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The Impact of Communication Transparency On Passengers' Trust in Airports: The Mediating Role of Business Ethics^(*)

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أثر شفافية الاتصال في ثقة المسافرين بالمطارات: الدور الوسيط لأخلاقيات الأعمال

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The Impact of Communication Transparency on Passengers' Trust in Airports: The Mediating Role of Business Ethics

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust in Yemeni airports and business ethics' role. Communication transparency comprises disclosure, clarity, and accuracy; business ethics comprises honesty and responsibility. An explanatory cross-sectional survey collected data February 11–August 10, 2025. Of 202 returned questionnaires, 200 were analyzed. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using a robust estimator for ordinal indicators, assessed the measurement model. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), with bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals (CIs), tested direct and indirect effects. Communication transparency was positively and significantly related to passengers' trust and business ethics. Business ethics positively influenced trust. The indirect effect of transparency on trust through business ethics was statistically significant, indicating complementary partial mediation. Disclosure, clarity, and accuracy positively affected business ethics. Clarity had a minimal direct effect on passengers' trust; disclosure and accuracy had no direct effects. However, three dimensions had indirect effects, with accuracy showing the strongest. Transparent airport communication builds trust by reducing uncertainty and expressing honesty and responsibility. The study contributes to communication transparency, business ethics, and airport management literature by identifying ethical credibility as a pivotal link between transparency and trust in Yemen's fragile institutional environment. Findings should be interpreted within Yemeni airports.

Keywords: Communication transparency; disclosure; clarity; accuracy; business ethics; passengers' trust; airport communication; Yemen.

Introduction:

Airports are complex service systems in which the services performance, communication, technology, staff behavior, and the physical environment all play a role in the airport passenger experience. They are not only transport facilities, but also institutional interfaces, in which the passengers assess the reliability, safety, fairness, and competency of services. In this context, the experience and quality of service at an airport is of paramount importance, as it involves passengers receiving information and interacting with other people during their travel (Batouei et al., 2020; Bogicevic et al., 2013; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2016). More recent research also reveals that digital transformation is increasing the communications-centric interactions that occur throughout the check-in and security process, the navigation, baggage handling and passenger support process, as well as raising issues relating to system reliability, privacy and loss of human interaction (Alnoman et al., 2025; Büyüksaatçı Kiriş & Akıf, 2025; Piedade et al., 2025), Airport service-quality is an important impetus for this. The previous studies found that the passengers' expectations about airport services include not only the physical facilities, it also include intangible expectations related to services utility and interaction between these services and the passengers (Fodness & Murray, 2007; Bezerra & Gomes, 2016). Other studies indicate that passengers' perception of the consistency of services through service interaction and communication processes (Park et al., 2006; Tsai et al., 2011; Saut & Song, 2022). Studies of Arasli et al., 2023, Hong et al., 2024, and Lim et al., 2024, conclude that digital communication and interfaces are essential for forming the perceived quality of airport and airline services. This literature has clearly shown that quality of communication is essential for the performance and the trust of the airport and its users, not in some administrative matters.

Communication is particularly important as passengers need to access the information and services that the airport has to provide them with updates regarding their check-in, security and boarding, delays, luggage and paperwork, and disruptions. Adopting transparent communication can reduce the level of information asymmetry and uncertainty in cases where information is available, transparent and accurate (Liu et al., 2015; Rawlins, 2008; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Evidence of this kind can be found at airports an independent study was conducted by the UK Civil

Aviation Authority (2025) on the effects of current communication practices and passenger preferences on the disruption journey to prove the importance of communication that is timely, accurate and consistent. It has been shown by Ginusti and Lestari (2025) that the same clear, consistent, and understandable operational information is also vital for effective communication within the realm of airport customer service. Recent transparency studies have indicated that there are other elements apart from information volume considered by stakeholders when evaluating disclosure: the comprehensibility, credibility, and informativeness of information, Transparency is not just a communication challenge in the operation. however. The passengers also assess honesty, responsibility, fairness and consistency between words and actions in the communication at the airport. According to trust theory, when people trust, they are willing to place themselves in a vulnerable situation based on positive expectations about the other person's actions (Mayer et al., 1995). This urgency is particularly significant in airports, where passengers are under strict time limits, have limited control, and depend on airport's communication and decision making. Nevertheless, recent aviation research shows that although technology have significant enhance on efficiency, it cannot fully overcome the ethical challenges. While passengers express a willingness to adopt on advanced technologies, they also emphasize the importance of protecting privacy, ensuring transparency, maintaining human oversight, and establishing responsible governance (Alnoman et al., 2025; Piedade et al., 2025). Therefore, while communication might be shared without necessarily leading to trust, if passengers doubt motives, ownership, or moral integrity of the communication.

This relationship is an important one to consider in the context of the Yemeni airports. Ethical signals can be particularly important if passengers are relying on communication to keep them informed about the disruption to the operation, institutional weaknesses and limitations of the infrastructure and uncertainty. Transparency level can have an impact on trust level, both because as long as there are uncertainties in the situation, there is a risk of mistrust, and because the level of transparency can indicate whether or not the airport is honest, responsible and accountable.

Although there have been many studies carried out on transparency and trust, three gaps exist. First, the concepts of communication transparency, business ethics and passengers' trust are seldom combined in a single airport specific model. Second, transparency trust is often seen as a direct link, but the influence of transparency on trust is reported to be related to the stakeholder interpretations and previous evaluations (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014). Third, the researches focus more on airports service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions than trust issues from an ethical perspective when exposed to vulnerability. Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the direct impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust and the indirect impact (mediated by business ethics) of communication transparency on passengers' trust in Yemeni airports.

