

CHALLENGES FACING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RECORDS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

OKPALA, ADINDU CHUKWUEBUKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY IGBARIAM CAMPUS
adicoebuka@gmail.com
+2348037565361

&

UKANDU, CHUKWUJEKWU JOHNSON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU
UNIVERSITY IGBARIAM CAMPUS
ukanduchukwujekwu226@gmail.com
+2348064040226

Abstract

The study focused on challenges facing effective management of financial records in secondary schools in Anambra State. For any school to thrive, financial record management should be taken seriously as record management helps educational managers in decision making. In the school system, there are certain financial record books that ought to be kept and preserved for reference purposes and as a guide in financial matters. Some challenges facing affecting management of financial records were discussed, the need for introduction of ICT in financial management was stressed while strategies for effective record management were highlighted and recommendations were also made.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of good records management in the efficient educational service delivery can never be over-emphasized. Records are source of history, culture and academic track of students in school (Boonprasert, 2010). Records in Nigerian schools seem poorly managed with financial records being inclusive as a result of ignorance of the importance of financial records and the fact that financial records are collected but not well managed or utilized. Financial records are often times haphazardly kept and when schools are visited by supervisors, the records are available for scrutiny and use. School personnel on their part see financial records management as not as an important aspect of school learning management.

In this study, some challenges facing effective management of financial records such as: lack of ICT gadgets, inadequacy of storage facilities and lack of financial management skills are considered. It appears that there is a gross lack of computer for keeping financial records in school, no space to keep most of the earlier existing financial records in schools and workshop on means of ensuring effective keeping of financial records are held in schools (Onye, 2012).

According to Allahmagani (2014), many schools in Nigeria lack the facilities like shelves, filing cabinet, ICT gadgets and cupboards to store the financial records. Hence, records are left at the mercy of termites, rats and weather element. Aduaka (2019) observed that the age of computers which would have helped school heads in managing financial records have not been of much help since most school administrators and their staff are not computer literate. Most schools do not have computers and even when computers are given or donated to the schools, they are left to be invaded by virus. Ogbonnaya (2012) opined that when financial transactions are properly documented and kept in records, incidence of fraud, overspending and financial waste will be curtailed to large extent. Records such as cash book, bank account book, account ledger and receipt for payments are very useful and proper keeping of these documents should be ensured.

This study therefore aimed at investigating the challenges facing effective management of financial records in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Concept of Record Management

Record management is the systematic control of an organization's record for effective work administration. Record and record keeping constitute the arteries that supply life – sustaining blood through the system and sub-systems of organizations and institutions (Osakwe, 2012). It will definitely be an impossible task to plan and administer any known organization in which records are not kept or are carelessly and fraudulently kept. The education system as a social organization has numerous sub-systems or levels that are managed to ensure some coherence and continuity. To successfully achieve this, records must be safely kept and managed.

Ajayi (2012) pointed out that materials for record keeping included: filing, cabinets, duplicating machines, photocopy machine, computers, cash saves, perforators, office pins, file jackets, file tags and stationery. Hence, record management is the practice of maintaining the records of an organization from the time they are created up to their eventual disposal. This may include classifying, storing, securing and destruction of records.

Bennel (2015) stated that records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. Vital records may be stored in a disaster resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, flood, earthquakes and conflict. However, many modern records environments use a computerized system involving bar code scanners or radio-frequency identification technology (RFID) to track movement of the records. These can also be used for periodic auditing to identify unauthorized movement of the records.

Financial Record Keeping in Secondary Schools

Operating in a system or institution without accurate data could be quite misleading or bring about errors. Financial record keeping guides against mistakes and common errors. Boyd (2013) opined that financial record keeping is a serious attempt put in place to ensure that every financial document for both income and expenditure are kept safe for future reference.

Onye (2012) supported that financial record keeping is very pertinent for management effectiveness. She further stated that the essence of financial record keeping is to enable the management or educators make effective decision and formulate relevant policies. This implies that absence of these records could spell doom to decisions taken and policies formulated.

According to Ikegbusi (2016), any organization or educational system that refuses to attach importance to proper record management would run into liquidation at the long run. Long (2017) listed the following financial records of schools that should be kept to include the following:

Cash book

Fees receipt
Vouchers
Purchase receipts
Sales receipts
Expenditure receipts e.t.c.

According to Marizu (2013), financial records have a dual function. Not only do they enable a school to have a clear picture of what is available and what is required but they also provide justification of certain needs. More so, they serve to extend the memory by which person or organization can pass to their future generation. Davis (2017) said that proper financial record keeping would enable institutions design and plan their programmes well. Sometimes, misappropriation of resources happens due to lack of records or data. Therefore, improvement on existing administrative practices and exploring ways of tackling any emerging problems is demanded of school managers in order to overcome the administrative problems.

