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## The mediating role of administrative empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance in public joint-stock companies

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### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the mediating role of administrative empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance within Yemeni public joint-stock companies, which play a vital role in supporting the national economy. Employing a descriptive quantitative approach, the research utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze data from 433 employees across eight companies. The measurement model demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with outer loadings  $\geq 0.70$ , composite reliability  $\geq 0.86$ , and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)  $\geq 0.56$ . The structural model revealed a significant impact of ethical leadership on administrative empowerment ( $\beta = 0.83$ ) and of administrative empowerment on job performance ( $\beta = 0.86$ ), while no direct effect was found between ethical leadership and job performance ( $\beta = 0.070$ ). However, administrative empowerment showed a strong mediating effect ( $\beta = 0.717$ ), explaining 69% of the variance in administrative empowerment and 85% in job performance, indicating high predictive power. The findings underscore the importance of administrative empowerment as a mechanism through which ethical leadership enhances job performance, offering a practical framework for evaluating and improving performance in Yemen's public companies.

**Keywords:** Administrative empowerment, Ethical leadership, Job performance, Joint-stock companies.

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**Transparency:** The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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## 1. Introduction

Public joint-stock companies operate in increasingly volatile and complex environments, driven by rapid transformations across economic, technological, and organizational domains. These dynamic conditions present substantial challenges to organizational continuity and competitiveness, prompting companies to adopt agile strategies that prioritize their most critical asset: human capital [1]. The effectiveness of these companies in achieving strategic objectives and navigating internal and external challenges is largely dependent on the quality of their human resources and the robustness of their management frameworks [2].

Job performance, broadly defined as the measurable output resulting from an individual's efforts, remains a central indicator of organizational effectiveness and competitiveness. It is shaped by how well employees channel their energy, competencies, and motivation into their tasks. Recent studies emphasize that performance is not merely an individual trait but a reflection of how strategically organizations manage and empower their human capital [3, 4]. At the organizational level, job performance reflects the efficiency of human resource utilization particularly in aligning talent with strategic goals, optimizing material and financial resources, and fostering a culture of accountability and innovation. Strategic Human Resource Management plays a pivotal role in this alignment, as it integrates recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement into a cohesive framework that drives sustainable success [5, 6].

Organizations that invest in empowering their workforce through well-designed HR strategies such as participatory decision-making, continuous development, and ethical leadership tend to achieve higher levels of productivity, innovation, and employee retention. This strategic alignment between HR practices and organizational objectives is increasingly recognized as a key driver of long-term performance outcomes in dynamic business environments [7]. Within this context, administrative empowerment stands as a foundational pillar of effective human resource management, enabling employees to make decisions, solve problems, and contribute creatively to institutional goals [8]. Empirical research has consistently shown that administrative empowerment significantly enhances job performance by fostering autonomy, participation, and professional development [9]. Empowered employees tend to exhibit higher levels of productivity, engagement, and commitment, positioning administrative empowerment as a global trend in organizational advancement.

Administrative empowerment is closely intertwined with ethical leadership, which plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and influencing employee behavior. Ethical leaders, through principled conduct and transparent communication, cultivate environments of trust and psychological safety essential conditions for effective empowerment [10, 11]. Recent studies indicate that ethical leadership has a direct and positive impact on employee job performance by enhancing job satisfaction, stimulating creative behavior, and reducing turnover intentions. In a recent systematic review, Mseti [12] concluded that ethical leadership is a critical factor in improving performance within organizations, as it is associated with values such as integrity, fairness, and transparency principles that foster commitment and positive employee behavior. Another study showed that ethical leadership influences sustainable performance by cultivating a work environment based on trust and mutual respect, which positively reflects on employee productivity [13].

Despite its recognized importance, administrative empowerment remains a persistent challenge in many public joint-stock companies, particularly in Yemen. These organizations often suffer from weak empowerment practices, including limited delegation of authority, minimal employee involvement in decision-making, and insufficient professional development opportunities [14]. Such deficiencies contribute to reduced job satisfaction and weakened organizational loyalty, ultimately undermining overall job performance [15].

This study aims to explore the mediating role of administrative empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance within Yemeni public joint-stock companies. By examining the current state of ethical leadership and administrative empowerment practices and analyzing their direct and indirect impact on job performance outcomes, the study seeks to generate insights that bridge theoretical frameworks with practical applications in the development of Yemeni public joint-stock companies.

Public joint-stock companies in Yemen face multiple factors that affect job performance and workplace stability, most notably the prevailing leadership style and the level of administrative empowerment, as indicated by the studies of Ahmed

[16]. Weak delegation of authority, limited employee participation, and insufficient professional development opportunities are among the key manifestations of this weakness, which negatively impact the quality and efficiency of job performance.

In contrast, recent literature confirms a positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee empowerment [17-22]. Additionally, other studies have demonstrated the positive impact of administrative empowerment on job performance [23, 24].

Despite growing scholarly interest in ethical leadership, administrative empowerment, and job performance, the literature addressing the intersection of these three variables remains limited, particularly within the context of public joint-stock companies. Early research has largely overlooked the mediating role of administrative empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance, resulting in gaps in understanding how these factors influence performance levels within organizations.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap through a multidimensional analysis of the relationship between ethical leadership, administrative empowerment, and job performance, and to identify the mediating role that administrative empowerment plays in strengthening the link between ethical leadership and job performance in Yemeni public joint-stock companies.

This study aims to explore the direct and indirect impact of ethical leadership on enhancing job performance in Yemeni public joint-stock companies, considering the mediating role of administrative empowerment. The objective is to determine the extent to which administrative empowerment mediates the effect of ethical leadership on job performance outcomes.

