Ethical leadership and public sector performance: mediating role of corporate social responsibility and organizational politics and moderator of social capital

Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi, Mohamed Bile Hashi & Khawaja Fawad Latif

Published online: 07 Aug 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 3584

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

Citing articles: 4 View citing articles ↗

co✳gent

MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

∂ OPEN ACCESS   Check for updates

Ethical leadership and public sector performance: mediating role of corporate social responsibility and organizational politics and moderator of social capital

Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi[a], Mohamed Bile Hashi[b] and Khawaja Fawad Latif[c]

[a]Faculty of Social Sciences, SIMAD University, Mogadishu, Somalia; [b]Department of Political Science, Asia e University, Malaysia; [c]COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Evidence from the body of knowledge shows that ethical leadership influences organizational outcomes. Thus, drawing on social learning and social exchange theories, this study empirically examines the impact of ethical leadership on public sector organizational performance, focusing on the mediating effects of perceived organizational politics and corporate social responsibility and the moderating role of organizational social capital. A quantitative cross-sectional online survey was conducted using a convenience sampling strategy to collect data from 292 federal government employees and federal member state employees across Somalia. Structural equation modeling (SEM–PLS) was used to analyze the data using SmartPLS4. The results reveal that ethical leadership directly affects organizational performance, perceived organizational politics, and corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, perceived organizational politics partially mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance. This study offers practical recommendations for public sector agencies and policymakers to enhance organizational performance through ethical leadership. This study fills a literature gap by exploring the association between ethical leadership and organizational performance in the public sector, specifically in Somalia. Various mediating and moderating factors have deepened our understanding of how ethical leadership influences organizational performance in the public sector.

1. Introduction

In the past decade, scholars have paid ethical leadership (EL) a great deal of attention (Kalshoven et al., 2013). Public sector organizational performance (OP) has become a hot topic in public management in the 21st century and has attracted much interest in public administration in recent decades (Vermeeren et al., 2014; Walker & Boyne, 2009), as there is a public outcry for more public sector research (Matten & Moon, 2008). Perceived organizational politics (POP) has been proven crucial for measuring the benefits of ethical leadership for organizations (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Prior studies recommended that leaders embrace core ethical principles, such as beneficence, justice, and veracity, to improve public sector performance (Buye, 2020). Myriad prior studies have emphasized the importance of examining ethical leadership's role in the performance of public organizations and called for more research in this area. Ethical leaders foster a learning culture to boost performance (Saeed et al., 2022), impart ethical values, give their organizations a competitive edge (Koay & Lim, 2021; Yasin, 2021), influence goal clarity and project success (Zada et al., 2023), and serve as a stabilizing force, enabling public entities to reassess goals amidst global uncertainties to remain competitive (Saeed et al.,

2023). Additionally, recent controversies surrounding the ethics of government managers underscore the importance of further studies on ethical leadership within public institutions (Hassan et al., 2014). Effective public sector performance is essential for development, stability, and service delivery in post-conflict nations like Somalia. However, the interaction between these factors in Somalia is unexplored and unknown. Researching this can offer vital insights for those looking to bolster the public sector in Somalia's recovery. Furthermore, Somalia's history of civil war, corruption, and political instability has significantly impacted its public sector. These factors have hindered public institutions' ability to deliver services and achieve desired performance levels (Abdi & Hashi, 2023). This unique context presents a valuable opportunity to study the relationship between ethical leadership (EL), organizational performance (OP), and the proposed mediating factors (corporate social responsibility (CSR) and organizational politics (POP)) and the moderating factor (organizational social capital (OSC)) within this relationship. The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS) (2021) highlights poor institutional performance and insufficient service delivery as critical issues plaguing Somali public institutions. Given this history of weak institutions, prioritizing ethical leadership that values transparency and accountability becomes crucial for rebuilding trust, attracting resources, and ultimately improving performance in Somalia.

Several determinants influence organizational ethics, with leadership notably influential (Grojean et al., 2004; Steinbauer et al., 2014). Combined with the unknown exploration of a new model that examines ethical leadership and public sector performance, factoring in CSR and organizational politics as mediators, and organizational social capital as a moderating factor, these justifications call for and motivate in-depth research.

Although myriad prior recent studies have examined the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance, mainly in the private sector (Pirzada et al., 2023; Abdi & Hashi, 2023; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2023), to the best of our knowledge, no previous study has modeled the impact of ethical leadership on public sector organizational performance via the underlying mechanisms of perceived organizational politics and CSR and the moderation effect of organizational social capital in a single comprehensive conceptual model. Being the first to look into the interplay between all five variables in a single model, the current study is noteworthy for being novel, unique, and valuable, as it contributes to the existing body of literature and offers a more thorough knowledge of the relationships between these variables.

To be more precise, five specific research gaps still exist in this area of study. First, despite decades of debate and research, ethical leadership research still suffers from disorganization and confusion (Avey et al., 2011). Most studies on the topic are anecdotal and remain strongly normative (Brown & Treviño, 2006), and there are still theoretical, methodological, and design challenges that necessitate more research (Den Hartog, 2015). Second, while different leadership styles have been associated with various organizational outcomes, little research has looked at whether there is a direct link between ethical leadership and organizational performance, and most studies have concentrated on the private sector, with little attention paid to the public sector (Shin, 2012). Very few studies have offered an explanation or mechanism for how ethical leadership impacts organizational performance, which led to a public call for further research (Avey et al., 2011). Third, most research on ethical leadership and CSR is particularly interested in the private sector, mainly manufacturing and financial performance (Kim et al., 2018). Fourth, to the best of our knowledge, there is no comprehensive research on the impact of perceived organizational politics on organizational performance in the public sector, except for the studies of Vigoda (2000) and Parker et al. (1995). Fifth, although ethics has recently gained attention in social capital research, there is still a lack of empirical research on the topic (Pastoriza & Ariño, 2013).

While previous studies have primarily focused on the private sector (see Pirzada et al., 2023; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2023), our research directly addresses the crucial impact of ethical leadership on performance in the public sector, which is essential for public trust and service delivery. The study examines how employees' perception of organizational politics, specifically favoritism over merit, influences performance in the public sector. This area has not been extensively researched but has the potential to highlight significant challenges. Our research goes a step further by exploring social capital as a moderator to understand how existing levels of trust affect the effectiveness of ethical leadership in the public sector. By addressing these gaps in the literature, our research offers a unique perspective on ethical leadership in the public sector, particularly in underdeveloped countries like Somalia. Understanding the

mediating role of CSR and organizational performance, as well as the moderating influence of social capital, can provide valuable insights for policymakers and leaders in the public sector. Therefore, the study investigates the relationship between ethical leadership and public sector performance, specifically examining the mediating role of CSR and organizational politics, as well as the moderating effect of social capital.

The study draws on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1986) to explain the impact of ethical leadership on public sector organizational performance with the mediating roles of CSR and perceived organizational politics and the moderating influence of organizational social capital. Social learning theory posits that individuals gain desirable behaviors by imitating reliable role models, an essential explanatory framework for how ethical leaders could influence desired follower behaviors (Kalshoven et al., 2013). Additionally, it is believed that social exchange theory offers a robust explanation for the relationship between ethical leadership behaviors and favored employee behavior; according to the norm of reciprocity, which is the foundation of social exchange theory, people are obligated to repay those who have helped them (Newman et al., 2013). By incorporating the theories above and examining the many processes of the mediating roles of CSR and perceived organizational politics and the moderating roles of organizational social capital, the current study advances the body of research on ethical leadership and the performance of public sector organizations.

Both social learning theory and social exchange theory offer valuable insights into the relationship between ethical leadership, public sector performance, and the mediating and moderating factors of CSR, organizational performance, and organizational social capital. Social learning theory suggests that employees learn through observation and social interaction. Ethical leaders create a positive environment that encourages ethical behavior. Employees internalize the ethical values promoted by their leaders, leading to responsible actions that support CSR efforts, build public trust, and improve performance. Social learning fosters a sense of shared responsibility for positive outcomes. Employees who understand the importance of their actions become more engaged in pursuing public good objectives.

