LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 8, Number 2, 2025.
Available online ***https://journals.fulafia.edu.ng/index.php/ljlis***
ISSN:Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZARIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, KADUNA STATE- NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigates Records Management Practices for the administration of Primary Schools in Zaria Local Government Kaduna State- Nigeria. The study has three objectives which include; Identify the types of records generated for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA, Ascertain the storage media used for records management for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA, Find out how records are retrieved for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA, Quantitative research method was used and cross sectional survey design was adopted. Population of this research consists of two hundred and thirty two (232) head teachers and assistants head teachers in all Primary Schools across the wards in Zaria LGA. Closed ended questionnaire was used as instruments for data collection for this study. The data collected for this study were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency count and simple percentage. Findings show that primary schools generate mostly enrollment, academic performance, and staff-duty records, while administrative documents such as logbooks and diaries are less common. Record storage relies heavily on manual systems such as paper files, folders, drawers, and lockers rather than digital options. Retrieval is largely based on year and subject headings. The study recommended that strengthening records management in primary schools through regular staff training. It urges a shift from paper-based storage to digital solutions such as computers, external drives, and cloud systems, supported with proper equipment and technical aid. Improved retrieval is advised through digital indexing and cataloguing.
Keywords: *Administration***,** Records Management, Records Practices, Records Preservation Local Government,

Introduction

Records are valuable asset, of any organization that should therefore, be treated with the utmost concern and care. As a reliable source of information, records provide a platform to access information by researchers, scholars, students, journalists, lawyers, and other people who may want to know about people, places, and events in the past. According to National Archives and Records Administration (2019), records are any recorded information, regardless of format or medium, created, received, maintained, and utilized by an organization or individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

Records management practices is the systematic control of an organization records from

creation through processing, distribution, maintenance and eventual disposition. It involves organizing, storing, retrieving and disposing of records effectively and efficiently while ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. There is no universally accepted definition of the term records management practice and this shows that the discipline of records management is dynamic (Yusof and Chell, 2019) and (Mojapelo, 2022) define records management practice as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Records management in primary schools administration are official documents, books or files that contain essential information on students' actions and performance as well as events and occurrences that took place in schools. They records are generate, arrange, store, retrieve, and preserve by teachers or head teachers. Some of the records generated in primary schools are: Annual Parent Teachers' Association meeting records, school fees receipts, staff attendance book, terminal examination, staff duty book, prefect duty book, continuous assessment, admission register book, among others are created on a term basis. Mukhtar and Aliyu (2014) and Oyedokun *et al*, (2021) are of the view that records are created on a daily basis in covering information about pupils, staff and the entire schools activities. Mukhtar *et al*, (2014) further asserted that the essence of record management in primary schools administration is for reference purpose. Pino, (2020) maintained that proper record keeping in primary schools provides information needed on ex-pupils by higher and other related institutions and employers of labour for admission or job placement.

Statement of the Problem

Records management practices play a crucial role in the effective administration of primary schools, as they ensure proper documentation, preservation, and retrieval of vital information necessary for decision-making, accountability, and planning. In primary schools administration, records such as enrollment registers, staff records, academic performance reports, and administrative documents are fundamental for the smooth school operations and compliance with educational policies (Adcock, 2024) and (Manicka, 2022).

Despite the significance of records management practices, the researcher observed that, some of the graduated students who delayed the collection of their (FSLC) find it difficult whenever they come for collections at later day. Additionally, government and other employers could not be able to verify the authenticity of the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) of their employees when the need arise. It is against this background that, this study assessed the records management practices for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study sought to address the following questions;

1. What types of records are generated for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA?
2. What storage media are used for records management for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA?
3. How are records retrieved for the administration of primary schools in Zaria LGA?

Review of Related Literature

School records refers to the documented information that kept in educational institutions to track the academic progress, such as attendance, examinations, meetings and other relevant information of students and teachers. School records are important for assessing students' performance, facilitating transitions between schools, and providing a comprehensive view of a student's educational journey (Mukred *et al*, 2022).

