
**DIGITIZED RECORD KEEPING PRACTICES, SCHOOL-BASED DECISION-MAKING
AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigated digitized record keeping practices, school-based decision making and administrative effectiveness of senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria. To achieve this objective, one research question was answered and two hypotheses were tested. Population consisted of all Principals, Vice Principals (Administration), Education Maintenance and Information System (EMIS) Officers and teachers from 327 Public Senior Secondary Schools in the six Education Districts of Lagos State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 101 principals, 101 vice principals (administration) and 101 EMIS Officers while simple random sampling technique was used to choose 505 teachers. The instruments used in collecting data were Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals Questionnaire (AESSPQ) ($r = 0.812$), School-based Decision-making Questionnaire (S_bDMQ) ($r = 0.842$) and Digitized Record-Keeping Practices Questionnaire (DRKPQ) ($r = 0.955$). All the instruments were also subjected to validity testing and taken through a pilot study. Findings of the study revealed that there is a negative and non-significant relationship between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria ($r = -.127, p <$

0.05); school-based decision-making does not significantly relate with administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria ($r = -.059, p < 0.05$);. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended among others that government at all levels should provide necessary support for implementing and maintaining digital record-keeping systems such as adequate infrastructure, ICT experts, and internet connectivity.

Keywords: Digitized, Record Keeping Practices, Decision-making, Administrative effectiveness

Introduction

Administrative effectiveness is an administrator's capability to harness available resources in an organization to achieve pre-determined goals. Administrative effectiveness is multi-faceted and is observed in the way an organizational leader manages the operations, correspondences, and activities of the organization. OkonEffong (2015) described administrative effectiveness as the outcome of an administrator's role as a human resource manager, implementer of policies and programmes, finance manager, community relations officer, disciplinarian, as well as an enhancer of creativity. Administrative effectiveness is therefore the result of the leadership prowess in achieving organizational goals.

Administrative effectiveness is important in educational institutions where the primary objective is human capacity development, since education is considered the vehicle to develop intellect for creativity and to teach values and tolerance that promote economic, social, cultural and political development of nations and individual (Ayushi, 2018). Effective educational administration thus ensures that school activities run efficiently in ways that enhance realization of the stated educational objectives whether in preprimary, primary, secondary, post-secondary or tertiary institutions.

A well administered secondary school has a seasoned administrative team which is effective in the management of teaching and learning systems and processes in ways that improve school performance as well as ensuring that students acquire knowledge, skills, values and habits that empower them to contribute positively to the society. The indicators of administrative effectiveness, according to Adegun, cited in Manafa (2020), include: high productivity, morale (high motivation), turnover rate of teachers, degree of integration, maximization of individual potentialities, maximum utilization of available resources and value contributions to the society.

Teaching and learning form the core objective of secondary schools and attaining this core objective is anchored on the adequate provision and management of the basic school records. No system, be it school or otherwise, can be effectively and efficiently run without proper management of its records. Therefore, the school system provides an atmosphere for conducive teaching and learning

and the school record is only one of the means through which this can be achieved. (Amaefule & Eshiet, 2021). The purpose of secondary schools can only be achieved through effective administration which helps to bring about an optimum achievement and one of the most important aspects is record keeping (Alabi, 2017).

Records can be stored in two forms namely manual and electronic methods. Manual storage system involves keeping records in form of printed materials on the files, the shelves or in the drawers, while electronic method involves storing of vital information in electronic devices such as computers, flash drives, card readers and disks. Electronic record keeping systems are information that are created and stored in Digitized form through the use of electronic facilities and gadgets.

As conservatives, most schools in Nigeria have continued to stick to paper and file cabinet based method of keeping and managing records. In spite of the increasing number of offices with desktops and laptop computers, administrative officers seem not to have fully embraced digital record keeping practices. Operationally, digital record keeping practices refer to the adoption of emerging technological platforms in creating, storing, retrieving, sharing, and discarding data and information content in formal organizations (Nwanguma-Kakaro & Emenike, 2021). Electronic record keeping deals with the keeping of record in electronic facilities such as computers, hard disks, compact disks and flash drives.

