PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NJIKOKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE.

Thompson, Chidinma Chinenye (Ph.D)
Email: cc.thompson@unizik.edu.ng
Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Chukwuemeka, Benedict Ikeanumba (Ph.D)
Email: chukwuemekaikeanumba@gmail.com
Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Nwamaka Assumpta Maduka
Email: madukaassumpta21@gmail.com
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Abstract
The study investigated impact of principal's school records management practices for administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population comprised fifty-six (56) principals from 42 State Government owned secondary schools in the Local Government Area. There was no sampling as the population was of manageable size. 'Principal's School Records Management Practices for Administrative Effectiveness' questionnaire (PSRMPFAE) was used for data collection. The instrument were validated by three experts from Department of Educational Management and policy and Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the reliability coefficients were established to be 0.94 using Cronbach Alpha reliability. For the purpose of data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The findings of the study revealed among others that that principal's record creation management practices affects their administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others thatthe 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.

Keywords: School record management, Effective administration, and management practices

Introduction

Education is a sure route to the development of every nation. Education adds value that is held in a very high esteem by modern societies. In Nigeria, education is seen as an instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). 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 a productive member of the society.Education is characterized by Chukwuma and Aniekwe (2011) as an instrument for facilitating learning, transformation, and capacity building in individuals. It encompasses the comprehensive process of acquiring knowledge, honing faculties, and cultivating skills. The primary objective of education is to furnish individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perspectives necessary for constructive participation as responsible citizens within their communities. As societal needs evolve, educational practices undergo continual adaptation to meet emerging challenges. In Nigeria, the government, as outlined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), consistently updates the educational system to address diverse challenges. Education in Nigeria is structured into early childhood, basic education, and tertiary institutions (Esomonu and Ikeanumba, 2021). Recognizing education's pivotal role, Nigeria prioritizes efforts to provide its citizens with quality, functional education for social, economic, and political development. The National Policy on Education (2013) underscores the objective of nurturing

productive skills, mental and physical competencies from early childhood through tertiary education, empowering individuals to contribute effectively to school and societal progress.

School is one of the very most important establishments in human societies. The school system is an education institution in which teaching and learning takes place in order to bring about desirable changes in a learners' behavior. The purpose for which the school 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 Ololube (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. Effective administration therefore is that administration that helps to bring about optimum achievement of any organization/establishment and in this case, the school (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2022).

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.

Record management is the application of systematic and scientific control of recorded information that is required for the operation of the school. Such control is exercised over the distribution, utilization, retention, storage, retrieval, protection, preservation and final disposition of all types of records within the school (Ukaogba and Nwankwo, 2020). The aim of record management is to achieve the best retrieval and management of school records in the school system and also to improve the efficiency of record making and keeping processes. Record management helps to control the quality and quantity of information that is created in a manner that effectively serves the need of the school (Fasasi, 2014).School record management according to Odeniyi and Adeyanju (2020) is meant to enhance the performance of secondary school administrators. Adequate record management program co-ordinates and protects an 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.

The management of records in the secondary schools like in any other organization is a cyclic process involving the principals, teachers, students, and messengers, among others. The bulk of records are handled by principals which are kept manually thus the attendant effect of difficulty in processing, retrieval and utilization of records. Odeniyi and Adeyanju (2020) stressed that, there is insufficient quality and quantity of manpower in record management in the school system. He emphasized that manpower is employed without prejudice to qualitative records management. Though this business of record keeping and effective management in the secondary school system has not attained good success due to insufficient provision of facilities, fund and management components however, adequate security, storage facilities and funds are generally recommended for good record keeping and 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, *et al*., (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 Anambra State. It also provides fact on important activities of the school which forms the basis for assessing school effectiveness and performance. According to Umeri (2022), School records refer to official books, documents, and files that include extremely important information about events and acts that happen in schools. The benefit of school record is derived when information are properly managed through record management practices.

Regardless of the overwhelming importance of school records, it is observed that they are poorly kept and managed. This is in tandem with the view of Asogwa (2014) which states that records and data generated in the course of execution of legitimate function of an organization or school should be kept and managed properly. School records whether statutory or non-statutory, physical or electronic should be properly kept and managed for utilization and future retrieval. The effective management of school records by principals depends on certain management procedures and functions such as effective supervision, effective leadership, monitoring, provision and training of adequate personnel, records storage and retrieval, discipline and effective communication, delegation of duty, developing record keeping skills and motivation. Babalola, Akinwumi, & Alegbeleye(2021) noted that information and data generated from an effective and efficient records management program aids the school to plan and make useful decisions, preserve facts and figures for future reference, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and administration of the school. The adequate provision of quality manpower, funds and equipment would ensure optimum management of school records. However, inadequate or non-availability of these resources bring about problems and challenges in the efficient and effective management of records. Since all schools are expected to keep records for effective and efficient achievement of educational goals and objectives, it is pertinent to examine whether records are managed properly or not in Anambra State secondary schools.