Mukhtar *et al*, (2014), in the view that, school records are generated or created when pupils' names, dates of births, names of parents or guardians, permanent addresses, date of admission or readmission are written into the admission register, class attendance registers are marked and recorded with the relevant pupils 'data. Relevant information may also be created on teachers into the staff record books or in their individual files. Some records in the school are received from education authority, the Ministry and others. Almost every day head teachers receive official letters and circulars from their authorities particularly the Educational authority office. Records are maintained as evidence by the school or person (the pupil or teacher) in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transactions of business. Information in the admission register, class attendance registers, punishment book, minute's books, cash books and receipt books provide evidential proof that some decisions were made, actions were taken or monies were spent in the right manner. Any of these books could be tended as evidence or reference of business transaction.

Shepherd (2020), supports this view when he opined that school records is concerned with the control of recorded information in an orderly way from the creation of the information through active use, inactive storage, and final disposition. School records refer to official documents, books, and files containing information that is highly crucial about actions and events that take place in schools. The school office keeps and preserves these records for use and retrieval of information as needed (Mukred *et al,* 2022) and Walters, (2020). The purpose of records keeping and management in schools is to ensure accurate and up-to-date records of students' achievements and growth readily and available. As a result, the school and parents can easily access and retrieve information on the child's school activities at any time. Akor and Udensi (2023). For the school system to be effective and efficient, it must value record keeping. Some organizations have continued to use paper and pen, the traditional method of record-keeping, for their documentation process. However, regardless of the chosen method, paper-based or electronic, the focus is on efficiently managing time, costs, and resources. Schools have various documents and files to manage, and thus, records management is essential. There are strict guidelines about which documents a school should keep, how long it should keep them, and who should access them (Shepherd 2020).

Schools as an organizations operating in the human society that carry out activities through which records are generated. These activities include pupils' registration (intake of new pupils), parent teachers' association meeting, students' examination, test, attendance register, and graduation ceremony and among others activities (Mukhtar *et al*, 2014). During these activities, records are being generated. These records are used for reference purpose. Below are some of the types of records created in the schools:

1. Admission Register: The admission register is kept under the custody of the school head/principal. Incoming pre-primary and primary pupils are formerly registered in the admission register to become bonafide members of the school. The registration is usually orderly and contains the names of pupils of particular academic year e.g. primary one or

primary two. Pupils on transfer are also recorded in this book. Mukhtar *et al* (2014).

2. Attendance Register: This document is kept by the classroom teacher and it is used to record in detailed form when a child is present or absent from school. The record indicates total times a child is present or absent from school in weekly and term basis. The attendance register consists of personal data of pupils such as admission number, name of pupils, date of birth, name of parents, residential/official address of parents/guardian and religion of parents/guardian.
3. Financial Records: These records are generated as a result of pupils' registration (new pupil's intake), payment for term school levies, and purchase of teaching and learning materials such as chalk, textbooks, and exercise books. Receipts are important records that serve as evidence of payment. Mukred *et al*, (2022). Maintained that evidence of transactions done in a particular organization is obtainable through records such as payment receipts.
4. Examination Records: In schools, pupils are given examination at regular intervals. For example, some schools operate based on terms such as first, second and third terms. Some operate based on bi-annual examination procedure. All of them administer examination to their pupils at the end of their organized examination period. After the examination, results of such examination in form of records are produced Mukred *et al* (2022).
5. Parent Teachers' Association Records: Mukhtar *et al* (2014) said that, a parents teachers association (PTA) records are documents that carry the information about PTA of the pupils in the schools. These documents can be PTA meetings documents, PTA donation records, PTA visit records.
6. Certificates: These are records found in schools that contain information about the pupils who finished the schools. They are documents that tell when the pupils finished from the school, name of pupils, the grades obtained among other information. Saffady, (2021) highlighted that certificate is a document that shows the evidence of attendance of school by an individual. Hence preserving it is very important for evidential and future use.
7. Staff Records: These are among the records created and maintained in schools. They are records that are found in staff files. These records include appointment letter, staff certificate, birth certificate, indigene letter and the rest (Walters, 2020).

