

Political Skill and Job Alienation: The Mediating Role of Workplace Positivity.

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Abstract

This research examines how leaders' political skill affects job alienation of newly hired personnel through the mediating role of workplace positivity. Based on this, it is proposed that a leader's understanding of the interactions in an organization, the development of professional relationships, and their capacity to influence others may help new employees feel more part of the organization, improving their sense of belonging, rather than feeling isolated and alienated from the job. The study targeted newly hired employees with less than 10 years of service, and was conducted at Al-Musayyib Technical Institute, Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University. The study used a quantitative approach and a purposive non-probability sampling method, with a sample of 41 employees. The study used previously developed tools to measure leaders' political skill, workplace positivity, and job alienation. Correlation and regression were used to analyze the data and examine the relationships among the study variables and the mediating role of workplace positivity. The results indicated that job alienation was significantly negatively related to leaders' political skill, workplace positivity was significantly positively related to leaders' political skill, and job alienation was significantly negatively related to workplace positivity. However, the mediating role of workplace positivity was not supported. The results indicate the significance of political skill in promoting workplace positivity and reducing job alienation among employees.

Keywords: *Political Skill; Job Alienation; Workplace Positivity; Educational Institutions.*

1. Introduction

Currently, job alienation is a major problem in organizations. It is when workers do not feel connected to their work, other staff, or the organization's environment, reducing their influence, sense of belonging and engagement. Job alienation is not only affecting the employee's mental health, but also the efficiency of the organization as job alienation leads to a lack of motivation, performance, creativity and innovation among the employees. This, in itself, may negatively affect the organisations' effectiveness in fulfilling their objectives (Yang & Lu, 2023). Job alienation is perceived as a situation where an employee is not able to exert enough control over his/her work or its associated decisions because he/she does not receive enough information, time constraints or he/she lacks authority. This is an affirmation of their sense of a loss of control over the work setting. It can be worsened in unsupportive workplaces where work demands are high, and autonomy and quality of work environment are low. This can have a detrimental effect on employees' productivity and affect employee attrition (Camerino et al., 2005). Another form of alienation is when a person cannot satisfy his needs and realise his self-actualization in the activity he is

engaged in, especially if he is engaged in an activity in which he is not able to participate in decision making or, in which he is not motivated or incentivised to participate. This highlights the need for empowerment policies and a supportive work environment to reduce this phenomenon (Mehta, 2022). In addition, job alienation is associated with various organizational and personal aspects such as lack of congruence between employee qualifications and job demands, organizational injustice, poor interpersonal relationships, lack of employee team spirit, low level of involvement in organizational influence and excessive power reserves in the hands of the boss. All of these can contribute to a sense of isolation and reduce a sense of belonging to the organization (Islam et al., 2019).

Political skill in the context described above is evident because it helps leaders to be able to interact with other social and organizational actors in the workplace effectively. Over the last few decades, organizational politics has been the focus of increasing attention in the management literature. Research has moved beyond employees' perceptions of politics and its impact to studying the traits and skills that enable people to thrive in organizations with political climates. Among the skills, politics stands out as the most important because it is a key determinant of the success and organizational effectiveness of leaders (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Munyon et al., 2015). The political skill is the capacity of the leader to comprehend and interpret others' motives, adapt to diverse social situations, establish effective professional relationships, and utilize this understanding to induce others to cooperate and influence (Bing et al., 2011). This skill is especially relevant to the work of leaders as they must not only excel technically but also be able to manage relationships, interactions with people within the organization and to balance individual preferences with organisational objectives (Andrews et al, 2009). Strong political skills enable leaders to better understand the situations in their organizations, to better identify the needs of others, to adjust their behavior to others and different contexts, and to develop relationships of influence and trust. This can help to alleviate stress and improve performance (Meurs et al., 2010). This skill is especially helpful in the case of new hires who are struggling to fit in with the new work environment, establish professional relationships, and get a handle on the rules of the organization. A leader's political savvy in this regard can help with professional interactions and foster better relations with employees, helping them to better fit into the job and to have more positive experiences working.

