



Impact of Administrative Empowerment on Administrative Creativity: Organizational Culture as a Mediator

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of administrative empowerment on organizational culture and examines how these dynamics jointly foster administrative creativity within the setting of Sana'a University. Adopting a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected from 207 administrative employees representing various levels of responsibility. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate measurement constructs, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) examined direct and mediated relationships among the variables. Results indicate that administrative empowerment positively and significantly affects organizational culture and administrative creativity. Moreover, organizational culture serves as a vital mediator, strengthening the link between empowerment and creativity. The findings highlight that when administrators are granted meaningful roles and decision-making authority, and when the institutional culture promotes trust, collaboration, and innovation, creativity flourishes. The study underscores the need for higher education institutions to integrate empowerment strategies with a supportive culture, thereby enhance creative problem-solving and resilience. Educational leaders can leverage this synergy by investing in professional development, fostering open communication channels, and rewarding creative contributions. By focusing on an academic institution in a dynamic context, this research provides empirical insights into the pivotal role of both empowerment and culture in driving administrative creativity in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Administrative Empowerment, Organizational Culture, Administrative Creativity, Sana'a University.

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Introduction

The landscape of higher education is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by technological advancements, evolving student expectations, and an increasingly competitive global environment (Altbach et al., 2019; Marginson, 2018). Universities, once bastions of tradition, are now compelled to adopt agile administrative processes to respond effectively to shifting demands (Deem et al., 2008). In this context, administrative staff play a pivotal role: they are the architects and implementers of policies, processes, and day-to-day operations that constitute the backbone of institutional functioning (Leow, Le, & Billett, 2025; Hussain & Zehra, 2025). As the primary points of interaction between top management, faculty, and students, administrative personnel directly influence service quality, operational efficiency, and institutional reputation (Teichler, 2015).

Amid these pressures, administrative empowerment has emerged as a powerful strategy for fostering adaptability and creative problem-solving (Da Silva & Cardoso, 2025; Kaur, Kaur, & Goyal, 2024). Building on early socio-technical theories (Lewin, 1951), researchers have consistently demonstrated that when staff are granted real authority over their work—alongside the necessary resources, training, and support to exercise that authority—they are more likely to innovate (Nimran et al., 2024; Vijayakumar & Davidova, 2024). Empowerment, in this context, is not merely a buzzword; it encompasses both structural and psychological dimensions. Structurally, it involves reconfiguring hierarchical systems to provide employees with decision-making power, clearer communication channels, and the autonomy to act (Reiche, 2023). Psychologically, empowerment entails fostering feelings of competence, self-determination, and meaningfulness, enabling employees to internalize a proactive mindset (Deja, Bobkowski, & Huvila, 2024).

However, empowerment alone is insufficient to guarantee high levels of creativity and innovation if the broader institutional context remains unsupportive (Abid & Polo, 2025). Institutions often face challenges stemming from longstanding norms, rigid procedures, and risk-averse cultures (Wang & Zheng, 2024). Consequently, organizational culture—the collective set of values, beliefs, and behavioral norms that define an institution—serves as a key mediator (Bhuiyan, Adu, Ullah, & Islam, 2025). Culture not only shapes how individuals interpret empowerment but also influences their sense of safety in taking creative risks (Yaqoob, Sheraz, & Mukhtar, 2024). A positive, innovation-oriented culture can enhance the impact of empowerment by fostering trust, collaboration, and the pursuit of new ideas (Kim & Park, 2021). Conversely, a culture entrenched in hierarchical control may diminish empowerment's potential benefits, as employees may hesitate to propose novel solutions due to fear of negative repercussions (Andargoli, Malik, & Rizi, 2024).

Within academic institutions, the interplay between empowerment, culture, and creativity holds particular significance (Awashreh, 2025). Universities have traditionally relied on administrative staff to ensure continuity and uphold academic standards (Oppong & Oduro-Asabere, 2025). In response to global shifts—such as online learning,

industry partnerships, and international accreditation-administrative roles now demand greater adaptability and ingenuity than ever before (Wu & Gu, 2022). Empowering these staff members to design efficient, student-centered processes, integrate technological innovations, and address emerging challenges is critical (Tan, Pandey, & Bhardwaj, 2025). However, nurturing administrative creativity also requires a cultural environment that values experimentation, respects employee input, and rewards innovative achievements (Wulandari, 2024). Without such cultural support, even well-intentioned structural reforms may fail to unlock the full creative potential of administrative teams.

Yemen has experienced prolonged political instability, economic deterioration, and institutional fragility over the past decade, significantly affecting the performance and governance capacity of public institutions, including higher education organizations (Almaweri, 2022). These conditions have imposed considerable administrative and organizational pressures on universities, particularly in areas related to resource management, institutional adaptability, and employee motivation, thereby increasing the need for administrative empowerment and organizational cultures that encourage creativity and innovation among employees.