The importance of this study lies in both its theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it helps bridge the knowledge gap regarding the interactive relationship between ethical leadership, administrative empowerment, and job performance particularly in the context of public joint-stock companies in developing countries such as Yemen. It enriches the administrative literature by presenting a conceptual model that highlights the mediating role of administrative empowerment, thereby deepening the understanding of factors influencing organizational performance. Additionally, it offers a scientific foundation for future researchers to build upon when exploring these variables or examining them in different organizational contexts. Practically, the study provides actionable recommendations that can assist Yemeni public joint-stock companies in enhancing leadership practices and administrative empowerment, which in turn positively affect the quality and efficiency of job performance. It supports decision-makers in formulating policies that encourage employee participation, delegation of authority, and the creation of a motivating work environment. By emphasizing the role of ethical leadership in fostering a culture of trust and transparency, the study contributes to improving human resource effectiveness and achieving more sustainable organizational performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Ethical Leadership (EL)**

Ethical leadership plays a vital role in public joint-stock companies by fostering trust between employees and management, enhancing job performance, and supporting organizational sustainability amid contemporary challenges such as globalization and competition. Yeap [11] emphasizes that “Ethical leaders support open communication, stimulate participation in decision-making, motivate individuals to express their opinions, and apply equitable treatment”. “Ethical leadership enhances public trust and improves organizational performance by integrating transformational practices” Malik and Khan [7]. Liu, et al. [10] define ethical leadership as a “Employees with high levels of psychological safety feel safe in expressing their ideas and are willing to offer suggestions and new ideas”. Abuzaid, et al. [19] add that “Ethical leadership clarifies the meaning of work, enhances the sense of competence through constructive feedback, and encourages delegation as a means of autonomy”. Thus, ethical leadership is a unique style rooted in justice, integrity, and respect, contributing to administrative empowerment by creating a trust-based organizational environment.

Ethical leadership is a central pillar of organizational success, as it contributes to elevating employees’ ethical standards, which positively impacts job satisfaction and professional performance [25]. Leaders’ commitment to ethical conduct also helps reduce losses caused by unethical practices and enhances the organization’s reputation both locally and globally [26]. A study by Lasthuizen, et al. [27] revealed that ethical leaders focus not only on profits but also consider the interests of employees, society, and customers when making decisions thus fostering a culture rooted in integrity and transparency. Moreover, ethical leadership helps prevent negative internal reactions and supports the development of a value-driven organizational climate that promotes long-term sustainability.

Literature identifies several key dimensions of ethical leadership that contribute to building a values-based organizational culture. According to Naeem and Syed [28] the first dimension is the availability of ethical behavior, which refers to the presence of core ethical traits in leaders’ actions and decisions, such as integrity, fairness, and transparency. The second dimension is the practice of ethical behavior, meaning the consistent application of ethical principles in daily interactions and decision-making, thereby promoting respectful and fair treatment across the organization. The third dimension is the reinforcement of ethical behavior, which focuses on embedding ethical values within the institutional framework by modeling virtuous conduct, treating others with dignity, and applying ethical standards at all organizational levels. Stavropoulou, et al. [29] confirmed that these dimensions collectively foster a culture of ethics, enhance trust and sustainability, and strengthen employees’ professional commitment.

### **2.2. Administrative Empowerment (AE)**

Administrative empowerment plays a vital role in organizations by fostering trust between employees and management, enhancing job performance, and supporting corporate sustainability in the face of modern challenges. It is defined as “the expansion of employee authority and the provision of timely and sufficient information to make decisions

within a collaborative framework aimed at developing leadership capabilities”[30]. “An internal administrative process involving the delegation of authority to employees, training, effective communication, and fostering team spirit”[24]. Thus, administrative empowerment refers to a managerial approach that seeks to delegate authority and responsibility to employees and develop them professionally, thereby improving their job performance.

Administrative empowerment is considered a fundamental pillar of effective management, as it enables organizations to respond swiftly to external challenges and focus on strategic objectives [30]. Streamlining administrative structures and reducing operational costs contribute to better resource utilization and faster decision-making processes [26]. Moreover, administrative empowerment enhances individual creativity, strengthens employees’ sense of responsibility and achievement, and positively impacts job satisfaction Gaeb and Altaza [31]. Jaber and Majeed [32] confirmed a positive correlation between the level of administrative empowerment and institutional performance, emphasizing that involving employees in decision-making and problem-solving fosters organizational loyalty and excellence.

The dimensions of administrative empowerment encompass a set of elements that contribute to building a productive and motivating work environment. According to Al-Dhafiri [33] and Haji [34], delegation of authority is a key dimension, involving the assignment of clear responsibilities and decision-making powers to employees. Teamwork promotes collaboration among individuals working toward shared goals, while effective communication serves as a two-way channel for information exchange and operational support. Alawamleh, et al. [35] highlight that professional development, through structured programs, enhances employee competencies and career growth. Lastly, employee motivation includes a variety of material and moral incentives aimed at boosting engagement and commitment to organizational objectives. Literature confirms that these dimensions collectively improve institutional performance and foster a culture of empowerment and continuous improvement.

### *2.3. Job Performance (JP)*

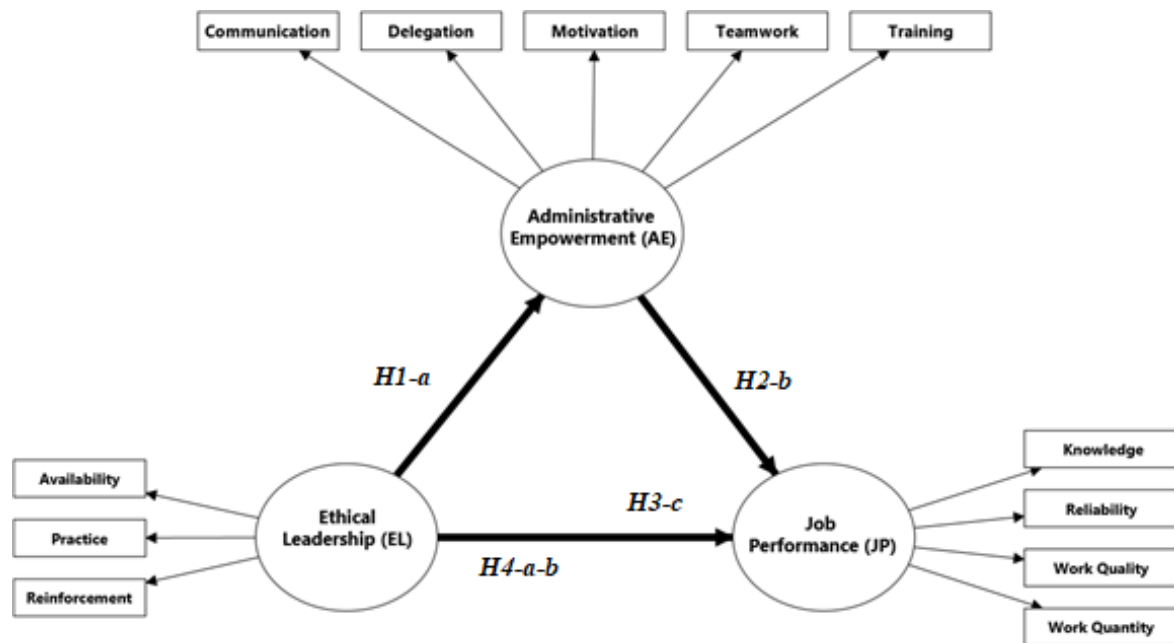
Researchers have explained and defined the concept of Job Performance in different ways. Job Performance is defined as “the accumulated value of the activities or actions where the employee is directly involved in contributing, either positively or negatively, to the organization's objectives” [1]. It is also described as Job Performance is “the effort given by employees on the job” [36] “the level of achievement attained by employees in tasks and roles, as well as the compatibility between job responsibilities and the employee’s capabilities” [24]. Based on these definitions, Job Performance represents the tangible outcome of employees’ efforts in achieving the organization's strategic objectives.

