.236	134-162	128.36	7.592	118-141	19.455	13.2%	[17.6, 21.3]	Very Large	Highly Significant

This comprehensive analysis demonstrates that the psychoanalytic intervention achieved exceptional effectiveness across all measured parameters. The 13.2% reduction in psychological stress scores, combined with very large effect sizes and high statistical significance, provides robust evidence for both the statistical reliability and practical importance of the intervention. The 95% confidence interval [17.6, 21.3] indicates that the true population effect likely falls within this range, confirming the substantial nature of the stress reduction achieved through psychoanalytic sessions. The success of this intervention can be attributed to several interconnected factors inherent in the theoretical foundation and practical implementation of the program. The psychoanalytic approach's emphasis on exploring unconscious psychological patterns and defense mechanisms allowed participants to develop profound insights into the underlying psychological dynamics contributing to their workplace stress responses[41]. The cultural adaptation of the intervention to align with Middle Eastern and Kurdish cultural values, communication patterns, and social structures likely played a crucial role in enhancing participant engagement and therapeutic effectiveness[42].

The comprehensive nature of the psychoanalytic approach, which simultaneously addressed multiple psychological domains including unconscious defense mechanisms, interpersonal relationship patterns, emotional regulation

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[40] P. Knekt, E. Virtala, T. Härkänen, M. Vaarama, J. Lehtonen, and O. Lindfors, "The outcome of short- and long-term psychotherapy 10 years after start of treatment," *Psychological Medicine*, vol. 46, no. 6, (2016), 1175-1188.

[41] P. Sharma, "Encounters with the universal and cultural in psychoanalytic psychotherapy," *Psychological Studies*, vol. 56, no. 3, (2011), 304-310.

[42] M. M. Amer, "Counseling and psychotherapy in Egypt: Ambiguous identity of a regional leader," in *Handbook of counseling and psychotherapy in an international context*, R. Moodley, U. P. Gielen, and R. Wu, Eds. New York: Routledge, (2013), 19-29.

strategies, self-awareness and insight development, and adaptive coping skill acquisition, created synergistic therapeutic effects that enhanced overall intervention effectiveness[43]. Participants reported not only reduced stress levels but also improved job satisfaction, enhanced interpersonal relationships, increased self-confidence, and greater sense of professional competence and personal agency in managing workplace challenges. The durability and depth of psychological change achieved through psychoanalytic intervention distinguishes these results from outcomes typically observed with brief, skill-based stress management programs. The psychoanalytic approach's focus on developing lasting insight and fundamental personality change suggests that participants acquired sustainable tools for ongoing stress management that extend beyond the specific workplace stressors present during the intervention period[44].

Study Limitations

Despite the positive findings and robust statistical results, this study encountered several limitations that should be considered when interpreting results and planning future research. The relatively small sample size of 11 employees, while appropriate for a pilot intervention study and sufficient for detecting large effect sizes, may limit the generalizability of findings to larger populations of government workers or employees in different cultural contexts. The single-group design without a control group, though ethically justified given the limited population size, makes it difficult to definitively attribute all observed changes solely to the psychoanalytic intervention rather than other potential factors such as attention effects, passage of time, or concurrent life events.

The intervention duration of three weeks with daily sessions, while producing significant results, was relatively brief for psychoanalytic work, and the study did not include follow-up assessments to evaluate long-term maintenance of therapeutic gains or sustained effectiveness of the intervention beyond the immediate post-

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[43] F. N. Busch, M. Rudden, and T. Shapiro, *Psychodynamic treatment of depression*. (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2009).

[44] H. Limm, H. Gündel, M. Heinmüller, B. Marten-Mittag, U. M. Nater, J. Siegrist, and P. Angerer, "Long-term effectiveness of a stress management intervention at work: A 9-year follow-up study based on a randomized wait-list controlled trial in male managers," *BioMed Research International*, vol. 2017, (2017), 2853813.

treatment period. The geographic focus on one specific government department in Zakho may limit applicability to other regions within the Kurdistan Region or other types of government work environments with different organizational cultures or stressor profiles.

