

The Role of Records Keeping for Effective Primary Schools Administration Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic and Insecurity Challenges: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the Importance of records keeping for effective administration/management of primary schools in Nigeria. Meaning of records and the types of records available in primary schools were identified, listed and explained. The Importance of those records were fully discussed highlighting their relevance to the effectiveness of primary school administration. Moreover, the effectiveness of keeping those records to stakeholders and society at large was well stated. Conditions that should be met for keeping and proper maintenance of school records were also explained. Common problems associated with records keeping in primary schools and solutions to the identified problems were given. The paper recommends that without keeping appropriate, adequate and relevant school records, there should not be an effective and efficient administration amidst Covid-19 and insecurity challenges faced in Nigerian primary schools.*

KEYWORDS: records keeping, effective, primary school administration.

INTRODUCTION

School is one of the most important institutions in human societies. The purpose for which the school is established can only be achieved through effective administration. Effective administration of a school helps to bring about optimum achievement of its purpose and objectives. However, one of the important aspect of school administration is record keeping. Record keeping is very important in school administration because it affects all other aspects of the school life such as planning, budgeting, staffing, facilities, discipline etc. School records serve as a document customs and traditions which guide the teachers and school head from time to time. Equally, school records serve as data bank from which information can be retrieved when the need arises. Teachers and school administrators deals with many issues and problems on daily basis. Therefore, an up to date records of such issues and events enable the staff, school head, inspectors/supervisors, parents, and researchers etc. to refer to such records on demand when the need arises.

In school administration, records keeping and management of records is one of the important responsibilities of the school head. To effectively manage human and material resources in relation to the issue of school policies and day to day running of the school, the school administrator relies on the information on records. The pattern of record keeping is a life cycle which begins from creation, storage, retrieval, retention and of course disposition of the records. The objectives of this paper therefore are: to identify different types of records in primary schools and the importance of keeping those records for effective administration of primary schools in Nigeria.

Definition of School Records

School records have been defined by many authors. Thus, Tella (1991). Define school records as “the totality of documents, structures (of relatively permanent in nature) that are of sentimental, economic or historical value to a particular school”. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002). See school records as “pieces of information on relevant events about a school”. School records can therefore be defined as bank of information that documents routine school’s activities for proper administration of the school. Most of the school records are kept because the education law of the country requires that they must be kept. Ozigi (1977). Stressed that “Education law demands that every educational institution should keep certain school records”. School records are also kept because of the useful information they provide about the students, teachers, the school and the educational system in general (they are therefore, categorized into Statutory and Non-Statutory Records).

Types of School Records

Educational law requires schools to keep some records which are regarded as statutory and are demanded by inspectors during school Supervision. Keeping of school records forms the centre agent of Administration at Primary and Secondary Schools. This is because school records aid in remembrance of events of the school. They make it easier to recall statement of facts, records create room for easy access to relevant documents about the school which are of interest to inspectors, researchers, parents and employers of labour and they also show the progress of the school and the challenges being faced by the school. Even though, school records are many, the following school records are considered to be a vital source of Educational data and for effective school Administration. Manga (2010) identified the followings:

1. Pupil`s Admission and withdrawal Register;
2. Pupil`s Attendance Register;
3. Staff Attendance Register;
4. Log Book;
5. Visitors Book;
6. School Dairy Routine;
7. School Subject Syllabus;
8. Scheme and Record of work Book;
9. Punishment Book and;
10. School Rules and Regulation; Etc.

The head teacher also ensures that, the following financial records are properly documented:

1. School Receipts;

2. Government Treasury Receipts;
3. School Main Cash Book;
4. School Payment Vouchers and;
5. Bank Statement; Etc.

There is also need for the head teacher to ensure that the store has the following Records:

1. Store Ledger;
2. Tally Cards;
3. Store Receipt voucher;
4. Store Issue voucher;
5. Store Loan Register;
6. Local Purchase Order and;
7. Receipts of Food Stuff; Etc.

In line of the forgoing Records being kept in various Sections of the School, the following Records should also be Provided and Accurately kept in the Clinical Section of the School:

1. A health record book showing the list of drugs purchased;
2. A health book contains the names of students/Pupils who brings complains to the clinic, the treatment given and if recommended to a hospital, students sex, age and class must be recorded;
3. School clinic Cards;
4. Treatment book and;
5. Book of visitors to the clinic; Etc.

Record Keeping and Covid-19

Records should be kept and used under covid-19 pandemic, before using any record you have to wash your hands with water and hand sanitizer, cover your face with face max and after you finished then you wash your hands again. And also the issue of those affected with covid-19 should be kept under clinical records and other illnesses.

Record Keeping and Insecurity Challenges

School Records are not personal property of any teacher or even the head teacher to be kept at his own house or to be taken away from school just anyhow. They are properties of the school and must be kept in school always hence proper security must be provided for them. The school head ensure that files are provided for every aspect of Administration. The files should be properly labelled and reference numbers created for each file. File tags and pinching machine to be provided for proper filing of papers and vital documents. The head teacher ensures that, drawers or cabinets are provided to keep the files safe, the files cabinets or drawers should be labelled to ease the identification, storage and retrieval of files. Also he ensures that strong locks and keys should be provided for the Security of Sensitive documents to get access by authorized persons and the keys must be kept in such a way no unauthorized person can have access to them.

