UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS
IN THE TARKWA- NSUAEM MUNICIPALITY

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2010

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BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE TARKWA- NSUAEM MUNICIPALITY

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration.

NOVEMBER, 2010

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in the University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature……………………   Date…………....................

Name: David Akolwin Agatiba

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast

Principal Supervisor's Signature……………………… Date………....................

Name: Mr. S. K. Atakpa

Co-Supervisor's Signature…………………………… Date…………………

Name: Rev: Arko. Boham

ABSTRACT

Failure to keep accurate and up-to-date records on organisational resources has crippled many administrators and managers' ability to render proper accounts of their stewardship. This study examined the status of records management in public basic schools in the Tarkwa- Nsuaem Municipality. The descriptive survey design method was adopted for the study. The population size consisted of 74 headteachers and five circuit supervisors whilst the sample consisted of 63 headteachers and the five circuit supervisors. Records in 35 schools were examined. Data were collected through questionnaire and observation of records, analyzed using the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS), and presented in frequencies and percentages.

Results of the study showed that whilst some schools kept adequate records, others did not. Again, whilst particular records were often managed well in the schools, others were not. Also, whilst some headteachers knew how to manage the records, others, particularly the newly recruited ones, did not. Again, it was usually the vital and important records like the inventory book, admission register, and cumulative records book, among others which were often the most neglected. On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that in-service training be organised periodically for headteachers of the public basic schools by the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipal Directorate of Education on good records management. Finally, the Ghana Education Service should supply the necessary record books, registers, files, and computers promptly to the schools to facilitate records management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most profound gratitude goes to my principal supervisor, Mr. S.K. Atakpa and co –supervisor Rev. Arko Boham who supported me throughout the work. The successful completion of this work has come about through their careful direction, supervision and useful suggestions.

My special thanks go to Dr Albert Dare and his wife, and Dr. G. K. T. Oduro the Director for the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration. I am equally indebted to all other lecturers notably Dr Rosemary S. Bosu, Dr. Y. A. Ankomah and all others who took me through the M. Phil programme.

I am equally indebted to my children and course mates particularly Cletus V. Aanomah and Monique Armstrong Baidoo who gave me their unflinching support throughout this programme. My special thanks also go to all personnel of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration who assisted me in diverse ways.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Akolwin Asigri and Mary Agesak both of blessed memory.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Records management particularly in public educational institutions in Ghana is important. Newton (1986) posited that no institution could function effectively without accurate and up-to-date records. It is essential that whatever significant happening, event, action taken or decision made, should be recorded. Shirley and Solity (1987) equally argued that the human memory is fallible, hence, the need for records keeping. Not only are records crucial for the proper functioning of individuals and organisations, but also to nations as they constitute their memory and history. It is in this light that individuals and institutions keep records of their day -to -day activities, and most countries including Ghana have the Public Records and Archives Administration Department responsible for managing public records.

Anderson and Van Dyke (1963) argued that in any school big or small, rural or urban, it is essential that the headteacher gathers and keeps adequate and up-to-date information on all resources, human or material. Such valuable information will not only aid him to manage and administer the institution effectively and efficiently, but also assist him to expedite communication and

furnish relevant stakeholders with whatever information is required for decision making and appropriate action.

Farrant (2004) posited that traditionally, parents entrusted their children to the teacher for him to look after on their behalf. With the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), parents are no longer free to act in this way as the task of educating the child is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders. It is the duty of every headteacher through the teacher to help his pupils to develop as fully as possible all aspects of their potential. He is responsible for his pupils' welfare, guidance, and supervision. By welfare implies that the headteacher's role is to provide leadership, exemplary life and care for his pupils. He is to establish trusting and friendly relations with the learners; and to act as a liaison between the child and his peers and parents. The headteacher through the teacher has a role for the physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupils. He is to note any absence of a pupil and find out the possible causes with a view of solving the problem. The headteacher and his staff have a responsibility of providing the emotional welfare of the pupil by observing any maladjustments and helping the child get out of them. All these can successfully be accomplished through accurate and up-to-date records.