Within this context, Sana'a University provides a compelling setting for examining these dynamics. As a leading academic institution facing resource constraints and evolving educational mandates, Sana'a University embodies many of the complexities characteristic of higher education worldwide (Altbach et al., 2009). Questions arise regarding the effectiveness of empowerment programs in enhancing organizational performance (Jang, Kwak, & Bae, 2025). How does empowerment translate into creative behavior among administrative employees? To what extent does organizational culture facilitate or impede this transformation? Addressing these questions is essential not only for theoretical development but also for institutional leaders aiming to implement best practices in workforce empowerment and fostering a culture of innovation (Hartley, 2012).

This study, therefore, aims to explore the interplay among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity at Sana'a University. Drawing on existing theories and empirical evidence, it hypothesizes that empowerment directly influences administrative creativity, while organizational culture mediates and amplifies this effect (García-Morales et al., 2012). To test these relationships, the research employs a quantitative methodology using structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze data collected from 207 administrative employees. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is applied to validate measurement instruments, ensuring robust inferences regarding the latent constructs (Byrne, 2013). Through this empirical approach, the study seeks to fill gaps in the current literature—where most research has focused on empowerment in business or industrial settings—and extend its application to the academic administrative context (Al-Shamsi, 2025).

By examining both the structural dimensions of empowerment (delegation of authority, role reconfiguration) and its psychological facets (employees' sense of auton-

omy, competence, and impact), the research aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the drivers behind creative behaviors (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Additionally, it elucidates how organizational culture, with its embedded values and norms, can either magnify or mitigate the effects of empowerment (Mahmoud & Mousa, 2025). The findings are expected to have practical implications for university policymakers, administrators, and academic leaders. If the hypothesized relationships are confirmed, institutions can benefit from designing strategic empowerment initiatives accompanied by cultural interventions—such as open communication forums, inclusive decision-making bodies, and incentive systems that reward creative risk-taking (Doten-Snitker, Margherio, & Litzler, 2021; Srisathan & Ketkaew, 2020).

This study proceeds as follows. First, the Literature Review and Conceptual Framework sections consolidate existing research on empowerment, organizational culture, and creativity in academic settings, identifying the conceptual gaps this study seeks to address. Next, the Methodology outlines the research design, data collection procedures, and analytical tools used to test the hypotheses. The Results section presents descriptive and inferential findings, detailing model fit indices and path analyses. Subsequently, the Discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing literature, highlighting practical implications and theoretical contributions. Finally, the Conclusion synthesizes key insights, acknowledges study limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

Literature Review: Conceptual Framework

Administrative empowerment has long been recognized as a crucial lever for enhancing organizational performance and adaptive capacity (Al-obaid & Alkawari, 2026). Fundamentally, empowerment arises when employees perceive meaningful discretion over their roles and recognize their impact on organizational outcomes (Wang & Lu, 2019). Although many studies treat empowerment as a unified construct, it is valuable to conceptualize it through distinct yet interconnected subdimensions: delegation, information sharing, and independence. These dimensions describe how authority is distributed, how information and resources circulate, and the degree of autonomy individuals possess in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Delegation refers to the formal transfer of decision-making authority from higher-level supervisors to frontline or mid-level employees. Scholars argue that genuine delegation encourages creative thinking, as staff are entrusted with tasks beyond routine duties (Jung, Kang, & Choi, 2022). In administrative settings, this may involve allowing staff to reformulate budgeting procedures, restructure workflows, or set departmental priorities without constant oversight. The goal is not merely to reduce managerial burdens but to foster a sense of ownership, increasing employees' accountability for delegated tasks (Zhou, Cheng, Liu, & Che, 2021). This often results in heightened motivation to explore innovative approaches, thereby fueling organizational innovation.

While delegation emphasizes formal authority, information sharing focuses on disseminating critical data and resources necessary for effective decision-making. A lack of resource sharing can undermine delegation if employees lack the knowledge or support to implement their ideas (Kumar, Liu, & Jin, 2022). Conversely, organizations that openly share data, budget insights, and strategic objectives empower administrators to make informed, creative decisions. From a social exchange perspective (Chen & Siphon, 2022), sharing signals trust and respect, encouraging employees to reciprocate with greater commitment and discretionary effort. An empowered workplace not only encourages staff to propose changes but also equips them with the tools to realize those proposals.

Independence completes the empowerment triad, highlighting employees' freedom to work autonomously and choose methods to achieve goals. This sense of self-determination is a core element of psychological empowerment, characterized by meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact (Lipae, 2025). Independence aligns closely with creativity, as employees free from micromanagement are more likely to experiment with unconventional methods tailored to specific challenges (Milner, 2024). In administrative contexts, independence may manifest in designing onboarding processes, experimenting with software for data optimization, or reimagining interdepartmental communication flows. Since creativity requires a willingness to explore new possibilities, autonomy reduces fear of reproach and reinforces intrinsic motivation to innovate.

However, empowerment does not operate in isolation. Research consistently highlights the moderating or mediating role of organizational culture in shaping employees' responses to empowerment (Mahmoud & Mousa, 2025; Kuang, Li, & Yang, 2022). Organizational culture—defined as shared assumptions, beliefs, and norms—guides behavior and shapes the collective ethos. While empowerment provides structural and psychological triggers for creativity, the prevailing cultural climate determines whether these triggers are amplified or suppressed (Malik, Nadeem, & Ahmed, 2022). Three cultural elements—teamwork, trust, and justice—are particularly crucial in fostering an environment where empowered staff can leverage their autonomy effectively.