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, record storage, record maintenance and record disposal in order to have a comprehensive empirical evidence of record management practices with regard to record creation and record storage in Anambra State. Secondary school principals in Anambra State have varying years of job experience as school administrator. Ofeimu, Ahmed and Kolawole (2018) stressed that some principals are more-experienced in effective record management 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 in effective record management, while those with above seven years of job experience are considered as more experienced in effective record management.

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 contrary, 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' effective record management practices into consideration in an attempt to build a new evidence of their record management practices in Anambra State. In Anambra 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 Anambra 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 Anambra 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 Anambra 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 Anambra 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 Anambra State. It was based on these problems that the researcher investigated record management practices adopted by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Anambra State with emphasis on record creation and record storage. Therefore, secondary education's wide objectives should be realized effectively and efficiently, so school administrators should be devoted to implementing all activities and programs to make this possible. Adesina (2011) emphasizes, important documents found in the school are a major factor in the efficacy and efficiency of the head teacher.

This bad record-keeping in schools may involve insufficient ability and knowledge of management practices for record-keeping on the part of both principal and classroom teachers, falsification of records like changing age, results, attendance register, and insufficient accounting of records. Supervisors from the State Ministry of Education have frequently noted false school data provided by administrators and teachers.Consequently, the general goals and objectives of education would be impacted by educational functionaries' failure to access the current data required for efficient planning. Some secondary school principals are unconcerned with the value and necessity of record-keeping within their administrative framework, nor do they recognize how it relates to overall school effectiveness. Therefore, it may be urgent and necessary to reverse this trend if school management is to accomplish its main goals. The researcher wishes to assess principal's school records management practices for administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. How do the principal's record creation management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. How do the principal's record storage management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?
3. How do the principal's record maintenance management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?
4. How do the principal's record disposal management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Method

The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population comprised fifty-six (56) principals from 42 State Government owned secondary schools in the Local Government Area. There was no sampling as the population was of manageable size. 'Principal's School Records Management Practices for Administrative Effectiveness' questionnaire (PSRMPFAE) was used for data collection. The instrument were validated by three experts from Department of Educational Management and policy and Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the reliability coefficients were established to be 0.94 using Cronbach Alpha reliability. For the purpose of data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: How do the principal's record creation management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 1: Principal's Record Creation Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Items for Lecturers	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	Documenting correspondences from reliable sources	3.00	1.32	Agree
2	Verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it	2.94	1.11	Agree
3	Writing down consensus decisions arrived at during meetings	1.52	2.35	Disagree
4	Complying to the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information	2.90	1.09	Agree
5	Documenting information that is backed up with original documents where necessary	2.53	1.05	Agree
6	Ensuring that written reports are documented	1.71	2.46	Disagree
	Grand Total	**2.43**	**1.56**	**Agree**

Results on Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of 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 2.43 as contained therein also buttressed the views. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.09 for principal's record creation management practices as it affects their administrative effectiveness.

Research Question 2: How do the principal's record storage management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 2: Principal's Record Storage Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Items for Lecturers	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
7	Dispersion of several copies of file in several locations	2.96	1.06	Agree
8	Keeping of files in steel shelves	2.56	1.21	Agree
9	Ensuring confidentiality of stored documents by restricting access for unauthorized staff	2.64	1.20	Agree
10	Keeping documents in cupboards based on their subject matters	2.82	1.06	Agree
11	Recording of vital information in compact disc	2.28	1.08	Disagree
12	Tapping of vital information through diskette	2.28	1.24	Disagree
13	Transferring informing in universal serial bus (USB)	3.10	0.92	Agree
14	Saving information in a computer system	2.51	1.14	Agree
15	Clouding of documents through the internet	2.43	1.07	Disagree
16	Keeping of files in memory card devices	2.48	1.18	Disagree
17	Using magnetic tape in storing information	2.59	1.15	Agree
18	Using of floppy disk in keeping documents	2.40	1.14	Disagree
19	Keeping files in a cabinet drawer	3.00	0.92	Agree
20	Labeling of files for easy identification	2.70	1.10	Agree
	Grand Total	**2.63**	**1.11**	**Agree**

On Table 2, the mean ratings of 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 for principals. The clusters means of 2.63 for more principals which is above 2.50 indicated agreement that they adopt record storage practices for effective school administration

Research Question 3: How do the principal's record maintenance management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 3: Principal's Record Maintenance Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Items for Lecturers	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
21	Using storage facilities such as cupboards, drawers, lockers etc	2.84	1.07	Agree
22	Fumigation	2.94	1.70	Agree
23	Dedicating a special room for the records (records store)	2.22	1.10	Disagree
24	Dedicating a staff to handle the records (records manager or clerk)	3.10	0.89	Agree
25	Frequent dusting of the records	2.89	1.04	Agree
26	Non direct access to the records by every staff to avoid mishandling	2.46	1.08	Disagree
27	Computerization or digitalization of the records	3.01	0.95	Agree
	Grand Total	**2.78**	**0.98**	**Agree**