Workplace positivity refers to the positive perception of the work environment, role and organizational goals of employees manifested by their positive attitude and behavior. A positive work environment helps create an environment that supports an exchange of ideas, expression of opinions, cooperation, teamwork, and participation in organizational activities. Practices that enhance positive thinking, build strong relationships at work, emphasize employees' strengths, empower staff, communicate work goals, and focus on employees' well-being can foster this positivity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Salas-Vallina et al., 2017). However, as Lambert et al. (2019) note, others continue to hold a traditional view of management, which is primarily problem-solving oriented and driven by profit-related outcomes, resulting in ignoring the people and the sustainability of the organization's success. There is also literature suggesting that positive organizational practices can evoke feelings and behaviors that can spread among the employees in a team or organization and boost employees' self-efficacy, team-work, and helping others, thereby positively affecting team and organizational performance (Geue, 2018). The workplace positivity that Cabrera (2012) describes is reflected in the regular display of positive emotions like hope, gratitude, joy, and inspiration, which correlate with greater job engagement, OC, performance, and reduced burnout and negative behaviours. In this regard, the positive attitude of an organization is a resource that can be used to strengthen motivation, creativity, productivity, quality in decision making, employee health, commitment and loyalty to the organization.

From the above, it can be noted that the political competence of leaders can play a role in creating positive work experiences in three ways: by knowing what employees need, developing professional relationships and by managing interactions of employees in the organization well. This can foster engagement and belonging and lessen job alienation. This relationship is especially significant for new hires, as they settle into a new workplace. The present study aims to explore the relationship between political skill and job

alienation and the mediating role of positivity in the workplace in a sample of newly appointed employees at Musayyib Technical Institute affiliated with Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University and a sample of employees who have less than 10 years of service. The role is that of enriching the Arabic organizational literature in the context of the technical education in Iraq.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. The concept of political skill and its basic components

Leaders Highly skilled politically: interacts calmly and confidently with others; builds professional relationships with mutual respect and trust; knows the limits of job role and responsibility within the organization. This skill extends beyond simply understanding the nature of social situations and the appropriate behavior; it encompasses employing this understanding in a way that reflects credibility and authenticity, thereby gaining the acceptance of others and enhancing their ability to influence them (Liu et al., 2007). Accordingly, political leadership skill is defined as the leader's ability to understand and effectively interact with individual behavior, guiding this interaction to serve individual and organizational goals through building trust, adapting to different situations, and effectively exerting social influence (Ferris et al., 2007). It is also a significant indicator of social and organizational competence, reflecting the leader's ability to interpret the organizational context and adapt their behavior to enhance their credibility and increase their effectiveness in influencing others (Blickle et al., 2008).

The literature indicates that political skill includes four basic components: social intelligence, which is the ability to understand others and accurately grasp social situations; personal influence, which expresses the ability to persuade and adapt behavior to achieve desired responses; communication skill, which focus on building supportive professional networks and relationships to achieve organizational success; and apparent honesty, which reflects demonstrating integrity and authenticity, thereby enhancing trust and increasing the effectiveness of influencing others (Ferris et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007; Konakli, 2016; Andrews et al., 2009; Bing et al., 2011; Blass & Ferris, 2007; Brouer et al., 2009; Williams et al., 2017; Treadway et al., 2013; Ewen et al., 2013).

2.2. The concept of positivity in the workplace and its main aspects

A positive workplace is an important part of creating a positive work culture that encourages people to work together and feel like they belong. This is done by focusing employee efforts on common objectives, while building and maintaining trust and respect among each other. Such an environment also capitalizes on diversity and recognizes individual potential, such as talent, determination, and loyalty, which positively impacts both individual and collective performance (Mansor et al., 2012). In this context, Avey et al. (2011) described positivity as a positive psychological state embodied in an individual's confidence in their abilities, optimism about achieving success, perseverance in facing challenges, and resilience in dealing with difficult situations. From another perspective, Lambert et al. (2019) view positivity as an emotional state associated with the frequent experience of positive feelings, such as passion, pride, and admiration. This enhances self-esteem, supports relationship building, and encourages continuous learning and development.

