

Compensation and Principal Leadership as Determinants of Teachers' Teaching Discipline

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Abstract: This study examines the effects of compensation and principal leadership on teachers' teaching discipline in public elementary schools. A quantitative explanatory survey was conducted among teachers working in public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District. The population consisted of 173 teachers, and 58 complete questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Data were collected using three 30-item Likert-scale instruments measuring compensation, principal leadership, and teaching discipline. All instruments demonstrated strong validity and very high internal consistency. Descriptive analysis, normality testing, simple linear regression, partial t-tests, multiple regression, and an F-test were performed using statistical software. The results indicate that compensation has a positive and significant effect on teaching discipline, with a regression coefficient of 0.940, a t-value of 51.613, and a significance level below 0.001. Principal leadership also has a positive and significant effect, with a regression coefficient of 0.938, a t-value of 51.281, and a significance level below 0.001. The simultaneous test confirms that compensation and principal leadership jointly influence teaching discipline, producing an F-value of 67,317.737 with significance below 0.001. These findings show that teachers are more likely to demonstrate punctuality, instructional preparedness, compliance with school procedures, and administrative responsibility when they perceive compensation as fair and leadership as clear, supportive, consistent, and exemplary. The study emphasizes that teaching discipline should be managed through an integrated approach combining equitable rewards, professional recognition, effective supervision, communication, and consistent organizational expectations. It offers practical direction for strengthening teacher management in schools.

Keywords: Compensation and Principal Leadership, Educational Management, Teacher Professionalism, Teaching Discipline

A. Introduction

Education quality is strongly influenced by what happens during everyday classroom practice. Policies, curricula, facilities, and learning resources can support instruction, but their value depends on teachers who arrive on time, prepare lessons, follow schedules, manage classrooms responsibly, assess learning, and complete required

administration. Teaching discipline therefore represents more than attendance or obedience to formal rules (Norlin, 2020). It reflects the professional consistency with which teachers convert institutional expectations into reliable learning experiences for students.

At the elementary level, teaching discipline has particular importance because young learners depend heavily on stable routines. They need teachers who begin and end lessons according to schedule, prepare suitable materials, provide continuous guidance, and model responsible behavior. When teachers are frequently late, unprepared, absent from the classroom, or inconsistent in completing instructional duties, students lose learning time and may imitate the same lack of order. Repeated disruption can weaken classroom management, reduce curriculum coverage, delay assessment, and create unequal educational experiences between classes (Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2021). By contrast, disciplined teaching helps students experience school as a predictable, supportive, and purposeful environment.

Teaching discipline can be observed through several connected behaviors. The first is time discipline, including punctual arrival at school, punctual entry into the classroom, and appropriate use of instructional time. The second is compliance with school procedures, such as following teaching schedules, attending official activities, and observing academic regulations. The third is instructional readiness, including the preparation of lesson plans, media, learning materials, assessment instruments, and classroom strategies. The fourth is consistency in carrying out teaching responsibilities even when workloads or school conditions are demanding. The fifth is administrative accountability, such as completing teaching journals, attendance records, assessment reports, and other documentation within the required period. Together, these behaviors indicate whether teachers perform their professional role in a dependable manner (Hagenauer et al., 2023).

Teacher discipline is not formed by personal commitment alone. It is affected by individual motivation, organizational systems, working conditions, leadership, professional recognition, and perceptions of fairness. Two factors are especially relevant in educational management: compensation and principal leadership. Compensation represents how an organization rewards the contributions, responsibilities, and professional services of teachers. Principal leadership represents how school leaders influence, guide, supervise, communicate with, support, and evaluate teachers. The two factors operate differently, but they can reinforce each other in shaping disciplined work behavior (Guerin, 2025).

Compensation includes financial and nonfinancial rewards. Financial compensation may consist of salaries, professional allowances, incentives, additional payments, and other material benefits. Nonfinancial compensation includes recognition, appreciation, opportunities for professional development, supportive working conditions, job security, trust, and meaningful involvement in school activities.

