Political Skill of Employees Working in Halal Concept Hotels and A Research

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Abstract

The ability to manage relationships between individuals on a sensible basis depends on mutual understanding and management of this process. One of the basic concepts that explains this relationship is political skill. The fact that both guests and employees represent a certain profile in halal concept hotels will increase the need for political skills. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the political skill levels of the employees in halal concept hotels and reveal whether employees' political skill levels differ in the context of different demographic characteristics. Using a questionnaire, the research data were collected from 278 employees working in halal concept hotels operating in Istanbul. The findings revealed that the general political skill levels of the employees are high, and the highest political skill dimension is apparent sincerity. In addition, it was determined that there are differences in terms of age, marital status, educational status and professional experience dimensions according to the demographic characteristics of employees. The findings are discussed in the last part of the study, and suggestions for future research are presented.

Keywords: *Political Skill, Halal Concept Hotels, Employee, Istanbul.*

INTRODUCTION

The sectors' efforts to take a position in line with the changing and diversifying demand types have led to the emergence of many different types in many other areas, the dissolution of known mass movements, and the development of alternative ways and methods. As a sector that feeds on people in terms of supply and demand, the diversification of tourism according to tourist types has led to many different types of tourism and touristic products and services. One of these is the halal concept hotels.

Each religion and belief system has principles, rules and codes that encode what should and should not be done. The increasing travel behavior of Muslims required applications that would make it easier for them to continue their faith-based life practices during their holiday adventures, and then the halal concept emerged. The idea of halal tourism, which is the tourism content by Islam in its most basic form, has led to the development and spread of many different applications such as halal hotels, halal transportation, Islamic tours, halal SPA etc. (Mansouri, 2014; Gohary, 2016). Over time, the rules became clearer, the characteristics of the structure of halal hotels were clarified, and staff attitudes and behaviors began to be defined. The standardization process has revealed a significant competitive advantage for businesses called halal (Salleh et al., 2019) and created a reliable business image for customers. As expected, halal hotel establishments require the representation of a certain profile within the scope of their unique characteristics, both in terms of the guests who prefer the hotel establishment in question and the employees working there. In this context, for the relationship and interaction between the two parties to be healthy, employees' political skills stand out as a behavior that should be underlined.

Within the scope of the research, no study has been found that evaluates the practice in terms of employee-customer relationship although the halal concept has been written by many researchers both in Turkey and internationally (Din, 1989; Henderson, 2010; Neveu, 2010; Battour et al., 2011; Sahida et al., 2011; Zulkifli et al., 2011; Samori & Rahman, 2013; Chandra, 2014; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Saad & Ali, 2014; Sriprasert et al., 2014; Ahmat et al., 2015; Arpacı & Batman, 2015a; 2015b; Arpacı et al., 2015; Hacıoğlu et al., 2015; Boğan et al., 2016; Gohary, 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Oktadiana et al., 2016; Samori et al., 2016; Batman, 2017; Akbaba &

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Çavuşoğlu, 2017; Jaelani, 2017; Kıngır & Kardeş, 2017; Adam & Çalık, 2019; Akmaz, 2019; Boğan, 2020; Çalık & Adam, 2020; Kian et al., 2020). The fact that the halal concept includes specific priorities and service requirements and that there is no restriction that all employees must be Muslims creates the possibility of employees from different lifestyles serving people with Islamic sensitivities.

In this context, increasing the service quality by reflecting political skill, which is largely evaluated in the context of superior-subordinate relations to employee-customer relations, can be considered as an advantage that can guarantee the continuity of the success of businesses. At this point, within the scope of this research, it is aimed to determine the political skill levels of people working in halal concept hotels in İstanbul. Istanbul is one of the most important leisure and business-based destinations of Türkiye and has 55 halal hotels. This is the main reason why Istanbul was chosen as a research area. In addition, the observation of gender-based differences in political skill in the literature and the association of women's lower presence in managerial positions with not developing and using their political skills (Perrewe & Nelson, 2004; Shaughnessy et al., 2011) necessitates examining the relationships between the political skill levels of halal hotel employees and demographic data. Within this scope, this research seeks the answer to these two questions:

RQ1: What is the level of political skills of employees in halal concept hotels?

