

# Strategic Thinking and Merit Understanding of Public Employees During The Covid-19 Pandemic <sup>1</sup>

## Covid 19 Salgını Sürecinde Kamu Çalışanlarının Stratejik Düşünce ve Liyakat Anlayışları

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### ABSTRACT

Today, strategic management emerges as a crucial element in achieving the sustainability goals of nation-states. In addition, the importance of qualified public staff who will implement these plans is an indisputable fact for reflecting the strategic foresight made to take decisive and urgent measures against sudden epidemics and disasters. This study aims to reveal the relationship between strategic management and merit understanding of public employees during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the analysis of the study data, arithmetic mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentage values, which are descriptive statistics, were examined. For determining if it is necessary to perform parametric analyzes for this study, first, an examination was made on whether the scale data shows a normal distribution. In this study, the descriptive research method was used, and data collection was made with the help of a questionnaire. When we look at the study results, the strategic management perceptions of public employees are at a high level as per the results obtained in the resource and environment dimensions. Besides, as per the general average and merit dimension, training dimension, assignment dimension and overall evaluation results of the answers related to the merit understanding of the public employees participating in the study, their merit understanding is at a high level. In conclusion, it is aimed to determine a method and form a theoretical basis according to the study results of decision makers, strategy makers, and public employees' understanding of strategic management and merit.

### KEYWORDS

Covid 19 Pandemic, Public Employees, Merit, Strategic Thinking

### ÖZ

Günümüzde ulus devletlerin sürdürülebilirlik hedeflerine ulaşmada, stratejik yönetim önemli bir unsur olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bunun yanında ani gelişen salgın ve felaketler karşısında önemli ve acil tedbirlerin alınması için yapılan stratejik öngörülerin sahaya yansıtılması noktasında bu planlamaları uygulayacak liyakatli kamu kadrolarının önemi tartışılmaz bir gerçektir. Yapılan çalışmanın amacı Covid 19 salgını sürecinde kamu çalışanlarının stratejik yönetim ve liyakat anlayışları arasındaki ilişkinin ortaya konmasıdır. Araştırma verilerinin analizinde betimsel istatistiklerden olan aritmetik ortalama, frekans, standart sapma ve yüzde değerlerine bakılmıştır. Bu çalışma için parametrik analizlerin yapılıp yapılmayacağını belirlemek için öncelikle ölçek verilerinin normal dağılım gösterip göstermediğine bakılmıştır. Betimsel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır ve anket metodu ile veri toplama yoluna gidilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına bakıldığında, kaynak boyutu ve çevre boyutunda elde edilen sonuçlara göre kamu çalışanlarının stratejik yönetim algılarının yüksek düzeyde olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Ayrıca araştırmaya katılan kamu çalışanlarının liyakat anlayışları ile ilgili cevapların genel ortalama ve liyakat boyutu, yetiştirme boyutu, atama boyutu ve genel değerlendirme sonuçlarına göre kamu çalışanlarının liyakat anlayışlarının da yüksek düzeyde olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Sonuç olarak karar verici ve strateji belirleyicilerin, kamu çalışanlarının stratejik yönetim ve liyakat anlayışları arasındaki araştırma sonuçlarına ilişkin ortaya koyduğumuz sonuçların yöntem belirleme ve teorik bir temel oluşturması amaçlanmıştır.

### ANAHTAR KELİMELER

Kovid 19 Salgını, Kamu Çalışanları, Liyakat, Stratejik Düşünce

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## INTRODUCTION

The new type of coronavirus (Covid-19), which emerged with the detection of a new virus in the 11th month of “2019” in the city of Wuhan, China, not only affected the relations between countries in the global context but also caused new changes and developments in the social and sociological context, and will continue to be so. The pandemic, which affected Turkey as well as the whole world, started to settle in the centre of life on an individual and social level. With the World Health Organization declaring Covid-19 as a worldwide pandemic, it has begun to be understood that it will be an effective process from production to consumption, from politics and social areas to religious rituals and economics (Karaca et al 2020: 1812). The pandemic is making the effects of a great crisis affecting health, and social life felt across the world as a global problem. Its spreading speed has become a big problem for all nation-states bringing along growing unemployment and economic difficulties. In some countries, it is a health problem that needs to be solved immediately, as restrictions affecting social life due to epidemics have turned into mass demonstrations and riots (Kara, 2020: 29).

