



## Psychological distress in the competitive sports environment and its impact on indirect grumbling behavior among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations

*El malestar psicológico en el entorno deportivo competitivo y su impacto en el comportamiento de queja indirecta entre los miembros de las Federaciones Olímpicas Iraquíes*

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The objective of this research is to develop scales for psychological distress in the competitive sports environment and indirect grumbling behaviors. It also aims to identify the level of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment and indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations. It also aims to identify the relationship, contribution, and impact of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment on indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations.

**Research methodology:** The nature of the research problem necessitated the adoption of a descriptive research approach using a correlational approach, and the research community represented members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations for the 2024/2025 sports season, comprising (26) federations, totaling (217) individuals. All of these individuals were selected using a comprehensive sample enumeration method, representing (100%) of the original community. **Results:** The results showed that the arithmetic mean of the two psychological phenomena exceeded the hypothetical mean for each scale of these two phenomena under study. Also showed that the increase in the phenomenon of psychological distress contributes to a correlation whose increase is directly proportional to its effect on the increase in indirect grumbling behavior among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations from the application sample. This was confirmed which showed the good fit of this regression model with a significant fit quality. **Conclusions:** The scale of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment is suitable for measuring members of Iraqi Olympic federations and meets the scientific requirements for paper-and-pencil scales.

### Keywords

Psychological distress; competitive sports environment; indirect grumbling behaviors.

### Resumen

**Objetivo:** El objetivo de esta investigación es desarrollar escalas para el malestar psicológico en el entorno deportivo competitivo y las quejas indirectas. También busca identificar el nivel de malestar psicológico en el entorno deportivo competitivo y las quejas indirectas entre los miembros de las federaciones olímpicas iraquíes. Asimismo, busca identificar la relación, la contribución y el impacto del malestar psicológico en el entorno deportivo competitivo sobre las quejas indirectas entre los miembros de las federaciones olímpicas iraquíes.

**Metodología de la investigación:** La naturaleza del problema de investigación requirió la adopción de un enfoque descriptivo con un enfoque correlacional. La comunidad investigadora representó a los miembros de las Federaciones Olímpicas Iraquíes para la temporada deportiva 2024/2025, compuesta por 26 federaciones y un total de 217 individuos. Todos estos individuos fueron seleccionados mediante un método de enumeración de muestra exhaustiva, representando el 100% de la comunidad original.

**Resultados:** Los resultados mostraron que la media aritmética de los dos fenómenos psicológicos superó la media hipotética para cada escala de los dos fenómenos estudiados. También se demostró que el aumento del fenómeno de angustia psicológica contribuye a una correlación cuyo aumento es directamente proporcional a su efecto sobre el aumento de la queja indirecta entre los miembros de las Federaciones Olímpicas Iraquíes de la muestra de la aplicación. Esto se confirmó, lo que demostró el buen ajuste de este modelo de regresión con una calidad de ajuste significativa.

**Conclusiones:** La escala de angustia psicológica en el entorno deportivo competitivo es adecuada para la medición de los miembros de las federaciones olímpicas iraquíes y cumple con los requisitos científicos para las escalas de papel y lápiz.

### Palabras clave

Distrés psicológico; entorno deportivo competitivo; comportamientos de queja indirecta.

## Introduction

Every normal person possesses a mass of emotions and feelings that are affected by various environmental situations, and sometimes affect them. The interest in controlling emotional states in sports psychology is not limited or limited to the direction of its study by the coach, the player, and the psychological counselor, given that all those working in the field of competitive sports represent the base that sports psychology targets in diagnosing and evaluating various behaviors, and then bringing them to the acceptance that benefits the individual and the transformations of the competitive sports environment. Thus, one of the groups that are rarely addressed in sports psychology research is sports leaders, especially members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations. This rarity may be due to the assignment of these research tasks to the field of other specializations in the sciences of physical education. However, the scientific truth is clear in separating these interferences, for example, but not limited to, that just as sports management deals with purely administrative concepts to organize the work environment for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations, sports psychology deals with targeting the emotional states and behaviors apparent to them with the aim of finding scientific treatments by investing what sports psychology offers in a healthy sports environment, to be fertile ground for the social adaptations of various Those in charge of the sport, its patrons, and its employees.

Sports federations are the entities responsible for developing any administrative work in any sport in any country, as they are responsible for their team in all areas (Reda & Saleh, 2018). Competition also places responsibilities on senior management to advance at various levels (Al-Khasawneh, 2018). The competitive environment imposes various psychological pressures on individuals and officials, primarily from the media and beneficiaries who seek leadership without regard for any considerations that may hinder the success of their mission (Imam, 2025). The two researchers also believe that the psychological confusion that drags members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations into psychological distress imposed by boredom or anxiety as a result of the reactions they encounter from the public or media in the competitive environment may cause confusion in their duties and the way they deal with the course of events when they do not have the authority delegated to them to change the expected course, or when they do not find logical justifications for losses or constructive criticism of their administrative duties. Furthermore, "Dealing with various competitive environment situations requires high-level psychological dynamics to control the course of events and provide a sense of security that responds to psychological pressures smoothly and without negative repercussions on mental and perhaps physical health." (Akbar, 2024) The two researchers also believe that among the psychological distress that drags members of Iraqi Olympic federations into the psychological stress imposed by boredom or anxiety resulting from the reactions of the public or media in the competitive environment, this may cause confusion in their duties and the way they deal with the course of events when they lack the authority to change the expected course of events, or when they cannot find logical justifications for losses or constructive criticism of their administrative duties.