According to Anderson and Van Dyke (1963), pupils' personnel records have the purposes to record the achievement, growth and development of the pupil during the school year; to provide information that is needed in preparing reports required by the School Management Committee (SMC), the Municipal Directorate of Education and the District Education Oversight Committee

(DEOC); to inform parents about the progress of their children through pupils' report cards and SMC and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings; to provide information needed by teachers and counsellors through adequate cumulative records to direct learners on their strengths and weaknesses and what career, schools and programmes to choose; to provide the essential information and data necessary for research relating to pupils and the school; and to provide information needed by higher institutions and employers about former students. For instance, one could apply for further studies, employment or a ministerial appointment ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty years after completing a school. This might call for verification of the fact that the applicant completed a school. Such verification might request for the pupil's continuous assessment scores or grades, his date of birth, year of admission and year of completing the school as well as, his total attendance to school to find out if he was not a truant.

A well planned and carefully maintained system of school records is essential if the headteacher has to meet the various requests for information about pupils, staff and his school as a whole. It is expected of educational agencies that they develop all aspects of pupils' personality; the cognitive, affective, and psychomotive. For schools to do this, they must be effective and efficient. The effective school must develop not only their intellectual needs, but also the social and personality traits such as leadership, resourcefulness, industry, emotional stability, courtesy and persistence.

Thomas (1990) posited that educational efficiency could be viewed from internal and external perspectives. The system of education must not only be effective but also efficient. By effectiveness is meant that the organisation has achieved or is drawing closer to achieving its goals or objectives. An activity is effective if it achieves its goals. The main objectives and goals of any educational institution are to increase the number of students who successfully complete the school and their ability to perform the tasks assigned to them.

Internal efficiency is concerned with how many pupils were admitted into a school and how many of them successfully completed. An educational output is the person who successfully completes a given educational cycle which must be evident in the admission register. An internally efficient educational system is one which turns out graduates without wasting any student- year through repetitions and drop-outs. Schools must not only increase their enrolments but ensure that the pupils so enrolled are retained to complete the given grade level. Repetition and drop out rates must be reduced to the barest minimum. There is external efficiency when the educated individual is able to adapt well into the environment or the society in which he finds himself. For the school to be able to determine that there is no waste in its system, it must keep accurate and up-to-date records. The Open University (1996) equally argued that headteachers and teachers need to have a clear idea about what it is they want to achieve, how well they are doing at the present, and what need to be done next. It is only possible to determine how

schools are achieving their goals when records are available to reveal teachers work, pupils' achievements, failures, repetitions and drop outs.

Efficiency also implies the judicious use of resources. Instructional materials like syllabi, textbooks, hand books, equipment and tools are acquired at a great cost to the nation. They must be managed and supervised well in the schools so that they are not stolen, mishandled, or easily torn or lost. To be able to manage these resources effectively, the headteacher is required to keep accurate and up-to-date records of everything in the school as he is accountable to all stakeholders. He must keep an inventory of the school infrastructure, materials and equipment. Also, knowledge of the inventories informs him about the current stock of materials, and about which materials are running out and how to get additional supplies to replenish the depleting ones, and to retrieve those books, equipment, tools, handbooks or syllabi that were given out to teachers or any other person and are still in their custody even though the term or academic year has ended. In this way materials will not get lost.

The headteacher is expected to employ only the required compliment of staff and avoid any overstaffing which constitutes waste. Knowledge of the specialties, competencies and qualifications of teachers enables him to decide who teaches which class in what subjects and who is responsible for what co-curricula activity.

Whilst personnel are on the job, he must keep records on them as well. He must receive and file letters of appointment, confirmations, promotions and leaves of absence of every teacher posted to the school. The salaries of teachers are

based on their ranks or grades and the number of days they effectively work, and there must be proof of this in the staff attendance book. As such, he must keep a good record of the teachers' attendance and stay in the school through the staff attendance and movement books. Sometimes however, some headteachers fail to do this.

Keeping accurate data on school enrolment is very important because the staffing of a school, as well as the capitation grant it receives depends on the school's enrolment which must be evident in the attendance and admission registers. Consequently, the headteacher must ensure that every pupil is properly admitted with all the necessary details in the admission register and the pupil must be allocated a class with his name and particulars duly entered in the class attendance register. Sometimes, headteachers are unable to record all the needed information about each pupil during admissions.

Time is an essential ingredient in the teaching – learning process. Its effective use is critical to the school. To effect the efficient use of time, schools usually plan academic calendars based on the school terms and holidays given by the Ghana Education Service (GES). Schedules for major co-curricular activities such as athletics, sporting, and cultural activities are also planned.

