

## Repositioning Record Keeping Practices in Nigeria Secondary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

The paper focused on ways of mainstreaming record keeping practices in Nigeria secondary schools for effective management of school business. Proper record keeping in schools aids administrative effectiveness and by implication influences students' achievement, school growth, through efficiency and effectiveness information and communication network. For principals to manage school records effectively and efficiently, they need to adopt not only workable but innovative strategies, but adopting and adapting to innovative records keeping strategies. Therefore, this paper attempted to x-ray: types of record keeping, modern records keeping, advantages of modern records keeping and impediment in the use of modern record keeping strategies. The paper discussed relevance concepts and issues surround effective management of records keeping. The paper recommended that Government should establish Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centers in all public secondary schools in Nigeria to enable principals and teachers gain insight and knowledge on the utilization of modern and innovative records keeping practices but also to checkmate on the impediment confronting modern records keeping in Nigeria secondary schools. The implication of these findings is that principals and teachers should be aware of these strategies to be able to cope with the modern trends in record keeping for effective administration of the schools.

**Keywords: Record keeping, Secondary School, Repositioning, Management**

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### INTRODUCTION

As the world is moving to a global village where virtually all institutions are united into a single unit of information sharing, and this require effective recording of administrative data as well as other important information [1,2,3]. According to [4], school is one of the institutions established by the society that not only inculcate worthwhile behaviour in the learner but keep essential records of students, teachers and material resources for further uses or reference purposes [5,6,7]. School in Nigeria is divided into three system-primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Secondary school is an educational institution meant for children over eleven (11) years. According to the National Policy on Education [8,9,10], secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary education [11]. The function of

secondary education according to National Policy is to prepare the individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education. The principals are the head of secondary school administration [12]. They have the responsibility of seeing to the smooth running of school. One of the functions of school principal is to ensure that the available records of the school are kept properly. School records are important documents containing all the overall activities of the school. [13] maintained that school records are official documents, books and files containing essential and crucial information on actions and events which are kept and preserved in the school offices for utilization and retrieval of information when needed. School records are grouped into statutory and non-statutory. Statutory records are those prescribed by education law and so must be owned

by every school and should be produced on demand by constituted authorities [14]. [15] maintained that statutory records include admission/withdrawal register, attendance register, scheme of work, time-table, school diary, log book, finance record books, continuous assessments records, etc. Non-statutory records are of private use to schools that find them useful [16,17]. Non-statutory records may include cash book, stock book, punishment book, school calendar, inventory book, staff minutes book, school magazine, inspection/supervision report file, confidential report forms and requisition book [18]. School record gives a lot of information about the school that will enable the principals to take decisions and also assess the progress of the school. The National Policy on Education emphasized the need to keep school records safely [18]. The principal, the class teacher, and other relevant education authorities keep different records about the school. According to [19], records are important tools for effective planning and administration of a school. School records occupy strategic position in the effective and efficient organization and administration of the school. It helps principals and other educational authorities in the planning and administration of secondary schools, thereby introducing proper monitoring of school activities [20]. For principals to achieve the objectives of record keeping in secondary schools, they must adopt effective management practice. Record keeping is an aspect of secondary school administration. According to [21] record keeping is the application of systematic and scientific control of recorded information that is required for the operation of the school. Such control is carried out to ensure proper distribution, utilization, retention, storage, retrieval, protection, preservation and final disposition of all types of records within the school [22]. The aim of records keeping according

to [22] is to achieve the best storage, retrieval and utilization of school records in the school system to improve the efficiency of school management. However, record keeping strategies are those measures or practice which when applied in the management of school record will ensure proper record keeping of school data. School record keeping strategy according to [8] is meant to enhance the performance of secondary school administrators. Adequate record keeping strategies may protect institutions' records, sharpens the effectiveness of records as a management memory which controls the times, equipment and space allocated to records and helps to simplify intra-organizational and communication problems. According to [12], record keeping strategies involves all the activities and practices directed towards creation and distribution, use, retention, storage, retrieval, protection and preservation as well as final disposal of vital records. [9] sufficed that proper record keeping strategies could be to place priority on the supply of necessary school records. In this discourse, record keeping management strategies involve the use of modern records practice in ensuring the availability and utilization of school records. Modern Record Keeping is the use of electronic devices to record and safe guide existing and accessible records, books, files and other documents containing useful information that relates to what goes on in the school system [11]. [16] defines modern record keeping as the management of electronic files and documents as records. Technology has continued to change the way things are done in the globe. Most information are computer record or store through electronic devices [18]. Nevertheless, the opinions on the keeping of secondary school records could vary between principals and teachers. These variations in record keeping could be attributed to the individual abilities based on their gender, self-esteem,