Today, our world is open to social developments. We are in a period in which the global pandemic forces us to question everything. Apart from the known public services, the change in sociological paradigms has created the need for an effective, fast, and solution-oriented public service. This situation forces especially nation-states to review their systems and automation and make strategic plans about public personnel regimes. Thanks to the invention of writing and historical information, the most important legacy left by man-made governments is their experience. Particularly from this point of view, when we look at the application examples related to the promotion of public and public service personnel, we see the employment of the close circle of the power holders or their ideological supporters in the public service. Since such practices seek loyalty rather than merit, consequences such as disruptions in public service, deterioration in laws and practices, and sociological injury to the justice system become inevitable. As a result of the government's failure to put merit before loyalty, the problem of survival (sustainability) of nation-states arises. For this reason, if a healthy state structure is to be maintained even when the governments change, merit is a fact that should not be ignored.

The necessity of the principle of merit in entering the public service and in promotion is a phenomenon accepted by all segments of society. Unfortunately, the problem of incompetence and political favouritism occupy our agenda again in Turkey. In particular, the fact that not considering "merit" while making appointments in the public sector and bringing unqualified people to managerial positions in a unit has caused the problem of incompetence to be frequently mentioned by society.

## 1. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategy (stratégie in French) is expressed as the science and art of using political, economic, psychological, and military forces together to support the policies adopted in peace and war (Bagci & Kaymakci, 2019: 2337). It is assumed that the word "strategy" is used by referring to “Strategos, one of the ancient Greek generals”, in addition to the war experience and the art of war (Dincer, 2003: 16). The concept of strategic management entered the field of management science after the middle of the 20th century. The meaning of the planned and systematic mobilization of the available resources to ensure that the rival organizations are superior to each other comes to the fore (Guclu, 2003: 62). When the strategic management process is considered from an organizational point of view, it can be explained as "the use of information gathering, selection, analysis, decision making, and strategy determination instruments in maintaining the competitive advantage by ensuring the sustainability of the organizations for many years" (Ulgen & Mirze, 2004: 31). In the history of strategic management, “it is seen that it was put forward by Sun Tzu with the idea of martial art in the 500s BC. According to Sun Tzu's approach, war, which is an art, is one of the main reasons for the existence and continuation of the state”. He advises the state to continue its existence or disappear, at what level it can practice the art of war and to realize its ability, as well as to evaluate the forces that are hostile to it and its own capabilities and possibilities (Dincer, 2013: 311). Scientifically, the development of strategic management begins in the 1880s and was previously seen as an organizational attitude. The scientific phases of this thought are as follows; “Non-scientific administrative process - the period before 1880, The beginning of the scientific management period - 1880, Planning - 1950, Long-term planning - 1960, Collective planning - 1965, Strategic Planning - 1970, Strategic Management - 1980, Strategic Scenario - 1985, Strategic Vision - 1990” (Guclu, 2003: 72). The institutionalization of strategic management in the public sector in our country, towards the end of the twentieth century, sociological, technological and political developments forced a rapid paradigm shift in state administrations and led to structural changes. The approach adopted by the Presidency of Strategy and Budget in 2004 is as follows; “It has led to serious changes in the understanding of public service and public administration. Factors such as globalization, accelerating technological development, deepening

interdependence between states, diversification of the needs and expectations of societies, democratization trends, participation in decision-making processes, and the development of civil society awareness play a crucial role in this change and transformation (Presidency of Strategy & Budget, 2004). The strategic management process is the whole of “information collection, analysis, selection, decision” and practices for organizations to maintain their assets permanently and sustainably and gain competitive advantage (Ulgen & Mirze, 2004: 31). This process refers to the practice starting from the top managers to the "staff" and progressing to the lower management levels. In addition, it is a process that determines the impact area and the power of strategic planning (Tastan, 2006: 1; Seker, 2012: 19).