RQ2: Do the political skill levels of halal hotel employees differ according to their demographic characteristics?

The study is structured into three main sections. Firstly, the theoretical framework in which halal concept hotels, halal tourism and political skill are discussed is presented. In this section, research related to the study's subjects is also mentioned. The second part explains the study's methodology, including the sampling and research procedure, the scale used, and the data analysis method. The study's findings are presented in the third and last section, and the results obtained are evaluated.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides explanations about halal concept hotels and halal tourism concept along with political skill.

Halal Concept Hotels and Halal Tourism

The increasing importance and place of travel in human life leads to developing concepts for different lifestyles. Alternative tourism is shaped and diversified by different desires and needs and different beliefs and lifestyles that are subject to tourism. One of the points where the sustainability of alternative tourism is nourished is the forms that it can differentiate and shape according to individual demands and expectations. One of the areas that require differentiation and special attention is religion and belief. Religion is an important factor that completely shapes a person's life and brings about living by its rules in all circumstances, regardless of place and time. The increase in prosperity in Islamic geographies and the increase in people's interest in travel have created the first need for halal tourism.

Halal describes things that are not prohibited in the Quran. The concept of halal, which offers Muslims a pattern of behavior and living, affects and shapes the lifestyles and consumption behaviors of Muslims (Pektaş, 2019). As the first point where religion was associated with tourism, religious tourism and the halal concept refer to two concepts that complement each other and can be considered separately. While religious tourism is a form of travel, halal tourism refers to the compatibility of the products and services offered with Islam. Similarly, Islamic tourism refers to travels to Islamic geographies and fulfilling the worship required by Islam. In this context, halal tourism is a technical and inclusive form of İslamic and religious tourism (Kian et al., 2020).

The content of the halal tourism concept consists of halal food, halal hotel, halal transportation, halal SPA, Islamic tour, and Islamic finance (Mansouri, 2014; Gohary, 2016). Although there are many conceptually different attempts, the simplest and most comprehensive interpretation of the concept was developed by Jafari and Scott (2014); "meeting tourist needs according to Islamic rules". According to this definition, in addition to the compliance of all processes such as accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, investment and

recreation with Islamic rules, it is also expected that the products used in businesses, employees and customers comply with the halal concept (Henderson, 2010; Sahida et al., 2011; Zulkifli et al., 2011; Samori & Rahman, 2013; Ahmat et al., 2015; El-Gohary, 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Kıngır & Kardeş, 2017; Adam & Çalık, 2019; Çalık & Adam, 2020).

Businesses operating with the halal concept are expected to prioritize Islamic sensitivities and maintain this sensitivity at every stage of the products and services they offer. These businesses consider Muslim tourists' sensitivities and contain all the elements that may be needed (Sahida et al., 2011). Similarly, halal concept hotel businesses also offer services that consider the requirements of Islamic orders and prohibitions, meet the accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, and other needs of tourists with Islamic sensitivity (Samori & Rahman, 2013), help customers perform their prayers by their religion, and provide services to men and women separately (Jeaheng et al., 2019).

The basic features of hotel businesses providing halal concept services can be summarized as follows (Henderson, 2010; Sahida et al., 2011; Zulkifli et al., 2011; Samori & Rahman, 2013; Ahmat et al., 2015; Gohary, 2016; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Kıngır & Kardeş, 2017; Çalık & Adam, 2020):

Rooms

Arranged according to the qibla,
Bathrooms suitable for ablution,
Including items such as a table showing the qibla, prayer rugs and rosaries should be kept in every room.
TV channels are suitable.

Common areas

Separate common areas for men and women,
Mosques for men and women separately,
Guests must dress appropriately.

Service

No alcoholic beverage service,
All products are halal.
Separate activity areas, pools for women
Having private areas on beaches for women
No entertainment areas such as disco, bar
Carrying out entertainment activities in accordance with Islamic principles

Employee

Employing predominantly Muslim personnel,
Dressing according to Islamic principles,
Providing opportunities for them to worship,
Absence of practices contrary to Islamic ethical and moral rules,
Room service personnel attach importance to privacy,
Employment of personnel fluent in Arabic and the languages of other Muslim countries,
Female waiters serve female customers.