GES (1994) classifies the headteacher's roles into the tasks of managing people; managing curricular and co-curricular activities; managing learning resources; managing financial matters; managing instructional time, and assessing pupils' and teachers' performance. These can successfully be achieved through

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good record keeping by the records managers like headteachers which some fail to do.

Two separate paradigms evidenced in Sadker and Sadker (1997) and Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) showed that there is some relationship between school effectiveness and efficiency and record keeping. According to Sadker and Sadker, two schools, Edgewood Elementary school and Backwood Elementary in the United States of America had similar characteristics. However, whilst Edgewood was effective in terms of students' achievement and progress, Backwood was performing poorly. A visit by a supervisor to both schools revealed that whilst Edgewood kept good records about its activities and programmes and made relevant information readily available to all stakeholders, Backwood did not. Following the visit therefore, the supervisor wrote her report; "a very likely reason for the difference in effectiveness is that one school carefully monitors students' progress and communicates this information to students and parents. The other school does not (p.35)."

Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) had a similar observation from a survey they conducted. In a baseline study on the State of School Management in Ghana, they identified two categories of schools, notably, the effectively managed and ineffectively managed schools. The major features of the effectively managed schools were that they had cordial interpersonal relationships and effective channels of communication within the schools and the communities. Their staff meeting minutes books showed that they held regular staff meetings to plan terms work, discuss administrative directives, strengthen teaching methods, solve

problems that arose within the term and review the term's work. The minutes were well kept. Also, essential school records such as circulars, official letters, and school inspection reports were properly filed.

The effective schools had drawn up annual and termly plans for effective time management and utilization by teachers and pupils. These schools ensured that class attendance registers and staff attendance books were well kept. The teachers signed the attendance book under the supervision of the headteachers. The headteachers had schedules for receiving and vetting lesson notes of teachers. They also collected samples of pupils' exercise books to establish the quantity and quality of pupils' work and thereby determine pupils' and teachers' work output. They also checked through the test items of the teachers to see if they were up to the standard of the class.

One of the features of the effectively managed schools was that they had offices and stores for the safe keeping of instructional materials including school records. These storage places had secured locks, safe boxes, shelves, and cabinets where books, equipment, tools, records and other supplies were kept. The effectively managed schools had notice boards and duty rosters for staff and prefects.

On the other hand, there were no notice boards and duty rosters for staff and prefects in the ineffectively managed schools; no well organised and regular staff meetings, and no essential school records were kept. Most of these schools had only one file for all forms of correspondence which was not well kept. With the exception of the log book, all other essential administrative books were not

kept. Communication within the schools and with other stakeholders hardly happened due to poor record keeping.

In the management of instructional time, Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) observed that the keeping of staff attendance books and the marking of the class attendance registers served no purpose as lateness and absenteeism by teachers and pupils were considered normal by the headteachers in the ineffectively managed schools. In some schools, the admission registers, cumulative record books, class attendance registers, and teachers' time-book were virtually empty, whilst, there were no staff records too. Despite the fact that most of such schools had poor buildings with weak doors and windows, whilst others had none, nobody seemed to care even when school materials got destroyed by mice, termites and cockroaches.

All that this discussion points to is that, basic schools just as the higher institutions need to manage a number of records well. These could broadly be classified into three, namely; personnel records (about pupils and staff), materials records such as inventories and timetables, and administrative records. For this study however, individual records would be taken into account in order to determine precisely which record is adequate and which is not.

GES (1994) recommends that each school needs to keep the following records; the log book, admission register, class attendance registers, inventory book, cash-book, receipt books, staff records book, staff attendance book, staff movement book, staff meeting minutes book, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) minutes book, School Management Committee (SMC) minutes books, health

record book, punishment book, visitor's book, cumulative records books, continuous assessment books, pupils report cards, and files of correspondence, among others. These records provide essential information for educational development. Farrant (2004), similarly opined that schools have to keep admission registers in which each pupil is given a serial admission number on entry into the school which he maintains until he completes the school. The admission register enables the headteacher know how each pupil is progressing and the areas or localities pupils come from. He maintained that the log book is required by regulation and education authorities often record their visits and findings in it. Schools must also keep cash books, stock books, SMC minutes book, staff meetings book, staff records book, visitors book, among others. Afful-Broni (2004) equally supports the view that these records are essential in a school. These discussions point to the fact that records are essential in all organisations. However, it appears that record keeping has not been accorded its proper attention in most institutions in Ghana.