Literature Review:

Communication Transparency:

Communication transparency is the stakeholders' awareness that relevant organizational information is shared, comprehensible and credible. Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) have developed a three-dimensional view of transparency: disclosure which is the availability and accessibility of information, clarity i.e. the comprehensibility and interpretability of information, and accuracy which means that information is correct, reliable, and without material distortion. It is more informative than considering transparency as a measure of the amount of information released, since this is a multidimensional perspective.

Good empirical evidence shows that making information transparent helps to diminish uncertainty and influence judgements of organizations. For example, Rawlins (2008) found that organizational transparency is related to customer trust, and Liu et al. (2015) proved that transparency in performance information can decrease the customer uncertainty; but Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2014) proved the relationship between transparency and the perceived trustworthiness is conditional on prior knowledge and predispositions. Recent studies as Montecchi et al. (2024) argued that stakeholders judge transparency by rely on the observability, comprehensibility, and the communicative intent. Evidence from aviation studies add a degree of clarity to this distinction. Tsoi and Liu (2025) found that there was a variation in airlines' communications regarding voluntary

carbon offsets and that the practices of vagueness and selective disclosure could be detrimental to making informed judgements. Similarly, Reill (2026) reported airport communication should not only be understandable, but also detailed, interactive, and responsive to various stakeholders. These studies, along with the findings from the UK Civil Aviation Authority (2025), indicate that transparency impacts trust in two ways: informativeness and accountability.

More generally, literature on organizational transparency cautions against considering transparency as a straightforward option or a universally good thing. Albu and Flyverbom (2019) demonstrated that transparency depends on the production of information, its visibility, and its interpretation, while Schnackenberg et al. (2021) tested the three dimensions of transparency: disclosure, clarity, and accuracy, empirically distinguishing between them.

These findings help to clarify the current research's multidimensional specification and indicate that consumers might react differently to the quality of information based on its availability, intelligibility and correctness at the airports.

Passengers' Trust

Trust plays an important role in a dependent, uncertain, and risky service environment. Mayer, et al. (1995) described trust as a willingness to vulnerability that comes from positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another party, and they identified the three pillars of ability, benevolence, and integrity to be central to the perceived trustworthiness. Similarly, Lee and See (2004) demonstrated that trust is a key factor in trusting a complex system when it is not possible for the users to check every process and outcome.

The institutions and communication systems in the airports serve as the way to time the process, ensure passengers' safety, document the process, move luggage, provide security, and handling disruption. Research on airport experiences results shows that the airport service quality, fairness, facilities, and technology have an impact on passengers' evaluations of airports and their behavioral intentions (Batouei et al., 2020; Bogicevic et al., 2013). More recent studies indicate that the transformation of the industry to digital offers both advantages, particularly with respect to speed, personalization, and the operational efficiency, but also disadvantages, such as privacy concerns,

cyber security risks, concerns over the failure systems, and a reduction in human interaction (Alnoman et al., 2025; Büyüksaatçı Kiriş & Akıf, 2025). Piedade et al. (2025) reported that most airports welcomed the use of AI and there were indications of ongoing calls for transparency and ethical oversight. Trust isn't a one-off thing, it's knowing that airports will do a good job, acted and communicated in a honest and responsible manner.

Trust is also considered a different concept than its predecessors, in the sense of trust research. The ability, benevolence, and integrity continuums are related but independent bases of trust and risk acceptance from meta-analytic evidence (Colquitt et al., 2007). These foundations may be given different values by the different stakeholders based on their vulnerability and their interactions with the organization (Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). Trust is important for enabling user reliance in service and technology-mediated exchanges and for transforming positive assessments into value and loyalty to the service in those situations (McKnight et al., 2002; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). However, when things go wrong in organizations, it can undermine trust if stakeholders think that the organization failed because of a lack of competence, integrity, or accountability, and it is important to be transparent about it and assign responsibility for it in order to repair trust (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009).

Business Ethics:

Business ethics is use of the moral values or standers, as honesty, responsibility, fairness, and integrity, in conducting business and relation with the stakeholders. Integrity related to linked to consistency of words and behaviors (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). For this relationship there are implications of ethics for organizational communication: information technically available but selective, misleading, and missing any accountability may lead to a interruption of trust.

As per Kang and Hustvedt (2014), transparency and social responsibility are some of the factors that influence consumer trust. Recent evidence highlights that the continued importance of this ethical mechanism, Daya & Riyadi (2025) demonstrated that implementing business ethics within Indonesian aviation industry have a positive impact on customer trust. Furthermore, Farkić et al. (2025) emphasized that the passenger's travel experience in airplane was related to the issue of dignity and care ethics. The

responsibility and effective communication with the stakeholders are the main points of the airport communication process as stated by Reill (2026). Hence, the study of business ethics is regarded as an interpretive process to evaluate the honesty and responsibility of the airport communication from the travellers' point of view.

The research in behavioral ethics is the one that provides an understanding as to how ethical credibility can be established through observable organizational behaviour. Ethical leadership is seen as the management of normatively appropriate behaviour as a result of decisions, actions, and interpersonal relations (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Formal rules, however, are not enough, as organizational practices do not adequately communicate the moral sensitivity and responsibility when it comes to organizational ethics (Treviño et al., 2006). A stakeholder's view of trustworthiness is related to competence, integrity, openness and a willingness to demonstrate concern for the interests of stakeholders (Caldwell & Clapham, 2003). These arguments are used to justify modeling business ethics as the evaluative portal which passengers exploit to read the meaning of the moral dimension of transparency.

