



Power Bases and Campus Discipline: Evidence from Public Universities in Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Campus discipline is central to the academic quality and orderly functioning of universities, yet little empirical evidence shows how the power exercised within institutions shapes it. This study examined the relationship between power influence and campus discipline at the university level, drawing on French and Raven's (1959) bases of power and Tracy's (1991) theory of empowerment. Power influence was measured through six dimensions: coercive, legitimate, reward, expert and referent power, and empowerment. Campus discipline was measured through six dimensions: moral/ethical, academic, behavioural, institutional-policy, social and cultural, and health and safety discipline. The objectives were to assess the association between power influence and campus discipline, and to determine the effect of each power dimension on it. A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational survey design was adopted. Data were collected from randomly selected faculty members ($N = [\text{confirm}]$) of five public universities (KUST, KKKUK, USTB, ULM and Gomal University) in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, using a validated 60-item, five-point Likert-type questionnaire (composite reliability = .930 and .947). Data were analysed in SPSS using Pearson correlation and simple and multiple regression. The results showed a significant, positive relationship between power influence and campus discipline, $r(239) = .604$, $p < .001$, with power influence explaining 36.4% of the variance in campus discipline. In the multiple regression, the six dimensions jointly accounted for 37.8% of the variance. Reward power ($\beta = .217$) and expert power ($\beta = .203$) were the strongest unique predictors, followed by legitimate power ($\beta = .164$) and coercive power ($\beta = .122$), while referent power and empowerment were not significant unique predictors. The study concludes that university leaders should rely on influence grounded in recognition and competence rather than on coercion and control, and that disciplinary policy should be designed accordingly.

Keywords: Power Influence, Campus Discipline, French and Raven, Empowerment, Higher Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan



Background of the Study

Discipline is one of the structures that carries the load in any learning organisation. It is the largely invisible system of norms and procedures that lets lectures begin on time, examinations be conducted fairly, and thousands of people from different backgrounds share a campus without disorder. In universities, discipline is not merely the absence of misconduct. It is the presence of values the academic community has agreed on, such as respect, punctuality, honesty, safety, and civic responsibility. It is closely tied to academic integrity and character development, and it rests on respect for rules, regard for legitimate authority, and accountability among students and staff alike (Khan & Malik, 2021). A well-managed disciplinary climate therefore does more than keep the campus running smoothly. It fosters responsibility, respect, and cooperation, which in turn improve the quality of teaching and learning (Iqbal & Akhtar, 2019).

Sustaining discipline has become harder than it was under the older custodial model of "rules and punishment." Today's universities involve many stakeholders, varied leadership styles, and different degrees of power distance between administrators, faculty, and students, all of which shape whether discipline is experienced as imposed or as shared. Understanding this requires returning to a basic question in organisational and social psychology: what is power, and how is it used? French and Raven (1959) defined power as the capacity of one party to influence another's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour and identified five bases: legitimate power (authority attached to a position), reward power (the ability to provide valued outcomes), coercive power (the ability to sanction or punish), expert power (recognised knowledge or skill), and referent power (identification with and admiration for the power holder). These dynamics are not confined to corporate or political settings. They operate daily in universities, in the relationships between administrators, faculty, and students (Rahim, 2016).

The typology has been repeatedly tested and refined since 1959. Contemporary work links the bases to modern leadership styles and suggests that expert and referent power tend to produce more durable influence than position-based power alone. It also shows that bases of power are socially negotiated and can be fragile rather than fixed attributes of individuals. The model therefore remains analytically useful for understanding how university administrators, deans, directors, and heads of department are perceived to exercise power over faculty.

In higher education, legitimate and reward power are typically exercised by administrators to implement institutional policy, while expert and referent power are more often used by teachers to shape student conduct through knowledge and mentoring (Harper, 2020). Reliance on coercive power, by contrast, can generate stress, resistance, and a loss of institutional credibility and morale, and it rarely secures lasting compliance (Ball, 2012). Empowerment has been proposed as a complement to the classical bases in response to these limitations. It is defined by cooperation, participation, and shared accountability rather than control (Tracy, 1991). Where authority is regarded as legitimate and people are given a sense of competence, autonomy, and impact, institutional values are more likely to be internalised, and discipline becomes a matter of self-motivated commitment rather than external monitoring.