Teamwork reflects the degree to which collaboration, information exchange, and mutual support are normative within an organization. A culture of teamwork accelerates creativity by pooling diverse perspectives and knowledge (Vallejos & Paredes-Saavedra, 2024). Empowered administrators who also experience collective synergy are more likely to refine ideas through constructive feedback. In higher education or public service, where work often spans multiple departments, team-based approaches are vital to ensure new initiatives gain traction. When collaboration is routine, administrators trust their autonomy will be supported rather than isolating.

Trust, manifested in vertical (leader-employee) and lateral (peer-to-peer) relationships, is essential for risk-taking (Mazidi, Abdollahzadeh Namini, & Samiei, 2024). Administrative creativity relies on risk-taking—introducing new ideas or processes in-

volves potential failure (Castillo-Vergara & Garcia-Perez-de-Lema, 2021). Without trust, employees may hesitate to use delegated authority, fearing blame or punishment for unsuccessful innovations (Elsayed, Zhao, & Goda, 2023). Conversely, when mistakes are met with constructive responses, employees are willing to push boundaries (Daly & Sætre, 2023). Trust also relates to information sharing; without reliable access to information, administrators cannot confidently implement solutions (Hayat Bhatti et al., 2022). Thus, trust forms the social foundation for empowerment.

Justice introduces fairness in decision-making and resource distribution. Organizational justice literature highlights distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness as key (Bobocel, 2021). When employees perceive policies and rewards as equitable and processes as transparent, they are more likely to embrace change and commit to goals. This has direct implications for creativity: an empowered administrator proposing a new evaluation system is more likely to gain acceptance if the culture is perceived as fair (Rbiaa & Dextras-Gauthier, 2024). Justice norms also affect how failure is treated; fair organizations focus on learning rather than punishment (Abid et al., 2024). Justice thus aligns empowerment dimensions with a collaborative environment conducive to creative exploration.

Administrative creativity, defined as the generation, promotion, and implementation of novel solutions to improve organizational processes, emerges from this synergy (Asgari, Babaei, Rahimi, & Ghorani, 2025; Shalley and Gilson, 2004). Examples include redesigning admissions workflows, launching digital communication platforms, or developing new staff training protocols (Berglund, 2024). Such creativity positively impacts morale, service quality, and resource utilization. By fostering creativity at the administrative level, institutions enhance agility in responding to challenges like technological disruptions and policy changes (Barrett-Maitland, 2024).

The link between empowerment and creativity is often examined through motivational and social exchange theories. Empowering leadership through delegation, shared decision-making, and autonomy enhances intrinsic motivation that supports innovation (Waseel et al., 2025; Al-Swidi, et al., 2025). Yet, empowerment alone is insufficient; a supportive culture promoting collaboration and experimentation is essential (Joo, Yoon, & Galbraith, 2023). The synergy among empowerment's structural components and cultural factors like trust and teamwork is critical. Formal authorization without cultural support can lead to resistance or passive opposition, undermining confidence and motivation (Zhang & Zhu, 2020).

Organizations fostering teamwork encourage cross-functional collaboration through brainstorming sessions, open forums, and joint task forces (Carreno, 2024). These practices facilitate knowledge sharing, reducing information asymmetry and enabling constructive feedback, which enhances independent actions (de Lucas Ancillo, Gavrila, & Tébar-Sáez, 2024; Abdu, Labaran, & Dabo, 2024).

Trust and justice complement independence and delegation. Independence allows administrators creative latitude (Modise, 2023), trust protects against harsh judgment for mistakes, and justice ensures fairness in resource allocation and recognition (Ibrahim, Ismail, & Mat, 2023). Each empowerment dimension aligns with cultural elements that either encourage or hinder innovation (Pongtuluran et al., 2025).

Thus, administrative creativity results from a network of organizational signals. Empowerment provisions signal institutional backing, while culture shapes how these signals are enacted daily. Norms of teamwork assure cooperation, trust encourages risk-taking, and justice fosters fair evaluation. Together, these factors create an environment where creativity can thrive.

Moreover, empowerment and culture reinforce each other, creating virtuous cycles of innovation. Successful creative initiatives strengthen cultural values of teamwork, trust, and justice, embedding a sustainable creative ethos (van Dun, Tan, & Wilderom, 2024). What begins as reform evolves into pride and momentum for ongoing improvement.

In conclusion, while empowerment establishes the foundation for creativity, its realization depends on organizational culture. By integrating empowerment's subdimensions with cultural facets, researchers and practitioners gain insight into fostering administrative creativity. Empowerment is both structural and psychological, shaped by cultural norms of collegiality, fairness, and respect. Organizations aiming to promote creativity must attend equally to cultural development and formal empowerment design. This synergy ensures creative thinking becomes standard practice, enabling institutions to adapt, thrive, and innovate in administrative functions.