personality, experiences, and competencies among others. For instances, [20] maintained that the gender and personality of people determine their performances and functioning in the organization. In addition, [21] noted that individual behaviour, personal disposition influences the performance of staff in certain tasks in the organization. As the adage puts it "experience is the best teacher" portrays the idea that experience teachers could also keep good records of students for future retrieval. The same is also applicable to the principals because the principals are also teachers but the head of teachers. For instance [22], submitted that experiences of teachers or principals in terms of differences in intellectual functioning attempts to account for correlation patterns between the genders in activities [17]. These characteristics could affect principals' record keeping positively in secondary schools in Nigeria. Although, the opinions of principals and teachers on record keeping by principals in secondary schools could vary depending on their personal characteristics, it is imperative to note that both principals and teachers are expected to keep records for effective and efficient achievement of educational goals and objectives [17]. The researcher has observed that most principals still rely on old method of keeping school records such as packing

The concept of record varies depending on the items, material, fact or data/information of the organization. According to [7], school records are official documents, books and files containing essential and crucial information of actions and events which are kept and preserved in the school office for utilization and retrieval as needed. Such records are kept by principals, teachers, counselors and administrative staff. School records include those pertaining to personal details of pupils, along with those of their academic

of students and teachers' files in cupboard which usually result in damage of files, lost of files or even mutilations [15]. This therefore requires that principals should adopt global best strategies in keeping school records for proper referencing, accessibility or usage in secondary school administration. The principals' ability to keep accurate and up-to-date teachers and students records could to a great extent, enhance their administrative effectiveness. In other words, for effective management of schools, there is need for principals as secondary school administrators to develop the strategies for keeping accurate and up-to-date records about the school's activities, which will be useful for evaluating teachers and students' performance, planning for teachers' recruitment and training, decision making as well as organizing other school activities. When these records are created, stored, retrieved and utilized appropriately, execution of management functions may likely be easy such as deploying of teachers and other vital resources based on schools' need. However, the question that should border one's mind is, do principals adopt innovative strategies in the management of school records? Scholars in the field of educational administration have explored information on record keeping management in secondary schools.

### **Record Keeping**

performance; assessments and examination results; school policies; minutes of school-based meetings; including information received from Ministries of education and other education bodies, solicitors, press organisations and public bodies. According to [9], school records can thus be said to comprise all existing and accessible records, books, files and other documents containing useful information that relates to what goes on in the school system. These records could also be in the form of reports, letters, memos, pictures, films,

journals, diaries, and so on. [9] opined that records are information or data on a particular subject or activity collected and preserved for future use. The essence of record keeping is to enable the management or educators make effective decision and formulate relevant policies. Records can refer to any activity which falls within the normal routine of an organisation. Schools have the task of teaching and providing a learning environment. In so doing, teachers and other members of staff are employed, materials are acquired, pupils are admitted, tested, examined. [13] defined records as any written or recorded item that shows the existence of a particular pupil, how many pupils there are in the school, if a pupil has been transferred and how many desks have been acquired. Records contain information important to the daily running of schools. Some activities in a school need to be accounted for, especially when resources have been or need to be used [14]. In the absence of proof of the activity having taken place, it is

difficult to explain or account for the resources that may have been expended in the course of the activity. Record, therefore, is an important means of accountability because they provide proof [12]. For example, there are instances when a school has to ask for certain facilities from the Ministry or any other funding organisation. For ministry or funding organization to respond to the request of the school, the school must present the record showing the need for such funding. School records are all the books and files containing information about what goes on in the school. Specifically, [12] defined school records as unified, comprehensive collection of documentation concerning all services provided to a student which may include intake information, evaluation(s), assessment(s), release of information forms, individual learning plan, all written notes regarding the student, all collateral information regarding the student among others.