Psychological distress is defined as "a psychological and emotional state that an individual experiences as a result of the accumulation of situations beyond their control, or mistakes they commit that cause them to feel blamed or anxious about anticipating events." (Al-Tihami, 2024) It is also defined as "a non-specific negative psychological phenomenon that includes feelings associated with depression and anxiety, placing the individual in a state of confusion and psychological distress." (Arhin et al., 2019)

It is also defined as "unpleasant feelings or emotions that affect an individual's performance and occupy their time with unpleasant thoughts." (Ryu, 2020)

It is also defined as "a psychological state that refers to the general concept of psychological performance that is unable to adapt to stressful life events." (Viertiö et al., 2021)

Psychological distress is defined as "an emotional state characterized by a combination of negative emotional symptoms such as depression, anxiety, helplessness, decreased meaning in life, lack of interest, inability to experience pleasure, and lack of desire to do anything, along with relaxation, irritability, and anger. This distress is also characterized by problems individuals experience at the interpersonal level." (Patel & Makvana, 2019) It also means "a set of distressing psychological and physical symptoms associated with mood swings, manifested in the form of anxiety, depression, and physical symptoms that cause social disruption in an individual's life." (Taha & et al., 2022)



Furthermore, "the symptoms of psychological distress are defined as those that arise from the accumulation of internal emotions in the human conscience. These emotions are the result of various struggles, which inevitably occur and are experienced as long as there is contact with others and constant interaction with the flow of daily life." (Kardas, 2020)

Furthermore, "Psychological distress, by its very nature, negatively impacts self-sufficiency and an individual's self-esteem, as a result of unwanted psychological responses to unpleasant pressures and demands, which may lead to tension and frustration, and then to distancing oneself as much as possible from their sources, in what is known as psychological defeat." (Goger & Gonzalez, 2020)

Since "the nature of the public and sports press in Arab societies, which are hostile to happiness, are classified as hostile according to the second Olympic Committee report for 2022, and this in itself causes players, coaches, administrators, and sports leaders to suffer." Continuous embarrassment and psychological and professional pressure require treatment through a combination of sports psychology and sports sociology, as well as increased awareness of transparency when explaining the events that accompany competitions. (Al-Shafei, 2023)

The researchers also believe that the competitive environment of local tournaments is one of the most dynamic environments in various sporting events and tournaments. While there is still interaction with these events, this interaction will inevitably face failures or successes, whether expected or unexpected. This places members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations in situations that prevent them from fully expressing the truth for administrative and social reasons. This causes psychological repression, which then leads to the emergence of non-aggressive, overt grumbling, meaning indirect (internal) grumbling. This repression adds another layer of repression to the competitive environment, thus negatively impacting mental health. This may manifest in the form of emotions in other situations, leading to confusion in their professional work in sports leadership. "Intrapsychic conflicts, desires, and unconscious tendencies increase as a person becomes more concerned with reality." The environment around him, especially the social, cultural, and historical aspects." (Jabr, 2022)

Furthermore, "Paying attention to the psychological factors of individuals is a motivator that works in opposition to the lack of motivation and grumbling imposed by the nature of the tasks assigned to them." (Al-Saad, 2016)

Since "indirect grumbling behaviors are growing among various employees in administrative formations, this indirect grumbling is considered an internal suppression that harms their psychological state because it is unspoken and causes psychological pressure due to the failure to express the energy to release emotions in order to preserve the safety and security of the work environment." (Salman, 2023)

Likewise, "dealing with various competitive environment situations requires high-level psychological dynamics, to control the course of events, and to provide safety that responds to psychological pressures, smoothly and without emotions that have negative repercussions on psychological health, and perhaps physical health as well." (Akbar, 2024)

Furthermore, "Social situations and an individual's ability and experience to challenge them are linked to their exposure to psychological pressures at levels that vary depending on the nature of the situation. Controlling individuals' behavior through support is necessary to overcome crises due to the difficulty of controlling the social situations that cause the psychological pressures they are exposed to." (Moss & Shaver, 2016)

Considering that "external events may not be harmful to the individual in and of themselves, but the extent to which the individual is affected by them and their reactions to them is what makes them appear so." (Al-Khatib, 2014)

Since "one of the duties that pertain to the core of apparent and invisible behaviors in various administrative sports formations, and which is at the forefront of their success, is paying attention to the emotional states of employees and the positive and negative impacts of these on the workflow in these vital institutions." (Al-Fahd, 2019)

Furthermore, "There are absolutely no types of sports practices that are not tinged with emotions, and a good psychological state makes the individual more capable of transforming negative thoughts into positive ones. They remember the pleasant events and emotions they experienced while succeeding in

a given task, which positively impact their competitive behavior. Conversely, a bad psychological state reminds them of the negative and unsuccessful events and emotions they experienced, which then negatively impact their competitive behavior." (Peter et al., 2016)

"Therefore, to ensure the process of implementing new ideas into innovations without individual complaints, it is necessary to clearly define their work responsibilities, define their tasks in an organized and non-conflicting manner, and support their ability to assume responsibilities." (Ngo, 2018)

### ***Theoretical Importance***

- This is an academic attempt aimed at drawing the attention of academic researchers in sports psychology to the importance of psychological distress in a competitive environment and its negative role in the emergence and growth of indirect grumbling behavior among members of Iraqi Olympic federations.
- This is an academic attempt aimed at enriching sports psychology literature with this type of research and providing academic support to researchers on the importance of psychological assessment of members of Iraqi Olympic federations regarding both psychological distress in a competitive environment and indirect grumbling behavior as a type of psychological phenomenon associated with their positions of responsibility in the sports sector.