This participative view of power is increasingly visible in international debates on university governance. Research in the United Kingdom and Australia indicates that educative



approaches to academic integrity, as opposed to purely deterrent approaches based on detection and sanction, help students understand institutional expectations and are associated with more sustained compliance (Cullen, 2022; Sbaffi & Zhao, 2022). Related work on assessment design likewise treats discipline as a shared process rather than a unilateral act of authority (Holden, Norris, & Kuhlmeier, 2021).

These global discussions intersect with the governance realities of the public university sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, which is marked by limited resources, layered administrative procedures, and a largely transactional, day-to-day style of leadership. Recurrent disciplinary problems, including student politics, inconsistent enforcement of rules across institutions, absenteeism, examination misconduct, and disrespect toward teachers, are widely reported and are often read as a gap between aspirational and practised leadership (Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020; Khan & Malik, 2021). Related Pakistani studies have examined faculty stress and attrition linked to inconsistent administrative practices (Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021), leadership and conflict management (Kiran, 2020), ethical power and student engagement (Seref & Mizikaci, 2022), and empowerment-oriented leadership and institutional harmony (Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020). However, these studies mostly address leadership styles in the abstract rather than the specific bases of power through which leadership is exercised. To the best of our knowledge, none has examined, at the faculty level and across multiple dimensions, how those bases relate to campus discipline.

This study addresses that gap. It combines French and Raven's (1959) bases of power with Tracy's (1991) concept of empowerment to form a six-dimensional model of power influence: coercive, legitimate, reward, expert, referent, and empowerment. It does not claim that the classical typology is exhaustive, but it adds the empowerment dimension in line with current participative-leadership thinking. Campus discipline is likewise treated as a set of related but distinct dimensions rather than a single outcome: moral/ethical, academic, behavioural, institutional-policy, social and cultural, and health and safety discipline. On this basis, the study examines the relationship between power influence and campus discipline and the effect of each power dimension on it, in the context of public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Statement of the Problem

A disciplined campus is a precondition for the core academic work of a university. In the public universities of southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, faculty and administrators report persistent student politics, absenteeism, examination cheating, bullying, and mutual disrespect (Iqbal & Akhtar, 2019; Khan & Malik, 2021). These problems span moral and ethical conduct, academic routine, behaviour, policy compliance, social and cultural interaction, and health and safety, so discipline is multidimensional.

University management exercises authority over these matters daily through the bases of power identified by French and Raven (1959) and, in current scholarship, through empowerment (Tracy, 1991). Pakistani research, however, has mostly examined separate organisational constructs such as empowerment, faculty retention, and organisational justice (Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020; Kiran, 2020; Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021). It does not show which bases of power faculty perceive as being exercised, or whether those perceptions are related to campus discipline. Without this evidence, disciplinary policy risks relying on sanctions, which are known to provoke resistance, stress, and disengagement (An, 2022; Ball, 2012).



This study therefore examines the relationship between six dimensions of power influence (coercive, legitimate, reward, expert, referent, and empowerment) and six dimensions of campus discipline (moral/ethical, academic, behavioural, institutional-policy, social and cultural, and health and safety), as perceived by faculty at five public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Gap

Existing Pakistani research touches on this problem without addressing it directly. Studies have examined organisational justice as a mediator between departmental leadership style and academic staff performance (Khan, Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021), leadership and conflict management (Kiran, 2020), ethical power and student engagement (Seref & Mizikaci, 2022), and faculty attrition linked to inconsistent administrative practice (Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021). Related work links empowerment-oriented management to institutional harmony (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020). These studies are valuable, but they do not explain how specific bases of power are exercised to maintain discipline on campus, particularly in the public universities of a developing country (Khan & Malik, 2021; Rahim, 2016).

The gap is theoretical, empirical, and contextual. Much of the evidence on power and discipline comes from schools or corporate settings, where disciplinary norms differ from those of universities, which are characterised by scholarly autonomy, professional academic status, and relatively decentralised administration. Applications of French and Raven's (1959) bases of power to campus discipline in Pakistani universities remain scarce. This study addresses the gap by testing a multidimensional model linking six dimensions of power influence to six dimensions of campus discipline among faculty at five public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between power influence and campus discipline at the university level?
- ii. What is the predictive contribution of each dimension of power influence (coercive, legitimate, reward, expert, referent, and empowerment) to campus discipline at the university level?

