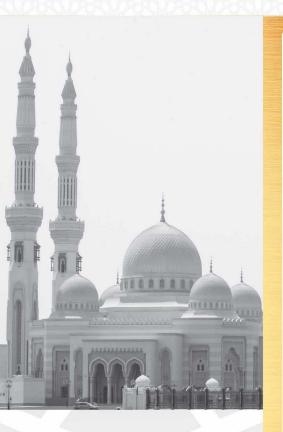
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مستوى المعرفة المالية الإسلامية بين موظفي البنك الإسلامي: حالة تركيا

THE ISLAMIC FINANCE KNOWLEDGE LEVEL AMONG ISLAMIC BANK EMPLOYEES: CASE OF TÜRKIYE¹

كامولا بيرم

جامعة كاراتاي KTO، تركيا

Kamola Bayram KTO Karatay University, Türkiye

يوسف اوجورلو

بنك المشاركة Emlak، تركيا

Yusuf Ugurlu Emlak Participation Bank, Türkiye

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الملخص

تشكل حصة الأصول المصرفية الإسلامية في تركيا 7 في المائة فقط من إجمالي الأصول المصرفية على الرغم من أن 98.9 في المائة من السكان مسلمون. ومن المعروف أن المعرفة المالية بالمنتجات المالية الإسلامية بحاجة إلى تحسين لجعل المنتجات المالية الإسلامية مقبولة لدى فئة واسعة من المستثمرين وأصحاب الأعمال. في هذه الدراسة وجهنا 20 سؤالا . إلى موظفي البنوك التشاركية لقياس معرفتهم بمنتجات التمويل الإسلامي وطرق التمويل) لهذا الغرض شارك 100 موظف من مختلف البنوك التشاركية) الخاصة والمملوكة للدولة في استطلاع عبر الإنترنت. بلغ متوسط الإجابات الصحيحة 54٪ على 20 سؤالاً يتعلق بمنتجات التمويل الإسلامي، والتي تم توجيهها لقياس مستوى معرفة موظفي البنوك التشاركية

Abstract

In Türkiye, the share of Islamic banking assets constitutes merely 7 per cent of the total banking assets even though 98.9% of the population is Muslim. It is known that financial literacy about Islamic financial products needed to be improved to make Islamic financial products acceptable to a wider variety of investors and business owners. In this study we directed 20 questions to the participation banks' employees to measure their knowledge on the Islamic finance products and financing methods. For this purpose, 100 employees from various participation banks (private and state owned) participated in an online survey. The average of the correct answers given to 20 questions related to Islamic finance products, which were directed to measure the level of knowledge of participation banking personnel, is 54%.

Keywords: Financial Literacy, Financial Knowledge, Knowledge on Islamic Financial Products, Participation Banks Employee, Türkiye.

1.0 Introduction

From the beginning, it appeared that Islamic finance and Türkiye's secular character would clash. Public and private conventional banks, as well as an unconvinced public, were fierce competitors for Islamic finance. A 1983 federal decree permitted the operation of "Special finance institutions" to provide interest-free banking without any direct mention of Islam or religion as part of a strategy to increase foreign direct investment from the Arab Gulf states. Islamic banking only made up a minor percentage of the banking industry in the 1980s and 1990s, offering mostly deposit accounts and retail banking as its primary services. The term "special finance" institutions was legally changed with the more enticing word "participation banking" in 2006 by Banking Law No. 5411. Today there are six participation banks in Türkiye, three state owned and three private which constitute seven per cent of the banking sector. One of the reasons for these comparatively very low shares is lack of financial literacy among potential customers.

Financial literacy is the ability and confidence of consumers and investors to make informed decisions and take other effective actions to improve their financial well-being. It was also determined that financial literacy is especially important today for a variety of reasons, including the increasing complexity of financial products and services, which are also available from an increasing number and type of providers.

