



DIGITALIZATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL RECORDS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated digitalization and the management of school records in secondary schools in Imo State. It adopted correlation research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population is made up of 2165 teachers from the 71 public secondary schools in Owerri education zone of Imo State. The sample random and proportionate sampling techniques from each of the schools in the LGAs. The two instruments for data collection for this study were Digitalization Scale (DS) with 20 items and principals management of school record scale (PMSRS) with 20 items having 4 points rating scale. The instruments were validated and found reliable with indices of 0.81 and 0.78 for DS and PMSRS respectively using Cronbach alpha method. Data were collected and 321 copies indication 99% return rate. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficiency (PPMCC) to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using t – test of significance of correlation at a $P < 0.05$ level of significance. It was found among others that there is a positive relationship between digitalization and students record management. Very high positive relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records in secondary schools. It was recommended among others that school records should be digitalized.

Keywords: Digitalization, management and school records

Introduction

The creation and management accurate, up -to- date information regarding a student academic career is critically important in secondary schools. Record keeping is a crucial factor in determining the school system. It is an essential management process in the system. As enrollment in schools increases globally on a daily bases available resources become over stressed. Adequate record keeping of the human and material resources is needed to address the issue of ever increasing enrollment. There is a need to keep record of all school activities as part of effective schooladministration. Record keeping and the management of records is a vital responsibility of the school administrator because of the indispensable role of the records and information in the day to day activities of the school system. School managers rely on the short and long term data captured in records to make effective decisions about immediate issues and more comprehensive school policies (Amanchukwu&Ololube 2017).

Osukwa (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 as needed. Such records are kept by principals, teachers, counsellors and administrative staff. Ibara (2010) asserts that without records there can be no accountability. He further maintained that quality performance taste accomplishment and measurable outcomes are increasingly important responsibilities all of which depends on accessibility of usable records. Without access to records, it is virtually impossible to determine responsibility for actions and to hold individuals accountable for their actions. The purpose of record keeping therefore is for effective school management to ensure that accurate and proper records and



kept of students' achievement and growth, for school activities and matters that will promote school efficiency and effectiveness.

School records includes those pertaining the personal details of pupils, along with those of their academic performance, assessments and examination results, school policies; minutes of school – based meetings; including information received from ministry of education and their education bodies. According to Ololube (2013) school records comprise of all existing and accessible records, books, files and other documents containing useful information that relates to what goes on in the school system. Those records may also be in the form of reports, letters, memos, pictures, films, journals, diaries and so on.

Onuorah&Ezenna (2023) asserts that school records must be comprehensive, available, accessible and secured. This implies that records must contain adequate information which is needed for the smooth running of school activities. Schools records are grouped into statutory and non – statutory records. Statutory records include admission/withdrawal register, scheme of work, timetable logbook, visitor's books (educational policy book), time/movement books, school diary, lesson plan/note for teachers, examination record books, punishment book, staff minute book, inspection/supervision report file etc. non – statutory records are cash book, stock book, school calendar, inventory book, school magazine, confidential report forms and requisition book.

School record management according to Onuorah and Ezenna (2023) are those meaningful activities and roles rendered by school administrators (principals and staff) to maintain and keep an up – to date regarding the school. School record management is of paramount value this is because it is the basis through which effective and efficient school administration can be achieved. Record management also deals with the documentation of data to its utmost update towards achieving any organizational goals. It is central in the administration of institution of learning because it documents the planning and implementation of appropriate course of service allowing for proper monitoring. The efforts of school principals and staff to preserve and retrieve the information of an individual staff and students and make use of them when there is a need is referred to as school record management.

According to Dada (2020) record is a brainbox of information packaged in different formats that lives after the death of the creator from generation to generation. In most of the academic institutions, records come in various format from digital to hybrid copies and could be stored in physical or cloud based spaces. There records in whatever format, type and storage are vital assets that must be properly managed. Effective record keeping is tantamount to effective management. Record management leads to the achievement of organizational goals.