Research Gap and Integrated Logic:

There is evidence in the literature of a positive relationship between transparency and trust, as well as a negative one, in the sense that transparency is not effective in all contexts. Alnoman et al. (2025), Büyüksaatçı Kiriş & Akif (2025), Reill (2026), Tsoi & Liu (2025), and the UK Civil Aviation Authority (2025) have examined business ethics from several perspectives, including disruption communication, digital service quality, AI governance, sustainability disclosure, and stakeholder accountability. These streams are still not integrated and not directly evaluate business ethics as a linkage between communication transparency and passengers' trust. In the current study, two mechanisms are included: an informational mechanism and an ethical mechanism. Communication transparency has potentially direct, as well as indirect, consequences for passengers' trust: transparency reduces uncertainty and increases interpretability; and transparency as the evidence of ethical credibility has an indirect consequence on the passengers' trust. In the specific case of airport settings that are considered fragile, ethical communication can make up for part of the weak institutional assurances.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses:

The conceptual framework is based on transparency theory, the integrative organizational trust model, and business ethics logic. Transparency theory describes the relationship between disclosure, clarity, and accuracy in access to and interpretation of information held by an organization by stakeholders (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Trust theory is the fact that passengers are ready to be vulnerable if they see the institution as competent, caring, and honest (Mayer et al., 1995). The mechanism is business ethics: communication that is transparent will convey a sense of responsibility and honesty, thereby enhancing trust.

Indirect Impacts of Communication Transparency:

Communication transparency is expected to have a positive impact passengers' trust by reducing information asymmetry and enabling passengers to make decisions in the face of uncertainty based on relevant, clear, and accurate information. This is in line with the recent findings in the field of communication of airport disruption, customer service communication, and the potential hazards of using vague or selective airline disclosure (Ginusti & Lestari, 2025; Tsoi & Liu, 2025; UK Civil Aviation Authority, 2025). Accordingly:

H1: *Communication transparency has positive impact on passengers' trust in Yemeni airports.*

Disclosure allows for access by the passengers to operational information and demonstrates openness and accountability of the organization. Accordingly:

H1a: *Disclosure has a positive impact on passengers' trust.*

Clarity eliminates confusion and reduces cognitive load by providing improved clarity in procedure and in messages. Accordingly:

H1b: *Clarity has a positive impact on passengers' trust.*

Accuracy refers to the information being communicated is correct and dependable, which enabling passengers to evaluate competence and integrity. Accordingly:

H1c: *Accuracy has a positive impact on passengers' trust.*

Business Ethics (Mediation):

Trust can be shaped by communicating transparency, and passengers' ethical perceptions of the airport. If such information is presented in a clear and accurate way, passengers might think that communication is an

expression of honesty and responsibility. In aviation studies in recent times, the relationship between business ethics and customer trust has been found, and it is known that communication in airports is an account responsibility that needs to be carried out with accessible, detailed and responsive information to the airport stakeholders (Daya & Riyadi, 2025; Reill, 2026). Communication transparency should thus be reflected Partially in passengers' trust in business ethics, accordingly:

H2: *Business ethics mediates the positive impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust in Yemeni Airports.*

H2a: *Business ethics mediates the positive impact of disclosure on passengers' trust.*

H2b: *Business ethics mediates the positive impact of clarity on passengers' trust.*

H2c: *Business ethics mediates the positive impact of accuracy on passengers' trust.*

Conceptual Model:

Communication transparency is a higher order construct in the model, represented by disclosure, clarity, and accuracy. Business ethics as a mediator variable represented by honesty and responsibility. While the passengers' trust is the dependent variable.

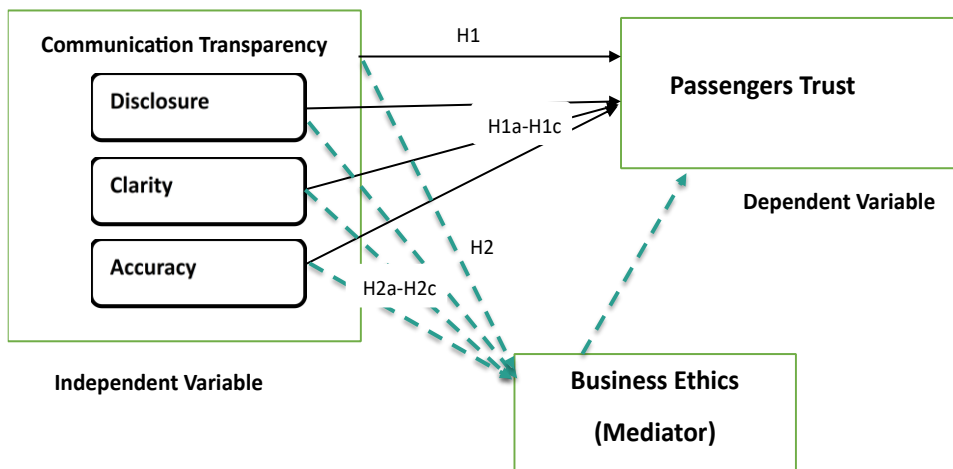


Figure (1). Conceptual model.

Methodology:**Research Design:**

The study used a cross-sectional explanatory survey design approach wherein the approach was quantitative in nature. It was quantitative as it used standardized Likert-type items to measure the latent constructs and the hypotheses were tested in a statistical way; cross-sectional because it was administered at a fixed time in the field; survey-based because it was administered by a standardized questionnaire completed by the respondents themselves; and explanatory because it involved calculating theoretically determined direct and indirect impacts among communication transparency, business ethics, and passengers' trust. A descriptive part was also employed to provide respondents' demographic and travel characteristics.

Population and Sampling:

The study's target population consisted of passengers who have previously visited airports in Yemen including Aden International Airport, Seiyun International Airport, and Socotra International Airport, which are currently the main airports for international and domestic flights. The study used convenience sampling due to the inability to use probability sampling because there was no stable sampling frame for passengers. This approach was done to allow access to those who were eligible for the survey but does not allow statistical generalization beyond the sample that has been observed.

