
INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL RECORDS KEEPING ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Article Received: 18 May 2026

Article Revised: 06 June 2026

Published on: 26 June 2026

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.9189>

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of records keeping on the administration of public Secondary Schools in Benue State. The study was guided by two specific objectives, two research questions and two research hypotheses. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1,156 which comprised Principals and Vice-Principals in public secondary schools in Benue state. The sampled size for the study was 297 Principals and Vice-Principals in the state. The sampling technique used in the study was random and proportionate Stratified Sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: School Records Keeping and Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire. The reliability Coefficient of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and the reliability for the entire instrument was 0.93 which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The research questions posed in the study were answered using mean and standard deviation while the research hypotheses formulated in the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Chi Square test of goodness of fit statistic. The findings of the study indicated that: Keeping administrative records play an important role in the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State; Keeping financial records play a crucial role in the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The study concluded that, keeping of adequate records have a great influence on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue state. The study therefore recommends that the principals and vice-principals should ensure adequate records keeping for effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state.

INTRODUCTION

Education as an investment constitutes the largest enterprise in Nigeria. It is the principal instrument for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of any country. Education, all over the world, is believed to be the most powerful instrument for national development. The increasing awareness of the prominent role of education in the human, economic, political and socio-cultural development of any nation has led many nations of the world to commit large amounts of money to the education of their citizens. Odunfowokan in Yakubu and Sowunmi (2017) asserts that the huge investment and expenses in education will only be justified if the goals and objectives of education are achieved.

The goals of Nigerian education as highlighted in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2013) include: the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical, social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Therefore, formal education is that type of education that is gotten from the school.

A school is a formally established institution by appropriate law and authorities where the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for both personal and social development are acquired. School is a place where people learn about the past, present and project the future of a society at large. Therefore, a school is an institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students or pupils under the direction of teachers. Adenaike&Olaniyi in Ihyev (2021) define school as a formal agency of education established by members of the community to mold the habits, interests, attitudes and feelings of children and transmit the societal norms, culture, value and tradition from one generation to another.

Education at secondary school level is defined by Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2013), as the form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. The aim of secondary education is to prepare the individuals for useful living within the society; and for higher education. School is one of the very most important establishments in human societies and the purpose for which the school is established can only be achieved through effective administration. Effective administration, therefore, is that administration that helps to bring about optimum achievement of any organization/establishment and in this case, the school. According to Idoko (2015), secondary

school administration is the systematic arrangement of human and material resources and programmes that are available in the school and carefully using them within defined guidelines or policies to achieve educational goals. Administration in secondary schools, therefore, involves the general provision and management of the resources available to the school administrators.

Administration is the process of utilizing the available resources (human, material and financial) for the actualization of organizational goals. Administration refers to the planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, leading, coordinating and directing of available resources (Adeleke, 2019). Adeleke further states that administration of secondary schools is a social process, concerned with identifying, maintaining, stimulating, controlling and unifying, formally and informally organized human and material energies within an interpreted system. Administration in school exists for the purpose of providing for instruction and, therefore, requires effective management. Supporting this, Aguba in Ogunbiyi (2017) defines administration as the process of working with and through others to efficiently accomplish organizational goals. Administrators by virtue of occupation initiate, plan, organize, direct, lead, control, supervise, motivate, evaluate and unify human and material resources towards the achievement of an organization's goals and objectives (Ochai, 2013). The administration of a school as an institution has the responsibility of bringing together various resources and allocating them effectively to accomplish the general goals of the institution. Therefore, administration of secondary school has a broad complex function. This complex function emanated from the fact that the school system activities generate a wide range of records and reports, which have to be kept, well processed and appropriately utilized to facilitate the process of effective school administration (Nwangwu in Edoh, 2018).

School records are official transcripts or copies of proceedings of actions, events, or other matters kept by the school manager or any other assigned person. Ololube (2018) sees that school records could be viewed as authentic register or instruments or documents of official accounts of transactions or occurrence, which are preserved in the school office. School records, therefore, could be explained to be a document through which information is transmitted within the school system and between the school and other stakeholders in the education sector. Such documents may be in form of letters, reports, pictures, minutes, maps, forms, films, microfiche, and soft copy among others. School records could be many and varied; they are to be kept generally by the school principals, bursars, heads of departments, coordinators among others at the secondary school level.

