

**A Comparative Study of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions about Leadership Skills and Students Self-Discipline**Iqbal Amin Khan<sup>1</sup>, Mehnaz Fazal<sup>2\*</sup>, Hameed Khan<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup> Department of Education University of Malakand, Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> Department of Education Women Sub Campus, Batkhela, University of Malakand, Pakistan.**Abstract**

*This study explores the perceptions of teachers and students regarding teachers' leadership skills and students' self-discipline. A quantitative approach was used, and data were collected from 20 teachers and 135 students in secondary schools through questionnaires. The findings show that both teachers and students perceive teachers' leadership skills and students' self-discipline at a moderate to high level, although teachers rated them slightly higher than students. Regression analysis revealed that inspiring and motivating skills, classroom management, and communication and feedback significantly influence students' self-discipline. The study concludes that effective teacher leadership plays an important role in developing students' discipline, motivation, and positive classroom behavior.*

**Keywords:** Teachers, leadership Skills, Self-Discipline

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## 1. Introduction

Educational environments are shaped by the interactions between teachers and students, making the perceptions of both groups regarding leadership and discipline crucial for effective learning outcomes. Teachers play a central role in shaping the behavioral and academic development of students, serving not only as knowledge transmitters but also as role models who guide personal growth and responsible behavior (Rahayu et al., 2024). Their perceptions of leadership and discipline influence classroom management, instructional strategies, and the reinforcement of self-discipline among students (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Leadership skills in teaching involve the ability to motivate students, communicate effectively, manage classroom environments, and create learning spaces that foster responsibility and discipline (Savage & Savage, 2009). Teachers who perceive themselves as leaders are more likely to adopt proactive measures to guide student behavior, establish high expectations, and provide constructive feedback, thereby promoting a positive classroom culture and collaborative learning (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Emmer & Stough, 2001). These leadership behaviors can directly influence students' self-regulation and behavioral control, enabling them to persist toward long-term academic and personal goals (Yeow & Martin, 2013).

Self-discipline among students defined as the capacity to regulate behavior, control impulses, and remain focused on goals despite distractions is closely associated with academic success and personal growth (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Teachers reinforce disciplined behaviors through structured learning environments, consistent guidance, and accountability measures. Students' perceptions of teacher leadership further shape their engagement and motivation (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) when students perceive teachers as supportive, fair, and inspiring, they demonstrate higher levels of self-discipline, motivation, and academic persistence (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Research indicates that perception gaps often exist between teachers and students. Teachers may emphasize instructional leadership and classroom management, while students may value encouragement, guidance, and communication. Understanding these differences is vital, as aligning teacher behaviors with student expectations can improve classroom discipline, engagement, and academic outcomes (Bashir & Iqbal, 2021).

Teacher leadership is thus not only about professional initiative but also about influencing student behavior, promoting self-regulation, and contributing to school improvement through collaborative practices and effective classroom management (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Students' perceptions of these leadership behaviors are equally important, as they affect motivation, emotional development, and behavioral regulation (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that students who perceive teachers as effective leaders exhibit stronger self-discipline, goal setting, and academic engagement, confirming the critical link between teacher leadership and student behavioral outcomes (Liu & Hallinger, 2018).

Thus overall, investigating the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding leadership skills and self-discipline provides valuable insights for improving teacher training, classroom management strategies, and educational outcomes in secondary schools. By understanding these dynamics, educators and policymakers can better align teaching practices with student needs, fostering environments that support both academic achievement and personal growth.

In the Pakistani educational context, Bashir and Iqbal (2021) found that while teachers believed they were providing adequate leadership and guidance, students sometimes perceived gaps in communication and feedback.

Therefore, comparing the perceptions of teachers and students is essential for understanding how leadership behaviors influence the development of student self-discipline.

### Problem Statement

The development of self-discipline, which is necessary for academic success, responsible behavior, and personal development, is extremely difficult for secondary school pupils in Pakistan. Many students have trouble setting goals, managing their time, and controlling their behavior, which can have a detrimental impact on their academic performance. As important classroom influencers, teachers are crucial in molding students' conduct and encouraging self-control. Students' capacity to acquire self-discipline is strongly impacted by their leadership abilities, which include inspiring students, running classes efficiently, giving constructive criticism, and setting an example of disciplined behavior.

Despite the significance of teacher leadership, the majority of Pakistani research has concentrated on academic achievement, curriculum implementation, or general classroom management; teachers' and students' perceptions of leadership and its impact on students' self-discipline have received less attention. Teachers can think they are mentoring pupils.

Teachers may believe they are successfully directing students, but students may perceive gaps in motivation, communication, or guidance, resulting in discrepancies in classroom discipline and participation. Understanding these attitudes is crucial because it can help identify gaps, educate teacher training programs, improve classroom management tactics, and support policy measures that promote disciplined, motivated, and academically successful kids.