Financial Structure

Having an Islamic financing source,
Budget and expenditures are made in accordance with Islamic procedures.

When the literature on halal tourism is examined, the distribution of studies is as follows; concept definition (Din, 1989; Ahmat et al., 2015; Akbaba & Çavuşoğlu, 2017; Boğan, 2020); conceptual content and development (Chandra, 2014; Boğan et al., 2016; Samori et al., 2016; Batman, 2017; Akmaz, 2019), implementation and standards evaluation (Neveu, 2010; Sahida et al., 2011; Samori & Rahman, 2013; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Saad & Ali, 2014; Gohary, 2016; Jaelani, 2017; Kian et al., 2020); customer behavior and profile (Adnan, 2011; Battour

et al., 2011; Sriprasert et al., 2014; Arpacı & Batman, 2015a; 2015b; Arpacı et al., 2015; Hacıoğlu et al., 2015; Oktadiana et al., 2016), Islamic hospitality supply (Stephenson et al., 2010; Stephenson, 2014), halal tourism development (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). As seen, no study from the employee perspective working in halal tourism creates a great gap in the literature.

In addition, the concept's existence and continuity are shaped around two basic elements defined as intangible and tangible (Stephenson, 2014). While intangible elements consist of traditional and cultural interpretations and practices, tangible elements consist of technical and application contents. Intangible elements enable the quality to be determined and the tangible elements to be shaped. This increases the sensitivity of service in halal businesses. Considering the features compiled from the literature, it stands out that it is preferred for the personnel to have an Islamic identity. The fact that the staff is Muslim is defined as "predominantly"; in other words, it is stated that it is not a requirement for all staff to be Muslim due to practice or standards. In situations and businesses where all staff does not need to be Muslim, people who do not have Islamic sensitivity are likely to work in halal concept hotels. This situation increases the importance of the approaches and attitudes of the employees who are in direct contact with the guests in halal concept hotels as an area that requires special knowledge, approach, and sensitivity. This fact increases the importance of the study.

Increasing Muslim demand for tourism has brought about development and quality improvement studies on the subject. The "Developing Multi-Destination Tourism Corridors In the OIC Member Countries" report by COMCEC (The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) declares the recommendations to successfully plan, establish, manage, and market multi-destination tourism corridors which will provide the information about easy access to halal tourism concept managements, destinations etc. It also shows a growing market need for this kind of information. Although it is known that Turkey is one of the preferred destinations for Muslim tourists, Iran ranked third with a rate of 6.85% in the list of foreign tourists who preferred Istanbul most in 2022 (Ernst & Young, 2023).

Political Skill

Mintzberg (1983, 1985) believes organizations are inherently political arenas. Organizations are defined as a system of political games (Mintzberg, 1985). Moss (2005) tried to draw attention to the negative aspects of political skill and emphasized that it may have dark sides. Political skill, previously attributed to a negative meaning, has been associated with concepts such as manipulation, self-interest, and intrigue in the workplace. However, in today's business world, where competition and human relations intensify, political skill has begun to be defined as a sought-after feature both in the literature and the sectors (Ferris, 1999). Conceptually, political skill is defined as effectively understanding other employees in the work environment and influencing them toward goals (Ahearn et al., 2004).

According to Ferris et al. (2010), political skill is the effective use of information obtained by understanding others in the field of work to achieve organizational and individual goals. The content of effective use is shaped around the skill to evaluate social relations in the workplace, which is claimed to be developed with political skill, easily gaining people's trust, giving confidence and social communication skills. These skills enable them to achieve effective and productive social relationships (Perrewé et al., 2000). High social intelligence and networking abilities enable them to see and analyze their workplaces more clearly in professional life (Brouer et al., 2011). These people also appear genuine and provide confidence that reduces people's stress levels. People with obvious sincerity and political skills are more likely to have a positive image at work (Ferris et al., 2007). It is possible for people with political skills who can make a good social analysis of professional environments and read people and situations well (Kimura, 2013) to eliminate the negativities that may be experienced with their skill to reduce the uncertainties in the environment (Mintzberg, 1983). While Mintzberg claims that most people with potential cannot be promoted because they do not consider political situations similarly. However, women are meticulous and hardworking in business life; their failure to advance to managerial positions is attributed to their lack of importance to political skill.