Job performance is a critical factor in organizational success, as it contributes to efficient resource management, improved production quality, and enhanced employee effectiveness [37]. It enables organizations to identify strengths and weaknesses, supports the achievement of strategic goals, and ensures optimal utilization of workforce potential. Colquitt, et al. [38] emphasized that job performance directly influences productivity and organizational effectiveness, making it a key indicator of institutional achievement. Similarly, Cameron and Quinn [39] argued that employee behaviors and task outcomes form the core of job performance, positioning it as a strategic tool for fostering organizational growth. A recent systematic review by Alqarni, et al. [40] also highlighted that a supportive work environment and adequate resources are essential for enhancing job performance and achieving sustainable organizational success.

The dimensions of job performance are essential for designing effective performance management systems and improving employee capabilities. According to Hasinat, et al. [41] job performance includes four key elements: job knowledge, which refers to understanding industry-specific expertise and professional skills necessary for accurate task execution; work quantity, a metric used to assess productivity over a defined period; work quality, evaluated through precision, compliance with professional standards, and creativity; and perseverance and reliability, which reflect an employee’s commitment to responsibilities, timely task completion, and independent problem-solving. Saidin, et al. [42] further categorized job performance into task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance, noting that these dimensions collectively enhance organizational effectiveness and guide professional development strategies. Understanding these aspects is vital for evaluating employee contributions, aligning efforts with institutional goals, and fostering a positive work environment.

### *2.4. Study Cognitive Model*

The conceptual framework of the current study is grounded in the independent variable, ethical leadership, which comprises three key dimensions: the availability of ethical behavior, the practice of ethical behavior, and the reinforcement of ethical behavior, as supported by the following studies: Naeem and Syed [28]. These dimensions exert both direct and indirect effects on administrative empowerment and job performance. The mediating variable, administrative empowerment, consists of five essential dimensions: delegation of authority, teamwork, effective communication, professional development, and employee motivation, as supported by Al-Dhafiri [33]. These dimensions also influence job performance both directly and indirectly. The dependent variable, job performance, includes four primary dimensions: job knowledge, work quantity, work quality, and perseverance and reliability, as supported by Hasinat, et al. [41]. Accordingly, the conceptual framework illustrates that ethical leadership contributes to enhancing administrative empowerment, which serves as an effective mediator in improving job performance reflecting a structural interconnection between leadership values and organizational outcomes. It can be illustrated through Figure 1.



**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual Framework.

Figure 1. illustrates that the independent variable, ethical leadership, is defined by the dimensions of Availability, Practice, and Reinforcement. The dependent variable, job performance, is represented through the dimensions of Knowledge, Work Quantity, Work Quality, and Reliability. Meanwhile, the mediating variable, administrative empowerment, encompasses the dimensions of Delegation, Teamwork, Training, Communication, and Motivation. These classifications were established to serve the purpose and objectives of the study.

As illustrated by the Figure 1. the paths in the current study are defined as follows: Path (a) refers to the effect of the independent variable ethical leadership on the mediating variable, administrative empowerment. Path (b) represents the effect of the mediating variable administrative empowerment on the dependent variable, job performance. Path (ab) reflects the effect of the independent variable ethical leadership on the dependent variable job performance through the mediating variable, administrative empowerment, and is referred to as the indirect effect. Meanwhile, Path (c) demonstrates the effect of the independent variable ethical leadership on the dependent variable job performance after introducing the mediating variable, administrative empowerment, and is known as the direct effect.

### 2.5. Hypothesis Development

The relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment; Literature confirms that ethical leadership is a key driver of administrative empowerment. Ethical leaders foster a culture of participation, transparency, and delegation of authority. Abuzaid, et al. [19] demonstrated that ethical leadership directly influences psychological and functional empowerment by enhancing trust and alignment between employees and the organization. Juan and Yusof [20] found that ethical leadership acts as a psychological catalyst for empowerment, enabling employees to make decisions and take initiative. Serang, et al. [43] further affirmed that ethical leaders strengthen organizational commitment by empowering employees and involving them in decision-making.

The relationship between administrative empowerment and job performance; Research shows that administrative empowerment is one of the most influential organizational factors in improving job performance. It gives employees confidence, autonomy, and the ability to make effective decisions. Ahmed [16] found a positive correlation between empowerment and job performance, especially in environments that support decision-making freedom. Alhammadi, et al. [24] revealed that empowerment in the Yemeni banking sector significantly enhanced performance and produced tangible results. Ali, et al. [8] confirmed that empowerment, along with job satisfaction, is a key driver of effective organizational performance.

The relationship between ethical leadership and job performance: Studies indicate that ethical leadership is a fundamental factor influencing job performance. It helps create a work environment based on fairness, respect, and accountability, which enhances employee commitment and motivates them to deliver high-quality performance. Alhaidan [44] found that ethical leadership is positively associated with organizational justice practices, which reflect on employee behavior and performance. Similarly, Freire and Bettencourt [17] showed that ethical leadership contributes to higher job satisfaction an essential indicator of performance. Archuleta [21] also emphasized that ethical leaders serve as role models, positively impacting performance across institutions.

The relationship between ethical leadership, job performance, and administrative empowerment; Studies show that ethical leadership not only directly affects job performance but also does so through administrative empowerment as a mediating variable. Abuzaid, et al. [19] found that empowerment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and innovative work behaviors, which are key indicators of high performance. Aslam, et al. [18] demonstrated that ethical

leadership enhances positive attitudes toward performance through psychological empowerment, increasing initiative and innovation. Yeap [11] confirmed that ethical leadership influences job performance by stimulating intrinsic motivation and empowering employees, clearly supporting the mediating hypothesis.