Digitization of school record is the act of creating and maintaining records in organization through digital system that enable the authorities take goal oriented decision and assess the progress of the organization at a glance or holistically. Digitization of school record devices can hold and store information both temporarily and permanently. Digitize school record tools includes cloud storage, internet content sharing and document control. According to Sabastine (2024), the cloud storage is managed remotely and made available over a network. Basic features are free to use but upgraded version is paid monthly as a per consumption rate. In the view of Krishna (2019), it is a way of storing data online through ICT instead of a local computer, which requires an internet connection in order to upload, modify, and share documents.

In the twenty-first century, school record is digitized to achieve administrative effectiveness, it is no more necessary for organizations to keep records in files and drawers for fear of being vulnerable to destruction by rodents, fire, flood and the like. Proper school records in the twenty-first century is done by digitized system, electronically, as enhanced information management system that involve the use of cloud and internet. This system could save secondary school administrators from the embarrassment which may likely occur when records are inappropriately kept, which could hinder decision-making process and likely make schools ineffective.

Administrative effectiveness is also a function of principals' effective decision-making. The level at which the principal attains school objectives is determined by his ability to make crucial decisions. The school principals can review and modify the school programmes to promote good human relations and manage changes in the system as lack of these can create fear, apprehension, and misunderstanding, among other litanies of problems.

Decision-making is an essential component of every organizational management. As opined by Ogbo, Ikedimma, Chukwu and Emere (2021), informed decision-making is very important for schools to remain relevant and competitive to their ever-changing environment. It is even essential for schools because with data driven decision-making, schools are able to know where to channel their limited resources, identify areas of need, improve students' achievement and respond to their most urgent needs. Decision-making without necessary information may at times become very difficult and unrealistic, chaotic, and in some cases may not lead to accurate results (Ogbo *et.al* 2021). This underscores the essence of school records utilization in enhancing administrative decisions for school improvement.

School-based decision making is an important ingredient for organizational attainment of set goals as it allows educators and administrators to make decisions that are tailored to the specific needs of their students and school community (Hallinger & Heck, 2020). This approach recognizes that each school is unique, with its own strengths, challenges, and priorities. By making decisions at the school level, educators and administrators can respond quickly and effectively to changing circumstances, and make decisions that are informed by their knowledge of the local context. School-based decision making promotes a collaborative approach to decision making, where educators, administrators, and other stakeholders work together to make informed decisions (Leithwood, 2020). This implies that decision making is a shared responsibility, and that educators and administrators have a critical role to play in shaping the direction of their school. By working together, educators and administrators can pool their knowledge, expertise, and experience, and make decisions that are informed by a range of perspectives.

School-based decision making is influenced by a range of factors, including the availability and quality of data, the capacity of school leaders to analyze and interpret data, and the degree of autonomy granted to schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2020). Data is critical for informing school-based decision making, as it provides educators and administrators with the information they need to make informed decisions about instructional programs, student services, and school operations. However, the availability and quality of data can vary significantly between schools, and educators and administrators must be able to analyze and interpret data effectively in order to make informed decisions.

The capacity of school leaders to analyze and interpret data is also critical for effective school-based decision making (Leithwood, 2020). School leaders must be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use this data to inform their decision making. This requires school leaders to have a range of skills, including data analysis, problem solving, and decision making. However, school leaders may not always have the capacity to analyze and interpret data effectively, and may require support and training in order to develop these skills.

Hence, school-based decision making is a critical component of effective school leadership, as it allows educators and administrators to make decisions that are tailored to the specific needs of their students and school community. Effective school-based decision making requires a collaborative approach, where educators, administrators, and other stakeholders work together to make informed decisions. However, school-based decision making is influenced by a range of factors, including the availability and quality of data, the capacity of school leaders to analyze and interpret data, and the degree of autonomy granted to schools.

However, records in most public secondary schools in Lagos State are still traditionally kept on pieces of papers stocked away in files, which are packed inside drawers, lockers, book shelves and boxes. Though, Lagos State government has been deploying electronic gadgets across public secondary schools in the state through creation of an Information Technology (IT) platform known as Education Maintenance and Information System (EMIS), which involves the use of electronic record-keeping (memory cards, CD ROMS, flash drives, audio recorders, and other information management devices) for proper record keeping, digitization of records using cloud base storage, interment-content sharing, and document control / folder management to enhance administrative effectiveness of secondary schools still needed to be given more attention. Thus, the education industry is bound to be deprived of useful information that could be used in making critical decisions if traditional methods of record keeping persists in secondary schools. The seeming administrative ineffectiveness experienced in schools could be traced to poor record keeping systems, which usually result into loss of vital information, falsification of data, inadequate retrieval of information as at when needed all of which could lead to administrative ineffectiveness. Therefore, if principals must remain relevant in secondary school administration, their mode of record keeping ought to be digitized in keeping with best global practices for decision-making and administrative effectiveness.

