

The Role of Ethical Leadership in Enhancing Administrative Empowerment in Public Joint-Stock Companies

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Abstract: Objective: This study aimed to measure the effect of ethical leadership, in its three dimensions' availability, practice, and reinforcement on managerial empowerment in Yemeni public joint-stock companies. **Methodology:** The study used a descriptive-analytical approach and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data from a simple random sample of 433 employees, with data collected via a questionnaire based on a seven-point Likert scale. **Results:** Descriptive results showed high levels of application with a mean score of 5.51 for ethical leadership and 5.41 for managerial empowerment. The measurement model showed strong psychometric properties for the study instrument. The structural model revealed a significant effect of ethical leadership on managerial empowerment ($\beta = 0.81, P = 0.000$), with the practice and reinforcement dimensions showing strong positive effects, while the availability dimension recorded a negative coefficient, noting the weak effect. The Structural Model showed high explanatory and predictive power ($R^2 = 0.76, Q^2 = 0.75$). **Conclusions:** The findings reveal that the actual practice of ethical behavior and its continuous reinforcement are the primary drivers of administrative empowerment. Conversely, the theoretical availability of ethical principles may yield counterproductive or negligible results if divorced from practical application. This elucidates the gap between the awareness of ethical values and their manifestation as authorities and capabilities that enhance employee performance. **Recommendations:** The research recommends that public corporate policies prioritize training programs that foster the adoption and practice of ethical conduct. Furthermore, it suggests redesigning internal governance systems through operational procedures and Key Performance Indicators designed to measure the behavioral manifestation of ethical leadership.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Administrative Empowerment, Organizational Performance, Public Companies, SDGs, PLS-SEM.

دور القيادة الأخلاقية في تعزيز التمكين الإداري في الشركات المساهمة العامة

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المخلص: الهدف: هدفت الدراسة إلى قياس أثر القيادة الأخلاقية بأبعادها الثلاثة التوفر والممارسة والتعزيز على التمكين الإداري في الشركات المساهمة العامة اليمنية. **المنهج:** استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي ونموذج المعادلات الجزئية الصغرى PLS-SEM لتحليل بيانات عينة عشوائية بسيطة مكونة من 433 موظفًا، وجمعت البيانات عبر استبانة مبنية على مقياس ليكرت السباعي. **النتائج:** أظهرت النتائج الوصفية مستويات تطبيق مرتفعة بمتوسط حسابي 5.51 للقيادة الأخلاقية و 5.41 للتمكين الإداري. أظهر نموذج القياس خصائص سيكومترية قوية لأداة الدراسة. وكشف نموذج البناء عن تأثير كبير للقيادة الأخلاقية على التمكين الإداري ($\beta = 0.81, P = 0.000$)، حيث سجلت أبعاد الممارسة والتعزيز تأثيرًا إيجابيًا وقويًا، بينما سجل بعد التوفر معاملًا سلبيًا مما يدل على ضعف التأثير. أظهر النموذج قدرة تفسيرية وتنبؤية عالية ($R^2 = 0.76, Q^2 = 0.75$). **الاستنتاجات:** تبرز النتائج أن الممارسة الفعلية للسلوك الأخلاقي والتعزيز المستمر له هما المحركان الأساسيان لتمكين الموظفين إداريًا، في حين أن التوفر النظري للمبادئ الأخلاقية قد يؤدي لنتائج عكسية أو ضعيفة إذا انفصل عن التطبيق الواقعي. وهذا يفسر الفجوة بين الوعي بالقيم الأخلاقية وبين تجسيدها كصلاحيات وقدرات ترفع أداء الموظف. **التوصيات:** يوصي البحث بأن تولي سياسات الشركات العامة الأولوية لبرامج التدريب التي تعزز تبني وممارسة السلوك الأخلاقي. كما يقترح البحث إعادة تصميم نظم الحوكمة الداخلية من خلال إجراءات تشغيلية ومؤشرات أداء رئيسية مصممة لقياس التجسيد السلوكي للقيادة الأخلاقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيادة الأخلاقية، التمكين الإداري، الأداء التنظيمي، الشركات العامة، أهداف التنمية المستدامة (SDGs)، نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية (PLS-SEM).

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Introduction

Public joint-stock companies operate in environments characterized by rapid and profound transformations, becoming increasingly diverse and complex making survival, continuity, and competitiveness more challenging. These dynamic conditions require swift and strategic responses to effectively leverage human resources, which are regarded as a fundamental driver of organizational performance and productivity (Mohammad *et al.*, 2025).

The success of companies in achieving their goals and addressing both internal and external challenges largely depends on the quality of their human capital (Sugiono & Alfaraby, 2025). Organizations and employees function as interdependent entities, particularly when employees are viewed as valuable assets to the company (Harefa *et al.*, 2025). In the context of accelerating global market competition, traditional bureaucratic approaches are no longer sufficient to drive performance and productivity. This necessitates the adoption of more efficient and effective strategies that motivate employees to realize their full potential such as administrative empowerment.

Outstanding corporate performance is achieved through effective human resource management, with employee empowerment serving as a cornerstone. Empirical evidence confirms that enhancing various dimensions of administrative empowerment leads to improved organizational performance (Ali *et al.*, 2025). Consequently, employee empowerment has emerged as a global trend, driven by the recognition that empowered employees are more productive, engaged, and committed to their organizations (Riak & Wanyama, 2025).

Administrative empowerment is central to fostering creativity in organizational performance, as it enables employees to

contribute to problem-solving, decision-making, idea generation, and collaborative teamwork (Saputro & Sumartik, 2024). However, human resource challenges particularly those related to empowerment remain highly complex and can directly or indirectly affect organizational sustainability (Olejarski & Neal, 2024). Empowerment is closely tied to leadership behavior and ethics, with ethical leadership playing a pivotal role in enhancing empowerment and driving organizational success. Numerous studies have examined this concept across various organizational contexts, highlighting its impact on both ethical and administrative outcomes (Limpo & Junaidi, 2023).

The relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment has gained increasing attention in organizational research. Ethical leaders, by virtue of their principled behavior, create environments that foster participation, trust, and psychological safety key prerequisites for empowerment. (Liu *et al.*, 2023; Yeap, 2024; Abuzaid *et al.*, 2024) emphasize that ethical leadership enhances empowerment through thoughtful task design, constructive feedback, and the promotion of autonomy. However, some studies suggest that the mere presence of ethical behavior may not be sufficient to drive empowerment unless it is actively practiced and reinforced within the organizational structure (Al-Dhafiri, 2025). This underscores the need to examine the nuanced impact of each dimension of ethical leadership on empowerment outcomes.