According to Ferris et al. (2005), political skill is a multidimensional structure, and the concept consists of four dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity:

Social Astuteness has been defined as "sensitivity to others." However, it has also been described as "one's ability to identify with others is a critical way of achieving something for oneself" (Pfeffer, 1992, as cited in Ferris et al. (2005).

Interpersonal Influence: Politically skilled individuals with interpersonal influence have a subtle and persuasive personal style that profoundly impacts those around them.

Networking Ability: Individuals with strong networking ability are adept at developing and utilizing diverse networks of people.

Apparent Sincerity: Political skilled individuals with apparent sincerity appear to others as having high levels of honesty, authenticity, and authenticity.

There are many studies on political skill in the literature. The studies are mainly related to leadership (Treadway et al., 2004; Kacmar et al., 2013; Kimura, 2013), effectiveness (Kolodinsky et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2011), career success (Todd et al., 2009; Kranefeld et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2022), workplace stressor (Perrewé et al., 2000), gender diversity (Shaughnessy et al., 2011; Perrewe & Nelson, 2004), developing tactics (Ferris et al., 2002; Harvey & Novicevic, 2004), implications at work (Ferris et al., 2007; 2011; Blickle et al., 2012; Bedi & Skowronski, 2014), distrust & safety (Sunindijo & Zuo, 2012; Coleman Gallagher et al., 2016). According to Atay (2009), managers, rather than subordinates, are expected to have political competence. Although studies have generally been conducted on the superior-subordinate relationship, Ferris et al. (2005) more clearly defined how people with political skills can influence others at all levels of the organization to achieve their own and organizational results. In people-oriented and labor-intensive sectors such as tourism, employees working in service delivery should have political skills. Using these skills will increase the service's quality and protect employees from many problems that may arise depending on the subjective perception character of the service. In this context, it will be a great benefit for people working in the field in dynamic and human-oriented sectors such as tourism to have the political skills that are considered sufficient for managers in other sectors to increase the efficiency of their employees.

Today, studies on the relationship between political skill and proactive personality have been discussed in the field of tourism. The effects of political skill on the effectiveness of proactive personality (Zhao et al., 2013), transformational leadership (Idris et al., 2022), political skill among employees (Hung et al., 2012; Hashimi, 2021), outcomes (Treadway et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2019; Karatepe et al., 2019) and religiosity (Wang et al., 2021) have begun to be measured. Studies have led to the definition of proactive personality as a precursor of political skill. While politically skilled employees with network ability can help manage conflicts (Ferris et al., 2005), they can also be an element that will ensure that crises arising from one-to-one relationships in tourism do not arise or can be easily resolved. This concept, which is generally examined at the executive level for other sectors, can and should also be examined from the employee perspective in human-oriented sectors such as tourism. There needs to be more literature on tourism, which can also provide some effective practical outcomes.

The concept of halal tourism provides services to a customer profile that is expected to have a very specific character and demands. Service types such as vegan tourism, halal concept, eco-tourism, health tourism, and halal tourism require the inclusion of empathy and behavioral styles beyond tourism, which is normally a social sector, due to the special customer profiles they address. It seems possible to present political skill as a solution to seek and provide employees with a new skill to take employees' customer focus one step further and prevent possible conflicts and decreases in service quality and customer satisfaction. Wang et al. (2021) approach the situation from a different perspective and examines "religiosity on building their mental toughness and mindfulness and the further formation of employees' political skills". Political skill can be considered a concept that can close the gap in this field.

METHODOLOGY

This section explains the study's methodology, including the sampling and research procedure, the scale used, and the data analysis method.

Sampling and Research Procedure

The main purpose of this research is to examine employees' political skill level in halal concept hotel businesses. Halal concept hotels operating in Istanbul have been preferred as the population of the study to realize the determined purpose. The main reason for selecting Istanbul province for the research is that the relevant location is intensely preferred as it is a center of attraction in terms of religious tourism. Therefore, there is an increasing number of halal concept hotel establishments in this context. As a result of the examination, it was determined that there are 55 halal concept hotels in Istanbul (Behremen & Turan, 2023). As the sampling method of the research, the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods, was used, and 285 questionnaire forms were returned from 300 questionnaire forms distributed. As a result of the removal of missing data and seven incomplete questionnaire forms, data were collected from 278 hotel employees working in the relevant halal concept hotels.