Social exchange theory focuses on assessing costs and benefits in social interactions. Employees are more likely to engage in ethical conduct if they perceive a fair exchange with their leaders. Ethical leaders promote open communication and collaboration, which facilitate knowledge sharing and problem-solving – crucial elements for achieving high performance in public service. Employees who trust ethical leadership and believe in the organization's values are more inclined to actively participate in CSR initiatives, such as volunteering and community outreach. These actions can enhance public perception and foster positive social capital, which is based on trust and cooperation. However, excessive organizational politics, where personal connections outweigh merit in career advancement, can undermine the benefits of ethical leadership and social exchange theory. This discourages ethical behavior and erodes trust, potentially hindering public service performance.

The strength of existing social networks within the organization (social capital) can moderate the impact of both social learning theory and social exchange theory. Strong social networks facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, supporting ethical conduct and CSR initiatives. Additionally, high levels of social capital based on trusting relationships within the broader community can further amplify the positive effects of ethical leadership and CSR by fostering cooperation between the public and the government, creating a more supportive environment for achieving public service goals. By combining social learning theory's focus on learning and social influence with social exchange theory's emphasis on reciprocity and trust, we gain a deeper understanding of how ethical leadership can drive ethical behavior, CSR, and ultimately enhance public service performance. Social capital serves as a moderator, influencing the effectiveness of these processes.

The study makes several contributions by filling the gaps mentioned in earlier studies. First, this study responds to the many calls from scholars to investigate the mediating and moderating mechanisms through which ethical leadership influences organizational performance in the public sector, given the relative shortage of integrative research that is currently available (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Second, to the best of our knowledge, no prior research on ethical leadership and organizational performance has incorporated the identified mediators and moderators into a single model to account for how ethical leadership impacts the performance of public sector organizations. Third, two theoretical stances— namely, social learning and social exchange theories – are combined in the current study. Doing these

advances earlier research that relied almost entirely on social learning theory. Additionally, since Somalia is reconstructing its public sector, a sample from public sector organizations is helpful to show how ethical leadership impacts organizational performance from the perspective of the public sector, with the mediators of CSR and perceived organizational politics, as well as the moderator of organizational social capital. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to examine the association between ethical leadership and organizational performance in the public sector with CSR and perceived organizational politics as mediators and organizational social capital as a moderator, particularly in the context of Somalia. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a hypothesis development and literature review. Section 3 describes the methodology and measures used in this study. Section 4 presents the analysis and results. Section 5 presents the discussion. Section 6 presents the conclusions of the study. Section 7 outlines the theoretical and practical implications of the study. Finally, Section 8 identifies the limitations and future research directions.

2. Hypotheses development and literature review

2.1. Ethical leadership and organizational performance

The primary aim of any organization is to achieve optimal performance, facilitating growth and success. Arab (2023) revealed that ethical leadership impacts organizational performance. Similarly, Lubis (2023) reported that ethical leadership positively impacts organizational performance. Over the past decades, ethical leadership has provided new insights for human resource managers, suggesting that organizational justice can enhance organizational outcomes (Ali et al., 2018). While leadership is widely acknowledged for promoting ethical behavior in organizations, the interplay between leader actions and formal ethics rules still needs to be explored. However, research suggests that well-run organizations often have leaders who exhibit exemplary behavior and proactively mitigate problems, thus reducing the need for formal ethics regulations (Downe et al., 2016). Furthermore, ethical leadership, the quality of a leader based on moral principles, can influence organizational performance (Alkhadra et al., 2022).

Resick et al. (2006) highlighted six specific attributes of ethical leadership: character and integrity, ethical awareness, community/people orientation, motivating, encouraging, empowering, and managing ethical accountability. Although some studies have examined the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance, the public sector received little attention in most studies on leadership styles and organizational performance (Esbenshade et al., 2016; Jayasinghe, 2016). This study conceptualized public sector organizations as government agencies (Kumari & Pandey, 2011).

Although previous studies have examined the association between ethical leadership and organizational performance (Pirzada et al., 2023; Abdi & Hashi, 2023; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2023), they have primarily concentrated on private sector institutions that employ distinct policies and practices compared to their public sector counterparts. However, these studies mostly failed to examine this relationship within the context of the public sector.

The positive influence that ethical leadership is believed to have on the performance of organizations has attracted considerable interest in organizational research. Ethical leaders empower their organizations by promoting a culture of integrity and trust by demonstrating elevated moral standards and ethical conduct. These leaders foster a more positive and productive workplace by inspiring and motivating workers to behave ethically and responsibly. Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory posits that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through direct experience, observation, modeling, and imitation. This theory suggests that employees develop ethical conduct through observation and interaction with their leaders within the framework of ethical leadership. Leaders cultivate the attitudes and behaviors of their followers by consistently exhibiting ethical behavior and serving as role models.

Peter Blau's (1964) social exchange theory states that people weigh both the benefits and disadvantages of social interactions. Employees sell their labor and knowledge for money, promotions, and recognition. According to this theoretical paradigm, ethical leadership fosters a positive social interchange atmosphere, improving employee and organizational performance. Social learning theory and social exchange help explain how ethical leadership affects organizational performance. Social learning theory focuses on modeling, observation, and reinforcement in forming ethics. In contrast, social exchange

theory emphasizes fairness, reciprocity, and psychological contracts for a healthy work environment and employee contributions. By incorporating these theoretical views, researchers and practitioners can better understand how ethical leadership promotes ethical conduct and organizational performance.

A previous study reported that the dimensions of ethical leadership (promoting positive effect, perspective taking, social modeling, people orientation, power sharing, and ethical guidance) positively impact organizational performance, albeit with varying intensities (Kamalakannan, 2021). Piccolo et al. (2010) revealed that ethical leadership improves the significance of the work, which in turn enhances performance. However, Ajulu noted that the desired outcome of public sector organizational performance involved service delivery, better efficiency in resource utilization, and the institutionalization of a performance-oriented culture while lowering or eliminating the dependency of public agencies on exchequer funding and overall performance. While studies on ethical leadership have produced a wide range of results (Avey et al., 2011), very few studies have looked at or explained how ethical leadership results in positive organizational performance. While previous studies have established a positive relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance (Pirzada et al., 2023; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2023), these studies have primarily focused on private sector organizations, overlooking the public sector, specifically the Somali context. Therefore, to bridge this literature gap, we hypothesize that:

> H1: Ethical leadership has a positive impact on public sector organizational performance.

2.2. Ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, and organizational performance

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to an organization's intention to use policies and actions focused on individuals outside the organization to bring about positive community change besides its profit-making goals (Saha et al., 2020). Though the relationship between ethical leadership and CSR has been extensively studied, how ethical leadership might improve an organization's performance through CSR methods has not been studied, especially in public sector organizations where ethical concerns are a vital concern (Nguyen et al., 2021; Pasricha et al., 2018). In addition, research has emphasized the need for leadership theories that consider how CSR, ethical leadership, and organizational performance are related (Angus-Leppan et al., 2010).

We used social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), which highlights that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and social interaction. This theory can be applied to understand the relationship between ethical leadership, CSR, and organizational performance. Employees learn by observing the behaviors and decisions of their leaders. Ethical leaders who prioritize honesty, fairness, and environmental sustainability act as positive role models. Through social learning, employees internalize the ethical values and CSR principles promoted by their leaders. As a result, these values and principles are reflected in responsible actions throughout the organization, including fair labor practices and efforts towards environmental sustainability. When employees perceive their organization as ethical and responsible, they tend to be more engaged, productive, and loyal. This, in turn, can lead to improved performance metrics such as public satisfaction and innovation.

Although ethical leadership and CSR have both grown in popularity, Matten and Moon (2008) assert that how they are implemented is still a mystery. Results show that ethical leadership impacts CSR practices directly and indirectly (Pasricha et al., 2018; Tourigny et al., 2019); the results also show that ethical leadership positively impacts the organization's CSR and performance. Similarly, Alkhadra et al. (2022) reported that CSR mediates positively and significantly the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance. However, other studies confirmed that CSR partially mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance (Alkhadra et al., 2022; Kim & Thapa, 2018).

Previous studies highlighted that without leadership support at all levels, there can be no meaningful CSR initiatives (Knippenberg & de Jong, 2010). Butt et al. (2016) conducted an empirical investigation and showed that ethical leadership influences CSR, which improves organizational performance. The findings showed that CSR significantly improved performance (Latif et al., 2020). Moreover, in a study by Iranian pharmaceutical companies, quality management mediates between social responsibility and organizational performance (Mehralian et al., 2016). Besides, RetTable et al. (2009) reported that CSR is

positively associated with organizational performance. Similarly, Kim and Thapa (2018) found that CSR mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and performance.