Based on developments in positive psychology, studies have identified six key aspects of positivity in the workplace, including: positive thinking as an approach to guiding behavior and improving performance; positive relationships based on trust and cooperation; leveraging strengths to support satisfaction, productivity, and job engagement; empowerment through granting autonomy and the resources necessary to accomplish work; meaning, which reflects the employee's awareness of the value and impact of their work; and well-being, which is associated with providing a work environment that promotes mental health and work-life balance, which is reflected in job satisfaction and achievement levels (Cabrera, 2012; Morrish et al., 2018; Halliday et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2021; Farmer & Cotter, 2021; Katopol, 2014). Related EJBM evidence also links ethical work environments and organisational trust

with stronger employee engagement, reinforcing the role of supportive workplace conditions in shaping positive employee experiences (Nasser et al., 2023).

2.3. The concept of job alienation and its main aspects

Alienation from a job is an organizational phenomenon which is a psychological and social disassociation of an individual from their job, resulting in reduced sense of belonging and reduced attachment to mission and job of the organization. This phenomenon has been confirmed in the literature as being more related to the characteristics of the work environment rather than the individual characteristics and makes improving the conditions of the work environment and promoting job engagement among the most prominent ways to mitigate this. (Banai et al., 2004). The motivation theories point of view is that alienation is a result of the dissatisfaction of an organization about the needs of employees and their expectations, which consequently results in low motivation and job satisfaction. Moreover, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory has been introduced to serve as an explanation of how the loss of psychological and professional resources such as autonomy, self-efficacy, and a sense of purpose in work can result in the employee feeling powerless and the tasks being meaningless (Guo et al., 2022). Similarly, Sharma (2018) notes that alienation is a mental state that occurs when an employee is aware of the difference between the work he does and what he wants to do, leading to a reduction in his enthusiasm, commitment and job satisfaction, particularly in a workplace with inadequate communication and inflexibility in administration.

Job alienation is comprised of five factors: helplessness, lack of control over work; meaninglessness, lack of value and purpose in work; lack of standards, lack of clarity in means or lack of clarity in goals; social isolation, poor social connections; (Mehta, 2022; Islam et al., 2019; Aydın et al., 2022; Sharma, 2018; Kozhina & Vinokurov, 2020; Lagios et al., 2023; Sarros et al., 2002; Ganesh & Joseph, 2011; Suárez-Mendoza & Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2007; Dagli & Averbek, 2017; Özkoç, 2016; Al-Gharaibeh et al., 2023). It is situated in the work situation, and is self-alienation in response to the dis-connections between the work and the employee's abilities and career aspirations.

2.4. Hypotheses Development

2.4.1. The Relationship Between Political Skill and Job Alienation

Political skill within leaders can be seen as a capability to handle social and organizational interactions better, understand their employees' needs and motivations, and foster trust and influence within relationships. From this angle, this skill can help address some of the elements of workplace alienation, including poor workplace relationships, lack of engagement, workplace isolation and loss of influence. This is supported by the recent literature. Ali et al. (2022) demonstrated that political skill are an important factor in enhancing social capital and that they play a role in mitigating the pathway to workplace alienation through this social resource.