### ***Applied Importance***

This is an academic attempt to provide two measures of both psychological distress in a competitive environment and indirect grumbling behavior in sports psychology to measure members of Iraqi Olympic federations, sparing them many of the complications associated with these two negative phenomena.

It is an academic attempt to guide those involved in the Iraqi National Olympic Committee and enable them to provide the requirements that prevent psychological distress in a competitive environment, limiting the emergence and growth of indirect grumbling behavior among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations. Following this detailed digression on the importance of the two undesirable psychological phenomena in the competitive sports environment,

### ***Research problem***

The research problem lies in the researchers' observation of the necessity of studying psychological phenomena and undesirable behaviors in sports psychology, to be determined in an attempt by the researchers to investigate the phenomena of psychological distress in the competitive environment and indirect grumbling behaviors, considering that it is not possible to prejudge their availability or lack thereof among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations unless two specialized psychological scales are available for each of them, which calls for the need to build these two scales, and then reach the relationships between them as an attempt by the researchers to support scientific efforts aimed at promoting psychological health in this competitive sports environment and providing support and assistance to sports leaders in overcoming psychological crises without negative consequences on their condition, by reaching an answer to each of the following two questions:

- What is the level of psychological distress in the competitive environment and indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations?
- Does psychological distress in the competitive environment have a negative impact on the emergence and growth of indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations?

### ***Research objective***

The aim of this research is to develop scales for psychological distress in the competitive sports environment and indirect grumbling behaviors. It also aims to identify the level of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment and indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations. Additionally, it seeks to determine the connection, role, and influence of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment on indirect grumbling behaviors among members of Iraqi Olympic federations.

## Researchers hypothesize

The researchers hypothesize that the results of the psychological distress scale in the competitive sports environment contribute to, are related to, and influence the results of the indirect grumbling behavior scale from the perspective of the research sample.

## Method

### Research Methodology

Because of the nature of the research problem, a descriptive research approach has to be used using a correlational approach.

### Community and sample research

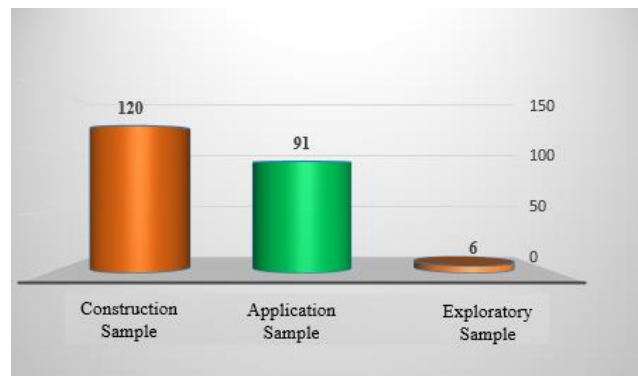
The scientific community was represented by members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations for the 2024/2025 sports season, comprising (26) federations, totaling (217) individuals. All of these individuals were chosen using a thorough sample enumeration process, which represented 100% of the initial community. At the beginning of the field procedures, they were treated as a single total sample, and then their members were divided, according to the requirements of the current research, into three samples. This limited-number community and its divisions into these three samples are shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Shows the description of the research community and its samples

No.	Olympic Federation	Total Number	Exploratory Sample	Construction Sample	Application Sample
1	Football	13	2	7	4
2	Basketball	11	2	6	3
3	Volleyball	7	-	4	3
4	Handball	8	-	4	4
5	Badminton	8	-	4	4
6	Table Tennis	8	-	4	4
7	Wrestling	7	-	4	3
8	Rugby	7	-	4	3
9	Taekwondo	6	-	3	3
10	Boxing	8	-	4	4
11	Triathlon	8	-	4	4
12	Cycling	9	-	7	3
13	Tennis	6	-	3	3
14	Gymnastics	9	-	6	3
15	Canoeing	9	-	6	3
16	Rowing	11	2	6	3
17	Sailing and Aquatics	9	-	6	3
18	Fencing	8	-	4	4
19	Weightlifting	8	-	4	4
20	Judo	9	-	5	4
21	Golf	7	-	4	3
22	Equestrian	9	-	5	4
23	Athletics	10	-	5	5
24	Swimming	8	-	4	4
25	Archery	7	-	4	3
26	Bow and Arrow	7	-	4	3
Total		217	6	120	91
Percentages		%100	% 2.765	% 55.3	%41.935



Figure 1. Shows the numerical distribution of the research samples.