The need for ICT and effective Management of Financial Records in Secondary Schools

The need of technological innovation has led to a revolution in the development of technological facilities that are applicable to keeping and management of school financial records. Making use of ICT for keeping financial record and management will go a long way in raising the standard of school records anywhere in the world. Educators are fast realizing the need for using computer for keeping and management of school records. This would be convenient to both administrators and teachers in secondary schools. Records and keeping financial record constitute the life wire of organizations (Ogbonnaya, 2012). It would be very difficult to plan and administer any organization such as school effectively if financial records are not kept and managed properly. Schools records are financial documents, books, diskettes and files which contain information on what goes on in the school (academic and non-academic activities), school personnel, students as well As other school resources such as instructional materials (Ikediugwu, 2016).

Financial record keeping and management ought to be taken as a vital responsibility by school authorities because of the indispensable role financial records play in the effective day-to-day running of the school. In order to make decisions on both short and long term finance policies, school authorities do not have a good culture of financial record keeping. The few records that are kept are usually not properly store, thus creating the problem of retrieval to users when needed. The few school authorities that have adopted the electronic financial record-keeping practice in the record management system of their institutions have risen above such problems of storage and retrieval, as ICT affords the opportunity to have a quick and easy view of all the records on school activities. Hence, by means of modern data storage facilities like computers, microfilm, CD-Rom, cassettes, e-mail, collaboration software and hardware, technological advancement had contributed to the effective storage and management of school financial records. The use of ICT for school financial record keeping and management gives an overview of the number of accurate information on students' fees payment status, and a comprehensive database of staff payment with just a click (Osakwe, 2012).

Due to the expansion of schools, it is essential that computerization takes place and a total overhauling of the existing ICT system be undertaken for easy financial record keeping and management. ICT has the potentials for not only ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in teaching-learning process, but for also easing the administrative duties of financial record keeping and management. Being aware of the significant role of information and communication technology in our lives, especially in our educational activities, school authorities should be wise enough to use ICT in supporting financial record keeping and management. Presently, financial records of most secondary schools are kept manually and,

with the passage of time, vital financial records and information are lost due to rise in the number of school activities. A lot of problems have been identified from manual record keeping and management practice. They include lack of skills in the interpretation of scores from assessment instruments, lack of skills in record keeping. For any school system to engage in satisfactory financial record keeping and management activities, information and communication technology must be applied in its operational system. This is because human beings can make mistakes. However, with the help of these modern electronic devices, the mistakes will either be eliminated or reduced to its barest minimum.

Challenges Facing Records Management in Schools

In Nigeria, getting accurate and reliable data has been a difficult task. Agbaje (1982) pointed out that Nigeria has been muddling without facts and figures in schools. Poor statistical system, many schools starved with competent teachers, ill-equipped and ill-supplied facilities are products of poor record keeping in our school system. According to Nakpodia (2011) amongst the problems facing records management in schools are:

1. Transfer and Retirement of Officers

When an officer/school head with a particularly schedule of duty is transferred from one office or school to another without an immediate replacement with a competent officer, a gap is created. There is likely to be distortion in the flow of information and record management. In some cases, transferred officers may not carry out adequate handing over of records and other matters still pending. This lapse may apparently constitute a problem for the new officer who is now assigned his duty.

2. Inadequate Storage Space

This hampers effective record management. It is a common place to see files in piles from the floor up to the walls in many offices because of lack of space. Adequate provision is not usually made for storing files in some offices and schools.

3. Undurable and Bulky Materials for Records

Files used for keeping materials are usually made from inferior materials such as cardboard. Within a short period of handling the files, they begin to wear out. If such files are not replaced, materials or records in them can get lost. Also, planks susceptible to termites attack are often used as file racks, shelves and cupboards. These damage easily and results in dislocation of records.

4. Carelessness of Officers Handling the Records

At the school level, both the school heads and teachers do not keep records accurately. The most abused is the attendance register. They do not keep their diaries and record of workbook up-to-date. In some cases, when students withdraw or drop out from the school/class, teachers continue to mark them present.

5. Inexperienced Officers

Newly recruited officers who are left uninducted tend to gamble with movement of documents and files. Such officers can clut documents into wrong files or cabinets. At times the inexperienced officer may not be aware of the importance and urgency of a document thereby putting it in an irrelevant file.