Public joint-stock companies in Yemen face several challenges that negatively affect job performance and workplace stability. Among these are weak administrative empowerment, manifested in insufficient delegation of authority, limited employee involvement in decision-making, and inadequate opportunities for professional development. These issues contribute to low job satisfaction and reduced

organizational loyalty, ultimately compromising the quality and efficiency of job performance. These findings are supported by the studies of AL-Muttairi (2025) and Ayed & Al-Bashari (2020).

Conversely, studies such as (Freire & Claudia, 2020; Aslam *et al.*, 2024; Abuzaid *et al.*, 2024; Juan & Yusof, 2024; Archuleta, 2025; Yan, 2025) emphasize the influence of ethical leadership on employee empowerment, contributing to enhanced organizational performance.

Based on the foregoing, the research problem can be summarized in the following main question: What is the role of ethical leadership in promoting administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies? This overarching question gives rise to several sub-questions aimed at exploring the current state of ethical leadership, assessing the level of administrative empowerment, and analyzing the influence of ethical leadership on empowerment practices within these organizations:

RQ1: What is the current state of ethical leadership in public joint-stock companies?

RQ2: What is the level of administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies?

RQ3: Does ethical leadership influence the promotion of administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies?

The objectives of the current study center on exploring the dynamic relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies. Specifically, the study aims to identify the current state of ethical leadership, evaluate the extent to which administrative empowerment is implemented, and examine how ethical leadership influences empowerment levels within these organizations. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide valuable insights that bridge theoretical understanding

with practical applications in the field of organizational development.

Literature Review

Ethical Leadership

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. Ethical Leadership Conceptual Definition “Ethical leadership enhances public trust and improves organizational performance by integrating transformational practices” (Malik & Khan, 2025, p. 47). (Yeap, 2024, p. 9630) emphasizes that “Ethical leaders support open communication, stimulate participation in decision-making, motivate individuals to express their opinions, and apply equitable treatment”. (Abuzaid *et al.*, 2024, p. 214) 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 crucial for organizational success. Al-Jurjari & Al-Obaidi (2025) report that it elevates employees’ ethical standards, thereby improving job satisfaction and performance. Moreover, ethical leadership helps reduce losses resulting from unethical practices and enhances the organization’s reputation both locally and globally. By fostering integrity and transparency, it mitigates internal resistance and cultivates a value-driven organizational climate that supports long-term sustainability.

Dimensions of ethical leadership Several scholars (Freire & Claudia, 2020; Malik &

Khan, 2025; Naeem & Syed, 2024; Yan, 2025) identify several core dimensions of ethical leadership.

- *Providing ethical behavior*: Leaders demonstrate integrity, fairness, and transparency in their actions and decisions.
- *Practicing ethical behavior*: Leaders consistently apply ethical principles in daily interactions and decision-making to ensure respectful and fair treatment across the organization.
- *Promoting ethical behavior*: Leaders model virtuous conduct, uphold everyone's dignity, and enforce ethical standards at every organizational level to build a values-based culture.

Despite its significance, ethical leadership faces several obstacles. Archuleta (2025) and Alhaidan (2024) identify key challenges such as pressure for rapid financial returns, the absence of a supportive organizational culture, conflicts of personal interest, inadequate ethical training, ambiguity in ethical standards, and fear of backlash. If not effectively addressed, these factors can erode ethical commitments and compromise leadership integrity.

Naeem and Syed (2024) outline the essential conditions for effective ethical leadership. These include a strong political will, active commitment from senior leaders, the empowerment of accountable individuals who align with organizational objectives, and the establishment of robust ethical frameworks and policies. Fostering an ethical culture also requires clear job descriptions that reflect core values, sufficient financial resources to meet basic needs, and measures that reduce bureaucratic constraints while enabling employee empowerment. Meeting these prerequisites lays the foundation for a resilient and ethically guided organizational environment.

Administrative Empowerment

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. Administrative empowerment is conceptually defined as “an internal administrative process involving the delegation of authority to employees, training, effective communication, and the fostering of team spirit” (Alhammadi *et al.*, 2023, p. 69). It is also 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” (Al-Makhadhi & Mugahed, 2024, p. 240). Naji *et al.* (2025, p. 170) define Administrative Empowerment (AE) as “an approach that aims to delegate authority and responsibilities to employees while fostering their professional development, ultimately enhancing their job performance.” Thus, administrative empowerment refers to a managerial approach that delegates authority and responsibility to employees and develops them professionally, thereby improving their job performance.

Administrative empowerment is a cornerstone of effective organizational management. Al-Makhadhi and Mugahed (2024) argue that its significance lies in enabling organizations to respond proactively to external emergencies and focus on strategic priorities. By streamlining administrative layers and reducing associated costs, empowerment promotes efficient resource management and accelerates decision-making. It also fosters individual creativity and reinforces employees' sense of responsibility and achievement. Consequently, empowerment enhances job satisfaction, boosts motivation, and cultivates a stronger sense of organizational belonging.

Dimensions of administrative empowerment
Several scholars (Naji *et al.*, 2025; Al-Dhafiri, 2025; Haji, 2023) identify several essential dimensions of administrative empowerment:

- *Delegation of authority*: assigning responsibility and decision-making power to others to execute clearly defined tasks.
- *Teamwork*: a collaborative structure in which members work interdependently toward shared goals.
- *Effective communication*: a two-way flow of information that supports decision-making and operational execution.
- *Professional development*: structured organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing employees’ competencies and career growth.
- *Employee motivation*: a set of incentives and practices designed to strengthen engagement and commitment to organizational objectives.

Barriers to administrative empowerment
Despite its benefits, implementation of empowerment faces several challenges. Al-Makhadhi and Mugahed (2024) identify barriers such as managerial inertia and the fear among some managers of losing status, which leads them to resist empowerment. Conflicts in decision-making may arise when empowered employees make inconsistent choices that

affect customer satisfaction. Overreliance on generic empowerment programs, lack of clear organizational goals, and misconceptions such as fears that employees may conspire against the organization further impede effective implementation.

