

AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF THE KNOWLEDGE, AVAILABILITY AND USAGE OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY TEACHERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

M. Olalekan Arikewuyo and P. A. Onanuga

(Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye)

Abstract

The study investigated the availability of records in Nigeria's primary schools. It also examined teachers' awareness of these records and their usage by the teachers. A total of 1690 teachers of primary schools drawn from three states of the federation took part in the study. The Teachers Knowledge and Utilisation of School Records Questionnaire (TEKUSREQ) was used for the collection of data that were analysed with the aid of simple and t-test. The findings showed that primary school teachers were not aware of the existence of the admission register; log book; punishment book; stock book; transfer certificate; health record book and record of physical development in their schools. However, the records that were frequently used by the teachers were: attendance register; school diary; note of lesson; syllabus; scheme of work; cumulative academic record; terminal report cards; teachers time book and school time table. Location of schools and teachers experience affected teachers' usage of school records.

Introduction

The principles of keeping, management and utilization of records are very crucial to the realization of organizational goals. This is because without adequate records, an organization will not be able to store, retrieve and use information when it is absolutely necessary to do so. Records, according to Emmerson (1989) are those documents, in whatever medium, received or created by an organization in the course of its business because of the information contained.

Record keeping, management and utilisation are therefore very vital to the continued existence of the school as an organization. Such records, if made available and put to use at the appropriate time, not only enable the teacher to monitor the progress of the child, but also enable him to give information to parents and guardians about the progress being made by their children. To the head teacher, the school records would enable him to follow the implementation and evaluation of the school curriculum

and programmes, as well as ensure compliance with the various laws, that guide the conduct of teachers and students within the school system.

Other reasons of keeping school records are:

- To serve as indices for assessing school performance;
- To provide useful information not only for members of the school community, but also for members of the public, employers of labour, researchers and government;
- To save the school from any unnecessary embarrassment as well as legal tussle;
- To aid administrative decision making and efficiency in the school;
- To enable the teacher know something about his pupils and through this, be in a better position to assist them academically, morally, socially, etc, in addition to being able to predict his behaviour and provide information to whoever may need it (Ajayi, 1997).

Within the school system, the records which are expected to be kept include: admission register; attendance register; log book; visitors book; punishment book; school diary; note of lesson; syllabus; scheme of work; stock book; health record book; movement book; supervisory notebook and school cash book (Okpetu and Peretomode, 1995).

For instance, the attendance register is to be kept and marked by every class teacher. It shows the daily record of attendance of every child. The admission register shows the admission, progress and withdrawal of all pupils enrolled in each year. The logbook is an historical record of events that have significant effects on the school. Such events which may be positive or negative, may include: date of opening the school, movement of teachers and head teachers, important staff/emergency meetings, visits of inspectors and dignitaries, deaths, natural disasters, examination achievements, etc. The punishment book is where all cases of corporal punishment are entered. According to the education law, only the head teacher is allowed to administer corporal punishment or any other staff assigned by him to carry it out. The head teacher is expected to promptly record the type of offence committed, the punishment given and the person that was assigned to give such punishment. The punishment book is very important because according to Ajayi (1997), it is expected to record events that can be shown to parents when necessary or tendered in a law court against any exaggeration of the punishment actually meted out to a particular student.

But in spite of the importance of school records highlighted above, it is imperative to examine the level of availability of these records in the primary school, teachers' awareness of these records and their usage by teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The study investigated the availability of records in Nigerian's primary schools, awareness of these records and the utilisation of school records by the teachers. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

What is the level of school records in Nigeria's primary schools?

Are teachers aware of these records?

How are school records utilized by teachers of primary schools in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

There will be no significant difference in the utilisation of school records by male and female teachers.

There will be no significant difference in the utilisation of school records by urban and rural teachers.

There will be no significant difference in the utilisation of school records by experienced and less experiences teachers.

Methodology

Samples.

A total of 1690 teachers from three states of Nigeria were randomly selected for the study. The states were: Ogun, Kwara and Rivers. The states were selected from three out of six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The samples were made up of 962 male and 728 female teachers; 1126 and 564 teachers were drawn from urban and rural areas respectively. The sample also consisted of 1282 experienced and 408 less-experienced teachers.

Instrument

The instrument used for this study was Teachers Knowledge and Utilisation of School Records Questionnaire (TEKUSREQ). The instrument contained a list of nineteen school records. Section A of the instrument elicited information about the availability of the records. Section B also elicited from the teachers, the level of their utilisation of these records. A pilot study was conducted, using twenty teachers of primary schools in another state to determine the reliability of the instrument. The split half method was used to determine the reliability and this produced a reliability co-efficient of 0.86.

Analysis of data

The data were analysed using simple percentage and t-test. The analysis are presented in the following tables:

Research Question 1: What is the level of availability of school records in Nigeria's Primary Schools?

The result of this analysis is presented in Table I.