The recent financial crisis has focused the world's attention on the importance of financial literacy. The crisis has revealed the severity of the consequences of people's lack of knowledge, particularly when it comes to making investment decisions in financial markets. The global financial crisis has also increased public awareness of the need to improve financial literacy. In the context of Islamic finance, it was pointed out that financial literacy about Islamic financial products needed to be improved to make Islamic financial products acceptable to a wider variety of investors and business owners. Recall that in Turkey, the share of Islamic banking assets constitutes merely 7% of the total banking assets where 98.9% of the population is Muslim. This study aims to measure the Islamic finance knowledge level of the participation bank employee in Türkiye.

2.0 Literature Review

Taskin et al. (2010) conducted study to determine the most important factors affecting the bank preferences of consumers based on the banking transactions. According to their results the customers at the first place want to trust the bank employees, they care about the knowledge level and skills of the bank employees, they want to be able to perform their banking transactions at their location through different distribution channels, and they pay attention to the physical appearance of the bank and its employees. Ozsoy et al. (2013) surveyed 217 participants selected from among the customers of three participation banks operating in the province of Bolu, Türkiye and conducted a study in which they aimed to determine the factors affecting individuals' participation bank preferences. According to the findings, the most important factors influencing the preference of participation banks are the quality of services and products offered. At the same time, it was stated in the study that the participants gave importance to the close relationship they established with the branch personnel, and although it was not the most important reason, religious sensitivity was also a determining factor in the participants' preference for the participation bank.

Toraman et al. (2015) studied the perceptions of customers towards Islamic banking activities and in this context, they applied a questionnaire to 539 participants in Gaziantep, Turkey. According to the findings obtained from the study, Islamic banking is seen as an alternative to conventional banks and since the Islamic banking system is not fully known in the province, it is not preferred enough by customers. Anac and Kaya (2017) conducted a study on the reasons why participation banks in Türkiye are preferred. In the study, a sample was selected from the customers of four different participation banks operating in Istanbul and a questionnaire was applied. The findings obtained as a result of the research, there are three important factors in the preference of participation banks. These factors are respectively; image and popularity as a participation bank and an interest-free institution, religious sensitivities and the attitude of bank employees towards customers.

In the study of Çömlekçi (2017), the Islamic finance literacy levels of customers working with participation banks were determined.

In the study, it was concluded that Islamic financial literacy differs according to demographic characteristics, and more than half of the customers working with participation banks have low general Islamic financial knowledge and financial literacy levels. Based on the data obtained, Çömlekçi commented that the main motivation for customers to prefer participation banks is not the level of Islamic financial knowledge and financial literacy. Pektas and Temelli (2019) aimed to reveal the customer differences of deposit and participation banks in their studies. According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the interest-free operation of banks according to Islamic principles contributes positively to the bank customers' perception of the bank's reliability and transparency; On the other hand, the fact that the bank works according to Islamic principles creates a sense of trust in the customers and may affect the bank preferences and investments of the customers.

In the study of Kara (2006), the subject of Personnel Training in Participation Banks, a questionnaire was applied by visiting randomly selected 30 participation bank branches in Istanbul and Ankara. In the study, the education status and activities of the personnel working in the participation bank were investigated. In the study, the relationship between demographic characteristics and educational status was revealed and the areas where lack of education was felt, the training programs implemented, the trainers and the results of the training activities were examined.

In Malaysia, Abdullah and Anderson (2015) conducted a survey on 81 bankers in Kuala Lumpur with objective to understand whether the bankers' level of financial literacy is sufficient to make financial decisions regarding Islamic financial products and services, and the factors affecting Islamic financial literacy among bankers. The findings of the study show that nine factors determine the financial literacy of bankers in Kuala Lumpur. These factors are views on banking products, views on Islamic banking products and parental influence on these views, factors that determine investment in securities, views on traditional banking products, attitude towards personal finance management, impact of personal finance management, knowledge on wealth planning and management, and Islamic finance product and attitude towards their services. Ali and Hassan (2017) conducted a study in Malaysia in order to determine the attitudes and thoughts towards Islamic banking and the factors affecting these attitudes and thoughts. According to the data obtained from the study it is found that the personnel of the participation banks had wrong prejudices against Islamic banking as a result of their banking operations and insufficient training on religious infrastructure and Shari'ah rules.