On the other hand, in a recent review of workplace alienation, Liu et al. (2025) suggested that political skill is a psychological resource that assists in reducing workplace alienation, by better managing the demands and resources of the workplace. The result agrees with the study conducted by Usman et al. (2020) that found political skill reduced the negative psychological and organizational outcomes that might arise from workplace alienation, meaning that it can help to reduce the negative psychological and organizational consequences of workplace alienation. It can be hypothesized that leaders who have a high political skill have a greater capacity to establish supportive professional relationships, increase employee involvement in the work environment, and decrease employee feelings of isolation, detachment, and loss of control, thereby reducing employee feelings of alienation. The study suggests the following hypothesis:

H1: Leaders' political skill is negatively related to job alienation.

2.4.2. The Relationship Between Political Skill and Workplace Positivity

Leaders have the potential to create positive experiences for their employees in the workplace through their political skill which can help them to understand others, adjust to social situations, establish effective working relationships and influence others appropriately. This is supported by empirical evidence; Öztürk and Emirza (2022) have shown that there is a relationship between the alignment of political skills of employee and supervisor and the quality of relationship between leader and member; this relationship is correlated with positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction and decreased turnover. Moraes et al. (2023) also revealed a positive interaction between the political skill and workplace engagement of managers, emphasizing that both are important in the workplace where a manager must engage in negotiation, influence, and relationship building.

Likewise, Mehtap et al. (2024) discovered that political skill, a workplace resource, was significantly correlated with workplace engagement and individual-organizational alignment, suggesting that it helps to create positive employee experiences and adapt to the workplace. Thus, political skill is a component of a leader's professional accomplishments that is associated with the development of positive relationships with colleagues and facilitates employee engagement and internal support of the organization, which leads to a positive attitude towards the work and a better job experience for employees. Therefore, the research indicates that leaders' political skill can help to improve a positive work environment.

H2: Leaders' political skill is positively related to workplace positivity.

2.4.3. The Relationship Between Workplace Positivity and Job Alienation

Positive experiences and resources within the workplace have the potential to decrease job alienation by making employees feel attached to their job and work environment. Positive emotions and wellbeing at work can contribute to an employee's sense of connection to their work, whereas an employee's sense of isolation and detachment from a job may be linked to increased feelings of job alienation. In the context of this, Wan et al. (2024) found that positive emotions were negatively correlated with the impact of job alienation, and negative emotions were positively correlated with well-being, signifying the significance of positive emotional encounters in diminishing the effects of alienation. Stănescu and Romaşcanu (2024) further demonstrated the link between perceived social support and job alienation, as it served as a mediator in the relationship between feelings of loneliness in the workplace and job alienation, highlighting the role of relationships and social support in mitigating workplace feelings of detachment and isolation.

Similarly, Ferreira and Gomes (2023) reported that psychological resilience, a positive psychological resource, has a positive relationship with greater job engagement and lower burnout, where job alienation explains such relationships. This highlights the need for positive psychological resources in the fight against alienation and experiencing positive work experiences. Based on this, the promotion of a positive emotional climate within the work environment, with the support of positive relationships and the availability of psychological resources that enable the employee to manage work stress, can increase the sense of engagement and belonging of the employee, thereby decreasing the feelings of isolation, detachment and loss of meaning. As a result, it is expected that the positive attitude in the workplace will help in the reduction of employee job alienation.

H3: Workplace positivity is negatively related to job alienation.

2.4.4. The Mediating Role of Workplace Positivity in the Relationship Between Political Skill and Job Alienation

Previous studies have shown that political skill can influence an employee's experience within an organization by improving organizational relationships and interactions and promoting job engagement and loyalty. Öztürk and Emirza (2022) demonstrated that alignment in political skill between an

employee and their supervisor is associated with a higher quality of leader-member relationship, which in turn translates into positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction and a reduced intention to leave.

Similarly, Mehtap et al. (2024) found that political skill is also one of the job resources that is strongly related to job engagement and person–org fit, which suggests its potential to enhance positive work experiences and adaptation to the workplace. By contrast, research on job alienation suggests that a positive work resource and experience is linked to greater levels of well-being and less job alienation. Wan et al. (2024) reported that positive work environment resources and conditions play a crucial part in understanding employee well-being and its association with evidence of job alienation. A positive workplace environment can help alleviate job alienation, feelings of isolation and detachment, and political skills among leaders can facilitate these positive workplace experiences based on previous findings. Hence, workplace positivity is hypothesized to mediate between political skill and job alienation.

