

Principals' Personal Variables and Management of Statutory Records in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this study investigated how principals' personal variables influence their management of statutory records in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The study adopted an expost facto research design. A census sampling technique was used to select a total of two hundred and forty two (242) principals in the area of study. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires titled Principals' Personal Variables Questionnaire" (PPVQ) and Management of Statutory Record Questionnaire (MSRQ). The questionnaire was validated and the reliability established using Cronbach alpha reliability estimate with the coefficient of 0.87 for continuous variable sub-scale in PPVQ and coefficient ranging from 0.77 to 0.90 for sub-Questionnaires in MSRQ. The sub scales were high for the instruments to be considered dependable and consistent. The test statistics used for data analysis were one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test. These statistical tools were selected based on the nature of the hypothesis and how they were measured in the instruments. The results showed that educational qualification and gender of principals influence their management of statutory records in all the dimensions that were assessed. Based on the results, it was recommended among others that school principals should be encouraged to ensure that admission and attendance registers are well kept for reference purposes.

Citation: Emanghe, Emmanuel E. and Udedeh, Christian C. 2018. Principals' Personal Variables and Management of Statutory Records in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. International Journal of Current Innovations in Advanced Research, 1(3): 39-45.

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Introduction

Management of statutory records in secondary schools is a necessary duty of school principals. Records-documented information occupy a vital place in everyday transaction in the school. School principals depend on records to make useful verdicts about urgent cases and the entire school policies. School records facilitate accountability and the level of responsibility for actions. The recent implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme calls for management of statutory records in order to provide adequate human, material and financial resources to achieve the objectives of the UBE programme. Some school principals have difficulties in record management. Poor record management may lead to inaccurate reports on school progress, evidence of work done, student's performance and others. It follows that effective management of school records is absolutely necessary.

Management of statutory record is a typical administrative duty which is centered on the protection and control of information from its creation to its eventual disposal. Management of records is viewed as the efficient and orderly control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including the process for capturing and maintaining evidence of information about organizational transaction in the form of records (Mbiti, 2006). Management of statutory records ensures that information on school syllables, curricular and co-curricular activities, student's educational and academic progress, the growth of the school and others are documented and preserved. The aforementioned facts and others make management of statutory records a necessary instrument for short term and long term planning, policy formulation and other administrative procedures in the school system. No school organisation can be effectively planned and administered without proper management of its records. Management of statutory records facilitates and improves the efficiency of record making process: It guarantees effective access to the retrieval and use of school documents. It equally enhances high level of control of the standard and amount of information generated for the benefits of the school, (Fasasi, 2009).

Principals' management of statutory records is one of the utmost administrative functions they should adhere to poor management of the scheme work, school diary, examination record books and other records in this category may impede the performance of the school administration, which could send a wrong signal about the standard of the school, (Fasasi, 2009). In this study, the following statutory records are considered: admission registers, attendance registers, school diary and school time book.

However, it has been observed that some principals in public secondary school in Akwa Ibom State have difficulties in managing school statutory records. This is expressed in founding out that in most schools, school records are exposed to environmental hazards such as rain, sunshine, dust, rodents among others. In most cases, school records are kept on the ground and the exposition to cold leads to the wear and tear of these relevant documents. Also, most school roof are tom and at the slightest rainfall, all documents in the school environment are wet and this have not really help the school in maintaining a good record keeping account.

The effect of this poor record management in school is that most of the records that would have been vital for reference purposes arc often missing. Most supervision activities in school have been paralyzed by the lack of materials by those from the ministry and other stakeholder. Students past result are tom, school diaries and register often in unreadable conditions, teachers notes of lesson in the said schools, some old copies of syllable, diaries and scheme of work were misplaced. Consequently teachers in the affected classes could not transfer relevant information into the new diaries and scheme of work. This situation led to inconvenience in teacher's lesson notes preparation. Equally, student's examination records books are lost or mutilated. This made some scores in the examination record books to be at variance with students result slip. These observed incidents have not really spoken well about the administrative competence of school principals. Many researchers have tried to find out what possible causes of this problem. Factors identified includes lack of facilities, poor motivation, inadequate supervisory activities, poor school plants, lackadaisical approach to records management, lack of records keeping skills, insufficient finance (Akintola, 2012). The researcher is however presuming that Principal's personal variables could be responsible for principals' poor management of statutory records in secondary schools.