## 2. MERIT

The concept of merit means "worthiness". The word “worthiness” has the etymological meaning of “being qualified with qualities, attitudes, actions, and behaviours” (www.tdk.gov.tr, 2021). It can also be explained as “*deserving, sufficiency, suitability*”. Others call it "being deserving" or "qualification system" (Tuncer, 2017: 37). According to another view, merit refers to being worthy of duty and deserving that duty (Yuksel, 1998: 21). Again, it means “*worthy and sufficient in Arabic origin and European languages*” (Guler, 2013: 142). Merit expresses a special ability and suitability of the individual in the field in which he is valuable more than his worth or value. The ability of an individual to reach the status of a judge or a commander is not related to being close to power, but to being worthy of that duty and having the necessary qualifications to fulfil his duties and responsibilities in the best way (Hobbes, 2007: 75).

Mevlana, on the other hand, emphasized the concepts of competence and merit while describing the ideal human type, the perfect human being, in his work called "Mesnevi". According to him, to ensure social justice, peace and tranquillity, the concepts of competence and merit should be given importance, and people with these qualities should be assigned. Mevlana, by constructing the society based on the individual, stated that human potential should be used for the public benefit. As to him, when the individual uses his potential for the public good, a strong individual, a strong society, and eventually a strong state will emerge (Yazici, 2009: 929). *For the first time in history, the definition of "meritocracy" was put into practice by the King of Prussia, Frederick I, in 1717, in the training of public administrators and their entrance to the civil service through the concept of an examination..In 1742, he made it compulsory to study law and to be successful in exams to hold public office.*” (Tortop, 2007: 371). The following principles of merit, also known as the Pendleton Act, have been adopted; “*A three-person, impartial and autonomous central staff commission appointed by the Head of State will manage the new staffing system, the Commission will assist the president in enforcing the provisions of the law, Employment of civil servants will be selected according to the rules of the open competition examination, In cases where the competition examination cannot be held, the commission will hold a pass examination, Political attitudes of the civil servants and political pressure of the superiors are prohibited*” (Tortop, 1999: 75). In the United States in 1940, USA President Roosevelt's government began applying merit systemically to 98% of permanent civil servants (Tortop, 2007: 81).

## 3. METHODS

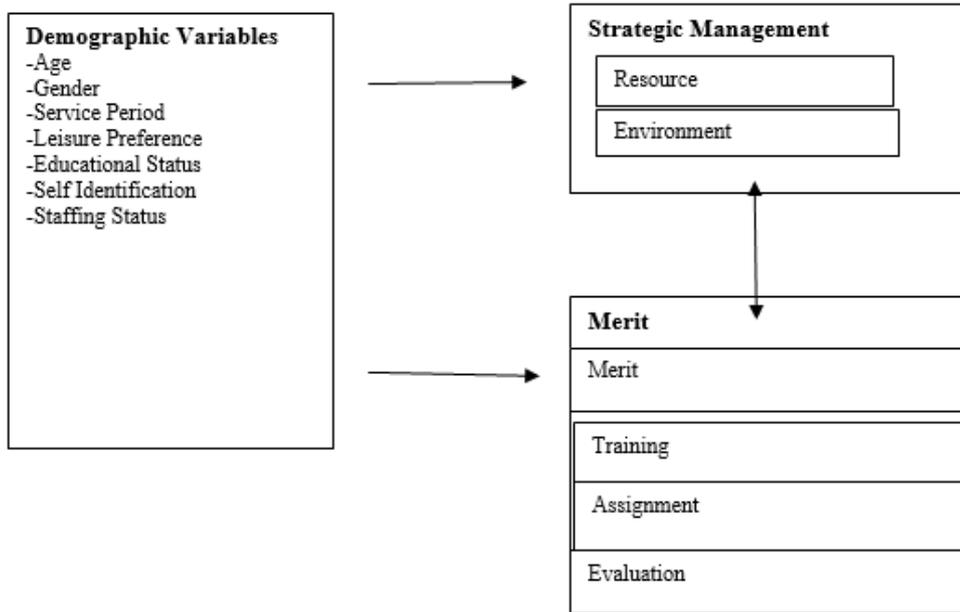
The study population consists of public employees working in Ardahan province during the Covid-19 pandemic in the third quarter of 2021. 361 employees, consisting of 58 contracted civil servants, 241 civil servants, 42 supervisors, 20 Managers, and Senior Managers, totaling 143 women and 218 men, are affiliated to 75 Ardahan Governorship, 125 Provincial Police Department, 65 Provincial Special Administration, 25 Provincial Revenue Office and 71 Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports in Ardahan. Additionally, the study population was formed from public personnel who can be reached from each institution by the convenience sampling method and accepted to fill out the questionnaire.