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- *H<sub>1</sub>: Ethical leadership positively affects administrative empowerment in Yemeni public joint-stock companies.*
- *H<sub>2</sub>: Administrative Empowerment positively influences job performance in Yemeni public joint-stock companies.*
- *H<sub>3</sub>: Ethical leadership positively influences job performance in Yemeni public joint-stock companies.*
- *H<sub>4</sub>: Ethical leadership positively influences job performance through administrative empowerment as a mediator in Yemeni public joint-stock companies.*

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Methods

The study relied on descriptive quantitative data and employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 to analyze the responses of 433 employees working in eight public joint-stock companies in Yemen regarding the mediating role of administrative empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance.

#### 3.2. Community and Sample

The study population consisted of all managers and employees of public joint-stock companies in Yemen, totaling 1,970 individuals, according to company records. A simple random sample of 433 participants was selected, representing 21% of the total population an acceptable sample size ratio (10–20%) recommended in social and behavioral research [45]. As illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
Sample Size in Relation to the Study Population

Company Name	Population	N	Percentage
1. Yemen Mobile Company	528	112	21%
2. Cooperative & Agricultural Credit Bank	387	76	20%
3. Construction & Development Bank	303	62	20%
4. Kamaran Trading & Investment Co.	251	53	21%
5. Yemeni Drug Manufacturing & Trading Co (YEDCO)	161	45	27%
6. Kuwaiti Real Estate Investment Group	151	35	23%
7. Arab-Yemeni-Libyan Holding Co (ARABIL)	112	30	26%
8. Yemeni Sugar Refining Company	77	19	24%
Total	1970	433	21%

The data in Table 1. show that the participation rates ranged between 20% and 27% of the study population, which falls within the acceptable range in social and behavioral research, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study findings.

#### 3.3. Tool and Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed as the primary instrument for data collection in alignment with the study's objectives, following a comprehensive review of relevant literature and previous studies. The finalized tool comprised 61 items distributed across three dimensions: with 17 representing ethical leadership, 28 representing administrative empowerment, and 16 representing job performance. The questionnaire was administered through on-site visits to the targeted companies during the period from March 20 to May 30, 2024. Data were collected using a convenience random sampling technique, yielding 433 valid responses.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Presents The Respondent Demographics

In order to identify the demographic characteristics of the sample, frequencies and percentages were used as follows:

**Table 2.**  
Sample Characteristics.

Variable	Category	Count	%
Gender	Male	335	77.4%
	Female	98	22.6%
	<b>Total</b>	433	100%
Qualification	High School or Below	48	11.1%
	Bachelor's Degree	307	70.9%
	Postgraduate	68	15.7%
	<b>Total</b>	433	100%
Position	Employee	220	50.8%
	Department Manager	149	34.4%
	Leadership	64	14.8%
	<b>Total</b>	433	100%
	1 - 5 years	35	8.1%
	6 - 10 years	110	25.4%
	11 - 15 years	147	33.9%
	16 -20 years	141	32.6%
	<b>Total</b>	433	100%

Table 2. presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample, which consists of 433 participants. The data indicate that males represent the majority at 77.4%, and that most participants hold a bachelor's degree (70.9%). Regarding job positions, nearly half of the respondents are regular employees (50.8%), while the rest are distributed among managerial and leadership roles. As for work experience, the majority of the sample have more than six years of experience, reflecting a level of professional maturity that may contribute to the reliability of responses and the accuracy of analyzing relationships between variables.

#### 4.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

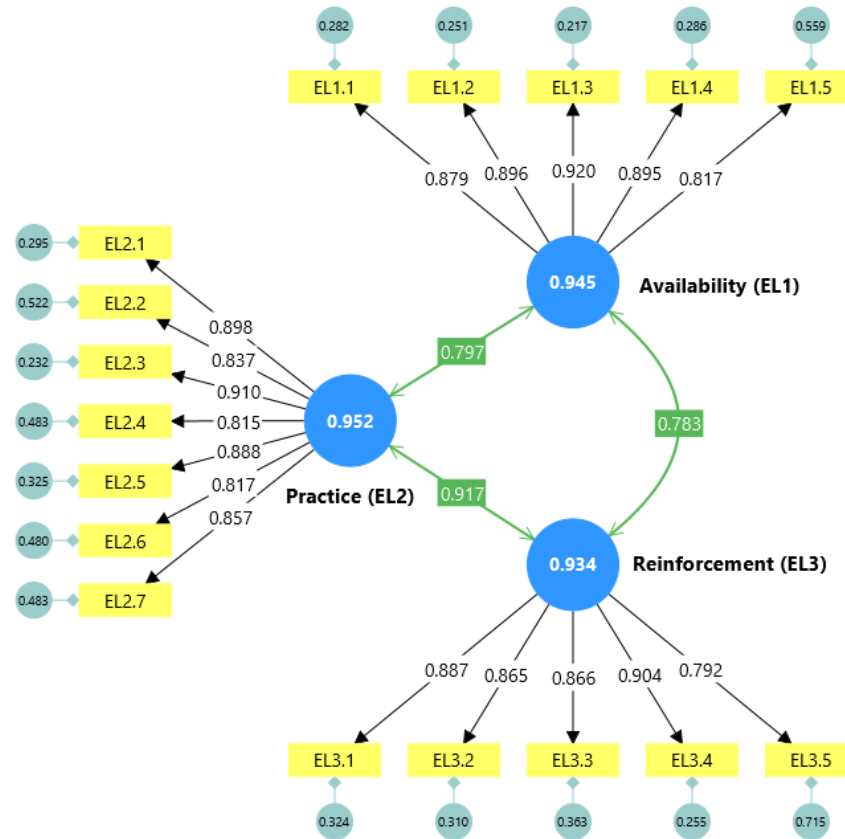
To evaluate the measurement model of the study and verify the validity and reliability of the instruments. The researchers employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), and (CB-SEM) to ensure accuracy and reliability of the results. Convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings, retaining indicators with values  $\geq 0.70$ . Additionally, convergent validity was verified using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is considered acceptable when  $AVE \geq 0.50$ . Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and Composite Reliability (CR), with values  $\geq 0.70$  deemed acceptable. In accordance with the recommendations of Hair, et al. [46]. The results were as follows:

**Table 3.**  
Measurement results for Ethical Leadership.

Dimensions	Indicators	Outer Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
(EL1)	EL1.1	0.879	0.945	0.945	0.894
	EL1.2	0.896			
	EL1.3	0.920			
	EL1.4	0.895			
	EL1.5	0.817			
(EL2)	EL2.1	0.898	0.952	0.952	0.955
	EL2.2	0.837			
	EL2.3	0.910			
	EL2.4	0.815			
	EL2.5	0.888			
	EL2.6	0.817			
	EL2.7	0.857			
(EL3)	EL3.1	0.887	0.936	0.934	0.937
	EL3.2	0.865			
	EL3.3	0.866			
	EL3.4	0.904			
	EL3.5	0.792			

**Note:** Availability = EL1, Practice = EL2, Reinforcement = EL3.  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's Alpha, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Table 3. presents the measurement results for the ethical leadership variable. Most outer loadings were  $\geq 0.79$ , with internal consistency ( $\alpha$ )  $\geq 0.936$ , composite reliability (CR)  $\geq 0.934$ , and average variance extracted (AVE)  $\geq 0.894$ . These results reflect the robustness of the structural model and the reliability of the measurement tools used to assess the ethical leadership variable.



