

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competency as an Integral Factor in the Improvement of the Head Teachers` Effectiveness in Record Keeping and School Management

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Abstract: - School records are veritable tools that aid the smooth management of the day to day activities of the school. Records give direction to the prompt derivation and computation of all education indicators for evidence based planning, monitoring, evaluation, and administration as well as national and global reporting competitiveness. School records are essential part of school administration as it generates a range of statistics on the entire school activities. These records can also be used to inform the parents and the communities about the school performance, enable school generate information for the monitoring of the education system and also, help in planning and decision making process at the policy level. Despite its enormous importance however, records are poorly kept and managed in most of the Nigerian schools. Poor school records weaken effective school administration which leads to inefficiencies in education management and policy implementation at all levels of education. It is in attempt to address this existing problem of poor record keeping habit by school administrators that this paper haven reviewed researches on same/similar topic conducted elsewhere and the writer`s personal experiences and observations examined how ICT competency of head teachers and school managers will tend to improve their efficiency and effectiveness towards record keeping. The paper also revealed certain factors militating against effective use of ICT by those school heads and managers. Recommendations on how to make the head teachers and school managers become more competent in the use of ICT for effective record keeping and school management was then proffered.

Key Words: Head teacher, Record Keeping and School Management.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria school record keeping and management as part of effective Administration and as a means of ensuring productivity and high level performance has not been given necessary attention that it deserves. Records and record keeping constitute the life wire of every organization (Egwunyenga, 2006) it will be very difficult to efficiently manage any organization like school if records are not kept and properly managed. Over the years, primary schools administrators had paid lip-services to the proper record keeping. The only emphasis as per the school is concern is simply to teach and graduate pupils but the aspect of keeping record is poorly practiced and highly neglected.

There are so many factors undermining effective and efficient record keeping habit in schools one of which is inadequate or badly maintained storage facilities as most of the head teachers are not ICT competent and lack computers and ICT tools for electronic record keeping. Considering the impact records and record keeping has on providing effective administration of any organization like school, it will not be out of place to do anything possible to poster it practice and improve the ability of those entrusted with such responsibility particularly at the school level. To achieve that ultimate goal however, Head teachers need to be competent in the use of ICT in their schools as it transformed the ways in which materials are created, stored, transmitted, communicated, and accessed and at the same time transformed the means and mode of scientific communication.

ICT competency by head teachers and school managers will also enable them to go in line with the technological advancement that greatly contributed to the effective storage and management of school records and the overall school Administration. Many Government and ICT users have recognize the potentials of ICT particularly for economic and social development where distances and traditional system hinders progress. It also provides opportunities for record keeping. Hence the need for Head teachers and school managers to be ICT competent which can enable them to go in line with the technological advancement that greatly contributed to the effective storage and management of school records and the overall school Administration.

II. RECORD AND SCHOOL RECORD DEFINED

Records are information or data on a particular subject collected and preserved (Unisef, 2018). Records can also be refers to any written document where the activities of the school are written (Aleiyideini, 2002).They are information handed down or preserved. They are authentic register of instruments of official accounts of transaction or occurrence which are preserved (Olenrawaju2008) Records in any organization are documents which provide insight in to its developmental process over a period of time. Keeping records often revolves around the life circle of creation, storage,

retention, retrieval and disposition. School records are therefore official documents, books and files containing essential routinely updated information about pupils, school, staff, the quality of teaching, and learning activities taking place during the daily operation of the school. They serve as a bank in which information is deposited in order that the information can be drawn on if and when the need arises. According to UNESCO (2005) a record is a document proof of transaction. Ayodele (2002) sees school record as pieces of information on relevant events about a school” Record keeping in school refer to the organization, maintenance, and sharing of accurate and complete information on the entire school personnel and entire school activities. School records include books, documents, diskettes, and files that contain information on what goes on in school as well as other relevant information pertaining to the growth and development of the school. Ibara (2010) asserts that without records there can be no accountability. He further maintains that quality performance, task accomplishment, and measurable outcomes are increasingly important responsibilities, all of which depend on the 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.

