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# Contribution of the Big Five Personality Factors in predicting psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan

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## Abstract

The study aimed to identify the level of psychological hardiness and the big five factors of the dominant personality, and to reveal the contribution of those factors in predicting psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support to refugees in Jordan. The study sample consisted of 110 counselors, they were chosen by the purposive method. The researchers used a questionnaire as the study instrument that consisted of a sixty item of the big five personality factors scale and a twenty-six-item Psychological Hardiness scale. The results of the study showed the level of psychological hardiness was at a high level. The big five factors of dominant personality among the psychological counselors are in order: conscientiousness, openness, extraversion, agreeableness, all of them at a medium level, then neuroticism at a low level. The results also showed that the big five personality factors explained (48.3%) as a statistically significant predictor of counselor's psychological hardiness.

the Big Five Personality Factors; psychological hardiness; psychological counselors; psychosocial support for refugees

# INTRODUCTION

Arab world currently witnesses several conflicts and wars, as in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Sudan, that led most of their citizens to seek refuge because of their feeling of threat, and fear of losing their lives, Jordan played a humanitarian

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role by receiving refugees, and providing them with services to preserve their lives and humanity. There was an increase in Humanitarian organizations in Jordan because of refugees' overflow who suffer from psychological problems for what they were exposed to in their countries before seeking refuge, (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [1, 2] those organizations provide several psychological and social rehabilitation services to refugees who have been subjected to torture, rape, and psychological trauma [3].

Consequently, mental health service providers working with refugees are exposed to risk for hearing refugees' traumatic events [4]. Where-

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as mental health professionals treating traumatized refugees and those who were exposed to extreme anxiety and dysregulation disorder are at risk of suffering from stress, and secondary trauma [5]. In addition, professionals who treat victims of war and trauma are more likely to experience traumatic events specifically, in areas experiencing violence and conflict [6, 7].

Regard individual's responses to these situations, it was found that personality factors such as extroversion, tolerance, and the conscientiousness, have a relationship in the quality of behavioral responses to different situations, and these personal factors contribute negatively or positively to the on the individual [8] The big five personality factors model has received great attention in psychological studies due to its importance in our social and professional life.

Costa & McCrae's model is one of the models and classifications that explained personality factors and the most recent to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of human personality components [9]. The model consists of five basic factors and each factor has a set of subfeatures: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness [10-12].

Psychological hardiness has a major role in reducing stress and improving a person's mental health, and preventing crises, as hardiness plays an important role in minimizing the effect of exposure to traumas [13]. This makes the individual more flexible, optimistic, and adaptive [14]. In positive psychology, psychological hardiness has been referred to as the ability tolerate and to cope with stresses [15].

Kobaza called people who resist stressors and who can control, commit, and challenge the term psychological Hardiness. In other words, these people are distinguished by their ability to make decisions and evaluate situations and change them into achieving opportunities, they also have a clear goal and meaning in their lives that they seek to achieve [16].

Psychological Hardiness is correlated with perseverance and flexibility with meeting life demands and the ability to tolerate negative emotions. People who have psychological hardiness have a greater ability to experience positive emotions, self-confidence, and empathy [17]. Several studies [18-21] showed that people with a neurotic personality are more prone to disorders and stress and have less psychological hardiness than others.

After reviewing related studies, it was revealed that a number have studied the big personal factors and psychological hardiness. Fayombo [22] conducted a study on a sample of (397) secondary school students in the Caribbean Islands. The results indicated a positive correlation between the big Five personality factors (agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experiences, extraversion) and psychological resilience, while the relationship was negative between neuroticism and psychological resilience. Saksvik & Hetland [23] held a study on a sample of (729) employees in Norway, the results of the study indicated that there is a positive correlation between neurotic personality, negative stress and job satisfaction at work, and a negative correlation between extrovert personality and job satisfaction at work.

Dumitru & Cozman [24] conducted a study on a sample of (34) nurses in Romania, the results of the study concluded that many personality factors such as empathy, social presence, and independence, good impression, cognitive competence, and orientation to work expose individuals to more stresses.