Although the literature on ethical leadership, CSR, and organizational performance is vast and growing, it has several limitations. First, it focused on developed countries. Most research on ethical leadership, CSR, and organizational performance has been conducted in developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Avey et al., 2011). This limits the generalizability of the findings to other parts of the world, particularly in war-torn countries such as Somalia. Finally, a recent study by Arab (2023) revealed that ethical leadership enhances CSR, which leads to organizational performance. Furthermore, he argued that CSR is a mediator between ethical leadership and organizational performance, meaning that ethical leadership directly and indirectly impacts organizational performance through CSR. However, to our knowledge, no prior study has yet been conducted on the mediating role of CSR in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance in the public sector, specifically in the Somali context. Based on this argument, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: CSR mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and public sector organizational performance.

2.3. Ethical leadership, perceived organizational politics, and organizational performance

The term perceived organizational politics (POP) refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the extent to which they believe that the workplace is self-serving of some people and groups at the expense of others (Ferris et al., 2000). Although political behavior is one of the most significant phenomena in organizations and is observed in every organization, the effects of POP on public organizations have not been thoroughly studied (Cheong & Kim, 2022). How leaders perceive organizational politics may significantly impact how they lead (Lee et al., 2021); high POP leaders often have a sour relationship with their organizations and are less likely to emulate the morally upstanding actions of other leaders. However, earlier studies have solely examined the POP of employees due to ethical leadership (Kacmar et al., 2013). Although there have been ongoing academic and practical initiatives to investigate the effects of organizational politics on organizational performance in the private sector, apart from the research of Vigoda (2000) and Parker et al. (1995), there have been very few detailed studies into this effect in the public sector. Therefore, we used social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain how ethical leadership can promote and support work environments free of politics. In social learning theory, individuals gain positive behaviors by observing and replicating the actions of dependable role models. Kalshoven et al. (2013) argued that this theory is a crucial explanatory framework for how moral leaders can influence desired follower behaviors.

However, the factors connected to POP can be categorized into three groups: organizational, occupational, and personal. At the organizational level, POP is significantly related to procedural justice and power centralization. At the occupational level, employees are more likely to have lower POP in job and work environments when their job expectations are met, when there are chances for growth and progress when they engage in decision-making, and when they have positive relationships with their leaders and friendly, trustworthy relationships with coworkers. Finally, there are a few personality traits that seem to affect certain people's propensity to perceive politics within their organization; specifically, those who believe they have control over their environment and those who are prone to pleasant moods and emotions are likely to have lower POP than those who have a cynical, untrustworthy view of human nature (Atinc et al., 2010).

Although Jamshed et al. (2022) pointed out a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership and POP, the study examined how POP affects organizational performance directly and indirectly by influencing task conflict and relationship conflict, two mediating factors. While the hypothesized negative impact of task conflict on perceived organizational performance was not supported, it was so for the hypothesized negative impact of relationship conflict. However, most studies reported that POP negatively impacts organizational performance (Cheong & Kim, 2022; Hyusein & Eyupoglu, 2022; Kacmar et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2021; Jamshed et al., 2022). Organizational politics can manifest as elitism, cronyism, nepotism (Pelletier & Bligh, 2008), resource competition, interpersonal conflicts, contests for power, and coalition formation (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). The three components of POP are "go along to get ahead," "general political behavior," and "pay and promotion policies." "Go along to get along" suggests purposefully remaining

silent to prevent vested interests or prized outcomes from being lost; in general political behavior, this entails influencing others and the course of events in the organization to safeguard their self-interests, meet their demands, and achieve their own aims (Sinha, 2008). The reward system impacts employees' political behavior (Khan & Hussain, 2022).

Studies identified POP as a crucial mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership and outcomes and emphasized that each person's experience with this relationship will be different. They contend that these linkages are moderated by political skill because those who possess it can comprehend and influence their surroundings, which reduces the adverse effects of POP that are typically observed (Kacmar et al., 2013). Finally, it has been demonstrated that ethical leadership enhances organizations; however, these positives may only materialize once POP is reduced (Brown & Treviño, 2006). These findings offer theoretical and empirical evidence for POP's role as a mediator of the linkages between ethical leadership and organizational performance and political skill's role as a moderator of these relationships (Kacmar et al., 2013).

The literature on ethical leadership, POP, and organizational performance is valuable in understanding the complex relationships between these variables. However, it is still in its early development stages, and most existing literature focuses on the private sector, ignoring the public sector, specifically in the Somali context. Additionally, it is essential to consider the context in which these studies were conducted when interpreting their findings. Most studies have been conducted in healthcare, education, financial services, and manufacturing, but only some have examined public institutions. Therefore, by filling this gap, we hypothesize the following:

> H3: Perceived organizational politics mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and public sector organizational performance.

2.4. Ethical leadership, organizational social capital and organizational performance

Social capital is a term used to describe a type of resource that represents the social relations of an organization and is made possible by the degree of information sharing, mutual trust, and goal-oriented group thinking among its members (De Leon & Tubay, 2020). Although social capital has been shown to impact organizations in a growing number of studies positively (Andrews, 2010), little empirical evidence has been found on how social capital can be created within organizations (Pastoriza & Ariño, 2013). However, none of these studies examined how organizational social capital may moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance, which makes this study unique.

Some studies conceptualize social capital as structural, relational, and cognitive, and organizational performance is measured in terms of effectiveness, responsiveness, equity, and efficiency. For instance, Andrews (2010) revealed that the cognitive and relational aspects of organizational social capital are positively associated with performance in the public sector. To him, the structural elements of organizational social capital are unrelated to performance, and organizational structure (such as decentralization and specialization within the organization) moderates the relationship between social capital and public sector performance. Therefore, the ethical leadership of supervisors significantly impacts the social capital's dimensions of structural, relational, and cognitive (Pastoriza & Ariño, 2013).

In this study, we extend Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to make the case that workers might pick up on standards of proper conduct by watching the behavior of role models. Social learning theory postulates that humans have a social nature and the ability to learn virtues that will make them better people and enable them to advance in life (Brown et al., 2005).

However, the linkages between social capital and organizational performance in the public sector may vary depending on the type of government agency (Hofstede, 2001). Previous theoretical work has emphasized the link between ethical leadership and social capital (Pastoriza & Ariño, 2013). These studies argue that when leaders create standards of ethical behavior, they help employees learn to be motivated by the well-being of others and the organization. When executives lead with ethical leadership, they can give their team members a sense of belonging to more than just a contractual or financial arrangement with the organization (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). To the best of the authors' knowledge, no previous study explored the moderation role of organizational social capital in the relationship

between ethical leadership and public sector organizational performance. Therefore, we hypothesized the following hypothesis:

H4. Organizational social capital positively moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance such that the relationship will be stronger with a higher value of organizational social capital.

This theoretical model was established based on the lacuna and evidence found in the existing literature, specifically in the public sector in the context of Somalia (Figure 1).

3. Methods

3.1. Population, sample, and procedure

To empirically test the predicted model, the target population of this study was the employees of public sector institutions in Somalia at both federal and state levels of government. A quantitative design was used to examine the impact of ethical leadership (EL) on public sector organizational performance (OP) via the underlying mechanisms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and perceived organizational politics (POP), as well as the moderating role of organizational social capital (OSC). Mediation and moderation analyses are prevalent in social science and management research (Aguinis et al., 2017). These analytical approaches play a crucial role in understanding the mechanisms through which causal effects operate (mediation) and exploring the conditions or contingencies of an effect (moderation) (Aguinis et al., 2017). Since the private sector has been widely studied, this study only focused on public sector institutions and their employees. The rationale for focusing on the directors and officers is that they are immersed in the operational aspects of public sector practices and are also most suited to evaluate senior leadership and organizational performance. Top civil servants in the national ministries, regional ministerial, directorates, departmental directorates, and executive agencies were surveyed.

