Records Management in Government Secondary Schools: The Case study of Kaduna North Local Government, Kaduna, and Kaduna State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *Records management is the area of administrative management that is concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records of an organization throughout its life cycle. Implementing good records management practices in school would provide information for educational planners and administrators, serves as historical source for documenting history of the school, a means of showing transparency and accountability in handling school finance, they are evaluation tools for accessing progress made by schools and also show evidence of compliance with legislative laws. The descriptive research design was used for this study; the case study was drawn from six schools out of the ten schools within Kaduna north metropolis. The instrument for data collection comprised of questionnaire, interview and observation. A sample size of fifty four respondents from 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 staff use the Alpha-numeric classification scheme but do not have Retention Schedule for disposing off their records, School records are kept in file cabinet lock up in stores and government schools do not have qualified staff to manage such records. The study therefore recommends that records management policy should be made available to all staff in charge of handling records; Government schools should begin to plan towards converting their paper records into electronic for;, only qualified staff should be employed to administer records management in schools and the Universal Basic Education Board should assist schools with storage facilities considering its importance.*

I. Introduction

Osakwe (2011) sees School records as official documents, books and files containing essential and crucial information of actions and events which are kept and preserved in the school office for utilization and retrieval of information when needed. Such records are kept by principals, teachers, counselors or administrative staff. Sunmola (2008) views school records as official transcripts or copies of proceedings of actions, events, or other matters kept by the school manager. School records are also authentic registers, instruments or documents of official accounts of transactions or occurrence, which are preserved in the school office.

School records can be grouped into two; statutory and non statutory records. Sunmola (2008) defines statutory records as records kept in accordance with educational law and must be produced on request by the agents of ministry of education on official inspection. Such records include admission/withdrawal register, attendance register, scheme of work, time-table, logbook, visitor's book, time/movement books, school diary, lesson plan/note for teachers, examination records book, while non-statutory records are school records kept for the purpose of administrative convenience such records includes cash book, stock book, punishment book, school calendar, inventory book, staff minutes book, school magazine, inspection/Supervision report file, confidential report forms and requisition book.

Concept of Records Management in School.

Records management ensures information can be accessed easily, can be destroyed routinely when no longer needed, and enables schools not only to function on a day to day basis, but also to fulfill its legal and financial requirements.

The International Standard Organization (2001) defines records management as "the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of information about business activities and transaction in the form or records".

Records management is all encompassing, since it stipulates how records should be managed even before it is created to the point of disposition or retention in the archives. Chairman (1990) sees records management as that area of general administrative management concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation,

maintenance, use and the disposal of records during their entire life-cycle. This is so because effective records management program is designed to increase efficiency and economy in the management of records by implementing component of records management system such as a good filing system which would enhance retrieval of needed records.

Records management as viewed by Popoola (2000), is the scientific control of recorded information throughout the record life-cycle, that is, records creation, active records, semi-active records, inactive records and final disposition of records with goals of minimizing costs associated with records management, business operations and producing g high quality information services to users.

Importance of Records Management in School

Effective record management in schools assists all its stake holders, i.e., educational Planners, Schools managers, Principals, Teachers, Parent and Pupils in decision making. For instance, educational planners would need to make informed decisions that would improve the educational sector. Sunmola (2008) posits that school records provide raw data which can be used by officials of educational ministries, for planning purpose. Data collected from school records on pupil's enrolment and school facilities can be analyzed in order to determine the number of teachers and other resources that would be needed by the school. Usually within the school, records are used for placement of students into higher classes. Durosaro (2002) also agrees that records are important tools for effective planning and administration in schools since they document the planning and implementation of appropriate course of action allowing proper monitoring of activities/tasks. Records are consulted by school inspectors to make value judgment on schools including recommendations for change.