**Figure 2.**  
cb-sem of Ethical Leadership

Figure 2. which presents the structural model based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CB-SEM) of ethical leadership, illustrates the outer loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and the correlations among the indicators and dimensions. These results reflect the overall quality of the model and its ability to accurately and reliably represent the concept of ethical leadership.

**Table 4.**  
Measurement results for Administrative Empowerment.

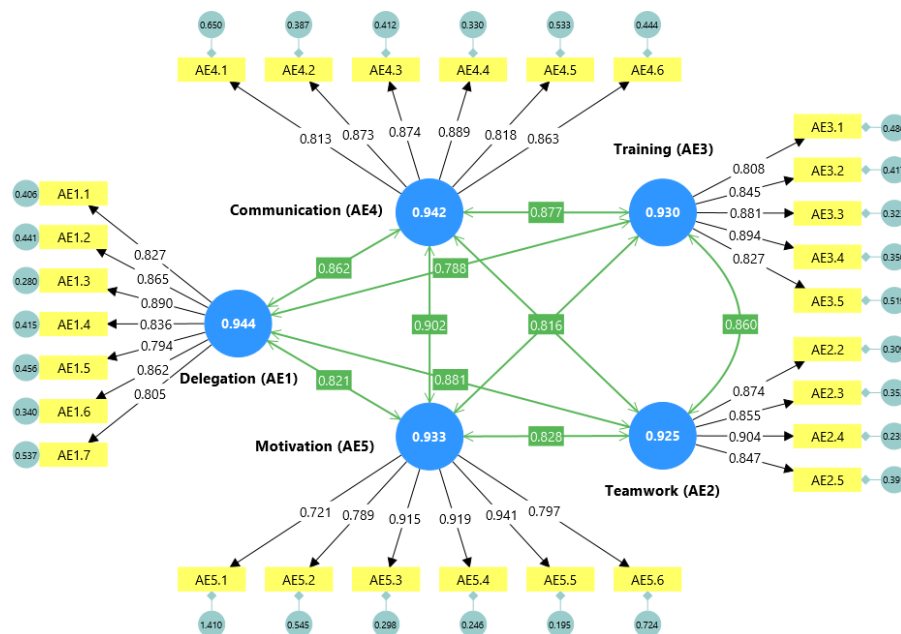
Dimensions	Indicators	Outer Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
(AE1)	AE1.1	0.827	0.943	0.944	0.732
	AE1.2	0.865			
	AE1.3	0.890			
	AE1.4	0.836			
	AE1.5	0.794			
	AE1.6	0.862			
	AE1.7	0.805			
(AE2)	AE2.1	0.691	0.925	0.925	0.706
	AE2.2	0.874			
	AE2.3	0.855			
	AE2.4	0.904			
	AE2.5	0.847			
(AE3)	AE3.1	0.808	0.929	0.935	0.765
	AE3.2	0.845			
	AE3.3	0.881			
	AE3.4	0.894			
	AE3.5	0.827			
(AE4)	AE4.1	0.813	0.942	0.942	0.757



	AE4.2	0.873			
	AE4.3	0.874			
	AE4.4	0.889			
	AE4.5	0.818			
	AE4.6	0.863			
(AE5)	AE5.1	0.721	0.938	0.933	0.725
	AE5.2	0.789			
	AE5.3	0.915			
	AE5.4	0.919			
	AE5.5	0.941			
	AE5.6	0.797			

**Note:** Delegation = AE1, Teamwork = AE2, Training = AE3, Communication = AE4, Motivation = AE5.,  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's Alpha, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Table 4 presents the measurement results for the administrative empowerment variable. Most outer loadings were  $\geq 0.70$ , except for one indicator AE2.1 (0.691) which fell below the required threshold. According to Hair, et al. [46] this indicator was removed for not meeting the acceptable level, indicating a weak contribution to the structural model. After its removal, the remaining items showed high outer loadings, and all dimensions achieved satisfactory values:  $\alpha \geq 0.925$ , CR  $\geq 0.925$ , and AVE  $\geq 0.725$ . These results reflect the robustness of the structural model and the reliability of the measurement tools used to assess the dimensions of administrative empowerment.



**Figure 3.**  
cb-sem of Administrative Empowerment.

Figure 3, which presents the structural model based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CB-SEM) of administrative empowerment after removing indicators with loadings below 0.70, illustrates the outer loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and the correlations among the indicators and dimensions. These results reflect the overall quality of the model and its ability to accurately and reliably represent the concept of administrative empowerment.

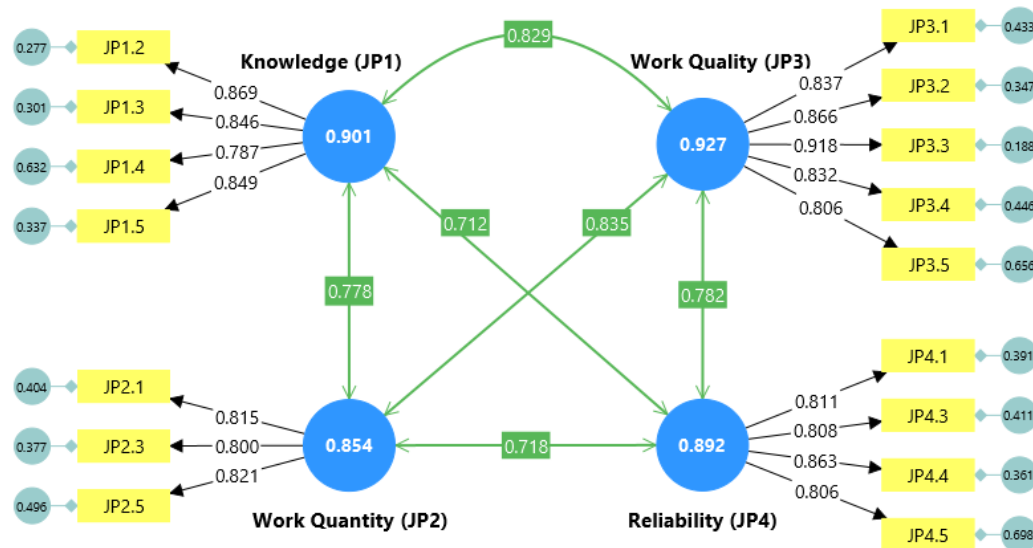
**Table 5.**

Measurement results for Job Performance.

