# Records Management Strategies in Secondary Schools in Esan-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study examined the Records Management Strategies in Secondary Schools in Esan-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research survey design. The sample of the study was 136 respondents made up of 12 school principals, 114 teachers and 10 administrative staff in the 12 public senior secondary schools in the local government area. The data collected by the means of questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages. Results revealed the types of records that were available in the schools; the storage facilities of obsolete cupboards, open shelves and drawers; the poor records management strategies with very low impact of records management in the schools' administration; various challenges, among others were also uncovered. The paper suggested the integration of open sources and cloud-based Computer School Records Management System (CSRMS) using software like Edmatix, Fefena, Alma, Gradelink SIS, Class 365, iGradeplus, Fekara, Gibbon, etc, which are comprehensive with fine interface designs for school records system.*

**Key words:** Records Management, Secondary Schools, School Administration, Storage facilities

**Introduction**

Experts in educational management have specified School records as vital resources devoted to the strategic administration of a school system. Adesode (2021) specified the school records as the official documents use for the effective and efficient planning and administration of a school. Generally, school records are acknowledged to enhance effective planning and operations of appropriate sequence of actions and activities in a school. In policy formulation and implementation, records are the strategic resources for improving the general wellbeing and performances of the students, the teachers and the school administrators.

Explicitly, without school records, the organization and administration of a school system would be practically impossible to carry carryout. No doubt Yunus, Hashim & Kamal (2016) affirmed that the records are the valuable asset with which a school is properly managed. Amanchukwu & Ololube (2015) also defined the school records posited that they are endorsed documents of a school management such as books and files containing essential information of action and events kept in the school office by the principal, teachers, counselors or administrative staff. Similarly, Alabi (2017) averred that school records are the recorded information resources for school management which are sometimes referred to as the encyclopedia of school activities. In another view, Jatto (2021) asserted that school records are documents such as class diaries, admissions/students' registers, result sheets, visitors' note, students/teachers' files, school rosters, notebooks, lesson notes, school calendars, log book, inventory note, etc. for keeping essential information of all activities in a school for reference use. The school records therefore, are designated information recording materials in any format (digital or print) for the organization and management of a school learning and administrative system. They are the power-house or center-point upon which all school programs and activities revolve and strengthens the assurances of confidence of the school stalk holders.

In educational management system, the school records occupy important position. The strategies adopted in managing records are to ensure the security of the records, the accurate and timely availability of information on the academic progress and effort of the students, the teachers and the school management. In developing countries, traditional records systems are today still more prevalent in schools than the digital records. In this digital era, where demands for information are smartly required and delivered, efforts should be at migrating from traditional

records keeping methods to digital records system in Nigerian schools. The Ministry of Education depends on school records to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative and management system of a school. The records help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning processes in a school and the strategies to remedy the situation. Mamud (2022) asserted that school records instruct the teachers on what to teach, the resources to use and the methods of instruction and evaluation.

But despite the values and importance of school records as an effective and efficient management instrument, a growing number of research studies have lamented the woes of irretrievable records and poor management strategy of records in many Nigerian secondary schools. Essentially, school records are needed to formulate, monitor and implement policies including managing the personnel and financial matters of the school. In schools where records are poorly kept or not available for needed information, there are band to be confusion, lack of trust, uncertainty and poor evaluation of students, teachers and management performances. School records therefore, occupies strategic position in a school overall management system. It is on this premise, that this study investigated the secondary school records management strategies in Esan-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, to ascertain the situation on ground and make suggestions where necessary.

**Objectives of the Study**

Generally, this study seeks to investigate the records management strategies of secondary schools in Esan-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. The types of school records available in the secondary schools
2. The storage facilities for the schools' records
3. The records management strategies in the schools
4. The level of impact of the school records management strategies on the schools' administration
5. The challenges militating against records management in the schools

**Method**

The study adopted the survey investigation method with use of questionnaire to elicit data from respondents. The sample population of study was 136 respondents made up of the principals, teachers and administrative staff in 12 public senior secondary schools in the local government area. The data collected were analyzed using tables and simple percentages for easy and further appraisal of the situation on ground.