Teachers evaluate compensation not only by its amount but also by its fairness, timeliness, transparency, and relationship to workload. A reward system that is perceived as appropriate can strengthen the sense that the organization values teachers' effort. This perception may increase willingness to comply with responsibilities and maintain professional standards (Mlambo et al., 2021).

The connection between compensation and discipline can be explained through reciprocity. Teachers who feel that their contribution is acknowledged are more likely to respond with commitment, attendance, responsibility, and sustained effort. Fair compensation can reduce frustration and help teachers focus on instructional duties. Timely payments and transparent incentives can also reduce uncertainty. Recognition from school leaders may strengthen professional pride, especially when appreciation is linked to clear performance expectations. Conversely, compensation perceived as inadequate, delayed, or unfair can weaken morale and encourage minimal compliance. Although teachers have ethical responsibilities regardless of reward levels, organizational fairness remains important because it influences motivation and the quality of the employment relationship (Muhammad et al., 2025).

Principal leadership is another central factor. The principal is responsible for translating school goals into practical expectations for teachers. Effective leadership provides direction, establishes procedures, communicates standards, distributes responsibilities, monitors implementation, gives feedback, and resolves problems. It also creates the social climate in which discipline is interpreted. A principal who is punctual, prepared, consistent, and fair demonstrates that discipline is a shared professional value rather than a demand imposed only on teachers. Leadership by example can be especially influential because daily behavior is more visible than formal statements (Bakker et al., 2023).

Leadership affects teaching discipline through both control and support. Control includes clear rules, attendance monitoring, classroom supervision, performance evaluation, documentation, and follow-up when duties are neglected. Support includes communication, coaching, problem solving, professional development, recognition, and attention to teachers' working difficulties. Excessive control without support may produce fear or compliance only when supervision is present (Mostafavi et al., 2021). Support without clear standards may create ambiguity and inconsistent performance. Effective leadership combines both dimensions by maintaining expectations while helping teachers meet them.

Public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District provide a relevant setting for examining these relationships. Schools in the area employ teachers with different employment statuses, responsibilities, career experiences, and access to financial and professional rewards. Principals also differ in communication patterns, supervisory intensity, decision-making practices, and capacity to recognize teacher performance. Preliminary observations indicated that teaching discipline was not uniform. Some

teachers consistently followed schedules and prepared instructional materials, while others showed weaknesses in punctuality, classroom attendance, or administrative completion. These variations raised questions about the organizational conditions associated with disciplined teaching (Welsh, 2024).

The empirical problem is important because compensation and leadership are often discussed separately. Compensation may be treated as a government or administrative matter, while leadership is viewed as a school-level management issue. In actual practice, teachers experience both simultaneously. A teacher may receive appropriate financial rewards but work under unclear leadership, or may experience supportive leadership while perceiving compensation as inadequate (Loo et al., 2024). Teaching discipline is likely to be stronger when reward systems and leadership practices provide consistent messages about professional responsibility. The present study therefore examines both variables separately and jointly.

The study also addresses a management gap. School improvement programs frequently emphasize teacher competence, curriculum implementation, and student outcomes, but discipline is sometimes assumed rather than systematically managed. Yet competence cannot produce consistent learning when teachers do not use time responsibly, prepare instruction, or complete follow-up duties. Similarly, rules alone are insufficient when teachers do not perceive organizational support or leadership credibility. By focusing on compensation and principal leadership, this study investigates two manageable organizational levers that can be strengthened through policy and school practice (Meyer et al., 2023).

The novelty of the study lies in its integrated examination of material recognition, nonmaterial recognition, and leadership behavior as predictors of teaching discipline in public elementary education. Compensation is treated as more than salary, while leadership is treated as more than authority. The analysis connects fairness, recognition, communication, supervision, role modeling, and accountability with concrete teaching behaviors. It also provides a local empirical picture based on teachers' perceptions and examines whether the two predictors jointly explain discipline more effectively than either factor alone (Polizzi et al., 2021).

