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SCHOOL RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN EDO STATE

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Abstract
This study examined School Records Management Practices and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Edo State, Nigeria. The research adopted a correlational survey design. The population comprised all the 306 public secondary school principals in Edo State, with 240 teachers sampled from 60 schools as respondents. Data were collected using validated questionnaires, and reliability was established. Data were analyzed using mean scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that most statutory records (like attendance registers and time books) are available, while some (like punishment books and health records) are not. The study found no significant relationship between overall school records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness; also found no significant relationship between records creation specifically and administrative effectiveness. The study concluded that, records management practices have no significant relationship with principal's effectiveness. It recommended improved principals' administrative effectiveness through more strategic leadership approach in school administration among others.

Keywords: School Record Management Practices, Principal Administrative Effectiveness, Public Secondary School, Edo State

Introduction

The administration of a secondary school represents a complex endeavour requiring meticulous organization, strategic planning, and informed decision-making to achieve pedagogical and institutional objectives. Within this framework, the systematic management of school records serves as the fundamental infrastructure for effective leadership (Grissom et al., 2016). Records encompass all documented evidence of a school's operations, from student academic histories and staff personnel files to financial accounts and ministerial correspondence (Adegbemile, 2011). Administration is the coordinated process of utilizing available human and material resources to achieve stipulated goals, a process fundamentally dependent on accessible, accurate information. Therefore, school records management practices are the integrated set of policies, procedures, and actions governing information from creation to disposal which constitute the operational bedrock without which administrative functions of a school leader cannot be effectively performed.

A critical component within this paradigm is the initial phase of records creation. This refers to the generation and first capture of information into a formal, usable format, whether in registers, reports,

digital databases, or official minutes. The integrity, accuracy, and timeliness established at this point determine the quality of the entire information lifecycle. As Usman (2016) notes, effective school administration is predicated on the successful attainment of objectives through resource utilization, a task impossible with flawed or non-existent initial records. The act of creating records transforms daily activities into accountable data, forming the essential raw material for planning, evaluation, and continuity in school governance. The ultimate measure of a principal's leadership is their administrative effectiveness. This concept extends beyond mere activity to denote the degree to which a principal accomplishes the school's core mission through key performance indicators. Scholars such as Ajayi (2007) identify these indicators as including the effective motivation of staff, the rigorous supervision of instruction, the maintenance of clear communication channels, and the nurturing of productive school-community relationships. A principal's capacity in these areas is not exercised in an informational vacuum; rather, it is deeply reliant on the ability to retrieve reliable data, analyze past performance, and forecast future needs based on documented evidence (Farombi, 2018).

Despite the acknowledged importance of records management, there exists a practical problem in many public secondary schools in Edo State. Incomplete, inaccurate, poorly maintained, inaccessible, or inconsistently created records may constrain planning, supervision, accountability, and decision-making. When principals lack immediate access to accurate student attendance data, comprehensive staff performance histories, or verifiable financial records, their ability to perform core administrative functions is severely undermined. Motivating staff without performance data, supervising instruction without curricular records, or communicating with parents without academic progress reports becomes an exercise in estimation rather than evidence-based leadership. This practical problem underscores the need for an empirical investigation into whether variations in records management practices are statistically associated with principals' administrative effectiveness in Edo State public secondary schools.

Consequently, this line of inquiry is driven by the need to empirically examine the relationship between these foundational elements of school management. It seeks to investigate whether a significant correlation exists between the quality and consistency of a school's overarching records management practices, with particular emphasis on the initial creation of records, and the demonstrated administrative effectiveness of its principal. Focusing on these core practices, the study sought to establish the relationship between school records management practices and administrative effectiveness of principals in Edo State public secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Effective school administration is universally acknowledged to be contingent upon the availability and reliability of institutional information. However, a concerning disparity exists between this acknowledged principle and the operational reality observed in many public secondary schools in Edo State. There appears to be a systemic weakness in basic school records management practices, evidenced by the reported absence of vital statutory records, the widespread difficulty in retrieving documents when needed, and a general culture of poor documentation. This deficiency in fundamental record-keeping may intrinsically be linked to challenges in principals' administrative effectiveness. When a principal lacks immediate access to accurate student attendance data, comprehensive staff performance histories, or verifiable financial records, their ability to perform core functions is severely undermined. Motivating staff without performance data, supervising instruction without curricular records, or communicating with parents without academic progress reports becomes an exercise in estimation rather than evidence-based leadership. Therefore, the problem of this research study is whether school records management practices are related to principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.