Table 1 below presents the demographic attributions of the halal concept hotels' employees participating in the research.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Attributions

Attribution	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	122	43.9
	Male	156	56.1
Age	25 years and below	71	25.5
	26-34 years old	91	32.7
	35-44 years old	78	28.1
	45 years and above	38	13.7
Marital Status	Married	124	44.6
	Single	154	55.4
Education Level	High School	61	21.9
	Vocational School	73	26.3
	University	144	51.8
Professional Experience	Less than 1 year	36	13,6
	1-5 years	95	31,6
	6-10 years	82	23,7
	11 years and more	65	11,7

When the demographic attributions of the employees participating in the research were analyzed, it was found that male employees were more than female employees (43.9%) with 56.1%. In terms of age, the majority of the employees were between 26-34 years old, with a rate of 32.7%, followed by the 35-44 age group with 28.1% and the 25 and under-age group with 25.5%. In terms of marital status, the majority of the employees were single, with a rate of 55.4%. Regarding educational status, it was determined that the majority were university graduates, with a rate of 51.8%. Finally, regarding professional experience, 31.6% of the employees had 1-5 years of experience.

Data Collection Method

The questionnaire technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was used to collect data. The political skill scale developed by Ferris et al. (2005) and used in the study of Lvina et al. (2012) was preferred to measure the political skill levels of employees. The main reason for choosing the related scale is that it is a prominent scale used in many studies due to the literature review. Consisting of 18 questions, the political skill scale is evaluated within four dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity. As an example of the statements in the scale: "I can communicate easily and effectively with others". A five-point Likert type of measurement assessed the scale with "1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, to 5=Strongly Agree" were used.

Data Analysis Method

The data obtained from the research were analyzed using SPSS software. In this context, descriptive statistics were determined by frequency and percentage analysis. Mean and standard deviation values were examined to determine the political skill levels of the employees. Since the gathered data were found to be normally distributed by the Kurtosis-Skewness values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and other conditions of parametric tests were met, parametric tests were used to analyze the data. Within this context, to determine whether the

employees' political skill levels differ according to their demographic attributions, an independent samples t-test was used for the two-group gender and marital status variables; One-Way ANOVA analysis was used for age, education level and professional experience variables with three or more groups. All the findings obtained are explained below and interpreted in the conclusion section.

FINDINGS

After analyzing the data obtained, the following findings were presented.

Results of Reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to test whether the basic structure of the political skill inventory, which is the scale used in the research, was preserved. As a result of the analysis, the KMO sampling adequacy statistic value of the related scale was determined as 0.920. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-Square value of the scale was 2237.954, and the significance result was 0.000. Based on these findings, the political skill scale is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was revealed that the four-factor structure of the political skill scale was preserved. However, some items were collected under factors different from the original version, and the factor structures obtained needed to be more significant. For these reasons, it was decided to use the political skill scale in the study by preserving its original structure. Table 2 below shows the dimensions of political skill and related items to the relevant dimension.

Table 2. Political Skill Dimensions and Items in the Scale

Political Skill Dimensions	Items
Social Astuteness	Q5, Q7, Q16, Q17, Q18
Interpersonal Influence	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q12
Networking Ability	Q1, Q6, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q15
Apparent Sincerity	Q8, Q13, Q14

After the exploratory factor analysis, the reliability analyses of the general political skill and the determined factor structures were determined with Cronbach's alpha values. In this context, the results of the reliability analyses covering the social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity dimensions of the political skill scale are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis Results Regarding Political Skill and Its Dimensions

Politicial Skill and Its Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
General Political Skill	0.927
Social Astuteness	0.851
Interpersonal Influence	0.790
Networking Ability	0.771
Apparent Sincerity	0.809

Employees' Political Skill Levels

Mean values and standard deviations were analyzed to determine the political skill levels of the employees participating in the study.