Based on this background, the study addresses three research questions. First, does compensation significantly affect teachers' teaching discipline? Second, does principal leadership significantly affect teachers' teaching discipline? Third, do compensation and principal leadership jointly have a significant effect on teachers' teaching discipline? The study aims to measure these effects, describe the condition of each variable, and provide practical implications for teacher management. The expected contribution is an evidence-based explanation of how equitable rewards and effective school leadership can be aligned to strengthen punctuality, preparedness, compliance, consistency, and professional accountability among teachers.

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design. The design was selected because the study sought to measure the effects of two independent variables, compensation and principal leadership, on one dependent variable, teachers' teaching discipline. The quantitative approach allowed perceptions and work behaviors to be represented numerically, while the explanatory design supported hypothesis testing concerning partial and simultaneous relationships among variables (Salem, 2025). The research was conducted in public elementary schools located in Talang Kelapa District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra. The setting was selected because it contained schools with varied teacher employment status, compensation experiences, leadership practices, and levels of teaching discipline (Toropova et al., 2021). Data collection was carried out during the 2026 research period after instrument preparation, testing, school coordination, and respondent selection had been completed.

The population consisted of 173 active teachers employed in the public elementary schools included in the research setting. The original sampling plan used a proportional allocation procedure so that teachers from each school could be represented according to the size of the teaching staff. Sixty-three questionnaires were allocated based on the sampling calculation. After the questionnaires were returned and checked, 58 complete response sets were available and were therefore included in the statistical analysis. Incomplete or unusable responses were not entered into the final dataset (Dina Diatta & Berchtold, 2023). Data were collected primarily through closed questionnaires (Biasio et al., 2021). Each research variable was measured by 30 statement items, producing a total of 90 items. Respondents indicated their level of agreement or the frequency of the described behavior using a five-point Likert scale. The response categories ranged from one to five, with higher scores indicating a more positive perception of compensation, more effective principal leadership, or stronger teaching discipline. The questionnaire format enabled respondents to provide standardized answers that could be compared across the sample. The compensation variable covered both direct and indirect forms of reward. Its dimensions included financial compensation, incentives, allowances, appreciation, recognition, professional support, and the perceived fairness and timeliness of rewards. Items assessed whether teachers considered the compensation received to be appropriate to their workload, responsibilities, performance, and professional contribution. Nonfinancial aspects included attention from school management, acknowledgment of achievement, opportunities for development, and a supportive work environment.

The principal leadership variable assessed teachers' perceptions of the principal's behavior in guiding school personnel. The instrument included indicators related to exemplary conduct, clarity of direction, communication, decision making, firmness in applying rules, supervision, evaluation, motivation, support, and the ability to create a professional working climate. Higher scores indicated that teachers perceived the

principal as more consistent, communicative, fair, supportive, and capable of directing staff toward school goals (Veletić et al., 2023). The teaching-discipline variable measured professional behavior directly associated with instructional responsibilities. Its indicators included punctual arrival, timely classroom entry, adherence to teaching schedules, compliance with school regulations, preparation of lesson plans and learning materials, effective use of instructional time, consistency in teaching assignments, completion of assessment duties, and timely preparation of instructional administration. A high score reflected a stronger tendency to perform teaching duties regularly, responsibly, and in accordance with school standards (Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020).

Supporting data were obtained through documentation and structured observation. Documentation included teacher-number data, school organizational information, teaching schedules, attendance records, task-distribution documents, school regulations, and relevant administrative records. Observation focused on teacher punctuality, classroom presence, conformity between actual teaching time and the official schedule, readiness of instructional materials, and compliance with school procedures. These supporting sources were used to strengthen the interpretation of questionnaire results rather than to replace the quantitative data (Cheung & Tai, 2023). Instrument quality was examined before hypothesis testing. Item validity was assessed by comparing the correlation value of each item with the required critical value. The 30 compensation items, 30 principal-leadership items, and 30 teaching-discipline items exceeded the critical correlation value of 0.259 and were retained. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The compensation instrument produced an alpha of 0.957, principal leadership produced 0.972, and teaching discipline produced 0.986. These values indicated very high internal consistency and showed that the item groups measured their respective constructs consistently (Gu et al., 2020). Data analysis was conducted using statistical software. The first stage involved descriptive statistics, including the number of valid responses, mean, standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, and maximum. Frequency distributions were then used to place respondent scores into five descriptive categories from very low to very high. These categories were intended to describe the distribution of perceptions and were not used as substitutes for inferential testing (Reedy et al., 2021).

