ASSESSMENT OF RECORD MANAGEMENT IN SANTA MARIA HIGH SCHOOL, OMOKU RIVERS STATE.

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Abstract
This study employed a descriptive survey design to assess record management practices in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State. The study population consisted of 92 staff involved in record management, and a sample of 74 was selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected with a self-structured 16-item questionnaire titled "*Assessment of Record Management Practices Questionnaire" (ARMP)*. The instrument was validated by two experts, and its reliability, established through the test–retest method, yielded a coefficient of 0.97. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Findings showed that the school maintains key records such as admission and withdrawal registers, attendance records, syllabi, health records, and other administrative documents. The study concluded that although record management practices are functional, improvements are necessary to enhance efficiency and compliance. It was recommended that the school adopt and regularly update electronic record management systems to replace outdated storage methods and improve security and accessibility. Administrative staff should also receive continuous training on accurate record creation, verification, and storage. In addition, routine audits should be conducted to identify gaps, ensure proper documentation, and uphold the integrity and confidentiality of school records.

Keywords: Record management, creation, storage, facilities

Introduction

Records management plays a foundational role in the administration of school systems, as it provides the information base required for effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational programmes. According to Fatu (2021), records constitute essential documents generated or received by an organization during the course of its activities, and they ensure that critical information about school processes is preserved for future reference. In educational institutions, proper record keeping is indispensable because it supports decision-making, enhances accountability, and facilitates communication among stakeholders.

International bodies also underscore the importance of effective school records management. UNESCO (2020) highlights that systematic record keeping enables the documentation of student learning, school activities, and administrative processes, thereby contributing significantly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system. These records ranging from attendance registers to cumulative files serve as tools through which school administrators monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

Scholars further emphasize the centrality of records in school administration. Ajayi and Ayodele (2019) describe school records as repositories of vital information on events within the school, while Durosaro (2022) asserts that they are indispensable instruments for planning and monitoring institutional activities. Despite their importance, the management of these records requires deliberate and systematic processes to ensure that information is organized, stored, protected, and retrieved appropriately.

Record management, as explained by Seniwoliba, Mahama, and Abilla (2019), provides a reliable mechanism for documenting transactions and minimises the risks associated with relying solely on human memory. In schools, effective management ensures that administrators can formulate policies, coordinate programmes, and make informed decisions. Akpomi (2020) adds that the educational system comprises interdependent sub-systems that rely on accurate information flow, making proper management of records crucial for organizational stability and continuity.

However, challenges persist in many schools where records are poorly stored, inadequately protected, or inconsistently updated. Hanior, Gire, and Achor (2021) caution that poor record management practices threaten the success of the school system, while Ojo and Obimuyiwa (2019) note that although records may be kept manually or electronically, the effectiveness of the system depends on the competence of school administrators in handling and safeguarding these records.

In the context of Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State, assessing the state of records management is essential to understanding how well the school documents and utilises information. Given the role that accurate and accessible records play in promoting quality teaching, learning, and administration, such an assessment is necessary to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. This study therefore aims to evaluate the effectiveness of records management in the school, drawing on established literature and the realities of contemporary educational administration.

Statement of the Problem

Effective record management is essential for the smooth administration of any educational institution. In secondary schools, accurate and well-organized records such as students' academic performance, staff information, attendance registers, financial documents, and administrative reports are crucial for decision-making, accountability, and overall school improvement. However, in many Nigerian secondary schools, including Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, challenges may relate to poor record keeping practices continue to hinder efficient school management.

Preliminary observations suggest that records in Sancta Maria High School may not be systematically stored, properly updated, or adequately protected from loss, damage, or unauthorized access. The reliance on manual record-keeping methods, insufficient storage facilities, inadequate training of staff responsible

for managing records, and lack of modern technological tools may be contributing to inefficiencies in retrieving and using essential information. These shortcomings may negatively impact administrative planning, student evaluation, financial accountability, and general school operations.

Despite the importance of proper record management to institutional growth, it appears that comprehensive research has not been conducted to assess the current state of record management practices in Sancta Maria High School. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how records are currently managed, the challenges faced by staff in maintaining them, and the extent to which existing practices meet standard requirements for effective educational administration.

This study seeks to assessing the record management system of Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State, with the aim of identifying weaknesses, determining their causes, and suggesting possible improvements.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this study is to investigate the assessment of record management practices in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

    i.   identify the types of records created in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku.
    ii. examine record creation practices in the school.
    iii. determine the record storage facilities available.

