

Record Management Practices of Principals for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Delta State

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Abstract:- The purpose of this study was to investigate the record management practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was utilized for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 465 principals in public secondary schools in Delta State. All the 465 principals were used for the study. An instrument titled ‘Principals’ Record Management Practices for Effective Administration Questionnaire (PRMPEAQ)’ which was developed by the researchers was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha was used for test of internal consistency of PRMPEAQ and the reliability indices obtained for the two clusters were 0.81 and 0.85 respectively. The researchers together with ten research assistants collected data for the study using direct administration method and 96% return rate was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that the record storage practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included: dispersion of several copies of file in several locations, keeping of files, ensuring confidentiality of stored document, keeping document in cupboards based on their subject matters, saving information in a computer system, using magnetic tape in storing information, labeling of files and keeping files in a cabinet drawer and steel shelves. It was also reported that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Ministry of Education and other relevant education authorities should subsidize the financial cost of attending conferences, seminars or workshops in order to encourage principals to attend and keep abreast of innovative method of record storage practices.

Keywords:- Record management; Record Management Practice; Record Creation; Record Storage.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every nation of the world depends on education for societal transformation and for improving the livelihoods of her citizens. The reason is not far-fetched as education is instrumental in developing one’s potentials and skills to become productive member of the society. The school system is the education institution in which teaching and learning takes place to bring about desirable changes in learners’ behaviour. The purpose for which the school system is established can only be achieved through effective administration. To support this, Alabi (2017) pointed out that there is no other way by which education institution can achieve the purpose of its establishment other than effective administration.

Amirize and Oloolube (2018) defined effective school administration as the achievement of a specific goal or aim of an educational institution. It is the attainment of desired result through utilization of the available resources. Usman (2016) viewed effective school administration as the implementation of programme geared towards the achievement of educational objectives through the utilization of the available resources. The researchers view effective school administration as the successful attainment of predetermined educational objectives through utilization of the available resources.

There are many indicators of effective school administration. Owan, Arop and Agunwa (2019) stressed that effective school administration is indicated by highly motivated teachers, good students’ academic performance on standardized examinations, good staff disposition, high school enrolment figures, quality of leadership, high secondary school graduates’ enrolment into tertiary institutions, low extent of truancy, low drop-out rate and class repeating figures among others. In the same vein, Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017) stressed that effective school administration is indicated by good use of personnel, money, time, energy and materials to produce desired and expected quality outcomes. From the foregoing, it could be maintained that effective school administration is characterized by excellent students’ academic performance, well-disciplined and organized staff and students, outstanding teachers’ job performance, prudence in utilization of school resources, good public relations and managerial efficiency among others. Alabi (2017) however added that without appropriate and adequate records

management, there cannot be effective and efficient administration of education institutions.

Several scholars and authors have defined record management in different manners. Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017) defined record management as the efficient and systematic control of records (both paper and electronic) throughout their life-cycle from their creation or receipt until the time of their disposal. The systematic control and effective use of records throughout their life cycle is thus the basis of records management. Danso (2015) defined record management as the systematic control of an organization's records, throughout their life-cycle, in order to meet operational needs, statutory and fiscal requirement and community expectations of an organization. Such systematic control is exercised over the creation, storage, maintenance and disposal of school records. The researchers defined record management as the systematic process of generating, storing, managing and retrieval of information. There are many importance of effective record management.

Effective record management ensures that information is well-organized, properly stored, easily retrieved and routinely disposed when no longer needed. When these records are well-created, properly stored, retrieved and utilized appropriately, execution of administrative tasks is likely to be easy. The planning, coordinating, organizing, controlling and implementation of an organization programme would be a leap in the dark, in the absence of accurate and effective record management (Nwaomah, 2017). In the view of Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017), no institution can survive without proper management of records of its activities and also no office could operate successfully, if it had to rely on memory alone to keep track of every transaction. Record management forms basis for formulating policies, making plans for future and taking decision to enhance smooth administration of secondary schools in Delta State. It also provides fact on important activities of the school which forms the basis for assessing school effectiveness and performance. The benefit of school record is derived when information are properly managed through record management practices.

Several authors and researchers have presented similar principals' record management practices. For example, Regodon (2017) and Sharma (2011) outlined record management practices as: record creation, record storage, record maintenance and record disposal. Out of these outlined record management practices, this study was limited to record creation and record storage in order to have a comprehensive empirical evidence of record management practices with regard to record creation and record storage in Delta State.