**Review of Related Literature**

Many authors such as Abel (2020) and Odeniyi & Adeyanju (2020) Ujah (2021) have in their respective studies, identified various types of school records to include students' registers, admission files, withdrawal register, logbook, time-table, staff appraisal forms, certificates of results, inventory notebook, lesson notes, visitors notebook, staff movement book, receipt booklets, diaries, teachers/students' rosters, the school calendars, etc. Similarly, Ibraheem (nd) posited the school records as historical or reference documents with necessary information to ensure the smooth operations of the school.

In another development, Jesuorobo & Anyiam (2020) asserted that records keeping is part of a school information management strategy. Citing Egwunyenga (2009), Jesuorobo & Anyiam (2020) described the school records as major information resources kept to sustain a school in achieving its educational goals and objectives. Correspondingly, Danso (2022) and Koma (2022) posited records keeping as an important segment of a school management strategy. Both authors asserted that preservation of records is the implementation of strategy that enhances the long and useable life of records and archives. On another hand, Alabi (2017) emphasized on standards as necessary to ensure fragile records are archived for continue access as long as the information contained are relevant.

Adesode & Obosaye (2021) in a study of ten designated secondary school records management in Benin City, Edo State, lamented the non-availability of certain essential school records in seven of the schools studied. A case in point was one where no class register and other related records were available to confirm a student's details after five years of graduation from the school. Similarly, Samide (2016) studied the availability and use of school records in some senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The study revealed the apathy with which some school

heads allowed linking roofs and vandals to destroy certain school records. The study identified such problems as damage to school records, broken windows and doors to offices with no burglary proof, poor records storage facilities in many of the schools, etc.

In another development, Mohammed (2016) in a study of school records management facilities in some public secondary schools in Zaria, Kaduna State, described the inattention to the school records as very pitiable. On another hand, Udo (2018) studied the school records keeping in Port Harcourt metropolis and lamented lack of records managers, poor records management skills with staff associated the records keeping and poor records storage facilities in keeping the school records. According to Udoh (2018), school records should be treated as part of national heritage.

Idiedo (2022) studied the impact of school records management practice to the performance of school administration in Yenogoa, Bayelsa State and reported that though the school authorities made efforts to manage some school records, there was no uniform structures in place for that purpose. The study noted unsystematic and disorganized records keeping and management in the schools. Adeyemo (2019) posited that for records management to be effective in schools, government should as a matter of policy make provisions for training records managers with modern skills and storage facilities for secondary schools in Nigeria. Jatto (2021) suggested the provisions and applications of computers for better records keeping. In the same vain, Mamud (2022) asserted that educational organizations should provide useful records storage device to secure records from fire, thief and other hazards. Attah-Udoh (2021) affirmed that storage equipment must permit easy access to records. Amanchukwa & Ololube (2015), Danso (2022), Asamonye, Ogbonaya & Osuagwu (2019) recommended several storage equipment in case of fire to include metal steel or wooden equipment treated with flame retardant to fire ignition. Others include open file shelves such as the mobile shelves, rotary cabinets, pull-out shelves, and bi-file shelve, basket, tray, etc.

Looking at the importance of records management in organization, the World Bank in 2010 listed some skills requirements for records managers to include ability to restructure existing records systems, manage current records with innovations for physical protections and manage archival. On another note, Adesode (2021) opined that the primary function of a record manager is to create a system that facilitates the free flow and access to records and ensure security of the

information through efficient and effective management program. In a related view, Rebore (2019) & Adejomo (2021) asserted that school principals have the overall responsibility to manage records generated in the school and safeguard the control and use of records in a way to meets the goals of policy management.

Records management policy is essential in Nigerian secondary school to safeguard school information. A good records management system must guarantee cost effectiveness, completeness of records, accurate quality of the records, relevance of the information, timeliness, flexibility of retrieval and use, etc. Mamud (2022) noted the problems of records management in Nigerian secondary schools to include lack of skilled records personnel, poor storage equipment, insecurity in the schools, lack of finance, government apathy to records management in the sector, etc. In this modern time, where technology holds so much for the educational sector, Jatto (2021) recommended digital records management systems for the Nigerian schools. According to this author, ICT helps to improve records control management, compliance with standards cost effectiveness and time management. Correspondingly, Adedeji (2019) also remarked that electronic records management system is better to secure organizational information records, improved control access, ensure compliance with standards, reduced operational cost, saves time and space, etc. Kashyap (2016) also noted that e-records increase records management efficiency, help to detect fraud, recovered lost information, etc.