Theoretical and empirical research shows that good records management benefits institutions (Mukred&Yuof 2020).Such benefits include effective design, planning, supervision and monitoring of programmes, (Falola, Capillas, Vergarra&Carbitto, 2022), efficient financial management, a fair distribution of resources among all units, performance and educational needs of students and better teaching and learning facilities (Mabara, 2020). Moreover, proper management of records may help concussed students recover faster and avoid academic damage, (Carzoo et al 2015).

Empirical research has shown many problems in institutional record management from the perspective of the main stakeholders. In this age and time, many schools still use the manual system of keeping records on paper. This record preservation method are obsolete and record retrieval were slow and sometimes impossible, (Mukred&Yusof 2020). Due to the reliance on paper, students' records may be lost or damaged. Paper records take up space and time to retrieve when needed. As a result, the absence of requisite records and record management apparatus has been shown to undermine accountability,task accomplishment and evaluation by school managers (Ibara, 2010).

Saclin, Sushil &Jairaj 2016), posit that institution have always relied on paper records which is a traditional way of managing students' data, which have shown a lot of drawbacks to this method. They opined that to convey information to students it should be displayed in the notice board and the students had to visit the notice board to check that information. It takes a very long time to convey the information to the student. Proper records are difficult to manage and track. The physical exertion required retrieving, altering and refile the paper records are all non-value added activities. Academic institutions typically generatedate in non-delimitated files for use by variousunits within the school, with the same data appearing on multiple files. For Eludire (2011), a simple address change could need to be processed twice and possibly three or four times, depending on the number of other files that contain the data. Okumbo&Todo (2020) asserts that



incorrect registration, late release of students results, inaccuracy due to manual and tedious calculation and retrieval difficulties/inefficiency are all issues with students' academic record management. As the use of computers and other information and communication technology infrastructure grows, so does the need for electronic records to improve productivity (Falolo et al). Organizations are now in a paperless era where all papers will fade away. Covering existing or new paper records to electronic format is becoming an increasingly important issue for record management in secondary schools. This has made significant contributions to education and student record management as these sectors efficiency and effectiveness have relied heavily on digitalization, especially in the last three decade. These days, the use of digitalization in students' record management is seen as a boost to accuracy, timeliness and professionalization. According to Toyo (2017), digitalization of students records have made its management and generation easier, faster and more organized. Digitalization in education refers to the process of converting analog information into digital form, thereby enabling easier storage and access to data.

Digitalization is the process of converting physical records into digital format. Confirmed by the Nigerian standard in the policy of information and documentation in implementation guidelines for digitalization of records, papers and digitalization is a process of converting hardcopy or non – digital records into digital format supported by National Archives and Record Administration in the article of strategy for Digitalizing Archival materials for strategy for public Access 2015 – 2024, Page 3. Digitalizing is a process of preserving the records for further use in visual form. Digitalization of educational records comes with enormous benefits, such as improved record security, space and cost savings, faster access to information, enhanced data analysis, reduced risk of document loss or damage, improved collaboration, streamlined admissions, processes and reduced environmental impact. Digitalizing educational records can help reduce the environmental impact of educational institutions. By eliminating the need for physical storage and paper – based documentation, educational institutions reduce their carbon footprint and promote sustainability. Owing to the overrating benefits of digitalization of school records, the researchers wonder if educational managers in Imo State secondary schools have leveraged on its numerous benefits for easy documentation and retrieval of student's records in Imo state secondary schools.

Statement of the problem

The presence of the Covid – 19 pandemic problems has forced students, teachers and schools to experience or encourage a taste of digital technology based education. During the lockdown many students, educational managers and stakeholders complained of their inability to retrieve students' records for use as the system of operation at that time recounted around the use of ICT. Schools with digitalized records were able to meet up to the needs of the students. The absence of digital records has posed a problem to secondary schools in Imo state. He researcher wants to investigate digitalization and the management of school records in secondary schools in Imo state

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate digitalization and the management of school records in Imo state secondary school. Specifically, the researcher sets to examine:

1. The relationship between digitalization and students record management in secondary schools.
2. The relationship between digitalization and principals management of school records in secondary schools.