Requirements for implementing administrative empowerment
Vu (2020) highlights critical requirements for successful empowerment. These include a clear organizational vision to guide employee decision-making and the cultivation of a culture that values and respects new ideas. Successful implementation also depends on team-based work that fosters mutual trust and shared responsibility, together with well-defined systems and guidelines that clarify roles and reduce ambiguity. These elements form a foundation for an empowered workforce capable of driving sustainable organizational success.

Cognitive Model

The study focuses on ethical leadership in its three dimensions: availability, practice, and reinforcement (Freire & Claudia, 2020; Naeem & Syed, 2024; Malik & Khan, 2025), and on administrative empowerment in its five dimensions: delegation, teamwork, training, communication, and motivation (Naji *et al.*, 2025; Al-Dhafiri, 2025; Haji, 2023).

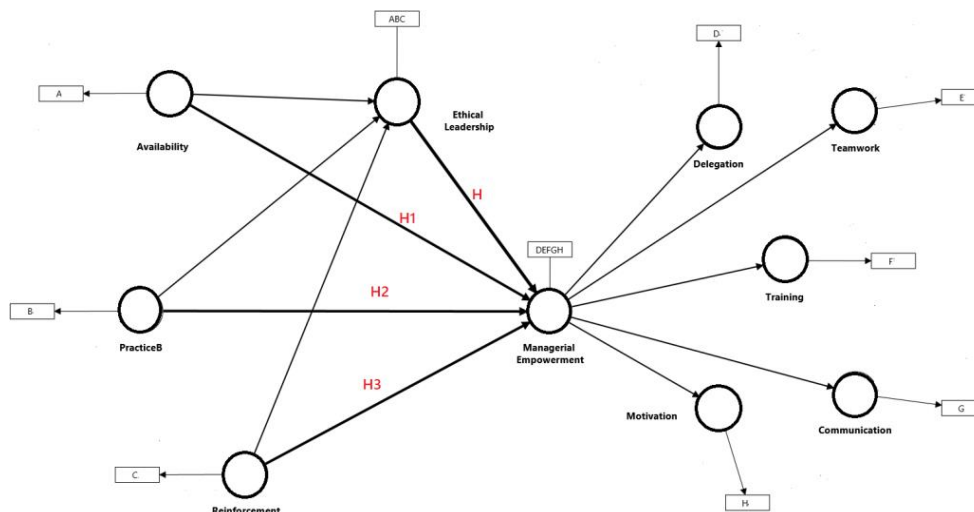


Figure (1): Represents the cognitive model of the study.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between ethical leadership measured by availability, practice, and reinforcement and administrative empowerment, which is assessed through delegation, teamwork, training, communication, and motivation.

Hypothesis Development

Recent literature highlights the pivotal role of ethical leadership in enhancing administrative empowerment and fostering innovative behavior within organizations, particularly in environments characterized by psychological safety and organizational justice. Studies have shown that the relationship between ethical leadership and innovative behavior is both direct and indirect. A fair and transparent leader contributes to improved ethical and managerial outcomes (Freire & Claudia, 2020) and motivates employees to innovate when they feel supported and treated equitably (Aslam *et al.*, 2024).

Ethical leadership helps clarify the meaning of work, fosters competence through constructive feedback, and promotes autonomy via delegation (Abuzaid *et al.*, 2024). It also positively influences employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Serang *et al.*, 2024), while reinforcing self-efficacy and autonomy in the workplace (Santiago-Torner *et al.*, 2025).

Ethical behavior within organizations fosters a secure work environment rooted in fairness, integrity, and transparency core elements of effective administrative empowerment. This empowerment is reflected in practices such as delegating authority, involving employees in decision-making, and providing access to training and development opportunities. Research confirms that leaders who uphold ethical values significantly enhance an organization's ability to empower employees both administratively and psychologically (Limpo & Junaidi, 2023; Juan

& Yusof, 2024; Al-Jurjari & Al-Obaidi, 2025; Abuzaid *et al.*, 2024).

The relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment extends beyond the mere presence of ethical behavior; it requires the consistent application of ethical principles in daily operations. This involves integrating justice, integrity, and respect into decision-making processes, thereby fostering ethical conduct among employees particularly in public institutions such as hospitals (Al-Dhafiri, 2025). Empowering managers to make value-based decisions helps cultivate a culture of support and accountability, contributing to reduced workplace conflict and enhanced transparency (Olejarski & Neal, 2024).

Reinforcing ethical behavior is an institutional endeavor that extends beyond formal policies, aiming to cultivate an integrated organizational culture rooted in justice and accountability. Evidence suggests that organizations that invest in reinforcing ethical values tend to create environments that encourage active participation and decision-making autonomy. Al-Dhafiri (2025) Ethical leadership fosters trust and strengthens organizational justice, thereby supporting sustainable empowerment (Malik & Khan, 2025; Al-Jurjari & Al-Obaidi, 2025). Furthermore, such leadership fosters the psychological safety necessary for innovation (Liu *et al.*, 2023). while promoting open communication and participatory decision-making (Yeap, 2024).

There is, however, a scarcity of applied studies that focus specifically on publicly listed companies, despite the rich literature linking ethical leadership to managerial empowerment and innovative behavior through mechanisms such as organizational justice and psychological safety. Empirical longitudinal evidence measuring the impact of daily ethical leadership practices on components of

managerial empowerment such as delegation, participation, training, and communication in work environments with mixed market and governmental characteristics is also rare. Furthermore, research examining causal relationships between ethical leadership and managerial empowerment across different managerial levels remains limited, and standardized, well-validated measures of managerial empowerment in the context of publicly listed companies are seldom employed. Therefore, this topic calls for field studies targeting these companies, utilizing longitudinal or experimental designs that investigate mediators, moderators, and the reliability and validity of measurement instruments to address this gap.

To address these shortcomings, the current study views ethical leadership as a strategic approach to fostering an empowering organizational environment that supports both innovation and institutional resilience. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Main Hypothesis (H): *Ethical leadership influences administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies.*

Sub-Hypotheses

H₁: *The availability of ethical behavior affects administrative empowerment.*

H₂: *The practice of ethical behavior affects administrative empowerment.*

H₃: *The reinforcement of ethical behavior affects administrative empowerment.*

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical method to examine the impact of ethical leadership on enhancing administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies in Yemen. This approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment by systematically

describing existing conditions, analyzing relevant data, and drawing conclusions based on empirical findings.