The motives for constructing In order to achieve the first objective of this research in constructing the two psychometric instruments of the paper and pen type and with a direct measurement of their availability in the sample targeted for measurement, the two researchers resorted to the following procedural steps and statistical treatments, for each scale in a completely separate manner, on the individuals of the construction sample whose number was determined based on the fact that each paragraph of the two largest scales would have (5) individuals, which amounted to (24) paragraphs to avoid measurement errors later, as follows:

- Each scale are limited to the principle of privacy, to both the phenomena under study, and to the specificity of the research community, specifically in sports psychology.
- The concepts of psychological distress and indirect grumbling behavior, specifically in a competitive environment, were adopted as a theoretical framework for formulating the content of the scale's statements.
- Following the establishment of the theoretical foundation for the idea of psychological distress and indirect grumbling behaviors specifically, the items were constructed according to the specifics of wording their content, avoiding randomness and personal improvisation. The psychological distress scale comprised (24) items, and the indirect grumbling behaviors scale comprised (24) items. These items were closed with three-point alternatives (never applies to me, occasionally applies to me, and always applies to me), and a Likert scale was used to correct them (3, 2, 1), respectively, for each of these weights.
- A set of instructions was developed for each scale to clarify how to answer them.
- The researchers prepared two paper opinion poll questionnaires to verify their apparent and logical validity, attaching to them the paragraphs and instructions of each scale in their initial form.
- The two questionnaires of the opinion poll and the two letters were presented to (21) experts in sports psychology and More than 80% of them decided to leave the paragraphs, their options, their correction key, and the guidelines for each scale exactly as they are, without any changes, in order to measure and evaluate the physical education sciences deletion, merging, modification, or addition to its paragraphs. This procedure continued from the Sunday that falls on January 5, 2025, to the Sunday that falls on January 19, 2025.
- The two researchers tried the two scales in a exploratory manner after agreeing on their initial form for the period of time extending starting on Tuesday, which is the date of 1/21/2025, and ending on Thursday, which is the date of 1/23/2025 on the members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations identified for the exploratory sample, numbering (6) individuals, to overcome what hinders their application and completion of the measurement by them, and to ensure that the respondents were able to understand the terms' meanings, their substitutes, and the guidelines for responding to them. It was determined that the average response time was ten minutes for each scale.

- The researchers verified the discriminatory ability of each item by applying the two paper scales to the members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations selected for the construction and statistical analysis sample, numbering (120) individuals, for the period extending from Sunday, January 26, 2025, to Wednesday, February 5, 2025. This was achieved by By arranging the scores of each item in descending order, the two equal-numbered extreme groups—which represent 27% of the total number of individuals in the construction sample—were able to reach (32.94) in each group. The number for each of the upper and lower groups was then rounded to (33) using this method. The results of Tables (2) and (3) then demonstrate how the (t) law for unrelated samples was used to statistically validate the discrepancies between the scores of the two corresponding extreme groups:

Table 2. Shows the results of the discriminatory ability of the items of the psychological distress scale in the competitive environment for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

Paragraph sequence Two terminal groups		Statistical comparison between the scores of the two terminal groups					Paragraph distinction
		number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
1	Upper	33	2.58	0.502	13.195	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.15	0.364			
2	Upper	33	2.55	0.506	14.311	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.09	0.292			
3	Upper	33	2.48	0.508	10.243	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.27	0.452			
4	Upper	33	2.52	0.508	11.416	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.21	0.415			
5	Upper	33	2.55	0.506	12.247	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.18	0.392			
6	Upper	33	2.73	0.452	11.767	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.36	0.489			
7	Upper	33	2.82	0.392	14.839	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.27	0.452			
8	Upper	33	2.64	0.489	11.337	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.3	0.467			
9	Upper	33	2.76	0.435	11.22	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.45	0.506			
10	Upper	33	2.94	0.242	14.857	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.48	0.508			
11	Upper	33	2.73	0.452	14.839	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.18	0.392			
12	Upper	33	2.85	0.364	15.59	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.27	0.452			
13	Upper	33	2.52	0.508	12.541	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.15	0.364			
14	Upper	33	2.61	0.496	12.942	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.18	0.392			
15	Upper	33	2.70	0.467	13.094	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.24	0.435			
16	Upper	33	2.73	0.452	14.178	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.21	0.415			
17	Upper	33	2.76	0.435	13.59	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.27	0.452			
18	Upper	33	2.55	0.506	9.041	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.42	0.502			
19	Upper	33	2.58	0.502	9.619	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.39	0.496			
20	Upper	33	2.91	0.292	15.6	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.36	0.489			
21	Upper	33	2.12	0.331	3.182	0.002	Sig
	Lower	33	1.85	0.364			
22	Upper	33	2.42	0.502	5.469	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.82	0.392			
23	Upper	33	2.18	0.392	4.162	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.76	0.435			
24	Upper	33	2.36	0.489	5.004	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.82	0.392			

Item discrimination: (Sig) > (0.05) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom of (64)

Table 3. Shows the results of the discrimination ability of the items of the indirect grumbling behavior scale for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