School records are useful for advisory and counseling services by school counselor, as agreed by Infideli (2011) who opines that records of guidance counselors which have been used to advice, guide, and monitor students can be consulted by teachers and school administrators to follow up student's progress and identify if they need remedial classes. Well documented records, for example, the school log-book is also a good archival material and research tool which can be consulted by historians in writing the school history. Lastly, effective records management can assist parents know the performance and progress of their children through their report cards and Continuous assessments book.

Purpose of the Study

Previous studies have highlighted the limitation to implementing a robust records management program in schools, such as absence of designing and implementing records management policies approved by the National Archives, lack of classification and filing system for records, lack of adherence to retention and deposition schedules in processing records. Also, in cases where such schedule exists they do not cover the whole records series, inadequate ultra modern storage facility for keeping records in case of disaster and the dread of qualified records managers to mange records in establishment (Iwhiwhu, 2005). Therefore this study is to investigate the state of records management in schools by raising the following question:

1.   What are the records management manual/filing systems used in the schools?
2.   Does Government schools employ retention schedule in managing its records?
3.   What are the records storage facilities used by these schools?
4.   Are there qualified records staffs in the Government Schools?

II.   Methodology

The sample population of the study consisted of 54 teachers drawn from six Government Secondary schools of the Ten Government Secondary Schools in Kaduna North Local Government. These Schools are: Rimi College, Kaduna; Government Girls Secondary School (GSSS), Doka, Kaduna; Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Independence Way, Kaduna; Government Girls Secondary School (GSSS), Kabala Costain, Kaduna; Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Ungwa Sarki, Kaduna. All the teachers in charge of handling exams, guidance and counseling, computer and financial records were included in the study.

The descriptive research design was use for this study, The main method employed to collect information was the questionnaire which was designed as follows: Section one of the questionnaire contained six items which was designed to provide information about the bio data of the respondents while section two contained six questions on Records Creation. Section three had six questions on records Maintenance and Use, while section four had question on Records Storage. Section five had two questions on Records Deposition while question six had three questions on Automation. The questionnaire was designed to generate yes or no responses. In some cases, teachers were asked to indicate with a thick the most appropriate answer. Data was also collected through observation and interview. Personal interview was conducted particularly with Guidance and counseling teachers and exam teachers. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, questionnaire and interview were designed and presented to acting Principal (Junior Section), Mrs. Ajala, (2013) in Rimi

College, Kaduna and project supervisor for verification and additional input. Necessary corrections were effected for content validity.

Findings and Discussion
Demographic Information

Table 1: Shows Schools' Response with Gender Reflection

Schools	Sample	Percentage	Male	Female
Rimi College	9	16.67	7	2
GGSS Doka	9	16.67	4	5
GGSS Independence Way	8	14.82	3	5
GGSS Ungwan Sarki	9	16.67	6	3
GGSS Kabala Costain	9	16.67	6	3
GGSS Kawo	10	18.52	4	6
TOTAL	54	100	30	24

Table 1 shows the number of questionnaire distributed in each of the schools. GGSS Kawo has the largest respondent of 10 representing 18.52% while GGSS Independence way has the least of 8 representing 14.82%. Gender distribution shows that Rimi College has the highest number of Male (7) as records Managers while GGSS Kawo has the highest number of Females (6) as records managers.

Table 2: Shows Designation of Respondents

Variables	req	%	Rimi College	GGSS Doka	GGSS Indep Way	GGSS U/ Sarki	GGSS Kabala Costain	GGSS Kawo
Education Officer1 (EO1)		5.55			-	1	-	
Assist. Edu. Offier2 (AEO2)		16.66			-	3	1	
High Asst. Edu. Officer HAEO		14.81			-	1	-	
Senior Edu. Officer (SEO)		11.11			2	3	-	
Assist. Director (SSEO)	24	44.44			3	1	7	
Director of Education		7.40			3	-	1	
TOTAL	4	100		9	8	9	9	10

Table 2 shows the rank/ designation of records staff, most of the respondents indicated their rank as Assistant Director totaling 44.44%, spreading across the various School with GGSS Kabala Costain having the highest respondents (7). This shows that most of the staff saddled with the responsibility of managing records in schools are senior management Staff.