Sample Size and Data Collection:

Data were collected from February 11 to August 10, 2025, using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The survey was distributed both face-to-face in accessible airport waiting areas and electronically to passengers who had recently used Yemeni airports. Each participant completed the questionnaire once and participation was voluntary and anonymous, with respondents informed of the study's academic purpose prior to participation. Of the 202 returned questionnaires, two were excluded during data screening for patterned responses and multivariate outliers. This yielded 200 valid cases for the final analysis, reflecting a usability rate of 99.0%.

Measurement Scales:

All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Communication transparency was broken down into

disclosure, clarity and accuracy (Rawlins, 2008; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Honesty and responsibility represented business ethics, based on Kang and Hustvedt (2014), and Palanski and Yammarino (2007). The ability, benevolence and integrity indicators were used to measure the passengers' trust, based on the framework of Mayer et al. (1995). The wording of the items was adapted to fit the airport communication in Yemen and checked for clarity, contextual fit, and redundancy prior to field administration.

Data Analysis Strategy

The statistical analysis was conducted using three complementary software packages, each serving a distinct analytical purpose. IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was used for managing, coding, cleaning, and organizing the main study database prior to the inferential analyses. jamovi version 2.7.24 was used to evaluate the study's measurement model, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), reliability, and validity assessments. SmartPLS version 3 was subsequently used to estimate the structural model and test the hypothesized relationships using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

The analysis consisted of two complementary stages. First, the measurement model was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis using a robust estimator appropriate for ordinal and non-normally distributed measures. Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including χ^2/df , CFI, TLI, GFI, AGFI, NFI, IFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. This stage was performed using jamovi 2.7.24. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, whereas convergent validity was evaluated through standardized factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), in accordance with established methodological recommendations (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Second, the structural relationships among the study constructs were evaluated using the PLS-SEM technique in SmartPLS 3. Direct and indirect effects were examined using bootstrapped path coefficients and their corresponding 95% confidence intervals. The explanatory and predictive performance of the structural model was further assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). These

indicators were used to evaluate the amount of explained variance, the magnitude of individual predictor effects, and the predictive relevance of the model.

The quality of the measurement model was additionally evaluated on the basis of convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and inter-construct distinctiveness, consistent with the principles proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in accordance with established reporting guidelines, including the interpretation of path coefficients, effect sizes, explained variance, predictive relevance, and bootstrapped confidence intervals (Hair et al., 2019).

Indirect effects and mediation patterns were evaluated on the basis of the significance and direction of the direct and indirect effects. Mediation types were classified according to the framework proposed by Nitzl et al. (2016) and Zhao et al. (2010), rather than relying on the traditional causal-steps procedure.

Finally, because the study variables were measured from the same respondents using a self-administered questionnaire, the potential for common method bias was explicitly considered. Procedural remedies, including respondent anonymity and clear and unambiguous item wording, were employed to minimize this potential source of bias. Common method bias was therefore considered and reported in accordance with the recommendations of Kock (2015) and Podsakoff et al. (2003, 2012).

Results:

Respondent Profile:

The final number of the respondents was 200. The majority of respondents were male (75.5%), and the 30 to less than 40 years age group (48.0%) was the largest. The largest educational group was those who had bachelor's degree (45.5%). The most common reasons for travel were study (36.0%), tourism or visiting (26.0%), and work or business (21.5%). Furthermore, 89.0% of the sample were international-flight passengers. Therefore, the data should be interpreted with the following characteristics in mind: The sample is composed mainly of male and international-flight passengers.

Table (1).

Respondent profile (N = 200).

Category	Group	Count	% N
Gender	Male	151	%75.5
	Female	49	%24.5
Age	Under 30 years	63	%31.5
	30 to less than 40 years	96	%48.0
	40 to less than 50 years	24	%12.0
	50 years and above	17	%8.5
Educational Qualification	Diploma or below	27	%13.5
	Bachelor's degree	91	%45.5
	Master's degree	52	%26.0
	Doctorate (PhD)	30	%15.0
Purpose of Travel	Work / Business	43	%21.5
	Study	72	36.0%
	Tourism / Visit	52	%26.0
	Medical treatment	15	%7.5
	Religious	18	%9.0
Air Travels Number	Once	85	%42.5
	Twice	42	%21.0
	Three times	13	%6.5
	More than three times	60	%30.0
Flight Type	International flight	178	%89.0
	Domestic flight	22	%11.0

Measurement Model Fit:

The overall measurement model had acceptable to good fit. The chi-square statistics were statistically significant but were within acceptable limits as measured by the relative chi-square and the incremental and residual-based indices. This result thus justified the continuation towards reliability, validity, and structural-model assessment.

Table (2).

Confirmatory measurement-model fit.

Fit index	CFA Model	Recommended values	Acceptable Values
X ²	1249		
df	579		
P-value	<.001	> 0.05	≥ 0.000
X ² / df	2.16	≤ 3.00	≤ 5.00
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.963	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.80
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.959	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.80
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.994	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.90
adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.992	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.933	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.963	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90
RMSEA	0.076	0.05 to 0.08	
SRMR	0.045	Less than 0.09	