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between digitalization and student record management in secondary schools.
2. What is the relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records in secondary schools?

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

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between digitalization and student record management in secondary schools.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records in secondary schools.

Method



The researcher adopted a correlational design for this study. The population of the study is made up of 2165 teachers from the 71 public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone 1 of Imo State. The sample for this study is 325 teachers drawn from the population of 2165 representing 15% of the entire population. The sampling was done through simple random and proportionate sampling techniques from each of the schools in the L.G.As. The two instruments for data collection for this study were: digitalization scale (DS) with 20 items and Principals Management of School Record Scale (PMSRS) with 20 items having 4 point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) - 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. The instruments were validated and found reliable with indices of 0.81 and 0.78 for DS and PEMS respectively using Cronbach alpha method. During the data collection for the study, 4 copies were lost while 321 copies were returned indicating 99% return rate. This number was used for the analysis. Data that were collected through the instruments were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using t – test of significance of correlation at a $P < 0.05$ level of significance.

Results

Research question one: What is the relationship between digitalization and students record management in secondary schools?

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between digitalization and students record management in secondary schools.

Table 1

Summary of analyses concerning research question 1 and hypothesis 1

Variables	N	E	R	DF	tcal	t tab	Decision
D		321	4003				moderate
				0.55	319	11.90	relationship
5RM		321	3925				H_0 significant

Table above shows the summary of t – test significance of correlation coefficient statistics of the relationship between digitalization and students' record management in secondary schools. It was indicated on the table the sample number is 321 with a coefficient of 0.55 at 319 degree of freedom, the t – cal of 11.90 is significantly greater than the t – tab of 1.96 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and accepting that there is a significant relationship between digitalization and students record management in secondary schools.

Research question two: What is the relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records in secondary schools?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between digitalization and principals' effective management in secondary schools.

Table 2.

Summary of analyses concerning research question 2 and hypothesis 2.

Variables	N	E	R	DF	tcal	t tab	Decision
D		321	4003				very high
				0.85	319	29.17	relationship
PMSR	321	4018					H_0 significant

It was shown on table 2 that with sample size of 321, the correlation coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The t – cal of 0.85 significantly greater than the t – tab of 1.96 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and concluding that there is a significant relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records in secondary schools.

Discussion of findings



The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between digitalization and students record management in secondary schools. This implies that there is a magnitude tendency for digitalization to have a link with management of students' record. This can as well mean that digitalization is one of the factors that will help in the management of students' record. If digitalization of records practiced in secondary schools it will help in facilitating and accelerating students records to meet up with the needs of the students. This finding is in consonance with Mukred and Yusof (2020) study which showed that the use of digitalization in students' record management is a boost to accuracy, timelessness and professionalism. Falolis et al (2022) concluded that digitalization of students' records makes its management and generation easier, faster and this finding is in consonance with Matina&Ngulube (2019) which showed that record management had a significant impact on school administration and promotes good governance.

The study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between digitalization and principals' effective management of school records in secondary schools. This finding shows that there is a strong association between digitalization and management of school records in secondary schools management. This finding is also in agreement with Onuorah and Ezeora (2023) who observed that school records management is the basis through which effective and efficient school administration can be achieved and more so in achieving organizational goals.

Falolo et al (2022) also found out that effective record management in academic institutions provides well organized, properly stored and easily retrieved information. They asserts that if the academic records are in place, the administrative tasks are easier and the records released services are faster and accurate.

Conclusion

He study concluded that digitalization of school records in Imo state secondary schools constitutes to effective management of records. Thus, there is a significant relationship between digitalization and relationship between digitalization and principals' management of school records.

Recommendations

1. Secondary schools should use digital systems in school records management.
2. Government should provide a data base management system for secondary schools in Imo state.

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