Community and Sample

The study population comprises all managers and employees working in joint-stock companies located in Amanat Al-Asimah, Sana'a, Yemen. These companies represent the total number of licensed establishments according to the Ministry of Industry-Sana'a (2023) data, totaling 1,970 individuals based on company records for 2024. Due to variations in company size, the population was divided into eight strata, with each stratum representing one company. A simple random sampling method was applied at a rate of 22% from each stratum, resulting in a total sample of 433 participants representing 22% of the overall population. This percentage is considered adequate, as it exceeds the commonly recommended range of 10–20% in social and behavioral research by 2% (Sekaran, 2003).

Table (1): Sample Size in Relation to the Study Population.

Company Name	Population	N	%
1. Yemen Mobile Company	528	116	22%
2. Cooperative & Agricultural Credit Bank	387	85	22%
3. Construction & Development Bank	303	67	22%
4. Kamaran Trading & Investment Co.	251	55	22%
5. Yemeni Drug Manufacturing & Trading Co (YEDCO)	161	35	22%
6. Kuwaiti Real Estate Investment Group	151	33	22%
7. Arab-Yemeni-Libyan Holding Co (ARABIL)	112	25	22%
8. Yemeni Sugar Refining Company	77	17	22%
Total	1970	433	22%

The data in Table 1 show that participation rates reached 22% of the study population, which falls within the acceptable range for social and behavioral research. This enhances

the credibility of the study's findings. Table 2 presents the respondent demographics as follows:

Table (2): Respondent demographics.

Demographic Item	Categories	N=433	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	335	77.4%
	Female	98	22.6%
Education	High School	58	13.4%
	Bachelor	307	70.9%
	Master and Doctorate	68	15.7%
Position	Employee	220	50.8%
	Manager	149	34.4%
	Leadership	64	14.8%
Experience	1 - 5 years	35	8.1%
	6 - 10years	110	25.4%
	11-15years	147	33.9%
	16-20years	141	32.6%

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample (N = 433). The data indicate that males comprised the majority of respondents (77.4%), and that most participants held a bachelor's degree (70.9%). Regarding job position, half of the respondents were regular employees (50.8%), while the remainder occupied managerial or leadership roles.

In terms of work experience, more than one-third of the sample had between 11 and 15 years of experience, reflecting a level of professional maturity that may enhance the reliability of responses and strengthen the analysis of relationships among variables.

Tool and Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument to align with the study's objectives, following a comprehensive review of relevant literature and prior research. The final instrument consisted of 46 items grouped into two main dimensions: ethical leadership and administrative empowerment. Respondents were asked to assess the extent of ethical leadership practices and the level of administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies using a seven-point Likert

scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was administered through field visits to the targeted companies between 20 March and 30 May 2024. Data were collected using simple random sampling, yielding 433 valid responses out of 500 distributed questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 86%.

According to the recommendations of Hair *et al.* (2022) and McNeish and Wolf (2023), a sample size of 100-200 participants meets the minimum threshold for structural equation modeling. Therefore, the sample used in this study is considered adequate for subsequent analyses conducted using SmartPLS (version 4.1.1.2).

Statistical treatments

The data were analyzed using SPSS, where descriptive statistics including arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated to examine the distribution of responses. SmartPLS (version 4.1.1.2) was employed to construct the structural equation model (SEM), assess validity and reliability, and estimate relationships among variables. Path analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of ethical leadership and its dimensions on enhancing administrative empowerment. Practice levels were assessed using relative weights derived from a seven-point Likert scale, as presented in Table 3.

Table (3): Ratings, Weighted Scores, and Relative Percentages.

Verbal Significance	Weighted Score	Relative Weighting
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0 – 1.86
Disagree	2	1.87 – 2.71
Somewhat Disagree	3	2.72 – 3.57
Neutral	4	3.58 – 4.43
Somewhat Agree	5	4.44 – 5.29
Agree	6	5.3 – 6.14
Strongly Agree	7	6.15 – 7.0

Table 3 The relative weight was determined through a systematic approach. First, the range between the highest and lowest values on the

Likert scale was calculated ($7 - 1 = 6$). Next, this range was divided by the total number of scale categories ($6 \div 7 = 0.86$). Finally, each category was adjusted by adding 1 to incorporate the calculated interval, ensuring accurate and consistent weighting across the dataset.

Results

Measurement Model Evaluation

The quality of the measurement instruments was verified by inspecting item factor loadings, retaining indicators with loadings ≥ 0.70 . Convergent validity was assessed using the

average variance extracted (AVE), which is considered acceptable when $AVE \geq 0.50$. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using both Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR), with values above 0.70 deemed acceptable. Additionally, discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Discriminant validity was considered established when HTMT values were below 0.85 or 0.90, in accordance with established methodological recommendations (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Hair *et al.*, 2022). The results were as follows:

Table (4): Measurement results for Ethical Leadership.

Constructs	Outer Loadings	α	CR	AVE	F-L	HTMT
Availability	A1	0.902	0.945	0.894	≤ 0.656	≤ 0.671
	A2	0.916				
	A3	0.928				
	A4	0.918				
	A5	0.862				
Practice	B1	0.906	0.952	0.955	≤ 0.843	≤ 0.810
	B2	0.859				
	B3	0.918				
	B4	0.846				
	B5	0.909				
	B6	0.853				
	B7	0.877				
Reinforcement	C1	0.910	0.936	0.937	≤ 0.842	≤ 0.824
	C2	0.891				
	C3	0.902				
	C4	0.916				
	C5	0.838				

Table 4 demonstrates that the three dimensions of ethical leadership availability, practice, and reinforcement exhibit high measurement quality. Outer loadings exceeded 0.83, indicating excellent convergent validity. Reliability measures, including Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR), were strong, with both values above 0.95, confirming high internal consistency. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed 0.89, suggesting that each dimension explains a substantial portion of the variance in its indicators. These results reflect a robust

statistical model that supports the reliable use of these dimensions in both structural and explanatory analyses.

Regarding discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion yielded satisfactory results in most cases, while HTMT values remained below the critical threshold in all cases, confirming conceptual distinctiveness among the dimensions. Consistently strong outer loadings further reinforce the model's stability and its suitability for structural analysis across diverse administrative contexts.