Paragraph sequence Two terminal groups		Statistical comparison between the scores of the two terminal groups					Paragraph distinction
		number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
1	Upper	33	2.79	0.415	13.187	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.33	0.479			
2	Upper	33	2.76	0.435	11.22	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.45	0.506			
3	Upper	33	2.88	0.331	12.923	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.52	0.508			
4	Upper	33	2.91	0.292	13.416	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.55	0.506			
5	Upper	33	2.55	0.506	12.247	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.18	0.392			
6	Upper	33	2.52	0.508	13.21	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.12	0.331			
7	Upper	33	2.45	0.506	9.613	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.3	0.467			
8	Upper	33	2.48	0.508	10.675	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.24	0.435			
9	Upper	33	2.58	0.502	12.027	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.21	0.415			
10	Upper	33	2.7	0.467	11.337	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.36	0.489			
11	Upper	33	2.79	0.415	13.656	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.30	0.467			
12	Upper	33	2.61	0.496	10.604	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.33	0.479			
13	Upper	33	2.73	0.452	10.499	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.48	0.508			
14	Upper	33	2.91	0.292	13.677	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.52	0.508			
15	Upper	33	2.76	0.435	16.26	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.15	0.364			
16	Upper	33	2.82	0.392	16.165	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.21	0.415			
17	Upper	33	2.55	0.506	12.247	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.18	0.392			
18	Upper	33	2.67	0.479	12.159	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.27	0.452			
19	Upper	33	2.73	0.452	12.589	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.3	0.467			
20	Upper	33	2.76	0.435	14.142	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.24	0.435			
21	Upper	33	2.42	0.502	5.765	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.76	0.435			
22	Upper	33	2.61	0.496	8	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.64	0.489			
23	Upper	33	2.27	0.452	6.158	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.55	0.506			
24	Upper	33	2.39	0.496	7.617	0.000	Sig
	Lower	33	1.45	0.506			

Paragraph discrimination With a degree of freedom of 64 and a significance threshold of 0.05, (Sig) > (0.05).

Based on the scores applied in the previous procedure to the construction sample, which consisted of 120 individuals, as indicated in the results of Tables (4) and (5), the researchers created simple Pearson correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the total score of the scale to which it belongs in order to validate the validity of the internal consistency of the two scales.

Table 4. Shows the internal consistency of the correlation of the score of each item with the total score of the psychological distress scale in the competitive environment for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

No.	Correlation between the paragraph and the total score of the scale	(Sig)	No.	Correlation between the paragraph and the total score of the scale	(Sig)
1	0.528*	0.000	13	0.835*	0.000
2	0.602*	0.000	14	0.681*	0.000
3	0.731*	0.000	15	0.845*	0.000
4	0.582*	0.000	16	0.628*	0.000
5	0.533*	0.000	17	0.581*	0.000
6	0.762*	0.000	18	0.579*	0.000
7	0.676*	0.000	19	0.652*	0.000
8	0.724*	0.000	20	0.677*	0.000





9	0.593*	0.000	21	0.511*	0.000
10	0.674*	0.000	22	0.562*	0.000
11	0.772*	0.000	23	0.791*	0.000
12	0.666*	0.000	24	0.609*	0.000

Paragraph consistency: At a significance threshold of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 118, (Sig) > (0.05).

Table 5. Shows the internal consistency of the correlation of the paragraphs with the total score of the indirect grumbling behavior scale for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

No.	Correlation between the paragraph and the total score of the scale	(Sig)	No.	Correlation between the paragraph and the total score of the scale	(Sig)
1	0.631*	0.000	13	0.576*	0.000
2	0.455*	0.000	14	0.761*	0.000
3	0.623*	0.000	15	0.645*	0.000
4	0.645*	0.000	16	0.682*	0.000
5	0.563*	0.000	17	0.671*	0.000
6	0.602*	0.000	18	0.503*	0.000
7	0.561*	0.000	19	0.697*	0.000
8	0.662*	0.000	20	0.611*	0.000
9	0.672*	0.000	21	0.552*	0.000
10	0.668*	0.000	22	0.675*	0.000
11	0.642*	0.000	23	0.522*	0.000
12	0.631*	0.000	24	0.499*	0.000

Item consistency: (Sig) > (0.05) at a degree of freedom of  $n - 2 = (118)$  and a significance level of (0.05).

The reliability of each scale was verified by finding a simple Cronbach's alpha coefficient, using the same scores applied in the previous procedure to the construct sample, which numbered (120) individuals. The score for the psychological distress scale reached (0.859), and for the indirect grumbling behavior scale reached (0.878), at a significance level of (0.05) and a freedom level of (118).

The researchers verified the suitability of the two scales for the research sample by statistically processing their scores to extract the normal distribution value, and by using the same application scores on the construct sample, which numbered (120) individuals, as shown in the results of Table (6).

Table 6. Shows the final statistical parameters for the construct sample and the normal distribution values for the two scales.

Scale Name	Number	Number of paragraphs	Total score	Mean	Std. Deviations	Skewness
Psychological Distress in the Competitive Environment of Members of Iraqi Olympic Federations	120	24	72	52.22	2.388	0.24
Indirect Grumbling Behaviors of Members of Iraqi Olympic Federations	120	24	72	54.55	2.605	0.031

A normal If the skewness value falls between 1 and  $\pm$ , the distribution is deemed moderate.

Following this process, the investigator finished building the two scales to create their final versions (Appendices 1 and 2), with a sum score for each ranging between (24-72) and a hypothetical mean of (48). The higher the respondent's score on each of the two scales, the greater the presence of the undesirable psychological phenomenon within him. After completing the construction of both paper-and-pencil scales in sports psychology and accurately describing them in the previous procedures, the researchers conducted the survey by applying them to the selected sample of (91) members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations. The main survey was conducted on them, and they were directly measured in a collective and individual manner, utilizing their presence at the headquarters of each of these federations. This survey lasted from Sunday, February 9, 2025, to Thursday, February 27, 2025. After each respondent completed their answers, the paper forms for the two scales were withdrawn from them. To transcribe their data, the following steps were taken:

- Step One: The weight score for each item was calculated for the selected alternative using the three-point correction key for each item in each scale.
- Step Two: The weight scores for the items were summed to determine the total score the respondent received for each scale.



- Step Three: Tabulate the data for each scale separately on special paper forms in preparation for statistical processing.