H4: Workplace positivity mediates the relationship between leaders' political skill and job alienation.

Given the above hypotheses, the following hypothesized research model is proposed (Figure 1).

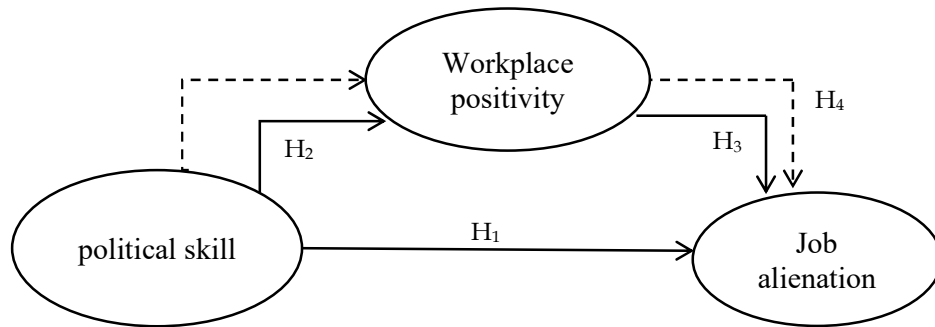


Figure 1. Hypothesized Research Model

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Design and Scope

The study adopted a quantitative approach, which was deemed most suitable for achieving its objectives. This approach allowed for the measurement of the study variables and the examination of the relationships between them, based on data collected from the sample and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. The study also employed a non-experimental cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between political skill and job alienation, the relationship between political skill and positivity in the workplace, and the role of positivity in the workplace as a mediator in the relationship between political skill and job alienation. The study was conducted at Al-Musayyib Technical Institute, one of the formations of Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The study applied purposive non-probability sampling technique because the sampling was based on certain criteria which were related with the objectives of the study. The sample was made up of the newly appointed staff at Al-Musayyib Technical Institute (ATI) which is one of the institutes of Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University (ATU) whose service period was not exceeding 10 years. Data were gathered through an electronic questionnaire sent out through the institute's electronic communication and invitations were sent to the target population to complete the questionnaire. Data was collected in March/April 2026. Only academic and administrative staff members of the institute who fit the study criteria participated and a total of 41 responses were found to be valid for analysis. Male (51%) and age group 31-35 years (44%) were represented by the demographic information of the respondents. It was

also revealed that (66%) of the respondents had (3-5) years of service and (54%) had bachelor's degree as opposed to (46%) having post Graduate degree. Concerning the type of employment, (73%) of the sample were in administrative jobs, (27%) were in academic jobs and (66%) said their current jobs were in line with their scientific field of specialization.

3.3. Measures

Data for the study were gathered by an adapted electronic questionnaire, which is based on previously used scales. Job alienation was measured using the Zaki & Al-Romeedy (2018) scales and political skill was measured using the Ferris et al. (2005) and Treadway et al. (2013) scales and workplace positivity was measured using the Cabrera (2012) scale. A translation of the scales from English into Arabic and adaptation to the study organization context was done, keeping all the content of the scales. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first section evaluated the study variables and consisted of 83 items, 18 of which assessed political skill, 35 the workplace positivity, and 30 the job alienation. The second part contained information regarding the demographics and organization of participants, such as gender, age, length of job service, level of education, job type and how closely the job matched their academic specialization. This study used a Likert Scale to quantify the responses of the sample members who were asked to provide their responses. The range of response options to the variables of political skill and positivity in workplace ranged from (1= strongly disagree) to (5= strongly agree), while the scales to the variables of job alienation were worded accordingly.

