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Discipline Management Strategies and Students' Academic Performance in Public Day Secondary Schools in Gasabo District, Rwanda

Herbert Mworozi and Cheboi Stephen Tomno
Mount Kigali University, Rwanda
Email: mworobert@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study examined how discipline management strategies relate to students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Gasabo District, Kigali, Rwanda. Guided by behaviourism and self-determination theory, it used a descriptive survey with a mixed-methods approach. The target population was 96 people (48 school leaders and 48 deputy head teachers in charge of discipline) from 48 schools. Using Yamane's formula and purposive sampling, 76 participants (38 per group) were selected. Deputy head teachers completed questionnaires and school leaders were interviewed. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, means, standard deviations and multiple regression, and interviews were analysed thematically. Most respondents agreed that rules are clearly communicated (73.6%) and that students understand the consequences of breaking them (92.0%). Views on teacher training were more divided, with 55.1% agreeing that training is adequate and 39.3% that professional development is sufficient. Punishment was rated as effective (86.8%) and consistently applied (86.7%), while only 34.1% felt that rewards raise engagement. Mentorship was viewed favourably, although 52.6% linked it directly to better performance. Regression models for teacher preparedness (R^2 = .86), reward and punishment (R^2 = .81) and mentorship (R^2 = .83) were significant. School leaders described balanced and increasingly restorative approaches but reported uneven training and limited resources. The study recommends clear and continuous communication of rules, regular training of teachers in discipline management, fair and personalised reward systems, and institutionalised mentorship.*

Keywords: *Discipline, Mentorship, Punishment, Rewards, Preparedness, Performance, Rwanda*

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1. Introduction

Order in a school is rarely an end in itself. Teachers and school leaders manage behaviour because learning needs time, attention and a climate in which students feel safe. Syntheses of the evidence on achievement consistently place classroom management and the school climate among the influences that matter for learning (Hattie, 2009), and the way schools handle misconduct can either protect or erode instructional time. Gregory, Skiba and Noguera (2010), for example, show that students who are frequently removed from class are the same students who fall behind, so that the "discipline gap" and the achievement gap tend to move together.

Across systems, the strategies used to manage discipline have shifted from purely punitive responses towards structured and preventive ones. In the United States, a randomised trial of school-wide positive behavioural interventions and supports reported improved behavioural outcomes for students (Bradshaw et al., 2010), and restorative interventions in a large urban district were linked to fewer exclusionary sanctions (Anyon et al., 2016). Work on teacher practice points the same way: when teachers are coached in classroom interaction, discipline referrals fall (Gregory et al.,

2016). Mentoring has also gained ground as a way of supporting adolescents, although its benefits depend on the quality and consistency of the relationship between mentor and student (Rhodes, 2020).

Evidence from Africa shows that rewards and punishments remain the everyday tools of school discipline. In Nigeria, the way punishment is administered was found to influence students' performance in mathematics (Owan et al., 2019), and the frequent use of reward and punishment was related to performance in history among senior secondary students in Kwara State (Alabi & Saidu, 2019). These studies suggest that how a measure is applied matters at least as much as whether it exists.

In Rwanda, discipline is closely tied to national education goals, and several local studies have connected it with performance. Sibomana and Andala (2021) found a significant positive relationship between students' discipline and academic performance in Rusizi District, and Uwizeyimana and Sikubwabo (2021) reported relationships of different strength between discipline enforcement techniques and performance in nine-year and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze District. Ruzibiza and Ndagijimana (2024) linked the administration of school rules and restorative practices to performance in secondary schools, and Nduwayezu and Gacinya (2025) reported that internal rules and regulations contribute to academic performance in Gasabo District. Musengimana (2022) looked at punishment and rewards and the performance of female students in selected Gasabo schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although several Rwandan studies have linked discipline to academic performance, the evidence remains incomplete. First, most studies examine one element of discipline at a time, usually rules or the balance of rewards and punishment, so little is known about how rules, teacher preparedness, rewards and punishment, and mentorship compare when they are studied together. Second, the views of the people who run discipline day to day, namely school leaders and the deputy head teachers in charge of discipline, are seldom the main source of data. The gap matters most in public day schools. Students spend only part of the day under the school's supervision, so these schools rely heavily on rules, staff capacity and relationships to maintain order, and they often work with limited resources. Without evidence on how these strategies work together in such a setting, school leaders and education authorities in Gasabo District, the largest district in Kigali with both urban and peri-urban schools, have little to guide decisions on discipline. The problem this study addresses is therefore the lack of combined, practice-based evidence on how school rules, teacher preparedness, reward and punishment strategies, and mentorship influence students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Gasabo District.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