"By means of measurement, we obtain information that can be relied upon to make judgments about the current status of individuals and groups and to estimate their future potential in various areas of human behavior" (Al-Shajari& Al-Zuhairi 2022).

After completing the field survey procedures, the results were processed using the statistical package system (SPSS), automatically by finding the percentage values, the arithmetic mean, the standard deviation, the t-test for unrelated samples, the simple (person) correlation coefficient, the (Alpha Crunbach) equation, the (person) skewness coefficient, the (t-test) for a single sample, and the simple (Linear Correlation) Coefficient.

## Findings

### *Presentation, analysis of the results*

The results are presented and analyzed below:

Table 7. Shows the results of comparing the arithmetic mean with the hypothetical mean for each scale.

Scale	Number of paragraphs	Total score	Hypothetical mean	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	mean difference between the means	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Psychological Distress	24	72	48	51.89	2.622	3.89	14.151	0.000	Sig
Indirect Grumbling Behaviors	24	72	48	53.98	2.820	5.978	20.219	0.000	Sig

The difference is significant if (Sig) > (0.05) at the degree of freedom (n-1) = (90) and the significance level (0.05), the unit of measurement is (degree).

Figure 2. Shows a comparison of the arithmetic mean with the hypothetical mean for each scale.

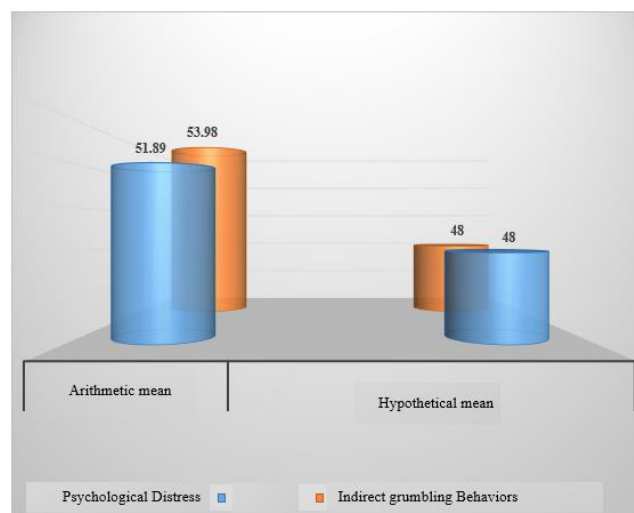


Table 8. Shows the results of the correlation between the scores of the two scales, the simple linear regression, the contribution ratio, and the standard error.

Influential	Affected	Simple correlation coefficient (R)	Linear regression coefficient (R) <sup>2</sup> (coefficient of determination)	Contribution rate	Standard error of estimate
Psychological distress	Indirect grumbling behaviors	0.799	0.638	0.634	1.706

N = 91

Table 9. Shows the results of the F test to examine the goodness of fit of the linear regression model for the scores of the two scales.

Influential	Affected	Variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	mean squares	F value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Psychological distress	Indirect grumbling behaviors	Regression Errors	456.923 259.033	1 89	456.923 2.91	156.992	0.000	Sig

The F value is significant if the Sig value is > 0.05 at the significance level of 0.05

Table 10. Shows the results of the fixed limit and slope (affect) estimates for the scores of the two scales.

Affected	Variables	$\beta$	standard error	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Indirect grumbling behaviors	Fixed Limit	9.392	3.563	2.636	0.010	Sig
	Psychological Distress	0.859	.069	12.53	0.000	Sig

The (t) value is significant if the (Sig) score is > (0.05) at the significance level of (0.05).

## Discussion

The results of Table (7) showed that the arithmetic mean of the two psychological phenomena exceeded the hypothetical mean for each scale of these two phenomena under study. The results of Table (8) also showed that the increase in the phenomenon of psychological distress contributes to a correlation whose increase is directly proportional to its effect on the increase in indirect grumbling behavior among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations from the application sample. This was confirmed by the results of Table (9), which showed the good fit of this regression model with a significant fit quality. The results of Table (10) then proved the effect and significance of the phenomenon of psychological distress on the increase in the results of indirect grumbling behavior among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations. The researcher attributes the emergence of these results for the psychological distress scale in the competitive environment to the attraction of the research sample to those who always feel that no one cares about their psychological pain as a result of wasted efforts, and they always feel that their opinions and ideas are not heard in The Federation before the start of the local league, and they always feel ignored in this regard, and they always feel a lack of respect for their achievements in the Federation when the local league competitions start, which is reflected in confusion in building relationships with the rest of the Federation members due to the change in the reality of the local league competitions and reaching the stage of intersections in understandings with them in this regard, which creates psychological pressures that are difficult for them to challenge, causing psychological distress that makes it difficult for them to disclose all of this, and a feeling of tension and boredom as a result of the marginalization they face as a result of individual decisions that are often taken by the Federation President or the most influential members in their Olympic Federation, which makes them feel uncomfortable in social situations with their peers, and these feelings accumulated in the competitive environment created a state or phenomenon of psychological distress, the results of which were clear in exceeding the hypothetical mean of the scale, which was reflected in the increase in indirect grumbling behaviors among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations from the application sample, in which the Federation member often resorts to hiding the feelings of boredom and resentment that accompany this grumbling, as their responses were clear in that they always feel that the poor Fate and the past brought them among those who did not deserve their presence in the relevant federation. Continuing with them makes them feel they have lost their place in the upper echelon, which creates a sense of isolation and a lack of psychological adjustment. This leads them to feel that their opinions are being rejected in advance, which makes them want to tell everyone everything. Telling the truth about failures will only increase their loss of social relationships, which pushes them to remain silent and suffer from oppressive repression because of their unspoken complaints about all these situations, which clearly reflect a sense that everyone is trying to hinder their success in their duties in the local competition league. This also leads to a growing sense of unfairness in the distribution of local league management tasks, as well as a sense of exploitation and injustice. These repressed behaviors clearly influenced the emergence of these results, due to the relationship between the association, contribution, and influence of the phenomenon of psychological distress, which increases the results of indirect complaints among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations. "The psychological factor plays a very important role in achieving better results through the presence of certain characteristics, including desire, willpower, and realism, etc., to confront changing situations and circumstances." (Vinney, 2019)