A convenience sampling strategy was used to recruit participants. We contacted director generals from various federal and state ministries who permitted us to collect data from employees within their respective departments. We used a cross-sectional study design to collect data using an online Google Forms survey with hyperlinks. All survey questions were marked as "required" to minimize the likelihood of missing data. Furthermore, the survey was accompanied by a cover letter describing the study's objectives, ensuring respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, and inviting voluntary participation. These elements served to obtain informed consent from participants. Additionally, the participants were given the researcher's contact information in the cover letter to ask relevant questions.

Researchers conducted a pilot test before gathering actual data from the target population to ensure that the survey items met the minimum psychometric standards. The survey items were tested with
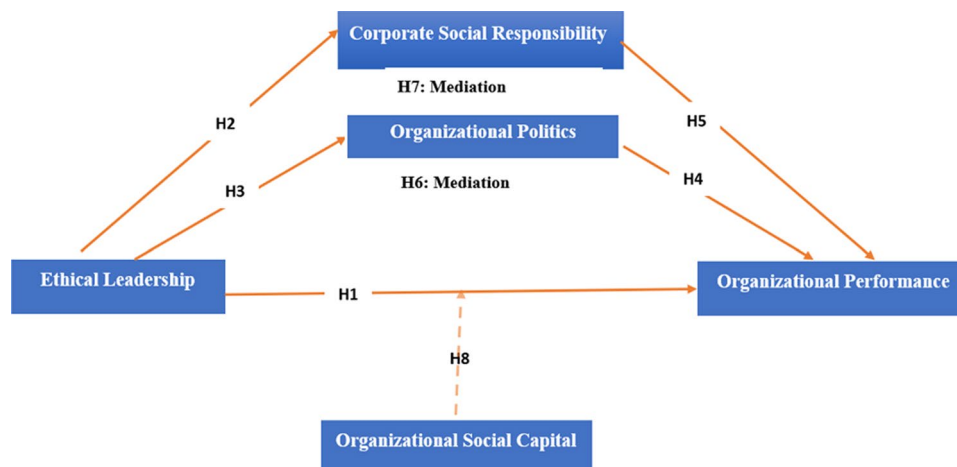

Figure 1. Theoretical model.

30 public sector employees to check their appropriateness, clarity, and reliability. All respondents reported that they found the survey questions understandable and that no modifications were necessary. As a result, we used the original adopted questionnaires without any changes. Finally, we evaluated the reliability of all items using Cronbach's alpha (α), and the overall survey questions showed a value of over 0.70, which is acceptable, according to Hair et al. (2022).

After ensuring the clarity and appropriateness of the survey questions, researchers distributed 450 questionnaires to the ministry director generals via WhatsApp, Facebook, and email. These director generals then forwarded the questionnaires to their departmental staff. To boost the response rate, two reminders were sent to the study participants. The first reminder was sent a week after the initial distribution, followed by a final reminder in the third week. These reminders were communicated through various channels such as WhatsApp groups, emails, and weekly departmental briefings. Regarding the sample size determination, the study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Daniel Soper's (2023) free statistical sample size calculator for the SEM was used to establish an adequate sample size for this study. The calculator determined the necessary sample size for the study using SEM. The anticipated effect size employed in this study was 0.25 (medium) effect size. A statistical power level of 0.8 and a desired probability level 0.05 were used. The model includes five (5) latent variables and twenty-nine (29) observable variables. The results indicated a recommended minimum sample size of 229 participants. Therefore, the sample size of this study surpassed the minimum required sample size threshold. We received 292 out of 450 responses, achieving a response rate of 64.8%. After checking the filled-out responses received from the respondents via Google Forms, it was determined that there were no issues with missing values or outliers. Therefore, the final sample size of 292 responses was used in the analysis. The data collection process began on 16 December 2022, and ended on 10 January 2023.

3.2. Demographic characteristics of the participants

The study showed that 90.4% were males and 9.6% females. Regarding the age range, 64.7% were between 26 and 35 years old, and 15.8% were between 18 and 25. In terms of experience, 37.3% had 4–6 years of experience, 33.2% had 1–3 years of experience, and 61 (20.9%) had 7–9 years of experience. Regarding education qualifications, most participants had a bachelor's degree, 49.70%, 43.20% had a master's degree, and 3.10% had completed high school. Finally, 63.70% were married, and 104 (35.60%) were single. Table 1 depicts a complete demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1. Sample frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (N = 292).

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Gender			1.10	0.295
Male	264	90.40		
Female	28	9.60		
Age			2.08	0.704
18–25	46	15.80		
26–35	189	64.70		
36–45	46	15.80		
46–55	9	3.10		
46–55	2	0.70		
Experience in years			2.05	0.940
1–3	97	33.20		
4–6	109	37.30		
7–9	61	20.90		
Above 9	25	8.60		
Qualification			3.36	0.706
High school	9	3.10		
Diploma	9	3.10		
Bachelor	145	49.70		
Master	126	43.20		
PhD	3	1.00		
Marital status			1.65	0.492
Single	104	35.60		
Married	186	63.70		
Divorced	2	0.70		

3.3. Measures of the study

A survey consisting of 29 items was used to collect data from the study participants. All items in this study were measured on a five-point Likert scale, with responses coded 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree."

Ethical leadership (EL): We measured EL with a six-item scale adapted from Brown et al. (2005). The scale item examples are "Our supervisor conducts his or her personal life ethically," "Our supervisor has the best interests of citizens in mind," and "Our supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards." **Organizational Performance (OP):** OP was measured with a seven-item scale developed by Brewer and Selden (2000). The scale includes items that reflect the organization's performance based on internal and external factors. Sample items are "The work performed by my work unit provides the public with a worthwhile return on their tax dollars," "In the past two years, the productivity of my work unit has improved," and "People in my organization have a strong team spirit." **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** A six-item scale created by Lee et al. (2012) was used to assess CSR. Sample items are "Our organization has a procedure for responding to every citizen's complaint," "Top leadership monitors the potential negative impacts of our activities in our community," and "Our organization tries to contribute toward bettering the local community." **Perceived Organizational Politics (POP):** A five-item scale adapted from Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler (2010) was used to measure POP. Examples of items are "Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here," "Promotions in this organization generally go to top performers," and "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down." **Organizational Social Capital (OSC):** We used a five-item scale adapted from Andrews and Mostafa (2019) to measure the OSC. A sample of items includes "People in my organization share the same ambitions and vision for the organization," "People in my organization enthusiastically pursue collective goals and missions," and "People in my organization engage in open and honest communication with one another."

4. Results

The study used SmartPLS software version 4 to analyze the data and test the proposed study model using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based method (Ringle et al., 2015). The method of PLS-SEM is suitable for intricate models that comprise multiple constructs, with no requirement for making assumptions about the distribution of the data.

4.1. Measurement model assessment

When using PLS-SEM, the first step is to evaluate the measurement model. The measurement model assessment comprises indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and validity (both convergent and discriminant). All indicators' loadings surpassed the recommended cut-off of 0.708, except POP1, which was removed from the analysis due to very low loadings, and POP3 and POP5, which were retained since their deletion may affect the content validity. Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) were used to establish the construct's internal consistency reliability. Table 2 shows the latent variables' reliability and convergent validity. The Cronbach's alpha (α) scores for each construct and the CR values were higher than the recommended threshold of 0.70. The average variance extracted (AVE) is used to measure convergent validity. The AVE values exceed the suggested threshold of 0.50 (Table 2). The constructs' discriminant validity was evaluated using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 shows that all values are under the suggested threshold of 0.90. Therefore, discriminant validity has been validated.

4.2 Structural model evaluation

The second step of PLS-SEM is to test the structural model after confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement model (Henseler et al., 2015). The first stage in testing the structural model is determining multicollinearity via the variance inflation factor (VIF). There are no problems with

Table 2. Outer loadings, validity, reliability, and collinearity (VIF).