Buchari et al. (2015) focused on "the awareness and attitudes of employees towards participation bank products in Bahrain". A questionnaire was applied to 102 participants and 5 participation bank employees in Bahrain. According to the findings, it was concluded that 56% of the participants had high awareness and positive attitudes towards participation banking products.

Zainol et al. (2008) evaluated the perceptions of Islamic bank and conventional bank employees in Malaysia about their institutions on five different criteria. These criteria were determined as products, services, training, gaining experience and the potential of the bank. When the findings were examined, it was determined that Islamic bank employees had more positive perceptions than conventional bank employees. Another important issue identified in the study is that conventional and Islamic bank personnel are employed despite not having sufficient level of knowledge. Compared to conventional banks, the need for personnel with a high level of knowledge in Islamic banking was considered more vital, it was emphasized that it should be more equipped to meet the demands and questions of the customers, and that seminars and workshops should be organized for the personnel in order to ensure development. In particular, it was stated that more educated and qualified personnel should be employed.

This study differs from the previous ones in terms of the questionnaire design where we adopted questionnaire which consist of question in three levels, namely basic, intermediate, and advance to measure the Islamic financial knowledge level of participation banks personnel.

3.0 Methodology

In this section, data, and evaluation of the results of the survey conducted for participation bank employees are presented. In this study we directed 20 questions to the participation banks' employees to measure their knowledge on the Islamic finance products and financing methods. For this purpose, 100 employees from various participation banks (private and state owned) participated in an online survey.

The survey is designed to measure the Islamic finance knowledge of the participants in three levels. First, the participants were asked *basic questions* about the fundamental principles of Islamic finance. In the second stage, *knowledge questions* were asked about Islamic financing models such as *Salam, Murabaha, Istisna, Ijarah, Mudaraba,* and *Sukuk.* Participants were asked to answer these questions with one of the options "True", "False" or "I have no idea". To measure Islamic finance knowledge level participants were given 1 point for each correct answer, and 0 (zero) points for each incorrect answer and the answer given as "I have no idea".

Levels	No of Questions	Islamic Finance Contracts/Terminology
Basic	3	Ribā Qard
Intermediate	14	Salam Murabaha Istisna Ijarah Mudaraba
Advance	2	Sukuk
Total	20	8

Table 1. Methodology behind the Measurement of Islamic Finance Knowledge

We presented the results of the survey by using descriptive statistics in following section.

3.1 Demographic Indicators

The answers given to the questions in the first part of the study, which define the participants in terms of demographics, are presented in Table 2 with the frequency and percentage distributions of the demographic findings. As presented in Table 2, 77% of the participants are male and 23% are female. 63% of the participants are between the ages of 20 - 29, 30% between the ages of 30 - 39, and 7% between the ages of 40 - 49. Looking at the education level of the respondents, it is seen that a significant portion of them is undergraduate (66%), followed by postgraduate students (34%). 89% of the employees participating in the survey are private sector employees and 11% are public employees, and it is observed that 53% of the employees are authorized, 35% have the title of director-assistant director, and 12% have the title of manager-assistant manager. In addition, when the work experience of the participants is examined, 60% of them are in the range of 1-5, 22% are in the range of 6-10, and 18% are in the range of 11-15 years.

		Frequency
Garden	Male	77
Gender	Female	23
	20 - 29	63
Age	30 - 39	30
	40 - 49	7
	Secondary school	3
	Diploma	1
Education	Degree	66
	Master's degree	26
	PhD	4
Sector	Private	89
Sector	Government	11
	Executive	53
Designation	Director/Assist	35
	Manager/Assist	12