I was a Circuit Supervisor of Education in the then Wassa West district which was later on split into the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality and Prestea Huni – Valley District politically and administratively in 2008 by Government. During my visits to schools, at times I observed that some headteachers did not pay attention to the management of school records which had serious consequences for the schools. Inadequate records management inevitably led to poor management and ineffective supervision of the schools. For instance, records in the admission registers and class registers were often not complete. Information

about teachers was equally inadequate, as well as records of the stocks of materials. This situation became eminent during school mapping exercises. Owolabi (1996) argued that school maps were essential tools for educationists preparing any kind of educational plans, and specialists involved in the construction of new schools and the renovation of existing ones. He maintained that if the location of schools, pupils, and potential pupils (enrolment projections) were not known, it would not be possible to plan education activities in any logical and economic manner. Yet, the gathering of such valuable data from schools is often frustrated because records are not well kept.

Recent school mapping exercises in which I participated in the then Wassa West district (now Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality and Prestea-Huni-Valley District) revealed that some schools did not keep proper records of their personnel (staff and pupils), facilities, materials, finances and activities. Past attendance registers were not preserved, whilst current ones were not complete. In such schools therefore, the exercise was cumbersome where past enrolments of pupils by sex, age, and class were required but could not be found. In such cases, it was often the circuit supervisor who bore the brunt of such lapses as he was required to fill these data for the education directorate for other forms to be entered. If headteachers failed to provide the needed data, the circuit supervisor was queried by the Municipal Director of Education for failing to supervise the headteachers do their work.

If the records were to be valid in indicating enrolment trends, repetition, drop-out, and retention rates, they had to be backed by facts and figures from the

appropriate documents. The issue of records management in our educational institutions particularly in the public schools again became a matter of concern in the early part of 2008 when the GES found it prudent to update its records on its personnel. To make this feasible, it requested from its personnel, particularly teachers, all personal records of their profession. These included their first appointment letters, letters of confirmation, certificates, all promotion letters, birth or baptismal certificates, among others. This brought about great anxiety among some teachers as they could not trace some of these records particularly their first appointment letters. An antidote had to be found for teachers who could not get their first appointment letters. They had to produce a photocopy of the page of the log book that their headteachers had logged on their assumption of duty; that is, their first day in the service. This took many teachers back to their first stations in search of these records. Some teachers who had then moved far away from their first stations and were now in distant regions or districts had to return by travelling long distances to their first stations in search of these records. Whilst others were fortunate to get them, others could not, either because the headteachers did not record the teacher's assumption of duty on that day, or did so, but the log book or other relevant records had been misplaced or destroyed. This indeed was a bitter experience for many teachers including myself which we will never forget. For example, I had to travel from Tarkwa in the Western Region to Subin – Hill in the Central Region for these records. Though I was fortunate to get mine, it was still a bitter experience for me because of the transportation difficulties, inconveniences, time and expenses I incurred.

The issue of records management is not only critical in education but traverses other spectres of human endeavour such as economy, finance, agriculture, and even government. For example, Dzandu (2006) wrote "Record keeping - key to good governance" (p.10). He maintained that records helped to promote the rule of law, protect human rights, involve stakeholders in the decision making process, and thereby inhibit autocratic rule. The school is a miniature society composed of pupils and teachers who have rights and responsibilities. Records help to guarantee these rights as well as confirm that decisions are well taken and actions are well executed.

To Dzandu, good records enhance good leadership and governance, good management and administration, transparency and accountability. He emphasized that citizens trusted their leaders and became more committed to their duties and responsibilities when they realized that decisions taken were open and followed laid-down rules and regulations in record materials. Without records, it would be difficult to hold people in authority accountable for whatever they said or did. The issue of public office holders accounting for their stewardship has been a big problem in Ghana. Not only have headteachers who have been transferred from their schools to other schools failed to handover properly to incoming ones, but also, whenever there is an election and a new political party comes into power, there have been reports of the misuse of public money and the inability of public officials to account for their stewardship.