Records Management Manual/filing Systems Used in Government Secondary Schools

The study revealed that the following are the types of records kept in Government schools; exams records, entry schedule, registration forms, account records, staff records; minutes staff books, students' records, school furniture inventory, report booklets, placement lists, transfer certificates, syllabus, curriculum, lesson plan books, academic board meeting files, Punishment and reward books. These records were predominantly kept in paper format with only a file copy was retained in the office of the Records Mangers.

Table 3: Shows Filing Method Used For Record

Variables	req		Rimi College	GGSS Doka	GGSS Indepe Way	GGSS U/Sarki	GGSS K/Cost ain	GGSS /Kawo
Alpha – numeric	1	7.04	4	5	3	3	-	6
Numeric		5.67	-	-	2	-	3	2
Geographical		.26	2	-	-	-	-	1

➤		➤	➤						
➤	Chronological	➤	➤ 8.52	2	2	1	3	-	-
➤	Colour coding	➤	➤	➤	-	➤	➤	-	➤ ➤ ➤ -
➤ aided	Computer	➤	➤ 8.52	1	2	2	3	-	-
➤	**TOTAL**	➤ 8	➤ 00	9	9	8	10	3	9

Filing aids and records management manuals are classification systems that stipulate how records should be filed which would ultimately facilitate retrieval of needed records from storage when required by searchers. The filing scheme support survival and accessibility of important records by promoting the consistent filing of information within the school. Table 3 above shows that (21) 38.88% of the respondents indicated that the alpha-numeric is the filing method used in their schools. GGSS Kawo (6) and GGSS Doka (5) have a consistent way of filing their records though some schools choose the computer aided but on close observation and interview it was discovered that only some staff records were kept on the computer, however, comprehensive electronic records management has not taken off in government schools.

Government Schools' Use of Retention Schedule in Managing its Records
Table 4 shows the availability and use of Retention Schedule in Government Schools

Used of Retention Schedule	Yes	%	No	%
Availability of retention schedule	17	31.48	37	68.52
Adherence to its use	18	33.33	36	66.67
Staff for file inventory & maintenance	10	18.52	44	81.52
Existence of record mgt policy	7	12.96	47	87.04

Retention schedules is a written manual that stipulates the duration of time records which should be retained in a registry before they are disposed off and what method should be used for this disposal to avoid leakage of vital information. Table 4 shows that 68.52% of the respondents indicated that they had no retention schedule for managing their record in Schools. 66.67% do not adhere to its use when deciding on what records to dispose off or keep. 81.52% of the respondents said they do not have a staff in charge of file inventory and maintenance while 87.04% of the respondents indicated that they do not have a records management policy in their schools to guide the school records management program. The researcher interviewed some of staff and their responses confirmed they had no records management policy, no retention schedule and staff handling records do not have any experiencing in using file inventory for records maintenance. This studies confirms Umar (2010) who observed that the absence of a records management policy to guide school administrators in retention and disposition of

their records is likely to cause the loss of vital records while retaining unnecessary records. He further stated when vital records are lost there may be the tendency of legal implication especially if the records may be required for adjudication in the court of law.

Government Schools Use of Storage Facilities for Keeping Records
Table 5: Shows Storage Equipment Employed for Record Storage

➤ **Variables**	➤ **req**	➤	➤ imi College	➤ GSS Doka	C ➤ GSS Indepe Way	➤ GSS U/Sarki	G ➤ GSS K/Costain	G GGSS/Kawo
➤ File cabinet	➤ 2	➤ 5.19	➤	7	7	5	6	8
➤ Vault	➤	➤ .85	➤	-	1	-	-	-
➤ Fire resistant safe	➤	➤ .56	➤	-	-	1	1	1
➤ Metal cabinet	➤	➤ .41	➤	-	4	3	1	-
➤ **TOTAL**	➤ 4	➤ 00	➤	7	12	9	8	9