Records storage media refer to the various methods and systems used to store and manage records. Media can be broadly categorized into physical and digital storage. Media typically refers to any types of storage medium that is used to store data, written, audio, video, or digital information, this includes various formats such as papers, tapes, cassette, CDs etc. Stewart and Westgate (2015) and (Garcia and Smith, 2021). Records management involves creating a system to store and manage records, deciding which records retain, organizing them for quick retrieval, safeguarding against loss or damage, and determining appropriate retention periods. Records may be stored by manual or automatic methods, via the computer. International Records Management Trust (2023). The organization may therefore use computer for storing, interrelating, and retrieving a mass information with speed and precision which otherwise would have been impossible through manual process. Keshadi (2022). Records management by electronic means is still low in most Nigerian primary schools. Most rural communities have no electricity, only few schools have computers. Also, many head teachers are not computer literate. The storage of records has to do with the creation and retention of the right material at a place which is accessible to the

persons using them and the protection of records against theft, fire, unauthorized access and deterioration. Abdulhamid, (2023). To regulate or control the ever-increasing volume of paper work, management needs to decide on what is to be kept, where, for how long, and when and how it is to be disposed.

The storage media used for the management of records can vary depending on factors such as the organization need and regulatory requirements. National Archives and Records Administration (2019). The most common storage media includes:

Paper: Traditional hard copies of documents stored in files, folders, or cabinets, shelves, lockers.

File folder: used to stored paper documents, such as student records, staff records and administrative files.

Shelves: used store books and other educational materials.

Lockers: used to store students personal belongings and files.

Drawer: Is a compartment typically rectangular in shape that slide in and out used to store files and other records.

Optical Disks: CDs, DVDs, or discs used for storing digital data.

Flash Drives: Small, portable USB drives for transferring and storing digital files.

External Hard Drives: Portable storage devices for backing up and archiving digital records.

Cloud Storage: Online services that allow for the storage and management of digital records on remote servers.

Handset: Refer to mobile phones or smartphones, which are handheld devices that combine a wide range of functionalities including calling, texting, data storage and internet browsing.

Organizations often use a combination of these media to ensure, accessibility, retrieval and compliance with records-keeping regulations. National Archives and Records Administration (2019) also noted that, the traditional storage method using file cabinets, shelves and lockers are still widely used in primary schools although adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) help schools and administrators with the needed skills especially in the storage and retrieval of relevant records (Chen *et al*, 2022).

Retrieval of records refers to the processes involved in locating and obtaining stored information. In the context of primary schools, these processes ensure that vital data is available to authorized individuals when needed. Retrieval of records is the process of obtaining specific information from the stored records, involves search and query: using tools to obtained specific records. Hudu *et al*, (2013), retrieval are tools that use to obtained records in the organization or institution. A records retrieval system in primary schools typically involves organizing, managing and obtaining various types of student's records including academic performance, attendance records, disciplinary records, health records, and contact information (Mukhtar *et al* 2014) and (Garcia and Smith, 2021).

Most of the primary schools still use both manual and digital system for retrieving records. Retrieving records manually involves:

Through subject heading: The school records can be obtained by using subject heading of the files to retrieve the rcords.

Index Cards/Registers: Alphabetically or numerically arranged cards or books used quickly to retrieve records

Card catalogue: Records can be retrieved through digital or physical list of records e.g. by keyword or name.
Year of records generated: records can be obtain through the records created.
Through search files: Where records retrieved through files searching.
Digital (electronic) retrieval systems use in primary schools are:
Staff log into the school database.
Search for students or staff by name, date or class (Society of American Archivists, 2020).