Construct	Indicator	Outer loadings	α	CR	AVE	VIF
CSR	CSR1	0.789				1.997
	CSR2	0.851				2.506
	CSR3	0.824	0.903	0.925	0.674	2.304
	CSR4	0.851				2.574
	CSR5	0.782				1.912
	CSR6	0.827				2.288
EL	EL1	0.755				1.872
	EL2	0.816				2.215
	EL3	0.853	0.894	0.919	0.655	2.540
	EL4	0.825				2.257
	EL5	0.763				1.819
	EL6	0.839				2.341
OP	OP1	0.805				2.420
	OP2	0.831				2.563
	OP3	0.783				2.045
	OP4	0.606	0.897	0.919	0.622	1.388
	OP5	0.848				2.704
	OP6	0.842				2.645
	OP7	0.780				1.945
OSC	OSC1	0.846				2.465
	OSC2	0.845				2.472
	OSC3	0.883	0.919	0.939	0.756	3.062
	OSC4	0.895				3.232
	OSC5	0.877				2.797
POP	POP2	0.875				1.612
	POP3	0.545	0.703	0.791	0.504	1.369
	POP4	0.861				1.679
	POP5	0.462				1.348

α = Cronbach's alpha, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, VIF = variance inflation factor, CSR = corporate social responsibility, EL = ethical leadership, OP = organizational performance, OSC = organizational social capital, POP = perceived organizational politics.

Table 3. Discriminant validity – HTMT criterion.

Construct	CSR	EL	OP	OSC	POP	OSC×EL
CSR						
EL	0.858					
OP	0.780	0.757				
OSC	0.831	0.758	0.863			
POP	0.693	0.622	0.707	0.644		
OSC×EL	0.110	0.166	0.113	0.073	0.150	

Table 4. Direct relationships.

Hypothesis	β	t	p	Result
H1: EL → OP	0.162	2.500	.006	Supported
H2: EL → CSR	0.772	30.615	.000	Supported
H3: EL → POP	0.616	16.648	.000	Supported
H4: POP → OP	0.162	3.300	.000	Supported
H5: CSR → OP	0.078	1.177	.120	Not supported

multicollinearity because all the VIF values (Table 2) fall below the recommended cutoff of 5 (Hair et al., 2022).

The second step is to test the proposed study hypotheses using bootstrapping procedures with 10,000 sub-samples. First, the researchers examined the direct effects by testing the hypotheses that EL predicts OP and that EL also predicts the mediating variables of POP and CSR. Second, the researchers tested the hypotheses that POP and CSR predict the OP. Then, the study looked at indirect effects to test the hypotheses that POP and CSR mediated the relationship between EL and OP. Finally, researchers examined how OSC moderated the relationship between EL and OP. As the results in Table 4 show, EL is positively and significantly associated with OP (β=0.162, t=2.500, p=.006), with CSR (β=0.772, t=30.615, p<.001), and with POP (β=0.616, t=16.648, p<.001). Hence H1, H2, and H3 were supported. Similarly, POP is positively and significantly associated with OP (β=0.162, t=3.300, p<.001). Hence, H4 is supported. However, CSR has a positive but insignificant impact on OP (β=0.078, t=1.177, p=.120). Thus, H5 was not supported (Figure 2).
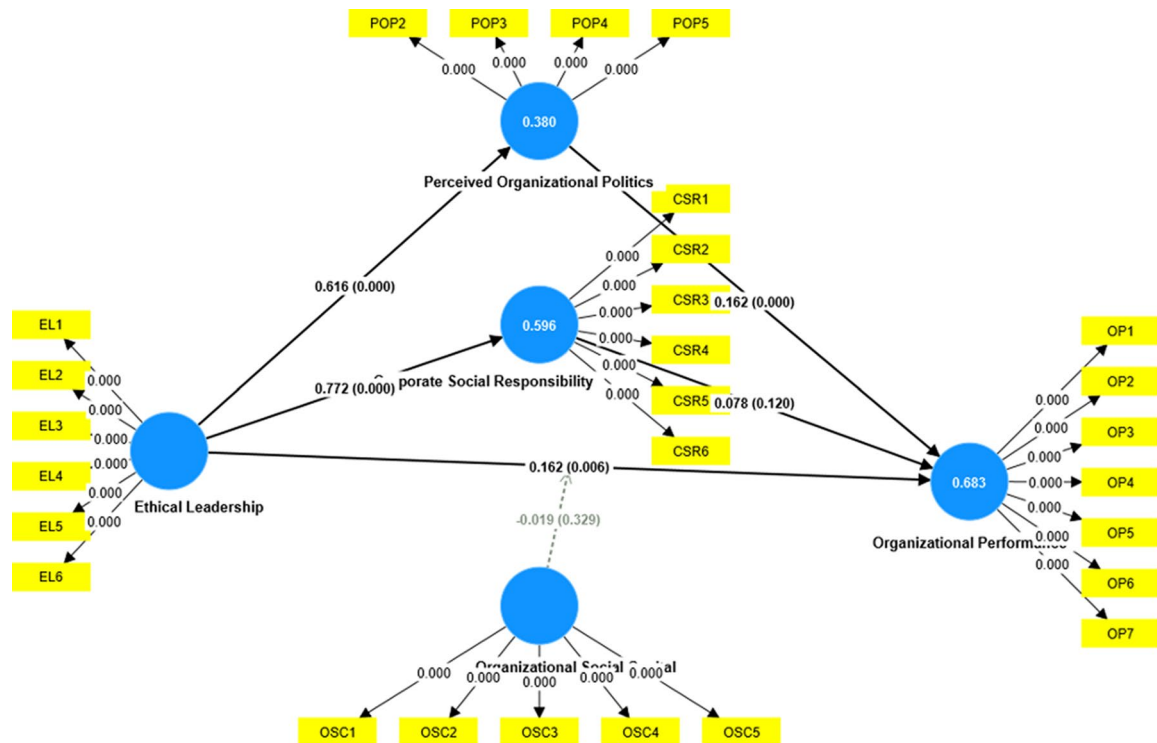
Figure 2. Structural model.

Table 5. Mediation analysis.

Total effect	β	t	p	Specific indirect effect	β	t	p	Result
	0.323	5.212	.001	H6: EL → POP → OP	0.101	3.336	.000	Supported
				H7: EL → CSR → OP	0.061	1.152	.125	Not supported

Note. Relationships are significant at $p < .05$, β = standardized beta coefficient.

Table 6. Model's predictive power.

	R^2	Q^2
CSR	0.596	0.593
OP	0.683	0.646
POP	0.380	0.371

4.3. Mediation analysis

The mediation analysis was conducted to determine the mediating role of POP in the relationship between EL and OP. The results (see Table 5) revealed that EL had a significant and positive indirect impact on OP via POP (β = 0.101, $t = 3.336$, $p < .001$). The total effect of EL on OP was significant (β = 0.323, $t = 5.212$, $p < .001$). This shows a partial mediating role of POP in the relationship between EL and OP. Therefore, H6 was supported. The indirect effects of CSR on the relationship of EL and OP were positive but insignificant (β = 0.061, $t = 1.152$, $p = .125$), which shows no mediation in the model. Thus, H7 was not supported.

The model's prediction power was evaluated using the coefficient of the determinant (R^2). The results show that EL, CSR, and POP explained 68.3% of the variation in OP. However, 59.6% of the change in CSR is explained by EL, and 38.0% of the variation in POP is accounted for by EL (Table 6). The researcher also assessed the constructs' predictive relevance (Q^2). Table 6 shows that the Q^2 values for the CRS, POP, and OP endogenous constructs were higher than zero. Hence, the model has predictive relevance.

4.4. Moderation analysis

The study assessed the moderating role of OSC on the relationship between EL and OP. Without including the moderation effect (OSC×EL), the value of R^2 for OP was 0.580. This indicates that EL, CSR, and POP explain 58% of the variation in OP. When adding the interaction term, the value of R^2 increased to 68.3%. This means an increase of 10.3% in the change explained in the endogenous construct.

Furthermore, the significance of the moderating effect was assessed, and the results showed a negative but insignificant impact of OSC on the relationship between EL and OP (β = −0.019, $t=0.444$, $p=.329$). Therefore, H8 was not supported. This means that with the change in OSC, the relationship between EL and OP does not change (Table 7). Finally, the f^2 effect size was 0.001. According to Cohen's (1988) suggestion, moderation's small, medium, and large effect sizes are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively. Therefore, there is a negligible or small but insignificant moderating effect.