**Data Analysis**
**Research Question 1.** What types of records are available in the schools?
**Table 1: Frequency (Freq.) and Percentages (%) of Records Available (AV) and Not Available (NAV)**

| S/N | Types of School Records | AV Freq. (%) | NAV Freq (%) | Remark |
|-----|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------|
| 1. | Admission/Withdrawal Registers | 120 (88.2%) | 16 (11.8%) | AV |
| 2. | Class Register | 136 (100%) | 0 (0%) | AV |
| 3. | Logbook | 130 (95.6%) | 06 (4.4%) | AV |
| 4. | Scheme of work/Lesson Plan/Notes | 118 (86.8%) | 18 (13.2%) | AV |
| 5. | Weekly Diaries | 126 (92.6%) | 10 (7.4%) | AV |
| 6. | Students' result sheets | 118 (86.7%) | 16 (11.7%) | AV |
| 7. | Lesson Time-table | 136 (100%) | 0 (0%) | AV |
| 8. | Punishment Book | 45 (33.1%) | 91 (66.9%) | NAV |
| 9. | Certificates | 136 (100%) | 0 (0%) | AV |

| 10. | Cash Book | 20 (14.7%) | 110 (80.9%) | NAV |
| 11 | Syllabuses/past exam papers | 105 (77.2%) | 31 (22.8%) | AV |
| 12. | School Rosters | 136 (100%) | 0 (0%) | AV |
| 13. | Inventory notes | 89 (65.4%) | 47 (34.6%) | AV |
| 14. | Staff files | 26 (19.1%) | 110 (80.9%) | NAV |
| 14 | Staff Time Book | 136 (100%) | 0 (0%) | AV |

Table 1 above revealed the frequency and percentages of records available and not available records in the schools. From the table, majority of respondents scored very high records that are available in the schools except for punishment book, cash book and staff files which the respondents scored: 91 (66.9%), 110 (80.9%) and 110 (80.9%) as not available (NAV) respectively.

**Research Question 2.** What storage facilities are available for records management in the schools?

**Table 2. Percentage Rating of Opinion of Respondents on Records Storage Facilities in the Schools**

| S/N | Storage Facilities | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Open shelves | 77 (59.6%) | 34 (25%) | 21 (15.4%) | 4 (2.9%) |
| 2. | Drawers | 53 (38.9%) | 42 (30.8%) | 38 (27.9%) | 3 (2.2%) |
| 3. | Cupboards | 111 (81.6%) | 21 (15.4%) | 4 (2.9%) | 0 (0%) |
| 4. | Vaults (safe deposit box) | 13 (9.5%) | 10 (7.4%) | 67 (49.3%) | 46 (33.8%) |
| 5. | Computer system | 2 (1.4%) | 2 (1.2%) | 12 (8.8%) | 120 (88.2%) |
| 6. | Pigeon holes | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 10 (7.4%) | 126 (92.6%) |
| 7. | Manilas | 21 (15.4%) | 15 (11%) | 39 (28.6%) | 61 (44.8%) |
| 8. | Safe baskets | 5 (3.6%) | 14 (10.3%) | 52 (38.2%) | 65 (47.7%) |
| 9. | Wooden/Metal Boxes | 8 (5.8%) | 11 (8%) | 42 (30.8%) | 75 (55.1%) |

Table 2 above showed the types of storage facilities; in the schools. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed to use of Cupboards, Open Shelves and Drawers as indicated by 111 (58.6%), 77 (59.6%   ) and 53 (38.9%) respectively; while the respondents strongly disagreed to use of Pigeon Holes 126 (92.6%), Computer Systems 120 (88.2%), Safe Baskets 65 (47.7%,),

Wooden/Metal Boxes 75 (55.1%), Manilas 61 (44.8%) and use of Vaults (safe deposit boxes) scored 67 (49.3%).