While several studies have been carried out on management and effectiveness of record keeping in secondary schools, literatures on digitizing record-keeping for effective decision-making and administrative effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools are still scanty even when the problems of manual record keeping still persists. Previous researchers such as Okolocha and Baba (2017) and Ereh and Okon (2015) have carried out similar studies but none of them focused on the two variables

combined together (Digitized record keeping practices and school-based decision-making with respect to administrative effectiveness) as considered by the present researcher. Also, majority of the previous researchers carried out their studies in tertiary institutions while the present study would be carried out in public secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The main objective of the study was to examine digitized record keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

6. examine the influence of digitized records keeping practices on administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria.
7. determine the influence of school-based decision-making on administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level:

Ho1 there is no significant relationship between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria;

Ho2 there is no significant relationship between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria;

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive design of survey type. Descriptive survey is a type of design that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. The target population of this study were all Principals and vice principals (Principal cadre), Education Maintenance and Information System (EMIS) Officers, and teachers of Lagos State Public Senior Secondary Schools in the six Education Districts. There are 327 Lagos state public senior secondary schools as presented in Table 1

Table 1 Population of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Each Education District of Lagos State.

Education District	No. of Public Senior Sec. Sch.	Principals	Vice Principals	EMIS Officers	Teachers	Total
I	42	42	42	42	210	336
II	54	54	54	54	270	432

III	66	66	66	66	330	528
IV	46	46	46	46	230	368
V	69	69	69	69	345	552
VI	50	50	50	50	250	400
TOTAL	327	327	327	327	1635	2616

The sample for the study consisted of 808 respondents out of 1962 member of population, drawn from all the six Education Districts of Lagos State, using stratified random sampling, disproportionate sampling, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The instruments used for this study were Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals Questionnaire (AESSPQ), School-based Decision-making Questionnaire (S_bDMQ) and Digitized Record-Keeping Practices Questionnaire (DRKPQ) that were responded to by the Principals (cadre), teachers, and EMIS Officers. Each research instrument has two sections, sections A and B. Section A seek information on personal data of respondents. Section B of Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals Questionnaire (AESSPQ) contained 20 structured items, designed in line with the dimensions of administrative effectiveness highlighted in the purpose of the study, research questions and research hypotheses and was responded to by the teachers. Equally too, Section B of School-based Decision-making Questionnaire (S_bDMQ) contains 15 structured items, designed in line with the purpose of the study, research questions and research hypotheses and was responded to by the principals and vice principals respectively. More so, Section B of Record-Keeping Digitisation Practices Questionnaire (RKDPQ) contains 56 structured items, designed in line with the dimensions of record-keeping digitisation practices highlighted in the purpose of the study, research questions and research hypotheses and was responded to by the EMIS officers. These questionnaires were structured on a four-point Likert rating scale type and scored accordingly on the options of Strongly Agree (SA) _ 4, Agree (A) _ 3, Disagree (D) _ 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) _ 1. The two instruments used in this study were taken through content validity scrutiny, and the six steps for content validity of the instruments were tenaciously followed. These steps are preparing the content validity form, selection of the review panel experts, conduct of the content validity, reviewing the domain and items , provision of score on each item and calculation of the content validity index (Saiful & Yusoff, 2019).