III. IMPORTANCE OF RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping generally concerns the administrative activities that are concerned with achieving cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of the records of educational institutions throughout their entire life cycle and in making the information they contain accessible in support of the school business administration (UNESCO, 2005). Thus, it is essential that records are kept in school for effective administration, because proper record keeping facilitates retrieval of valuable information that might be helpful in day-to-day operations and decision making in school systems globally (Durosaro, 2002). According to Ololube (2013), “the importance of good record keeping transcends into short and long term benefits and affects the overall achievement of educational objectives”.

He further identified some additional and important reasons for records keeping in schools, among these are:

- i. *Accountability:* Record keeping is vital to an education system’s information cycle as a whole, because of its fundamental role in the process of efficient information production and collection. School records are an important means of accountability because they provide proof. Records such as cash books and stock books help to ensure accountability as they show income, expenditures and stock levels in a school. These cash and the stock books can then be made available to auditors on demand for the auditing of school funds and facilities.

- ii. *Decision Making:* School records help school administrators to make decisions. Records provide raw data that enable coherent, balanced and objective decisions on issues such as promotion, student and staff discipline, and teaching and learning performances.
- iii. *Information for Parents:* Parents often want to know how their children or wards perform academically. Records of school report cards and/or end of term results should be kept by schools should parents wish to review or discuss past student performance.
- iv. *Planning:* Accurate data assists educational planners to identify areas of need that should be addressed or accorded priority attention.
- v. *Student Academic Achievement and Behavior:* Certificates and testimonials are issued to graduating students to show how they performed during their studies. Properly kept records can help considerably in the accurate production of thorough certificates/testimonials.
- vi. *Subject Time Table:* School time tables help in the coordination of staff and student activities and work. Keeping track of time tables from year to year can help a school and school administrators determine which combination of classes and teaching assignments work best to optimize teaching and learning.
- vii. *Supervisors/Inspectors:* The availability of records enables supervisors or inspectors to objectively assess student and staff performance and offer advice or proposals for improvement.

IV. TYPES OF SCHOOL RECORDS

Educational management involves planning, controlling, implementing and monitoring of policies, as well as teachers and students activities. It embraces daily management as well as the formulation of short, medium and long-term objectives, policies and strategies in support of the educational goals (Bock, 2011). Good record keeping is critical to the success of any school system, no matter the size and whether or not it is in the public or private (UNESCO, 2005). In the public sector, the rendering of accounts for public scrutiny is a key to accountability in governance (Ololube, 2009). As such, records keeping play a significant role in effective school management, and if records are not well managed, the school management function suffers (Gama, 2010). To this end, school records can be classified into two types: statutory and non-statutory records. Statutory records are records prescribed by education edicts and laws of a state which must be maintained by school administrators. Non-statutory records, while not prescribed by law, are equally as important to the smooth functioning of a school. Among the examples given by Ololube (2013) of the records found in schools and school systems are:

- i. *Admission and withdrawals register:* The admission and withdrawals register shows the names of students that are enrolled each year in various classes in a school and the names of those who withdrew from various classes in the school.
- ii. *Attendance register:* Attendance register shows the daily record of student attendance in each class in the school. At the end of every term, the class teacher closes the register and submits it to the school head to crosscheck and sign.
- iii. *Class timetable:* Class timetables are a record of how, when and where classes are held. These keep students organized and informed about upcoming classes and help students to manage their time and schedule.
- iv. *Education edicts and laws:* Education edicts are announcements of a law governing an educational system. They are decrees or proclamations issued by an authority that have the force of law.
- v. *Health records:* Are records of the names of students who were ill and sent to local health centers, school sick bays or the hospital for treatment. These records indicate the nature of the sickness and the treatment administered.