Record keeping is one of the important aspects of secondary school administration. On regular basis, information on secondary school personnel (students, teachers and non-teachers), facilities, funds and school activities are collected and preserved. This collection becomes school records. Kemoni in Erima and Wamukoya (2017) opines that records are required for developing and implementing policies, planning, keeping track of actions, achieving consistency in decision-making, providing effective service to citizens and achieving greater efficiency. It must be emphasized that records must be properly managed to ensure their usefulness through time. Perhaps records keeping in secondary schools are therefore, information or data which are collected on various aspects of a school and preserved for future use. This information or data which are written manually or electronically are preserved in books, files, diskettes and other electronic materials (Austin and Mark, 2015).

The importance of records keeping in an organization set-up like school cannot be overemphasized. This is because its continuity depends on availability of useful records of past activities. Onweh, Etim and Eniang (2018) maintain that for accountability to be worthwhile in the school, records are mandatory and are to be kept on regular basis. Usman in Alabi (2017) observes that secondary school records are important because they contain vital information which aids the smooth running of the school. They serve administrative, supervisory, professional development and historical purposes. Oyewo (2018) further itemized four purposes of school records keeping which are: assist in monitoring the progress of the members in the school and assist in administration by assisting the school in planning its activities and researches. Record keeping provides a guide for school supervision and inspection and helps successive administration in the schools as historical base among others. In secondary school, there are several categories of records which are very vital to the smooth running of the school; they include but not limited to the following: administrative records, financial records, academic records, library records, security records, facilities' records among others. This study looked at four categories of records that are essentials for the smooth running of secondary schools which include: Administrative records, financial records, academic records and library records. These four categories are used as the variables for the study.

Administrative records are the documents that contain the daily activities of the school administrators and personnel which enhance planning, controlling, implementing, and monitoring of policies. They embrace daily management as well as the formulation of short, medium and long-term objectives, policies and strategies in support of the educational goals

(Bock, 2021). According to Smith in Ihiev (2021), administrative records include: admission/withdrawal register, attendance register, log book, visitors book, time/movement books, and progress register among others. Proper and accurate administrative documentation would enable the school management to be abreast of everything going on in the school and will enable them to take accurate decision. It is important to note the importance of minute book as it enables the management remember what were discussed and also to implement what were discussed. It is interesting to note that the next decision could be arrived at from the last reports documented. If the decisions and discussions are casually documented, it could lead to defective decision making. Oniyade in Nwagwu (2018) opines that, administrative records keeping enhance administrative effectiveness in secondary schools. Administrative functions of planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, coordinating, and directing are not effectively carried out without proper documentation, for example, every plan and decision undertaken by the teachers and by the school administrators must be properly documented for reference purposes. Therefore, decisions on certain issues are taken based on proper administrative documentation. Aside administrative records that help in the smooth administration of secondary schools, there is also need to have adequate and up to date financial records.

Financial records have to do with the management and the documentation of the schools' income and expenditures. There are several records in this category which are essential for the smooth running of the school, some of the financial records that are essential in the school include the following: school fees register, daily cash and expenses requisition, salary voucher, payment register, school fees receipts, imprest register, bank transaction details register, cheque book register among others. Through these records, it is easier for the management and the administrators to determine the total amount the school generated and how much has been expended for the development of the school. Accurate records of all school fees collected are kept by the school head. Financial records provide vital information for checks and balances as well as guiding against loss of confidence in the school by parents/guardians (Agbe, 2015). A strong emphasis was made that financial records keeping is very essential in an organization and school administration in order to maintain administrative effectiveness, academic excellence and development. It is essential that modern records keeping technology be involved in financial records keeping because that would make financial calculations to be accurate. Through computer, accurate and better reports would be made possible in the school for effective administration. It is, therefore, important for an administrator to appoint a financial expert or an accountant who has been

trained to keep financial records. This idea would enable the administrator to arrive at a better financial decision that would enhance effective school administration. For decision making concerning the day-to-day administration of the school as well as long term school policies, school administrators rely on information that is contained in school financial records. It is imperative to note that information and data generated from an effective and efficient record management aids the school to plan and make useful decision, presents facts and give figures for future references; thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of school. Apart from financial records, since we considered secondary school records, another category of records considered crucial for effective administration was academic records.