Table 4. Political Skill Levels of Halal Concept Hotel Employees (N=278)

	Min.	Max.	s.d.	Mean
Political Skill	1.00	5.00	0.621	3.99
Social Astuteness	1.00	5.00	0.750	3.96
Interpersonal Influence	1.00	5.00	0.683	4.03
Networking Ability	1.00	5.00	0.706	3.86
Apparent Sincerity	1.00	5.00	0.727	4.28

According to the findings in Table 4, the general political skill levels of the employees in halal concept hotels are high (Mean=3.99). When evaluated in terms of dimensions, the highest political skill dimension was found to be apparent sincerity (Mean=4.28), while the relatively low political ability dimension was found to be networking ability (Mean=3.86). Among the other dimensions, social astuteness (Mean=3.96) and interpersonal influence (Mean=4.03) were close.

Comparison of Employees' Political Skill Levels According to Demographic Attributions

The analyses were conducted to examine whether the levels of political skill and its sub-dimensions differ according to the demographic attributions of halal concept employees participating in the research, and the findings obtained are presented below. In this context, firstly, whether there is a difference in the political skill levels of the employees according to their gender was analyzed by independent samples t test.

Table 5. Results of Independent Samples t-test for the Difference of Political Skill Levels of Employees According to Their Gender

Political Skill and Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	s.d.	t	p
General Political Skill	Female	122	4.03	0.51	0.73	0.46
	Male	156	3.97	0.69		
Social Astuteness	Female	122	4.01	0.61	0.93	0.35
	Male	156	3.92	0.84		
Interpersonal Influence	Female	122	4.03	0.65	-0.10	0.91
	Male	156	4.04	0.70		
Networking Ability	Female	122	3.89	0.59	0.75	0.45
	Male	156	3.83	0.78		
Apparent Sincerity	Female	122	4.32	0.65	0.82	0.41
	Male	156	4.25	0.77		

According to the findings shown in Table 5, the level of political skill and its sub-dimensions did not show a significant difference (p$\square$ 0.05) depending on the employees' gender in halal concept hotels. Gender is not an attribution that makes a difference in the context of political skill variables. Although being male or female did not affect the employees' political skills, it can be declared that female employees have relatively higher political skills than male employees.

Table 6 below shows the independent samples t-test results on whether political skill and its sub-dimensions differ depending on the employee's marital status.

Table 6. Results of Independent Samples t-test for the Difference of Political Skill Levels of Employees According to Their Marital Status

Political Skill and Dimensions	Marital Status	N	Mean	s.d.	t	p
General Political Skill	Married	124	3.88	0.70	-2.89	**0.00***
	Single	154	4.09	0.52		
Social Astuteness	Married	124	3.78	0.85	-3.60	**0.00***
	Single	154	4.10	0.61		
Interpersonal Influence	Married	124	3.94	0.76	-2.12	**0.03***
	Single	154	4.11	0.60		
Networking Ability	Married	124	3.75	0.81	-2.31	**0.02***
	Single	154	3.95	0.59		
Apparent Sincerity	Married	124	4.20	0.81	-1.48	0.13
	Single	154	4.33	0.64		

The findings in Table 6 posit that political skill and its dimensions differ significantly (p$\square$ 0.05) according to the employees' marital status in halal concept hotels. Accordingly, both general political skill levels (p=0.000$\square$ 0.05) and social astuteness (p=0.000$\square$ 0.05), interpersonal influence (p=0.003$\square$ 0.05) and networking ability (p=0.002$\square$ 0.05) dimensions of employees differ according to their marital status. According to the marital status variable, the political skill level (Mean=4.09), social astuteness (Mean=4.10), interpersonal influence (Mean=4.11) and networking ability (Mean=3.95) of single employees are higher than married employees. Therefore, it can be determined that single employees have higher political skills than married employees.