The period of May-August 2021, when the data collection process was carried out in the study, is within the scope of the pandemic period. *According to Presidential Decree No. 2020/8, which was in force during this period, employees over the age of 60 and people who were determined to have chronic diseases by the Ministry of Health were deemed to be on administrative leave indefinitely. In addition, the rotational working practice was also implemented. Since the unfavourable international conditions of the pandemic have been continuing across the world since the 2020/May period when the circular was published, and since no variability in the conditions could be foreseen, the application was made by considering the actual universe instead of the official universe.*

In this study, *the descriptive research method, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used and data collection was made with the survey method. In the survey method, the communication between the researcher and the subject, who is the data source, is made only in writing. In addition, the correlational and*

causal-comparative methods were used. The Correlational research method aims to study the relationship between two or more variables without attempting to influence the variables. (Arseven, 2001: 101).

**Figure 2. Research Model**



After the necessary explanations about the scales used in the study were given to the participants by the researcher, the questionnaire was applied by taking social distance, hygiene, and mask precautions following the Covid-19 pandemic measures.

Among the scales used in the study, the Strategy Management Scale as used by Kayar Çelik (2019), Özgür's (2007) study titled "Strategic Management in Denizli SMEs", Sucu's (2010) master's thesis named "Strategic Management in SMEs and a Research", Kılıcı's (2013) master's thesis titled "Strategic Management Practices in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises" and "A Research on the Information and Usage Level of Strategic Management Tools in Healthcare Organizations" by Bilgin Demir (2015) were used.

The results show that the group of civil servants/specialists has the highest average value among the participants for the "Source" dimension of the Strategy Scale. The group of chiefs has the lowest average value. The average values for contractual personnel and manager/senior executive positions are similar. When the standard deviation values are examined, it is seen that the manager/senior executive position has a lower standard deviation value compared to other groups. This shows that managers/senior executives have a more homogeneous opinion on this issue. When the significance levels are examined, a significant difference is observed between contractual personnel and civil servant/specialist positions. The average and standard deviation data for each item in the "Environment" dimension are also included in the tables below.

The second scale used in the study is the Merit Scale by Gök (2017) which was used as a data collection tool to determine the merit principles.

According to the data provided by the participants, there is a positive and significant correlation (at the 0.01 level) among all scales. The highest correlation is between the Merit and Strategic Management scales (0.810), and the lowest correlation is between the Appointment and Evaluation scales (0.609).

"The SPSS 21.0 software was used for the analysis of the study data. In the analysis of the study data, arithmetic mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentage values, which are descriptive statistics, were examined. For determining if it is necessary to perform parametric analyzes for this study, first, an examination was made on whether the scale data shows a normal distribution. As a result of the analysis, the kurtosis and skewness values of the data were calculated. Also, they are given below.