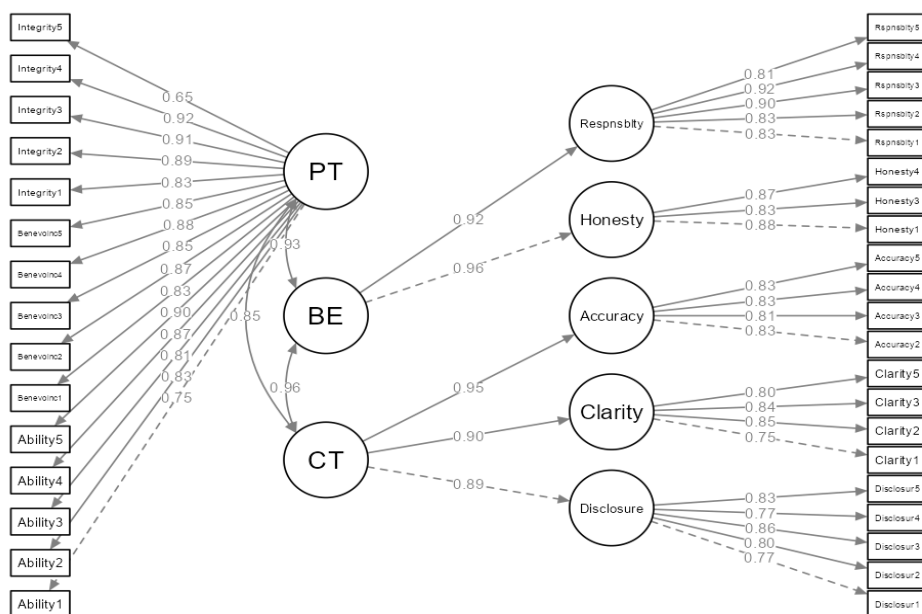


Figure (2). Combined confirmatory measurement model.

Reliability and Convergent Validity:

Generally, the factor loadings that remained were strong with the construct-level reliabilities and convergent validities were above typical levels. Cronbach's alpha coefficient varied between .828 and .963, the composite reliability ranged from .886 to .974, and the AVE ranged from .656 to .736. The composite reliability of passengers' trust shows high internal consistency (higher than might be expected if there was a significant overlap between the indicators), although this could also be the result of high internal consistency.

Table (3).

Reliability and convergent validity.

Axis	Dimension	Items	Convergent Validity		Reliability	
			Factor loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
			β	AVE	α	CR
Communication Transparency	Disclosure	Disclosure1	0.774	0.656	0.868	0.905
		Disclosure2	0.805			
		Disclosure3	0.863			
		Disclosure4	0.772			
		Disclosure5	0.831			
	Clarity	Clarity1	0.754	0.661	0.828	0.886
		Clarity2	0.852			
		Clarity3	0.844			
		Clarity5	0.799			
	Accuracy	Accuracy1	0.834	0.681	0.856	0.895
		Accuracy2	0.81			
		Accuracy3	0.83			
		Accuracy4	0.827			
Business Ethics	Honesty	Honesty1	0.877	0.736	0.851	0.893
		Honesty3	0.825			
		Honesty4	0.87			
	Responsibility	Responsibility1	0.826	0.734	0.904	0.932
		Responsibility2	0.83			
		Responsibility3	0.897			

		Responsibility4	0.915			
		Responsibility5	0.81			
Passengers' Trust		Ability1	0.755	0.715	0.963	0.974
		Ability2	0.834			
		Ability3	0.811			
		Ability4	0.868			
		Ability5	0.898			
		Benevolence1	0.830			
		Benevolence2	0.873			
		Benevolence3	0.846			
		Benevolence4	0.884			
		Benevolence5	0.846			
		Integrity1	0.833			
		Integrity2	0.887			
		Integrity3	0.914			
		Integrity4	0.916			
		Integrity5	0.653			

Discriminant Validity:

The HTMT ratios were less than .90, supporting the provisional validity of discriminant. Some values were close to the threshold such as honesty and responsibility related with passengers' trust. These high values are indicative of conceptual proximity and thus should be taken into account for the magnitude of the structural paths, but do not cast doubt on the model under the reported criterion.

Table (4).

Discriminant validity (HTMT).

Construct	Disclosure	Clarity	Accuracy	Honesty	Responsibility	Passengers' Trust
Disclosure	1.000	.866	.825	.831	.776	.740
Clarity	.866	1.000	.834	.791	.805	.787
Accuracy	.825	.834	1.000	.891	.880	.821
Honesty	.831	.791	.891	1.000	.898	.897
Responsibility	.776	.805	.880	.898	1.000	.870
Passengers' Trust	.740	.787	.821	.897	.870	1.000

5. Higher-Order Structural Model:

The higher-order model was used to examine the overall impact between communication transparency, business ethics, and passengers' trust. Communication transparency had a strong positive relationship with business ethics, ($\beta = .839$, $p < .001$), and business ethics had a strong positive relationship with passengers' trust ($\beta = .670$, $p < .001$). In addition, communication transparency had a smaller positive direct on passengers' trust ($\beta = .222$, $p = .003$). For business ethics, the model accounted for 70.4% of the variance and in passengers' trust it accounted for 74.7% of the variance. It was reported that the values of Q^2 were positive, showing that they were predictive relevant.