Research Problem and Questions

Administrative employees are becoming increasingly essential to universities for enhancing service quality, addressing institutional pressures, and supporting academic transformation. However, administrative creativity does not arise automatically from routine work structures. It requires employees to have sufficient authority, access to information, autonomy, and a supportive organizational environment. At Sana'a University, administrative employees operate within a complex institutional context marked by resource constraints, procedural pressures, and increasing demands for improved administrative performance. These conditions necessitate examining whether administrative empowerment fosters administrative creativity and whether organizational culture strengthens this relationship.

Although previous studies have investigated empowerment, organizational culture, and creativity in business and public-sector organizations, there is limited empirical evidence on how these variables interact within higher education institutions, particularly in the Yemeni context. Moreover, earlier research often treats empowerment as a direct predictor of creativity without adequately exploring the cultural mechanisms

through which empowerment may lead to creative administrative behavior. This creates a research gap regarding the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity.

Accordingly, the central research problem of this study is expressed in the following question: To what extent does administrative empowerment affect administrative creativity at Sana'a University, and what role does organizational culture play as a mediating variable in this relationship?

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What is the effect of administrative empowerment on organizational culture at Sana'a University?
- 2- What is the direct effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity at Sana'a University?
- 3- What is the effect of organizational culture on administrative creativity at Sana'a University?
- 4- Does organizational culture mediate the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity at Sana'a University and to determine whether organizational culture mediates this relationship.

More specifically, the study aims to:

- 1- Assess the effect of administrative empowerment on organizational culture among administrative employees at Sana'a University.
- 2- Examine the direct effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity.
- 3- Analyze the effect of organizational culture on administrative creativity.
- 4- Test the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity.
- 5- Provide practical recommendations that can help university leaders strengthen administrative creativity through empowerment practices and a supportive organizational culture.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are based on empowerment theory, organizational culture literature, and prior empirical findings linking empowerment practices with creativity and innovation. Administrative empowerment is expected to influence employees' perceptions of authority, autonomy, access to information, and participation. These conditions can shape organizational culture by fostering trust, teamwork, fairness, and

openness. In turn, a supportive culture creates the social and psychological environment needed for administrative employees to generate and apply creative ideas.

- H1: Administrative empowerment has a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational culture at Sana'a University. This hypothesis is grounded in the view that empowerment practices such as delegation of authority, information sharing, and work independence contribute to building a participatory and trust-based organizational culture. When employees are given authority and access to relevant information, they are more likely to perceive the organization as fair, collaborative, and supportive.
- H2: Administrative empowerment has a positive and statistically significant effect on administrative creativity at Sana'a University. This hypothesis is based on the argument that empowered employees are more likely to demonstrate creative behavior because they have greater autonomy, a stronger sense of ownership of their work, and more opportunities to propose and implement new solutions. Delegation, information sharing, and independence reduce excessive dependence on hierarchical approval and allow employees to respond creatively to work-related problems.
- H3: Organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant effect on administrative creativity at Sana'a University. This hypothesis is based on organizational culture theory, which suggests that creativity is more likely in environments characterized by trust, teamwork, justice, openness, and support for new ideas. A supportive organizational culture reduces fear of failure, encourages cooperation, and increases employees' willingness to suggest and apply creative solutions.
- H4: Organizational culture mediates the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity at Sana'a University. This hypothesis assumes that administrative empowerment affects creativity not only directly but also indirectly through organizational culture. Empowerment may create structural and psychological conditions for creativity, while organizational culture determines whether these conditions translate into actual creative behavior. Therefore, the effect of empowerment on creativity is expected to be partially transmitted through organizational culture.

Study Design

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity at Sana'a University. The cross-sectional design was appropriate because the study aimed to measure employees' perceptions of empowerment, culture, and creativity at a specific point in time and to test the direct and indirect relationships among these variables using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Study Population and Sample

The target population consisted of all administrative employees at Sana'a University, totaling 898 employees across different administrative levels and departments. These employees included general directors, department directors, department heads, and specialists. The required sample size was estimated using the Stephen Thompson formula, resulting in a target sample of 296 participants.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to improve representativeness. The population was divided into strata according to job level and administrative department. Participants were then selected proportionally from each stratum to ensure that different categories of administrative employees were represented in the sample. Of the distributed questionnaires, 207 valid responses were obtained, representing a response rate of approximately 70%. Although this response rate is acceptable for survey-based organizational research, the possibility of non-response bias cannot be completely excluded. To reduce this concern, the demographic characteristics of respondents were reviewed to ensure representation across gender, age, education level, job position, and years of experience.

Measurement of Study Variables

The study measured three main latent variables: administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity. Administrative empowerment was measured through three dimensions: delegation, information sharing, and independence. Organizational culture was measured through teamwork, trust, and justice. Administrative creativity was measured through indicators reflecting the availability of a creative work environment, employees' ability to generate alternatives, institutional support for incentives, learning from others' experiences, and willingness to improve administrative practices.

All questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales used in previous studies on empowerment, organizational culture, and creativity. The wording was modified to fit the context of Sana'a University and the administrative work environment in higher education (Nasser, 2019), (Al-Heyasi, 2022).

