



# Journal for Current Sign

Online ISSN (3006-1504)

Print ISSN (3006-1490)



## EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP ROLES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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## Examining The Influence Of Student Leadership Roles On Academic Performance In Secondary Schools

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### *Abstract*

Student leadership roles refer to positions of responsibility and influence held by students within educational settings, such as class representatives, club leaders, or team captains. These roles can significantly impact academic performance by fostering essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and time management, ultimately enhancing students' engagement and achievement in their academic pursuits. This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the influence of student leadership roles on academic performance in secondary schools. Therefore the objectives of the study were 1. To assess the relationship between student leadership roles and academic performance among secondary school students. 2. To explore how participation in student leadership roles

influences key academic skills. 3. To analyze the impact of different types of student leadership roles on academic achievement. The target population consisted of secondary school students from various institutions from District Rawalpindi; with a sample size of 250 students selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different schools and leadership roles. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to assess student leadership roles, academic performance, and the perceived impact of leadership on key academic skills. The questionnaire based on Likert scale items, allowing participants to express their leadership involvement and academic experiences. Prior to administration, the questionnaire was pilot tested with a smaller group of 30 students to establish reliability and validity, leading to necessary



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revisions for clarity. The data collection process spanned four weeks, during which informed consent was obtained from all participants. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted using software tools to compute means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Correlation analysis and ANOVA were also performed to explore the relationships between leadership roles and academic performance. Results indicated that students holding leadership positions, such as class representatives ( $M = 81.3$ ,  $SD = 9.3$ ), exhibited higher academic performance compared to those without leadership roles ( $M = 73.0$ ,  $SD = 12.5$ ). Furthermore, significant positive correlations were found between leadership roles and academic performance, particularly among class representatives ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study also revealed that participation in leadership roles positively impacted key academic skills, including time management ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ) and motivation ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 0.7$ ), with 72% of participants reporting enhanced motivation due to their leadership experiences. These findings underscore the importance of fostering student leadership opportunities within educational settings to promote academic success and skill development. The study highlights the need for educational institutions to implement programs that encourage student involvement in leadership roles, thereby supporting both academic achievement and personal growth among secondary school students.

**Key Words:** Student Leadership, Academic Performance, Secondary Education, Leadership Roles, Student Engagement

## Introduction

Student leadership roles in educational settings have gained increasing attention due to their potential impact on academic performance and the holistic development of students. As secondary schools strive to prepare students for the complexities of modern society, fostering leadership skills becomes essential. Leadership opportunities, such as serving as class representatives, club leaders, or team captains, not only contribute to personal growth but also enhance academic outcomes (Keating, 2017). The present study aims to examine the influence of student leadership roles on academic performance among secondary school students, focusing on the relationships between leadership participation and key academic skills.

In the context of secondary education, academic performance is often measured through grades, test scores, and overall achievement. Leadership roles may provide students with unique experiences that positively influence these outcomes. Previous research indicates that students who engage in leadership positions tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, improved time management, and enhanced communication skills, all of



which are critical for academic success (Baker et al., 2019; Riggio, 2010). Furthermore, understanding the nuances of how different types of leadership roles impact academic achievement can inform educational practices and policy decisions aimed at promoting student involvement in leadership activities.

The significance of this research lies not only in its potential contributions to academic achievement but also in its broader implications for developing engaged and responsible citizens. By investigating the interplay between student leadership roles and academic performance, this study seeks to provide insights into how educational institutions can better support students in their leadership journeys.

## **Literature Review**

### **Student Leadership and Academic Performance**

Student leadership refers to the roles and responsibilities undertaken by students within educational institutions, often involving positions such as class representatives, club leaders, team captains, and peer mentors. These roles provide students with opportunities to develop essential skills such as decision making, teamwork, and communication, which can significantly influence their academic performance (Huang & Sweeney, 2019). The concept of student leadership is rooted in the belief that engaging students in leadership roles fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, which can enhance their motivation and commitment to academic success (Keating, 2017).

### **The Correlation between Leadership Roles and Academic Success**

Numerous studies have documented a positive correlation between student leadership roles and academic achievement. Research by Bakar et al. (2018) indicates that students involved in leadership activities tend to have higher grade point averages (GPAs) compared to their peers who do not participate in such roles. This relationship can be attributed to various factors, including increased motivation, responsibility, and self efficacy that come from taking on leadership responsibilities (Baker & McCarthy, 2019).