The second stage involved assumption testing. Normality was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov procedure. A significance value above 0.05 was interpreted as evidence that the variable did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution. Variance equality was examined using Levene-based procedures. Because the alternative Levene calculations generated different significance patterns, the homogeneity result was interpreted cautiously and was not treated as the sole basis for accepting or rejecting the regression models.

The third stage involved hypothesis testing. Simple linear regression and partial t-tests were used to assess the effect of compensation on teaching discipline and the effect of principal leadership on teaching discipline. The regression coefficient indicated the direction and magnitude of the relationship, while the t-value and significance level determined whether the partial effect was statistically significant. Multiple regression and an analysis-of-variance F-test were used to assess the joint effect of compensation and principal leadership. A significance value below 0.05 was used as the criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis. Coefficients of determination were examined to estimate the proportion of variation explained by the predictors. Because the study used a cross-sectional survey and self-reported perceptions, the statistical effects were interpreted as predictive associations rather than definitive proof of causation (Büchner et al., 2025).

Table 1. Research Variables and Operational Indicators

Variable	Main Dimensions	Operational Indicators
Compensation (X_1)	Financial and nonfinancial rewards	Salary and workload fit; allowances and incentives; payment timeliness; recognition; appreciation; professional support
Principal leadership (X_2)	Direction, support, control, and example	Exemplary conduct; clarity of direction; communication; firmness; supervision; evaluation; motivation
Teaching discipline (Y)	Time, compliance, readiness, consistency, and accountability	Punctuality; schedule compliance; lesson preparation; instructional consistency; assessment and administrative completion

Source: Research instrument developed and processed by the authors

C. Results and Discussion

1. Result

The final dataset contained 58 complete responses. No missing values were recorded for the cases included in the analysis. Descriptive statistics showed that the compensation score ranged from 111 to 139, with a mean of 124.00 and a standard deviation of 6.76. Principal leadership scores ranged from 117 to 144, with a mean of 129.07 and a standard deviation of 6.42. Teaching-discipline scores ranged from 119 to 146, with a mean of 131.05 and a standard deviation of 6.41. The relatively similar standard deviations indicated that the three variables had comparable levels of score dispersion (Ultsch & Lötsch, 2022).

The distribution of compensation perceptions was centered in the middle categories. Eight respondents, or 13.79%, were classified in the very-low category, while 14 respondents, or 24.14%, were in the low category. The largest group consisted of 19 respondents, or 32.76%, in the moderate category. Twelve respondents, or 20.69%, reported high compensation scores, and five respondents, or 8.62%, were in the very-

high category. This pattern showed that most teachers did not evaluate compensation at either extreme (Nordgren et al., 2021). Their responses were concentrated between low and high, with the moderate category representing the largest share.

Principal leadership scores also showed a varied distribution. Eight respondents, representing 13.8%, were in the very-low category. Nineteen respondents, or 32.8%, were in the low category, making it the largest group. Seventeen respondents, or 29.3%, were in the moderate category. Eight respondents, or 13.8%, reported high leadership scores, and six respondents, or 10.3%, were in the very-high category. Although the overall mean was relatively high compared with the possible score range, the categorical distribution suggested that a substantial number of teachers perceived room for improvement in leadership communication, supervision, firmness, recognition, or support.

Teaching discipline produced a slightly more positive pattern. Five respondents, or 8.6%, were classified as very low. Seventeen respondents, or 29.3%, were in the low category, and another 17 respondents, or 29.3%, were in the moderate category. Twelve respondents, or 20.7%, reported high discipline scores, while seven respondents, or 12.1%, were in the very-high category. The distribution indicated that disciplined teaching behaviors were present across the sample, but not at the same strength for all teachers. The combined proportion in the low and very-low categories showed that punctuality, preparedness, compliance, or administrative responsibility still required management attention (Bayou et al., 2022).