6. Involvement of Manual Operations in Records Management

Manual operation of records can lead to misplacement of file, loss of vital document by unscrupulous officers. Officers often times feel hesitant to carry files from one office to another because of laziness or bulkiness and undurability of the files; hence, information may not get to the right place at the appropriate time.

Strategies for effective record management

The following strategies as advocated by Nakpodia (2011) may help reduce some of the constraints on record management in the school system.

1. **Induction Courses:** When new staff are recruited or school heads just promoted to leadership position, they should be trained in the management of records. They should also be made familiar with relevant offices, lines of communication, records available in each office and officers managing the offices.
2. **Refresher Courses:** Officers managing records who have spent up to 3 years on the job should be encouraged to attend refresher courses on record management. This can help to upgrade their skills.
3. **Introduction of Computer Technology:** Computer hardware and software should be gradually introduced into Nigerian school system for adequate storage, manipulation, utilization and retrieval of records. The use of computer technology will reduce the manual task of managing records.
4. **Reduction in Size of Record Materials:** The files and papers used for record management in the school system are often so wide and heavy that they occupy too much space. The size of files and papers should be reduced to half the present size. This could solve the problem of bulkiness of record materials.
5. **Adequate Supervision and Inspection:** The school head should endeavor to conduct periodic checking of stored records to ensure proper management practices amongst the staff responsible for handling records. Adequate inspection of files and other storage facilities will help check missing of documents and improper filling of records materials.

Conclusion

Financial record keeping in secondary schools of Anambra state has seriously suffered setback which has adverse effect on the quality of education, educational decision and achievement of educational goals and objectives. The challenges could be minimized with the introduction of the use of ICT so that financial information could be durable, safe and accessible for use.

Recommendations

1. Adequate training and retraining of secondary school principals, bursars/secretaries through in-service programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops organized by the government will help improve financial record keeping.
2. Schools should be equipped with adequate ICT gadgets by the government so as not to lose crucial financial information.
3. School managers should ensure that the existing means of storing financial records are maintained and serviced regularly so as to avoid wastage and loss of documents.

REFERENCES

- Aduaka, M.U (2014). Level of record keeping in secondary schools on Owerri education zone of Imo State. *An unpublished M.Ed. thesis*. Department of Educational Management and Planning, faculty of Education, Imo state University, Owerri.
- Ajayi, K. (2012). Record keeping in schools. In federal ministry of Education, World Bank Primary Education Sector Programme Training of Masters Trainers in School

- Management and Supervision. A paper presented at Training Workshop Organised by the Educational Institutes (Nig) Ltd.
- Allahmangani, K. (2014). Records management in government secondary schools. The case study of Kaduna North Local Government, Kaduna, and Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and social science* 19(1), 55-60.
- Allahmangani, K. (2014). Records management in government secondary schools: The case study of Kaduna North Local Government, Kaduna, and Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19(1), 55-60.
- Bennel, R. (2015). A survey of records management practices in curricular primary schools in Metropolitan Local Government Area (MLGA) of Kaduna State. *Samaru Journal of information studies*, 10(1&2), 23-30.
- Boonprasert, M. (2010). Development of desirable characteristics of Thai University graduates. Paper presented at the 1th UNESCO - APEID \ *International Conference on Education for Human Resources Development*, Bangkok, Thailand 21-23, Oct.
- Boyd, T.P.(2013). Understanding school management. Makurdi: Ugo Printing Press. Jones
- Davis, P (2017). *School record system and educational administration in colleges*. New York: PanBoo Washington World. Bank.
- Egwunyenga, E.J (2016). *Essential of school administration*. Benin: Justice – Jeco Publishers.
- Ikediegwu, N.P (2016). Administrative and management skills for effective secondary school management. *Unizik journal of Educational management and policy*, 1 (1), 1 – 7.
- Ikegbusi, N. (2016). Management competency needs of principals for effective administration of secondary schools. *International Journal of Advanced Research in education and Technology* 3(3), 61-67
- Long, D. (2017). Appraisal of record keeping practices of principals in Abia State secondary schools. *Review of education* 2(11), 28.
- Marizu, V (2013). Assessment of school record management in secondary schools in federal capital Territory. *Open Journal of Educational Development* (O.J.E.D.,)
- Ogonnaya, N.O (2012). *Foundations of education finance*. Nsukka, Enugu state. Hallman Publishers.
- Onye, C.O (2019). *Effective educational planning and strategic management techniques*. Owerri: Cape publishers int'l Ltd.
- Osakwe, R. N. (2012). Problems and Prospects of using information and communication technology for record keeping in tertiary Institution. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(14), 39-43.