V. WHAT IS ICT AND ICT COMPETENCE?

Information and communication technology means different things to different educators and researchers; hence there are various views and definitions of ICT. Yusuf (2007) described ICT as an electronic technology used for accessing, processing, gathering, manipulating, presenting and communicating information. He emphasized that when ICTs are employed in education, they can accelerate, enrich and deepen basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic and the sciences beside motivating and encouraging students to learn as they become more independent and responsible for their learning. Nwite, (2007) cited that information and communication technology is a broad based technology which includes methods, managements and applications that are employed in the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information. Obanya (2002) views information communication technology as a broad concept that has to do with the harnessing of the process, the methods and the product of electronic and communication related technologies (and other related resources in today's knowledge – driven society), for enhancing the availability, the spread and efficiency of a set of programmed activities geared towards the achievement of clearly defined goals. Information communication technology is a tool that comprises electronic devices which are utilized for the information and communication needs of institutions, organizations, students and individuals (Nwakundo, Oguejiofor and Nwankwo, 2006). Such electronic devices include computers (software and hardware), networking, telephone, video, multimedia and internet. Application and utilization of these devices convert information, text

messages, sounds and motion to common digital forms. Therefore, information and communication technology is the use of computer and telecommunication facilities to store and retrieve information from various sources, generate and transfer ideas, and also impart knowledge to recipients. In view of the meaning of ICT as described above, it could be concluded that the paramount important of ICT in the schools records keeping cannot be over emphasize. The term is commonly used as a synonym for computers and computer networks but it also encompasses other information distribution technologies such as television and telephones (Oloruntoyin & Adeyanju 2013).

ICT competency by school heads and managers is the ability to use ICT and ICT tools effectively and appropriately when investigating, creating, storing, managing, retrieving and communicating ideas and information towards the progress of their schools. School heads and managers develop ICT competence when they;

- i. Manage and operate with ICT i.e. applying technical knowledge and skills, managing data and information efficiently, effectively and appropriately
- ii. Investigate with ICT i.e. planning and information searches
- iii. Create with ICT I.e generate ideas plans, processes and products to create solutions to school challenges and
- iv. Communicating with ICT i.e exchanging ideas and information with others, while adhering to social protocols, appropriate to the communicative context.

However understanding the nature and scope of ICT is not fixed but is responsive to the ongoing technological developments, as ICT is constantly growing and changing so also the ICT competence by Head teachers and school managers must also change and grow over time to enable them function effectively in their various institutions /schools.

VI. IMPACT OF ICT ON HEAD TEACHER'S EFFECTIVENESS IN RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping and management ought to be taken as a vital responsibility by school authorities because of the indispensable roles they play in the day to day management of the school. However most schools do not have good culture of record keeping. The few records that are kept are usually not properly stored, thus creating problems of retrieval to users when needed.

Some schools that have adopted the electronic record keeping practice in their schools have risen above such problems of storage, and retrieval as ICT have the opportunity to have quick easy access to all record of school activities. Maki (2008) stipulates that ICT integration plays a vital role in supporting powerful and efficient school management in Education sector as it is essential for personnel management, financial management, and general management of the school affairs. With information and communication technology

(ICT), record management will be simple as compared with the complexity of traditional record keeping method particularly on Data/figures. ICT and record management are both concern with the creation, storage, accessibility and security of digital information. The ultimate aim of both record management and ICT is to enable the business of the organization to be in a cost effective manner now and in the future. Information and communication technology is the major change perceived in the world of record keeping and record management. The use of ICT for school record keeping and management gives an overview of the number of students that are registered, accurate information on payment of school fees, comprehensive database of all the students, teachers etc with just a click. Technological advancement has without doubt contributed to the effective storage and management of school records. Trends in the development of ICT has revolutionized the manner and volume of record keeping which enable the organizations to store substantial amount of Data which can be easily retrieved, shared and copied. ICT will provide the schools with wonderful opportunity to keep large volume of data at a little or less cost. Head teachers competence In ICT will therefore allow for simplified management and administration of school activities as regards to online application for admission, registration, enrolment, general student data, personnel administration, processing and release of examination results and payment of school fees etc which can all be done using ICT facilities.

School records therefore can be effectively and efficiently maintained with the use of ICT such as computers, digital libraries, e-mail, internet and so on in which information are stored retrieved and disseminated. Keeping record involves data base management, by this software like Ms word, MS excel, Ms access, spreadsheets, multimedia, network search engines etc can help maintain database in schools as they reduces data redundancy, data inconsistency, ensure data security and data sharing.