The results of the One-Way ANOVA test on whether political skill and its sub-dimensions differ according to the age of the employees are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. One-Way Anova Test Results for the Difference in Political Skill Levels of Employees According to Their Ages

Age	N	General Political Skill	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity
		Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.
1. 25 years and below	71	3.84 ± 0.70	3.71 ± 0.86	3.94 ± 0.73	3.71 ± 0.82	4.19 ± 0.80
2. 26-34 years old	98	3.97 ± 0.58	3.96 ± 0.70	4.03 ± 0.63	3.82 ± 0.65	4.25 ± 0.77
3. 35-44 years old	78	4.06 ± 0.56	4.08 ± 0.65	4.05 ± 0.71	3.91 ± 0.63	4.34 ± 0.65
4. 45 years and above	38	4.19 ± 0.58	4.17 ± 0.70	4.19 ± 0.64	4.11 ± 0.65	4.39 ± 0.55
F		3.122	4.498	1.162	2.938	0.887
p		**0.026***	**0,004***	0.325	**0.034***	0.448
PostHoc (Tukey)		1<4	1<3, 1<4	-	1<4	-

According to the findings in Table 7, it was determined that there was a significant difference (p☐ 0.05) in political skill levels and sub-dimensions according to the age of the employees. In this context, it was observed that there was an increase in the levels of political skill in general political skill levels (p=0.026☐ 0.05), social astuteness (p=0.004☐ 0.05) and networking ability (p=0.034☐ 0.05) dimensions as the age of the employees increased. As a result of the Tukey test conducted to understand which age groups the differences between the groups are, employees aged 45 and above (Mean=4.19) have higher levels of general political skills than employees aged 25 and below (Mean=3.84). Similarly, the networking ability of the employees aged 45 years and above (Mean=4.11) is higher than those aged 25 years and below (Mean=3.71). In the social astuteness dimension, both employees aged 45 years and above (Mean=4.17) and employees aged 35-44 years (Mean=4.08) have higher social astuteness than employees aged 25 years and below (Mean=3.71). According to these results, it is determined that employees have higher levels of political skills as they get older.

Table 8. One-Way Anova Test Results for the Difference of Political Skill Levels of Employees According to Their Educational Status

Education Status	N	General Political Skill	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity
		Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.
1. High School	36	3.98 ± 0.45	3.93 ± 0.74	3.99 ± 0.49	3.86 ± 0.52	4.28 ± 0.54
2. Vocational School	95	3.83 ± 0.74	3.78 ± 0.83	3.91 ± 0.81	3.68 ± 0.82	4.10 ± 0.90
3. University	65	4.09 ± 0.59	4.06 ± 0.69	4.11 ± 0.67	3.95 ± 0.69	4.36 ± 0.68
F		4.215	3.665	2.391	3.354	3.107
p		**0.016***	**0.027***	0.093	**0.036***	**0.046***
PostHoc (Tukey)		3<4	3<4	-	3<4	3<4

Table 8 presents the results of the One-Way ANOVA test conducted to determine whether the political skill levels of the employees differ according to their educational status. According to the results obtained, it was determined that all other dimensions except the interpersonal influence dimension showed a significant difference (p☐ 0.05) according to the educational status of the employees. Based on the results, it can be stated that employees who have university graduates have a higher level of political skill than employees who have vocational school degree graduates both in general political skill (Mean=4.09) and in the dimensions of social astuteness (Mean=4.06), networking ability (Mean=3.95) and apparent sincerity (Mean=4.36). As the educational level of the employees increases, they may have higher levels of political skill.

Finally, the One-Way ANOVA test was applied to test whether the political skill levels of the employees differed according to their professional experience.

Table 9. One-Way Anova Test Results for the Difference of Political Skill Levels of Employees According to Their Professional Experience

Professional Experience	N	General Political Skill	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity
		Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.	Mean ± s.d.
1. Less than 1 year	36	3.78 ± 0.69	3.75 ± 0.77	3.80 ± 0.82	3.56 ± 0.77	4.26 ± 0.78
2. 1-5 years	95	3.98 ± 0.60	3.91 ± 0.74	4.01 ± 0.63	3.86 ± 0.71	4.29 ± 0.73
3. 6-10 years	82	4.05 ± 0.63	4.08 ± 0.72	4.07 ± 0.72	3.90 ± 0.71	4.30 ± 0.74
4. 11 years and more	65	4.06 ± 0.57	4.00 ± 0.76	4.15 ± 0.58	3.97 ± 0.61	4.24 ± 0.67
F		1.913	1.808	2.176	2.834	0.106
p		0.128	0.146	0.091	**0.039***	0.957
PostHoc (Tukey)		-	-	-	1<4	-