The general objective of the study was to assess the influence of discipline management strategies on students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Gasabo District. The specific objectives were:

1. To determine the influence of school rules and guidelines on students' academic performance.
2. To examine the influence of teacher training and preparedness in managing discipline on students' academic performance.
3. To assess the influence of reward and punishment strategies on students' academic performance.
4. To establish the influence of mentorship programmes on students' academic performance.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by four research questions, one for each objective:

RQ1: What is the influence of school rules and guidelines on students' academic performance?

RQ2: What is the influence of teacher training and preparedness in managing discipline on students' academic performance?

RQ3: What is the influence of reward and punishment strategies on students' academic performance?

RQ4: How do mentorship programmes influence students' academic performance?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study draws on two complementary theories. Behaviourism, associated with Skinner (1953), holds that behaviour is shaped by its consequences: behaviour that is reinforced tends to be repeated, and behaviour that is punished tends to decrease. For schools, this supports the use of clear rules with predictable consequences and of rewards for desired conduct. Self-determination theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), starts from a different point. It proposes that lasting engagement depends on the satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, and that controlling practices can weaken intrinsic motivation. A meta-analysis of experiments by Deci et al. (1999) found that tangible rewards tended to undermine intrinsic motivation. Taken together, the two theories frame a practical question for schools: which combination of rules, consequences and support produces both order and motivation to learn.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 School Rules and Guidelines

Clear rules reduce ambiguity about expected behaviour and cut down on disruption. School-wide behaviour systems that teach and reinforce expectations have been associated with better behavioural outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2010), while evidence on restorative approaches suggests that rules work best when enforcement repairs relationships rather than only excluding students (Anyon et al., 2016). In Rwanda, Nduwayezu and Gacinya (2025) concluded that attendance, conduct and assessment rules in Gasabo schools contribute to a structured learning environment and to student accountability, and Ruzibiza and Ndagijimana (2024) reported that the administration of school rules was positively related to performance. Sibomana and Andala (2021) similarly found that respect for rules and regular attendance were associated with better results.

2.2.2 Teacher Training and Preparedness

Teachers apply discipline policy in classrooms, so their skills largely determine whether a policy works in practice. The evidence that teacher practice can be changed is encouraging. In the study by Gregory et al. (2016), teachers who received coaching in interaction with students issued fewer discipline referrals, and the gap in referrals between student groups narrowed. Hattie (2009) also treats the teacher's management of the classroom as part of the wider set of teacher-related factors that influence achievement. We found few Rwandan studies that measure teacher preparedness for discipline directly. Most local work treats the teacher as one actor among several, which leaves open how adequate training and professional development are in day schools.

2.2.3 Reward and Punishment Strategies

Reward and punishment are the oldest tools of school discipline. Owan et al. (2019) showed that the administration of punishment was significantly related to students' test anxiety and performance in mathematics in Cross River State, and Alabi and Saidu (2019) reported a significant relationship between teachers' frequent use of reward and punishment and performance in history. The research on motivation adds a warning. Deci et al. (1999) found that expected tangible rewards can reduce intrinsic motivation, which means that reward systems need to be designed with care. In Rwanda, Musengimana (2022) studied punishment and rewards in relation to the performance of female students in selected Gasabo schools. Taken together, these studies show that both tools are widely used, but that their effect depends on fairness, consistency and fit with student motivation.