3.4. Data Analysis

All data collected were analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study descriptive statistic data were presented by mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. Skewness and kurtosis were used to determine the distribution of the data. Pearson correlation analysis was used to explore the relationships between the study variables. Hypothesized direct effects were examined through simple linear regression analysis and combined effects of the study variables examined through multiple regression analysis. A mediation analysis was used to test the Baron and Kenny (1986) method with the mediating role of workplace positivity between political skill and job alienation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

To verify the suitability of the study data for conducting parametric statistical analyses, the normality of the study variables was tested using the skewness and kurtosis indices, according to the criteria recommended by (Hair et al., 2019), as shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Political Skill	0.212	-0.849
Workplace Positivity	0.143	-0.362
Job Alienation	0.116	-0.375

Table 1 indicates the skewness values were between 0.116 and 0.212, and the kurtosis values were between -0.849 and -0.362. These values were within the acceptable range reported by Hair et al. (2019) and the study variables were almost normally distributed and thus appropriate for subsequent statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha), and correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the characteristics of the study variables, assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, and identify the relationships between the study variables, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3
Political Skill	4.182	0.338	0.847	1		

Workplace Positivity	4.074	0.241	0.849	0.965**	1	
Job Alienation	2.010	0.264	0.833	-0.935**	-0.912**	1

(Note. *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach's Alpha, **= $p < .01$)

Table 2 shows that the mean score for political skill was 4.182, and for workplace positivity 4.074, reflecting a high level of these two variables among the sample. The mean score for job alienation was 2.010, indicating a low level. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between 0.833 to 0.849 for the three variables, respectively, all of which are higher than the minimum acceptable threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2019). This indicates an acceptable internal consistency of the measures. The results also showed a strong positive correlation between political skill and workplace positivity ($r = 0.965$, $p < 0.01$), in contrast to strong negative correlations between political leadership skill and job alienation ($r = -0.935$, $p < 0.01$), and between workplace positivity and job alienation ($r = -0.912$, $p < 0.01$).

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

To test the research hypotheses and investigate the mediating role of workplace positivity in the relationship between political skill and job alienation, simple and multiple regression analyses were conducted according to the mediation procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). This approach has continued to be applied in subsequent empirical research, including Long (2018), Al-Bataineh & Hayajneh (2026), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Simple and Multiple Regression Analyses

Path	R ²	F	B	β	t	sig
PLS→JA	0.874	271.126	-0.730	-0.935	-16.466	0.000
PLS→WP	0.932	532.000	0.689	0.965	23.065	0.000
WP→JA	0.832	192.613	-0.997	-0.912	-13.879	0.000
PLS→WP→JA	0.876	133.662	-0.626	-0.802	-3.662	0.001
			-0.151	-0.138	-0.629	0.533

(Note. *PS*= Political Skill, *WP*= Workplace Positivity, *JA*= Job Alienation, R^2 = Coefficient of Determination, *B*= Unstandardized Regression Coefficient, β = Standardized Regression Coefficient, *F*= F-statistic, *t*= t-statistic, *p*= Significance Level.)

The results in Table 3 show that political skill had a significant negative effect on job alienation ($\beta = -.935$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the first hypothesis (H1). Political skill also had a significant positive effect on workplace positivity ($\beta = 0.965$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the second hypothesis (H2). Furthermore, workplace positivity had a significant negative effect on job alienation ($\beta = -.912$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the third hypothesis (H3). When workplace positivity was included in the regression model, the effect of political skill on job alienation remained significant ($\beta = -.802$, $p = 0.001$), while the effect of workplace positivity on job alienation was not significant ($\beta = -.138$, $p = 0.533$). Therefore, the mediation condition was not met, and the fourth hypothesis (H4) was not supported.