1.5 Research Objectives

- i. To determine the relationship between power influence and campus discipline at the university level.
- ii. To determine the predictive contribution of each dimension of power influence to campus discipline at the university level.

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

H01: There is no significant relationship between power influence and campus discipline at the university level.

H02: The dimensions of power influence do not significantly predict campus discipline at the university level.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study has implications for university administration, policy, regional research, and scholarship. University administrators in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face a daily challenge: how to maintain discipline and productivity without relying on coercive measures that are increasingly linked to disengagement and resistance (Ball, 2012). By relating faculty perceptions of each of the six bases of power to discipline outcomes, the study offers an



evidence base for designing fair, transparent, and effective disciplinary mechanisms grounded in institutional values rather than ad hoc enforcement. A culture of accountability, fairness, and ethical leadership offers a more sustainable route to disciplinary stability than one built on monitoring and sanction. For policy, the findings give educational policy analysts, the Higher Education Commission, and university administrations evidence on the realities of Pakistani public universities, which can help them balance authority with good governance and foster calmer, better-disciplined campuses that support positive learning experiences. The study also addresses a regional gap, since leadership and governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's public universities have received comparatively less attention than in the larger urban systems of Punjab and Sindh. Finally, it contributes to scholarship by operationalising and testing an expanded version of French and Raven's (1959) bases of power model. It provides a replicable instrument and analytic model that can be applied in other provinces, in other developing-country higher education systems, and in other settings that combine professional autonomy with hierarchical administration, such as hospitals, research institutes, and professional training bodies. Its methodological value lies in an instrument that separates "power" and "discipline" into their component dimensions, allowing each to be analysed on its own terms.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on French and Raven's (1959) bases of social power and on the theory of empowerment (Tracy, 1991).

French and Raven's framework rests on three ideas that the study adopts. First, power is relational rather than positional. It exists only to the extent that the person influenced perceives and accepts it, so the faculty member's perception is the appropriate unit of measurement. Second, power is not a single thing but a set of bases: legitimate (the formal authority of office), reward (the ability to provide valued outcomes), coercive (the ability to sanction), expert (recognised knowledge and competence), and referent (admiration and identification). Third, the same person may draw on different bases at different times, and the base used is expected to shape the kind of compliance achieved. Positional bases (legitimate, reward, coercive) tend to produce external compliance, while personal bases (expert, referent) tend to produce internalised compliance.

The framework suits this study for two reasons. It defines authority as perceived by those subject to it, which a faculty survey can capture, and it separates authority into distinct bases, which Pakistani university research has rarely done.

The classical typology is, however, incomplete for the modern university, where administrators must not only exercise authority over faculty but also empower them. Empowerment was therefore added as a sixth dimension. It comprises four cognitions (meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact) that have been linked to lower burnout and stronger institutional engagement (Laschinger, Wong, & Grau, 2014; Munawar, Zulfiqar, & Shabbir, 2025).

2. Literature Review

This review is organised by the six dimensions of power influence examined in the study, followed by a short synthesis.

2.1 Coercive Power and Campus Discipline

Coercive power rests on the belief that non-compliance will be sanctioned (French & Raven, 1959). It is the most cautionary dimension in recent literature. Ball (2012) argued that



sanction-based governance replaces professional trust with surveillance. Later evidence points the same way. Students who perceived teacher discipline as overly punitive reported negative psychological outcomes despite short-term compliance (An, 2022), and studies of academic integrity found that purely punitive, detection-oriented approaches influence long-term behaviour less than educative ones (Cullen, 2022; Holden, Norris, & Kuhlmeier, 2021). In Pakistan, centralised and punitive administration has been linked to faculty turnover and dissatisfaction (Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021).

Evidence from other sectors is similar. A meta-analysis found that abusive and authoritarian leadership were associated with greater workplace aggression, while ethical leadership showed the strongest negative association (Cao, Chen, & Song, 2022). Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies link coercive or authoritarian leadership to bullying and turnover intentions (Trépanier et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2025), and toxic leadership to weaker innovative behaviour and commitment among hospital nurses (Faeq, 2025; Reslan et al., 2025). The picture is not uniform, however. A review of thirteen studies reported that coercive power was positively related to job satisfaction in some settings and negatively in others (James et al., 2022). Coercive power is therefore likely to play a limited, and possibly counterproductive, role in building a positive disciplinary climate.