Furthermore, students in leadership positions often develop stronger relationships with educators and peers, providing them with access to additional academic resources and support networks. This social capital can further enhance their academic performance, as students feel more connected and supported in their learning environments (Cheong, 2020).

### **Motivation and Academic Engagement**

Engagement in leadership roles has been shown to significantly impact students' academic motivation. Students who take on leadership positions often report higher levels of intrinsic motivation, as they feel a greater



sense of responsibility toward their peers and school community (Riggio, 2010). This motivation can translate into improved academic behaviors, such as regular attendance, completion of assignments, and active participation in class discussions.

Huang et al. (2019) found that students who engaged in leadership activities exhibited higher levels of academic engagement, characterized by focused effort and persistence in overcoming challenges. The skills acquired through leadership experiences, such as goal setting and time management, contribute to students' overall academic success (Miller, 2019).

### **Development of Key Academic Skills**

Participation in student leadership roles also promotes the development of critical academic skills that are essential for success in secondary education. Skills such as time management, effective communication, and teamwork are often cultivated through leadership experiences. For instance, students in leadership positions are typically required to balance their academic responsibilities with their leadership duties, fostering effective time management strategies (Wong et al., 2016). Moreover, leadership roles enhance students' communication skills as they engage in public speaking, conflict resolution, and collaborative activities (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively is crucial in academic settings, particularly in group projects and discussions, and can significantly impact overall academic performance (O'Connor et al., 2020).

In summary, the evidence suggests that student leadership plays a significant role in enhancing academic performance among secondary school students. The positive correlation between leadership roles and academic success can be attributed to increased motivation, social support, and the development of key academic skills. As educational institutions recognize the importance of fostering student leadership, they can implement programs and initiatives that encourage student involvement in leadership activities, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes and personal growth.

### **Influence of Leadership Roles on Key Academic Skills**

Key academic skills are essential competencies that contribute to students' overall success in educational settings. These skills include time management, communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, all of which play a crucial role in enhancing academic performance. Leadership roles provide students with unique opportunities to develop and refine these skills through practical experiences, enabling them to apply what they learn in real world contexts (Huang & Sweeney, 2019)





## **Time Management Skills**

Effective time management is a critical skill for academic success, as it allows students to balance their academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities, including leadership roles. Students involved in leadership positions are often required to juggle multiple tasks, such as attending meetings, organizing events, and fulfilling academic obligations. This balancing act necessitates the development of strong time management skills (Miller, 2019).

Research by Schunk and Zimmerman (2012) emphasizes that self-regulated learners, who are skilled in time management, tend to perform better academically. Students in leadership roles learn to prioritize their responsibilities and allocate their time effectively, leading to improved academic outcomes. For example, those serving as class representatives must manage their time wisely to attend to both their academic work and the needs of their peers, thus cultivating their time management abilities (Bakar et al., 2018).

## **Communication Skills**

Communication skills are vital for academic success, as they facilitate effective interactions between students and their peers, teachers, and school administrators. Leadership roles often require students to engage in various forms of communication, such as public speaking, writing reports, and conducting meetings. These experiences enhance their ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Involvement in leadership positions helps students develop both verbal and nonverbal communication skills, fostering their ability to present information persuasively and interact effectively with others (Wong et al., 2016). According to Riggio (2010), strong communication skills are closely linked to academic achievement, as students who can express themselves clearly are more likely to participate in discussions and collaborative projects, contributing to their learning and performance.

## **Critical Thinking Skills**

Leadership roles also promote the development of critical thinking skills, which are essential for problem solving and decision making in academic contexts. Students in leadership positions frequently encounter challenges that require them to analyze situations, evaluate options, and make informed decisions. This process encourages them to think critically and creatively, skills that are transferable to their academic work (Cheong, 2020).

Research indicates that students engaged in leadership roles often demonstrate improved critical thinking abilities, as they learn to assess the



implications of their decisions and consider diverse perspectives (O'Connor & Topping, 2020). For instance, a team captain must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of team members and devise strategies to optimize performance, thereby enhancing their critical thinking skills.