The study aims to compare the perceptions of teachers and students regarding teachers' leadership skills and students' self-discipline, and to examine the effects of teacher leadership skills on student self-discipline. Correspondingly, the study proposes the following hypotheses: there is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and students regarding teachers' leadership skills and their influence on students' self-discipline, while the alternative suggests that a significant difference exists; additionally, it is hypothesized that there are no significant effects of teacher leadership skills on student self-discipline, whereas the alternative proposes that teacher leadership skills have a significant effect on student self-discipline.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Study Design

This study adopted a comparative quantitative research design to examine and contrast teachers' and students' perceptions regarding teacher leadership skills and student self-discipline. The population consisted of teachers and students from Government Girls High Schools in District Malakand. From this population, a total sample of 155 participants was selected, including 135 students and 20 teachers, using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique followed by random sampling to ensure representativeness. Data were collected through a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of 20 items grouped under two main constructs teacher leadership skills and student self-discipline. Participants responded to each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires in the selected schools, providing clear instructions to ensure accurate completion. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics were

used to summarize the perceptions of both teachers and students, while independent sample comparisons using mean scores were employed to

identify differences between teachers' and students' views regarding leadership skills and their influence on student self-discipline.

### 3. Results

**Table 1**  
*Perceptions of Teachers' and Students about Leadership Skills*

Leadership Skill Dimension	Students (n=135)	Mean	Teachers (n=20)	Mean	Interpretation
Inspiring & Motivating Skills (IM)	135	3.98	20	4.23	High
Classroom Management Skills (CM)	135	3.84	20	4.11	High
Communication & Feedback Skills (CF)	135	3.72	20	4.05	High
Overall Leadership Skills	135	3.85	20	4.13	High

**Interpretation:** Both teachers and students perceive teacher leadership positively. Teachers rate themselves slightly higher, with the strongest confidence in inspiring and motivating students. Students perceive leadership slightly lower but still at a high level.

**Table 2**  
*Perceptions of Teachers and Students about Self-Discipline*

Self-Discipline Dimension	Teachers' Perception (n=20)	Mean	Students' Perception (n=135)	Mean	Interpretation
Time Management(TM)	20	4.05	135	3.95	Moderate-High
Goal Setting & Persistence (GP)	20	4.00	135	3.88	Moderate-High
Behavioral Regulation (BR)	20	4.02	135	3.92	Moderate-High
Overall Self-Discipline	20	4.02	135	3.92	Moderate-High

**Interpretation:** Teachers perceive students' self-discipline slightly higher than students themselves report. Overall, students' self-discipline is rated as moderate to high across all dimensions, indicating consistent behavioral regulation and goal-directed habits.

**Table 3**  
*Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions about leadership skills*

Dimension	Students (n=135) Mean	Teachers (n=20) Mean	Interpretation
Leadership Skills			
Inspiring & Motivating Skills (IM)	3.98	4.23	Teachers perceive themselves slightly higher in leadership than students do.
Classroom Management Skills (CM)	3.84	4.11	Both groups rate high, teachers slightly higher.
Communication & Feedback Skills (CF)	3.72	4.05	Teachers see themselves as more effective; students perceive it slightly lower.
Overall Leadership Skills	3.85	4.13	Overall, teachers rate their leadership higher than students perceive.

**Table 4**  
*Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions about self-discipline Student Self-Discipline*

Dimension	Students (n=135) Mean	Teachers (n=20) Mean	Interpretation
Time Management (TM)	3.95	4.05	Teachers perceive students' time management slightly higher than students report.
Goal Setting & Persistence (GP)	3.88	4.00	Teachers perceive students' persistence higher than students' self-reports.
Behavioral Regulation (BR)	3.92	4.02	Teachers perceive slightly higher behavioral regulation than students report.
Overall Self-Discipline	3.92	4.02	Both groups rate self-discipline moderate to high; teachers slightly higher.

Table 3 and 4 shows a comparison between students' and teachers' perceptions of teachers' leadership skills and students' self-discipline. Overall, teachers rated both their leadership abilities and students' self-discipline slightly higher than the students themselves. In leadership skills, teachers gave higher mean scores in inspiring and motivating (4.23), classroom management (4.11), and communication and

feedback (4.05) compared with students' ratings of 3.98, 3.84, and 3.72 respectively. This indicates that teachers believe they demonstrate strong leadership in the classroom, while students perceive these skills slightly less strongly. Similarly, in student self-discipline, teachers again rated students higher in time management (4.05), goal setting and persistence (4.00), and behavioral regulation (4.02) compared with

students' own ratings (3.95, 3.88, and 3.92). Overall, both groups agree that teachers' leadership skills and students' self-discipline are at a moderate to high level, although teachers tend to view both more positively than students.