2.2 Legitimate Power and Campus Discipline

Legitimate power, the authority attached to formal position, underpins institutional governance, but research suggests it is necessary rather than sufficient for effective discipline. In higher education institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the authority of department heads did not produce desired outcomes unless it was seen as fair and consistent (Khan, Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021). Internationally, academic-integrity policies imposed from the top down, without wide acceptance among academics, were applied inconsistently (Davis, 2022). James et al. (2022) found mixed associations between legitimate power and job satisfaction. Bruni-Bossio and Fitzpatrick (2021) showed that formal authority cannot easily override the informational power of subordinates, which may also hold in universities, where administrators and faculty both hold substantial expertise. Formal authority therefore seems to matter less on its own than in combination with other bases.

2.3 Reward Power and Campus Discipline

Reward power is the ability to deliver valued outcomes. It has been associated with employee effort (Kovach, 2021) and, together with expert and referent power, with job satisfaction (James et al., 2022). Financial and non-financial rewards predicted employee performance (Noorazem et al., 2021), and in Pakistani SMEs intrinsic rewards improved performance through motivation (Manzoor, Wei, & Asif, 2021).

Other studies urge caution. Across 47 education systems, total rewards were more strongly related to teachers' satisfaction and motivation than to performance (Elrayah & Semlali, 2023). In manufacturing firms, the direct effect of reward on performance was non-significant and operated only through engagement (Siswanto et al., 2021). Non-monetary recognition sustains performance better than financial incentives alone (Adams, 2025), and perceived inequity in how rewards are distributed erodes trust and performance however generous the rewards are (Boadi et al., 2025). The effect of reward power on campus discipline may thus depend on the perceived fairness of promotion, recognition, and research incentives, not just their existence.

2.4 Expert Power and Campus Discipline



Expert power, based on recognised knowledge and competence, is earned rather than appointed, and is generally associated with more durable influence than position alone. In Pakistani universities, competence-oriented leadership has been linked to innovative performance and better conflict resolution (Kiran, 2020; Sarwar, Zamir, Fazal, Hong, & Yong, 2022). Studies of knowledge sharing show that expert power promotes trust and sharing (Funasaki et al., 2024; Jia et al., 2024), though its effect varies with hierarchical distance (Jia et al., 2024) and can be double-edged when expertise is perceived as under threat (Issac et al., 2022). Expert power also appears to work in combination with other bases (Tripathi & Kumar, 2022), and one study of Malaysian ICT workers found no significant relationship with knowledge-sharing willingness (Razak et al., 2020). Expertise is thus a socially constructed and context-sensitive resource.

2.5 Referent Power and Campus Discipline

Referent power rests on subordinates' admiration for and identification with the power holder. It has received comparatively little attention in higher education research. Alongside reward and expert power, it is among the bases most consistently linked to positive job satisfaction (James et al., 2022). Its importance is often explained through Kelman's distinction between compliance and internalisation: identification-based influence is more likely to produce deep, self-sustaining behaviour change than the surface compliance associated with legitimate and coercive power. This suggests referent and expert power may relate more closely to a multidimensional, behaviourally embedded view of discipline than coercive power does.

2.6 Empowerment and Campus Discipline

Empowerment emphasises participation, competence, and shared accountability rather than control. In Pakistan, faculty empowerment has been related to institutional commitment (Munawar, Zulfiqar, & Shabbir, 2025), and empowerment-oriented administrative measures to institutional harmony in public universities (Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020). International research reports positive effects of empowerment-focused practices on staff and student commitment to institutional goals (Aramburu Zabala, Culcasi, & Cerrillo, 2024). In Pakistani higher education institutions, empowering leadership improved job performance through goal clarity and self-efficacy (Ahmed et al., 2022), and among Turkish teachers it was related to performance directly and through commitment (İlimon et al., 2022). Empowerment may overlap conceptually with expert and reward power, which could affect its distinct contribution when all six dimensions are considered together.

Contemporary Applications and Critiques of the Bases-of-Power Framework

French and Raven's (1959) framework continues to be applied across many organisational settings. Percy (2021) linked the bases to Kelman's follower motivations (compliance, identification, and internalisation) and found that legitimate power was associated with felt obligation, while legitimate, referent, and expert power were associated with identification and internalisation through a leadership-style mediator. A review of thirteen studies found that referent, reward, and expert power were consistently related to job satisfaction, whereas coercive and legitimate power gave mixed results (James et al., 2022).