2.2.4 Mentorship Programmes

Mentorship pairs students with an older or more experienced person who offers guidance, encouragement and academic support. Rhodes (2020) reviews the evidence on youth mentoring and stresses that outcomes are closely tied to how long the relationship lasts and how close it is, and that benefits are not automatic. This helps explain why mentorship may be judged favourably by practitioners while its direct link to results is harder to demonstrate. Little published work in Rwanda examines mentorship alongside other discipline strategies, which is one reason for including it in this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey design with a mixed-methods approach. A descriptive survey suited the purpose because the aim was to describe current discipline practices and the views of those who manage them without manipulating any variable. Quantitative data came from a questionnaire and qualitative data from interviews, which allowed the survey results to be explained by leaders' accounts of policy and practice.

3.2 Sampling and Samples

The study was conducted in Gasabo District, one of the three districts of Kigali City. The district has 15 sectors and, according to Rwanda Basic Education Board records for 2024, 48 public day secondary schools. The target population was 96 people: the school leader and the deputy head teacher in charge of discipline in each school. Because these two roles carry direct responsibility for discipline, purposive sampling was used. The sample size was determined with Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, with $N = 96$ and a 5% margin of error, which gives about 77. A sample of 76 was used, made up of 38 school leaders and 38 deputy head teachers (Table 1).

Table 1: Target population and sample

Respondents	Population	Sample
School leaders	48	38
Deputy head teachers in charge of discipline	48	38
Total	96	76

Source: Field data (2025)

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Deputy head teachers completed a structured questionnaire with five-point Likert items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) covering school rules, teacher preparedness, reward and punishment, and mentorship. School leaders were interviewed using a guide covering how rules are communicated, how teachers are trained and assessed in discipline management, how rewards and punishments are applied, and how mentorship is evaluated. Content validity was established by aligning items with the conceptual framework and obtaining review from specialists in education and discipline management. The instruments were piloted with eight participants (four head teachers and four deputy head teachers) from schools outside the sample. Reliability was examined through test–retest administration over a two-week interval and Cronbach's alpha, and ambiguous items were revised after the pilot. For the qualitative strand, credibility was supported by triangulating questionnaire and interview data, and dependability by documenting procedures and decisions.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from the university and from district authorities before data collection began. Written consent was obtained from every participant. Questionnaires were completed by the deputy head teachers and interviews were held with the school leaders. All 76 selected participants took part, a response rate of 100%.

3.5 Data Analysis

Questionnaire data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, and multiple regression was used to examine how perceptions of each strategy related to students' academic performance as rated in the questionnaire. In the tables, "agree" combines agree and strongly agree, and "disagree" combines disagree and strongly disagree. Interview data were analysed thematically.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, written consent was obtained from every participant, no personal identifiers were collected, and data were used only for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of respondents

Table 2 summarises the 76 respondents. Men were slightly in the majority (53%). Most respondents were between 31 and 50 years old (75.0%), and most (94.7%) had at least two years of experience. Most held a bachelor's degree (87%). The respondents were therefore mid-career professionals with considerable practical exposure to discipline management.

Table 2: Characteristics of respondents (N = 76)

Characteristic	f	%
Gender		
Male	40	53
Female	36	47
Age		
21–30 years	12	15.8
31–40 years	30	39.5
41–50 years	27	35.5
Over 50 years	7	9.2
Experience		
Less than 2 years	4	5.3
2–5 years	41	53.9
Over 6 years	31	40.8
Qualification		
Bachelor's degree	66	87
Master's degree	8	10
Postgraduate qualification beyond master's	2	3

Source: Field data (2025)

4.2 RQ1: Influence of school rules and guidelines on academic performance

Table 3 shows that respondents largely agreed that rules are communicated and understood. Nearly three-quarters (73.6%) agreed that rules are clearly communicated at the start of the year (M = 3.87, SD = 0.92), and 92.0% agreed that students understand the consequences of breaking them (M = 4.47, SD = 0.72), the highest mean in the study. Adherence to guidelines was seen as improving academic performance by 86.7% (M = 4.03), and 92.0% agreed that rules reduce disruption in class (M = 4.34). The weakest item, though still favourable, was that discipline measures contribute to a positive learning environment (76.2% agreed; M = 3.82, SD = 1.05).