Table 2. Frequency of Demographic Indicators

	1-5 Years	60
Working Experience	6-10 Years	22
	11-15 Years	18

Source: Authors own

4.0 Findings and Discussion

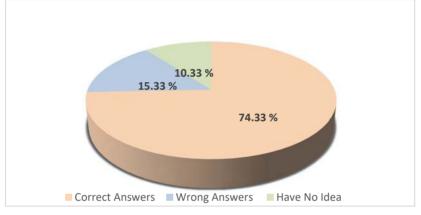
With the questions in the remaining parts of the questionnaire, it is aimed to determine the Islamic finance knowledge level of the participants. First, the participants were asked *basic questions* about the fundamental principles of Islamic finance. In the second stage, *knowledge questions* were asked about Islamic financing models such as *Salam*, *Murabaha*, *Istisna*, *Ijarah*, *Mudaraba*, and *Sukuk*. Participants were asked to answer these questions with one of the options "True", "False" or "I have no idea". To measure Islamic finance knowledge level participants were given 1 point for each correct answer, and 0 (zero) points for each incorrect answer and the answer given as "I have no idea".

	True (%)	False (%)	Have No Idea (%)
<i>Ribā</i> (interest) is haram and forbidden.	96	0	4
In Islamic economics, in principle, debt can generate income.	22	65	13
The difference in amount that occurs during the exchange of the same type of standard (Homogeneous / Fungible) goods is <i>Ribā</i> .	62	24	14
Average success			74.33 %

Table 3. Knowledge Level of Participants on Basic Islamic Finance*

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own 96% of the participants gave the correct answer to the first question in the field of basic Islamic finance, and 65% of them know that in Islamic economics, debt cannot generate income in principle. The last question was answered correctly only by 62% of the participants. More than half of the participation banking personnel answered the basic questions correctly and the average success rate was 74.33%. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions in the field of basic Islamic finance.

Figure 1: Distribution of Answers to Basic Islamic Finance Questions



Source: Authors own

The next section presents the results from the second phase of our questions which intends to measure the intermediate knowledge level of the participants.

Table 4. Answers of the participants to the questions related to $Salam^*$

	True	False	Have No Idea
	(%)	(%)	(%)
In the Salam contract, if the seller delivers goods of higher quality than specified in the contract, he should not ask for additional price.	49	25	26

In the Salam contract, one of the reciprocal prices must be cash and the forward price must be money.	32	25	43
In the Salam contract, if all or part of the goods are not available at the time of delivery or the quality is worse than promised and the buyer does not accept them, the buyer has two options. The buyer may terminate the contract and request a refund or wait for the goods to be supplied.	59	3	38
Average success		44.33 %	

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own

It is seen that the participants answered the questions about *Salam*, one of the Islamic financing models, correctly at the rate of 49% in the first question, 25% in the second question, and 59% in the third question. The answers given about *Salam*, a financing model that is not actively used by participation banks, are of the opinion that the participants generally *do not have sufficient information* about the details and operation of the financing model. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions about *Salam*.



Figure 2: Distribution of Answers to Salam Questions

Source: Authors own

Table 5 presents answers of the participants to the questions related to *Murabaha*.

Table 5. Answers of the participants to the questions related to
Murabaha*

	True (%)	False (%)	Have No Idea (%)
In <i>Murabaha</i> contract, the seller must provide the buyer with honest information about the cost of the purchase and the profit he wishes to earn.	94	6	0
In <i>Murabaha</i> contract, if the buyer is bankrupt or insolvent and the buyer is unable to complete his debt, the seller must defer the buyer's debt until the seller repays the debt or another agreement is made.	48	27	25
Average success		60.50 %	, D

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own As seen in Table 4, 94% of the participants know that in the Murabaha model, which is one of the financing models most used by participation banks in Turkey, the seller should be given honest information about the cost and the profit he wants to earn. (AAOIFI 2010,189-190) On the second question related to Murabaha, 27% of the participation banking personnel answered correctly and the average success rate of the Murabaha contract is 60.50%. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the Murabaha related questions.



Figure 3: Distribution of Answers to Murabaha Questions

Source: Authors own

Table 6 presents answers of the participants to the questions related to *Istisna*.