Record creation is the act of generating and capturing evidence of action, events or activities in school. Adade, DampsonQuashigah and Eshun (2018) stressed that records are created when information generated within an organization or received from outside the organization is

documented. Records are created from reports, minutes, personnel records, administrative decisions, notices and other correspondences (Regodon, 2017). Earlier in the same line, Osakwe (2012) stressed that record creation practices include: documentation of meeting, proceeding, decision and resolutions which are kept as important reference materials through which institution keep track of changes in their procedures, practices and to know the state of transparency of their activities. It is not just enough to create record but also ensure properly record storage till they are needed for use.

Record storage is a systematic process of securing and keeping document, file or information intact. It entails securing records from unauthorized access, tampering, deletion or loss. Records are stored for as long as they are needed for fiscal, legal, research or administrative purposes among others. Adade, DampsonQuashigah and Eshun (2018) noted that it is imperative for a manager to store records in media that ensure that their usability, reliability, authenticity and preservation for as long as users need them. Ereh and Okon (2015) also pointed out that records can be stored in two forms namely: manual and electronic forms. Furthermore, Ereh and Okon stressed that manual storage practices involves keeping these records in forms of printed materials in files, shelves, or drawer, while electronic practices involve keeping records in electronic devices such as computer and flash drives among others. Effective record storage practices protect records from destruction, unauthorized access or alternation. However, some of innovative record storage devices such as computer, internet network for clouding document and other facilities seem to be insufficient in secondary schools in Delta State and this may adversely affect principals' record storage practices. Record management practices could be influenced by years of job experience.

Secondary school principals in Delta State have varying years of job experience as school administrator. Ofeimu, Ahmed and Kolawole (2018) stressed that some principals are more-experienced than others based on the number of years they have spent in-service as school heads. Principals' job experience over years could help them acquire skills, expertise and knowledge in managing the school records. In this study, principals with less than seven years of job experience are considered as less-experienced principals, while those with above seven years of job experience are considered as more experienced principals.

There have been contradictory reports on research findings regarding principals' years of job experience and their record management practices. For instance, Osakwe (2013) pointed out that there was a significant difference between more-experienced and less-experienced principals in the effective management of school records. On the contrarily, Okoli and Onuigbo (2014) reported that there was no significant difference in the mean response of more-experienced and less-experienced school managers in their roles of records management. As a result of these controversial findings, the need arise for further study that will take principals' years of job experience into

consideration in an attempt to build a new evidence of their record management practices in Delta State.

In Delta State secondary schools, there appears to be alarming rate of misplacement or loss of vital records and the slow speed at which needed information are retrieved from their storage. Osakwe (2011) pointed out that despite the importance of school records in the achievement of educational objectives, these records do not seem to be adequately managed by the principals in Delta State. Sequel to this, Osakwe added that it is obvious that the accuracy, reliability and trustworthy records that fulfill educational requirements are being created but not properly managed by secondary school principals in Delta State. This situation seemed to contribute to the delay in processing of students' admission and registration in secondary schools in the state.

In most cases, secondary school students in Delta State queue in administrative building for long period of time to submit their files in order to officially complete the registration process due to difficulty in locating their document by school principals. This appears to result to waste of time and energy among the students and principals in Delta State. After registration process, there appears to be shortage of record storage. Consequently, there is insufficient information which contributes to inaccurate projection or planning that posed a challenge to effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. It was based on these problems that the researchers investigated record management practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State with emphasis on record creation and record storage.

➤ *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the record management practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, this study ascertained:

- Record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.
- Record storage practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

➤ *Research Questions*

The following research questions guided the study.

- What are the record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State?

- What are the record storage practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State?

➤ *Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record creation practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted in Delta State using the descriptive survey research design. The state has eleven education zones namely: Agbor, Asaba, Bomadi, Koko, Kwale, Oghara, Oleh, Orerokpe, Sapele, Ughelli and Warri. The population of the study comprised 465 principals in public secondary schools in Delta State. The entire population was studied. An instrument titled ‘‘Principals’ Record Management Practices for Effective Administration Questionnaire (PRMPEAQ)’’ developed by the researchers was used for data collection. The instrument contains items structured on four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) and weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The validation of PRMPEAQ was determined using three experts. The data used for establishing the internal consistency of the instrument were single administration of copies of PRMPEAQ administered to 30 respondents made up of 18 more-experienced and 12 less-experienced principals in Bayelsa State. Using data obtained, PRMPEAQ was subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. Coefficient values of 0.81 and 0.85 were obtained for the two clusters respectively. The researchers and 10 research assistant who are secondary school teachers in Delta State collected data for the study. Direct approach was employed in the data collection in order to ensure that copies of the questionnaire administered were properly filled and successfully retrieved. A total of 465 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and 446 copies were successfully retrieved, indicating 96% percent return. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses.

III. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

➤ Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State?

S/N	ITEMS	More-experienced Principals (N =243)			Less-experienced Principals (N =203)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Documenting correspondences from reliable sources	2.77	1.09	Agree	2.84	1.07	Agree
2	Verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it	2.62	1.09	Agree	2.94	1.07	Agree
3	Writing down consensus decisions arrived at during meeting	2.18	1.04	Disagree	2.22	1.10	Disagree
4	Complying to the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information	2.93	1.11	Agree	3.10	0.89	Agree
5	Documenting information that is backed up with original documents where necessary	2.73	1.08	Agree	2.89	1.04	Agree
6	Ensuring that written reports are documented	2.30	1.11	Disagree	2.46	1.08	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	2.58	1.09	Agree	2.74	1.04	Agree

Table 1:- Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of More-Experienced and Less-Experienced Principals' on their Record Creation Practices

Results on Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals which are above 2.50 for all items except 3 and 6 indicated agreement on these items as their record creation practices. Thus, the record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration included; documenting correspondences from reliable sources, verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it, complying to the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information and documenting information that is backed up with original documents where necessary. The cluster mean of 2.58 and 2.74 as contained therein also buttressed the views. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.09 and 1.04 for more-experienced and less-experienced principals respectively show homogeneity amongst their responses indicating a similar consensus of opinion.

Research Question 2: What are the record storage practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State?

S/N	ITEMS	More-experienced Principals (N =243)			Less-experienced Principals (N =203)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
7	Dispersion of several copies of file in several locations	2.96	1.06	Agree	3.01	0.95	Agree
8	Keeping of files in steel shelves	2.56	1.21	Agree	2.85	0.94	Agree
9	Ensuring confidentiality of stored document by restricting access for unauthorised staff	2.64	1.20	Agree	2.71	1.02	Agree
10	keeping document in cupboards based on their subject matters	2.82	1.06	Agree	2.80	1.01	Agree
11	Recording of vital information in compact disc	2.28	1.08	Disagree	2.29	1.03	Disagree
12	Taping of vital information through diskette	2.28	1.24	Disagree	2.48	1.04	Disagree
13	Saving information in a computer system	3.10	0.92	Agree	3.28	0.87	Agree
14	Transferring document in universal serial bus (USB)	2.51	1.14	Agree	2.33	1.14	Disagree
15	Clouding of document through the internet	2.43	1.07	Disagree	2.56	1.03	Agree
16	Keeping of files in memory card devices	2.48	1.18	Disagree	2.78	1.11	Agree
17	Using magnetic tape in storing information	2.59	1.15	Agree	2.67	1.03	Agree
18	Using of floppy disk in keeping document	2.40	1.14	Disagree	2.51	1.07	Agree
19	Keeping files in a cabinet drawer	3.00	0.92	Agree	2.88	1.02	Agree
20	Labeling of file for easy identification	2.70	1.10	Agree	2.78	1.07	Agree
	Cluster Mean	2.63	1.11	Agree	2.71	1.03	Agree

Table 2:- Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of More-Experienced and Less-Experienced Principals' on their Record Storage Practices

On Table 2, the mean ratings of both more-experienced and less-experienced principals for items 7-10, 13, 17, 19 and 20 are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the record storage practices adopted by the principals. This shows that the record storage practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included; dispersion of several copies of file in several locations, keeping of files in steel shelves, ensuring confidentiality of stored document by restricting access for unauthorised staff, keeping document in cupboards based on their subject matters, using magnetic tape in storing information, keeping files in a cabinet drawer and labeling of file for easy identification.

However, with mean scores below 2.50 for items 11 and 12, the respondents indicated with the items as their

record storage practices. There was disagreement among the respondents with connection to items 14, 15 and 16. The overall standard scores which stood at 1.11 and 1.03 for both more-experienced and less-experienced principals respectively indicated similarity in their responses amongst each cluster. The clusters means of 2.63 and 2.71 for more-experienced and less-experienced principals respectively which are above 2.50 indicated agreement that they adopt record storage practices for effective school administration

➤ *Testing the Null Hypotheses*

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record creation practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df ∞	Remarks
More-Exp. Principals	243	2.581.09	1.48	1.96	444	0.05	Not Significant
Less-Exp. Principals	203	2.741.04					