Importance of School Records

The importance of records keeping in primary school cannot be overemphasized. This is because apart from the significance of each record, there is a great value in keeping school records. Ozigi

(1977), Salami, Alabi & Okemakinde (2002), Okpetu & Peretomode (2004) have all identified the importance of keeping school records which include the following:

1. It is an important aspect of (school) Administration. It is compulsory and can never be jettisoned.
2. It provides useful information on the progress and development made within the school.
3. For providing information to parents and guardians who may seek information regarding the general conduct and academic performance of their children and wards at school.
4. To enable the teacher, know something about his students and through this be in a better position to assist them academically, morally, socially, etc, in addition to being able to predict their behavior and provide needed information to whoever may need it.
5. For research purposes in education and other fields.
6. For planning and budgeting purposes.
7. To enable the school Authority, provide necessary data about the school which may be required when needed from the proprietor/proprietress or other agencies of Education.
8. To enable the school authority, provide requested information to employer of labor who may need the services of the students for job placement.
9. To provide useful information about any student intending to further his/her Education in a tertiary institution.
10. For assessment of teachers and principals.
11. To save the school from any unnecessary embarrassment as well as legal tussle.
12. For the purpose of continuity in the school Administration.
13. For effective and efficient management of the school.

However, the role of school records keeping for effective primary school Administration are summarized by Manga (2010) as follows:

- a. It provides useful information:** It serves as source of relevant information about a past pupil who was once in the school and now requires information about his past performance by his/her employees. The pupil's record will now form the basis for written report that the school head might give.
- b. It helps in guidance and counselling:** The pupil's academic records also form the basis on which the guidance/counselor shall offer professional advice in relation to the academic performance of the pupil.
- c. Decision making:** The availability of records in the school makes it possible for the school head to make important decisions about the pupil or a situation at a given time.
- d. Accountability:** The cash and stoke book are sources of useful information about income and expenditure which keeps the school head on the track of being accountable.
- e. Source of data:** Accurate records in a school system provides information about the inflow of pupils and their age distribution, year of admission, information about their parents, condition of the pupils when admitted, progression etc.
- f. It helps Supervisor:** The availability of well record keeping enhance smooth and easy school inspection/supervision as the case may be and provides relevant facts for promotion or appraisal of staff.

g. Legal Backing: Proper record keeping can be a legal document in case of eruption of problems in the school. For instance, the attendance register shows clearly whether or not a pupil is in the school on a particular day or not.

Maintenance of School Records

There are certain conditions that should be met for keeping and proper maintenance of school records. Oyedeji (1998) in Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), Oyewobi and Alabi (2002) identified the following as very important for keeping and maintenance of school records.

- 1. The records must be full and complete:** They must contain total and whole information not bits or part as bits or part information will lead to wrong decision and eventual falsehood.
- 2. They must be truthful and honest:** School records must not contain lies. Those who fill the records must tell the truth. Decision and actions taken on lies will yield wrong results.
- 3. They must be available when needed:** School records are not personal property of any teacher or even the Head teacher to be kept at his own house or to be taken away from school just anyhow. They are properties of the school and must be kept in school always hence proper security must be provided for them.
- 4. They must be used to take appropriate actions:** Each record has a purpose as such appropriate record must be used to take appropriate decisions and actions. For example, in identifying the most punctual student, attendance register is the most appropriate record to consult. For some decisions and actions more than one record may be consulted.
- 5. They must be original:** School records must contain what is going on in the school not just copying what was going in another school. This is why the school records are unique to each school. School records are not imagined or fictionalized; they are records of realities on ground in the school.
- 6. They must be kept safe from excessive humidity and heat that can spoil them:** They must be kept in good conditions for many generations to see and read. Adequate security must be provided for the school records so that they can be easily retrieved in good and perfect conditions at any time.

Problems of Records Keeping in Nigerian Primary Schools

There are certain problems associated with records keeping in primary schools of Nigeria. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) have identified the following problems in relation to proper records keeping in Nigerian Primary schools:

- a. Lack of Uniformity of record keeping;
- b. Apathy/laziness on the part of teachers to supply information or record of information;
- c. Lack of formal training/induction of teachers in record keeping;
- d. Lack of continuity of records;
- e. Security problems (destruction of records);
- f. False information;
- g. Inadequate record keeping materials; and
- h. Poor handling of records by the teachers.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, record keeping in Nigerian primary schools is necessary because without keeping records there should not be an effective Administration as regard to human, materials and financial aspects of the Schools. The task is therefore on the head teacher to ensure the availability of adequate records, proper keeping of the Records and maintenance of those records in the school. This is because keeping of records save as bank of information to be used and referred to whenever the need arises.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend the following:

1. School supervisors/inspectors should always demand to see and inspect school records whenever they visited a school for inspection/supervision.
2. Teachers should develop good orientation and right attitude towards keeping and maintenance of school records.
3. Government should also provide training and re-training, workshops/seminars opportunities for head teachers/teachers in the management of school records.
4. Rules and regulations should be provided in handling and continuation of records in School.
5. Government should ensure that all leaking roofs, damage ceilings, broken windows and doors frames should constantly be repaired and re-fixed to keep buildings in good condition in order to be protected from insecurity problems.
6. Sanity should be applied for deliberate Falsification. All entries made in schools must be truthful, correct and legibly written.
7. The government should provide adequate and appropriate books of records needed at primary schools with record keeping safety devices/equipment.
8. The head teacher and teachers should appreciate the need and importance of records in effective and efficient school administration.

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