Likewise, Palma-García & Hombrados-Mendiet [25] conducted a study on a sample of 479 students and social workers in Spain. The results indicated that the personality factors were dominant, respectively: agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, extraversion, and finally neuroticism, and the most predictive five personality factor for psychological resilience is the extroverted personality, followed by conscientiousness and openness, there were also positive relationship between the personality factors (extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness) and psychological resilience, while the relationship was negative between it and neuroticism.

Termitope [26] conducted a study on a sample of 129 counselors in New Zealand. The results showed a negative relationship between psychological resilience and secondary trauma and stress among service providers working with trauma survivors in New Zealand [27] conducted a study on a sample of 187 teachers in Jordan. The results of the study showed that the most common factor of personality is Agreeableness and the least common factor is neuroticism.

Oshioa, Takub, Hiranoc & Saeed [28] directed an analytical study on 30 studies about resilience and the big five personality factors, the results indicated a negative correlation between neuroticism and psychological resilience, and a positive correlation between psychological resilience and extroversion, Openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Zoghibi's [29] conducted a study on a sample of 164 counselors, the results showed a decrease in the level of burnout and an increase in the level of psychological hardiness. It also showed a negative relationship between psychological burnout and psychological hardiness. Ogińska-Bulik & Michalska [30] conducted a study on a sample of 72 female nurses working with terminally ill patients, the results found a negative relationship between psychological resilience, occupational burnout and secondary trauma stresses among nurses working with critical cases.

The previous studies appeared to review the personality factors and psychological hardiness of different study groups such as students, nurses and employees in different environment, and the current study is distinguished by that it aims to reveal the contribution of the big five personality factors in explaining the psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan; As this topic has not been studied and dealt with before in Jordan, especially with the refugees crisis and the increasing demand for psychosocial support services provided by psychological counselors.

# Statement of the problem

The sense of current study problem is an attempt to understand some psychological aspects of counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan, due to the importance of this group in providing psychological support services to refugees who entered Jordan and suffer from psychological problems and disorders and are in great need of psychological support. Psychological care providers, as psychological counselors, have been subjected to great psychological stresses as a result of the increasing demand for providing psychological care to refugees, and since psychological hardiness is an important factor in bearing the degree of psychological and professional stress, and the personality factors have an impact on the personal and professional life of workers in providing psychological services, the current study came.

The main question of a study is summarized as follows: To what extent do the big five personality factors contribute to explaining the psychological hardiness of counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan? The following questions are divided into:

- The first question: What is the level of psychological hardiness of counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan?
- The second question: What are the big five personality factors prevailing among psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan?
- The third question: What is the contribution the big five personality factors in predicting psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan?

# STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To measure the level of psychological hardiness and to disclose the prevailed big five personality factors among counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan
- To reveal the contribution of the big five personality factors in explaining the psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan

#### Study importance

The importance of the study scientifically lies in the fact that it examines the big personality fac-

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tors of counselors providing psychological services to refugees and the relationship of these personal factors to psychological hardiness, to give a predictive power about the extent to which these traits and factors are affected.

The study practical importance also stems in helping working counselors who provide psychological services in overcoming psychological and professional stresses and enhancing their psychological hardiness.

## **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

The Big Five Personality Factors: They are five basic factors describing the human personality, each of which represents an abstraction of a set of traits that researchers in the personality field have reached through scientific evidence for experimental research, namely: neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness [31]. Procedurally, it is defined as the degree obtained by a counselor who provides psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan on the scale of personality factors used in the study.

Psychological Hardiness: It is a set of features that represent the belief or attitude of a person with his effectiveness and his ability to employ all available psychological and environmental resources in order to logically understand and objectively interpret stressful life events and adapt them positively, and it includes three components, namely: commitment, control, challenge [32]. Procedurally, it is defined as the degree obtained by a counselor who provides psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan on the psychological hardiness scale used in the study.