**Research Question 3.** What records management strategies are in the schools?

**Table 3. Percentage Rating of Respondents on Records Management Strategies in the Schools**

| S/N | Records Management Strategies | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Use of records management professionals | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 50 (36.7%) | 86 (63.2%) |
| 2. | Use of indexing records systems | 35 (25.7%) | 19 (13.9%) | 40 (29.4%) | 77 (56.5%) |
| 3. | Use of standard data-bases for records | 41 (30.1%) | 22 (16.1%) | 61 (44.8%) | 12 (8.8%) |
| 4. | Regular in-service training programs for records managers | 12 (8.8%) | 40 (29.4%) | 23 (16.9%) | 61 (44.8%) |
| 5. | Use of modern records storage Facilities | 36 (26.4%) | 15 (11.0%) | 31 (22.7%) | 54 (39.7%) |
| 6. | Availability of adequate funds for the records maintenance | 27 (19.8%) | 13 (9.5%) | 46 (33.8%) | 50 (36.7%) |
| 7. | Regular evaluation of the records and Archiving | 36 (26.4%) | 31 (22.7%) | 16 (11.7%) | 53 (38.9%) |
| 8. | Use of computers and standards for Records keeping | 15 (11.0%) | 23 (16.9%) | 40 (29.4%) | 58 (42.6%) |

Table 3 revealed the records management strategies in the schools. From the results, respondents Strongly Disagree (SD) to the following strategies: Use of records management professionals 86 (63.2%); Use of indexing records systems 77 (56.5%); Regular in-service training programs 61 (44.8%); Use of computers and standards for records keeping 58 (42.6%); Regular evaluation of records and archiving 53 (38.9%) and Use of modern records storage facilities 54 (39.7%). Respondents disagreed to Use of standard databases for records by 61 (44.8%).

**Research Question 4.** What is the level of impact of the records management strategies on the schools' administration?

**Table 4. Percentage Rating of Respondents on Levels of Impact of Records Management strategies on the Schools**

| S/N | Management Impacts | Very High | High | Low | Very Low |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | What is on ground helps to safe-guide school information | 26 (19.1%) | 14 (10.2%) | 96 (70.5%) | 0 (0%) |
| 2. | Enhances planning and coordination of school activities | 6 (4.4%) | 81 (59.5%) | 49 (36.0%) | 0 (0%) |

| S/N | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Ensures free flow of information within the schools | 10 (7.3%) | 44 (32.3%) | 56 (41.1%) | 26 (19.1%) |
| 4. | Facilitates improved teaching and Learning | 10 (7.3%) | 121 (88.9%) | 5 (3.6%) | 0 (0%) |
| 5. | Safe-guide school properties and Ensure continuity | 4 (2.9%) | 36 (26.4%) | 12 (8.8%) | 87 (63.9%) |
| 6. | Enhances proper accountability by School Heads | 8 (5.8%) | 23 (16.9%) | 41 (30.1%) | 64 (47.0%) |
| 7. | Guarantees information on students, teachers and school performance | 15 (11.0%) | 109 (80.1%) | 12 (8.8%) | 10 (7.3%) |
| 8. | Enhances rating of schools by the Ministry of Education | 44 (32.3%) | 56 (41.1%) | 26 (19.1%) | 10 (7.3%) |

Table 4 revealed respondents rating of the level of impact of records management on schools' administration. Respondents rated High: Facilitates improved teaching and learning high by 121 (88.9%); Guarantees information on students, teachers and school performance 109 (80.1%); Enhances planning and coordination of school activities 81 (59.5%) and Enhances rating of schools by the Ministry of Education 56 (41.1%). What is on ground helps to safe-guide school information was rated LOW by 96 (70.5%). Respondents rated VERY LOW: Safe-guide school properties and ensure continuity by 87 (63.9%) and Enhances proper accountability by school Heads by 64 (47.0%), etc.

**Research Question 5.** What are the challenges associated with Records Management in the schools?

**Table 5. Percentage Rating of Respondents on Challenges of Records Management in the Schools**

| S/N | Challenges | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Lack of financial provisions | 120 (88.2%) | 16 (11.7%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| 2. | Absence of records specialist | 112 (82.3%) | 10 (7.3%) | 14 (10.2%) | 0 (0%) |
| 3. | Poor storage facilities | 130 (95.6%) | 6 (4.4%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| 4. | Apathy to records keeping by school. | 16 (11.7%) | 14 (10.2%) | 20 (14.7%) | 86 (63.2%) |
| 5. | Insecurity and vandalism | 124 (91.1%) | 6 (4.4%) | 4 (2.9%) | 2 (1.4%) |
| 6. | Inability to manage natural disasters | 85 (62.5%) | 6 (4.4%) | 36 (26.4%) | 9 (6.6%) |
| 7. | Inability to trace certain records | 106 (77.9%) | 20 (14.7%) | 10 (7.3%) | 0 (0%) |