The importance of records keeping in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized, unfortunately, the researcher has observed that in many of the educational institutions, particularly the secondary schools in Benue State, it is the general trend to find that, either records are not kept at all or they are kept in the most haphazard manner. This is because people that are saddled with the responsibility of records keeping in secondary schools in Benue State possibly do not know the importance of these records. Sometimes they may feel that some of these records could have negative implications on them. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate the influence of school records keeping on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue state.

Statement of the Problem

Records management is one of the basic functions of school administrators and should not be taken with levity. The continuity of any school organization depends on available and accessible useful records of past activities. Records constitute a storehouse of useful information to students, parents, teachers, school heads and employers on the background activities and progress of staff and students. Adequate record keeping furnishes not only parents but teachers, principals with data on the activities, problems and achievement of their students. Effective records keeping have to do with the proper documentation of activities, proper storage of the records as well as easy retrieval of the records for smooth administration of the school.

However, the researcher observed that, despite the importance of school records in the achievement of educational objectives, these records do not seem to be adequately managed in terms of provision, storage, utilization and maintenance by school administrators. From observation, it becomes obvious that accurate, reliable, and trustworthy records that fulfill

evidential requirement are been created but not properly managed in public secondary schools in Benue State. The researcher observed insufficient skilled and experienced record management personnel. Apart from the challenges of proper documentation in Benue State public secondary schools, the researcher also observed that some schools lack proper storage facilities. Due to this, records are kept at the mercy of termites, rats and weather as well as other records destructive elements. It is also likely that some schools could suffer from disaster such as fire, windstorm in times of rain, community clash which may result in loss of these records. And in some places where such records are kept, several complaints show that they are kept in the care of poorly trained or totally ignorant record clerks. The data might become mixed up and sometimes retrieval may be difficult or almost impossible when required. In addition, the prevalent manual method of keeping schools records appeared to hinder easy processing, storage and retrieval of information.

Despite the importance of records keeping in administration of public secondary schools, it seems the public secondary school administrators do not give it much needed attention possibly they do not see the importance of such exercise and that is the reason for the lackadaisical handling of the school records. It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to investigate the influence of school records keeping on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of school records keeping on administration of public secondary schools in Benue state. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the influence of administrative records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State.
2. Ascertain the influence of financial records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of administrative records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of financial records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Administrative records do not significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. Financial records do not significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1,156 which comprised Principals and Vice-Principals in public secondary schools in Benue state. The sampled size for the study was 297 Principals and Vice-Principals in the state. The sampling technique used in the study was random and proportionate Stratified Sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: School Records Keeping and Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire. The reliability Coefficient of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and the reliability for the entire instrument was 0.93 which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The research questions posed in the study were answered using mean and standard deviation while the research hypotheses formulated in the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Chi Square test of goodness of fit statistic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What is the influence of administrative records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Administrative Records and Administration of Public Secondary Schools.

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	S.D
1.	Administrative records help the school administrators to have an effective planning for the school.	3.57	0.76
2.	Proper administrative records enhance decision-making processes in school administration.	3.47	0.77
3.	Effective administrative record-keeping assists in maintaining discipline in the school.	3.49	0.73
4.	The use of administrative records allows for smooth	3.50	0.78

Strongly Agreed transition when there is a change in leadership.		
5. Administrative records provide a basis for evaluating teachers' performance.	3.47	0.93
Agreed Effective record-keeping practices help in the follow up of activities in the school.	3.61	0.61
7. Effective records management contributes to school accountability and transparency.	3.57	0.69
Strongly Agreed		
Grand Mean	3.53	0.75
Strongly Agreed		

The result in table 1 shows that administrative records influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. With a grand mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 0.75, the responses indicated that school administrators acknowledge the relevance of administrative records in various aspects of school management. The high mean scores across the items suggest that administrative records contribute to effective planning, decision-making, discipline maintenance, leadership transitions, teacher performance evaluation, follow-up of school activities, and accountability. The consistency in responses, as reflected in the standard deviation, implies a general agreement among respondents on the positive role of administrative records in school administration.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of financial records on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Financial Records and Administration of Public Secondary Schools .