Table 3: Perceptions of school rules and guidelines (n = 38)

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	M	SD
Rules are clearly communicated at the beginning of the year	7.8	18.4	73.6	3.87	0.92
Students understand the consequences of violating rules	2.6	5.2	92.0	4.47	0.72
Adherence to guidelines positively influences academic performance	10.4	2.6	86.7	4.03	1.01
Discipline measures contribute to a positive learning environment	13.0	10.5	76.2	3.82	1.05
The presence of rules reduces disruptive behaviour in class	5.2	2.6	92.0	4.34	0.77

Source: Field data (2025). Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

A regression of academic performance on these items was also estimated, but the fit statistics reported by the software showed a perfect fit (R^2 = 1.000), which is not credible for survey data of this kind and most likely reflects the small sample and the overlap between predictors. These statistics are therefore not interpreted, and the answer to RQ1 rests on the descriptive evidence. That evidence is consistent with local studies in which attendance policies, behaviour expectations and the administration of rules were positively associated with performance (Nduwayezu & Gacinya, 2025; Ruzibiza & Ndagijimana, 2024; Sibomana & Andala, 2021). It also fits behaviourist reasoning: when students know what is expected and what follows a breach, the consequences can guide their conduct (Skinner, 1953). The spread in the first item shows that communication is not uniform across schools. Uwizeyimana and Sikubwabo (2021) found that the strength of the link between discipline and performance varied with the type of school, so these views should not be generalised beyond Gasabo.

4.3 RQ2: Influence of teacher training and preparedness on academic performance

Views on teacher preparedness were less uniform (Table 4). Just over half (55.1%) agreed that teachers receive adequate training in discipline management (M = 3.30, SD = 1.24), while 28.9% disagreed. Professional development was the weakest area: 39.3% agreed that opportunities are provided and 31.4% disagreed (M = 3.22, SD = 1.26). Sixty percent (60.5%) agreed that teachers feel confident in managing behaviour. By contrast, the institutional supports were rated highly: clear communication of discipline policy to staff (86.7%), teacher collaboration (76.2%) and leadership support (89.4%, M = 4.34).

Table 4: Perceptions of teacher training and preparedness (n = 38)

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	M	SD
Teachers receive adequate training on discipline management	28.9	15.7	55.1	3.30	1.24
Ongoing professional development is provided	31.4	28.9	39.3	3.22	1.26
Teachers feel confident managing student behaviour	15.7	23.6	60.5	3.57	1.06
Discipline policies are clearly communicated to staff	5.2	7.8	86.7	4.04	0.72
Teachers collaborate to share strategies	13.0	10.5	76.2	3.81	1.04
Teachers are supported by school leadership	5.2	5.2	89.4	4.34	0.89

Source: Field data (2025)

The regression model for teacher preparedness was strong (R = .93, R^2 = .86, adjusted R^2 = .84) and significant (p = .018), and each predictor was significant (Tables 7 and 8). Leadership support had the largest standardised coefficient (β = .43), followed by adequacy of training (β = .41) and clearly communicated policies (β = .39). These results should be read as associations between respondents' ratings, not as proof of cause, and with caution given the sample of 38. Even so, the pattern is meaningful: the schools' weakest scores lie in training and professional development, the very factors that carry weight in the model. This agrees with evidence that teachers' practice can be changed through structured support and that such change affects discipline outcomes (Gregory et al., 2016). It also suggests that strong leadership and clear policy partly compensate for limited formal training, though they cannot replace it.

4.4 RQ3: Influence of reward and punishment strategies on academic performance

Respondents were far more positive about punishment than about rewards (Table 5). Large majorities agreed that punishment improves classroom behaviour (86.8%, M = 4.21), that it is applied consistently (86.7%, M = 4.34) and that it is proportionate to the offence (81.5%, M = 4.11). Views on rewards were mixed. Although 76.6% agreed that students understand how rewards are earned (M = 3.55), only 34.1% agreed that the prospect of rewards increases engagement (M = 2.84, SD = 1.30) and 42.0% that the reward system encourages healthy competition (M = 2.89, SD = 1.42), the lowest means and the widest variation in the study.