#### **Types of School Records**

School records vary from school to school. School records are broadly divided into statutory records and non-statutory records. Statutory records are the records kept in accordance with the education law and they must be produced on request by the agents of ministry of education on official inspection. Such records include: admission/withdrawal register, log book, attendance register, school time table, diary of work, visitors book, examination record book, time movement book, a copy of national policy on education, national curricula on different subjects, assignment books for teachers, query book, history of the school, transfer certificate books, pupils individual

files, sports and games record file, school clubs/societies, annual leave roster, teachers' annual evaluation reports, education inspectors reports, organizational charts, minutes books, disciplinary committee file, school land papers, lesson plan/note for teachers among others. Non-statutory records are school records kept for the purpose of administrative convinces such records include stock book, cash and account books, school calendar, health book, inventory book and staff minutes book [13]. There are several records under the laws which are expected to be kept to make the school administration effective, progressive, clean and paving way for development such records include;

#### **Admission and Withdrawal Register**

The school registers of admission and withdrawal is a statutory record that contains detailed information about every child admitted as a

pupil/student of the school. The school admission register must always be updated and made available for inspection when

demanding for scrutiny by education inspectors, law enforcement agents on an official assignment or any authorized person [9]. The keeping of an admission and withdrawal register is to have a comprehensive details of personal and academic background of all pupils/students. With their names and other information entered into the register they become bonafide members of the school. Information recorded in the admission register includes full names of the pupils, age, date of birth, place of birth, date of enrollment, address and occupation

of the parents/guardians, state of origin, local government of origin, date of admission, previous schools attended, date of leaving the school, reasons for leaving the school and the school certificates number [12]. The purpose for which this record is kept is that it is mandatory to do so as school population can easily be retrieved from this record. It serves as an index for statutory financial allocation to states from the federation account. It indicates the growth of the school over the years.

#### **Attendance Register Books**

The class attendance register is a record that is useful in showing pupils/students who attend classes regularly. It is usually kept by class teachers, and marked twice a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon to ascertain whether the pupil is in school at a particular time or not. The information regarding the number of pupils present and those absent on daily basis must be submitted to the school head teacher so that he can bring the school's daily attendance notice board up to date [15]. Improperly kept attendance registers can lead to the embarrassment of a head. In a situation where the teacher arbitrarily marks a student who was not in the

class present. Such student unfortunately dies or is involved in a criminal act outside the school leading to his/her arrest, the school may be forced by the pupils parents and the law to account for the death or the arrest of such a student [8]. According Onwurah(2004), cases of pupils leaving home in the morning for school but never got to school, pupils playing truancy, some students answering present in the attendance register in the morning and later disappeared from the school. The school attendance register is therefore helpful in checking habitual absenteeism of pupils/students from school. It helps to reveal if a pupil has been sick.

#### **Log Book**

The log book is one of the statutory records required to be kept by the school. The entire important events in the life of the school are recorded in the log book. Log book is for records of the main occurrences that have been established to have taken place during the session and even holiday periods. Events that take place in a school that need to be recorded include date of resumption in a term, number and categories of staff resuming in each term, transfer

of staff, school ceremony, visits of important personalities and school inspections. Other events include natural occurrences like storm, heavy rainfall followed by destruction of school properties, meetings with the member of the school board of governors and parents teacher-association, experiments and innovation made in the school, date of finding the school, death, public examination periods etc.

#### **Visitors' Book**

The school visitor's book is a record book containing the list of important personalities who have visited the school. The book provides a very

useful record of the general interest shown by the community in the school. The school uses the book as a means of contacting such visitors

again if the need arises, contacts made with such visitors can help to extend or improve on the interpersonal relationship of the school staff, school head and the visitors. The school community relationship can also be enhanced through the visitors book records. The school visitors book is an important document for checking fraudulent behaviour of some officers or inspectors of schools who leave

their offices without permission and laying false claim to have paid official visit to schools. The school shows great respect to a state commissioner of education, state Governor or Administrator, Minister of Education and the country's president or head of state by making a fresh page available to such a very important official/guest for recording his/her historic visit.

#### **The School Time Table**

This is expected to be approved by the ministry of Education. It is drawn by experts and contains subjects taught in each class, total number of periods each subject is taught in a week, how much time is spent on each lesson period, number of lesson periods in a day. Time of daily opening and closing and time for class activities are shown on the time table. It is prepared and kept in the office of the headmaster. It is from the master time table that every

teacher makes his own time-table for teaching his classes. The purpose of a time table is to regulate the activities in the school. The time-table should, for example, indicate when classes will begin, when the school closes for the day or when the school should break. The preparation of the school time table can be difficult task and as such, experienced teachers are expected to prepare it while the inexperienced ones learn from them [7].

#### **Syllabuses and Scheme of Work**

It is common to find that in some schools, when a new teacher arrives, he has difficult, finding out what he should teach. This happens because the school does not have copies of syllabus in the office of the head

teacher. It is important therefore for every head teacher of a school to have in his office copies of the syllabus. The scheme of work, which breaks up the syllabus into teaching unit should be kept [13].