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

All questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales used in previous studies on empowerment, organizational culture, and creativity. The wording was adjusted to fit the context of Sana'a University and the administrative work environment in higher education (Nasser, 2019; Al-Heyasi, 2022). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed electronically to administrative employees at Sana'a University. The questionnaire comprised

two sections. The first section gathered demographic information such as gender, age, education level, job position, and years of experience. The second section measured the study variables: administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity.

Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in organizational behavior and management to evaluate face and content validity. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of administrative employees constituting about 5% of the target sample. Feedback from both the expert review and pilot test was used to enhance item clarity, wording, and contextual relevance.

Validity and Reliability

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS to assess the validity of the measurement model. Convergent validity was evaluated via standardized factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). Factor loadings of 0.50 or higher were deemed acceptable. AVE values exceeding 0.50 indicated satisfactory convergent validity, and CR values above 0.70 signified acceptable construct reliability. Internal consistency was also evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS. SPSS was employed to produce descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics and study variables. AMOS was utilized for CFA and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM tested the direct effects of administrative empowerment on organizational culture and administrative creativity, alongside the effect of organizational culture on administrative creativity. The mediating role of organizational culture was examined through the indirect effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity mediated by organizational culture.

The SEM model was estimated using the Maximum Likelihood estimation method. Before analysis, the dataset was screened for missing values, outliers, and normality. Missing responses were examined, and incomplete questionnaires were excluded, resulting in 207 valid cases. Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis. Model fit was evaluated with indices including CMIN/df, RMSEA, CFI, NFI, IFI, and TLI. Modification indices were applied only if theoretically justified; no data-driven modifications were accepted without conceptual rationale.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. Approval was secured from the relevant university authority, and participants were fully informed about the study's purpose. Participation was voluntary, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Data collected were used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Field Study: Results and Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, including demographic characteristics, measurement model assessment, structural model evaluation, hypothesis testing, and mediation analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the study sample. The majority of respondents were male, comprising 71.5% of the sample, while females represented 28.5%. Regarding education level, most respondents held a bachelor's degree, accounting for 57.0% of the sample. Concerning job position, the largest group was general directors at 38.2%, followed by department directors at 25.1%, department heads at 23.7%, and specialists at 13.0%. Most respondents were aged between 30 and 40 years, representing 48.8% of the sample. With respect to experience, 31.4% had more than 15 years of experience, while 30.0% had between 10 and 15 years.

These characteristics indicate that the sample comprised employees with substantial administrative experience and representation across various job levels. However, these descriptive results were used solely to characterize the sample and were not incorporated as control variables in the structural model. Future research may investigate whether demographic variables such as gender, education, age, job level, and experience affect administrative creativity.

Table 1. Sample Distribution by Gender, Education Level, Job, Age and Experience

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	male	148	71.5
	female	59	28.5
Education level	High School	27	13.0
	Post-secondary diploma	27	13.0
	Bachelor's	118	57.0
	Postgraduate	35	16.9
Job	Competent	27	13.0
	Head of the Department	49	23.7
	Director of the Department	52	25.1
	Director general	79	38.2
Age	Less than 30 years	52	25.1
	30-40 years	101	48.8
	40-50 years	48	23.2
	More than 50 years	6	2.9
experience	Less than 5 years	34	16.4
	5-10 years	46	22.2
	10-15 years	62	30.0
	More than 15 years	65	31.4

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed using AMOS to evaluate the measurement model. The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.503 to 0.891, exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpassed 0.50, supporting convergent validity. Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.738 to 0.909, and Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.802 for all constructs, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. These results suggest that the measurement model achieved acceptable levels of reliability and convergent validity. Therefore, the constructs were deemed suitable for further analysis using Structural Equation Modeling.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling was employed to test the direct and indirect relationships among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity. Model fit was assessed using indices including CMIN/df, RMSEA, CFI, NFI, IFI, and TLI.

The model demonstrated acceptable fit according to CMIN/df = 2.070 and RMSEA = 0.072. However, several incremental fit indices were below the conventional threshold of 0.90, namely CFI = 0.870, NFI = 0.777, IFI = 0.871, and TLI = 0.859. Hence, the model fit is best described as marginal but partially acceptable. Consequently, the structural results are interpreted with caution, especially since the hypothesized paths are theoretically justified and statistically significant (Byrne, 2013).

Table 2: Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold	Study Result
CMIN/df	< 5 (acceptable), < 2 (excellent)	2.070
RMSEA	0.05 – 0.08 (acceptable), ≤ 0.05 (excellent)	0.072
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.870
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.777
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.871
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.859

The model fit indices indicate an overall acceptable fit, though some indices (NFI, TLI, and CFI) are slightly below the 0.90 threshold, suggesting room for improvement.

Hypothesis Testing

This study conducted detailed hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity at Sana'a University. The results clarify both the direct effects and the mediated relationships among these variables, offering a comprehensive understanding of their dynamics.