Table 5: Perceptions of reward and punishment strategies (n = 38)

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	M	SD
Punishment measures improve behaviour in class	7.8	5.2	86.8	4.21	0.95
Students understand the criteria for receiving rewards	20.9	18.4	76.6	3.55	1.22
Punishment is applied consistently across students	5.2	7.8	86.7	4.34	0.94
Punishment is proportional to the behaviour addressed	7.8	10.5	81.5	4.11	1.05
Students are more engaged when rewards are available	47.2	18.4	34.1	2.84	1.30
The reward system encourages healthy competition	47.3	10.5	42.0	2.89	1.42

Source: Field data (2025). Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

The regression model for reward and punishment explained a large share of the variance (R = .90, R^2 = .81, adjusted R^2 = .79) and was significant (p = .012). Consistent application of punishment (β = .41), the belief that punishment improves behaviour (β = .40) and proportionality (β = .38) were the strongest predictors,

while the reward items, although significant, had smaller coefficients (β = .27 to .31). The strong standing of consistent and proportionate punishment fits behaviourist expectations (Skinner, 1953) and is in line with Nigerian studies that link the way punishment and reward are administered with performance (Alabi & Saidu, 2019; Owan et al., 2019). The weak showing of rewards can be read through self-determination theory. If rewards are tangible and expected, they may add little to intrinsic motivation and can even weaken it (Deci et al., 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985). This is only one possible explanation. The questionnaire did not ask what kinds of reward schools use, and respondents may simply be reporting that their schools' reward systems are less developed than their sanction systems.

4.5 RQ4: Influence of mentorship programmes on academic performance

Mentorship was viewed moderately to highly favourably (Table 6). Most respondents agreed that the frequency of sessions is adequate (76.2%, $M = 3.97$) and that mentors have extensive subject knowledge (86.7%, $M = 4.03$). Peer interaction was rated lower, with 65.7% agreeing that students engage actively in peer interactions ($SD = 1.34$) and 63.1% that peer interaction contributes to academic growth. Just over 60% (60.4%) agreed that mentorship motivates students academically. The weakest item was the direct link between the frequency and quality of sessions and improved performance, which only 52.6% endorsed ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.20$), while 28.8% disagreed.

Table 6: Perceptions of mentorship programmes (n = 38)

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	M	SD
Frequency of sessions is adequate	7.8	15.7	76.2	3.97	0.97
Students actively engage in peer interactions	26.2	7.8	65.7	3.66	1.34
Mentors have extensive subject knowledge	7.8	5.2	86.7	4.03	1.04
Peer interactions contribute to academic growth	18.3	18.4	63.1	3.63	1.25
Students are motivated academically by mentorship	15.7	23.6	60.4	3.63	1.06
Frequency and quality of sessions are linked to improved performance	28.8	18.4	52.6	3.37	1.20

Source: Field data (2025)

The regression model for mentorship was strong ($R = .91$, $R^2 = .83$, adjusted $R^2 = .82$) and significant ($p = .009$). Mentors' subject knowledge (β = .41), frequency of sessions (β = .40) and the contribution of peer interaction (β = .37) had the largest coefficients. The result echoes the view that mentoring works through the quality and regularity of the relationship rather than through its mere existence (Rhodes, 2020). The lower agreement on the direct link with performance suggests that schools see the benefits of mentorship in motivation and support but cannot yet demonstrate its effect on results, which is consistent with the leaders' comments below on the difficulty of measuring impact.

Table 7: Summary of regression models for RQ2 to RQ4

Strategy	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p
Teacher training and preparedness	.925	.856	.843	.018
Reward and punishment	.897	.805	.791	.012
Mentorship	.912	.832	.819	.009

Source: Field data (2025). p refers to the significance of the overall model.

Table 8: Standardised regression coefficients of the predictors

Predictor	β	t
Teacher training and preparedness		
Teachers receive adequate training	.412	3.90*
Professional development opportunities	.298	2.77*
Teachers' confidence in managing behaviour	.363	3.34*
Discipline policies clearly communicated	.389	3.59*
Teacher collaboration	.287	2.73*
Leadership support	.428	4.07*
Reward and punishment		
Punishment improves behaviour	.398	3.89*
Students understand rewards	.305	2.89*
Punishment applied consistently	.412	4.01*
Punishment proportional	.381	3.63*
Rewards increase engagement	.273	2.56*
Reward system encourages competition	.285	2.73*
Mentorship		
Frequency of mentorship sessions	.396	3.86*
Peer interactions	.305	2.85*
Mentors' subject knowledge	.405	3.85*
Peer interactions contribute to growth	.374	3.49*
Student motivation	.354	3.35*
Frequency and quality linked to performance	.326	3.05*

Source: Field data (2025). *Significant at $p < .05$.