The framework has also been extended to educational and governance settings. Hernández et al. (2020) applied the five bases to faculty-student relationships in the university classroom, arguing that they hold with some structural differences. Bruni-Bossio and Fitzpatrick (2021) showed in non-profit governance that the weight of each base depends on each party's structural position, which is relevant to university hierarchies of Vice Chancellors,



Deans, Heads of Department, and faculty. Vázquez and Suárez-Barraza (2025) similarly argued that the level of governance at which power is exercised matters.

Cultural and contextual studies show that power is not exercised the same way everywhere. Legitimate power is embedded in local status hierarchies (Yang & Song, 2021). In a South Indian college, centralised administration and selective delegation reduced faculty autonomy, whereas transparent communication, participative governance, and visible recognition of faculty expertise were linked to trust and engagement (Thabassum, 2026). Power-distance research points the same way: high power-distance societies favour deference to position, and low power-distance societies favour participative norms (Guo & Zhu, 2021).

The framework is not without critics. Simeonova et al. (2021) note that pluralist, interpretivist, and Foucauldian approaches offer alternative ways of theorising power. This study retains the French and Raven typology because it supports a validated, multi-item instrument suited to quantitative analysis, and it treats the alternative approaches as a limitation.

2.7 International Literature on Discipline in Higher Education

International scholarship points to a shift from a custodial, top-down model of order toward an educative and participative one, without dispensing with formal authority. In the United Kingdom, a structured online academic-integrity induction improved students' understanding of institutional expectations (Sbaffi & Zhao, 2022). Holden, Norris, and Kuhlmeier (2021) argued that assessment design influences dishonest behaviour more than the severity of sanctions, so discipline is partly co-produced through institutional design. Cullen (2022) likewise reported that developmental interventions changed student behaviour more effectively than punishment alone. Strict teacher discipline in Chinese universities improved short-term compliance but harmed students' psychological wellbeing (An, 2022). Sustainability research reaches a similar conclusion: institutional change needs real staff empowerment and participative governance, not mandate alone (Al Kez, Lowans, & Foley, 2024; Aramburuzabala, Culcasi, & Cerrillo, 2024). Tight (2024) cautions that evidence on which anti-cheating measures work remains inconclusive, so findings should not be generalised uncritically.

2.8 Regional Literature (South Asia)

South Asian public universities share centralised governance, limited resources, and politicised institutional environments. Student activism and unrest are a recurring disciplinary issue, with causes such as economic hardship, dissatisfaction with examinations, and weak facilities (Lokeshwari, 2025). The 2024 uprising in Bangladesh involved both public and private university students (Hossain, 2025), and universities have been linked to local political protest, particularly in non-democratic settings (Dahlum & Sønderskov, 2020). Student politics may therefore reflect the wider political context as well as administrative practice. A South Indian case study found that centralisation and selective delegation reduced faculty autonomy, while transparency, participative governance, and recognition of expertise were associated with trust and engagement (Thabassum, 2026). Across this work runs a tension between participative models borrowed from Western literature and resource-constrained, bureaucratically layered administration. This study examines that tension at the level of specific power bases rather than general leadership style.

2.9 National Literature (Pakistan)

Pakistani research on higher-education leadership has grown since 2020, but it has focused mainly on leadership styles and organisational justice rather than bases of power, and it has



rarely used multidimensional measures of campus discipline. Studies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa found that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice were each related to employee performance (Khan et al., 2020), and that justice partly mediated the link between leadership style and academic staff performance (Khan et al., 2021, 2023). Faculty job satisfaction in three KP public universities was lowered by unequal treatment, inconsistent rules, and exclusion from decisions (Abdullah et al., 2021, 2022a, 2022b). Organisational justice was also linked to citizenship behaviour in Malakand (Ahmad et al., 2025), and to job performance through psychological capital and commitment among 554 public-sector teachers (Majid et al., 2024). In Dera Ismail Khan, the justice-performance link was partly mediated by emotional intelligence (Iqbal et al., 2026). These studies show that perceived fairness in administration matters, but none examines which bases of power relate to campus discipline.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study followed a positivist, deductive approach, testing hypotheses derived from French and Raven's (1959) bases of power and Tracy's (1991) concept of empowerment. A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational survey design was used to examine the relationship between power influence and campus discipline as perceived by faculty at a single point in time.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population comprised all 1,203 teaching faculty (Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Professors, male and female) of five public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak (KKKUK), University of Science and Technology Bannu (USTB), University of Lakki Marwat (ULM), and Gomal University (GU). Students, administrative staff, non-teaching staff, and sub-campus were excluded.