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	S.D
Decision			
8.	Accurate financial records improve budget planning and allocation of resources in schools	3.51	0.77
Strongly Agreed			
9.	Financial records help to track school expenditures and prevent mismanagement	3.59	0.70
Strongly Agreed			
10.	Proper financial record-keeping enhances accountability in school administration	3.51	0.71
Strongly Agreed			
11.	Financial records aid in securing grants for school development	3.58	0.66
Strongly Agreed			

12. Maintaining financial records helps in complying with government financial requirements.	3.33	0.83
13. Accurate financial records help in the general decision making in the school	3.55	0.65
14. Financial records help the school administrators and the school management to determine the state of the school's finance at any point in time	3.49	0.71
Grand Mean	3.50	0.72
Strongly Agreed		

The result in table 2 indicates that financial records influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. With a grand mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.72, the responses show a general agreement among respondents on the importance of financial records in school management. The high mean scores suggest that financial records contribute to budget planning, resource allocation, expenditure tracking, accountability, grant acquisition, compliance with government financial regulations, and informed decision-making. The relatively low standard deviation signifies consistency in responses, reflecting a shared understanding of the necessity of financial record-keeping in ensuring the smooth financial administration of public secondary schools.

Research Hypothesis 1: Administrative records do not significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square showing the Influence of Administrative Records on Administration of Public Secondary Schools.

Item	df	χ^2	Asymp. Sig
Chi-square	6	259.030 ^a	0.000
No. of valid case	7		

Table 3 shows that the χ^2 calculated is 259.030^a and sig (p-value) is 0.000. Hence $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that administrative records significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. This means that, keeping proper administrative records helps school administrators plan effectively, make better decisions, maintain discipline, ensure smooth leadership transitions, evaluate teachers' performance, track school activities, and promote accountability. In simple terms, schools that keep good records are likely to be better organized, run more efficiently, and achieve their goals more effectively.

Hypothesis 2: Financial records do not significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-square showing the Influence of Financial Records on Administration of Public Secondary Schools.

Item	df	χ^2	Asymp. Sig
Chi-square	6	203.976 ^a	0.000
No. of valid case	7		

Table 4 shows that the χ^2 calculated is 203.976^a and sig (p-value) is 0.000. Hence $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that financial records significantly influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. This means that maintaining accurate financial records helps schools plan their budgets, track expenses, prevent mismanagement, ensure accountability, secure funding, comply with government regulations, and make informed financial decisions. In simple terms, schools that properly manage their financial records are more likely to use their resources effectively and operate smoothly.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that keeping administrative records influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The study agrees with Agbe&Bua (2018) who stated that teachers' office accommodation and students' classroom and accommodation records should be provided in school. Also teachers' and students' school and classroom attendance and movement during school periods should be monitored. This means that, for effective management of public secondary schools in Benue state, there should be adequate records of administration which include maintenance of registers such as attendance register, movement register, log book and inventory among others. Also, Josephine (2014) agreed with the finding by stating that staff time book is always kept in the school office where every staff will see it, write his/her name, time he/she arrives school and append his/her signature. Also, at the close of the school or before the close of the school for the day, the staff still has to indicate the time he/she is leaving the school. The principal or any of his designated staff has to check the time book at the end of the day and enter his remarks. This will prevent staff from absenting themselves from work without the administrator knowing. In addition, Onwuka (2017) noted that, it is worthy to note that administrative records influence the activities of the school; each of the indices of an administrative record facilitates the administration of school activities that promote efficiency and effectiveness of

the school system. This statement agrees with this finding, that administrative records influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue state.

The study also found that keeping financial records influence the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with Agbe&Odeh (2015) who stated that financial record has to do with the records of income and expenditures of the school together with the statement of planning and budgeting. They also added that, financial records provide information for checks and balances as well as guiding against loss of confidence in the school by parents/guardians. Adequate financial records contribute significantly to the administration of public secondary schools so as to have total control of school finance and to appraise the financial growth of the school. In addition, Mbiti in Adekola (2022) stated that financial record keeping is very essential in an organization and school administration in order to maintain administrative effectiveness, academic excellence and development. The author goes on to say that without financial records keeping, no proper accountability would be made. It is important for an administrator to appoint a financial expert or an accountant who has been trained to keep financial records. Financial records would enable the administrator to arrive at a better financial decision. Therefore, there is need to have a good record of the school finance to enable management plan effectively and monitor the planning and also to be able appraise the financial growth of the school.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that keeping of adequate records have a great influence on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school administrators, principals and vice principals should ensure that effective administrative records are kept in all public secondary schools in Benue State.
2. The school administrators, principals and vice principals should ensure that effective financial records are kept in all public secondary schools in Benue State.

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