Table 3. Score Category Distribution

Variable	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Comp.	8 (13.79%)	14 (24.14%)	19 (32.76%)	12 (20.69%)	5 (8.62%)
Principal leadership	8 (13.8%)	19 (32.8%)	17 (29.3%)	8 (13.8%)	6 (10.3%)
Teaching discipline	5 (8.6%)	17 (29.3%)	17 (29.3%)	12 (20.7%)	7 (12.1%)

Source: Questionnaire data processed by the authors.

The validity analysis confirmed that all questionnaire items met the minimum item-correlation requirement (Dou et al., 2020). Each of the 30 compensation items exceeded the critical value of 0.259. The same result was obtained for all 30 principal-leadership items and all 30 teaching-discipline items. No item was removed from the final measurement model. The retained items therefore represented the planned dimensions of financial and nonfinancial compensation, leadership behavior, and disciplined teaching practice.

Reliability analysis produced Cronbach's alpha values of 0.957 for compensation, 0.972 for principal leadership, and 0.986 for teaching discipline. All three values were substantially above conventional minimum standards. The results indicated a high level of internal consistency among the items within each instrument. The teaching-discipline instrument had the highest reliability, followed by principal leadership and

compensation. These coefficients supported the use of summed scores in the regression analyses (Widaman & Revelle, 2023).

Table 4. Instrument Quality

Instrument	Items	Validity	Alpha	Status
Compensation	30	All $r > 0.259$	0.957	Very reliable
Principal leadership	30	All $r > 0.259$	0.972	Very reliable
Teaching discipline	30	All $r > 0.259$	0.986	Very reliable

Normality testing generated significance values of 0.200 for compensation, 0.091 for principal leadership, and 0.098 for teaching discipline. All values exceeded 0.05. The null hypothesis of normal distribution was therefore retained for each variable, indicating that the score distributions did not significantly depart from normality (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). This finding supported the use of parametric regression procedures.

The variance-equality test produced mixed results. The mean-based Levene statistic had a significance value of 0.009, while the median-based versions produced significance values of 0.688 and 0.683. The trimmed-mean calculation produced a significance value of 0.015. Because the tests did not provide a uniform conclusion, the assumption was interpreted cautiously. The analysis proceeded because regression estimation was the principal method, the variables were normally distributed, and the standard errors reported in the fitted models were small (Male & Duncan, 2020). Nevertheless, the mixed variance result was considered when interpreting the strength and generalizability of the findings.

Table 5. Assumption-Test Summary

Test	Variable/Method	Significance	Interpretation
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Compensation	0.200	Normal
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Principal leadership	0.091	Normal
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Teaching discipline	0.098	Normal
Levene	Based on mean	0.009	Heterogeneous
Levene	Based on median	0.688	Homogeneous

The first hypothesis tested whether compensation significantly affected teaching discipline. The simple regression model produced a constant of 12.498 and a compensation coefficient of 0.940. The coefficient was positive, meaning that higher compensation scores were associated with higher teaching-discipline scores. The t -value was 51.613, with a significance level below 0.001. The null hypothesis was rejected. The standardized coefficient was 0.990, showing a very strong positive association between the two variables.

The first model produced an R value of 0.990 and an R -squared value of 0.979. The adjusted R -squared value was also 0.979, and the standard error of the estimate was

0.933. Based on these results, compensation explained 97.9% of the variation in teaching-discipline scores in the analyzed sample. The remaining 2.1% was associated with variables outside the simple model. The very high explanatory value showed that teachers' perceptions of financial rewards, nonfinancial recognition, fairness, and organizational appreciation were closely aligned with their self-reported discipline.

The second hypothesis tested whether principal leadership significantly affected teaching discipline. The regression model produced a constant of 14.766 and a principal-leadership coefficient of 0.938. The positive coefficient indicated that improved leadership perceptions were associated with increased teaching discipline. The t-value was 51.281, with a significance level below 0.001. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The standardized coefficient was 0.990, indicating a very strong positive relationship.