Dimensions	Indicators	Outer Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
(JP1)	JP1.2	0.870	0.904	0.901	0.699
	JP1.3	0.844			
	JP1.4	0.784			
	JP1.5	0.845			
(JP2)	JP2.1	0.631	0.855	0.854	0.656
	JP2.2	0.809			
	JP2.3	0.810			
	JP2.4	0.658			
	JP2.5	0.830			
(JP3)	JP3.1	0.839	0.929	0.927	0.723
	JP3.2	0.861			
	JP3.3	0.913			
	JP3.4	0.827			
	JP3.5	0.807			
(JP4)	JP4.1	0.817	0.891	0.892	0.566
	JP4.2	0.661			
	JP4.3	0.805			
	JP4.4	0.855			
	JP4.5	0.798			

Note: Knowledge = JP1, Work Quantity = JP2, Work Quality = JP3, Reliability = JP4.  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's Alpha, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Table 5. presents the measurement results for the job performance variable. Most outer loadings were  $\geq 0.70$ , except for three indicators JP2.2 (0.631), JP2.4 (0.658), and JP4.2 (0.661) which fell below the threshold. According to Hair, et al. [46] these indicators were removed for not meeting the minimum required level, indicating weak contributions to the structural model. After their removal, the remaining items showed high outer loadings, and all dimensions achieved satisfactory values:  $\alpha \geq 0.85$ ,  $CR \geq 0.85$ , and  $AVE \geq 0.56$ . These results reflect the robustness of the structural model and the reliability of the measurement tools used to assess job performance.



**Figure 4.**  
cb-sem of Job Performance.

Figure 4. which presents the structural model based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CB-SEM) of job performance after removing indicators with loadings below 0.70, illustrates the outer loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and the correlations among the indicators and dimensions. These results reflect the overall quality of the model and its ability to accurately and reliably represent the concept of job performance.

Based on the above, the results of Tables 3. 4. 5. indicate that the measurement model used in the current study demonstrates a high level of reliability and validity. The statistical indicators showed strong performance in measuring the three variables: ethical leadership, administrative empowerment, and job performance. Weak indicators were removed in accordance with scientific standards, which contributed to enhancing the structural model's quality and the accuracy of the measurement tools used to represent the theoretical constructs.

#### 4.3. Structural Model Evaluation

To evaluate the structural model of the study and verify the validity of the hypotheses, the researchers applied Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) combined with Bootstrapping. Path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) were used to estimate the strength and direction of relationships between constructs, while their statistical significance was tested using t-values. A path is considered significant when  $t > 1.96$  at the 0.05 level, indicating that the relationship is not due to random chance. The model's explanatory power was evaluated using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), where values above 0.67 indicate strong explanatory power, values between 0.33 and 0.67 suggest moderate power, and values below 0.33 reflect weak or unacceptable explanatory strength. All evaluations followed the guidelines of Hair, et al. [46]. The results were as follows:

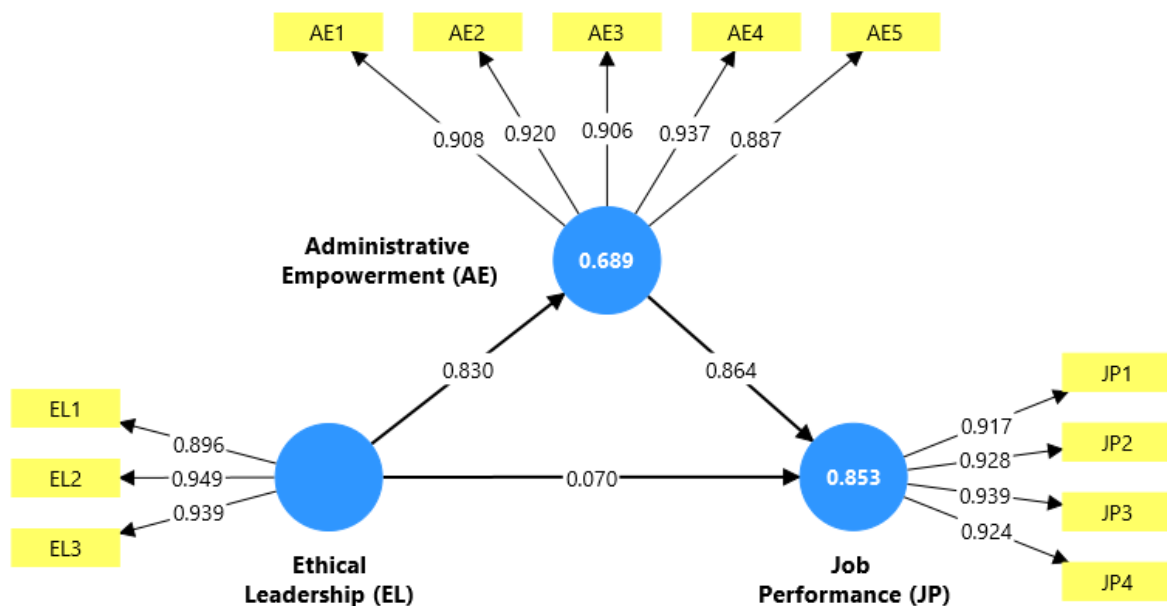
**Table 6.**  
Hypothesis Tests.

Effect	Hypothesis Code	$\beta$	SE	t	P	Results
Direct	H <sub>1</sub> : EL $\rightarrow$ AE	0.830	0.019	44.52	0.000	Accepted
	H <sub>2</sub> : AE $\rightarrow$ JP	0.864	0.054	15.35	0.000	Accepted
	H <sub>3</sub> : EL $\rightarrow$ JP	0.070	0.050	1.065	0.061	No accepted
Indirect	H <sub>4</sub> : EL $\rightarrow$ AE $\rightarrow$ JP	0.717	0.050	14.27	0.000	Accepted

**Note:** ethical leadership =EL, administrative empowerment =AE, job performance =JP,  $\beta$  = Beta coefficient, SE = Standard Error, t = t-value, P = P-value.