Table 3:- The t-test of Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of More-Experienced and Less-Experienced Principals on their Record Creation Practices for Effective School Administration

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of 1.48 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 444 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record

creation practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df ∞	Remarks
More-Exp. Principals	243	2.631.11	0.89	1.96	444	0.05	Not Significant
Less-Exp. Principals	203	2.711.03					

Table 4:- The t-test of Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of More-Experienced And Less-Experienced Principals on their Record Storage Practices for Effective School Administration

As shown on Table 4, the t-calculated value of 0.89 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 444 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis, the summary of the findings are as follow:

- The record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration included; documenting correspondences from reliable sources, verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it, complying with the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information and documenting information that is backed up with original documents where necessary.

- The record storage practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included; dispersion of several copies of file in several locations, keeping of files, ensuring confidentiality of stored document, keeping document in cupboards based on their subject matters, saving information in a computer system, using magnetic tape in storing information, labeling of files and keeping files in a cabinet drawer and steel shelves.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record creation and record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State.

A. Discussion of Findings

The result of the study revealed that record creation practices adopted by principals for effective administration included; documenting correspondences from reliable sources, verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it, complying to the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information

and documenting information that is backed up with original documents where necessary. This supported the finding of Osakwe (2013) which reported that record creation practices include; documentation of correspondences, reports, memo from higher authorities and information backed up with original documents. This is also in line with the finding of Owan, Arop, and Agunwa (2019) that records are created from reports, minutes, personnel records, administrative decisions, notices and other correspondences. The possible reason for the agreement in the findings could be attributed to the fact that the studies were all conducted in Africa countries, where similar record management are practiced in secondary schools across the continents.

The record creation practices of secondary school principals in Delta State are consistent with policy, regulation and administrative requirements stipulated by the State Ministry of Education for keeping statutory and non-statutory records of the school. The finding indicated that secondary school principals in Delta State document or keep evidence of various activities in the schools in compliance to the record requirement of Delta Ministry of Education. The proceedings of actions, events or other official matters are documented by secondary school principals in Delta State. This helps to make information available to principals to ensure day-to-day administration of secondary schools in Delta State. As a result of this, principals could easily give account of the various activities in secondary schools in Delta State.

It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record creation practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. This is in disagreement with the report of Osakwe (2011) which reported that more-experienced principals are more effective in the management of school record than less-experienced principals due to long term experience gained during administration. The disagreement between the two findings could be attributed to time span. Osakwe's study was conducted eight years ago. It is likely that innovation in secondary school system in Delta State might have brought about the contradiction. The possible reason for no significant difference between more-experienced and experienced principals is that they operate in the same geographical location where similar policy is applied in record management.

The finding of the study showed that the record storage practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included; dispersion of several copies of file in several locations, keeping of files, ensuring confidentiality of stored document, keeping document in cupboards based on their subject matters, saving information in a computer system, using magnetic tape in storing information, labeling of files and keeping files in a cabinet drawer and steel shelves. This is in line with the finding of Abdullahi, Abiola and Abdulwahab (2016) who

reported that the record storage practices adopted by managers are the use of; steel shelves, computer, wooden shelves, memory card devices and flash drives. The agreement in the findings could be as a result of the fact that the two studies were conducted in Nigeria and utilized questionnaire for data collection. This is an indication that secondary school principals in Delta State keep and protect large volumes of active and inactive document, image and information in both physical and electronic formats. The record storage practices could contribute to limited cases of missing files and exposure of documents to termites, rats and other destructive elements in secondary schools in Delta State. This makes the retrieval of document to be easier when required.

It was revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record storage practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. Okoli and Onuigbo (2014) who reported that there was no significant difference in the mean response of more-experienced and less-experienced school managers in their roles of records management. The possible reason for the agreement is that the two studies were conducted in south-east geo-political zone of Nigeria and used questionnaire for data collection. The similarity in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced secondary school principals in Delta State is could be attributed to the fact that they are exposed to the same kind of training to acquire skills and knowledge on record storage practices.

V. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that principals' apply record management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State. Secondary school principals in Delta State adopt record creation and storage practices for effective school administration. The difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their record management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Delta State was not significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The State Ministry of Education should organize annual capacity building programme in form of in-service training and refresher courses for principals to professional up-date their skills and knowledge of record creation practices.
- Ministry of Education and other relevant education authorities should subsidize the financial cost of attending conferences, seminars or workshops in order to encourage principals to attend and keep abreast of innovative method of record storage practices.

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