Afful-Broni (2004) noted that there have been periods in Ghana's life in which public officers have been called upon to render account of their

stewardship, notable among these were the 1980s and recently after the 2008 elections. The 1980s witnessed a remarkable era of probity and accountability in Ghana. The government called many school heads and financial administrators to render account of their stewardship. A good number of them got into trouble and were subsequently suspended, dismissed or demoted and made to pay back the large sums of money which had been misappropriated or embezzled. It is however significant to note that in most of these cases, these headmasters had not themselves taken any monies; most often, they had failed to supervise those in charge of the financial management of their schools. Though they had not stolen the monies, they were sanctioned for financial malpractices because they did not keep proper records of the schools income and expenditure in their books and so could not remember how the monies were spent. Good record keeping would have ensured ease of accountability during checking by the auditors.

At times too, headmasters and their financial staff avail themselves of "soft loans" from school funds for private purposes without properly recording them in the books to remind themselves. However, these bits of monies become mountains of debts or other question marks for the school and its records. Corruption is largely possible where there is poor records management as leaders may not have time to manage essential records or may have little knowledge of financial management. Since some people are 'fast' to cheat, 'ghost names' could exist in pay vouchers due to inadequate records management to monitor the system. In this way, large sums of money are siphoned at a great loss to society. Recent remarks by the Chairman of the Commission set up to investigate the use

of public funds at the Ghana at 50 celebrations seem to suggest that there are ghost names in our pay vouchers. Abdul- Rahaman and Markwei (2009), reported the Chairman of the Commission as saying, "Acheampong's local government system despite everything else was the best. There was hardly any room for ghost names on pay rolls. We will not have the incidence of ghost names if decentralisation is firmly in place (p.3)."

The issue of accountability by public officials remains a problem. In mid 2009, the new government under the National Democratic Congress (N.D.C.) formed a Commission of enquiry to investigate the activities of the celebration of Ghana at 50 which revealed poor records management in the public sector. Responses given by majority of the District Co-coordinating Directors and their accountants to the Commission revealed a high level of ignorance and incompetence about public spending and records management in general. Most of the district assemblies used the funds without keeping any proper records. A case in point was evidenced on the 18th of August, 2009 which was telecast on Ghana Television (GTV) which I personally watched and listened to. The leader of the Commission set up to investigate the use of funds on the celebration of Ghana at 50, was so upset by the startling revelations that he interrogated the District Coordinating Director for Akim West District and his accountant with the following questions:

"Do you know that every public money must pass through acceptable procedure and that proper records must be kept? Did I hear you say that your DCE handled the funds and materials for the 'Ghana at 50' himself? Did you say

that your former DCE had been a headteacher of a JSS? At the JSS, do they run any accounts? Did he do administration? If you don't qualify, you don't force yourself to take up a position. "Mr. …., you are an accountant, can you tell the public why it is necessary for one to make a daily- to daily record of account?" (Ghana Television Telecast (GTV) 18th August, 2009, 2.00p.m.).

Abdul- Rahaman and Markwei (2009), writing under the caption "Ex-Kwahu West DCE Summoned to Ghana at 50 Probe," quoted the Chairman of the Ghana at 50 Commission, "… if you are watching us or listening to us from wherever, be prepared to appear before the commission with all the relevant documents." This was in reaction to the report that no waybills covered the consignment of souvenirs that were deposited at the Kwahu –West Assembly on the afternoon of March 4, 2007. The Chairman said that such oversight by officials which hampered proper records keeping of transactions at the offices were clear evidence of incompetence in running public offices. Abdul-Rahaman and Markwei (2009) again reported the Chairman of the Commission as ordering the former District Coordinating Director of the Atiwa Assembly and his administrative officer who had been subpoenaed before the Ghana at 50 Commission, "If you are listening, you should get ready to account for your stewardship, and you should appear with your lawyers." Horsoo (2009), Chairman of the Governing Council of the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB) in his recent remarks said, "Keep accurate financial records…" He re-echoed to heads of institutions the issue of keeping accurate and up to date

records. Such reports are indicative that records management in public institutions in Ghana need to be given a critical look.

Records management, crucial as it is however, appears not to have been adequately researched into by students of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration and this University in general. So far, the researcher has seen only two research works quite related to this topic. The first could be cited of Dy −Yakah (2006) who wrote on farm records in agriculture, and the other is that of Kommeh (2008) who wrote on 'Status of Students Records Management in the University of Cape Coast'. It thus appears that there is need for more research in this area to find out the extent to which records are managed in our public institutions; hence, this endeavour.