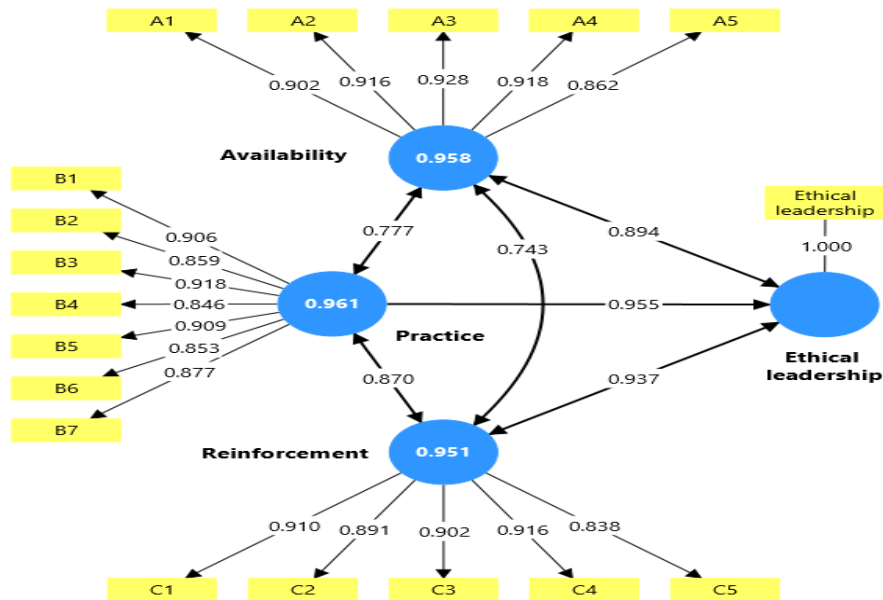


Figure (2): Outer loadings, shared variance, and reliability of ethical leadership indicators.

Based on Figure 2, all indicators for each construct exhibit factor loadings greater than 0.70, indicating sufficient validity in measuring the associated constructs. Additionally, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50, thereby

satisfying the criteria for convergent validity. These results confirm that each indicator adequately represents its respective construct and is suitable for subsequent structural model testing.

Table (5): Measurement results for Administrative Empowerment.

Constructs		Outer Loadings	α	CR	AVE	F-L	HTMT
Delegation	D1	0.848	0.943	0.954	0.907	≤ 0.864	≤ 0.698
	D2	0.881					
	D3	0.905					
	D4	0.863					
	D5	0.831					
	D6	0.885					
	D7	0.834					
Teamwork	E1	0.862	0.937	0.940	0.918	≤ 0.850	≤ 0.893
	E2	0.876					
	E3	0.861					
	E4	0.909					
	E5	0.901					
	E6	0.669					
Training	F1	0.855	0.942	0.946	0.903	≤ 0.882	≤ 0.870
	F2	0.872					
	F3	0.911					
	F4	0.910					
	F5	0.861					
Communication	G1	0.845	0.921	0.954	0.942	≤ 0.874	≤ 0.863
	G2	0.893					
	G3	0.896					
	G4	0.901					
	G5	0.856					
	G6	0.893					
Motivation	H1	0.780	0.929	0.951	0.909	≤ 0.874	≤ 0.835
	H2	0.831					
	H3	0.929					
	H4	0.917					
	H5	0.944					
	H6	0.827					

Table 5 demonstrates high measurement quality for assessing managerial empowerment across its five dimensions: delegation, teamwork, training, communication, and motivation. External loadings exceeded 0.83 for most items, indicating strong correlations between indicators and their respective latent constructs, thereby supporting convergent validity. One exception was item E6 under the teamwork dimension, which had a loading of 0.66 below the ideal threshold of 0.70 and was removed by the researchers to preserve overall measurement quality.

The results also show that Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) values

exceeded 0.94 across all dimensions, confirming excellent internal consistency. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed 0.90, reflecting strong convergent validity and reinforcing the indicators' accurate representation of the theoretical constructs. Regarding discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion yielded satisfactory results across most relationships, while HTMT values remained below the critical threshold in all cases, confirming conceptual distinctness among the dimensions. Furthermore, consistently strong external loadings enhance the model's stability and its suitability for structural analysis in diverse managerial contexts.

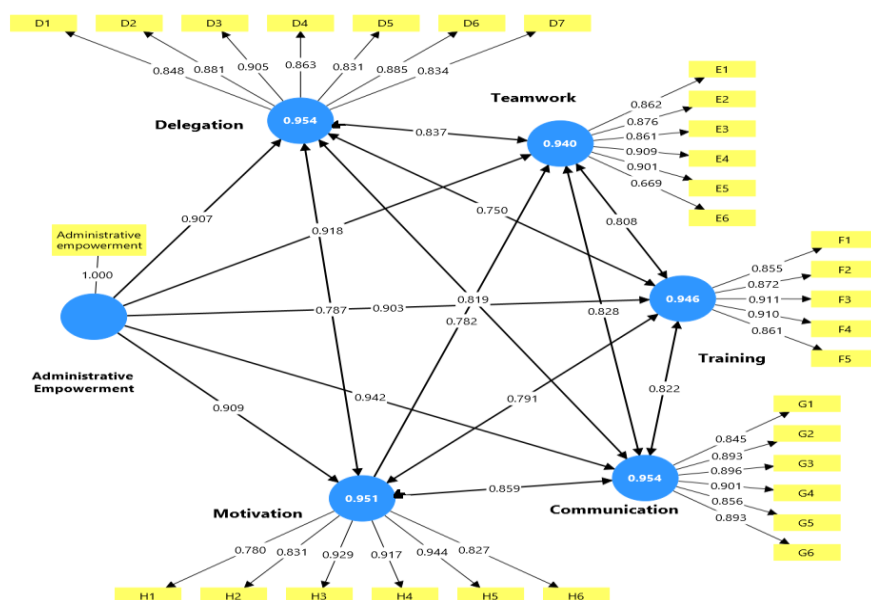


Figure (3): Outer loadings, shared variance, and reliability of administrative empowerment indicators.

Based on Figure 3, all indicators for each construct exhibit factor loadings greater than 0.70, with the exception of one item (E6), which recorded a loading of 0.66 and was subsequently removed. This indicates sufficient validity in measuring the associated constructs. Additionally, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50, thereby satisfying the criteria for convergent validity. These findings confirm that each indicator adequately represents its respective construct and is appropriate for subsequent structural model testing.