5. Discussion

The present study examined the impact of EL on OP in the public sector via the underlying mechanisms of POP and CSR. Furthermore, the study also investigated the moderating role of OSC on the relationship between EL and OP. As expected, this study found that EL positively and significantly affects the OP in public sector institutions. This result aligns with the previous studies (Alkhadra et al., 2022; Pirzada et al., 2023; Abdi & Hashi, 2023; Arab, 2023; Lubis, 2023; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2023). In line with our results, Kamalakannan (2021) reported that ethical leadership dimensions positively and significantly influence organizational performance. The study's findings support social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1986). According to social learning theory, employees can learn from and aspire to ethical leadership, ultimately improving organizational performance. According to social exchange theory, moral leadership creates a climate of fairness, reciprocity, and positive social interactions, encouraging employees to do their best work. This, in turn, improves organizational performance.

This result suggests that ethical leadership behaviors make public sector organizations perform better. The significance of this result is crucial in the public sector, where leaders make decisions that impact the well-being of communities and the general public. By acting ethically, leaders can gain the trust and respect of their employees, which can help improve the organization's performance. EL could promote an honest, ethical climate and an accountable and transparent culture that can significantly enhance public sector OP in countries like Somalia. This results in better decision-making, more satisfied and productive workers, more public trust, less corruption, and better service delivery. EL in Somalia may help the country to overcome corruption, weak governance, and resource constraints by prioritizing an open and ethical environment, fair distribution of funds, employee empowerment and participation, citizen-centered service delivery, and robust anti-corruption measures.

Furthermore, in line with previous studies (Pirzada et al., 2023; Alkhadra et al., 2022; Pasricha et al., 2018; Tourigny et al., 2019), the study found that EL is positively and significantly associated with CSR. This result shows that EL is necessary if public sector institutions want to promote CSR. Public sector organizations in Somalia can help build a more honest and responsible society by promoting ethical leadership practices in their institutions. This result suggests that EL may enhance CSR in Somali public sector organizations by integrating ethical principles into decision-making and encouraging a culture of sensitivity to how decisions and actions affect the environment. EL encourages employees to adopt CSR efforts, encourages active participation in community development projects, and supports sustainable practices. EL cultivates a work environment that values social responsibility and drives positive societal change through role modeling and establishing clear CSR guidelines.

Moreover, the study revealed that EL positively and significantly impacted POP. This finding backs up the result of Jamshed et al. (2022), who found a positive and significant relationship between EL and POP. This finding suggests that EL can help create a more positive and productive work environment by

Table 7. Moderation analysis.

Hypothesis	β	t	p	Result
OSC×EL → OP	−0.019	0.444	.329	Not supported

reducing the harmful effects of politics in the workplace. However, these findings contradict recent assertions that reported a negative and significant relationship between EL and POP (Hyusein & Eyupoglu, 2022; Kacmar et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2021). Because these findings contradict and confirm earlier research results, more research on the relationship between ethical leadership and perceived organizational politics will be required in future studies.

Additionally, the study found that POP had a direct significant positive impact on OP. The result suggests that managing the perception of politics within an organization is crucial for improving organizational performance. A positive perception of politics can lead to a more engaged workforce and better communication, ultimately contributing to better performance. This result contradicts a recent previous study that revealed perceived organizational politics negatively and significantly affected organizational performance (Cheong & Kim, 2022). Therefore, this result signals the need for more research in the future to explore the complexity of perceived organizational politics and how it impacts organizational performance by considering the specific context and type of politics being used.

Finally, the study uncovered a positive but insignificant impact of CSR on OP. This result agrees with the previous study that reported that CSR has a positive but insignificant impact on OP (Mehralian et al., 2016). Nevertheless, a plethora of prior recent studies reported that CSR is positively and significantly associated with OP (Alkhadra et al., 2022; Latif et al., 2020). This finding suggests that while CSR efforts may positively affect an organization's performance, it may not be the determining factor. Future study is required to understand the relationship between CSR and organizational performance more fully and to determine the conditions under which CSR is most reasonable to impact organizational performance significantly.

Next, the study examined the mediating roles of POP and CSR in the relationship between EL and OP. First, the findings (Table 5) revealed that POP partially mediates the relationship between EL and OP. Despite a significant gap in the literature on the effect of EL in the public sector, the private sector literature revealed that POP plays a mediating role in the relationship between EL and organizational outcome (Hyusein & Eyupoglu, 2022). Jamshed et al. (2022) reported that perceived organizational politics had a partially significant mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and performance.

Furthermore, the study assessed the mediating role of CSR on the relationship between EL and OP. The findings (Table 5) depict that CSR does not mediate the relationship between EL and OP. This result contradicts the prior studies that confirmed that CSR partially mediates the relationship between EL and OP (Alkhadra et al., 2022; Kim & Thapa, 2018). This current study was conducted in government institutions, so its findings may differ from those of similar studies done in the private sector context. Consequently, this result indicates the need for future research to produce conclusive findings regarding the mediating role of CSR in the relationship between EL and OP.

Finally, the study assessed the moderating role of OSC in the relationship between EL and OP. The result (Table 7) showed a negative but insignificant moderating effect of OSC on the relationship between EL and OP. Despite the paucity of literature on the moderating role of OSC in the relationship between EL and OP, that new study reported that social capital does not moderate the relationship between CSR and performance.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the positive impact of ethical leadership on the performance of public sector institutions in Somalia. It also establishes clear positive relationships between ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, and perceived organizational politics. The findings indicate that perceived organizational politics positively mediates ethical leadership and public sector organizational performance. Interestingly, corporate social responsibility did not directly mediate the ethical leadership-performance relationship. The study also found the insignificant moderating role of organizational social capital in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance, suggesting the potential for further research to understand its influence in the specific context of Somalia's public sector. Our results contribute to social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) by illustrating how ethical leadership creates an environment where employees observe and imitate ethical behavior, thus

enhancing corporate social responsibility practices and organizational politics, ultimately improving organizational performance. Furthermore, the study supports social exchange theory (Blau, 1986) by highlighting the positive effects of both ethical leadership and organizational politics on performance, indicating a reciprocal exchange of trust, fairness, and influence within the organization.

7. Theoretical and practical implication

Several theoretical and practical implications stem from this study. Regarding theoretical implications, it has added to the body of knowledge on CSR, EL, POP, OSC, and OP in public sector institutions. Also, this study differs significantly from earlier research that merely focused on the private sector. Public-sector ethical leadership goes beyond profits. Unlike the private sector, public-sector leaders prioritize societal well-being and navigate complex political landscapes. This necessitates a strong focus on transparency, trust building, and citizen engagement to ensure ethical decision-making and effective service delivery. This study will benefit academics, researchers, philanthropists, managers of public sector organizations, services-based organizations, practitioners, and policymakers interested in organizational performance. The findings of this study will also serve as a manual for civil servants, government leaders, philanthropists, and managers of service-based organizations in Somalia who wish to improve their performance. They can achieve, and will inevitably do, the highest degree of organizational performance in the public sector if they adhere to the ethical leadership approach and prioritize CSR initiatives and organizational social capital. Researchers in upcoming studies can also cite the findings. Researchers and practitioners in the public sector would benefit from this to effectively concentrate their efforts on CSR and ethical leadership. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the use of CSR, ethical leadership, perceived organizational politics, and organizational social capital in the public sector. It will help in understanding ethical leadership's influence on institutions in the public sector, a subject that is rarely researched.

Moreover, scholars can utilize the findings of this study to build novel ideas and frameworks about EL, CSR, POP, OSC and public sector OP. Policymakers can employ the findings from this study to enhance the formulation of policies and programs that foster ethical leadership and promote corporate social responsibility within the public sector to foster organizational performance. Managers can utilize the findings to develop their ethical leadership practices and undertake corporate social responsibility programs that contribute to improving organizational performance. To the authors' knowledge, this study is the first to delve into the intricate relationship between EL and public sector OP in Somalia via the underlying mechanisms of POP, CSR, and the moderating role of OSC within a unified theoretical framework. This study sets itself apart from prior research on ethical leadership and organizational performance, which has predominantly focused on the private sector. This study significantly contributes to the existing literature by examining the public sector context.