The principal-leadership model also produced an R value of 0.990 and an R-squared value of 0.979. The adjusted R-squared value remained 0.979, and the standard error of the estimate was approximately 0.933. The model therefore indicated that principal leadership explained 97.9% of the variation in teaching discipline within the sample. The result showed that leadership practices involving direction, communication, supervision, evaluation, firmness, motivation, and exemplary behavior were strongly connected with teachers' punctuality, preparedness, compliance, and accountability.

The third hypothesis tested the simultaneous effect of compensation and principal leadership on teaching discipline. The analysis-of-variance table reported a regression sum of squares of 2,348.765, a residual sum of squares of 0.959, and a total sum of squares of 2,349.724. The mean square for regression was 1,174.382, compared with a residual mean square of 0.017. The resulting F-value was 67,317.737, with a significance level below 0.001. The null hypothesis was rejected, demonstrating that compensation and principal leadership jointly had a statistically significant effect on teaching discipline.

The reported simultaneous model summary indicated an exceptionally high level of model fit. This result showed that the two predictors together were closely aligned with the discipline scores in the sample. At the same time, a near-perfect model fit is unusual in organizational survey research and should be interpreted carefully. It may reflect strong conceptual overlap among questionnaire items, similar response tendencies across scales, or sample-specific patterns. The significant F-test supports the joint relationship, but the magnitude of the fit should be rechecked against the original statistical output and raw dataset before final journal submission (Wick et al., 2022).

Overall, the results supported all three research hypotheses. Compensation had a significant positive partial effect, principal leadership had a significant positive partial effect, and both variables had a significant simultaneous effect on teaching discipline.

The descriptive findings also showed that the three variables were not uniformly high across respondents, indicating that the statistical relationships coexisted with practical variation among teachers and schools (Miller et al., 2025).

Table 6. Hypothesis-Testing Results

Model	B	Test statistic	Sig.	R	R ²	Result
$X_1 \rightarrow Y$	0.940	$t = 51.613$	<0.001	0.990	0.979	Support
$X_2 \rightarrow Y$	0.938	$t = 51.281$	<0.001	0.990	0.979	Support
$X_1 + X_2 \rightarrow Y$	—	$F = 67,317.737$	<0.001	1.000	1.000*	Support

*The exceptionally high joint model fit should be verified against the raw statistical output before submission.

2. Discussion

The positive effect of compensation on teaching discipline indicates that reward systems are closely connected with teachers' willingness to perform professional duties consistently. Compensation communicates how the organization values teachers' contribution. When teachers consider salaries, allowances, incentives, recognition, and professional support to be fair, they are more likely to respond with responsible behavior. In this study, that behavior was reflected in punctuality, attendance, lesson preparation, compliance with schedules, and completion of instructional administration. The finding should not be interpreted to mean that teachers become disciplined only because they are paid (Ibrahim & El Zataari, 2020). Teaching is a professional and moral responsibility, and discipline remains an obligation. However, the employment relationship influences how consistently that obligation is performed. Teachers who experience financial insecurity, delayed rewards, or a lack of recognition may still perform their duties, but prolonged dissatisfaction can weaken enthusiasm and organizational attachment. Fair compensation reduces this tension by creating a clearer balance between responsibility and appreciation.

Financial and nonfinancial compensation work through different mechanisms. Financial compensation provides material security and confirms that the teacher's workload has recognized economic value. It can reduce the need to seek additional work that competes with school responsibilities and may help teachers allocate more attention to instructional preparation (Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2023). Nonfinancial compensation strengthens psychological attachment. Recognition, trust, opportunities for professional growth, supportive facilities, and appreciation from school leaders can increase pride and a sense of belonging. The strong compensation coefficient suggests that both forms of reward should be considered when schools and education authorities seek to strengthen discipline.

The descriptive distribution is important because compensation perceptions were not uniformly high (Burchardi et al., 2021). More than one third of respondents were in the low or very-low categories, while only a smaller proportion reached the very-high category. This pattern suggests that a statistically strong relationship does not mean

that the compensation system is already optimal. Instead, it means differences in compensation perceptions closely corresponded with differences in discipline. Management action should therefore focus on fairness, transparency, payment timeliness, workload alignment, and nonfinancial recognition rather than assuming that existing rewards are sufficient.