Table 5 revealed the challenges of records management in the schools. Respondents Strongly Agree (SA) to the following challenges: Poor storage facilities 130 (95.6%); Insecurity

and vandalism 124 (91.1%); Lack of financial provisions, 120 (88.2%); Absence of records specialist, 112 (82.3%), inability to trace certain records 106 (77.9%) and inability to manage natural disasters 85 (62.5%). The respondents Strongly Disagree (SD) to Apathy to records keeping by school authority 86 (63.2%).

**Discussion of findings**

The study shows records available and not available for administration in the schools studied. This finding collaborates with Ujah (2016), Abel (2020), Odeniyi & Adeyanju (2020) and Ibraheem (nd) who in their respective studies identified certain school records available in Nigerian secondary schools to include admission/class registers, Logbooks, diaries, time-books, movement books, lesson timetables, school calendars, inventory notes and certificates as also identified in the present study.

The study also discovered certain records storage facilities in the schools. These were merely traditional open shelves, cupboards and drawers. This finding supports Idiedo (2022) study on the impact of school records management practice to the performance of school administration in Yenogoa, Bayelsa State and reported that although the school authorities made efforts to manage some school records, there was no uniform system involved; the records were unsystematic and haphazardly kept and managed. Computers storage facilities were almost non-existence. Kashyap (2016) and Jatto (2021) asserted in their respective studies that electronic storage systems increase efficiency and productivity, detect fraud and help to recover lost records in an organization. Electronic systems enhances systematic control of records, cost effectiveness, accurate quality records, relevance, timeliness and flexibility of information records storage, retrieval and use. Secondary schools in the state should begin to apply computer storage systems for school records so as to meet global best practices.

On records management strategies, majority of the schools have very poor records keeping strategies. Respondents scored all the schools very low on use of records management professionals, in-service training for school records managers and availability of funds for records management. This finding is in agreement with Adesode (2021) who postulated that Nigerian secondary schools lacked records management experts and essential records management strategies to secure quick access to information. A school records system should be able to provide a simple good classification of records in logical order with fine labeling arrangement in cabinet

drawers, ensure tracking of records and periodical maintenance. This is critical to achieving effective records keeping system in the schools, strengthen the records keeping and management strategies and address issues relating to policy appraisal of school records, etc.

From this study, it is observed that despite the application of ICT, in all most all aspect of education, secondary schools in the Local Government Area have not embraced technology not to talk of applying it for records management. Jatto (2021) advocated compulsory applications of ICTs in Nigerian secondary education in line with advanced best practices. The author also affirmed that ICT provides records control management, compliance with standards, operational cost effectiveness and time management of information in organizations.

During the study, the researchers furthermore observed some ugly challenges bedeviling records management in the schools to include poor storage facilities of obsolete open shelves, some of which were broken with the records covered with dust which indicated lack of maintenance and care. Mamud (2022) lamented similar challenges of school records in her studies. According to this author, the storage facilities were old-fashioned and needed urgent replacement. The Ministry of Education responsible for monitoring schools should provide policy guidelines to assist school management authorities safe guide records in Nigerian schools for posterity and national heritage. Secondary schools in Edo state and in fact in the country should be provided with computer systems for both teaching and administration as is down in advanced countries.

**Conclusion**

It has been established that school records are critical for effective school administration, safety of information and ease of access to needed information using modern records management systems. But this has not be established in the secondary schools studied in this local government area in Edo State. The records available in the schools and the storage facilities were very poor, the schools lacked skilled records managers with poor impact records management on the schools administration, there was no plan yet in place for digital records management systems in the schools, etc. All these are bound to affect effective school management in modern time. The state government and the Ministry of Education in charge of the government schools must urgently review this trend. The government through her Ministry of Education should, as a matter of policy, help these schools by integrating Computer School Records Management System (CSRMS) using any of such software as Edmatix, Fefena, Alma, Gradelink SIS, Class 365, iGradeplus, Fekara,

Gibbon, etc, which are available as open sources and cloud-based. These packages have been proven to be all comprehensive with fine interface designs for school records system.

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