## Study Limitations

The possibility of generalizing the results of the study is determined in the light of its sample; Where the study was conducted on a sample of counselors working in providing psychosocial support for refugees in Jordan, during the last quarter of 2020.

# Methodology

The study relied on the descriptive predictive correlational approach, being the most appropriate to achieve the study objectives.

## **Participants**

The study sample consisted of 110 counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan who hold BA, MA and PhD's degrees in the disciplines of counseling, clinical psychology and social work, their ages ranged from 24-45 years. They were licensed professionals who have accredited training certificates on the latest treatment methods and were chosen by purposive sample from the employees of the Institute for Family Health – Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture, the Child Protection Foundation, and the Society JRC for the rehabilitation of refugees during the year 2020.

#### Measurement

Psychological Hardiness Scale: the researchers developed a copy of the Psychological Hardiness Scale by referring to study [33]. The scale consisted in its initial version of 26 item, which were answered according to the five-dimensional Likert scale on three dimensions: (challenge, control and commitment), and all the items took a positive direction.

To correct the scale, the answer was given very broadly agree (5 degrees), highly agree (4 degrees), moderately agree (3 degrees), slightly agree (two degrees), disagree (one degree). The average psychological hardiness was judged as follows: (1 - 2.33): low, (2.34 - 3.66): average, (3.67-5): high.

#### Validity

The scale was presented to a set of arbitrators specialized in psychological and educational sciences to judge the validity of the items, and the comments of the arbitrators on the scale were taken into consideration and some items were

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re-worded, and others were modified based on their observations.

The item correlation with the dimension and the scale were extracted by applying the scale to 50 psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees. The results revealed that the values of the item correlation coefficients with the scale's overall score ranged between (0.45 - 0.84), and the item correlation coefficients ranged between 0.61 - 0.86, the dimension correlation coefficients for the total degree of the scale ranged between 0.89 - 0.94, and it was decided that the value of the item correlation with the dimension or the scale as a whole is a statistically function at the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), thus the scale remained the same as consisting of 26 item.

# Stability

To ensure the stability of the scale, the internal consistency factor was calculated through method of the Alpha Cronbach for internal consistency, where the scale was applied to a sample consisting of 50 psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees, and the results showed that dimensional stability coefficients ranged between 0.87 - 0.92 and reached for the scale as a whole 0.90, which are acceptable coefficients for purposes of the study.

**Second:** The Big Five Personality Factors Scale

The scale of personality factors was used with referring to study [12], the scale consists of 60 item distributed over five dimensions (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). Likert's five-dimensional scale was also adopted. To correct the scale, the answer was given strongly agree (5) degrees, agree (4) degrees, neutral (3) degrees, and disagree (2) two degrees, and strongly disagree (1) one degree. The averages of personality factors were also judged as follows:(1 - 2.33): low, (2.34 – 3.66): average, (3.67-5): high.

## Validity

The scale was presented to arbitrators specialized in psychological, educational, and coun-

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seling sciences, and the comments of the arbitrators about the scale and its relevance to the study sample were considered in terms of rewording of some items based on their observations.

The indications of the item correlation with the dimension total score were extracted by applying the scale to 50 counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees, and the results showed that the values of the correlation coefficients for the neurotic dimension ranged between 0.32 – 0.77 and ranged from the extrovert dimension between 0.37-0.57, the dimension of openness ranged between (0.37-0.56), and the dimension of agreeableness ranged between 0.36-0.55, for the wake of conscience dimension it ranged between 0.38-0.67. It was adopted that the value of the item-dimension correlation be statistically significant at the level of ( $\alpha$  = 0.05), thus the scale remained the same as it was composed of 60 items.

# Stability

To ensure the stability of the scale, the internal consistency factor of the scale was calculated through method of the Alpha Cronbach of internal consistency, where the scale was applied to a sample of 50 psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees. The values of the reliability coefficients for the scale dimensions ranged between 0.70-0.83 and reached for the scale as a whole 0.82, which are acceptable coefficients for the study purposes.