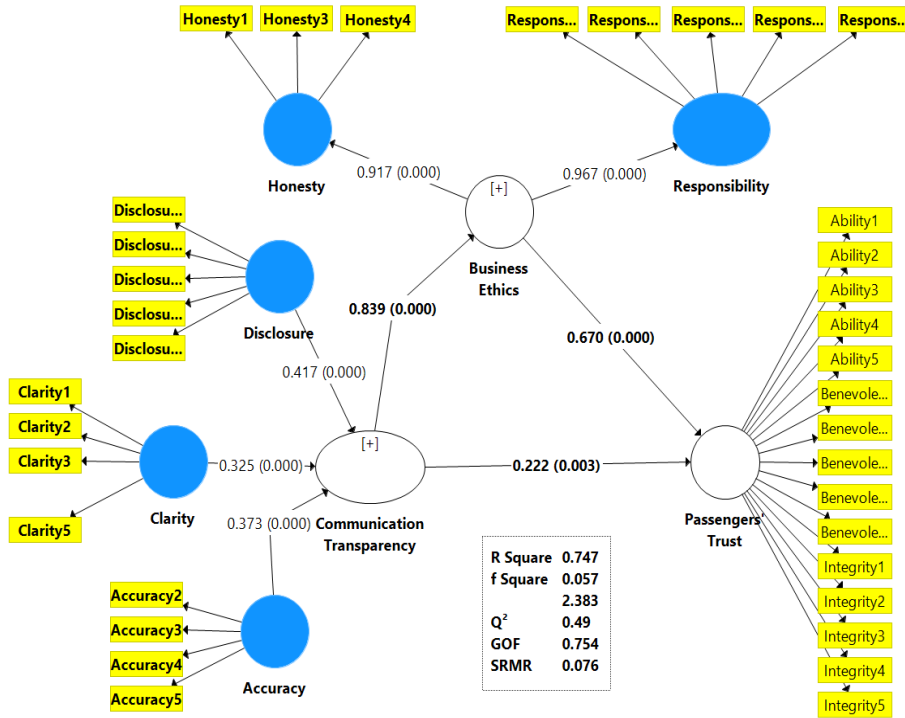


Figure (3). Higher-order structural model.

Table (5).

Higher-order direct impacts, impact sizes, explained variance, and predictive relevance.

Path	β	CI 0.95		T	P Values	F^2	R^2	Q^2
		Lower	Upper					
Communication Transparency -> Business Ethics	0.839	0.787	0.882	34.74	0.000	2.383	0.704	0.461
Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.67	0.55	0.806	10.15	0.000	0.526	0.747	0.49
Communication Transparency -> Passengers' Trust	0.222	0.07	0.347	3.01	0.003	0.057		

The indirect impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust through business ethics was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .562$, CI %95 [.449, .689], $p < .001$). Both the direct and indirect impacts were positive and significant, hence business ethics was supplemented with partial mediation.

Table (6).

Higher-order indirect impact through business ethics.

Path	Coefficient	CI 0.95		T	P Value
		Lower	Upper		
Communication Transparency -> Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.562	0.449	0.689	8.935	0.000

Dimension-Level Structural Model

Disclosure, clarity, and accuracy were split into the dimension-level model. Except for business ethics, all three dimensions showed positive impacts. Accuracy had the strongest impact ($\beta = .513$, $p < .001$), followed by disclosure ($\beta = .248$, $p < .001$) and clarity ($\beta = .177$, $p = .002$). Clarity had a small positive direct impact on passengers' trust ($\beta = .136$, $p = .040$), whereas the direct impacts of accuracy and disclosure were not statistically significant. Passengers' trust was most strongly positively directly affected by business ethics ($\beta = .666$, $p < .001$).

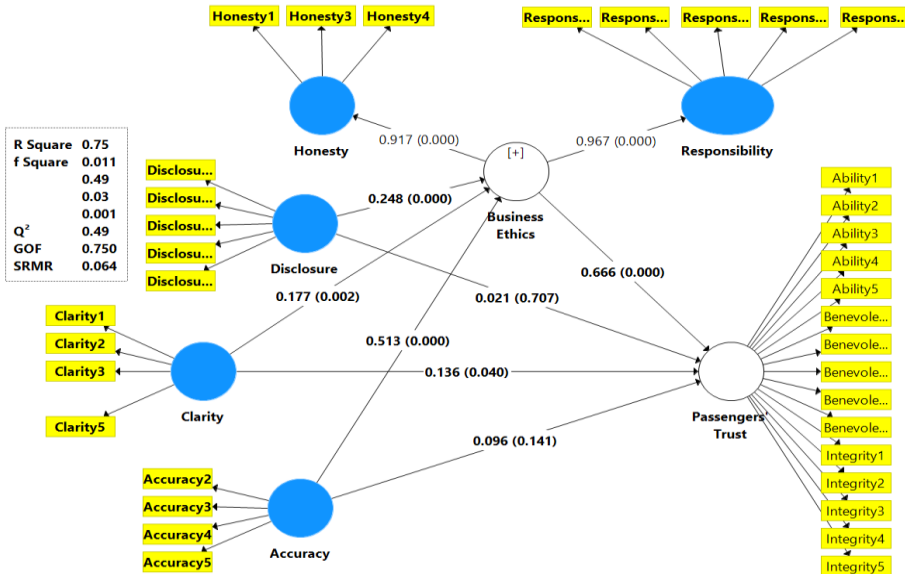


Figure (4). Dimension-level structural model.

Table (7).

Dimension-level direct impacts, impact sizes, explained variance, and predictive relevance.

Path	Coefficient	CI 0.95		T	P Values	F Square	R Square	Q ²
		Lower	Upper					
Accuracy -> Business Ethics	0.513	0.378	0.617	8.781	0.000	0.414	0.724	0.473
Clarity -> Business Ethics	0.177	0.065	0.291	3.106	0.002	0.048		
Disclosure -> Business Ethics	0.248	0.12	0.372	3.982	0.000	0.089		
Accuracy -> Passengers' Trust	0.096	-0.037	0.222	1.473	0.141	0.011	0.75	0.492
Clarity -> Passengers' Trust	0.136	0.005	0.267	2.062	0.040	0.030		
Disclosure -> Passengers' Trust	0.021	-0.087	0.122	0.376	0.707	0.001		
Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.666	0.533	0.804	9.311	0.000	0.49		

All three indirect impacts through business ethics were statistically significant. Accuracy produced the largest indirect effect ($\beta = .342$, $p < .001$), followed by disclosure ($\beta = .165$, $p < .001$) and clarity ($\beta = .118$, $p = .003$). Accuracy and disclosure therefore showed indirect-only mediation, whereas clarity showed complementary partial mediation.