Research Methodology

Research methodology adopted for the study is quantitative because it involves the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. While cross sectional research survey design was used for this study. This design aims to capture a snapshot of a particular phenomenon or characteristic of a population at a specific moment. It enables the discovery of meaning in the data collected, so that facts and events are better understood, interpreted and explained (Creswell, 2014). The population of this study consisted of all head teachers and assistant head teachers in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area was used as population because they are records managers in primary schools. There are one hundred and sixteen (116) primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area. The schools are divided into thirteen (13) political wards in Zaria LGA. The sample size of the study was two hundred and thirty two (232), due to the small number of the population. Therefore, the sample technique adopted for the study was census sampling. A closed ended questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection for this research. Considering its significance, Osuala (2015) posited that a questionnaire is more economical because of the time involved in conducting research. In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the researcher subjected it to research experts that are statistician, language experts, researchers, supervisors and face and content for validation. In order to ascertain that, the instruments was tested using Cronbach's alpha has been used to test the reliability and result of 0.86, was obtained which means the instrument is reliable (Creswell, 2014). The researcher with the help of three (3) trained research assistants from Zaria Local Government Education Authority administered the instruments. The researcher used descriptive statistics in the form of frequency count, simple percentage to analyze the data. A benchmark 50% of highest response positive and below response negative for decision making. Also the data for this study was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 30) software so as to obtain answer to the research questions formulated.

Discussion of the Findings

A total of two hundred and thirty two (232) copies of questionnaire were administered to head teachers and assistants of head teachers of primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State- Nigeria. Out of which a total of 189 (81.5%) copies were returned, duly completed and found worthy for the analysis.

Table 1: Types of Records Generated for the Administration of primary Schools

S/N	Types of Records Generated in Schools	Wards													
		Anguwan fatika	Dambo	Dutsen abba	Gyellesu	Kaura	Kufena	Kwarbai "A"	Kwarbai "B"	Limancin Kona	Tuudn wada	Tukut tukur	Wuciciri	Anguwan juma	Total
		Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)
1.	Admission register	7(3.7)	19(10.1)	52(27.5)	13(6.9)	5(2.6)	17(9.0)	14(7.4)	14(7.4)	8(4.2)	9(4.8)	4(2.1)	25(13.2)	2(1.1)	189 (100)
2.	Pupil attendance register	6(3.2)	17(9.0)	47(24.9)	12(6.3))	4(2.1)	15(7.9)	13(6.9)	13(6.9)	7(3.7)	8(4.2)	4(2.1)	22(11.6)	2(1.1)	170(89.9)
3.	Examination records	6(3.2)	16(8.5)	45(23.8)	11(5.8)	4(2.1)	15(7.9)	12(6.3)	12(6.3)	7(3.7)	8(4.2)	3(1.6)	21(11.1)	2(1.1)	162(85.7)
4.	Pupils certificate	6(3.2)	16(8.5)	43(22.8)	11(5.8)	4(2.1)	14(7.4)	11(5.8)	11(5.8)	7(3.7)	7(3.7)	3(1.6)	21(11.1)	2(1.1)	155(82.0)
5.	Staff duty report	5(2.6)	13(6.9)	36(19.0)	9(4.8)	3(1.6)	12(6.3)	10(5.3)	10(5.3)	6(3.2)	6(3.2)	3(1.6)	17(9.0)	1(0.5)	130(69.3)
6.	Parent Teachers Association (PTA) records	4(2.1)	11(5.8)	30(15.9)	8(4.2)	3(1.6)	10(5.3)	8(4.2)	8(4.2)	5(2.6)	5(2.6)	2(1.1)	15(7.9)	1(0.5)	110(58.2)
7.	Promotion records	3(1.6)	8(4.2)	21(11.1)	5(2.6)	2(1.1)	7(3.7)	6(3.2)	6(3.2)	3(1.6)	4(2.1)	2(1.1)	10(5.3)	1(0.5)	78(41.3)

The analysis of table 1 reveals varying levels of record-keeping practices in the administration of primary schools across the surveyed wards. The data shows that the admission register is the most universally maintained record, with all schools 189(100%) reporting its use. This suggests a widespread commitment to documenting student enrollment, which is essential for tracking population trends, planning for resource allocation, and fulfilling educational accountability requirements. Closely following are the pupil attendance registers 170(89.9%) and examination records 162(85.7%), which are integral for monitoring student engagement and evaluating academic performance respectively. The high prevalence of these records reflects their central role in the core educational processes of teaching and learning.