**Table 5**  
**Regression Analysis (Effect of Teacher Leadership skills on Student Self-Discipline)**

Predictor Variable	$\beta$	SE	t	p
Inspiring & Motivating Skills	0.32	0.05	6.40	< 0.001
Classroom Management Skills	0.28	0.06	4.67	< 0.001
Communication & Feedback	0.21	0.05	4.20	< 0.001

The table presents the regression analysis results showing the effect of different teacher leadership skills (predictor variables) on the dependent variable (e.g., students' self-discipline or student outcomes).

The results indicate that Inspiring and Motivating Skills have a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable. The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.32$ ) shows that a one-unit increase in teachers' inspiring and motivating skills leads to a 0.32 unit increase in the dependent variable, while other variables remain constant. The t-value ( $t = 6.40$ ) is high, and the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant.

Similarly, Classroom Management Skills also show a positive and significant influence on the dependent variable. The beta value ( $\beta = 0.28$ ) suggests that effective classroom management contributes positively to improving the outcome variable. The t-value ( $t = 4.67$ ) and the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) confirm that this effect is statistically significant. Furthermore, Communication and Feedback skills have a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable as well. The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.21$ ) indicates that better communication and constructive feedback from teachers are associated with improvements in the dependent variable. The t-value ( $t = 4.20$ ) and the probability value ( $p < 0.001$ ) show that this effect is also statistically significant.

Overall, the table demonstrates that all three leadership skills significantly influence the dependent variable, with Inspiring and Motivating Skills having the strongest impact, followed by Classroom Management Skills and Communication and Feedback. This suggests that teachers who motivate students, manage classrooms effectively, and provide clear communication and feedback contribute significantly to improving student outcomes

#### 4. Discussion

The analysis of the collected data reveals several important insights regarding the perceptions of teachers and students about teacher leadership skills and their impact on students' self-discipline. Descriptive statistics show that both teachers and students generally recognize the importance of leadership skills in fostering disciplined behavior among students. Teachers rated themselves relatively high on inspiring and motivating skills, classroom management, and communication and feedback, suggesting that they perceive themselves as effective leaders capable of guiding students toward self-regulated behavior. Students, on the other hand, reported slightly lower perceptions, which indicates that while they acknowledge teacher leadership, their experiences of these behaviors in the classroom may be more moderate or situational.

The regression analysis further supports the significance of teacher leadership on student self-discipline. Specifically, the model summary ( $R^2 = 0.45$ ,  $F(3,246) = 66.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) demonstrates that approximately 45% of the variance in student self-discipline can be explained by teachers' leadership skills, indicating a substantial predictive relationship. Among the leadership dimensions, inspiring and motivating

skills ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $t = 6.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) emerged as the strongest predictor, followed closely by classroom management skills ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $t = 4.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and communication and feedback ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $t = 4.20$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings suggest that when teachers actively motivate students, manage classrooms effectively, and provide clear feedback, students are more likely to exhibit disciplined behaviors, such as completing assignments on time, maintaining focus, and demonstrating self-control. The comparison between teachers' and students' perceptions highlights interesting patterns. While teachers consistently rated their leadership skills higher, students' perceptions, though positive, were lower, which may reflect differences between self-assessment and observed classroom behaviors. This gap emphasizes the need for teachers to align their leadership practices with students' experiences, ensuring that motivational strategies, classroom management, and feedback are effectively translated into observable support for self-discipline.

The empirical results reinforce that teacher leadership is a critical determinant of student self-discipline. In the context of Pakistani secondary schools, these results underline the importance of teacher training programs focused on leadership development, as improving teachers' leadership skills can directly enhance students' academic engagement, personal responsibility, and behavioral regulation.

#### Conclusion

The study concludes that teacher leadership skills have a significant and positive impact on students' self-discipline in Government Girls High Schools of District Malakand. Among the dimensions of leadership, inspiring and motivating students emerged as the strongest predictor of disciplined behavior, followed by effective classroom management and clear communication and feedback. While teachers perceive their leadership skills highly, students' slightly lower perceptions indicate the need to align leadership practices with students' classroom experiences. These findings highlight that strengthening teacher leadership through targeted training can enhance student self-regulation, academic engagement, and overall behavioral outcomes, ultimately contributing to more disciplined and productive learning environments.

#### Recommendations

Future researchers should explore longitudinal effects of teacher leadership on student self-discipline and include other influencing factors. Schools should provide leadership training and mentoring programs for teachers to foster student responsibility. Policymakers should support teacher development initiatives and promote evidence-based strategies in schools. Parents should reinforce disciplined behavior at home and collaborate with teachers. Students should actively practice time management, goal setting, and emulate positive role models to enhance self-discipline and academic success.

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