The research gap lies in the fact that although records are theoretically important to administration, it remains unclear whether variations in records management practices are statistically associated with principals' administrative effectiveness in Edo State public secondary schools. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the nature and direction of this relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate school records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary school in Edo State. The specific objectives were to:

1. find out the school records that are available in public secondary schools in Edo State;
2. assess if there is relationship between school records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State; and
3. determine the relationship between records creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the records available in public secondary schools in Edo State?
2. Is there relationship between school records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State?
3. Is there relationship between records creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level:

1. There is no significant relationship between school records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between records creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.

Literature Review

Concept of School Records Management

Records management, also known as records and information management, is an organizational function devoted to the management of information in an organization throughout its life cycle, from the time of creation or receipt to its eventual disposition (Iguodala, 2011). This includes identifying, classifying, storing, securing, retrieving, tracking and destroying or permanently preserving records. Mahama and Abilla (2017) defined records 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. Momoh and Evumonwe (2025) see records management as the methods of keeping, processing, storing and retrieving records. Owan and Bassey (2019) see records management as a conscious process of collecting, analyzing, using and preserving data with the aim of making decisions, reaching conclusions, creating new knowledge, adding to or modifying existing knowledge with new evidence and providing a platform for easy retrieval and re-use in the future.

Momoh and Evumonwe (2025) further argued that records management plays a significant role in influencing school effectiveness. School records management for the purpose of this study refers to the systematic and integrated set of policies, procedures, and actions governing the creation, processing, storage, security, retrieval, and eventual disposal or preservation of documented information within a school setting, for the purpose of supporting administrative decision-making and institutional effectiveness. It is important to distinguish between data, information, and records: data refers to raw facts or observations; information refers to processed or organized data that has meaning; and records refer to documented information created or received as evidence of activities, transactions, decisions, or obligations. Records management concerns the systematic control of records throughout their lifecycle, which may include information used for statistical analysis but is not equivalent to statistical data analysis itself. Odeniyi and Adeyanju (2020) revealed that most school records are not properly kept. Ojo and Ayoko (2024) maintained that adequate provision of school records in schools contributes to positive school outcomes and it becomes pertinent when all school records are made available. It helps school administrators to take decisions and provide raw data that ensure coherent, balanced and

objective decisions on issues such as promotion, students and staff discipline, and teaching and learning performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Driver's Decision Information Theory (1979) and Reddin's 3-Dimension Theory of Managerial Effectiveness (1970). The integration of these two theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between records management and administrative effectiveness. Driver's theory explains the link between records management and administrative decision-making, asserting that the quality of a principal's decisions is directly dependent on the availability, accuracy, and utilization of information from school records. Driver distinguishes between administrators who are "maximizers," exhaustively using all available data, and "satisficers," who use just enough information for a quick solution. This framework highlights that effective school administration is an information-intensive process; decisions regarding students, staff, finances, and curriculum are only as sound as the records upon which they are based. Consequently, systematic records management is not merely an administrative task but the critical infrastructure for informed, effective leadership.

Reddin's 3-Dimension Theory extends this logic by explaining how principals apply this information to achieve effectiveness, which is defined as the realization of school goals. The theory posits that a principal's administrative style results from their orientation toward tasks (e.g., planning, organizing records systems) and relationships, for example, motivating staff responsible for record-keeping. Effectiveness is not inherent to any single style but is contingent on matching the appropriate style such as the integrated "Executive" style or the task-focused "Dedicated" style to the situational demands of the school environment. For this study, Reddin's theory clarifies that a principal's administrative effectiveness in records management is a dynamic outcome. The connection between the two theories can be explicitly stated as follows: records management leads to availability, reliability, and accessibility of information; this information feeds into administrative decision-making; decision-making informs managerial action; and managerial action produces administrative effectiveness. Driver's information/decision perspective explains the information side, while Reddin's theory explains the managerial effectiveness side. Together, they provide a robust theoretical foundation for examining how records management practices influence principals' administrative effectiveness.

Empirical Review

Empirical work provides insight into this finding. Okon, Ekaette and Ameh (2015) investigated the relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) utilization and principal administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the research. The population of secondary school principals and vice principals was two hundred and fifty-five (255) principals drawn from eight-five purposive sampling technique. The findings revealed a significant relationship between ICT usage in the communication process and record keeping and principals' administrative effectiveness. Babalola, Akinwumi and Alegbeleye (2021) investigated the influence of records management practices on administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was three thousand administrative team members in the three hundred and twenty-four (324) public senior secondary schools in Lagos. The respondents were 360 administrative team members in public senior secondary schools. The findings of the study suggest a positive relationship exists between records management practices and administrative effectiveness of school managers. Otobo (2021) examined records management practices and administrative effectiveness of Lagos judiciary, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 328 administrative staff of Lagos State judiciary, Nigeria. The total population was used as sample size. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study concluded that records management practices contribute to administrative effectiveness.