Research Questions

    1. What types of records are created in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku?
    2. What are the record creation practices in the school?
    3. What record storage facilities are available in the school?

Literature Review

School records are broadly **categorized** into statutory and non-statutory records. According to Fatu (2021), statutory records are those mandated by educational law and must be produced on request by officials of the Ministry of Education during inspections. Examples include admission and withdrawal registers, attendance registers, schemes of work, school timetables, diaries, log books, financial record books, and continuous assessment records. Conversely, non-statutory records are not legally required but are kept for administrative convenience. Such records include stock books, cash and account books, school calendars, health books, inventory books, and staff minutes books Gabriel, (2019).

One of the most important statutory records is the admission register. Fasasi (2023) explained that this register provides a list of students admitted each year and records those who exit, along with reasons for withdrawal. It contains essential information such as the name, age, and address of each student, as well as the date of enrolment. This register is crucial because it authenticates students' claims, tracks their progress, and provides personal details about students, their parents, and guardians Ajayi and Ayodele, (2019). Similarly, the attendance register records daily attendance for each class arm. It is arranged alphabetically

by surname and maintained by the class or form teacher. This record is particularly useful in monitoring student attendance on any specific day Ajayi et al. (2019).

Another key statutory record is the school log book, which serves as a daily record of significant events in the life of the school. Fatu (2021) and Fasasi (2023) noted that entries may include dates of resumption, staff transfers, ceremonies, visits by important personalities, and inspection exercises. The log book **summarizes** the historical development of the school, is kept exclusively by the principal, and is usually locked away for security purposes.

The syllabus or curriculum is also regarded as a vital record. At the secondary school level, it is prepared by the Ministry of Education and relevant examining bodies. It outlines the topics to be taught in each subject and for each class within the academic year. This document is typically kept in the office of the principal or the vice-principal (academics). Teachers are also required to maintain a record of work or diary, which documents the aspects of the syllabus covered weekly. Oyetunde (2019) explained that this record must be submitted to the principal, through the head of department, for verification and signature. Such records are especially useful when a teacher is transferred, as they help the incoming teacher understand where to continue instruction.

Additionally, every teacher is expected to prepare detailed lesson plans or notes, which serve as daily guides for classroom instruction. These notes should be sufficiently comprehensive to be used by another teacher in cases of the original teacher's absence Oyetunde, (2019). The school timetable is another important statutory record. It shows the daily routine of the school, including periods for devotion, lessons, breaks, and closing time. It also indicates which teacher handles each subject and class at any given period (Fasasi, 2023).

The staff record book contains detailed information about every teacher employed in the school, such as age, qualifications, work experience, date of appointment, transfers, and resignations Oyetunde, (2019). Schools also maintain a visitors' book, which records the names, addresses, and impressions of visitors. According to Jones (2023), this record provides valuable planning information, particularly for school improvement and accountability. Similarly, the staff movement book documents when teachers leave the school premises during working hours, their destinations, and reasons for leaving. This serves as a control measure to reduce unauthorised movement during official duty hours Njoku, (2020).

Financial records also play a significant role in school administration. The cash book usually prepared daily by the bursar shows both income and expenditure. Sources of income may include government grants, school levies, and donations, while expenditures may cover stationery, repairs, transportation, and utilities Fasasi, (2023). The stock book documents both consumable and non-consumable items such as chalk, rulers, furniture, and equipment. It includes details of purchases, quantities received, and items issued out. This helps the principal plan effectively for future needs.

Disciplinary and administrative records are equally crucial. The punishment book records cases of disciplinary action against students, including offences, punishments administered, and outcomes. Njoku (2020) noted that this record protects students from unreasonable punishment and protects teachers from unfair criticism by parents. The staff minutes book records the proceedings and decisions of staff meetings.

According to Njoku (2020), it ensures that teachers are aware of and comply with collective decisions. Continuous assessment records provide comprehensive information on students' academic and extracurricular performance, while the school inventory tracks major school facilities such as buildings, vehicles, and equipment. Fatu (2021) explained that this assists with monitoring depreciation, maintenance, and budgeting.