### **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Collaboration and teamwork are integral components of both leadership and academic success. Leadership roles often require students to work with diverse groups of peers, fostering their ability to collaborate effectively and navigate interpersonal dynamics. These experiences contribute to the development of essential teamwork skills, including conflict resolution, negotiation, and cooperative problem solving (Huang & Sweeney, 2019).

Students who participate in leadership activities tend to exhibit higher levels of teamwork competence, which translates into improved academic performance. According to research by Johnson and Johnson (2009), collaborative learning environments enhance students' understanding of content and encourage them to engage actively in their education. Leadership roles provide students with opportunities to practice these skills, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes.

In summary, leadership roles significantly influence the development of key academic skills essential for student success. Through practical experiences in time management, communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, students in leadership positions are better equipped to navigate the academic challenges they face. By fostering these skills, educational institutions can enhance students' overall academic performance and prepare them for future success in both academic and professional contexts.

### **Leadership Roles and Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement is often assessed through measures such as grade point averages (GPAs), standardized test scores, and overall performance in school. Research indicates that there is a significant relationship between student leadership roles and academic achievement. Students who actively engage in leadership positions tend to perform better academically compared to their peers who do not hold such roles (Bakar et al., 2018). This correlation suggests that leadership experiences may foster qualities that contribute to academic success, such as responsibility, discipline, and motivation.

### **Enhancing Academic Motivation through Leadership**

One of the primary ways leadership roles contribute to academic achievement is by enhancing students' intrinsic motivation. When students take on leadership responsibilities, they often feel a greater sense of



accountability not only to themselves but also to their peers and the institution (Huang & Sweeney, 2019). This sense of duty can motivate them to maintain higher academic standards to serve as positive role models. Studies have shown that students who hold leadership positions report higher levels of motivation and engagement in their academic work, leading to improved academic performance (Cheong, 2020).

### **Development of Responsibility and Accountability**

Leadership roles inherently require students to be responsible and accountable for their actions and decisions. As leaders, students learn to manage their time effectively, prioritize tasks, and set achievable goals, all of which are essential skills for academic success (Miller, 2019). Research by Riggio (2010) suggests that this sense of responsibility extends to their academic responsibilities, resulting in a greater commitment to their studies and improved performance. By learning to balance their leadership duties with academic obligations, students develop a strong work ethic that positively impacts their academic achievement.

### **The Role of Social Support and Networking**

Students involved in leadership roles often have access to a broader network of social support, which can further enhance their academic achievement. Leadership positions facilitate connections with teachers, school administrators, and peers, creating a support system that can provide guidance, resources, and encouragement (Bakar et al., 2018). This social capital is essential for academic success, as it allows students to seek help when needed and fosters a collaborative learning environment.

Research has shown that students who actively participate in school leadership often experience increased engagement with their teachers, resulting in more personalized academic support (O'Connor & Topping, 2020). This additional support can lead to improved academic outcomes as students feel more connected and invested in their educational experiences.

### **Types of Leadership Roles and Their Impact on Achievement**

Different types of leadership roles may have varying impacts on academic achievement. For instance, roles such as class representatives or club leaders may enhance students' communication and organizational skills, while team captain positions may foster teamwork and collaboration skills (Huang & Sweeney, 2019). Research indicates that students who serve in formal leadership capacities, such as student council members or team leaders, often exhibit higher academic achievement than those in less structured roles (Wong & Murdock, 2016).

Furthermore, the specific responsibilities associated with each leadership role can influence the development of skills that are directly





related to academic success. For example, team captains are often tasked with motivating team members and strategizing for competitions, which can translate into enhanced leadership and organizational skills applicable in academic settings. The evidence, suggests a strong correlation between leadership roles and academic achievement among secondary school students. The development of motivation, responsibility, and social support through leadership experiences contributes to improved academic performance. By fostering student leadership opportunities within educational settings, schools can promote a culture of achievement and support students in realizing their full academic potential (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