Proportional stratified random sampling was used, with strata defined by university, academic rank, and gender, so that the smaller universities and the more senior ranks were not under-represented. Following Gay (1987) and Airasian (2003), who recommend sampling about 20% of a population of this size, a sample of 241 faculty was drawn (Table 1). The realised sample was $N = 241$.

Table 1

Population and Sample by University

University	Population	Sample
GU	552	115
ULM	50	15
USTB	220	41
KKKUK	183	33
KUST	198	37
Total	1,203	241

3.3 Instrument

Data were collected with a questionnaire developed from the existing literature on power bases (French & Raven, 1959; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989; Rahim, 2016) and campus



discipline (Iqbal & Akhtar, 2019; Khan & Malik, 2021). It used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and had three parts: demographic information; power influence (30 items, five for each of coercive, legitimate, reward, expert, and referent power and empowerment); and campus discipline (30 items, five for each of moral/ethical, academic, behavioural, institutional-policy, social and cultural, and health and safety discipline), giving 60 substantive items.

Power influence refers to faculty perceptions of the bases of power exercised by university administrators, and campus discipline refers to the extent to which students and staff observe rules and maintain ethical, academic, behavioural, policy-related, social and cultural, and health and safety order on campus (Iqbal & Akhtar, 2019).

3.4 Validity, Pilot Testing, and Reliability

Content validity was established by a panel of eight university faculty members (six from Education, one from International Relations, and one other Education lecturer; see note), who reviewed the items for relevance, clarity, and language. The instrument was revised accordingly and then pilot-tested on 30 faculty members who were not part of the main sample, leading to minor wording changes. Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (.930 and .947), and all sub-scales met the accepted threshold of .70

3.5 Data Collection

The questionnaire was in English, the language of instruction and administration in Pakistani universities, and took 15 to 20 minutes to complete. It was self-administered on paper or through Google Forms according to each respondent's preference, and reminders were sent to non-respondents after two weeks. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency, and participation was voluntary and anonymous.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed in SPSS. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) summarised the variables. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test H₀₁, and simple linear regression assessed the overall contribution of power influence to campus discipline. Multiple regression with the six power dimensions as predictors tested H₀₂. The data were screened for missing values and outliers, and the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were checked using skewness, kurtosis, and residual diagnostics. Likert responses were treated as interval data, and the significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Results & Findings

4.1 Data Screening

All 241 questionnaires were fully completed, with no missing values on the 60 items, and no case was excluded, so $N = 241$ for every analysis. Composite scores for each of the 12 dimensions were computed as the mean of its five items, and overall scores for power influence and campus discipline were computed from these. Skewness, kurtosis, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated that the assumptions for Pearson correlation and multiple regression were reasonably met.

4.2 Respondent Profile

The 241 respondents were drawn from Gomal University ($n = 115$, 47.7%), USTB ($n = 41$, 17.0%), KUST ($n = 37$, 15.4%), KKKUK ($n = 33$, 13.7%), and ULM ($n = 15$, 6.2%). Men made up 68.5% ($n = 165$) and women 31.5% ($n = 76$). By rank, there were 94 Lecturers (39.0%), 72 Assistant Professors (29.9%), 48 Associate Professors (19.9%), and 27 Professors (11.2%). Ages ranged



from 25 to 59 years ($M = 35.34$, $SD = 7.61$) and teaching experience from 1 to 32 years ($M = 7.93$, $SD = 7.15$). The sample reflects the proportional stratified design and the junior-heavy staffing typical of public universities.