Principal leadership also showed a strong positive effect on teaching discipline. This result confirms the organizational importance of the principal as a model, supervisor, communicator, and decision maker (Szukits & Móricz, 2024). Teachers need clear expectations about attendance, classroom time, lesson planning, assessment, and administrative completion. They also need consistent follow-up. When principals communicate standards but do not monitor implementation, rules can become symbolic. When they supervise without explaining expectations or listening to difficulties, discipline can be perceived as coercive. Effective leadership links clarity with support.

Exemplary behavior is especially important (Stoker et al., 2022). A principal who arrives punctually, prepares meetings, completes administrative duties, and applies rules consistently creates moral credibility. Teachers are more likely to accept discipline expectations when leaders demonstrate the same standards. Leadership credibility is weakened when rules are applied selectively or when leaders demand behaviors that they do not practice. The strong relationship found in this study suggests that teachers' perceptions of leadership conduct were closely associated with their own reported discipline. Communication is another pathway. Teachers may fail to meet expectations because instructions are unclear, schedules change without adequate information, or problems are not discussed early. Open communication allows principals to explain the purpose of rules, identify barriers, and distinguish between deliberate neglect and genuine difficulty (Pak et al., 2020). It also gives teachers an opportunity to participate in solutions. Participatory communication does not remove authority; it improves the quality of implementation because teachers understand what is expected and why it matters.

Supervision and evaluation should be developmental rather than purely punitive. Classroom visits, attendance monitoring, lesson-plan checks, and administrative reviews can identify weaknesses before they become habitual. Feedback should specify the gap, the expected improvement, the support available, and the time for follow-up. Teachers who receive only criticism may become defensive, whereas teachers who receive clear coaching are more likely to improve. At the same time, repeated violations require firm and consistent action. Discipline systems lose credibility when consequences are uncertain or depend on personal relationships (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2023).

The principal-leadership distribution showed that the low category contained the largest group of respondents (Gümüş et al., 2024). This suggests that leadership

improvement remains a practical need even though the average score was relatively favorable. Principals may need stronger skills in communication, performance feedback, recognition, conflict management, and consistent enforcement. Leadership development should therefore be treated as part of teacher-discipline improvement rather than as a separate administrative program.

The simultaneous effect of compensation and principal leadership shows that teaching discipline is best understood as the result of an organizational system. Compensation provides a reward and recognition structure, while leadership provides direction, supervision, and cultural meaning. Either factor can be weakened when the other is absent. Adequate compensation under inconsistent leadership may not produce reliable discipline because expectations remain unclear. Strong leadership under perceived compensation unfairness may generate compliance, but dissatisfaction can reduce long-term commitment. The strongest condition occurs when teachers receive fair rewards and experience leadership that is credible, supportive, and accountable (Al Maktoum & Al Kaabi, 2024).

This integrated interpretation has several implications. First, schools should define teaching discipline through measurable behaviors. Expectations should cover punctuality, classroom presence, lesson preparation, schedule compliance, assessment, and administration. General demands to “be disciplined” are less useful than specific standards. Second, compensation and recognition should be linked transparently to responsibilities and performance without creating unhealthy competition. Third, principals should use routine data, such as attendance records, teaching journals, class schedules, and completion reports, to provide timely feedback (Adams & Thompson, 2025). Fourth, nonfinancial recognition can be strengthened even when school-level authority over salaries is limited. Principals can acknowledge reliable performance, provide opportunities to lead professional activities, support participation in training, involve teachers in decision making, and create a respectful working climate. These actions do not replace financial compensation, but they increase the perceived value of professional contribution. Fifth, education offices should ensure that financial policies are implemented consistently and communicated clearly so that teachers understand the components and timing of compensation.