Questions	True	False	Have No Idea
	(%)	(%)	(%)
In <i>Istisna</i> contract, the buyer has the right to continue or cancel the contract if the goods are not in conformity with the contract or are defective.	80	2	18

 Table 6. Answers of the participants to the questions related to

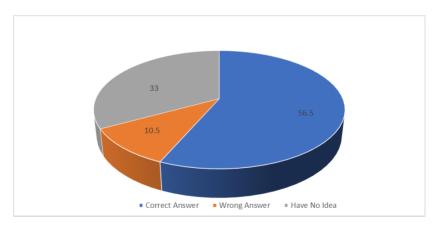
 Istisna*

<i>Istisna</i> contract does not require full payment and can be made with a down payment.	33	19	48
Average success		56.50%	, 0

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own

Most of the participants answered the first question related to *Istisna* contract correctly. Contrary to the answer given to the first question about the *Istisna* contract, it can be said that the participants are more knowledgeable about the general rules of the *Istisna* contract and less information about the functioning of the contract. The average success rate of the participants is 56.50%. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions about the *Istisna* contract.

Figure 4: Distribution of Answers to Istisna Related Questions



Source: Authors own

Table 7 presents answers of the participants to the questions related to *Istisna*.

Questions	True (%)	False (%)	Have No Idea (%)
There is no transfer of ownership in the <i>Ijarah</i> contract, but the transfer of the usufruct between the lessor and the lessee.	65	31	4
In the <i>Ijarah</i> contract, the lessee's obligation is to pay rent and maintain the integrity of the asset.	66	4	30
If the lessor does not have a special record, the lessee may lease the leased asset to a third party during the lease term.	33	35	32
Average success		54.66%	

Table 7. Answers of the participants to the questions related to *Ijarah**

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own

More than half of the participants gave correct answers to the first and second questions related to the *Ijarah* contract, which were directed to the participation banking personnel. In the third question, as can be seen in Table 6, 33% answered correctly, 35% incorrectly, and 32% have no idea. The average of success in the *Ijarah* contract is 54.66%. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions about the *Ijarah* contract.

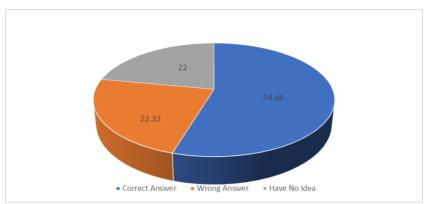


Figure 5: Distribution of Answers to *Ijarah* Related Questions

Source: Authors own

Table 8 presents answers of the participants to the questions related to *Mudaraba* contract.

Table 8. Answers of the participants to the questions related to
Mudaraba*

Questions	True (%)	False (%)	Have No Idea (%)
In <i>Mudaraba</i> contract, there is no guarantee or certainty that the owner of the capital will always make a profit.	73	4	23
In <i>Mudaraba</i> contract, the owner of the capital bears all financial losses (Except when the losses are due to the negligence or misconduct of the entrepreneur).	53	14	33
In <i>Mudaraba</i> contract, if the business managed by the <i>Mudarib</i> earns profit, the partner and the capital owner will share	62	2	36

the profit according to the previously agreed rate.			
Regardless of the stage of the <i>Mudaraba</i> contract, the contract terminates in case of loss of the entire capital.	40	18	42
Average success	57%		

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own

It is seen that more than half of the participants gave correct answers to the first three questions regarding the *Mudaraba* contract. The majority of the participation banking personnel gave the correct answer to the *Mudaraba* contract, which is partially used in the participation banking operation, and the success rate was 57%. Although there is an average of 57% success in general, 33.5% of the *Mudaraba* questions were answered as 'I have no idea'. At the same time, the average of those who gave wrong answers is 9.5% and we can say that it is the financing model with the lowest wrong answer in our survey study. Figure 6 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions about the Mudaraba contract.



Figure 6: Distribution of Answers to Mudaraba Related Questions

Source: Authors own

Table 9 presents answers of the participants to the questions related to *Sukuk* contract.