Principal's personal variables entail the conditions that prevail in the school compound. In this study these conditions include educational qualification and gender of principals. These

factors may enhance or hinder principals' management of statutory records. Educational qualification refers to degrees, certificates and professional titles obtained by school principals after successful completion authorities. It enhances principals' performance by equipping them with the needed skills, knowledge, methods and information required for effective management of statutory records, (Bossone, 2014). Gender entails the fact of being male or female. Gender affects individual behavior and performance in certain tasks (Ngozi, 2011). It implies that principal's management of statutory record which demands high level of commitment and diligent may be influenced by gender. The significance of education has been well accentuated in all societies whether developed or developing, ancient or modern. It is as a result of this obvious fact that education is accorded great emphasis in terms of quality and access in order to prepare man for the challenges and responsibilities in the society at large

In this study the researchers have selected three principals' personal variables which are educational qualification and gender of principals to examine their influence on management of statutory records.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i). To what extent does educational qualification influences principals' management of statutory records?
- ii). How does gender of principals influence their management of statutory records?

Statement of hypotheses

The under listed hypotheses were formulated and tested,

1. There is no significant influence of educational qualification on principals' management of statutory records.
2. Gender of principals does not significantly influence their management of statutory records.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex post facto research design. A census sampling technique was used to select a total of two hundred and forty two (242) principals in the area of study. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires titled Principals' Personal Variables Questionnaire" (PPVQ) and Management of statutory record Questionnaire (MSRQ). The questionnaire was validated and the reliability established using Cronbach alpha reliability estimate with the coefficient of 0.87 for continuous variable sub-scale in PPVQ and coefficient ranging from 0.77 to 0.90 for sub-scale in MSRQ. The sub scales were high for the instruments to be considered dependable and consistent. The test statistics used for data analysis were one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test. These statistical tools were selected based on the nature of the hypothesis and how they were measured in the instruments.

Presentation of result

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of educational qualification on principals' management of statutory records in terms of admission register, attendance register, school diaries and time book. The independent variable in this hypothesis is educational qualification categorized as Bachelor, Master's and Doctorate degree while the dependent variable is principals' management of statutory records in terms of admission register, attendance register, school

diaries and time book. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and the result showed that for influence of educational qualification on management of admission register ($F^* 12.26$, $p < .05$), for management of attendance register ($F=59.44$, $p < .05$), for management of school diaries ($F=4.48$, $p < .05$) while for the influence of educational qualification on management of time book ($F=15.74$, $p < .05$). Since $p(0.00)$ is greater than $P(.05)$ across the four variables, it implies that there is significant influence of educational qualification on principals' management of statutory records in terms of management admission register, attendance register, school diaries and time book. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Since the null hypothesis is rejected, a post hoc test was carried out using Fishers LSD post hoc technique. The result is presented in Table 4. The result showed that mean value of those with doctorate and master's degree is greater than the mean of principals with other qualifications. This implied that higher education provides opportunity for principals with higher degree to manage school records than those with seemingly lower degrees.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Management of records	Educational qualification	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Management of Admission Register	Bachelor	170	15.1481	6.09688
	Masters	43	18.3256	6.27437
	Doctorate	29	19.4483	3.07741
	Total	242	15.8512	5.80694
Management of attendance register	Bachelor	170	13.2815	5.09412
	Masters	43	20.3953	2.02531
	Doctorate	29	19.3793	2.79558
	Total	242	14.8223	5.41297

Table 2. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of educational qualification on management of statutory records

Management of statutory record	Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Management of Admission Register	Between Groups	1088.308	3	362.769	12.267	.000
	Within Groups	7038.337	238	29.573		
	Total	8126.645	241			
Management of Attendance Register	Between Groups	3024.663	3	1008.221	59.444	.000
	Within Groups	4036.696	238	16.961		
	Total	7061.360	241			