Table 2: Storage Media Used for Records Management for the Administration of primary Schools

S/N	Storage Media	Wards													
		Anguwan fatika	Dambo	Dutsen abba	Gyellesu	Kaura	Kufena	Kwarbai "A"	Kwarbai "B"	Limancin Kona	Tuudn wada	Tukut tukur	Wuciciri	Anguwan juma	**Total**
		Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)
1.	Computer	2(1.1)	6(3.2)	17(9.0)	4(2.1)	2(1.1)	5(2.6)	4(2.1)	4(2.1)	3(1.6)	3(1.6)	1(0.5)	8(4.2)	1(0.5)	60(31.7)
2.	File folder	5(2.6)	14(7.4)	39(20.6)	10(5.3)	4(2.1)	13(6.9)	11(5.8)	11(5.8)	6(3.2)	7(3.7)	3(1.6)	19(10.1)	2(1.1)	142(75.1)
3.	Shelves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Lockers	6(3.2)	15(7.9)	42(22.2)	11(5.8)	4(2.1)	14(7.4)	11(5.8)	11(5.8)	6(3.2)	7(3.7)	3(1.6)	20(10.6)	2(1.1)	153(81.0)
5.	Drawer	7(3.7)	19(10.1)	52(27.5)	13(6.9)	5(2.6)	17(9.0)	14(7.4)	14(7.4)	8(4.2)	9(4.8)	4(2.1)	25(13.2)	2(1.1)	189(100)
6.	Handset	3(1.6)	7(3.7)	19(10.1)	5(2.6)	2(1.1)	6(3.2)	5(2.6)	5(2.6)	3(1.6)	3(1.6)	1(0.5)	9(4.8)	1(0.5)	70(37.0)
7.	Paper	7(3.7)	19(10.1)	52(27.5)	13(6.9)	5(2.6)	17(9.0)	14(7.4)	14(7.4)	8(4.2)	9(4.8)	4(2.1)	25(13.2)	2(1.1)	189(100)
8.	Optical disks	0(0.0)	1(0.5)	3(1.6)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	2(1.1)	0(0.0)	12(6.3)
9.	Flash drive	1(0.5)	3(1.6)	13(6.9)	3(1.6)	1(0.5)	4(2.1)	3(1.6)	3(1.6)	2(1.1)	2(1.1)	1(0.5)	6(3.2)	0(0.0)	48(25.4)

The data presented in table 2 provides insights into the various storage media used for records management in the administration of primary schools across the surveyed wards. The findings reflect a significant dependence on traditional, non-digital storage systems, with digital media still underutilized in most schools.

The most commonly used storage media are drawers and paper, each reported by all schools surveyed, 189(100%). This indicates that every school maintains records in paper form and physically stores them in drawers. Such high usage suggests a continued reliance on manual

record-keeping, which, while familiar and low-cost, poses risks related to physical damage, loss, and limited accessibility.

Closely following are lockers, used by 153(81.0%) of the schools. Lockers provide a more secure physical storage solution compared to drawers but still reflect a traditional method of managing records. Similarly, file folders are utilized by 142(75.1%) of the schools, further confirming the predominance of manual, paper-based systems for organizing school records. Digital and modern storage solutions shows that, handsets (phones) are used by 70(37.0%) of schools, indicating a growing but still limited practice of storing information on mobile devices. This trend may reflect increasing smartphone penetration among school administrators, albeit without structured or secure data management systems. Computers, which offer more robust digital data storage and retrieval capabilities, are used in only 60(31.7%) of the schools. This relatively low percentage reveals the digital divide and possibly the limited availability of ICT infrastructure in the surveyed areas. Flash drives, used by 48(25.4%) of the schools, and optical disks, with only 12(6.3%) usage, further illustrate the limited integration of portable digital storage devices in school administrative practices. These figures suggest that even when digital tools are available, they may not be widely adopted or fully integrated into the record-keeping culture of primary school.