TABLE I
RESPONSE OF THE TEACHERS TO THE AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

S/No	School Records	Available	Not Available	Don't Know
1	Admission register	-	86 (05%)	1604 (95%)
2	Attendance register	1690 (100%)	-	-
3	Log book	506 (30%)	170 (10%)	1014 (60%)
4	Visitors book	940 (56%)	610(36%)	14(08%)
5	Punishment book	12 (07%)	62(04%)	150(89%)
6	School diary	1690 (100%)	-	-
7	Note of lesson	1690 (100%)	-	-
8	Syllabus and scheme of work	1690 (100%)	-	-
9	Stock book	390 (23%)	358 (21%)	942(56%)
10	Cumulative record	1690 (100%)	-	-
11	Terminal report card	1690 (100%)	-	-
12	Transfer certificate	120 (07%)	454(27%)	1116(66%)
13	Teachers time book	1638 (97%)	52(03%)	-
14	School time table	1690(100%)	-	-
15	Staff minutes book	1638(100%)	-	-
16	Health record book	-	80(05%)	1610(95%)
17	Movement book	1690(100%)	-	-
18	Accounts record	1128(67%)	-	562(33%)
19	Records of physical development	-	130(08%)	1560(92%)

Table I shows that teachers considered the level of school records in primary schools as very high. Out of the 19 school records listed in the questionnaire, the teachers considered 12 of them as available in their schools. The records are: attendance register, visitor book; school diary; not of lesson; syllabus and scheme of work; cumulative record; terminal report cards, teachers time book; school time table; staff minutes book; movement book and account record book.

Research Question 3: How are school records utilized by teachers of primary school in Nigeria?.

TABLE II

USAGE OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY TEACHERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA.

S/No	School Records	Available	Not Available	Don't Know
1	Admission register	-	68 (04%)	1622 (96%)
2	Attendance register	1690 (100%)	-	-
3	Log book	81 (05%)	99 (06%)	1510 (89%)
4	Visitors book	157 (09%)	422(25%)	1111(66%)
5	Punishment book	12 (07%)	62(04%)	150(89%)
6	School diary	1690 (100%)	-	-
7	Note of lesson	1690 (100%)	-	-
8	Syllabus and scheme of work	1690 (100%)	-	-
9	Stock book	13 (01%)	176 (10%)	1501(89%)
10	Cumulative record	1690 (100%)	-	-
11	Terminal report card	1690 (100%)	-	-
12	Transfer certificate	17 (01%)	96(06%)	1577(93%)
13	Teachers time book	976 (58%)	714(42%)	-
14	School time table	1690(100%)	-	-
15	Staff minutes book	33(02%)	560(33%)	1097(65%)
16	Health record book	-	109 (06%)	120(07%)
17	Movement book	620(37%)	950(56%)	120(07%)
18	Accounts record	70(04%)	120(07%)	1500(89%)
19	Records of physical development	100 (06%)	167(10%)	1423(84%)

Table II indicates that the records that are frequently used by the teachers are: attendance register, school diary; note of lesson; syllabus and scheme of work; cumulative record; teachers time book and school time table. Only the movement book is being used once in a while. The teachers also considered the admission register; log book; visitors book; punishment book; stock book; transfer certificate; staff minutes book; health record book; accounts book and records of physical development as never being used by them.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There will be no significant difference in the usage of school records by male and female teachers.

The analysis is presented in table III below:

TABLE III
USAGE OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY MAKE AND FEMALE TEACHERS

Subjects	N	X	S.d	t calculated	t critical	Df
Male Teachers	962	14.61	7.06	0.28	1.96	1688
Female Teachers	728	13.11	7.01			

$P < 0.05$

Table III shows that there is no significant difference in the usage of school records by male and female teachers. Hypothesis I cannot be rejected

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the usage of school records by urban and rural teachers.

The analysis is presented in Table IV

TABLE IV
USAGE OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY URBAN AND RURAL TEACHERS

Subjects	N	X	S.d	t calculated	t critical	Df
Urban Teachers	1126	15.46	3.12	2.11	1.96	1688

$P < 0.05$

It could be observed from Table IV that there is a significant difference in the usage of school records by urban and rural teachers. This was because t calculated is 2.11 and greater than t critical which is 1.96. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference in the usage of school records by experienced and less-experienced school teachers.

The results are presented in Table V

Table V

USAGE OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY EXPERIENCED AND LESS EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Subjects	N	X	S.d	t calculated	t critical	Df
Experienced Teachers	1282	10.11	7.62	2.41	1.96	1688
Less Experienced Teachers	408	4.29	1.77			

$P < 0.05$

Hypothesis 3 is rejected because there is significant difference in the usage of school records by experienced and less experienced teachers of primary schools. As it would be seen in Table V, t calculated is greater than t critical ($2.41 > 1.96$) respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The study did an empirical review of the availability and usage of school records by teachers of primary schools in Nigeria. From all indications, the level of school records in the primary schools is very high. Twelve out of the nineteen records were mentioned as being available in the schools by the teachers. Those records, which the teachers considered as not available were: admission register, log book; punishment book; stock book; transfer certificate; health record book and record of physical development. Perhaps the teachers considered these records as not available because they are records that are expected to be kept exclusively by the headteachers. For instance, the log book is to be kept by the headteacher to record important events that take place in the school. The punishment book is where the Headteacher records cases of students that are given corporal punishment. Under the law, it is only the headteacher or his appointed representative that is allowed to administer corporal punishment. When this is done, the headteacher is also expected to record the event in the punishment book.