Hypothesis two

Gender of principals has no significant influence on their management of statutory records. The independent variable in this hypothesis is gender categorized as male and female while the dependent variable is principals' management of statutory records in terms of admission register, attendance register, school diaries and time book. To test this hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used and the result showed that for gender and management of admission register ($t = -5.600$, $p < .000$), for gender and management of attendance register ($t = -9.519$, $p < .000$), for gender and management of school diaries ($t = .379$, $p > .05$) and for gender and management of time book ($t = -1.87$, $p > .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$ for gender and management of admission register and attendance register, the null hypothesis is

rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of gender on management of statutory record in terms of admission register and attendance register. However, for management of school diaries and time book, the null hypothesis is retained since their p-values are greater than p (.05). Hence the null hypothesis is generally rejected for management of admission register and attendance register but accepted for management of school diaries and time book. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on management of statutory records

Management of statutory record	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-cal	p-val
Management of admission register	Male	150	14.0530	3.53243	240	-	.000
	Female	92	18.0091	7.13757		5.600	
Management of attendance register	Male	150	12.2348	4.30845	240	-	.000
	Female	92	17.9273	4.96355		9.519	

Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant influence of educational qualification on principals' management of statutory records was rejected for all the four dimensions that were examined. This implies that educational qualification significantly influence principals' management of statutory records. This could likely be due to the fact that education itself naturally improves the knowledge of an individual and provides him/her with skills and techniques that can facilitate innovativeness. Principals who are exposed to professional development in the forms of education, are exposed to new modern techniques of ensuring that records are kept the way they ought to be kept and whatever that constitute a threat to the preservation of these statutory records are dealt with.

The findings of the study were in line with that of Allahmagani (2014) that investigated on records management among principals in government secondary schools: The case study of Kaduna North Local Government, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to implement good records management practices in school that would provide for information educational planners and administrators. Descriptive research design was used for the study. The instrument for data collected comprised of questionnaire, interview and observation. A sample size of fifty four respondents for both schools was used. The finding of the study revealed that government schools in Kaduna North Metropolis keep their records in paper format despite advancement in electronic era in government schools. Records of staff used the Alpha-numeric classification scheme but do not have retention schedule for disposing off their records, schools records are kept in file cabinet lock up in stores. That there was no significant influence on the management of statutory record. However, educational qualification, year of experience was found to significantly influence management of statutory record.

Hypothesis two that stated that gender of principals has no significant influence on their management of statutory records was rejected for management of admission register and attendance register but was accepted for management of time book school diaries. The result could be due to the fact that record management is an essential administrative role of the principal. Most of the supervisory activities of members of the ministry is to check these documents in order to determine the effectiveness of the principals in terms of managing the staff and resources in the school. Therefore, the principals, irrespective of gender ensures that records are kept especially those that pertain the students which the teacher is directly

involved. Where the attendance register is not properly managed and a child is missing in the school, it is a big challenge. So, the school principals ensure that they adhere to maintain these records appropriately. However, for the school diaries which is insignificant, it could be that since teachers are directly involved in the handling of the diaries, the principals are rest assured and they allow it to the school teachers to handle.

The finding of the study was in line with that of Osakwe (2013) investigated on the efficiency of managing schools records by secondary schools principals in Delta State, Nigeria. Then purpose of the study was to examine the efficiency of management of schools records by secondary schools principals in Delta State. The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population comprised all the 602 public secondary school principals in the State. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data which was subsequently analyzed using mean scores and z-test statistics to answer the three research questions and test the three hypotheses. The efficiency of managing school records differed among principals, depending on gender, experience and school location. Thus, it was recommended that government should provide adequate funds and facilities for effective management of schools records. This is to say that, there should be adequate training and retraining of principals through in-service programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops as well as their effective supervision irrespective of their gender, experience and school location.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' personal variables influence their management of statutory records in terms of management of admission and attendance registers in schools. Hence, it was recommended that

- i) That adequate facilities should be provided to schools in order to facilitate the management of records in schools
- ii) That school principals should be encouraged to ensure that attendance registers are well kept for reference purposes
- iii) That school enrolment should be carried out according to the capacity of facilities and resources at their disposal so that they can be able to manage the records they have without unnecessarily stressing them.

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