Megbenege, Unegbu and Chilaka (2024) maintained that record creation of the Ministry of Health are not managed in accordance with best practices. The principals' ability to keep accurate and up-to-date

teachers' record creation could to a great extent enhance their administrative effectiveness in school (Jesuorobo & Anyiam, 2020). No school can succeed in a situation where a principal does not constantly achieve the work of his/her subordinate (Uzaru, 2018). Ogueiofor (2018) found that there was no significant influence of principals' administrative effectiveness and record creation in school. Edo and Johnson (2024) maintained that there is a high and positive relationship between record creation and principal administrative effectiveness in public schools in Rivers State. Aleru (2024) believed that school principals are more aware of their responsibility and work more diligently towards the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Njeru, Chege and Ngerus (2012) stated that effective and efficient administration of any organization is dependent upon sound record management practices which ensure that right records are made available when needed. Osadebamwen-Okhomina and Ogbeide (2026) found that public secondary schools in Edo State of Nigeria do not have record management practices that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in school. Ereh and Okon (2015) noted that managing school records throughout the life cycle enhanced school administrative effectiveness.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey design. This was considered appropriate as the study sought to establish a relationship between records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in the studied area. The population comprised all 306 principals of public secondary schools in Edo State. A sample of 60 principals and 240 teachers who served as respondents were used for the study. Principals provided information on records management practices, while teachers rated principals' administrative effectiveness. This separation of data sources was intended to reduce common method bias and provide a more objective assessment of the variables. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. First, Edo State was divided into senatorial districts (Edo Central, Edo North, and Edo South). Second, schools were selected from each senatorial district using a 20% sampling fraction. Third, principals were selected from the sampled schools. Fourth, four teachers were selected from each participating school to rate their principals' administrative effectiveness.

Table 1: Sample Distribution of Schools and Principals for the Study

Senatorial District	Population of School (Principals)	Sample of Schools (Principals, 20%)	Sample of Teachers from the Sampled School
Edo Central	68	13	52
Edo North	106	21	84
Edo South	132	26	104
Total	**306**	**60**	**240**
Urban Schools	94	19	76
Rural schools	212	41	164
Total	**306**	**60**	**240**

Teachers were asked to report on their principals' effectiveness and records management practices using two main questionnaires. These tools were checked by experts for accuracy and tested for reliability to ensure they measured things consistently. The data collected was analyzed to answer the study's specific objectives and test its two main hypotheses. First, a checklist and simple averages (mean) were used to find out what school records are available. Then, to test Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two, the Pearson Moment Correlation statistical test was used.

Results

Research Question One: What are the records available in public secondary schools in Edo State?

To answer this question, frequency and percentage were used. The result is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Records Available in Public Secondary Schools in Edo State

School Records	Frequency	Percentage	Remark
Time book	240	100%	Available
Log book	150	62.5%	Not Available
Lesson Note	233	97.1%	Available
Attendance Register	238	99.2%	Available
Diaries (Weekly record of work)	237	98.8%	Available
School Time-table	230	95.8%	Available
Staff movement book	235	97.9%	Available
Curriculum	218	90.8%	Available
National Policy on Education	168	70.0%	Not Available
Visitor's book	238	99.2%	Available
Admission Register	215	89.6%	Available
Health Record Book	142	59.2%	Not Available
Cash Book	228	95.0%	Available
Staff Minutes Book	236	98.3%	Available
Continuous Assessment Book	222	92.5%	Available
Duty Roster Book	234	97.5%	Available
Punishment book	136	56.7%	Not Available
School certificate	240	100%	Available
Query book	180	75.0%	Not Available
Handover note	225	93.8%	Available

n = 240

The data in Table 2 shows that most school records are available in public secondary schools in Edo State, with Time book and School certificate (100% each) being the most available, followed by Attendance Register and Visitor's book (99.2% each), while Log book (62.5%), National Policy on Education (70.0%), and Query book (75.0%) were less available. However, Health Record Book (59.2%) and Punishment book (56.7%) were found to be not available in many schools, indicating gaps in record-keeping that may affect student welfare and discipline management. In summary, while most critical records are adequately maintained, certain statutory records remain unavailable in some schools, requiring attention from administrators and policymakers.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between school record management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.