#### Statistical Analysis

To conclude the results of the study, The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used, and to answer the first and the second questions of the study the means and standard deviations were extracted, for the third question, a multiple regression analysis was extracted.

## **Results and Discussion**

The first question: What is the level of psychological hardiness of counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan?

To answer the question, means and standard deviations were calculated for the dimensions of the psychological hardiness scale of psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees, and it appears in Table 1.

 Table 1. Means, standard deviations of psychological hardiness and their dimensions.

Dimension / scale	Mean (M)		
Commitment	4.16	.545	High
Challenge	3.99	.657	High
Control	3.99	.611	High
Total score	4.05	.554	High

Table 1 shows that the means of the dimensions of psychological hardiness of psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees ranged between 3.99-4.16, the commitment dimension obtained the highest mean 4.16 at a high level. And the psychological hardiness mean as a whole was 4.05 and standard deviation 0.554 at a high level.

This shows that the level of psychological hardiness of the counselors is high on the total score and the sub-dimensions. This may be due to the level of professional commitment and moral responsibility of the counselor, which appears through their adoption of a personal and professional philosophy based on a set of constructive and positive behaviors, values, attitudes and beliefs towards their work and its confidentiality with refugees and the traumatic psychological events and experiences they were exposed to.

This strengthened their personal and professional skills of perseverance, positive evaluation, and dealing with severe stressful and traumatic events among refugees. The nature of their work was is opportunity for elevating personal experience, openness, and flexibility, which improved the components and dimensions of their psychological hardiness. This result is consistent with the results of the study [29].

The second question: What are the big five personality factors prevailing among psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan? To answer the question, means and standard deviations of the big five personality factors scale dimensions were calculated, and Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations of the Big Five
Personality Factor scale dimensions.

Dimension / scale	mean standard (M) deviation (SD)		Level
Conscientiousness	3.43	.477	Medium
Openness	3.39	.432	Medium
Extroversion	3.17	.445	Medium
Agreeableness	3.04	.438	Medium
Neuroticism	2.32	.627	Low

Table 2 shows that the means of the big five personality factors scale dimensions were of ranged between 2.32-3.43, the conscientiousness dimension obtained the highest mean 3.43 at a medium level, followed by openness with a mean of 3.39 and a medium level, then after Extroversion, with a mean of 3.17 and a medium level, followed by a agreeableness dimension with a mean of 3.04 and a medium level, and the lowest mean was for the neurotic dimension, reaching 2.32 and at a low level.

Counselors working with refugees obtaining of an average degree in the conscientiousness dimension can be traced back to the counselor's characteristics, such as caution, deliberation in thinking, controlling self-behavior, attention and accuracy in working according to a set of professional ethics and human values, which are affirmed by the constitution and the ethical charter of workers in psychological occupations. Also, professional standards and responsibilities, legislation, and legal accountability contribute in enhancing the level of conscientiousness among counselors working in the field.

The fact that counselors working with refugees have a medium degree in the dimension of openness can be explained by the nature of their work with refugees and the unexpected and familiar traumatic events and experiences they face. Which generates flexibility and creativity in addition to the desire for research and learn about what is new to develop their skills and methods of treatment, as well as openness to new experiences that enrich their personal lives and improve their professional performance and distinction.

furthermore, the extroverted dimension for counselors working with refugees came with a medium degree, and it can be explained that such professions fall under the humanitarian ones, which require them to be social and able to build social relationships with different people and share their feelings, sympathy and warmth with them. The result can also be attributed that it came to a moderate degree where counselors, as a result of stressors, workload, and special tasks with refugees, require dedication to design and implement various psychological services and interventions, which deprives working counselors of the opportunities to participate in many occasions and social and family activities.

Whereas the dimension of agreeableness came with a moderate degree can be contributed to the fact that counselors working with refugees and their work nature and its characteristics, represented by trust in the other, respect, openness, modesty, positive and unconditional acceptance, the correspondence between words and actions, sincerity, tolerance and rejection of any form of discrimination and racism.