4.3. Discussion

The results of the study revealed that political skills in leadership help to reduce job alienation. The ability of political skill leaders to interpret social interactions within the organization, establish professional relationships grounded in mutual influence and trust, and allow their employees to access social resources that facilitate them to carry out their job better can help explain this finding. This finding is similar to that of Ali et al. (2022) who found that political skill and social resources play a key role in minimizing alienation, and matches the findings of Good and Schwepker Jr. (2022) who found that political skill improves the quality of work related interactions and the building of professional relationships.

The findings of the study revealed that political skill in leadership is a factor which helps to build a positive work environment. This finding may be attributable to the fact that high political skill leaders can be more aware of and adaptable to social settings, establish effective professional relationships, alter other people's

behaviors appropriately, and therefore foster a more supportive working environment that promotes positive interaction and engagement. The results are consistent with those of Moraes et al. (2023), who showed that political skills are related to engagement of managers, and Mehtap et al. (2024), who found that political skill is associated with engagement and individual-organizational fit, which is considered a resource that can assist employees in adapting to the workplace. It is also consistent with Tziner et al. (2024) who suggested that positive political skill in leaders can be correlated with positive organisational and individual outcomes. Thus, the findings indicate that political skill leaders can be beneficial in fostering positive working environments and employee engagement and adjusting to the work environment.

The findings highlighted the link between the positive aspects within the workplace and the reduction of job alienation. The reasons for this can be attributed to a work environment that offers positive feelings, supportive relationships, and adequate mental resources that enable employees to stay engaged with their jobs and feel valued, which in turn helps to minimize feelings of isolation and detachment from their work. The result is in line with the study by Wan et al. (2024), which found that job alienation was negatively related to workplace well-being, and highlighted the role of positive emotions in understanding job well-being. Moreover, it is consistent with the findings of Ferreira and Gomes (2023) who highlighted the role of positive psychological resources in fostering engagement at work and mitigating adverse consequences of job alienation.

Last, the results suggest that there was no mediation between political skill and job alienation, even though these two variables were significantly related in this sample, by workplace positivity. This indicates that the link between political skill and job alienation could be mediated more by social relationships, influence, and interaction in the organizational context than through workplace positivity.

5. Conclusions

The study showed that political skills on the part of leadership is a key determinant of lower job alienation and higher workplace positivity. The findings further revealed that positive experiences and working environment correlates with reduced job alienation, which is another key factor to take into consideration when looking at the importance of positive working conditions for employees. On the other hand, the results did not confirm the mediation of workplace positivity between political skill of leaders and job alienation. This indicates that political skill seems to directly impact job alienation rather than through the prism of workplace positivity in the study sample.

The findings are relevant when considering educational institutions, as this suggests that the leadership's capacity to understand social scenarios, develop professional relationships, and exert influence within others can play a role in minimising the prevalence of disconnection and disengagement. The findings also highlight the need to create a positive, supportive, connected, and caring workplace environment as a predictor of decreased job alienation. This study therefore helps the literature on the subject of political skill, job alienation, and workplace positivity, particularly in the context of educational institutions in Iraq.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study results, it was recommended that educational institutions need to pay more attention to the training of academic and administrative leaders in the development of political skills, which include: effective communication, development of professional relationships, awareness of social situations and managing interactions and conflicts within the work environment. This will help reduce job alienation and promote a positive work environment. The study also suggests a facilitating work environment of trust, cooperation, mutual respect and support as well as orientation and support programmes for new employees to help them get into the work setting and establish stable professional relationships. In addition, institutions should focus on improving social and organizational conditions of the employees and not only on their leadership qualities, for job alienation.

At the research level, the study calls for future research that explores other factors that could be related or define the relationship between political skill and job alienation including organizational support, organizational trust, psychological empowerment, and emotional intelligence. It also suggests that the study should be expanded to other institutional, sector and organizational environments, and that larger samples, longitudinal designs and more sophisticated statistical analysis be employed to more fully explore the nature of the relationships between political skill, workplace positivity and job alienation.

Declarations

Funding

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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