The results indicate high measurement quality for the study instruments. External loadings of the indicators generally exceeded 0.83, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70, which reflects excellent convergent validity. One exception was a teamwork indicator that fell below the acceptable threshold and was removed to preserve the overall quality of the instrument. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.89 for the leadership dimensions and 0.90 for the empowerment dimensions, exceeding the minimum AVE threshold of 0.50 and

confirming that each dimension explains a substantial portion of variance in its indicators. The instrument therefore demonstrates high validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values ranged between 0.90 and 0.93, confirming strong internal consistency and reliability. The Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT values were within acceptable limits, supporting discriminant validity and clear differentiation among dimensions. Collectively, these indicators reflect a robust and reliable statistical model suitable for both structural and interpretive analyses, as well as practical application across diverse managerial contexts.

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were used to analyze the actual practice of ethical leadership and the level of administrative empowerment in the public joint-stock companies under study. This analysis was conducted to address the first and second research questions. The results are presented as follows:

Table (6): Means and Standard Deviations for Ethical Leadership.

No.	Dimension	Rank	Mean	SD	Significance
1	Availability	1	5.56	1.07	High
2	Practice	3	5.47	1.09	High
3	Reinforcement	2	5.49	1.09	High
Total scale			5.51	1.08	High

Table 6 shows that all dimensions of the variable received a "high" rating on the verbal significance scale, with arithmetic means ranging from 5.47 to 5.56. This reflects a high level of practice, as reported by the sample members, across the dimensions of availability, application, and reinforcement. These results indicate a positive and effective perception of ethical leadership within the work environment. Standard deviation values ranged from 1.07 to 1.09, which are relatively close and suggest consistency in responses thereby enhancing the reliability and stability of the findings. The overall mean of 5.51 confirms

that the practices associated with these dimensions are implemented intensively and regularly, supporting the hypotheses regarding their potential impact within the study's structural model.

Table (7): Means and Standard Deviations for Administrative Empowerment.

No.	Dimension	Rank	Mean	SD	Significance
1	Delegation	1	5.46	1.03	High
2	Teamwork	3	5.45	1.01	High
3	Training	2	5.47	1.09	High
4	Communication	4	5.35	1.15	High
5	Motivation	5	5.34	1.19	High
Total scale			5.41	1.01	High

Table 7 indicates that all dimensions of administrative empowerment received a "high" rating on the verbal significance scale, with arithmetic means ranging from 5.34 to 5.47. This reflects a positive level of practice, according to respondents' views, across the areas of delegation, teamwork, training, communication, and motivation. Training recorded the highest mean (5.47), highlighting a strong emphasis on skill development, while motivation received the lowest mean (5.34), which may suggest variability in perceptions of its effectiveness.

Standard deviation values ranged from 1.01 to 1.19, indicating an acceptable level of variation particularly in the dimensions of communication and motivation. These differences may be attributed to individual variations in experience and perception. The overall mean score of 5.41 confirms that administrative empowerment practices are consistently applied at a high level, reinforcing the study's theoretical framework and enhancing the reliability of its findings.

Structural Model Evaluation

Table 8 presents the results of the path analysis conducted within the structural model to test the study's hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of relationships between latent variables. Path coefficients were interpreted using their standardized values (β),

along with their statistical significance assessed through t-values and p-values, following the guidelines of Hair *et al.* (2022). The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables, serving as a measure of the model's explanatory power (Henseler *et al.*, 2015) Predictive relevance

Table (8): Path Coefficient Test.

Hypothesis Code	β	t-value	p-value	Results
H: Ethical_leadership ->Administrative_Empowerment	0.81	10.88	0.000	Accepted
H1: Availability -> Administrative_Empowerment	-0.06	-1.481	0.139	Rejected
H2: Practice -> Administrative_Empowerment	0.46	9.439	0.000	Accepted
H3: Reinforcement ->Administrative_Empowerment	0.49	10.261	0.000	Accepted
R^2 -Administrative_Empowerment	0.76			
Q^2 -Administrative_Empowerment	0.75			

Table 8 reveals that ethical leadership has a significant impact on administrative empowerment in public joint-stock companies, as perceived by respondents ($\beta = 0.81$; $t = 10.88$; $p = 0.000$). This finding confirms the pivotal role of ethical leadership in shaping empowerment within organizational settings.

In contrast, the effect of the availability of ethical behavior on administrative empowerment was negative and weak ($\beta = -0.06$), and was not statistically significant ($p = 0.139$). This suggests that the mere presence of ethical behavior is insufficient to enhance empowerment unless it is actively practiced and reinforced. These components appear to

(Q^2), which reflects the model's forecasting capability, is considered acceptable when $Q^2 > 0$, suggesting that the independent variables enhance the model's predictive power (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). These results provide empirical support for the structural relationships proposed in the study.

form interconnected loops that mutually reinforce one another within the administrative context. The model thus underscores the greater importance of practicing and reinforcing ethical behavior in promoting empowerment, rather than relying solely on its availability.

The results also indicate that the independent variables, ethical leadership and its dimensions, explain (76%) of the variance in administrative empowerment ($R^2 = 0.76$) in public joint-stock companies. Furthermore, the high Q^2 value (0.75) reflects the model's excellent predictive quality. The findings can be illustrated in the following figure:

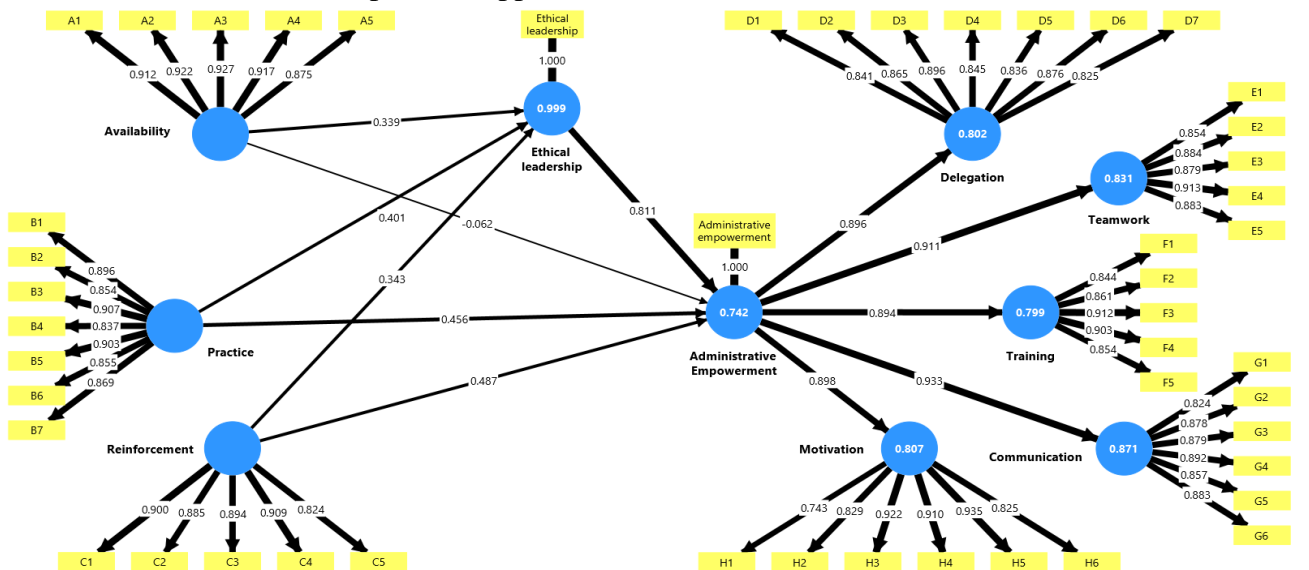


Figure (4): Structural Equation Modeling using PLS-SEM.

Figure 4 illustrates the structural model analysis and provides a visual representation of the direction and strength of relationships among the study variables. The figure highlights the directional paths between the independent variable ethical leadership and its dimensions, and the dependent variable administrative empowerment and its corresponding dimensions. This visual framework clarifies how each component interacts within the model and supports the interpretation of the statistical relationships identified in the analysis.

Discussions

The results indicate that ethical leadership is practiced at a high and consistent level across all of its dimensions, as evidenced by elevated arithmetic means and closely aligned standard deviations signaling a uniform perception among sample members. These findings are consistent with those of Limpo and Junaidi (2023) and Liu *et al.* (2023), who affirmed ethical leadership's role in promoting empowerment through trust-building and psychological autonomy. They also align with the work of Yeap (2024) and Abuzaid *et al.* (2024), who emphasized the importance of constructive feedback and participative task design in enhancing employees' sense of empowerment. Moreover, the current study supports Al-Dhafiri (2025) view that the effectiveness of ethical leadership relies on continuous and reinforced practice, rather than merely possessing ethical traits. For managers and policymakers operating in fragile economies, these converging insights suggest that investing in leadership development programs focused on repeated, observable ethical behaviors and structured feedback mechanisms can foster trust and autonomy among employees, thereby enhancing organizational resilience and adaptive capacity in unstable environments.

The current study's findings indicate that the overall average for administrative empowerment reached 5.41, classified as high, reflecting effective and consistent practices within the work environment. These results align with Naji *et al.* (2025), who demonstrated the positive impact of empowerment on job performance in public shareholding companies; Al-Dhafiri (2025), who emphasized its role in promoting ethical behavior within Saudi Arabia's health sector; and Haji (2023), who revealed how administrative empowerment enhanced crisis management in Algerian economic institutions. Collectively, these comparisons confirm the present study's consistency with previous literature and reinforce the credibility of the proposed theoretical model linking ethical leadership with administrative empowerment. For decision-makers in fragile economies, prioritizing empowerment mechanisms such as decentralizing routine decision-making authority, clarifying boundaries of responsibility, and establishing rapid feedback channels can strengthen operational continuity and enhance local problem-solving capacity during periods of instability.

These findings further align with Naeem and Syed (2024) and Alhaidan (2024), who identified ethical leadership as a key driver of administrative empowerment and emphasized the pivotal role of practicing and reinforcing ethical behavior in enhancing employee engagement and responsibility as reflected in the statistical strength of hypotheses H_2 and H_3 . Similarly, Al-Dhafiri (2025) highlighted that leaders who actively model and promote ethical conduct positively influence the work environment, further validating the proposed model and its consistency with contemporary literature. From a practical standpoint, managers operating in fragile contexts should embed ethical behavior into daily routines by establishing clear codes of conduct, modeling

transparency in resource allocation, and recognizing ethically aligned decisions. These practices can increase staff commitment and reduce corruption risks, thereby strengthening institutional stability and resilience.

On the other hand, the model reveals that the dimension of ethical behavior availability does not positively correlate with empowerment, despite its theoretical importance in earlier studies such as Malik and Khan (2025) and Al-Dhafiri (2025). While employee recognition of a leader's values may serve a preliminary step toward building an ethical workplace, the current model indicates that such recognition alone is insufficient. Hypothesis H_1 demonstrated a negative effect ($\beta = -0.06$), suggesting that ethical values must be translated into tangible practices to achieve meaningful empowerment. This conclusion is supported by Alhaidan (2024), who affirms that ethical behavior becomes effective only when actively practiced and reinforced within the organization making behavioral implementation the true catalyst for organizational interaction and productivity. For policymakers in fragile economies, this implies that promulgating ethical codes without enforcement or observable practice yields limited benefit. Effective policy must integrate normative guidance with monitoring, capacity building, and incentive structures that transform ethical values into consistent practices, thereby empowering employees and safeguarding scarce public resources.

Conclusion

- The level of ethical leadership practice in publicly listed joint-stock companies was high, with a mean score of 5.51. Its dimensions received a “high” rating, with mean values ranging from 5.47 to 5.56 and closely aligned standard deviations, indicating consistency in responses and supporting the study's theoretical framework.
- The level of administrative empowerment practice was also high, with a mean score of 5.41. All five dimensions were rated “high,” with the training dimension recording the highest mean. However, the incentives and communication dimensions showed notable variation due to differences in responses, while still reflecting generally consistent and effective practices.
- The effect of ethical leadership on administrative empowerment was strong, with the path coefficient reaching ($\beta = 0.81$), confirming the importance of adopting a comprehensive ethical leadership approach.
- The most influential factor was the practice and promotion of ethical behavior. Hypotheses H_2 and H_3 showed positive and statistically acceptable effects, indicating that the actual enactment of ethical behavior by the leader or the encouragement of such behavior in others enhances administrative empowerment.
- Providing only a theoretical perception of ethical behavior is insufficient. The rejection of Hypothesis H_1 , with a negative coefficient, suggests that employees' awareness of the leader's ethical values does not automatically translate into a sense of empowerment unless those values are embodied in actual practice.
- The model's explanatory and predictive power is high; it accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in administrative empowerment ($R^2 = 0.76$) and demonstrates strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.75$), reinforcing its reliability for examining the relationship between ethical leadership and empowerment.