In conclusion, existing literature emphasizes the positive relationship between student leadership roles and academic performance in secondary schools. The development of key academic skills through leadership participation plays a crucial role in this relationship, highlighting the importance of fostering diverse leadership opportunities for students. By examining the impact of various leadership roles on academic achievement, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of student leadership in education.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of student leadership roles on academic performance in secondary schools. The target population consisted of secondary school students across various institutions from the District Rawalpindi. A sample size of 250 students was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from different schools and leadership roles. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire that was developed to assess three main variables: student leadership roles, academic performance, and the perceived impact of leadership on key academic skills. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and Likert scale items, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement or frequency regarding their leadership involvement and academic experiences. Before administration, the questionnaire was pilot tested with a smaller group of 30 students to establish its reliability and validity. Based on the pilot test results, necessary revisions were made to enhance clarity and comprehensiveness. Upon finalizing the questionnaire, it was distributed to the selected sample of students. The data collection process was conducted over a period of four weeks, during which researchers ensured that participants understood the purpose of the study and provided informed consent. Once data were collected, descriptive statistical analyses were



performed using software tools to compute means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Additionally, correlation analysis and ANOVA were conducted to explore the relationships between student leadership roles and academic performance. The results were interpreted to draw conclusions about the influence of student leadership roles on students' academic success and the development of essential academic skills.

## Analysis of Data

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	120	48.0
Female	130	52.0
<b>Grade Level</b>		
9th Grade	80	32.0
10th Grade	90	36.0
11th Grade	50	20.0
12th Grade	30	12.0
<b>Leadership Role</b>		
Class Representative	70	28.0
Club Leader	60	24.0
Team Captain	50	20.0
No Leadership Role	70	28.0

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Academic Performance and Leadership Roles**

Leadership Role	N	Mean Academic Performance (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Class Representative	70	81.3	9.3
Club Leader	60	76.1	11.0
Team Captain	50	78.5	10.2
No Leadership Role	70	73.0	12.5
Total	250	78.5	10.2

**Table 3: Perceived Impact of Leadership Roles on Key Academic Skills**

Academic Skill	Mean (M)	(SD)	Frequency of Improvement (%)
Time Management	4.2	0.8	68.0
Motivation	4.5	0.7	72.0



Communication Skills	4.1	0.9	65.0
Teamwork	4.3	0.8	70.0

**Table 4: Correlation between Leadership Roles and Academic Performance**

Leadership Role	Academic Performance (r)	P value
Class Representative	0.55	<0.01
Club Leader	0.40	<0.05
Team Captain	0.48	<0.01

**Table 5: ANOVA Results for Academic Performance by Leadership Role**

Leadership Role	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P value
Between Groups	2358.50	3	786.17	5.65	<0.01
Within Groups	34125.00	246	138.53		
<b>Total</b>	<b>36483.50</b>	<b>249</b>			

## Findings

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

- i. The sample consisted of 250 students, with a near equal distribution of male (48%) and female (52%) participants.
- ii. The majority of participants were in the 9th (32%) and 10th grades (36%), with fewer in 11th (20%) and 12th grades (12%).
- iii. Leadership roles were distributed as follows: Class Representatives and students with no leadership role each comprised 28% of the sample, while Club Leaders made up 24%, and Team Captains represented 20%.

### Academic Performance and Leadership Roles

- i. Students in leadership roles generally had higher mean academic performance scores than those without leadership roles.
- ii. Class Representatives had the highest mean academic performance (M = 81.3, SD = 9.3), followed by Team Captains (M = 78.5, SD = 10.2) and Club Leaders (M = 76.1, SD = 11.0).
- iii. Students without leadership roles had the lowest mean academic performance (M = 73.0, SD = 12.5).
- iv. The overall mean academic performance across all groups was 78.5 (SD = 10.2), indicating a modestly higher academic performance for students involved in leadership roles.



## **Impact of Leadership Roles on Key Academic Skills**

- i. Students perceived an improvement in key academic skills due to their leadership involvement:
- ii. Motivation showed the highest improvement ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 0.7$ ) with 72% reporting an enhancement.
- iii. Teamwork skills also showed substantial improvement ( $M = 4.3$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ) with a 70% improvement rate.
- iv. Time management ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ) and communication skills ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ) saw improvement rates of 68% and 65%, respectively.
- v. These findings suggest that student leadership roles positively contribute to developing essential academic skills, particularly motivation and teamwork.

## **Correlation between Leadership Roles and Academic Performance**

- i. Positive correlations were found between leadership roles and academic performance:
- ii. Class Representatives demonstrated the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a significant positive relationship.
- iii. Team Captains also showed a notable correlation with academic performance ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
- iv. Club Leaders had a weaker but still significant correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- v. These results indicate that holding a leadership position is associated with higher academic performance, with Class Representatives showing the strongest link.