#### **Duty Roster**

The daily supervision of all school activities is scheduled among teachers in the school. In such a school, every day a teacher and a prefect are on duty except during holidays. The teacher on duty make a report daily on duty report book. In most schools, depending on the size of the school, the conduct of assembly, record of cases of truancy and loitering among students, health

and sanitation inspections, schools uniform and proper dressing are among the schools activities and problems areas for which the attention of duty masters are enlisted. In summary daily duties performed, and recommendations, where necessary, are submitted to the principals or vice-principals (admin) as the case may be at the end of each school day [7]

#### **Movement Book**

The staff movement book is a record that shows the where about of a staff. Every staff moving out of school hours with the head teachers permission must record in the staff movement book, the following information arranged in vertical

columns, date, name of staff, time of departure from school, reasons for moving out of school, time of arrival back to school, signature of staff, head teacher's remarks/signature. The staff movement book helps the school to have knowledge of the

where about of a staff, recall the staff if urgently needed by an inspector or visitor to the school, know where to

look for such a staff in case of a suspected accident or any mishap.

### **Cumulative Report**

This is a continuous record or combination of records which contains comprehensive information about each pupil. It provides a summary of the pupils career in the school. The cumulative record is confidential and should be kept in filing cabinet in the office of the head teacher and the school counsellor.

The following information are required: date of admission, grades, family background and social activities, if a child goes on transfer to a new school, his cumulative record can be sent to the new school, and this will help the new school to be abreast with up to date information about the child.

### **Punishment Book**

This book is kept by the head teacher in order to record cases of punishment given to children and to ensure that the procedure for punishing any child has been followed. The keeping of this book helps to protect the child from being punished any how by the teacher. It

helps to protect the teachers themselves from the complaints of parents on the way and manner teachers punish their children. It also helps to stop other members of the community from giving wrong information on how children are being punished in the school.

### **Inventory Book**

The school inventory book shows a list of laboratory, home economics and games, equipment, school furniture, textbooks, library books, school blocks, dormitories, tables, chairs, desks, black board, and other materials that belong to the school. A separate exercise book is used in recording consumable supplies for example exercise books for note of lessons, pen, biros ink, chalk and dusters, the cost of repairs and maintenance are also shown against the particular asset of the school. The school inventory book helps in

knowing the running and maintenance cost thus, providing cost information for budgetary and replacement purposes.

**The School Inventory Book:** This is not supposed to be taken away by the principal because it helps the school principal to know when the school property has disappeared and how to recover it, it helps the head to make handover note to his/her successor, it enables the state education board officials to know exactly how adequate or inadequate the supplies are carefully used.

### **Modern Record Keeping**

Modern Record Keeping is the use of electronic devices to record and safe guide existing and accessible records, books, files and other documents containing useful information that relates to what goes on in the school system. [8] defines modern record keeping as the management of electronic files and documents as records. Record keeping has taken a new dimension with advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) in the last two or three decades. Technology has continued to change the way things are

done in the globe. Change is something that is inevitable in any organization particularly when dealing with record management for it to cope with new innovations so as to be current, relevant and productive. When these records are accurate, future generations will benefit. Record managers' major onus is to ensure the maintenance of all data in such a way that users will have factual and precise materials to research and reference. Over the years, records and archives help people to know all what has transpired before, that is why it is vital

to continue to keep and manage the strategies that can be used to stand and cope with electronic management system. With advancement in technology, records management is being affected with the way task are been carried out. Thereby, allowing record managers to learn new strategies and adoptions by it. Records are handle with care, not only manual. Digital system enables people to manage from creation to retention or destruction but electronic world. Record manager/keepers must not be too cumbersome in their strategies and practices in order to be effective and adapt to new trends in record management. For instance, there are new ways of service in the library. Such as change in network design, data entry etc. According to [11] the influence of technology as changed and presently voluminous information are stored electronically. For example, images or office document, video, social media or instant messaging. Modern record keeping control how your organization information is created, edited, shared, tracked, stored and protected. Institutions have lots of physical records which derive it source from digital record. Organization use modern record keeping applications to

productively and deliberately oversee and share reports. Modern record keeping is the significant piece of any computerized change system and data administration exertion. Electronic archive and records the board is a software computer use to store records. Modern record keeping systems commonly provided specialized security and auditing functionality tailored to the needs of records managers. Modern records management system which are basically electronic needs to adapt to the growing changes of technology. Changes in the formats of documents and records stored in a particular format might also need to change. The most popular and best technology in existence was the floppy discs but presently, it difficult for you to see anyone who has a drive to read those discs. The main different between modern and the traditional record management of physical records is the focus. In modern record management, records are preserved on the original digital records unlike in the tradition record management where paper copies are pile up in boxes in storeroom or warehouses. Modern record keeping allow records to be capture digital business process.