Crant also believes that "Springer's theory sheds light on the negative manifestations and effects of psychological distress on an individual's life, which are linked to depression, considering that it is a high level of negative emotions. Early detection of these emotions is essential to avoid their exacerbation." (Grant, 2015) "It is possible to promote positive behaviors and attitudes in the work environment to contribute to active and happy work performance, and to enhance individual success in this work by understanding the situations individuals face. The subsequent stages of this psychological diagnosis involve developing psychological development programs." (Peláez-Fernández et al., 2020) "Administrative leaders must not be emotionally or practically detached from the various forms of overt and unspoken discontent they encounter, and they must avoid anything that could affect their development and effectiveness with their followers." (Bryant, 2012) "Different social interaction situations and an individual's ability and experience to challenge them are linked to their exposure to psychological stress at levels that vary depending on the nature of the situation. This requires controlling individuals' behavior by providing support and enabling them to overcome crises." (Larsson & Rijdsdijk, 2018) Furthermore, "social skills or competencies in the workplace are primarily based on psychological motivations and behaviors developed to adapt to the work environment and increase the empowerment of individuals working in the workplace. This view is consistent with the view that the development of these skills depends on the level of ability to absorb new knowledge and put it into practice to overcome the psychological distress they experience as a form of psychological stress." (Birknerová, 2011) Since "a set of interactions arises between the individual's motivations and desires and attempts to satisfy them, this process results in a change that the individual brings about in themselves and their surroundings. This change is manifested through the individual's behavior." (Debarty, 2015)

"The more psychologically healthy the environment, the more sound thinking will be the product of its support. Conversely, an environment with weak foundations or one filled with unstable events may lead to disturbances in the individual's thinking about that environment." (Mikhail, 2022)

"Despite their stumbles, disappointments, and failures, a person must remain positive in their outlook on themselves, their abilities, potential, opportunities, and practices. They must not allow despair to creep into their judgment and self-criticism. In contrast to disappointments, there are many achievements and successes, in contrast to shortcomings, there are capabilities and potential, and in contrast to stumbles, there are potential opportunities. All of these positives must be built upon to overcome stumbles and failures." (Hijazi, 2021) "Also, an individual's contemplation of the situation before them, analyzing it into its components, and drawing up the necessary plans to understand it can lead them to the desired results, and then evaluating the results in light of their contemplation of those plans." (Bryant, 2012) "An athlete's confidence in their abilities represents an important positive source for achieving positive psychological energy." (Yassin, 2021) It is also "certain that emotions and feelings play an important role in guiding human thought and behavior, and determining the individual's relationship with the outside world. The psychological heritage, both ancient and modern, is replete with themes that indicate the existence of a reciprocal interaction between an individual's feelings and their psychological makeup (or personality). Wardeell & Royce presented a series of studies confirming the extent to which the human personality is influenced by the human emotional system." (Maghribi, 2008) Furthermore, "The ability to accurately perceive emotions during situations includes remaining at the peak of one's reactions to these situations, challenges, and people. On the other hand, high self-awareness requires a willingness to tolerate the reflection of emotions, which may be negative." (Al-Khalidi, 2014) Future orientation is a multidimensional cognitive motivational construct that defines the future by setting goals and plans and developing expectations regarding future events. For this reason, future orientation has been considered in the literature as a protective factor that helps prevent problematic behaviors as well as promote desirable adaptive behaviors. (Skinner et al., 2022) also points out that "Bandura's perspective stems from a set of assumptions: most behaviors are purposeful or goal-directed and guided by anticipation, prediction, and planning; people are self-reflective and capable of analyzing their own thoughts and experiences; and environmental events and internal personal factors, such as cognition, emotions, biological changes, and behavior, are interconnected influences. Thus, individuals respond cognitively and behaviorally effectively to environmental events. But, more importantly, through cognition, they exercise control over their own behavior, which is not limited to the environment." (Ghanem, 2011) (Alshaikhli & Razzaq, 2024)

Moreover, "Increased indirect grumbling behaviors arise from psychological pressures and social situations that conflict with the principles of the individual to whom they are exposed" (Al-Qader, 2023) (Abd-Ulwahid, 2024).

## Conclusions

- The scale of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment is suitable for measuring members of Iraqi Olympic federations and meets the scientific requirements for paper-and-pencil scales.
- The scale of indirect grumbling behavior is suitable for measuring members of Iraqi Olympic federations and meets the scientific requirements for paper-and-pencil scales.
- The phenomenon of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment is widespread among members of Iraqi Olympic federations.
- There is an undesirable level of indirect grumbling behavior among members of Iraqi Olympic federations due to the prevalence of psychological distress in the competitive sports environment.
- The increase in psychological distress in the competitive sports environment contributes to a negative correlation, with the effect of increasing psychological distress directly decreasing in its negative impact on the increase in indirect grumbling behavior among members of Iraqi Olympic federations.