Table 3: **Records Management Practices and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State**

Variables	N	Pearson r	Sig.	Remark
Records Management Practices Principals' Administrative Effectiveness	60	-0.21	0.10	Ho_1: Accepted

α =0.05

The data in Table 3 revealed a Pearson r value of -0.21 with a corresponding P-value of 0.10 testing at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Since the P-value of .10 is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant relationship between school record management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between Records Creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Edo State.

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Table 4: **Relationship between Record Creation and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State**

Variables	N	Pearson r	$r^2 \times 100$	Sig.	Remark
Records Creation	60	-0.040	0.16	0.759	Ho: retained
Principals' Administrative Effectiveness					

$\alpha = 0.05$

The result of the Pearson r statistics used to test hypothesis one is presented in Table 4 which revealed a Pearson r value of -0.040 with a corresponding p-value of 0.759 testing at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Since the p-value of 0.759 is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, the hypothesis is retained. Thus, there is no significant relationship between Records Creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that most school records such as time book, school certificate, attendance register, visitor's book, diaries, staff minutes book, staff movement book, duty roster book, lesson note, school time-table, cash book, handover note, continuous assessment book, curriculum, and admission register were available in public secondary schools in Edo State. However, some records such as health record book and punishment book were not available in some schools. This finding is in line with that of Mabera (2015) who submitted that adequate provision of school records in schools creates a positive effect towards school achievement and it becomes pertinent to note also that when all school records are made available, it helps the school administrators to make decisions and provide raw data that enable coherent, balanced and objective decisions on issues such as promotion, students and staff discipline, and teaching and learning performances. However, the finding of this study is in conflict with that of Gama (2010) who found that the percentage availability of records in government-owned secondary schools in Kano State was below 50 percent criterion decision point and that there was an observed significant difference on the percentage ratings of male and female principals on how school records were provided. It is important to note that availability of records does not necessarily equate to effective records management, as a school can possess a record but fail to maintain it properly, update it, secure it, retrieve it efficiently, or use it appropriately.

The finding obtained from hypothesis one that stated there is no significant relationship between school record management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State was accepted. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between school record management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State. This finding is in agreement with Okon, Ekaette and Ameh (2015) who stated that there is no relationship between ICT usage in the communication process and record management and principals' administrative effectiveness. This finding supports the report of the study of Allahmagani (2014) who found that record management practices do not influence principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kaduna State of Nigeria. The findings of this study negate previous study by Babalola, Akinwumi and Alegbeleye (2021) which opined that there is a positive relationship between records management practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. Possible explanations for the non-significant relationship observed in this study may include the possibility that other factors such as instructional supervision, decision-making processes, leadership style, and school culture exert stronger influence on principals' administrative effectiveness than records management practices alone. Additionally, the moderate level of administrative effectiveness observed among principals may be attributable to factors beyond records management, such as resource availability, staff quality, and community support.

The finding obtained from hypothesis two that there is no significant relationship between record creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State was retained. This finding aligns with the findings of Ogueiofor (2018) who asserted that there was no

significant influence of principals' administrative effectiveness and record creation in school. On the other hand, the finding of this study is contrary to that of Edo and Johnson (2024) who maintained that there is a high and positive relationship between record creation and principal administrative effectiveness in public schools in Rivers State. The finding is similar to the work position of Aleru (2024) who believed that school principals are more aware of their responsibility and work more diligently towards the achievement of educational goals and objectives. It seems that other factors such as instructional supervision can influence principals' administrative effectiveness, and the decision-making process can influence principals' administrative effectiveness in school.

Conclusion

On the strength of the findings of the study, it was concluded that school records management practices do not have any significant influence on principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Edo State. It was also concluded that some statutory and non-statutory records are available in secondary schools in Edo State. The level of principals' administrative effectiveness was moderate, and there is no significant relationship between records management practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in schools. In addition, there was no significant relationship between records creation and principals' administrative effectiveness in schools. The study concludes that while records are available in schools, their management practices do not significantly predict principals' administrative effectiveness in Edo State public secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Principals should learn how to adopt their administrative effectiveness style to situations in order to sustain a good working environment for teachers in their schools.
2. The principals should sustain the moderate level of administrative effectiveness in schools.
3. Principals should use cloud storage for record management in schools for accountability, mobility, and accessibility of data instead of the manual way of storing records.
4. The state government should supply the necessary electronics and digital record management devices such as computers and their accessories to all schools.
5. Since records management practices alone do not significantly predict administrative effectiveness, principals should also focus on other factors such as instructional supervision, staff motivation, and effective communication to enhance their administrative effectiveness.

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