Direct and Mediated Relationships:

- **H1: Administrative Empowerment → Organizational Culture:** The first hypothesis proposed a direct positive relationship between administrative empowerment and organizational culture. The analysis revealed a strong path coefficient of 0.781, significant at $p < 0.001$. This significant positive association indicates that efforts to enhance empowerment within the administrative framework substantially contribute to fostering an organizational culture that values and supports innovation and creativity. This underscores the pivotal role of empowerment as a transformative force within the organization, cultivating an environment conducive to the generation of new ideas and approaches.
- **H2: Administrative Empowerment → Administrative Creativity:** The second hypothesis tested the direct effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity. The path coefficient was 0.437, significant at $p < 0.001$. This confirms that empowerment directly promotes creative outcomes by granting employees the autonomy and authority to pursue innovative solutions and express their ideas freely. This highlights the importance of empowerment not only for improving operational efficiency but also for enhancing the creative potential of administrative staff.

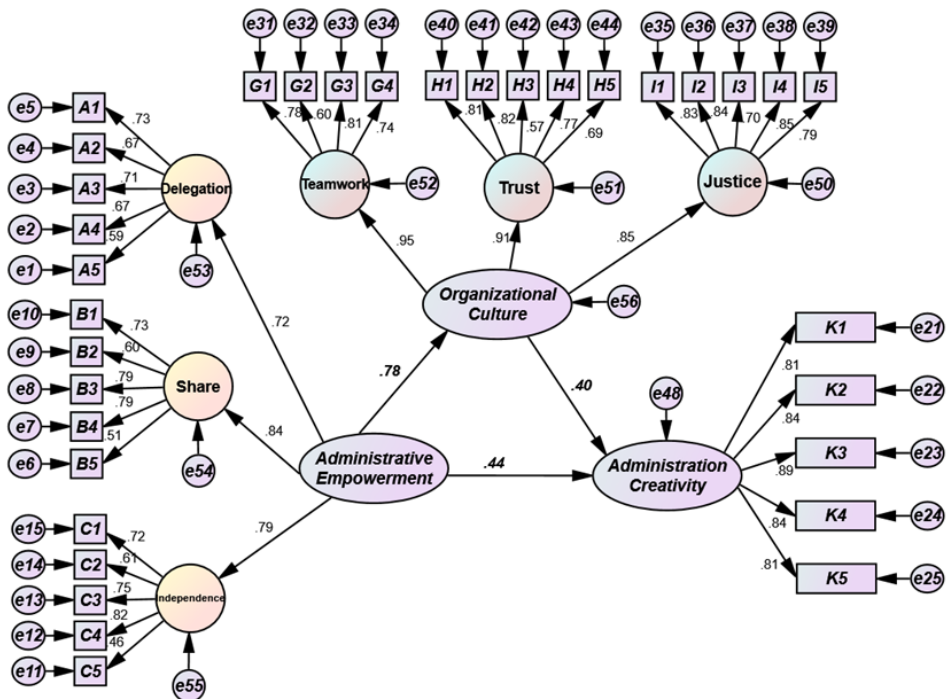


Figure 1. SEM Analysis of Employees Empowerment Effect on Creativity through Organizational Culture

- **H3: Organizational Culture → Administrative Creativity:** The third hypothesis examined organizational culture as a mediating factor that enhances administrative creativity. The path coefficient was 0.397, with $p < 0.001$, demonstrating a significant positive effect. This finding emphasizes that a supportive and inclusive organizational culture—characterized by trust, openness, and fairness—is essential for cultivating an environment where creativity can flourish. It suggests that while empowerment initiates creativity, organizational culture sustains and amplifies it, making culture a critical determinant for realizing innovative outcomes.

The standardized regression weights (β) and critical ratios (C.R.) are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	β (Standardized Estimate)	C.R.	p-value	Result
H1	AE → OC	0.781	6.037	***	Supported
H2	AE → AC	0.437	4.870	***	Supported
H3	OC → AC	0.397	4.744	***	Supported

Table 4. Means Scores, Standard Deviation and Correlations between the Study Variables

variables	Areas/indicators	Mean	SD	correlation
Administrative Empowerment	Delegation	3.014	0.757	.788**
	Information Sharing	3.518	0.819	.858**
	Independence	3.154	0.805	.858**
Organizational Culture	Teamwork	3.063	0.874	.897**
	Trust	3.057	0.849	.904**
	Justice	2.445	0.938	.891**
Administration Creativity	K1	2.420	1.015	.839**
	K2	2.329	1.051	.864**
	K3	2.101	1.054	.900**
	K4	2.174	1.037	.878**
	K5	2.367	1.000	.850**

* $p < 0.05$ $p < 0.01$ ($n = 207$). ** Notes: K1 (The university provides a work environment suitable for creativity); K2 (I feel that I have the ability to find many alternatives to deal with the problems I face at work); K3 (The university is interested in incentives because of their positive impact on creating creativity); K4 (I always strive to enhance creative behavior by benefiting from the experiences of others); K5 (My direct supervisor's good treatment motivates me to be creative at work).