The findings in Table 9 posit a significant difference (p=0.039☐ 0.05) in terms of political skill only in the dimension of network ability according to the employees' professional experience. Employees with 11 years

or more of professional experience (Mean=3.97) have higher networking ability than employees with less than one year of professional experience (Mean=3.56). In this context, it is possible to determine that the networking ability of employees increases with professional experience.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Halal concept hotels require the representation of a certain profile in terms of both the guests who prefer the hotel business and the employees working there within the scope of its unique features. For the relationship and interaction between the two parties to be healthy, the employees' political skill stands out as a behavior that should be underlined. Within this context, this study examined the political skill levels of the employees who work for halal concept hotels. The findings obtained from the research were evaluated in general as follows.

First, it was observed that the general political skill levels of the employees in halal concept hotels were high. When evaluated in dimensions, the highest political skill dimension was apparent sincerity, followed by interpersonal influence and social astuteness. This result was to be expected, as the general structure of the tourism sector and its dynamics require sincere, extraverted, and outgoing employees to be recruited. The conclusion drawn from this result is that halal concept hotels employ staff who can build a close relationship with guests and communicate with them sincerely. In addition, it is crucial to employ people who can easily adapt to different social environments in terms of their social astuteness skills. Second, gender was not a differentiating attribute in political skill. However, it was not possible to make a clear distinction, but it can be noted that female employees have a relatively higher level of political skill than male employees. This result is unexpected as previous research (Ferris et al., 2009) has suggested that female employees are disadvantaged in being less power oriented. Therefore, this result supports female employees in opening up more development and improvement areas for themselves as they find more space in halal tourism-oriented business life, especially in halal concept hotels. Third, it was discovered that the marital status of employees of halal concept hotels differs from the perspective of general political skill and its dimensions, namely social astuteness, interpersonal influence and networking ability. It was observed that single employees have higher political skills than married employees. This result may be explained by the fact that single employees focus more on their jobs than married employees regarding work-life balance. Fourth, according to the ages of employees, it was observed that they have higher political skill levels as they age. In particular, the social astuteness and networking ability dimensions of political skill were found to be skills that employees demonstrated more as they became older. As employees mature, they are more successful in using different social networks and serving guests with different beliefs and values. This result, which is a desirable outcome in halal tourism, suggests that halal concept hotels, in particular, should consider age as a variable in the recruitment process. Fifth, it was found that the education status of employees plays an important role in using political skills. According to the results, more educated employees become more politically skilled, especially in social astuteness, networking ability and apparent sincerity dimensions of political skill. This result can be interpreted as an expected result as education provides an important development opportunity for individuals. Since the social astuteness and networking ability dimensions inherently require engaging with others and collaborating to influence others, it is likely to be easier for educated employees to provide this interaction (Ferris et al., 2009). Therefore, by employing educated employees, halal concept hotels can successfully carry out their business processes and operations. Finally, as expected, professional experience was found to be a remarkable attribution to effect the political skill level of employees working in halal concept hotels. It was observed that employees with more professional experience have higher levels of political skills in general political skills and in the dimension of networking ability. The conclusion drawn from this result is that experience in the profession allows employees to manage different networks and use persuasion in relationships. In this context, it is possible to determine that the networking ability of employees increases with professional experience.

While designing this study, two research questions were taken into consideration. In this context, when the research results are related to the research questions, it is revealed that the political skill levels of the employees of halal concept hotels are high and that the employees differ in terms of age, marital status, educational status and professional experience demographic attributions.

Like all other studies, there are some limitations to this study. First, the fact that a certain number of employees were examined as a sample limits the generalizability of the research results. Therefore, studies involving samples with more participants can be planned in future studies. Moreover, since this research was designed as a cross-sectional study, participants' perceptions and attitudes were analyzed simultaneously. However, as perceptions, attitudes and intentions change over time, future research could include longitudinal studies to reveal temporal relationships across different periods.

On the other hand, the fact that the study is based on a single variable as political skill reveals the need for research involving its association with different variables. In this context, future studies could include antecedent variables such as personality types, use of power, locus of control, and mentoring, and studies that include relationships with outcome variables such as commitment, engagement, and identification. Finally, since the research was conducted in Turkish culture, it would be useful to conduct the research in different countries and locations to compare employees working in different cultures.

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