## Recommendations

- It is essential to conduct psychological assessments of members of Iraqi Olympic Federations to measure the phenomena of psychological distress in competitive sports and indirect grumbling behavior within the confines of their administrative work environment.
- It is essential to form special committees within the Iraqi National Olympic Committee to work to reduce the negative effects of psychological distress in competitive sports and to cooperate with sports psychology counselors to mitigate the negative psychological effects of this phenomenon.
- It is essential to grant broader powers to members of Iraqi Olympic Federations, enabling them to express failures in the competitive environment and assisting them in confronting pressure groups by freely revealing the facts to avoid the negative effects of publicized direct grumbling.
- It is essential to conduct further future studies addressing other psychological phenomena among members of Iraqi Olympic Federations.
- It is essential to conduct further future studies addressing psychological counseling programs to address the phenomena of psychological distress in competitive sports and indirect grumbling behavior within the confines of their administrative work environment. 6. It is essential to conduct future studies that examine samples from sub-federations of various sports and events, examining the phenomena of psychological distress in competitive sports and indirect grumbling behavior within the confines of their administrative work environment.

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### Appendix



Appendix 1. shows the image of the psychological distress scale in the competitive environment for members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

No.	Paragraph content	Paragraph phrase answer alternatives		
		Always applies to me	Sometimes applies to me	Does not apply to me
1	I feel exhausted by the Federation's ill-considered efforts being wasted when the league competitions begin.			
2	I feel like no one cares about my psychological pain caused by the Federation's ill-considered efforts being wasted when the league competitions begin.			
3	I feel like my opinions and ideas aren't heard within the Federation before the league begins.			
4	I feel like I'm being ignored by the Federation when collective decisions are made regarding the start of the league competitions.			
5	I feel like my achievements within the Federation are not respected when the league competitions begin.			
6	I feel like I'm unable to build relationships with other Federation members to change the reality of the league competitions.			
7	I feel like Federation members don't understand me well.			
8	I believe my feelings and thoughts regarding the league competitions are often misunderstood by Federation members.			
9	I feel like others want to control my decisions regarding the league competitions.			
10	I feel stressed by the Federation's failures when the league competitions begin.			
11	I feel like many people resent my decisions regarding the league competitions.			
12	I feel excluded from important conversations and discussions within the team.			
13	I feel I don't have a significant role within the union.			
14	I believe my presence in the union doesn't have much impact.			
15	I feel nervous when interacting with my fellow union members.			
16	I feel uncomfortable in social situations with my fellow union members.			
17	I feel frustrated when I try to communicate with my fellow union members and don't receive a response.			
18	I feel my relationship with my fellow union members is superficial and doesn't extend beyond the competitive environment.			
19	I find it difficult to understand the problems of the union's ill-considered efforts being wasted when the local league competitions begin.			
20	I feel comfortable when I'm away from group gatherings.			
21	I feel I'm not invited to participate in organizing the local league.			
22	I feel isolated from the events of the competitive environment.			
23	I feel I don't belong to my union.			
20	I feel my authority is severely restricted in my work at the union.			

Appendix 2. shows a picture of the scale of indirect grumbling behaviors among members of the Iraqi Olympic Federations.

No.	Paragraph content	Paragraph phrase answer alternatives		
		Always applies to me	Sometimes applies to me	Does not apply to me
1	I feel I have many criticisms of the Federation's work in the local league, but I am unable to express them.			
2	I feel others have already rejected my opinion in the competitive environment.			
3	I hope to inform every one of the direct reasons for the Federation's failure in the vacant competition league.			
4	Many thoughts are running through my mind, filled with frustration at the continued failure of the Federation's work in the local competition league.			



- 5 I believe that telling the truth about the failures will  
only increase my loss of social relationships.
- 6 I believe that the best solution to address the Federation's failures in the local competition league is to remain silent.
- 7 I feel a lack of trust toward others in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 8 I see others as seeking to hinder my success in my duties in the local competition league.
- 9 I aspire for the Federation to be re-evaluated every competitive season, but I find no one listening.
- 10 I feel a lack of fairness in the distribution of tasks managing the local league.
- 11 I feel mocked by others for my complexes regarding the Federation's work in the local competition league.
- 12 I believe the sanctions imposed on me are unfair in the local league.
- 13 I believe that justice is just a word in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 14 I believe that the federation is exploiting me unjustly in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 15 I feel that the smiles of others towards me in the local league are not credible.
- 16 I believe that the entire sports community in the local league is deceitful.
- 17 I feel that others in the local league are all hypocrites.
- 18 I feel that sincerity of intentions is absent in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 19 I see that noble values are becoming extinct in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 20 I see that my peers, members of a union, are imposed on me by time and are not my choices in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 21 I feel unfair that such union members have the power to make decisions, and that I participate in decision-making as union members in the competitive environment of the local league.
- 22 I believe that bygone eras brought me to the midst of those who do not deserve my presence in this union
- 23 I see my status as being lost to the continued presence of the local league's competitive environment.
- 24 I wish to completely isolate myself to protect my health due to the confusion surrounding the local league's competitive environment.
-