Table 3: Tools for Record Retrieval for the Administration of primary schools

		Wards													
S/N	**Access methods**	Anguwan fatika	Dambo	Dutsen abba	Gyellesu	Kaura	Kufena	Kwarbai "A"	Kwarbai "B"	Limancin Kona	Tuudn wada	Tukut tukur	Wuciciri	Anguwan juma	**Total**
		Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)	Frq(%)
1.	Through subject heading	6(3.2)	15(7.9)	42(22.2)	10(5.3)	4(2.1)	13(6.9)	11(5.8)	11(5.8)	6(3.2)	7(3.7)	3(1.6)	20(10.6)	2(1.1)	150(79.4)
2.	Through card catalogue	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	8(4.2)
3.	Through year records generated	6(3.2)	16(8.5)	45(23.8)	11(5.8))	4(2.1)	14(7.4)	12(6.3)	12(6.3)	7(3.7)	8(4.2)	3(1.6)	21(11.1)	2(1.1)	161(85.2)
4.	Through searching files	5(2.6)	13(6.9)	37(19.6)	9(4.8)	3(1.6)	12(6.3)	10(5.3)	10(5.3)	6(3.2)	7(3.7)	3(1.6)	17(9.0)	2(1.1)	134(70.9)

The analysis of table 3 reveals the different tools and methods employed by primary school administrators for retrieving records across various wards. The data indicates a strong preference for manual and subject-based retrieval systems, with limited use of advanced or automated methods. The most frequently used record retrieval tool is the year records were generated, reported by 161(85.2%) of the schools. This approach involves locating documents based on the year they were created, reflecting the predominance of chronological filing systems as previously observed in Table 4.6. The popularity of this method suggests that school records are typically organized by date, and administrators are comfortable retrieving information within specific academic or administrative years.

Following closely is retrieval through subject headings, reported by 150(79.4%) of schools. This method allows for accessing documents based on categorized topics such as academic subjects, finance, or personnel. Its widespread use indicates that many schools have adopted a

subject-based filing system that supports easy navigation and quick identification of related records.

Summary of the Findings

1. The finding revealed that, the types of records generated mostly in the administration of primary schools are **enrollment, academic performance, and staff duties,** while administrative documentation like **log books, diaries, and prefect reports** are less frequently maintained.
2. Finding also revealed that, storage methods, such as paper, file folders, drawers, and lockers were used mostly in the management of school records over digital storage like computers, flash drives, and handsets.
3. Moreover, the finding revealed that, administration of primary schools mostly practiced retrieval methods, especially, based on year and subject headings. While there is limited or absence used of others retrieval methods such as cataloguing and indexing.

Conclusion

It is concluded that, records management practices largely facilitated the administration of primary schools across generation, storage, and retrieval in thirteen (13) wards in Zaria local government, with strong emphasis on maintaining records related to enrollment, academic performance, over administrative records such as diary, log book and inventory. While limited adoption of electronics tools and advanced systems significantly constrains efficiency of records management.

Recommendations

1. School management should organize regular training workshops for staff on records management. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring all relevant records academic, administrative records such as log book, diary and demotion records are consistently created and maintained.
2. Given the dominance used of papers, drawers storage methods in the administration of primary schools, they should be encouraged to adopt digital storage solutions such as computers, external drives, and cloud-based systems
3. The primary schools mostly used retrieval methods such as based on year and subject headings, the school administrators should implement digital indexing and cataloguing tools to improve records retrieval.

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