The admission register is also expected to be kept by the headteacher to record the admission, movement and withdrawal of every pupil from the school. Record of physical development should also be kept by the headteacher to record issues relating to the physical structures and projects of the school. So, the teachers who took part in this study might have felt that these records are not available, perhaps, because they are being kept and used exclusively by the headteacher. Indeed, a transfer certificate can only be issued by the headteacher of the school. The non-awareness of the existence of health record book by the teachers may be due to the fact that most schools in Nigeria, as Fajewonyomi and Afolabi (1993) discovered, lacked written health guidelines and school health records.

This study also discovered that the records being used frequently by the teachers are: attendance register, school diary; note of lesson; syllabus; scheme of work; cumulative record; terminal report cards; teachers time book and school time table. This finding is not unexpected because these records, with the exception of report cards and time book are expected to be used on a daily basis by teachers. Only the movement book was considered as being used once in a while because it will only be used when teachers are going out of the school for authorized purposes.

The teachers also considered the following records as never being used by them. They are: admission register; logbook; visitor's book; punishment book; stock book; transfer certificate; account records and record of physical development. This finding is not unexpected because these records are to be kept and used exclusively by the headteacher to record certain administrative information.

The significant difference that was discovered in the utilisation of school records by urban and rural teachers might be due to the distribution of these records among the schools in the two locations. It is therefore imperative for the Primary Education Board to ensure that all records are evenly distributed among urban and rural schools. There was also a significant difference in the utilization of school records by experienced and less-experienced teachers. This therefore called for regular training in the art of using school records for all categories of teachers.

Records are important instruments in any organization, including the school system. Unfortunately records are poorly kept in Nigeria. At the primary school level, some of the reasons responsible for poor record keeping are: poor or lack of training in record keeping among educational personnel, inadequacy of record keeping materials, as well as inadequate safety arrangement of records (Popoola, 1997). As a corollary, Mazikama (1996) noted that under-development of records

management in Africa was due to low adoption of information technologies insufficient qualified personnel and use of outdated records manual.

This is the reason why every school must have a record centre. Presently, primary schools in Nigeria don't have even clerical officers that should be doing most clerical and administrative jobs in the school system. It is the headteacher that combines clerical work with the academic and administrative functions. Such a record centre, in the view of Esse (1996) would provide a central storage and retrieval service for semi-current and non current records which are no longer needed for day-to-day activities, but which must be kept because they have legal, fiscal, administrative and informational or research value.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Perhaps it should be mandatory for all teachers and headteachers to be trained in the art of managing school records. In an earlier proposal, Arikewuyo (1997) suggested that in training headteachers of primary schools, a course on school records should be included in the curriculum. But the training on the management of school records should not be limited to headteachers only. As a matter of fact, this study discovered that teachers are using most of the records. Consequently, it is recommended that courses in the art of managing school records should be included in the curriculum of teacher training institutions.

References

- Ajayi, K. (1997). Records and record keeping in the Primary School, In A. O. Ajayi and B. Sokan (Eds.) *Effective Management of Primary Education*, Ibadan Adeose Training and Consultancy Services, pp. 9-24.
- Arikewuyo, M. O. (1997). Training Primary School headteachers through the distance learning programme, *ABSU Journal of Distance Education* 3 (1), pp. 193-198.
- Emmerson, P. (1989). *How to manage your records* Paris: ICOSA Publication.
- Esse, U. O. A. (1966). *Positive drive in records keeping, use and maintenance as an aspect of records management*, A paper presented at the National Workshop on the implementation of records management programme in Nigeria, held at Ota, July 8 - 10.
- Fajewonyomi, B. A. and Afolabi, J. S. (1993). The status of health services and needs of Nursery School children: A case study on Nursery Schools in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria,. *Nigeria school Health Journal*, 8 (2), pp. 62-67.
- Okpetu, S. A. and Peretomode, O. (1995). School records in Educational Administration, In V. F. Peretomode (Ed.), *Introduction to Educational Administration, Planning and Supervision*, Lagos: Joja Education Research and Publishers Ltd., pp. 57-70.

Popoola, A. (1997) Effective Management of Primary Education in Nigeria, In A. O. Ajayi and B. Sokan (Eds.), *Effective Management of Primary Education* Ibadan: Adeose Training and Consultancy Services, pp. 66-79.

Mazikama, P. C. (1996), *The role records management plays in business during market reforms programmes*, Paris: ICA JANUS 1, pp. 4-48.