8. Limitation and future research direction

While our research appears to have theoretical and practical applications and substantially contributes to the literature on EL, CSR, POP, OSC, and OP, it is nevertheless subject to the following limitations. First, there are myriad leadership styles; the study, however, only considered the ethical style. In relation to that, future research might consider other leadership styles, such as transformational, Islamic, and responsible leadership. Second, our study's participants included managers and employees from the public sector. Further study is necessary to replicate our research utilizing managers and employees from the private sector. Using quantitative analysis techniques only is the third limitation. Although this is a unique study in Somalia, future research may employ mixed or qualitative methods to gather in-depth data on ethical leadership and public sector organizational performance. As a result of our study's early empirical evidence on the overlooked mediating roles of CSR and perceived organizational politics, as well as the moderating role of organizational social capital, it is advised that future research use a mixed-methods research design and retest the suggested research model in order to deduce causal relationships between study variables and validate our findings. Fourth, to test the hypothesized research model, we took a sample of about 292 managers and

workers from Somalia's public sector institutions. The generalizability of the results to other sectors and countries may be questioned, given the limited scope of the research in one sector and one country. Future studies may use a cross-industry and cross-cultural sample to understand further the links indicated, improve the application of the findings, and develop more rigorous practical implications. Consequently, we concluded that CSR and perceived organizational politics mediation and organizational social capital moderation may not be the only mediation and moderation mechanisms that may effectively convey the impact of ethical leadership on organizational performance in the public sector.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

About the authors

Ahmed-Nor Mohamed Abdi, a distinguished scholar, earned his bachelor's degree in public administration from Mogadishu University in 2009. He further honed his knowledge by completing his master's degree in public administration from the esteemed Islamic University of Uganda (IUIU) in 2014. Since 2015, he has been sharing his wealth of knowledge as a senior lecturer in public administration and research methods at Simad University. He is also a respected faculty member at other universities in Mogadishu, Somalia. His research, which is highly regarded in the academic community, delves into crucial areas such as decentralization and local governance, good governance, public trust in government institutions, public policy, and ethical leadership in the public sector.

Mohamed Bile Hashi, originally from Kismayo University in Somalia, began his academic journey by obtaining a bachelor's degree in business administration in 2010. motivated by his passion for public service, he decided to further his education and pursue a master's in public administration at the Islamic university in Uganda, which he completed in 2014. Mohamed earned his PhD in Political science, focusing on African federalism, from an Asian university, further enhancing his expertise in African affairs. Mohamed has been inspiring future generations as a lecturer in Public administration and research methods at Mogadishu University since 2020. his research focuses on crucial subjects such as decentralization and local governance, good governance practices, building public trust, political science intricacies, federalism dynamics, and the impact of public policy.

Khawaja Fawad Latif completed his M.A. in Human Resource Management from the University of Westminster, London, and his PhD from Abasyn University, Peshawar, Pakistan. He has Published over 30 Research papers in high-quality impact factor journals that include Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, Social Indicators Research, Total Quality Management, and Business Excellence, Journal of Intellectual Capital, Leadership and Organization Development Journal, Applied Research in Quality of Life, Journal of Enterprise Information Management, ASILB Journal of Information Management, Evaluation and Program Planning, Knowledge Management Research and Practice, International Journal of Hospitality Management, and Studies in Higher Education. His areas of interest include Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership, Knowledge Management, and Internal Marketing. He has extensive analytical experience in software like IBM SPSS, AMOS, SmartPLS, and SEMinR. He has conducted several workshops, both nationally and internationally, on Writing Quality Research Papers, using Software tools for Literature Writing, and Analyzing Data using SPSS, AMOS, and SmartPLS.

Data availability statement

Data are available upon request.

References

Abdi, A. M., & Hashi, M. B. (2023). Linking ethical leadership and organizational social capital towards enhancing organizational performance in the Somali public sector. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, *12*(4), 406–424. https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2023.60386

Ali, A., Ahmad, S., & Saeed, I. (2018). Ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: mediating role of organizational justice: A case study of education sector. *Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences*, *11*(2), 386–399.

Alkhadra, W. A., Khawaldeh, S., & Aldehayyat, J. (2022). Relationship of ethical leadership, organizational culture, corporate social responsibility, and organizational performance: a test of two mediation models. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, *39*(4), 737–760. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-05-2022-0092

Andrews, R. (2010). Organizational social capital, structure and performance. *Human Relations*, *63*(5), 583–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726709342931

Andrews, R., & Mostafa, A. M. S. (2019). Organizational goal ambiguity and Senior public Managers' Engagement: does organizational social capital make a difference? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *85*(2), 377–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852317701824

Angus-Leppan, T., Metcalf, L., & Benn, S. (2010). Leadership styles and CSR practice: An examination of sensemaking, institutional drivers and CSR leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *93*(2), 189–213. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0221-y

Aguinis, H., Edwards, J. R., & Bradley, K. J. (2017). Improving our understanding of moderation and mediation in strategic management research. *Organizational Research Methods*, *20*(4), 665–685. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428115627498

Arab, H. R. (2023). Corporate social responsibility as a bridge between ethical leadership and organizational performance: A survey of public and private banks in Kurdistan. *Remittances Review*, *8*(4), 585-595. https://doi.org/10.47059/rr.v8i4.40

Atinc, G., Darrat, M., Fuller, B., & Parker, B. W. (2010). Perceptions of organizational politics: A meta-analysis of theoretical antecedents. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, *22*(4), 494–513.

Avey, J. B., Palanski, M. E., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2011). When leadership goes unnoticed: The moderating role of follower self-esteem on the relationship between ethical leadership and follower behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *98*(4), 573–582. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0610-2

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Blau, P. M. (1986). *Exchange and power in social life*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203792643

Brewer, G. A., & Selden, S. C. (2000). Why elephants gallop: Assessing and predicting organizational performance in federal agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 10*(4), 685–712. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024287

Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(6), 595–616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.004

Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *97*(2), 117–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002

Butt, A., Butt, A., & Ayaz, M. (2016). Impact of ethical leadership on organizational performance and mediating role of corporate social responsibility: Evidence from banking sector of Pakistan. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research*, *5*(6), 25–37. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3464785

Buye, R. (2020). Ethical leadership in public management: The importance of ethical principles and standards to improve performance in public sector organizations. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy Ethics, 1–14.

Cheong, J. O., & Kim, T. (2022). Testing the relationship between perceived organizational politics and organizational performance: Task and relationship conflict as mediators. *Public Organization Review*, *24*(2), 657–673. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-022-00656-3

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Myra, Jerwin, (2020). Ethical leadership of supervisors and internal social capital in a financial institution. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, *VIII*(Issue 2), 291–301. https://doi.org/10.35808/ijeba/462

De Leon, M. V., & Tubay, J. B. (2020). Ethical leadership of supervisors and internal social capital in a financial institution. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration*. https://doi.org/10.35808/ijeba/462.

Den Hartog, D. N. (2015). Ethical leadership. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *2*(1), 409–434. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111237

Downe, J., Cowell, R., & Morgan, K. (2016). What determines ethical behavior in public organizations: Is it rules or leadership? *Public Administration Review*, *76*(6), 898–909. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12562

Esbenshade, J., Vidal, M., Fascilla, G., & Ono, M. (2016). Customer-driven management models for choiceless clientele? Business process reengineering in a California welfare agency. *Work, Employment & Society*, *30*(1), 77–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017015604109

Ferris, G. R., Harrell-Cook, G., & Dulebohn, J. H. (2000). Organizational politics: The nature of the relationship between politics perceptions and political behavior. In *Research in the sociology of organizations*., Vol. 17 (pp. 89–130). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0733-558X(00)17004-1

Grojean, M. W., Resick, C. J., Dickson, M. W., & Smith, D. B. (2004). Leaders, values, and organizational climate: Examining leadership strategies for establishing an organizational climate regarding ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *55*(3), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-004-1275-5

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), 3rd ed. Sage.