Results on Table 3 revealed that the mean ratings of principals which are above 2.50 for all items except 23 and 26 indicated agreement on these items as their record maintenance practices. Thus, the record maintenance practices adopted by principals for effective administration included; using storage facilities such as cupboards, drawers, lockers etc, computerization or digitalization of the records, and frequent dusting of the records,among others. The cluster mean of 2.78 as contained therein also buttressed the views. The overall standard deviation scores of 0.98 for principal's record maintenance management practices as it affects their administrative effectiveness.

Research Question 4: How do the principal's record disposal management practices affect administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 4: Principal's Record Disposal Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Items for Lecturers	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
28	Burning of wasted materials	2.56	1.03	Agree
29	Selling of documents that are no more relevant	2.78	1.11	Agree
30	Rapping some items in them	2.67	1.03	Agree
31	Covering transparent windows, among others	2.51	1.07	Agree
32	Dumping them in waste bin	2.88	1.02	Agree
33	Shredding and dumping them	2.31	1.04	Disagree
	Grand Total	**2.62**	**1.05**	**Agree**

Results on Table 4 revealed that the mean ratings of principals which are above 2.50 for all items except item 33 indicated agreement on these items as their record disposal practices. Thus, the record disposal practices adopted by principals for effective administration included; burning of wasted materials, selling of documents that are no more relevant, rapping some of the items, and covering transparent windows, among others. The cluster mean of 2.62 as contained therein also buttressed the views. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.05 for principal's record disposal management practices as it affects their administrative effectiveness.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion is focused on the findings for answers to research questions formulated in chapter one to guide this research work.

Findings from research question one revealed that principal's record creation management practices affects their administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. 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 Ukaogba and Nwankwo (2020) 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 Anambra 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 Anambra State document or keep evidence of various activities in the schools in compliance to the record requirement of Anambra Ministry of Education. The proceedings of actions, events or other official matters are documented by secondary school principals in Anambra State. This helps to make information available to principals to ensure day-to-day administration of secondary schools in Anambra State. As a result of this, principals could easily give account of the various activities in secondary schools in Anambra State.

The finding of the study in research question 2 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 Ukaogba and Nwankwo (2020) 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 Anambra 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 Anambra State. This makes the retrieval of document to be easier when required.

The finding of the study from research question 3 showed that the record maintenance practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included; using storage facilities such as cupboards, drawers, lockers etc, computerization or digitalization of the records, and frequent dusting of the records,among others. This is in line with the finding of Okaforcha (2021) who reported that the record storage practices adopted by managers included; fumigation, frequent dusting of records, repair of relevant storage facilities, dedication of a special room for records, monitoring movement of records and digitalization of the records among others. This is an indication that secondary school principals in Anambra State regularly up-date and preserved document showing official accounts of occurrence in schools. 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 Anambra State keep and protect large volumes of active and inactive document, image and information in both physical and electronic formats. The record maintenance practices could contribute to limited cases of missing files and exposure of documents to termites, rats and other destructive elements in secondary schools in Anambra State. This makes the retrieval of document to be easier when required.

The finding of the study from research question 4 showed that the record disposal practices adopted by principals for effective school administration included; burning, selling, rapping some of the items, dumping them in a waste bin and covering transparent windows, among others. This is in line with the finding of Okaforcha (2021) who reported that the record storage practices adopted by managers included; discarding unnecessary books, selling off obsolete materials, and burning old and used books, among others. This is an indication that secondary school principals in Anambra State regularly up-date and preserved document showing official accounts of occurrence in schools. 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. The record disposal practices could contribute to limited cases of missing files and exposure of documents to termites, rats and other destructive elements in secondary schools in Anambra State. This makes the retrieval of document to be easier when required.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the study is that principals' apply record management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Anambra State. Secondary school principals in Anambra State adopt record creation, storage, maintenance and disposal practices for effective school administration. The mean ratings of principals on their record management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Anambra State was not significant. Conclusively, record

keeping is an asset to all human beings as well as the school organization. It is specifically essential for all secondary school principals to deal with the issue of school record management (creation, storage, maintenance and disposal) effectively without delay because doing so will lead to a booming success that will facilitate the attainment of secondary school goals and objectives.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Principals should attend regular conferences and workshops on record maintenance practices for effective administration of secondary schools.
4. The Ministry of Education should provide modern office filling cabinets to the secondary schools for effective record maintenance.
5. The digital record management system should be adopted in Anambra State for effective record maintenance practices in the secondary schools.

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