Storage equipment helps to protect and preserve records from environment and biological hazards. The table 5 above shows that the 85.19% of the respondent choose the file cabinet as a method of keeping records in the Government Schools. Rimi College and GGSS Kawo have 9 and 8 respondents saying they are using this method. When the researcher went round to view such equipment, it was discovered that GGSS Doka had good file cabinet, Rimi college's equipment were not enough and adequate as most of its records were kept on

Cupboard and boxes which were not covered and had gathered dust over time due to inadequate storage facilities. This would further hasten its rate of deterioration of such records and would not be readily available when needed while in GGSS Costain it was shocking to see records kept in world drop which can easily be attacked by termites. This study agrees with Sunmola (2008) who observed that most schools keep records in files, put in Cupboards or on bare floors which can easily be destroyed by termites, flood, fire or even storm.

Table 6: Shows Security Measures Adopted for Records

Variables	Freq F	%	imi College	GSS Doka	GSS Indepe Way	GSS U/Sarki	GSS K/Costain	GGSS/Kawo
Fire dictator	3	5.55	-	-	-	3	-	-
Lock up in a store	23	42.59	4	4	2	1	5	7
24 – hours guard	16	29.62	3	3	1	5	1	3
Burglary alarm	1	1.85	-	-	1	-	-	-
Smoke detection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire extinguisher	10	18.51	2	2	4	-	-	2
TOTAL	54	100	9	9	8	9	6	12

Table 6 above shows the security measures adopted for records in Government Schools. 42.59% respondents indicated that the prominent method used to safe guard their records was by locking them in the store. 18.51% said they use fire extinguishers but on observation only few of such equipment were seen in some offices. This method is not adequate enough for securing record. When the researcher asked why modern security gadgets are not used for securing vital records in their schools, it was brought to her notice that there are no funds to sponsor projects.

Table 7; Shows Responses of Presence of Qualified Staff in the Government Schools

	Yes	No	Total
Does school have qualified staff in charge of records management?	17	37	57
Total (%)	**31.48**	**68.52**	**100**

A qualified records staff is one who has been equipped with both formal and informal knowledge or skills and act of managing records from records creation to the point when records are disposed of in the Archive or destroyed. Such knowledge has to be updated through on-going program like attendance of Seminars, Workshops and Conferences to keep abreast with latest development in ones field of endeavor.

Table 7 shows Reponses of qualified staff appointed to manage school records in the government school 68.52% respondents said they did not have qualified staff to handle their school records. Although table 2 on demographic information shows that 44.44% respondents indicated their rank as Assistant Director spread across the various Schools with GGSS Kabala Costain having the highest number (7). But when the researcher interviewed the respondents it was brought to her notice that staff had not been trained in the act of managing records. No staff was employed that had such qualification.

III.   Conclusion

For Records Management to be efficient in any school system it must imbibe all the component of Records Management Such as applying uniform Classification scheme for records creation and control, the use of records retention and Records management policy and training of staff, but the research discovered that though Government Schools kept various records, however, they do not adhere to the various dictate of National Decree 1992 governing records management in school. Records were still created and managed in paper format despite the advent of electronic records. Lack of awareness of the appropriate records manuals used to process records among staff like the classification scheme, records retention schedule, records management policy etc. Inadequate storage facilities and lack of quality staff in charge of records was also discovered.

5.3 Recommendation
Based on the findings in the studies; the following recommendations are made.

1. A Records Management Policy should be designed that would state the type of records inventory, appraisal, retention, and how disposition of inactive files should be done in all Government Schools Uniformly.
2. The State Universal Basic Education Board (UBE) through the local education authority should provide additional storage facilities and modern day security gadget for keeping of records.
3. School management should ensure that only qualified staff is employed to handle the task of records management. Also, school administrator should sponsor or organize in-house training for records staff to keep abreast with new development in their fields so as to enhance service delivery.
4. School administrators in government schools can begin to plan towards converting their paper records to electronic form which would serve as backup and facilitate retrieval of needed information.

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