Table (8).

Dimension-level indirect impacts through business ethics.

Path	Coefficient	CI 0.95		T	P Values	Mediation type
		Lower	Upper			
Accuracy -> Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.342	0.249	0.449	6.564	0.000	Indirect-only mediation
Clarity -> Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.118	0.042	0.198	2.961	0.003	Complementary partial mediation
Disclosure -> Business Ethics -> Passengers' Trust	0.165	0.081	0.246	3.742	0.000	Indirect-only mediation

Hypothesis Decisions:

Table (9).

Summary of hypothesis tests.

Hypothesis	Path	β	t	CI 0.95		p	Decision
				Lower	Upper		
H1	Communication Transparency → Passengers' Trust	0.222	3.010	.070,	.347	.003	Supported
H1a	Disclosure → Passengers' Trust	0.021	.376	-.087	.122	.707	Not supported
H1b	Clarity → Passengers' Trust	0.136	2.062	.005	.267	.040	Supported
H1c	Accuracy → Passengers' Trust	0.096	1.473	-.037	.222	.141	Not supported
H2	Communication Transparency → Business Ethics → Passengers' Trust	0.562	8.935	.449	.689	< .001	Supported
H2a	Disclosure → Business Ethics → Passengers' Trust	0.165	3.742	.081	.246	< .001	Supported
H2b	Clarity → Business Ethics → Passengers' Trust	0.118	2.961	.042	.198	.003	Supported
H2c	Accuracy → Business Ethics → Passengers' Trust	0.342	6.564	.249	.449	< .001	Supported

Discussion:

This study investigated the impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust in the Yemeni airports, and the test of mediation was business ethics. The results reinforce the main hypothesis: communication has a direct impact on trust as well as an indirect impact via passengers' assessments of the ethic of airport behavior. The indirect impact was much larger than the rest of the direct impact, showing that the value of transparency as a trust builder greatly relies on how passengers perceive the communication as honest and responsible.

The positive direct link between communication transparency and passengers' trust is supported by research that provides a correlation between accessible and understandable information and reduced uncertainty and

increased stakeholder confidence (Liu et al., 2015; Rawlins, 2008; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). It is also consistent with the recent evidence from airports that disruption communication and customer service communication in the front line is more effective when the messages are timely, clear, accurate and consistent (Ginusti & Lestari, 2025; UK Civil Aviation Authority, 2025). The smaller magnitude of the direct path, on the other hand, is in line with evidence that transparency does not always have the same impacts, and may, in fact, be dependent on the contextual and interpretive conditions (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014). In a delicate airport environment, information could be essential but unconvincing, which is why they need to see that the institution is communicating in good faith.

The findings further corroborate research on airport services by demonstrating that besides satisfaction, information-related service quality may impact on a deeper relationship level than service satisfaction. Previous research in the airport field shows a relationship between the service attributes and satisfaction and image formation, as well as intentions to behave (Bezerra & Gomes, 2016; Fodness & Murray, 2007; Park et al., 2006; Saut & Song, 2022; Tsai et al., 2011). In the present study, the findings expand on that research by showing the communication transparency's trust relevance, especially when the communication is perceived as being ethically credible by the passengers. This extension aligns with the recent evidence which indicating that digital interfaces, emerging technologies, and online passenger evaluations are becoming increasingly a factor in the understanding of service quality (Arasli et al., 2023; Hong et al., 2024; Lim et al., 2024).

Communication transparency had the strongest structural relationship with business ethics. This finding suggests that the passengers perceive disclosure, clarity, and accuracy as ethical indicators, not only as technical aspects of communication. The result supports the findings of Kang and Hustvedt's (2014), who demonstrated that transparency and social responsibility lead to trust, as well as Palanski and Yammarino's (2007), who focus on matching words with deeds. It also aligns with the latest aviation evidence which indicates that business ethics promotes customer confidence (Daya & Riyadi, 2025), and airports communication should be accessible, and information should be appropriate and accountable (Reill, 2026). Clear

communication at airports then, seems to influence perceptions of honesty and responsibility, and, consequently, trust.

The relationship between business ethics and passengers' trust was strong and positive, and business ethics partially mediated the overall transparency–trust relationship. This is a “partial mediation” where transparency itself is an information impact, but the bigger impact is through the “ethical credibility.” This discovery extends a straightforward direct impact argument to reveal that the perception of information is not just important, but also its suggested implications regarding the airport's motives, accountability and willingness to accept responsibility.

The mediation pattern is also in line with general trust and ethics literature. Organizational behavior allows stakeholders to make inferences about an organization's competence, benevolence and integrity, with the latter two inferences being particularly important when vulnerability exists (Colquitt et al., 2007; Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). Ethical conduct offers tangible cues regarding the organization's motives, and its trustworthiness (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Caldwell & Clapham, 2003), and service research indicates that trust creates relational value that lasts beyond the short-term (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). Business ethics thus does not simply follow transparency in the current model, but it is an answer to the question of why transparency can be so compelling as to influence trust.

Specifically at the dimensional level, the direct impacts were statistically significant for clarity, but not for other dimensions. Clear messages can help minimize ambiguity on the spot, support in passenger decision-making, and help to lessen cognitive load on more complicated procedures. This is in line with the airport communication research which focuses on providing clear, consistent, and easily accessible information at customer-service points and when the operation is disturbed (Ginusti & Lestari, 2025; UK Civil Aviation Authority, 2025). Clarity also indirectly influenced via business ethics, suggesting that clear communication serves as an ethical cue for consideration towards passengers and is also a tool for practice.