**Table 1: The Skewness and Kurtosis Values Obtained for The Strategic Management Scale and The Merit Scale.**

	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Strategic Management Scale</i>	-0,511	-0,692
<i>Merit Scale</i>	-0,467	-0,786

According to the normal distribution analysis, as can be seen in Table 1, the skewness and kurtosis values obtained for the strategic management and the merit scale are between -2 and +2. “Additionally, in the analysis of normally distributed study data, the independent T-test was used for pairwise comparisons, the One Way ANOVA test for multiple comparisons, and Tukey's test for post-hoc analysis”.

**Table 2: The 5-Point Likert Scale Ranges for The Strategic Management and Merit Scales**

Value	Option	Limits
1	Strongly disagree	1,00 – 1,80
2	Disagree	1,81 – 2,60
3	Neither agree or disagree	2,61 – 3,40
4	Agree	3,41 – 4,20
5	Strongly agree	4,21 – 5,00

The Cronbach  $\alpha$  internal consistency value of the 22-item Strategic Management Scale used in this study was 0.968, and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  internal consistency value of the 20-item Merit Scale was 0.972. Accordingly, the obtained reliability values are pretty sufficient.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of The Sample Group**

		f	%
<b>Age</b>	18-19	25	6,9
	20-21	80	22,2
	22-23	111	30,7
	24 and above	145	40,2
<b>Gender</b>	Female	143	39,6
	Male	218	60,4
<b>Service Period</b>	0-1 years	21	5,8
	2-5 years	84	23,3
	6-10 years	122	33,8
	11-15 years	103	28,5
	16 years and above	31	8,6
<b>Leisure time preference</b>	Reading books	92	25,5
	Going to the cinema/theatre	92	25,5
	Visiting historical places	115	31,9
	Going to entertainment venues	62	17,2
<b>Educational status</b>	Primary/Secondary school graduate	22	6,1
	High-school graduate	75	20,8
	Bachelor's degree	240	66,5
	Postgraduate	24	6,6
<b>Self-identification</b>	Quiet/calm	91	25,2
	Social and extrovert	141	39,1
	Hyperactive	75	20,8

		f	%
<b>Staffing</b>	Edgy and hot-blooded	54	15,0
	Contract employee	58	16,1
	Officer/Specialist	241	66,8
	Supervisor	42	11,6
	Manager-Senior manager	20	5,5

As per Table 3, where the demographic characteristics of the sample group are given, 30.7% of the public employees are over the age of 22-23, and 40.2% are over the age of 24. 39.6% of them were female, and 60.4% were male. Considering the service periods, 23.3% of them have 2.5 years, 33.8% have 6-10 years, and 28.5% have 11-15 years of service. 25.5% of public employees prefer to read books and go to the cinema/theatre in their leisure time, 31.9% prefer to visit historical places, and 17.2% prefer to go to entertainment venues. As for their educational status, 66.5% had a bachelor's degree, and 20.8% were high school graduates. 25.2% of public employees defined themselves as quiet, 39.1% as social and extroverted, 20.8% as hyperactive, and 15.0% as nervous. Also, 6.8% work as officers/specialists, 16.1% on a contractual basis, 11.6% on supervisor staff, and 5.5% on management staff.

**Table 4: The Averages and Standard Deviation Results Obtained for The Strategic Management Scale**

	N	AVG	SD
<b>Strategic Management Scale</b>	361	3,58	0,87
<b>Resource Dimension</b>	361	3,60	0,96
<b>Environment Dimension</b>	361	3,56	0,86

The general average of the answers of the public employees about their strategic management understanding was determined as  $x=3.58\pm 0.87$ . When we examine the sub-dimensions, an average of  $x=3.60\pm 0.96$  was obtained for the resource dimension and an average of  $x=3.56\pm 0.86$  for the environment dimension. According to these results, the strategic management perceptions of public employees are high.