Questions	True (%)	False (%)	Have No Idea (%)
<i>Sukuk</i> represents a receivable in favor of the owner of the sukuk in the embezzlement of the issuer.	58	7	35
The tradability of <i>Sukuk</i> is subject to the conditions of the tradability of the asset it represents.	63	3	34
<i>Sukuk</i> issuer can make a debt or donation (tabarru) commitment to the sukuk holders if the actual profit is lower than the expected profit.	34	24	42
Average success	31.33%		

Table 9. Answers of the participants to the questions related to Sukuk*

*Correct answers are given in bold Source: Authors own

It is seen that the average success rate of the participants in the questions asked about *Sukuk* in the last part of our study is lower than other financing models. However, *Sukuk* have taken its place in the Islamic capital market by being issued by the participation banks and the Undersecretariat of Treasury in Türkiye after the communiqué published by the Capital Markets Board of Türkiye (CMB) in 2010. The first *Sukuk* issuance in Türkiye was carried out by Kuveyt Türk participation bank. Today, *Sukuk* issuances are increasing day by day. It attracts attention from the issuer institutions and investors. Only 7% of the participants answered correctly the first question, while more than half of them gave wrong answers. Among the questions asked to the participants about Islamic financing models, Sukuk is the one which get most wrong answers (31.66%) and 'I have no idea' answers

(37%). Although it is frequently used among Islamic financing models and is in the participation banking sector, the low average success rate indicates that the participants do not have sufficient knowledge about sukuk. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions about *Sukuk*.

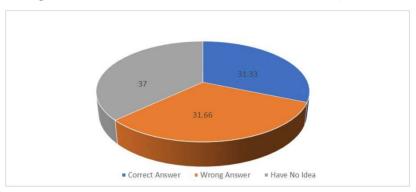


Figure 7: Distribution of Answers to Sukuk Related Questions

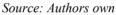
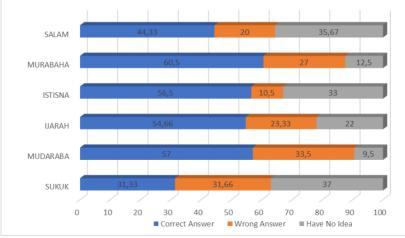


Fig. 8 summarizes the distribution of the answers given by the participants to the questions related to the Islamic Financing Models.

Figure 8: The Summary of Answers to the Survey Questions



Source: Authors own

The average of the correct answers given to 20 questions in the field of Islamic finance, which were directed to measure the level of knowledge of participation banking personnel, is 54% (see Figure 9). Although more than half of the participants answered the questions correctly, this rate shows that the participation banking personnel do not have sufficient knowledge about Islamic financing models.

The fact that some of the financing models directed to the participants are not used in the sector in Türkiye and that adequate training is not provided in this area shows that this may be the main reason for this situation. As a matter of fact, among the questions posed, the Murabaha and Mudaraba, which are used in the sector and are the most known among the Islamic financing models, are among the questions with the most correct answers. This also confirms our concern.



Figure 9: The Summary of the Distribution of Answers

Source: Authors own

5.0 Conclusion

In Turkey, the share of Islamic banking assets constitutes merely 7 per cent of the total banking assets despite the fact that 98.9% of the population is Muslim. It is known that financial literacy about Islamic financial products needed to be improved to make Islamic financial

products acceptable to a wider variety of investors and business owners. In this study we directed 20 questions to the participation banks' employees to measure their knowledge on the Islamic finance products and financing methods. For this purpose, 100 employees from various participation banks (private and state owned) participated in an online survey. The average of the correct answers given to 20 questions related to Islamic finance products, which were directed to measure the level of knowledge of participation banking personnel, is 54%. Although more than half of the participants answered the questions correctly, this rate shows that the participation banking personnel do not have sufficient knowledge about Islamic financing models. The fact that some of the financing models directed to the participants are not used in the sector in Türkiye and that adequate training is not provided in this area shows that this may be the main reason for this situation. As a matter of fact, among the questions posed, the Murabaha and Mudaraba, which are used in the sector and are the most known among the Islamic financing models, are among the questions with the most correct answers.

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