4.6 Views of school leaders

Interviews with school leaders produced seven themes (Table 9). Leaders described rules as communicated early and through several channels, such as orientation, assemblies, class briefings and posters. They assessed teachers' discipline skills through observation, self-assessment and behaviour reports, but no standard tool was used across schools. Training took the form of workshops, peer learning and visits from external experts, and its quality and frequency varied with resources. Leaders found it hard to separate the effect of discipline from other influences on results. Most schools combined rewards (certificates, public recognition, privileges) with sanctions (detention, suspension), and several were moving towards restorative practices. Leaders said rewards work best when they match students' interests and age and involve parents. Mentorship was judged beneficial for progress, behaviour and engagement, but time and resources limited it.

Table 9: Themes from interviews with school leaders (n = 38)

Theme	Sub-themes	Implication
Communication of rules	Orientation, visibility, teacher involvement	Awareness is ensured but needs reinforcement during the year
Assessment of teacher discipline training	Formal and informal methods	Standardised, regularly evaluated tools are needed
Discipline training programmes	Workshops, peer learning, external experts	Training needs to be sustainable and context-specific
Rewards and punishments	Balanced approach, shift to restorative practice	Encouraging positive behaviour works better than sanctions alone
Motivational rewards	Recognition and tangible incentives	Rewards must fit students' values and age
Measuring impact	Before-and-after comparisons, surveys, records	More rigorous, data-driven evaluation is needed
Mentorship evaluation	Qualitative and quantitative measures	Benefits are noted, but scale and consistency are challenges

Source: Field data (2025)

The interviews help explain the survey results. Leaders' remarks on unstandardized assessment and uneven training match the lower scores on training and professional development, and their account of schools moving towards restorative practice is in line with research showing that approaches which repair relationships can reduce exclusion (Anyon et al., 2016). Their comments on reward design also fit self-determination theory: rewards that are personalised and valued by students are more likely to support motivation than uniform incentives (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Several limits should be kept in mind. The study covered one district and a small sample. The data are perceptions reported by school leaders and deputy head teachers, not students' examination records, and the design cannot establish cause. Regression models estimated on 38 questionnaires with six predictors are sensitive to chance, so the coefficients are best read as indications of relative importance. Future work should combine records of results with the views of students and teachers.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

RQ1: School rules and guidelines. Rules are generally well communicated and understood, and respondents believe that they reduce disruption and support learning, although communication is not equally strong in all schools.

RQ2: Teacher training and preparedness. Teachers' preparedness for discipline is only partly secured. Training and professional development are the weakest areas, while leadership support and clear policy are strong, and all were significant predictors of performance.

RQ3: Reward and punishment strategies. Punishment is viewed as effective, consistent and proportionate, while rewards are seen as less able to raise engagement. Both were significant predictors, but consistent punishment carried more weight.

RQ4: Mentorship programmes. Mentorship is valued, particularly for mentors' knowledge and the regularity of sessions, but its direct contribution to performance is not yet clearly shown.

Overall, rules, teacher capacity, balanced consequences and mentorship appear to work best together.

5.2 Recommendations

RQ1: School rules and guidelines. School leaders should repeat orientation on rules during the year, use several channels, and involve students in giving feedback on the rules.

RQ2: Teacher training and preparedness. The Ministry of Education, the Rwanda Basic Education Board and districts should provide regular, funded training in discipline and classroom management, and use a common tool to assess teachers' discipline skills.

RQ3: Reward and punishment strategies. Schools should keep sanctions fair and proportionate, expand restorative practices, and redesign rewards around students' interests and age, involving parents where possible.

RQ4: Mentorship programmes. Schools should set aside timetabled time for mentorship, train mentors, support peer interaction, and keep simple records that connect mentorship with students' progress.

Schools and districts should record discipline and academic data in a way that allows the two to be linked. Future research should include other districts and school

types, use students' results and views, and follow students over time.

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