Records Creation Practices

Record creation refers to the process of generating and capturing evidence of events, decisions, and actions within schools. Adade, Dampson, Quashigah, and Eshun (2022) explained that records are created when internally generated or externally received information is documented. According to Regodon (2019), records may originate from reports, minutes, personnel files, administrative decisions, or correspondence.

Osakwe (2022) **emphasized** that record creation practices include documenting meetings, proceedings, decisions, and resolutions, which serve as reference materials and provide evidence of transparency. Similarly, Jonathan and Nwankwo (2020) observed that these practices also involve file labelling, making duplicate copies for security, and storing information electronically on computers or magnetic tapes. These measures ensure confidentiality, easy retrieval, and protection of records from damage.

Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) stressed that record creation practices are incomplete without appropriate maintenance and disposal. Maintenance involves transferring inactive files to storage, retaining them in line with legal or institutional schedules, and securely disposing of them once they are no longer useful. Methods of disposal include incineration, shredding, and recycling. Such practices prevent congestion and promote the efficient use of storage facilities.

Records storage facilities

Records storage involves securing documents to preserve their usability and protect them from **unauthorized** access, tampering, or destruction. Adade et al. (2022) argued that effective storage ensures that records remain reliable, authentic, and preserved for as long as they are needed for fiscal, legal, research, or administrative purposes.

Ereh and Okon (2020) identified two major forms of storage: manual and electronic. Manual storage involves keeping printed documents in files, shelves, or drawers, whereas electronic storage entails saving records on devices such as computers, flash drives, and cloud-based systems. Both methods require proper organisation and strong security measures.

Although electronic storage offers significant advantages such as faster retrieval and better protection against physical damage, Ereh et al. (2020) observed that many secondary schools lack adequate facilities, including computers and internet-based systems, for effective storage. This inadequacy hampers principals' ability to manage school records efficiently and leaves documents vulnerable to risks of loss or damage.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to elicit relevant data on the assessment of record management practices in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State. This study adopted the **descriptive survey design** to investigate records management practices. The population of the study

involves 92 staff of Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, involved in record management. The sample size of the study was 74 staff of Sancta Maria High School, Omoku which was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured 16-items questionnaire titled Assessment of Record Management Practices Questionnaire" (ARMP) consisted of two sections, A and B. Section 'A' focused on the respondents' biodata while section 'B' consisted of 8 closed-ended structured items that addressed the variables considered in the study. The instrument was structured based on a modified 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) which were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The research instrument was validated by two experts in the field of study. This was enhanced owing to series of corrections and criticisms that were put in place before the instrument was final administered. The test-retest technique was used to establish the reliability coefficient of the instrument as 0.97. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions posed for the study.

Results

Research question 1: What are the types of records created in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State.

Table 1 Mean Scores of the types of records created in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Records of admission and withdrawal register.	3	4	2	1	2.9	Agreed
2	Log book record.	4	3	2	1	3.0	Agreed
3	Attendance register record.	3	5	2	0	3.1	Agreed
4	Syllabus/Examination records	4	3	2	1	3.0	Agreed
5	Visitor's records.	2	2	3	3	2.3	Disagreed
6	Staff movement record.	4	3	2	1	3.0	Agreed
7	Lesson plan/Diary book record.	3	3	2	2	2.7	Agreed
8	Health records.	3	4	2	1	2.9	Agreed
9	Education policy records	3	3	2	2	2.7	Agreed
10	Disciplinary Record	2	1	3	4	2.1	Disagreed
	Grand Mean					**2.77**	**Agreed**

source: field survey,2024
Key: X- mean.
Significant mean score: 2.77

Criterion mean: 2.50

Result in table 1 shows that eight (8) item questions were agreed on, while two (2) was disagreed upon. The grand mean of 2.77 for the items indicate a positive response rate. This shows a high response rate of the type of records created in Sancta Maria High school, Omoku

Research question 2: What are the records creation practices in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku

Table 2 Mean scores of records creation practices

S/N	Item Statement Decision	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	
1	Ensuring that written reposts are documented accordingly		4	3	2	1	3.0	Agreed
2	Verifying the accuracy of information before documenting it	3	4	2	1	2.9	Agreed
3	Documenting information that is backed up with original document where necessary		3	3	1	3	2.6	Agreed
4	Documenting correspondence from reliable sources	2	4	3	1	3.1	Agreed
5	Complying with the order from higher authorities regarding documentation of relevant information.		3	2	2	1	2.3	Disagreed
6	Writing down consensus decisions arrived at during meetings		4	3	2	1	3.0	Agreed
	Grand Mean					**2.81**	**Agreed**

source: field survey,2024
key: X- mean
Significant mean score: 2.81

Criterion mean: 2.50

Result in table 2 shows that all five-item questions were agreed upon. The grand mean of 2.81 for the items indicate the respondent's responses. This shows a high response rate of records creation practice.