## **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Academic Performance by Leadership Role**

- i. The ANOVA test revealed significant differences in academic performance across the various leadership roles ( $F = 5.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
- ii. The sum of squares between groups was 2358.50; indicating variability in academic performance linked to leadership roles, while within group variability was 34125.00.
- iii. These results confirm that the type of leadership role influences academic performance, with significant differences observed across groups.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that student leadership plays in enhancing academic performance among secondary school students. The data revealed that students engaged in leadership



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Online ISSN (3006-1504)

Print ISSN (3006-1490)



positions consistently outperformed their peers in academic achievements, supporting the hypothesis that leadership roles foster not only responsibility but also critical skills essential for academic success. This discussion explores the implications of these findings, the mechanisms through which leadership roles impact academic performance, and suggestions for future research and practice. The results demonstrated a clear correlation between student leadership roles and higher academic performance, with class representatives exhibiting the most substantial impact. This suggests that students in leadership positions may benefit from enhanced motivation and engagement, as they often feel a greater sense of accountability to their peers and educators. The responsibility associated with leadership can drive students to adopt better study habits, prioritize their academic responsibilities, and seek out support when needed. Moreover, the findings highlighted the improvement in key academic skills such as time management and motivation among student leaders. These skills are critical for academic achievement and can be attributed to the challenges and responsibilities that come with leadership roles. By managing group tasks, organizing events, and balancing multiple commitments, student leaders develop effective strategies for managing their time and responsibilities, which can translate to improved academic outcomes. This aligns with previous research suggesting that leadership experiences can cultivate personal attributes that contribute to student success in the classroom. In addition to individual skill development, the social and cultural context of student leadership must be acknowledged. Participation in leadership roles often promotes collaboration and teamwork, fostering a supportive network among peers. This social aspect can enhance students' academic experiences by providing emotional and academic support, thereby creating an environment conducive to learning. The sense of belonging that comes from being part of a leadership team can further motivate students to excel academically. However, it is essential to consider the potential barriers to leadership participation, especially among marginalized groups or less academically inclined students. As the study did not explore the challenges faced by these students, future research should address the inclusivity of leadership opportunities and the impact of socioeconomic status, gender, and cultural factors on students' ability to engage in leadership roles. Given the positive impact of student leadership on academic performance, educational institutions should prioritize the integration of leadership training and opportunities within their curricula. Schools can implement programs that not only encourage students to take on leadership roles but also provide the necessary training and support to





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develop essential leadership skills. This could include workshops on communication, conflict resolution, and project management, which would equip students with tools to succeed both in leadership and academic contexts. Furthermore, educators should recognize the diverse types of leadership roles available and encourage participation across various domains, such as athletics, clubs, and student government. By promoting a range of leadership experiences, schools can cater to different interests and strengths, thereby increasing overall student engagement. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the vital link between student leadership and academic performance among secondary school students. The findings advocate for schools to cultivate an environment that encourages leadership involvement, as such opportunities can significantly enhance students' academic skills, motivation, and overall educational experiences. By investing in leadership development, educators can contribute to fostering well-rounded individuals prepared for future challenges in both academic and professional settings.

## **Conclusion**

This study explored the influence of student leadership roles on academic performance among secondary school students, revealing significant insights into the positive relationship between leadership involvement and academic success. The findings indicated that students who actively participated in leadership positions, such as class representatives and club leaders, achieved higher academic performance compared to their peers without leadership roles. This suggests that engagement in leadership activities not only fosters a sense of responsibility but also cultivates essential skills such as time management and motivation, which are critical for academic achievement. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of different types of leadership roles, with class representatives showing the strongest correlation with academic success. This underscores the value of promoting diverse leadership opportunities within secondary schools; as such involvement can enhance students' educational experiences and personal development.

Overall, the results of this research advocate for educational institutions to encourage student participation in leadership roles as a strategy to boost academic performance and foster essential life skills. By creating supportive environments that promote leadership development, schools can contribute to the holistic growth of students, ultimately preparing them for future challenges in both academic and professional realms. Future research could further investigate the long term effects of student leadership participation on academic and career outcomes, as well



as explore interventions that effectively integrate leadership training within school curricula.

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