#### **Impediment in the Use of Modern Strategies**

As important as information from school records are to effective administration of schools, effective record keeping in schools have many problems. Some of these problems include:

##### **Inability to keep available records:**

High rate of pupils attrition especially in the rural areas poses a big problem. Children who are enrolled in school fall out of school at will, either through sheer lack of interest or ignorance of what school holds in stock for them in future. Ignorance, poor attitude of parents cause parents to withdraw their children from school without as much telling the headmaster. Infrastructure and equipment are destroyed from time to time by bush fire, rain storms, white

ants and mischievous persons, including school pupils. All these contribute in no small measure in frustrating the efforts of the planner at acquiring valid and reliable data [11].

##### **Poor Attitude of school personnel towards data collection:**

Despite the fact that teachers and principals are witnesses to the problems described above, they are many a time, uncooperative when records are demanded of them from time to time in respect of their schools. Rather than make effort, they copy out old records verbatim or amend them slightly and submit to the head office.

**Shortage of staff:** The section of the educational offices charged with collecting educational statistics is



very often under staffed. As a result of the shortage in the number and quite often qualifications and experiences of such staff, they can not cope with the volume of work before them. They do their best, but sometimes, their best falls short of the requirements of the planning office.

**Inadequacy of transportation and traveling facilities:** In the view of [9] in addition to lack of adequate staff, there is the problem of lack of vehicles to convey data to and from schools in their zones. In some instances, data collectors invest their money in such exercise, and the head office does not reimburse such money. Subsequent calls on them to tour round schools to collect data without giving them enough money or vehicles fall on deaf ears. Since they must submit information in respect of their zones; they resort to amending old data or creating new information in their offices.

**Lack of thorough supervision by the head teacher:** This can arise if a teacher records topics not taught under record of work covered in the diary. It is unethical to record what has not been taught. Some teachers make false entries in the time book, and staff movement register because such records are not effectively monitored by the school head. [11], maintained that untimely supply of records, lack of through supervision

and funds, inadequate knowledge of record keeping, incessant alteration of records and role of conflict among school principals among others are the chief problems recorded to have associated with records keeping in school system.

**Inadequate knowledge of record keepers for the use of information from records:** If the information given are false or incomplete, it cannot give us the accurate information needed. Lack of thorough supervision by the head teacher, lead to destruction of poorly kept records by termites, flood or storm. This usually occurs as a result of keeping such records in wooden cup boards or on bare floors. Retrieval problems such as corruption of files by computer virus leading to distortion or complete erasure of stored data cause educational wastage. This may cause issue of having drop outs and repeaters in the school system, which is a loss in resources to the society. More so, at a time when the nation is struggling to meet its need in man power and increased demand for education as stressed by [15]. It is proper to look into the above mentioned problems especially corruption of data by human beings due to deliberate alteration or erasure, untimely supply of records and undue access to confidential information on staff, students and facilities.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the revealed, it was concluded that the use of shared folders in network drives, record classification, development of record disaster management. Records play vital role in the management and survival of the organization. Without appropriate staff record, it would be impossible to take decision on staff. Hence, could not be references without records. Records are useful in solving both short and long run management problems. Records keeping can be done in two ways-

manual and electronic. Record managers at both manual and electronic media play major roles in the exercise. Tangible object or digital information can be seen as record. They include data application, office document, databases, birth certificates, and e-mail etc.. It is obvious that when teachers and principals do not adopt these strategies due to lack of knowledge or experiences, could result to loss of vital records or possibly the falsification of data of the schools. These invariably would

affect the attainment of goals and objectives of secondary education. The activities and programmes of secondary schools are continuous in nature, therefore the daily keeping of personnel data is an inevitable feature at each of the levels. It is essential for

management to explore various strategies and techniques of record keeping in modern information. Wide range of strategies is therefore required to ensure effective record keeping in secondary schools in the area.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Government should establish Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centers in all public secondary schools in Nigeria to enable principals and teachers gain insight and knowledge on the utilization of modern and innovative records keeping

practices but also to checkmate on the impediment confronting modern records keeping in Nigeria secondary schools.

2. Orientation services on the utilization of electronic devices should be made available to principals and teachers by UBEB on better ways of using computers in record keeping in secondary schools

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