The instruments reliability test was conducted to check the extent of internal consistency of the research instruments. This process identified the flaws in the instrument such as the difficulty in comprehending the items, and ambiguities. Cronbach alpha coefficient of each instrument was calculated after the instruments were administered among 120 respondents from 15 public senior secondary schools which were not part of the study sample in Lagos state. The reliability coefficient

for Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals Questionnaire (AESSPQ) was 0.812 while Digitized Record-Keeping Practices Questionnaire (RKDPQ) was 0.955. Data collected were analysed using inferential statistics. Inferential statistics of Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, while those of Multiple Correlational Analysis and Analysis of Variance were used to test Hypotheses four and five all at 0.05 level of significance and with the aid of computerized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) VERSION 20. The decision rule upon which the hypotheses is accepted or rejected was if the calculated probability value (ρ or p-value) is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, indicating that a significant relationship exists between the variables. Otherwise, if the calculated probability value (ρ or p-value) is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected, indicating that no significant relationship exists between the variables

Results

Hypotheses One:

H₀₁: There is no Significant Relationship between Digitized Records Keeping Practices and Administrative Effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary School Principals in Lagos State, Nigeria

In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation Analysis (PPMCA) was conducted between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals. The scores of responses on items of digitized records keeping practices were computed and used as a single variable to correlate the sum of scores on items of administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship between Digitized Records Keeping Practices and Administrative Effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary School Principals in Lagos State, Nigeria

		Records keeping digitization Practices	Administrative effectiveness
Digitized record keeping Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	-.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.225
	N	93	93
Administrative effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.127	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.225	
	N	377	376

The result of the test performed indicates that there is a weak, negative and non-significant relationship between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria ($r = -.127, \rho > 0.05$). The implication of this is that as digitized records keeping practices increases administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria decreases. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria is hereby not rejected.

Hypotheses Two:

H₀₂: There is no Significant Relationship Between School-Based Decision-making and Administrative Effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary School Principals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

To test the null hypothesis, Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation Analysis (PPMCA) was carried out between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals. The scores of responses on items of school-based decision-making were computed and used as a single variable to correlate the sum of scores on items of administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria

			School-based decision-making	Administrative effectiveness
School-based decision-making	Pearson Correlation		1	-.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.416
	N		190	190
Administrative effectiveness	Pearson Correlation		-.059	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.416	
	N		377	376

Table 4 presents correlation between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria and the results show that there is a very weak, negative and non-significant relationship between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria ($r = -.059, \rho > 0.05$). This implies that school-based decision-making does not statistical significantly relate with administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State,

Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school-based decision-making and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria is hereby not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

From the data analysis above, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between digitized records keeping practices and administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria was not rejected. This finding implies that the adoption of digitized records keeping practices may not necessarily lead to improved administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Several factors may contribute to this negative influence as schools may face difficulties in implementing and maintaining digital record-keeping systems due to inadequate infrastructure, technical expertise, or internet connectivity. It could also be as a result of resistance to change as principals and staff may resist adopting digital record-keeping practices due to familiarity with traditional methods or concerns about data security. Studies by Onweh (2019) and Oke (2020) found similar results, highlighting the challenges of implementing digital record-keeping systems in Nigerian schools. Amaefule and Eshiet (2021), in line with this finding, also observed that many schools used manual method for records management and few used computerized method.

Findings also revealed that school-based decision-making may not be a significant predictor of administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. This is because schools may have limited autonomy to make decisions due to centralized education policies or bureaucratic constraints. Principals and staff could also lack the necessary skills, training, or resources to effectively engage in school-based decision-making. More so, external factors such as funding, community involvement, or parental expectations may influence administrative effectiveness more significantly than school-based decision-making. Studies by Afolabi (2018) and Adeyemi (2020) in support of this finding, emphasized the limitations of school-based decision-making in Nigerian schools. However, Ogbonnaya (2019) argued that school-based decision-making can enhance administrative effectiveness by promoting flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness to local needs.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, it could be deduced that digitized records keeping practices do not necessarily lead to administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals. Also, school-based decision-making do not necessarily lead to administrative effectiveness of public

senior secondary school principals. Hence, it could be deduced that both digitized record keeping practices and school-based decision making does not necessarily relates to administrative effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Government at all levels should provide necessary support for implementing and maintaining digital record-keeping systems such as adequate infrastructure, ICT experts, and internet connectivity.
2. Senior secondary school principals and other staff should embrace 21st century changes by adopting digital record-keeping practices and do less with traditional methods of record keeping.
3. Government should decentralize education policies and remove unnecessary bureaucratic constraints that could hinder senior secondary school authority to make decisions that may enhance their administration

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