Hassan, S., Wright, B. E., & Yukl, G. (2014). Does ethical leadership matter in government? Effects on organizational commitment, absenteeism, and willingness to report ethical problems. *Public Administration Review*, *74*(3), 333–343. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12216

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*(1), 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS). (2021). Impediments to good governance in Somalia. Mogadishu: The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Impediments-good-governance-2.pdf

Hyusein, A., & Eyupoglu, S. Z. (2022). Ethical leadership, organisational citizenship behaviours and social loafing: The mediating effect of perceived organisational politics. *South African Journal of Business Management*, *53*(1), a2842. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v53i1.2842

Jamshed, K., Ali Shah, S. H., Alaghbari, M. A., Tunio, M. N., Shamsi, A. I., & Jamshaid, S. (2022). Ethical leadership and work performance: Role of perceived organizational politics and political skills. *Journal of Xidian University*, *16*(2), 236–225. https://doi.org/10.37896/jxu16.2/019

Jayasinghe, M. (2016). The operational and signaling benefits of voluntary labor code adoption: Reconceptualizing the scope of human resource management in emerging economies. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*(2), 658–677. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0478

Kacmar, K. M., Andrews, M. C., Harris, K. J., & Tepper, B. J. (2013). Ethical leadership and subordinate outcomes: The mediating role of organizational politics and the moderating role of political Skill. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *115*(1), 33–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1373-8

Kalshoven, K., Den Hartog, D. N., & de Hoogh, A. H. (2013). Ethical leadership and followers' helping and initiative: The role of demonstrated responsibility and job autonomy. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *22*(2), 165–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2011.640773

Kamalakannan, R. (2021). Ethical leadership and its influences on organizational performance. *Annals of the Romanian Society for Cell Biology*, *25*(4), 4069–4081.

Khan, M. A., & Hussain, N. (2022). Perceptions of organizational politics among public sector university faculty. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, *9*(1), 111-129. https://doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v9i1.583

Kim, K.-H., Kim, M., & Qian, C. (2018). Effects of corporate social responsibility on corporate financial performance: A competitive-action perspective. *Journal of Management*, *44*(3), 1097–1118. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315602530

Kim, M. S., & Thapa, B. (2018). Relationship of ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility and organizational performance. *Sustainability*, *10*(2), 447. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020447

Knippenberg, L., & De Jong, E. B. (2010). Moralising the market by moralising the firm: Towards a firm-oriented perspective of corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *96*(1), 17–31. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0446-9

Koay, K. Y., & Lim, P. K. (2021). Ethical leadership and knowledge hiding: Testing the mediating and moderating mechanisms. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *26*ahead- of-print. (3), 574–591. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-02-2021-0091

Kumari, G., & Pandey, K. M. (2011). Job satisfaction in public sector and private sector: A comparison. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, *2*, 222–228.

Latif, K. F., Sajjad, A., Bashir, R., Shaukat, M. B., Khan, M. B., & Sahibzada, U. F. (2020). Revisiting the relationship between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance: The mediating role of team outcomes. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *27*(4), 1630–1641. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1911

Lee, S., Kim, J., & Byun, G. (2021). Are leaders' perceptions of organizational politics worsening favorable employee outcomes ? The role of ethical leadership. *Sustainability*, *13*(19), 10767. https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910767

Lee, Y.-K., Kim, S., Lee, K., & Li, D. (2012). The impact of CSR on relationship quality and relationship outcomes: A perspective of service employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *31*(3), 745–756. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.09.011

Lubis, A. I. (2023). The influence of ethical leadership and work stress on increasing organizational performance at BPKP representatives of North Sumatra Province. *Journal of Proceedings Social Science and Political Science Dharmawangsa University*, *3*, 32–40.

Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2008). "Implicit" and "explicit" CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, *33*(2), 404–424. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.31193458

Mehralian, G., Nazari, J. A., Zarei, L., & Rasekh, H. R. (2016). The effects of corporate social responsibility on organizational performance in the Iranian pharmaceutical industry: The mediating role of TQM. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *135*, 689–698. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.06.116

Newman, A., Kiazad, K., Miao, Q., & Cooper, B. (2013). Examining the cognitive and affective trust-based mechanisms underlying the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship: A case of the head leading the heart? *Journal of Business Ethics*, *123*(1), 113–123. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1803-2

Nguyen, N. T. T., Nguyen, N. P., & Hoai, T. T. (2021). Ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, firm reputation, and firm performance: A serial mediation model. *Heliyon*, *7*(4), e06809. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06809

Parker, C. P., Dipboye, R. L., & Jackson, S. L. (1995). Perceptions of organizational politics: An investigation of antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Management*, *21*(5), 891–912. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639502100505

Pasricha, P., Singh, B., & Verma, P. (2018). Ethical leadership, organic organizational cultures and corporate social responsibility: An empirical study in social enterprises. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *151*(4), 941–958. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3568-5

Pastoriza, D., & Ariño, M. A. (2013). Does the ethical leadership of supervisors generate internal social capital? *Journal of Business Ethics*, *118*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1536-7

Pelletier, K. L., & Bligh, M. C. (2008). The aftermath of organizational corruption: Employee attributions and emotional reactions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *80*(4), 823–844. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9471-8

Piccolo, R. F., Greenbaum, R., Hartog, D. N., & Folger, R. (2010). The relationship between ethical leadership and core job characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *31*(2-3), 259–278. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.627

Pirzada, M. J. U., Shah, S. M. A., Merani, S. H., & Khan, M. (2023). Effect of ethical leadership and ethical climate on corporate social responsibility and firm performance: A mediated model. *Middle East J. of Management*, *10*(4), 408–424. https://doi.org/10.1504/MEJM.2023.131947

Ram, P., & Prabhakar, G. V. (2010). Leadership styles and perceived organizational politics as predictors of work related outcomes. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *15*(1), 40–55.

Resick, C. J., Hanges, P. J., Dickson, M. W., & Mitchelson, J. K. (2006). A cross-cultural examination of the endorsement of ethical leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *63*(4), 345–359. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-3242-1

Ringle, Christian M., Wende, Sven, & Becker, Jan-Michael. (2015). SmartPLS 4. Bönningstedt: SmartPLS. Retrieved from https://www.smartpls.com

Saeed, I., Khan, J., Zada, M., & Zada, S. (2023). Employee sensemaking in organizational change via knowledge management: Leadership role as a moderator. *Current Psychology*, *43*(7), 6657–6671. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04849-x

Saeed, I., Khan, J., Zada, M., Zada, S., Vega-Muñoz, A., & Contreras-Barraza, N. (2022). Linking ethical leadership to followers' knowledge sharing: Mediating role of psychological ownership and moderating role of professional commitment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*(February), 841590. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.841590

Saha, R., Cerchione, R., Singh, R., Dahiya, R., & Shashi. (2020). Effect of ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility on firm performance: A systematic review. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *27*(2), 409–429. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1824

Shin, Y. (2012). CEO ethical leadership, ethical climate, climate strength, and collective organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *108*(3), 299–312. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1091-7

Sanchez-Famoso, V., Maseda, A., Iturralde, T., & Alayo, M. (2023). A generational perspective of family firms' social capital: Interplay between ethical leadership and firm performance. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, *32*(2), 773–789. https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12521

Sinha, J. (2008). *Culture and organizational behaviour*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132100997

Soper, D. S. (2023). A-priori sample size calculator for structural equation models [Software]. https://www.danielsoper.com/statcalc

Steinbauer, R., Renn, R. W., Taylor, R. R., & Njoroge, P. K. (2014). Ethical leadership and followers' moral judgement: The role of followers' perceived accountability and self-leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *120*(3), 381–392. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1662-x

Tourigny, L., Han, J., Baba, V. V., & Pan, P. (2019). Ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility in China: A multilevel study of their effects on trust and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *158*(2), 427–440. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3745-6

Vermeeren, B., Kuipers, B., & Steijn, B. (2014). Does leadership style make a difference? Linking HRM, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *34*(2), 174–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X13510853

Vigoda, E. (2000). Organizational politics, job attitudes, and work outcomes: Exploration and implications for the public sector. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *57*(3), 326–347. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1999.1742

Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Meisler, G. (2010). Emotions in management and the management of emotions: The impact of emotional intelligence and organizational politics on public sector employees. *Public Administration Review*, *70*(1), 72–86. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2009.02112.x

Walker, R. M., & Boyne, G. A. (2009). Introduction: Determinants of performance in public organizations. *Public Administration*, *87*(3), 433–439. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2009.01774.x

Yasin, R. (2021). Responsible leadership and employees' turnover intention. Explore the mediating roles of ethical climate and corporate image. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *25*(7), 1760–1781. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-07-2020-0583

Zada, M., Khan, J., Saeed, I., Zada, S., & Yong Jun, Z. (2023). Linking public leadership with project management effectiveness: Mediating role of goal clarity and moderating role of top management support. *Heliyon*, *9*(5), e15543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e15543