Statement of the Problem

Records management in the public basic schools has been a problem because some headteachers often fail to keep accurate and up-to date records. This often results in managerial problems as institutions lack the required information for effective planning and implementation of policies. Educational authorities like the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Government through the Ministry of Education are similarly handicapped by lack of reliable data in schools. However, it is noteworthy that records provide information on the existing stock of resources like the human, material, and financial resources. That is what the school has and what needs to be acquired. Records indicate the events and activities that have happened in the institution and how they happened. In the

school, teachers and pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually for successful interaction. Evidence of teachers and pupils attending school regularly and punctually and working assiduously towards the school's goals may not only be visibly proven by their physical attendance but also recorded in the class attendance registers and staff attendance books. The availability of records and their accuracy are essential for the successful planning and execution of school programmes.

Unfortunately however, most often, headteachers fail to keep the essential records of the school. When they do, they may not be up- to- date or detailed enough to provide the needed information. There have been instances where headteachers have written to their education authorities to sanction teachers who are not regular, are often late to school, do not prepare their schemes and expanded schemes of work and submit to the headteacher for vetting, or whose output of work has been very low. In most of such cases, however, education authorities have been unable to apply the appropriate sanctions because headteachers did not supervise how teachers recorded their attendance in the staff attendance book. Sometimes the headteacher does not log a teacher's absence, meanwhile the teacher might have recorded in the staff attendance book that he was always in school, or was always punctual to school, when, in fact, he was not. However, in delving into the matter so as to take the appropriate action, it has often been found that the headteacher has no proof in the record books to support his claim.

Another disturbing feature is that some headteachers keep their log books and other records under lock and key when they are absent from school so that such essential materials are not readily available even to the assistant headteachers and visiting officers who might need to use them. For example, in a research work in the Wenchi District of the Brong – Ahafo Region, Awuku (2001), noted among the problems he encountered during the data collection that, "In some cases more than one visit had to be made to some schools because of sporting activities and also some headteachers were absent during the first round of his visits and had locked up the stores and cupboards. Some of the schools had not kept proper records on enrolment and in almost all the schools there were no records on drop- outs and repeaters (p. 57). Dy -Yakah (2006) cements this in his observation, "Ghana and other third world countries often lack reliable records because of many reasons" (p. 21).

My personal experience in my career as a teacher further reveals that some schools do not manage records well. I became a headteacher in 1984 though in acting capacity. This was because at that time it was normal that in the absence of any qualified and substantive headteacher, the next highest teacher in rank automatically took control of the administration of the school. Thus, when our substantive headteacher left for greener pastures in Nigeria in the face of the economic hardships in the early 1980s, I took over control of the school even though I was barely five years in the service. This happened without any formal training given me in management and administration which included records management. Much of my work was predominantly that of trial and error, and

through contacts with other experienced headteachers. There was no doubt that several administrative lapses occurred in the process which had repercussions not only on pupils but also teachers. Perhaps some of such instances still exist in our schools particularly those in the hinterlands.

Again, I was a circuit supervisor from 1996 to 2008 in the then Wassa West district now split into Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality and Prestea-Huni-Valley District. I served in this capacity in Nsuaem Circuit (1996-1997), Prestea Circuit (2000-2004) and Tarkwa Circuit (2004-2008)

My thirteen years experience as a circuit supervisor revealed to me that record keeping in the schools in the three circuits which I supervised was a problem. During my visits to the schools, I observed that some headteachers were not keeping records. Those who did, did not keep the records the way they were supposed to. For example, some schools did not complete the admission processes in the admission register by filling the admission numbers, date of admission or re-admission, month and year of birth, parent or guardian, among others. Some schools did not even have some of their pupils' names written in the admission registers. Similarly, records in the class attendance registers were incomplete. Again, though cumulative records and continuous assessment booklets had been supplied to the schools, they were not complete. Education officers and members of the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) including myself who visited the schools had to support headteachers on how to go about their work particularly with regards to records management since inadequate records management in

schools was costly to all stakeholders of education as resources were poorly managed resulting in inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

The situation of records management in the district at the time raised my curiosity in desiring to study the status of records management in the entire district (now a municipality) in order to gain a better understanding of the extent to which records were managed.