4.3 Reliability of the Instrument

All subscales showed good internal consistency (Table 1), exceeding the .70 threshold (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of the Study Scales (N = 241)

Scale	Items	α
Coercive Power	5	.854
Legitimate Power	5	.854
Reward Power	5	.846
Expert Power	5	.848
Referent Power	5	.865
Empowerment	5	.844
Moral/Ethical Discipline	5	.840
Academic Discipline	5	.849
Behavioural Discipline	5	.851
Institutional-Policy Discipline	5	.860
Social and Cultural Discipline	5	.864
Health and Safety Discipline	5	.836
Power Influence (composite)	30	.930
Campus Discipline (composite)	30	.947

Above Table show that alpha coefficients of the six power-influence subscales ranged from .844 (Empowerment) to .865 (Referent Power) and the six campus-discipline subscales ranged from .836 (Health & Safety Discipline) to .864 (Social & Cultural Discipline). Reliabilities of these two thirty item composite scales were very high at .930 for Power Influence, and .947 for Campus Discipline. Corrected item-total correlation statistics (not shown individually due to space limitations) demonstrated that the corrected item-total correlation values for each item on each of the 12 subscales were all $> .55$ and removal of each item would have had less than a significant effect on the alpha of the subscale they were included in. This led to the determination that the 12 composite dimension scores, in addition to the two composite index scores, were suitable for use in the substantive analyses that follow.

4.4 Relationship Between Power Influence and Campus Discipline (H01)

Pearson correlation showed a significant, strong, positive relationship between power influence and campus discipline, $r(239) = .604$, $p < .001$, which is a large effect (Cohen, 1988). H01 was therefore rejected. Faculty who perceived stronger use of the power bases by administrators also rated campus discipline more favourably.

At the dimension level, all six power dimensions correlated positively and significantly with campus discipline (Table 2). The correlations ranged from $r = [\text{lowest}]$ to $r = .500$ (reward power), with legitimate power next ($r = .483$) and coercive power at $r = .374$. The six dimensions correlated with one another between $r = .313$ and $r = .543$, so they were related



but distinguishable, which supports their use as separate predictors in the regression analysis.

Table 2

Correlations Between Power Dimensions and Campus Discipline (N = 241)

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Coercive	—						
2. Legitimate	.362**	—					
3. Reward	.376**	.514**	—				
4. Expert	.361**	.543**	.483**	—			
5. Referent	.313**	.429**	.465**		—		
6. Empowerment	.341**	.489**	.488**			—	
7. Campus Discipline	.374**	.483**	.500**				—

H02: Impact of Power Influence on Campus Discipline

In terms of the power influence on the discipline on campus, H02 stated that there is no influence from the university level. Two tests were used to analyze this hypothesis: Ordinary Least Squares regression of the composite Campus Discipline score on the composite Power Influence score; and Standard Multiple regression of the six power dimensions as simultaneous predictors of Campus Discipline score, as detailed in Research Objective (ii) to analyze the unique contribution of each power base.

Table 4.10

Simple Linear Regression of Campus Discipline on Power Influence (N = 241)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R ²
(Constant)	1.305	.198		6.60**	
Power Influence	.650	.056	.604	11.70**	.364

Note. $F(1, 239) = 136.92$, $p < .001$. Dependent variable: Campus Discipline. ** $p < .001$.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 239) = 136.92$, $p < .001$ and Power Influence accounted for approximately 36.4% of the variance in Campus Discipline ($R^2 = .364$, Adjusted $R^2 = .362$) (see Table 4.10). The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = .650$, $SE = .056$, $\beta = .604$, $t = 11.70$, $p < .001$) indicates that, controlling for the other variables, Campus Discipline would change by .65 scale points for each one-point increase in the composite Power Influence score. As the impact is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that power influence has a significant positive impact on the University level campus discipline. The finding addresses directly Research Objective (i) and suggests a strong predictive (rather than a correlative) relationship exists between administrative power and faculty-reported disciplinary climate.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Summary of Findings

1. Power influence and campus discipline were strongly and positively related, $r(239) = .604$, $p < .001$, and H01 was rejected. Power influence explained 36.4% of the variance in campus discipline.
2. All six power dimensions correlated positively and significantly with campus discipline.
3. In the multiple regression, the six dimensions jointly explained 37.8% of the variance in campus discipline, and H02 was rejected. Reward power ($\beta = .217$) and expert power ($\beta = .203$) were the strongest unique predictors, followed by legitimate power ($\beta = .164$) and



coercive power ($\beta = .122$). Referent power and empowerment were not significant unique predictors.