Research question 3: What are the record storage facilities in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, Rivers State.

Table 3: Mean scores of record storage facilities in Sancta Maria High School

S/N	Item Statement Decision	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	
1.	Transferring document in universal serial bus (USB)	2	3	3	2	2.5	Agreed
2.	Keeping of documents in cupboards based on their subject matter.	3	2	3	2	2.6	Agreed
3.	Recording of vital information in compact Disc	3	3	3	1	2.8	Agreed
4.	Using floppy disk in keep document. Disagreed	2	2	2	4	2.2	
5.	keeping files in a cabinet drawer	4	3	1	2	3.0	Agreed
6.	Dispersion of several copies of files in several locations.	3	4	2	1	2.9	Agreed
7.	Ensuring confidentiality of stored documents by restricting access for unauthorized staff.	5	3	1	1	3.1	Agreed
8.	Saving information in a computer system.	3	3	2	2	2.7	Agreed
9.	Labeling of file for easy identification.	4	3	1	0	3.2	Agreed
10.	Keeping of files in steel shelve.	3	4	2	1	2.9	Agreed
	Grand mean					**2.79**	**Agreed**

source: field survey, 2024
Key: X- mean,
significant mean score: 2.79
criterion mean: 2.50

Result in table 3 shows that all the nine (9) item questions were agreed upon while one (item) question was disagreed upon. The grand mean of 2.79 for the items indicates that respondents accepted the nine items for the record storage facilities in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku.

Discussion of findings

The results presented in Table 1 revealed a significant grand mean of 2.77, indicating that several types of records are created in Sancta Maria High School, Omoku. These include admission and withdrawal registers, log books, attendance registers, syllabi, health records, and others. This finding aligns with Olubebe (2019), who emphasized that schools are required to maintain statutory records such as admission registers, health records, and syllabi, which are essential for effective administration.

Regarding records creation practices, the study reported a grand mean of 2.81, showing that the respondents agreed on most practices examined. These practices include documenting reports, verifying information before documentation, keeping correspondences from reliable sources, and recording consensus decisions from meetings. This finding supports Osakwe (2022), who noted that record creation involves proper documentation of correspondences, reports, and memoranda from higher authorities, as well as information supported by original documents. Similarly, Owan, Arop, and Agunwa (2019) confirmed that records in schools are often generated from reports, minutes, personnel records, administrative decisions, notices, and other forms of correspondence.

Furthermore, the results in Table 3 revealed a grand mean of 2.79, suggesting that respondents agreed on the availability of storage facilities for records. Facilities identified include cupboards, cabinets, computer systems, labelling of files, and restricted access to confidential documents. However, the use of floppy disks was considered obsolete. These findings are consistent with Ukaogbu and Nwankwo (2020), who reported that record storage in organizations involves dispersion of files across locations, storage in cupboards and cabinets, confidentiality measures, and use of electronic systems.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that Sancta Maria High School, Omoku maintains a variety of records, including admission and withdrawal registers, attendance records, syllabi, health records, and other administrative documents. The findings indicate that the school engages in effective record creation practices, such as documenting reports, verifying information prior to recording, maintaining correspondences from reliable sources, and recording decisions from meetings. Additionally, the school provides adequate storage facilities, including cupboards, cabinets, computer systems, and measures to ensure confidentiality, although outdated storage media such as floppy disks are no longer in use.

Recommendations

From the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school should continue to adopt and upgrade electronic record management systems to replace obsolete storage methods and improve accessibility and security.

2. Administrative staff should receive regular training on best practices in record creation, verification, and storage to ensure accuracy and compliance with statutory requirements.

3. School should conduct routine audits of records to identify gaps, ensure proper documentation, and maintain the integrity and confidentiality of information.

4. Strengthen access control measures for sensitive records, particularly digital files, to prevent unauthorized access and ensure data protection.

5. They should develop clear, school-wide policies and procedures for record creation, maintenance, and disposal to ensure consistency and sustainability of record-keeping practices.

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