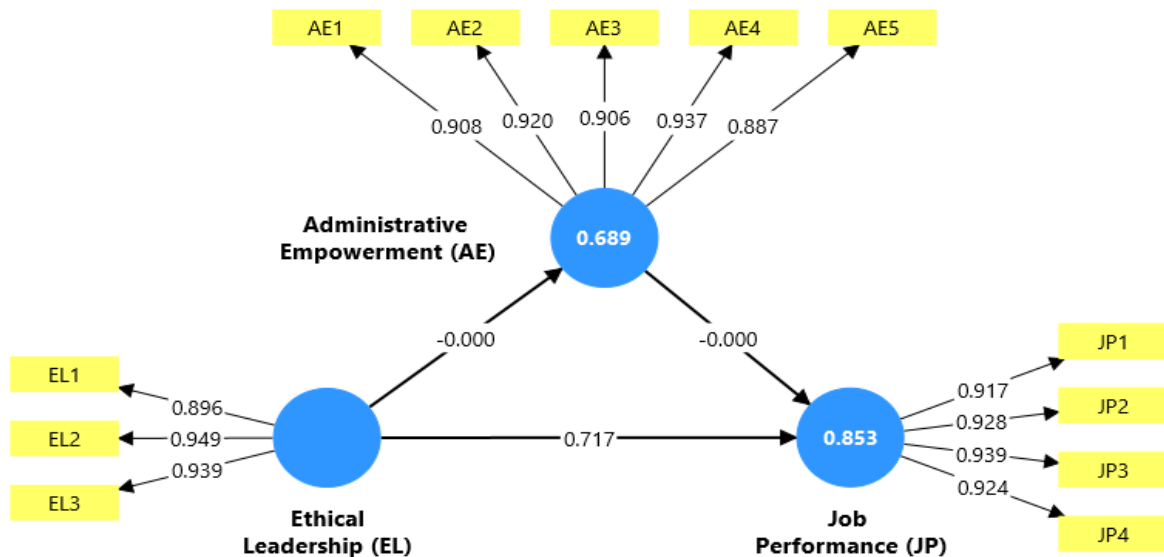
Table 6. reveals that ethical leadership (EL) has a strong direct effect on administrative empowerment (AE), with a path coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.830$ ) and a high level of statistical significance ( $P = 0.000$ ). This indicates that leaders in Yemeni public joint-stock companies who demonstrate ethical behavior effectively promote employee empowerment within their organizations, thereby supporting the acceptance of the first hypothesis. The results also show that administrative empowerment has a strong and direct impact on job performance (JP), with a coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.864$ ), confirming the second hypothesis.

However, the third hypothesis, which examines the direct effect of ethical leadership on job performance, yielded a relatively weak coefficient ( $\beta = 0.070$ ) and was not statistically significant ( $P = 0.061$ ). This suggests that ethical leadership does not directly influence job performance in Yemeni public joint-stock companies. In contrast, the indirect effect presented in the fourth hypothesis (**H<sub>4</sub>**) shows a strong influence of ethical leadership on job performance through administrative empowerment as a mediator, with a coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.717$ ) and a high level of statistical significance ( $P = 0.000$ ).



**Figure 5.**  
Direct Effects.

Figure 5 illustrates the direct effects of the hypotheses and the pathways between the independent variable (ethical leadership), the dependent variable (job performance), and the mediating variable (administrative empowerment).



**Figure 6.**  
Indirect Effects.

Figure 6. illustrates the Indirect effects of the hypotheses and the pathways between the independent variable (ethical leadership), the dependent variable (job performance), and the mediating variable (administrative empowerment).

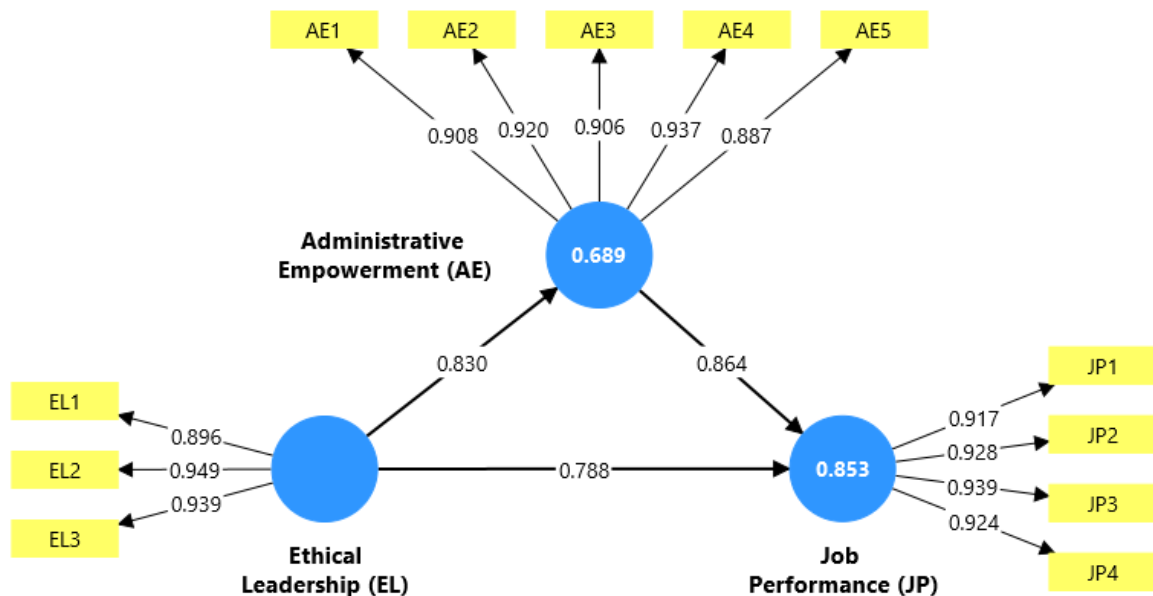
**Table 7.**

Hypothesis Tests.

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	VAF
H4: EL -> AE -> JP	0.070	0.717	0.788	0.909

Note: ethical leadership =EL, administrative empowerment =AE, job performance =JP.