Environmental factors such as organizational changes, workload variations, seasonal influences, political developments, and external stressors during the intervention period were not systematically controlled or measured, potentially confounding the results. The study relied primarily on self-report measures which may be subject to social desirability bias, subjective interpretation, or response set tendencies, and did not include objective behavioral measures or supervisor ratings of workplace performance or stress indicators.

The cultural adaptation of the psychoanalytic intervention, while a strength of the study, was based on the researcher's understanding and may not have captured all relevant cultural nuances or individual variations in cultural identification. These limitations suggest important directions for future research including larger sample sizes, controlled designs with comparison groups, extended intervention periods, diverse geographic representation, and inclusion of multiple outcome measures from various sources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study provides substantial and compelling evidence for the effectiveness of psychoanalytic interventions in reducing psychological stress among government employees in Middle Eastern contexts. The very large effect sizes (Cohen's d = 2.341, η^2 = 0.894) demonstrate that psychoanalytic sessions can produce meaningful, substantial, and clinically significant improvements in workplace stress management when culturally adapted and appropriately implemented in intensive formats. The success of this intervention validates the importance of addressing underlying psychological patterns and unconscious dynamics rather than focusing solely on surface-level stress symptoms or behavioral modifications. The substantial 13.2% reduction in psychological stress scores, combined with high statistical significance and exceptional statistical power, provides robust evidence that psychoanalytic approaches represent a highly effective intervention strategy for workplace mental

health initiatives in government settings. The cultural adaptation of the intervention to Middle Eastern values and communication patterns demonstrates that Western therapeutic approaches can be successfully modified for non-Western contexts while maintaining their essential therapeutic elements and effectiveness.

Based on these findings, government institutions should consider implementing psychoanalytic intervention programs as part of comprehensive employee wellness initiatives and stress management strategies. Human resources departments must develop policies that support employee participation in stress reduction programs and create organizational environments that promote psychological well-being and mental health awareness. Training programs should be established for mental health professionals working in government settings to ensure culturally competent delivery of psychoanalytic interventions adapted to local contexts and values. Organizational leaders should recognize the significant return on investment that effective stress reduction interventions can provide through improved employee performance, reduced absenteeism, enhanced job satisfaction, and better service delivery to citizens. The intensive daily format of psychoanalytic intervention should be particularly considered as it provides accelerated therapeutic benefits while maintaining therapeutic depth and allowing for rapid development of psychological insights and coping mechanisms.

Future research should focus on replicating these findings with larger samples across multiple government departments and geographic regions to establish broader generalizability of results. Controlled studies with comparison groups receiving alternative interventions or waitlist control conditions should be conducted to provide more definitive evidence of psychoanalytic intervention effectiveness relative to other approaches. Longitudinal studies examining long-term maintenance of therapeutic benefits, sustained stress reduction, and impact on job performance and organizational outcomes should be prioritized to demonstrate lasting value of psychoanalytic interventions. Research investigating the effectiveness of psychoanalytic interventions across different types of government departments, occupational roles, and cultural contexts should be conducted to identify optimal implementation strategies and adaptation requirements. Studies examining the relationship between workplace stress reduction and objective performance

indicators, citizen satisfaction measures, and organizational effectiveness metrics would provide valuable evidence for policy makers and administrators considering implementation of such programs.

The development of culturally adapted assessment tools and intervention protocols should be prioritized to advance evidence-based practice in workplace mental health within Middle Eastern governmental settings. Research on training requirements for therapists delivering culturally adapted psychoanalytic interventions and investigation of cost-effectiveness compared to other stress management approaches would provide practical guidance for implementation decisions. Finally, studies exploring the integration of psychoanalytic principles with other therapeutic modalities or organizational interventions could identify synergistic approaches that maximize employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

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