The findings from the hypothesis testing provide a nuanced understanding of how empowerment and culture interact to enhance creativity within an academic setting. The direct effects of empowerment on both organizational culture and creativity highlight its foundational role in administrative innovation. More importantly, the significant mediating role of organizational culture underscores the synergy between structural changes and cultural dynamics. This synergy leads to the conclusion that for administrative creativity to be fully realized and sustained, efforts must extend beyond merely implementing structural empowerment. There must also be a concerted effort to cultivate an organizational culture that actively supports and rewards innovative thinking and problem-solving.

These insights not only reinforce the theoretical underpinnings of the study but also offer practical guidance for educational leaders. By understanding the pivotal roles of empowerment and culture, institutions can more effectively strategize initiatives that promote creativity and foster an environment where such creativity leads to tangible improvements and innovations in administrative processes and educational outcomes. This holistic approach ensures that empowering administrative staff is not an end in itself but a means to foster a more dynamic, innovative, and effective organizational culture.

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of organizational culture was examined by assessing the direct and indirect paths among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity. Administrative empowerment had a significant positive effect on organizational culture ($\beta = 0.781, p < 0.001$), and organizational culture had a significant positive effect on administrative creativity ($\beta = 0.397, p < 0.001$). The direct effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity also remained significant ($\beta = 0.437, p < 0.001$). This pattern indicates partial mediation. Based on standardized coefficients, the estimated indirect effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity through organizational culture was 0.310 (0.781×0.397). The estimated total effect was 0.747, consisting of the direct effect of 0.437 and the indirect effect of 0.310. Therefore, organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the notion that administrative empowerment plays a crucial role in cultivating organizational culture and fostering administrative creativity within academic settings. Specifically, the results indicate that empowerment strategies—whether oriented toward structural elements, such as delegated authority, or psychological elements, such as autonomy and competence—significantly affect the attitudes, behaviors, and creative outputs of administrative employees. These outcomes align with earlier scholarship suggesting that empowered employees are more inclined to exhibit proactive behaviors and propose innovative solutions (Schazeril et al., 2023). By highlighting the direct impact of empowerment on creativity, this study contributes empirical evidence to the growing body of literature viewing empowerment as a catalyst for organizational innovation (Nimran et al., 2024).

Crucially, the data also underscore the mediating function of organizational culture in shaping how empowerment manifests as creative behavior. A supportive culture—characterized by open communication, collaboration, and a willingness to embrace new ideas—can magnify the impact of empowerment on creativity. These insights echo findings from Kamil, Zhao, & Nordin (2025) and Asgari, Babaei, Rahimi, & Ghorani (2025), which emphasize that culture acts as a social mechanism that either

encourages or deters innovative thinking. In the context of Sana'a University, a culture endorsing risk-taking and valuing contributions from all levels appears to significantly enhance administrators' capacity and readiness to engage in creative problem-solving. This dynamic suggests that even well-designed empowerment initiatives may not yield optimal results if the broader cultural environment is resistant to change or risk-averse. Consequently, educational leaders should view culture and empowerment as interdependent levers for fostering meaningful, lasting innovation.

From a practical standpoint, these results have important implications for university administrators and policymakers. First, structural empowerment measures—such as flattening hierarchies, clarifying decision-making pathways, and offering training and resources—can equip administrative staff to take initiative. However, parallel efforts to cultivate a culture of trust, openness, and mutual respect are essential. Without a receptive cultural backdrop, administrators may hesitate to exercise their newly delegated authority, fearing negative repercussions for unorthodox ideas or failed experiments. Second, the study suggests that strategies aimed at psychological empowerment—increasing employees' sense of self-efficacy, purpose, and impact—should be integrated with cultural practices that reward creativity. Recognition programs, peer feedback systems, and inclusive leadership styles can reinforce the positive feedback loop whereby empowered employees become champions of innovation, further strengthening the institution's cultural fabric.

Additionally, the findings broaden the theoretical understanding of how empowerment mechanisms translate into organizational outcomes in higher education. Past research on empowerment has mostly focused on corporate or public-sector contexts, with limited application to the unique features of academic institutions. By focusing on Sana'a University, this study highlights both the universal benefits of empowerment and the distinct cultural elements that characterize universities. In particular, it demonstrates how administrative creativity—often overshadowed by faculty-centered discussions—can drive operational efficiency, service quality, and institutional adaptability.

Nonetheless, several limitations warrant attention. The study's cross-sectional design limits definitive causal inferences, suggesting the need for longitudinal research to track how changes in empowerment strategies and cultural norms evolve over time and impact creativity. Additionally, reliance on self-reported measures may introduce common method bias, although steps such as guaranteeing respondent confidentiality were taken to mitigate this. Future research could employ qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to capture nuanced administrator experiences and cultural subtleties shaping creative behavior. Studies comparing multiple higher education institutions could also account for variations in governance, size, and resources, enhancing generalizability.