5.2 Discussion

The strong positive association between power influence and campus discipline is consistent with French and Raven's (1959) argument that the bases of power shape the behaviour of those subject to them. It also fits the view that discipline in universities is shaped by how authority is exercised, not just by whether rules exist (Khan & Malik, 2021). The size of the relationship (about 36% of the variance) is large, but it leaves most of the variance unexplained. Discipline is also affected by institutional culture, resources, and the wider political context, including student politics (Khalid & Mushtaq, 2020).

The ranking of the predictors supports the study's central proposition that bases of power are not equally important. Reward and expert power were the strongest unique predictors. This agrees with research linking reward and expert power to positive organisational outcomes (James et al., 2022) and with evidence that recognition and perceived fairness in rewards sustain performance (Adams, 2025; Boadi et al., 2025). It suggests that faculty perceive discipline as stronger where administrators recognise and reward good conduct and are seen as competent. Legitimate power also contributed, which agrees with the view that formal authority supports institutional order but is not sufficient alone (Khan, Zehra, Rukhsana, & Usmani, 2021).

Coercive power was a significant but the weakest predictor, which needs careful interpretation. Much of the literature warns that coercion produces resistance and short-lived compliance (An, 2022; Ball, 2012). The positive coefficient here may reflect the fact that some enforcement capacity is part of any functioning disciplinary system, and the results are consistent with the mixed evidence on coercive power (James et al., 2022). The design also cannot show direction. Faculty on well-ordered campuses may simply perceive enforcement as more consistent. Because coercive power had the smallest standardised effect, the findings still do not support relying on it in preference to reward and expert power.

Referent power and empowerment were not significant unique predictors, even though both correlated significantly with discipline. Two explanations are plausible. First, these dimensions share variance with reward, expert, and legitimate power (the dimensions intercorrelated between $r = .313$ and $.543$), so their unique contribution may be small once the others are controlled. Second, the six dimensions together explained only 1.4 percentage points more variance (37.8%) than power influence as a single composite (36.4%), which suggests the dimensions largely overlap in what they explain. This result does not mean that referent power and empowerment are unimportant. It means their effect is not independent of the other bases in this sample, which may also reflect the hierarchical, high power-distance context of public universities in the region (Guo & Zhu, 2021).

5.3 Implications

For university leaders, the findings suggest that discipline is more likely to be supported by recognition, fair rewards, and visible competence than by sanctions alone, while retaining legitimate authority and enforcement capacity. For policymakers and the Higher Education Commission, they argue for leadership development and governance practices that pair formal authority with fairness and recognition. For researchers, they offer a validated six-dimension instrument that can be reused in other contexts.

5.4 Limitations



The study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design supports association but not causation, and the direction of influence cannot be established. Both power influence and campus discipline were self-reported by the same faculty respondents, so common-method bias and perception bias are possible. The sample covers five public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, so generalising to private universities or other regions should be done cautiously. Faculty perceived discipline, which may differ from the views of students and administrators and from objective disciplinary records. Finally, the six power dimensions were moderately intercorrelated, which limits conclusions about their unique effects, and the instrument was developed for this study, so further validation is advisable.

5.5 Future Research

Future studies could use longitudinal or experimental designs to test causal direction, and could collect data from students and administrators, or use objective discipline indicators, to reduce single-source bias. Comparisons with private universities and with other provinces would test generalisability. Researchers could also test mediating mechanisms such as institutional trust, organisational justice, or faculty commitment, and moderators such as institutional type. Structural equation modelling or confirmatory factor analysis would allow the six-dimension structure to be tested more rigorously and the overlap between the dimensions to be examined. Qualitative or mixed-methods work could explain why coercive power predicted discipline positively and why referent power and empowerment did not.

5.6 Conclusion

This study examined how power influence relates to campus discipline among faculty at five public universities in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Power influence showed a strong positive relationship with campus discipline and explained over a third of its variance. Reward and expert power were the strongest unique predictors, followed by legitimate and coercive power, while referent power and empowerment did not add unique prediction. The findings suggest that university leaders can support discipline most effectively through recognition, fairness, and demonstrated competence, backed by legitimate authority, rather than by coercion. Because the design is cross-sectional and based on faculty perceptions, these conclusions should be treated as associations that future longitudinal and multi-source research can test further.

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