**Table 5: The averages and standard deviation results obtained for the merit scale.**

	N	AVG	SD
<b>Merit Scale</b>	361	3,73	0,94
<b>MeritDimension</b>	361	3,68	1,02
<b>TrainingDimension</b>	361	3,74	0,99
<b>AssignmentDimension</b>	361	3,79	0,99
<b>Evaluation Dimension</b>	361	3,72	1,06

The general average of the answers of the public employees regarding their understanding of merit was determined as  $x=3.73\pm 0.94$ . Looking at the averages of the sub-dimensions, an average of  $x=3.68\pm 1.02$  was obtained for the merit dimension,  $x=3.74\pm 0.99$  for the training dimension,  $x=3.79\pm 0.99$  for the assignment dimension, and  $x=3.72\pm 1.06$  for the evaluation dimension. Thus, showing that the understanding of the merit of public employees is also at a high level.

**Table 6: The results of the One-Way ANOVA Test comparing strategic management and merit understandings by the service period variable.**

	Service Period	N	AVG	SD	F	P	Difference
<b>Resource</b>	0-1 years	21	3,78	0,72	9,901	0,000**	
	2-5 years	84	3,85	0,92			1 > 5
	6-10years	122	3,81	0,87			2 > 5
	11-15 years	103	3,28	0,99			3 > 5
	16 years and above	31	2,99	1,01			2 > 4

<b>Environment</b>	0-1 years	21	3,67	0,85	8,694	0,000**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4 3 > 5
	2-5 years	84	3,77	0,72			
	6-10 years	122	3,75	0,82			
	11-15 years	103	3,27	0,89			
	16 years and above	31	3,08	0,88			
<b>Strategic Management</b>	0-1 years	21	3,73	0,78	10,392	0,000**	1 > 5 2 > 5 3 > 5 2 > 4 3 > 4
	2-5 years	84	3,81	0,75			
	6-10 years	122	3,78	0,79			
	11-15 years	103	3,28	0,91			
	16 years and above	31	3,04	0,89			
<b>Merit</b>	0-1 years	21	3,66	0,99	8,522	0,000**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4 3 > 5
	2-5 years	84	3,91	0,94			
	6-10 years	122	3,92	0,92			
	11-15 years	103	3,40	1,05			
	16 years and above	31	3,02	1,11			
<b>Training</b>	0-1 years	21	3,77	0,72	9,915	0,000**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4 3 > 5
	2-5 years	84	4,04	0,88			
	6-10 years	122	3,96	0,89			
	11-15 years	103	3,42	1,03			
	16 years and above	31	3,14	1,11			
<b>Assignment</b>	0-1 years	21	3,70	0,94	5,019	0,001**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4 3 > 5
	2-5 years	84	4,00	0,92			
	6-10 years	122	3,96	0,96			
	11-15 years	103	3,55	1,00			
	16 years and above	31	3,38	1,06			
<b>Evaluation</b>	0-1 years	21	3,76	0,83	9,876	0,000**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4
	2-5 years	84	4,11	0,93			
	6-10 years	122	3,90	0,93			
	11-15 years	103	3,28	1,15			
	16 years and above	31	3,38	1,08			
<b>Merit Avg.</b>	0-1 years	21	3,72	0,75	9,215	0,000**	2 > 4 2 > 5 3 > 4 3 > 5
	2-5 years	84	4,02	0,85			
	6-10 years	122	3,94	0,86			
	11-15 years	103	3,41	0,99			
	16 years and above	31	3,23	1,02			

\*\* Indicates a significant difference at the  $P < 0.05$  level.

The results of the One-Way ANOVA test, in which we evaluated the strategic management and merit understanding of public employees by their service periods, are given in Table 6. According to the examination of the results of the general averages and sub-dimensions of the strategic management scale, the strategic management understanding of the employees with a service period of over 16 years is at a lower level than the employees in the group with 0-1 years, 2-5 years and 6-10 years of service. Similarly, employees with 11-15 years of service have a lower level of strategic management understanding than those in the group with 2-5 years and 6-10 years of service ( $p < 0.05$ ). As per the examination of the results of the merit scale, the employees in the group with 2-5 years and with 6-10 years of service have a higher level of merit understanding with a significant difference compared to the employees in the group with 11-15 years of service and over 16 years of service ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 7: The correlation analysis results showing the relationship between strategic management and merit understandings.**