The results also reveal that counselors working with refugees have a low score in the dimension of neuroticism, and this can be attributed to the awareness and psychological maturity of the counselors because of their studies and their undergoing training and supervisory programs that had a reflection on their personalities. Depression and stressors with peace and balance. This result is consistent with [25, 27] studies results.

The third question: What is the contribution the big five personality factors in predicting psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees in Jordan?

To find the contribution level of the big five personality factors in predicting the psychological hardiness among counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees, a multiple regression analysis was performed, and Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis of the Big Five Personality Factors in predicting psychological hardiness

Predictors	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F value	Sig.	Beta	T level	Sig.
Extraverted	0.695	0.483	26.820	0.000*	.289	3.384	.001
Neurotic					538	-6.893	.000
Openness					.352	3.669	.000
Conscient-iousness					.171	2.135	.035

\* Statistically Significant at (α=0.05) level

Table 3 indicates the existence of a statistically significant effect of the big five personality factors on psychological hardiness among psychological counselors working in providing psychosocial support services to refugees, where the F value was 26.820 is a statistically significant value at a level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) The value of the determination coefficient indicates that the model explained (48.3%) of the changes occurring in the level of psychological hardiness, while 51.7% of these changes are due to other variables, and the most influential factor in psychological hardiness was neuroticism and its relationship was inverse with psychological hardiness, while the relationship with the three factors (extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness) was positive, while the agreeableness

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factor had no significant contribution to explaining psychological hardiness.

This result can be explained in terms of psychological hardiness is one of the main personality traits and factors that improve and enhance the mental health of the individual.

This result can also be attributed to the fact that the Big Five personality factors play a major role in the psychological hardiness of counselors working with refugees. The logical, realistic, and objective cognitive assessment of life and environmental events, behavioral control represented in confronting and managing emotions such as stress, anxiety, depression, etc., a sense of competence, commitment and responsibility, challenge and flexibility, and accepting changes as an opportunity for development, prosperity and openness to the world are all factors and components that contribute to the mentors' psychological hardiness, which are traits and features that falls within the Big Five personality factors model.

The extroversion in communication, social relations, participation in social activities, voluntary work, activity, excitement, warmth and positive feelings towards life and others, openness to the world, new knowledge and experiences, enriching life with positive ideas and values, management and self-control, responsibility, adherence to ethics, norms, moral values, and order, all as traits and major personality factors. It indicates psychological hardiness and contributes to increasing it if found among the counselors working with refugees.

As for the neurotic factor correlation with psychological hardiness, it appeared in an opposite way, it can be attributed to the psychological counselor's characterization of neuroticism, moodiness, emotional instability, weakness and recklessness, his sense of anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, and shyness, all of which are indicators that represent the neurotic factor as one of the big five personality factors that contribute if found in reducing the level of psychological hardiness among counselors working with refugees; Consequently, when the counselor is described as neurotic, his level of psychological hardiness decreases.

This result is in consistent with the [22, 25, 28] studies results that showed a positive correlation between the big Five personality factors and psychological resilience, while the relationship was negative between neuroticism and psychological resilience that hardiness is considered an important factor of it. As well as the results are in constant with the [29] study result that showed a negative relationship between psychological hardiness and burnout. And coherent with [26, 30] studies results that showed a negative relationship between psychological resilience and trauma and job stresses. While burnout, trauma and stress are signs of the neuroticism as the [23] study result had assured.

#### Suggestions and Recommendations

In light of the study results, it recommends the following suggestions:

- Organizations working with Refugees as Institute for Family Health – Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture, the Child Protection Foundation, and the Society JRC for the rehabilitation of refugees, must invest the personal factors that characterize the counselors in improving their effectiveness in providing services and psychological support.
- Conducting more qualitative approach studies or case study design that deal with variables related to counselors working with refugees.
- Conducting and applying supervisory and training programs for counselors working with refugees, which strengthen the components of psychological hardiness and developing their personality traits.

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