VII. CHALLENGES OF USING ICT FOR RECORD KEEPING

There are so many challenges that have undermined the success of promoting ICT for improving Head teacher's effectiveness in record keeping of their school activities. Some of these challenges that need to be addressed if ICT is to be used and integrated in the administrative affairs of schools are:

- i. *Unreliable power supply*: Majority of the schools in Nigeria do not have power supply this is a serious problem that can affect the integration of ICT for effective Administration and record keeping of such schools as ICT and ICT tools will never operate without power supply.
- ii. *Lack of ICT infrastructures*: All the ICT facilities and tools e.g computers, network, internet access, telephone lines etc are lacking in most of the schools

making it extremely impossible to use and integrate ICT in the affairs of the school.

- iii. *ICT incompetency by Head teachers and school managers*. Head teachers and school managers lack the technical knowhow in using the ICT and ICT tools. This can eventually make them to be ineffective in keeping records and managing their schools efficiently in this current era of technological development. Most of the head teachers are not computer literate and prefer working analogically than changing to digital way of doing things. This pose a lot of challenges to the proper take up of ICT and the use of ICT facilities for record keeping in schools.
- iv. *Limited connectivity*: poor internet access and network signal is also one of the challenges for using ICT in schools. Most of the ICT tools require internet access to function effectively and to serve purpose e.g E mail, lack of it therefore militates against ICT successful take up by head teachers and school managers
- v. *Technophobia*: Most of the head teachers and school managers have no computer background; hence they are afraid of using one. They prefer to remain analog rather than changing to digital way of doing things. They fear the use of ICT facilities as they perceive it to be complex and difficult in nature.

VIII. WAYS OF MAKING HEAD TEACHERS AND SCHOOL MANAGERS ICT COMPETENT

For Head teachers and school managers to be ICT competent which will lead them to be effective in keeping records and general Administration of their schools, the following strategies should be adopted:

- Developing a national ICT policy ,like the e-government strategy and national ICT draft policy will guide ICT integration and implementation in all the schools across the country
- Introducing compulsory computer training for Head teachers and school managers that can be done either within the school or outside the school setting. This will enable them to acquire ICT skills and knowledge and become competent in integrating them in their daily administrative activities; Record keeping inclusive
- The government should make ICT tools readily available in all schools for the head teachers and school managers to have easy access of such tools such as laptops, desktops and cellular phones among others thereby using them for their Administrative purpose.
- Training Workshops on the use of ICT should be organized from time to time for the Head teachers and school managers by the government and NGOs for them to acquire the necessary skills that will

improve their ability to effectively use ICT in their schools.

- More awareness should be given to head teachers and school managers on the importance of using ICT in their Administrative activities this will improve their attitude towards ICT integration in their schools
- In service ICT trainings for head teachers should be sponsored by the government, doing so will improve the competency level of the head teachers and school managers in using ICT in their schools.

IX. CONCLUSION

ICT and record management have a strong degree of commonality and many complementary skills, as both are concerned with the creation, storage, accessibility, and security of digital information. Both ICT and record management focus on protecting, classifying and maintaining the authenticity of records so that they remain accessible and function as evidence of the business conducted for as long as they are required to be kept. Considering that fact and the importance of record keeping in providing effective management, the head teachers and school managers need to be competent in the use of ICT so that they effectively and efficiently keep records of their school activities which will in turn make them effective in the overall administration and management of their schools towards goal achievement.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should provide the needed social amenities and constant power supply for easy task up and integration of ICT in schools.
- Proper planning and a strategy for e- record are required by government which will go a long way in the implementation e- record at the various sectors across the country
- Computers and other digital devices should be introduced at the school level to facilitate digitalized school record keeping and management.
- Supervision and monitoring of school heads and managers integration of ICT in the Administration of the school will improve their ICT skill and their ability to effectively keep records.
- The government should promote ICT skills development that can be easily assessed everywhere and should be either free or subsidized to give every citizen including Head teachers and school managers the opportunity to become ICT competent.

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