Together, these results both corroborate existing theories and clarify the synergistic relationship between empowerment and culture. By examining this relationship in an

academic institution, this research highlights that leadership decisions about authority structures and staff engagement must be accompanied by deliberate efforts to build a culture valuing and fostering creativity. Such a dual approach is essential for universities aiming to remain agile and responsive amid rapid educational transformation.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of administrative empowerment on administrative creativity at Sana'a University and tested the mediating role of organizational culture. The findings showed that administrative empowerment has a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational culture and administrative creativity. The results also showed that organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant effect on administrative creativity. The findings further indicate that organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between administrative empowerment and administrative creativity. This means that empowerment contributes to creativity both directly and indirectly through a supportive culture. Administrative employees are more likely to demonstrate creative behavior when they are granted authority, autonomy, and access to information, and when the organizational culture supports trust, teamwork, justice, and openness to new ideas. The study contributes to the literature by examining these relationships in the context of a higher education institution in Yemen, a context that remains underrepresented in organizational behavior research. It also highlights the importance of administrative employees as contributors to institutional innovation, not merely as implementers of routine procedures. Practically, the study suggests that universities seeking to improve administrative creativity should not rely solely on structural empowerment. Empowerment initiatives must be accompanied by deliberate cultural development. When decision-making authority, information sharing, and work independence are supported by a fair, collaborative, and trust-based culture, administrative creativity is more likely to emerge and be sustained. Overall, the study provides empirical support for the view that administrative creativity in higher education depends on the combined effect of empowerment practices and organizational culture. For Sana'a University, strengthening both dimensions can improve creative problem-solving, administrative responsiveness, and institutional adaptability.

Study Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that Sana'a University strengthen administrative empowerment as a practical approach for improving administrative creativity. University leaders should expand the participation of administrative employees in decision-making, particularly in matters related to workflow improvement, service delivery, student support, and internal administrative procedures. Empowerment should not be limited to formal delegation; it should also include access to relevant information, clear communication channels, and sufficient authority to act within de-

defined responsibilities. The university should also develop a supportive organizational culture that encourages teamwork, trust, fairness, and openness to new ideas.

The results indicate that organizational culture plays an important role in translating empowerment into creative behavior. Therefore, administrative units should promote collaborative work practices, reduce excessive centralization, and encourage employees to propose practical solutions to administrative problems without fear of blame or punishment. In addition, Sana'a University should establish clear mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding creative administrative contributions. Incentives may include formal appreciation, professional development opportunities, promotion-related recognition, or support for implementing successful employee-generated initiatives. Such mechanisms can increase motivation and signal that creativity is valued institutionally.

The study further recommends investing in training programs focused on creative problem-solving, digital administrative skills, communication, leadership, and participatory decision-making. These programs should target different administrative levels, including general directors, department directors, department heads, and specialists, to ensure that empowerment practices are understood and applied consistently across the university. Finally, university leadership should periodically assess the organizational culture and empowerment climate through employee surveys, feedback sessions, and internal review processes. This would help identify barriers to creativity, such as weak communication, perceived unfairness, limited autonomy, or lack of trust, and allow leaders to address them through evidence-based administrative reforms.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted in a single institution, Sana'a University. Although this context is important and underrepresented in higher education research, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other universities or administrative settings with different governance structures, resources, or organizational cultures. Second, the study used a cross-sectional design, meaning that data were collected at one point in time. Therefore, the findings show statistical associations among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity, but they do not establish definitive causal relationships. Longitudinal studies would be needed to examine how changes in empowerment practices and organizational culture influence creativity over time. Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data. This may increase the possibility of common method bias, social desirability bias, or inflated relationships among variables. Although confidentiality was assured to reduce this risk, future studies should consider using multiple data sources, such as supervisor evaluations, institutional performance records, interviews, or observation.

Future Studies

Future studies should extend this research by testing the proposed model in other Yemeni universities and higher education institutions in different national contexts. Comparative studies would help determine whether the relationships among administrative empowerment, organizational culture, and administrative creativity are consistent across institutional types, governance systems, and cultural environments. Longitudinal research is also recommended. Tracking empowerment practices, cultural change, and administrative creativity over time would provide stronger evidence about causal direction and help determine whether improvements in empowerment and culture lead to sustained increases in creativity. Future research should also use larger samples to improve the stability of SEM estimates and allow additional statistical analyses. For example, researchers could examine whether gender, age, education level, job position, or years of experience moderate the relationships among empowerment, culture, and creativity. In addition, future studies should apply more rigorous mediation testing procedures, especially bootstrapping methods with confidence intervals for indirect effects. This would provide stronger statistical evidence regarding the mediating role of organizational culture. Researchers may also consider using mixed-methods designs. Qualitative interviews or focus groups with administrative employees could provide deeper insight into how empowerment is experienced in daily work, what cultural barriers limit creativity, and what institutional practices encourage or discourage innovative administrative behavior. Finally, future studies could expand the model by including additional variables, such as leadership style, psychological safety, organizational justice, job satisfaction, digital transformation readiness, or perceived organizational support. These variables may help explain more precisely how administrative empowerment leads to creative outcomes in higher education institutions.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Informed Consent Declaration

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Approval was obtained from the university's review board, and all participants provided informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation. Measures were taken to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of responses, safeguarding the integrity of the research process.

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