Table 7. shows that the total effect of ethical leadership on job performance reached 0.717, while the direct effect was relatively weak ( $\beta = 0.070$ ). In contrast, the indirect effect through administrative empowerment was strong ( $\beta = 0.717$ ). The VAF value highlights that 91 % of the total effect of ethical leadership on job performance occurs through administrative empowerment, confirming that empowerment plays a crucial mediating role in this relationship. These findings support the theoretical model and emphasize the importance of strengthening administrative empowerment as an effective mechanism for enhancing performance within the context of ethical leadership.



**Figure 7.**  
Total Effects.

Figure 7. illustrates the Total effects of the hypotheses and the pathways between the independent variable (ethical leadership), the dependent variable (job performance), and the mediating variable (administrative empowerment).

**Table 8.**Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and adjusted values.

Variable	$R^2$	$R^2$ - adjusted
administrative empowerment (AE)	0.689	0.688
job performance (JP)	0.853	0.852

Table 8 reflects the explanatory strength of the relationships between variables in the structural model that links ethical leadership as an independent variable to job performance as a dependent variable, with administrative empowerment serving as a mediating variable. The  $R^2$  value for administrative empowerment (0.689) indicates that ethical leadership accounts for 68.9% of the variance in administrative empowerment a solid proportion that suggests leaders who exhibit ethical behavior effectively empower employees within their organizations. The minimal difference between  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  (0.001) highlights the model's stability and the absence of excessive variables that could undermine its accuracy.

As for job performance, the  $R^2$  value (0.853) is notably high, showing that administrative empowerment explains 85.3% of the variance in job performance, underscoring its pivotal role as a mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership and performance. The slight difference between  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  (0.001) further supports the model's reliability. Thus, the structural model demonstrates that ethical leadership does not exert a strong direct influence on job performance; rather, its impact is realized indirectly through administrative empowerment an interpretation consistent with the statistical path analysis results, which revealed a strong indirect relationship between the two variables via the mediator.

## 5. Discussions

The results of testing the first hypothesis revealed a strong and direct effect of ethical leadership (EL) on administrative empowerment, which aligns with previous literature emphasizing that ethical leaders foster environments of transparency, participation, and trust. Abuzaid, et al. [19] indicated that ethical leadership enhances both psychological and functional empowerment by building trust and harmony between employees and the organization. Juan and Yusof [20] described ethical leadership as a psychological catalyst for empowerment, granting employees the freedom to make decisions and take initiative. Serang, et al. [43] confirmed that ethical leaders strengthen organizational commitment by involving employees in decision-making. These findings strongly support the first hypothesis and highlight ethical leadership as a fundamental factor in promoting administrative empowerment.

The results of testing the second hypothesis confirm that administrative empowerment has a significant and direct impact on job performance, consistent with literature that identifies empowerment as one of the most critical determinants of performance. Ahmed [16] found a positive relationship between empowerment and performance, particularly in environments that support decision-making autonomy. Alhammadi, et al. [24] showed that empowerment in the Yemeni banking sector significantly improved performance. Ali, et al. [8] also affirmed that empowerment, along with job satisfaction, serves as a key driver of effective organizational performance. These findings reinforce the importance of administrative empowerment as an effective mediator in enhancing job performance.

The results indicate that the direct effect of ethical leadership on job performance is very weak and statistically insignificant, suggesting that ethical leadership does not directly influence performance but rather operates through a mediating variable. This finding contrasts with studies such as Alhaidan [44] and Freire and Bettencourt [17] which linked ethical leadership directly to job satisfaction and performance. However, the weak direct effect supports the notion that administrative empowerment is the primary mediator in this relationship, as highlighted by studies like Abuzaid, et al. [19] and Yeap [11].

The results of testing the fourth hypothesis confirm that ethical leadership indirectly affects job performance through administrative empowerment, supporting the structural model of the study. This finding aligns with Aslam, et al. [18] who demonstrated that ethical leadership enhances performance through psychological empowerment, increasing initiative and innovation. Yeap [11] also confirmed that ethical leadership stimulates intrinsic motivation and empowers employees, positively reflecting on performance. This strong mediating effect explains the weak direct relationship observed in H3 and underscores the importance of empowerment as the main channel through which ethical leadership influences performance.

## 6. Conclusion

The study results clearly demonstrate that ethical leadership is a fundamental factor in promoting administrative empowerment, which in turn significantly contributes to enhancing job performance. Although the direct effect of ethical leadership on job performance was weak, the indirect effect through administrative empowerment was strong and statistically significant, confirming the importance of empowerment as a key mediator in the relationship between leadership and performance.

These findings are consistent with recent literature indicating that ethical leaders do not merely guide employees, but actively empower them both psychologically and functionally. This empowerment strengthens their decision-making abilities and increases their sense of confidence and belonging. Moreover, administrative empowerment is considered one of the most influential organizational factors driving high job performance, particularly in work environments characterized by fairness and participation.

## 7. Contributions

This study contributes to enriching the literature on ethical leadership and administrative empowerment by presenting a structural model that clarifies the nature of the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance, with a focus on administrative empowerment as a mediating variable. The findings revealed that ethical leadership does not directly influence job performance, but rather operates through administrative empowerment, highlighting the importance of building an organizational environment based on trust, participation, and fairness.

The significance of this contribution lies in its provision of empirical evidence within the context of Yemeni public joint-stock companies a context that has received limited attention in previous research. Moreover, this study is among the first to link ethical leadership, administrative empowerment, and job performance within a Yemeni setting, paving the way for researchers and practitioners to develop effective leadership strategies that align with the cultural and organizational characteristics of Yemeni institutions.

## 8. Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, researchers recommend that Yemeni public joint-stock companies strengthen the culture of ethical leadership within their administrative structures, given its pivotal role in fostering a work environment built on trust, transparency, and participation. This can be achieved by developing training programs for managerial leaders that focus on values such as justice, respect, and responsibility, which positively influence employee behavior and organizational commitment.

It is also advised to activate administrative empowerment programs across all organizational levels, granting employees clear authority in decision-making and participation in operational planning. This type of empowerment enhances initiative and increases employees' sense of responsibility, leading to tangible improvements in job performance particularly in work environments characterized by fairness and collaboration.

Moreover, it is important for companies to link administrative empowerment with job performance through incentive and promotion systems. Institutions are encouraged to adopt performance indicators related to innovation, initiative, and problem-solving, ensuring that employees who demonstrate high levels of empowerment and effectiveness are appropriately rewarded.

Researchers also suggest conducting regular studies within Yemeni public joint-stock companies to measure the impact of ethical leadership and administrative empowerment on job performance. Collaboration with local universities or research centers is recommended to develop measurement tools tailored to the Yemeni context, enabling continuous performance improvement based on accurate data and scientific analysis.

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