The extremely high regression values require careful methodological interpretation. Both simple models explained 97.9% of the variation in discipline, and the simultaneous model produced a near-perfect fit. Such values may indicate that the constructs were measured with highly similar wording or that respondents used consistent response patterns across all three questionnaires (Arias et al., 2020). Compensation, leadership, and discipline may also have been perceived as parts of a single positive or negative evaluation of the school. This does not invalidate the significant relationships, but it means that the magnitude should not be generalized without verification. Common-method influence is possible because all variables were measured from the same respondents at the same time using the same response scale.

A teacher who evaluated the school positively may have assigned high scores across compensation, leadership, and discipline items, while a dissatisfied teacher may have assigned low scores across all scales. Future analysis should compare questionnaire data with objective records, such as verified attendance, classroom observation, lesson-plan submission, and administrative completion. It should also examine correlations among predictors, tolerance values, variance-inflation factors, residual plots, and item-level overlap.

The sample size and setting also limit generalization. The final analysis used 58 respondents from one district. The findings provide a useful picture of the participating public elementary schools, but they should not automatically be applied to all teachers or regions. Employment status, local policy, school size, transportation, infrastructure, and community conditions may influence the way compensation and leadership affect discipline. Replication in other districts and educational levels would strengthen confidence in the model (Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020). Despite these limitations, the results provide a clear practical message. Teaching discipline is not strengthened effectively through sanctions alone. It requires a balanced system in which professional expectations are explicit, rewards are perceived as fair, leadership is consistent, teachers receive support, and performance is monitored using reliable information. The principal plays a coordinating role, but compensation policy may involve school committees, education offices, and government authorities. Improvement therefore depends on collaboration across levels (Zamboni et al., 2020).

A practical program could begin with a discipline audit (Volkwyn et al., 2020). Schools could review punctuality, classroom attendance, instructional preparation, assessment timelines, and administrative completion. The results could be discussed with teachers to identify barriers. The school could then establish clear targets, provide coaching, improve communication, recognize consistent performance, and apply proportionate follow-up when obligations are not met. Compensation concerns should be documented and communicated to the responsible authority, while school-controlled nonfinancial rewards can be strengthened immediately. Ultimately, disciplined teaching is both an individual behavior and an organizational achievement. Teachers exercise personal responsibility, but institutions shape the conditions in which responsibility is sustained. The findings show that fair compensation and effective principal leadership are not competing explanations. They are complementary mechanisms that influence how teachers interpret their work, respond to expectations, and maintain professional routines. Aligning the two can improve not only discipline but also the stability and quality of classroom learning (Zhao et al., 2023).

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that compensation and principal leadership are significant organizational predictors of teachers' teaching discipline in the participating public

elementary schools. Compensation had a positive and significant partial effect, with a regression coefficient of 0.940, a t-value of 51.613, and significance below 0.001. Teachers who perceived financial and nonfinancial rewards as fair, timely, appropriate, and appreciative tended to report stronger punctuality, instructional readiness, compliance, consistency, and administrative responsibility. Principal leadership also had a positive and significant partial effect, with a coefficient of 0.938, a t-value of 51.281, and significance below 0.001. Clear direction, exemplary conduct, communication, supervision, motivation, fairness, and consistent enforcement were closely associated with disciplined teaching behavior. The simultaneous analysis confirmed that compensation and principal leadership jointly had a significant effect, producing an F-value of 67,317.737 with significance below 0.001. These findings demonstrate that teaching discipline should not be treated solely as an individual obligation or controlled only through sanctions. It should be developed through an integrated management system that combines equitable rewards, professional recognition, credible leadership, clear standards, constructive supervision, and consistent accountability. Schools should regularly review teacher attendance, classroom presence, instructional preparation, assessment completion, and administrative responsibilities. Principals should communicate expectations clearly, provide developmental feedback, recognize reliable performance, and respond consistently to repeated violations. Education authorities should strengthen the fairness, transparency, and timeliness of compensation while supporting leadership development for principals. The exceptionally high explanatory values found in the regression models should be verified using the raw statistical output and additional diagnostic tests before broad generalization. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, separate data sources, objective discipline records, classroom observation, and longitudinal designs to examine whether improvements in compensation and leadership are followed by sustained changes in teaching discipline and overall learning quality.

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