This study therefore set to find out whether headteachers in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality created the essential records and whether the records were adequate (whether they were available and up-to-date), whether they were preserved and used, and whether they were stored, and eventually the obsolete records disposed of.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to find out the status of records management in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. Specifically, it investigated whether the essential records were adequate (available, up-to-date, organised, preserved, stored and used, among others). In short, the study looked at whether the public basic schools in the municipality created, unitized, preserved, stored, used and eventually disposed of any obsolete records. The study also examined the challenges that hampered effective records management in the schools.

Research Questions

1. How are records managed in the schools?

2. What factors enable good record keeping in schools?

3. To what extent are the essential records adequate (available and up-to-date) in the schools?

4. What challenges do headteachers encounter in the management of school records?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study may have a number of significant aspects. When the status of records management in the municipality is known, appropriate measures could be taken by the Supervision and Monitoring department and the Tarkwa- Nsuaem Municipal Directorate of Education in general to further improve it.

The study has the potential of raising the level of consciousness among headteachers and teachers in the Tarkwa- Nsuaem Municipality about the need to keep and use up-to-date records on their human, material, time and financial resources. The study may remind and sensitize headteachers to appreciate records management as an integral part of their work; hence, they have to endeavour to keep adequate records. Government and stakeholders might be reminded to provide adequate storage facilities like offices, storerooms, filing cabinets, shelves, cupboards and computers for the management of records.

Furthermore, the study hopes to promote effective records management in the public basic schools in Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality through this medium which will be to the benefit of all stakeholders such as pupils, teachers and parents in the municipality, the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service (GES), and the nation at large. By promoting the management of adequate records in institutions, headteachers, teachers and guidance and counselling officers will have valuable information which will facilitate their work to guide learners in the right choice of programmes, subjects, and schools so that students can realize their full potentials. Well kept records and their effective use may lead to an all round improvement in education in the municipality.

Delimitations

The Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality was carved out of the then Wassa West District of the Western Region of Ghana. In 2008, the Wassa West District was split into two. This gave rise to the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality and the Prestea-Huni Valley District. Educationally, Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality has five circuits namely, Tarkwa, Fiase, Dompim, Nsuaem and Benso circuits. The study was carried out in the public basic schools in the five circuits of the municipality.

The study focused on the status of records management in public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. The study was further delimited to 23 records. These records were the log book, admission register, pupils' attendance registers, inventory book, staff minutes book, school management committee minutes book, parent –teacher association minutes book, staff records

book, staff attendance book, staff movement book, annual school census, cumulative record booklets, continuous assessment booklets, punishment book, cash book, waybills, pupils' report cards, visitors book, correspondence files, receipt books, hospital book, audit reports, and records' retention schedules. The study examined whether these records were created, kept, maintained, unitized, used, stored, and disposed of when they became obsolete.

Limitations

My experience as a headteacher and as a circuit supervisor could have set some bias into the work. For instance, I could have over reacted to what I saw because I might have expected so much effort from the headteachers which I might not have found in the schools. I overcame this through objectivity and open mindedness. I stuck to what the observation guide required and I tried as much as possible to be fair and objective. In this way, I overcame possible biases in the study.

Inadequate funds for travelling and other expenditures were a problem especially where there was the 'go and come' syndrome by headteachers and circuit supervisors. For instance, in some cases I had to travel to a school for three or more times to administer the instruments. Though this did not adversely affect the study except that the study was delayed, it had an adverse financial impact on me.

The time available for the research was rather limited in view of the number of schools and the records to be observed. Besides, the hinterland schools like Amantin, Memahomo, Adiewoso, and Esuoso were rather too far. Again,

initially, most headteachers did not feel very comfortable releasing their school records to me to observe for fear of any lapses; others too did not appear to have filled the questionnaire frankly as there were a few contradictions between their responses and what I saw on the ground. The fears of the records managers were allayed however, when I explained to them that it was a study and that the results would not be communicated to the Municipal Directorate of Education. Others were not able to complete the questionnaire and return them in good time to me for the analysis of the data to happen, and indeed I could not retrieve four of the headteachers' questionnaire even though I went to each of these schools for the fourth time.