Accuracy had the greatest indirect impact on trust with the largest dimension-specific direct impact on business ethics, but this direct impact was not statistically significant. This indicates that passengers might consider the correctness of the facts as an assumption and an expectation in basic

operations. But, only when accuracy is perceived as proof of honesty, competence and responsibility, can it assist in building trust. This is especially significant when passengers are waiting for a plane to arrive, changes to the schedule, security instructions, airplane baggage disputes, and/or documentation needs occur, as the ability to provide accurate information can cause passengers to face significant costs. The findings are, again, consistent with the results of Tsoi and Liu (2025) finding that vague or selective aviation communication can result in impeding informed judgment and perceived credibility.

There was also indirect impact as opposed to direct disclosure of trust. Nevertheless, disclosing information only is not enough. Disclosure adds to trust when they feel it is sincere openness and accountability are not too much, not too late, not too much, not too little, and or out of context. These findings are aligned with the current transparency research, which highlight the importance of the intention behind disclosure and information accessibility by the stakeholders (Montecchi et al., 2024).

The results are overall a model of transparency ethics trust. While communication transparency is still relevant, it can have multiple impacts: communication transparency can have an immediate uncertainty-reducing function, whereas disclosure and accuracy can have a trust-relevant function, mainly through ethical credibility. Accordingly, passengers' trust in Yemeni airports is the main way that business ethics is manifested. It is particularly relevant to airports context become increasingly digital and passenger-centric. Current research indicates that to guarantee passengers' trust in airports, efficiency-enhancing technologies should be accompanied by privacy protection, reliable systems, communication with humans, and ethical governance (Alnoman et al., 2025; Büyüksaatçı Kiriş & Akıf, 2025; Farkik et al., 2025; Piedade et al., 2025).

Theoretical Contributions:

The study has four theoretical contributions. First, it builds on previous research on organization transparency by proving that communication transparency has a direct impact and an enhanced ethically mediated impact on passengers' trust. Second, it validates the importance of considering transparency as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and not as a nondimensional concept as disclosure, clarity and accuracy are recognized. Third, the study puts business ethics as a mediating mechanism regarding the

importance of communication in terms of trust, connecting recent studies on aviation ethics, accountability, and responsible disclosure with trust formation literature (Daya & Riyadi, 2025; Reill, 2026; Tsoi & Liu, 2025). Fourth, takes transparency and trust theory to a thin-airport setting where passengers' vulnerability and institutional uncertainty have heightened its importance, making it crucial to communicate honestly and responsibly.

Practical Implications:

Transparency should be viewed not only as a means of disseminating more information, but also as an airport authority's communication system, for which transparency is an integral part. First, communication protocols should be designed so they indicate what information should be communicated, when it should be updated and who should be responsible for verifying the information. Second, messages should be written in a clear, concise and website friendly manner, for public address, counters, mobile communications and staff communications. Third, the accuracy should be safeguarded by having the data fed into various sources synchronized, and by having timely correction processes in place. Fourth, those who are tasked with check-in and security, customer service and disruption management, should be trained to give clear information in a straightforward manner, to accept that they are unsure and to be honest about who is responsible for any mistakes in information or delays. Last but not least, the performance of communication should be evaluated based on both the clarity and the accuracy of the information, as well as its timeliness, consistency, fairness, and the passengers' trust in it, rather than on the amount of information. These priorities concur with existing airport literature and evidence on disruption communication, digital service quality, passenger focused technologies, and stakeholders' engagement responsible manner (Alnoman et al., 2025; Büyüksaatçı Kiriş & Akıf, 2025; Reill, 2026; UK Civil Aviation Authority, 2025).

Limitations and Future Research:

There are a number of caveats to the study. It is not a cross-sectional design, which does not capture changes over time in trust. The study used convenience sampling, thereby restricting the ability to generalize statistical findings, and the sample was skewed towards passengers of the same sex and who had travelled from abroad. Measures were based on self-reported perceptions and may thus be influenced by common response tendencies.

Furthermore, number of HTMT ratios were close to .90, signifying conceptual similarity of the ethics-related dimensions and the trust construct. Thirdly, the study focused on the national context and may not allude to airports in more stable institutional contexts.

However, the one source survey design involves attention to common-method bias as well. Evaluation apprehension and ambiguity are minimized by anonymity and careful wording of the items, but are not removed by these methods, response consistency, social-desirability, and implicit-theory, are still present (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). For future replications, it is suggested to use passenger surveys, show behavioral or operational indicators, use different measurement opportunities or marker variable procedures / full collinearity procedures, where applicable (Kock, 2015).

Future studies should do more to explore if changes in trust over time are observed as a result of communication interventions and use a longitudinal or experimental design. Comparative studies between airports and countries would help to compare the stability of institutions and the moderating impact on the transparency–ethics–trust mechanism. Other parameters which may be mediators or moderators include service quality, perceived safety, crisis-communication effectiveness, previous experience at airports and institutional reputation, and should be investigated in further studies. To understand the difference between 'real' transparency and procedural or performative transparency, qualitative research could be used to elicit this information from passengers.

Conclusion:

This study aimed to investigate the impact of communication transparency on passengers' trust in Yemeni airports and how the business ethics play as a mediator between communication transparency and passengers' trust. Communication transparency was positively and directly related to trust, and indirectly related, with the business ethics variable showing some partial mediation. At the dimensional level, clarity had a direct impact on trust, as well as an indirect impact, while business ethics was the only dimension that had an indirect impact on trust through impacts of disclosure and accuracy. The indirect impact was the greatest from accuracy.

The results confirm that openness of airports in Yemen is not only a strengthening factor of trust, but openness which is perceived as honest and

responsible. It is therefore best to communicate information in a transparent way that includes appropriate disclosure, comprehensible information, accuracy, and an explicit ethical commitment. The current study contributes to the understanding of the process of trust formation in fragile airport environments by introducing business ethics as the main mechanism linking transparency with trust.

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