Limitations

– The absence of control variables such as company size, sector type, and years of experience may influence the relationship between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment in Yemeni public shareholding companies. This limitation should be acknowledged when interpreting the study's findings.

– Among the methodological limitations to consider are the results of Harman's Single-Factor Test, which indicate the dominance of a single factor in explaining the variance in the data. To illustrate this, Table 9 presents the "Total Variance Explained" resulting from the factor analysis.

Table (9): Harman's Single-Factor Test.

No	Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	Availability	8.071	80.712	80.712
2	Practice	0.777	7.770	88.482
3	Reinforcement	0.275	2.755	91.237
4	Delegation	0.239	2.394	93.631
5	Teamwork	0.211	2.105	95.737
6	Training	0.155	1.549	97.285
7	Communications	0.139	1.390	98.675
8	Motivation	0.120	1.202	99.877
9	Ethical leadership	0.010	0.103	99.980
10	Administrative Empowerment	0.002	0.020	100.000

Table 9 reveals that the first factor accounts for 80.71% of the total variance. This high percentage indicates the presence of Common Method Bias (CMB), likely resulting from the use of a single instrument for data collection across all variables. Consequently, the results should be interpreted with caution, as this limitation restricts the study's ability to

definitively establish causal relationships. To mitigate this in future research, it is advisable to employ procedural remedies, such as separating the measurement of variables across different time periods. These observations are further supported by Figure 5, which visually reinforces the dominance of a single factor within the dataset.

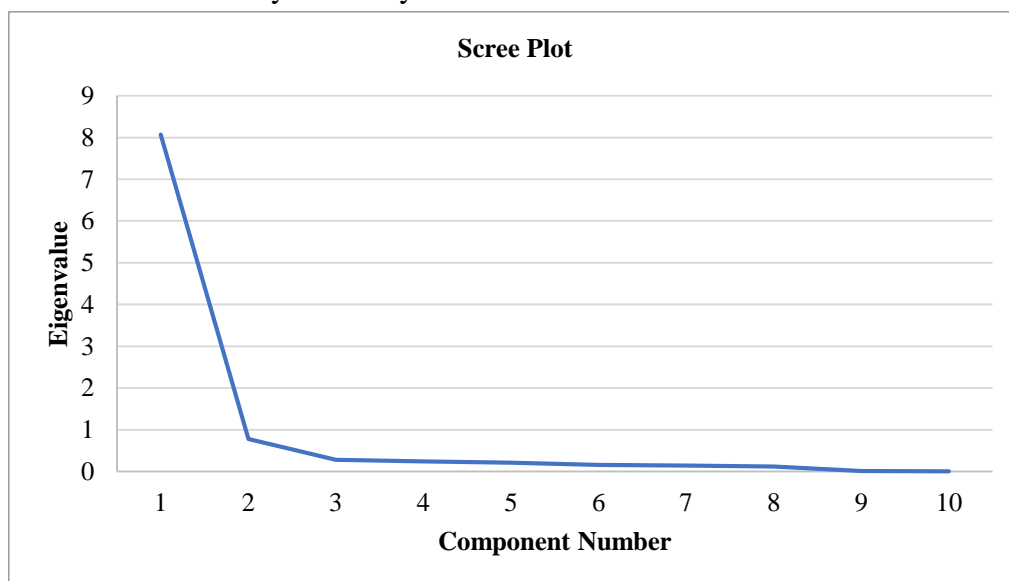


Figure (5): Scree Plot.

Figure 5 clearly illustrates the dominance of the first factor in explaining the variance,

reinforcing the likelihood of common method bias.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, researchers recommend the active integration of ethical values into daily decision-making and behavior. This should include training leaders in ethical conduct through workshops that emphasize justice, empathy, and role modeling. Organizations are also encouraged to promote ethical practices by implementing incentive mechanisms and communication strategies that reinforce integrity and transparency. Building a culture rooted in accountability and mutual trust between management and employees is essential, along with formally codifying ethical standards to align behavior and clarify expectations.

Furthermore, researchers suggest that future studies focus on the behavioral dimensions of ethical leadership rather than relying solely on perceptions of values. They also recommend evaluating the impact of strengthened ethical behavior on additional performance indicators, such as employee commitment and organizational innovation.

To enhance the internal validity of future research, scholars are advised to employ multiple measurement tools or diverse data sources to minimize bias. Additionally, incorporating control variables such as company size, sector type, and years of experience can improve the accuracy and generalizability of the results.

Contributions

The study offers several theoretical and practical contributions:

- *First*, it establishes a conceptual link between ethical leadership and administrative empowerment within organizational contexts, particularly in the business sector.
- *Second*, it addresses a gap in the existing literature, which remains limited in its exploration of ethical leadership in

organizational settings. The study's findings reveal the absence of a significant relationship between the mere prevalence of ethical behavior and administrative empowerment an aspect previously overlooked. This contributes to a deeper understanding of ethical leadership dimensions and their implications for empowerment practices.

- *Third*, the results carry important practical implications, including the enhancement of administrative empowerment within companies and the provision of insights into the current state of ethical leadership practices and empowerment mechanisms in organizational environments.

Disclosure Statement

- **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the Research Ethics Committee at the Business Administration Center (CBA) Sana'a University, the American Psychological Association (APA 2010), and the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards (2013). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Our research protocol received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the Business Administration Center, Sana'a University, prior to the commencement of data collection, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants' responses.
- **Data Availability Statement:** The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.
- **Author Contributions:** The conceptualization, methodology, data collection, analysis, and drafting of the

original manuscript were carried out by FMN. Supervision, review, and editing were jointly undertaken by AAA and FNM. All authors have read and approved the submitted version of the manuscript.

- **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.
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- **Dissertation Note:** This study is extracted from an unpublished doctoral dissertation titled: *The Role of Ethical Leadership in Improving Job Performance in Yemeni Public Joint-Stock Companies Through Administrative Empowerment: A Field Study on Yemeni Public Joint-Stock Companies*, authored by Naji, Fuad Mohammed (2026). The dissertation was submitted to and approved by the Public Administration Center at Sana'a University, Yemen. All field study data presented in this article are derived from the aforementioned dissertation.

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