		Merit	Training	Assignment	Evaluation	Merit Average
<b>Resource</b>	PearsonCorrelation	,786**	,794**	,688**	,698**	,796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	361	361	361	361	361
<b>Environment</b>	PearsonCorrelation	,754**	,709**	,621**	,609**	,723**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	361	361	361	361	361
<b>Strategic Management</b>	PearsonCorrelation	,810**	,792**	,690**	,689**	,800**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	361	361	361	361	361

\*\* The correlation is significant at the two-way 0.01 level.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was examined in the correlation analysis performed to determine the relationship between the strategic management understanding and the merit understanding of the public employees. Also, the results are given in Table 7. Accordingly, there is a strong positive correlation ( $r=0.800$   $p=0.000$ ) between the general averages of the strategic management scale and the merit scale. In addition, a strong positive correlation was observed between the resource dimension of the strategic management scale and the general average of the merit scale and its sub-dimensions. Similarly, a strong positive correlation was observed between the environment dimension of the strategic management scale and the general average of the merit scale and its sub-dimensions. Consequently, as public employees' understanding of strategic management increases, their merit understanding also remarkably increases.

## CONCLUSION

According to Table 3, where the demographic information of the sample group is given, 30.7% of the public employees participating in the research are over the age of 22-23, and 40.2% are over the age of 24.39.6% of the participants were female and 60.4% were male. Considering the lengths of service, 23.3% of the participants have 2.5 years, 33.8% have 6-10 years, and 28.5% have 11-15 years of service.25.5% of public employees stated that they prefer to read books and go to the cinema/theatre in their spare time, 31.9% prefer to visit historical places and 17.2% prefer to go to entertainment venues. When looking at the educational status, it was seen that 66.5% of the employees were undergraduate graduates, and 20.8% of them were high school graduates.25.2% of public employees defined themselves as quiet, 39.1% as social and extroverted, 20.8% as hyperactive, and 15.0% as nervous. Of the public employees participating in the research, 66.8% work as civil servants/experts, 16.1% on a contractual basis, 11.6% on supervisor staff, and 5.5% on management staff.

The general average of the answers of the public employees participating in the research about their strategic management understanding was determined as  $x=3.58\pm0.87$ . After looking at the sub-dimensions,  $x=3.60\pm0.96$  mean in the source dimension and  $x=3.56\pm0.86$  mean in the perimeter dimension were obtained. Thus, we can say that the strategic management perceptions of public employees are at a high level.

When looking at the general results of the answers of the public employees participating in the research regarding their understanding of merit, we can say that the merit understanding of public employees is also at a high level according to the results of the merit dimension, the training dimension, the assignment dimension, and the evaluation dimension.

When we look at the results obtained from the One-Way Anova test, in which we evaluated the strategic management and merit understanding of public employees according to their length of service, it was seen that the strategic management understanding of the employees with a service period of more than 16 years was lower than the employees in the group with a service period of 0-1 year, 2-5 years and 6-10 years. Likewise, observations show that employees with 11-15 years of service have a lower level of strategic management understanding than those in the group with 2-5 years and 6-10 years of service. When the results obtained from the merit scale were examined, it was seen that the employees in the group with 2-5 years of service and the employees in the group with 6-10 years of service have a higher level of merit understanding than the employees in the group with a service period of 11-15 years and above 16 years, by a significant margin.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was examined in the correlation analysis performed to determine the relationship between the strategic management understanding and the merit understanding of the public employees participating in the research, and according to the results, it was seen that there was a very high level of positive correlation between the general average of the strategic management scale and the general average of the merit scale. A high degree of positive correlation was observed between the resource dimension of the strategic management scale and the sub-dimensions and the general average of the merit scale. Similarly, a high level of positive correlation was observed between the environmental dimension of the strategic management scale and the sub-dimensions and general average of the merit scale. Accordingly, we can say that as public employees' understanding of strategic management increases, their understanding of merit also increases at a high level.

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