Organisation of the Study

The study is organised in five chapters. Chapter One is made up of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and organisation of the study.

Chapter Two is devoted to the Review of the Related literature to the study. It looks at both the theoretical and conceptual literature. Chapter Three is the Methodology. It is made up of the population, sample and sample selection, the research instrument and its design, the data collection and data analysis procedure. Chapter Four is the results and discussions of findings. Chapter Five is the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the related literature that guided the study. It examines the importance of records management, meaning of records, records management in historical perspectives, the meaning of records management, principles of records management, the mechanics of records management, release for filing and utilization of records, good record keeping, records managers, location of records, the use of records, and the physical maintenance, retention and disposal of records.

Importance of Records Management

The importance of records management cannot be overemphasized. GES (1994) posits that headteachers have to manage school resources including records well because these materials are expensive on any school budget, yet vital to effective education. A good record system is important. Headteachers need to ensure that both teachers and pupils sign for whatever equipment or books they wish to borrow so that they do not get lost. If such improvements are to reinforce and not to undermine the personal touch, they must be based on a reliable and user-friendly records system which contains the essential details, professional and personal of each teacher, and other educational inputs.

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Afful- Broni (2004) observed that records are said to be closely associated with bureaucracy. The major contributions of the fathers of the classical organisational approach were the scientific management school of thought. The chief advocates of this school of thought were Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) who was recognized as the father of scientific management, Henri Fayol (1814-1925), Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick. A major theme that runs through their contributions is that they emphasized the formal or bureaucratic side of organisations. Characteristic of bureaucratic organisations is the maintenance of good and proper official records including career tracks. Whatever decisions are made or activities are carried out in the organisation are formally recorded and safely preserved for future reference. This is possible by extensive filing system. Afful-Broni proceeded to argue that data are essential for an organisation to be able to achieve its objectives. Every organisation needs to harness its human and material resources for its survival, growth and development which require adequate and up-to-date data. Headteachers and other leaders make decisions that affect the lives and destinies of many people. Whatever choices are made by these leaders should be based on sober reflection and critical thinking. Headteachers must ensure that they have adequate information from their record books, that they can carefully think through and sift the facts from the chaff before taking any actions. Records are kept to provide evidence of the institutions' activities, past actions and events, and to substantiate what was communicated or decided on.

Haskew and Mclendon (1968) pointed out that the best way of getting information about pupils is to consult data recorded in record books and school

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files. To them, school records furnish valuable evidence about pupils' physical and mental characteristics, home backgrounds, academic progress, and school activities. The teacher is better equipped with vital information about each pupil through good records which otherwise might be hidden from him until later, if at all. By consulting these records early in the school year, the teacher is better placed in knowing his pupils. The information found in the school files sometimes helps the teacher find solutions to problems that students meet in their schooling. They went on to draw an analogy between education and the military. Haskew and Mclendon (1968) recounted the saying of a famous General who once said that, "to have a good army, the soldiers must have one big thing to gripe about. It appeared that for teachers, records and reports provided the griping outlet in teaching" (p 65). What they meant was that most often an army complained or grumbled bitterly about certain happenings or why they were made to perform certain actions. Initially, they often do not understand why, however, most often in the end, they appreciate why they were made to do that. In the same way, headteachers and their staff sometimes do not understand why they should be bothered to keep certain records or why visiting officers should even ask for them to inspect. Though often they do not see the purpose for a given record or the need for a given report when they keep it, in the end they find it useful to themselves and their schools. As circumstances unfold and when they go into the matter with school administrators they come to the realization that it is in their interest, the pupils and the school in general to keep these records and that there is no better alternative. They recognize that their records and reports contribute

greatly to the teaching-learning process and that it is they alone who can supply a great amount of the information that must be recorded and reported. To them, the record keeping system of a school should include the following:

background records (as may be found in the admission register and cumulative records books) on each pupil giving information about the pupil's family, any previous schools attended, serious illnesses or handicaps, and any other information likely to be relevant to the pupils' progress in the school. Additionally, there could be a quick reference record giving each pupil's home address, names of parents or guardians and telephone numbers where they can be reached in an emergency.

Again, a record of the work a child has done in school (continuous assessment records and report cards often reveal this).This record may be complemented by comments from teachers about the progress in different aspects of the curriculum.

Furthermore, personnel files containing teachers' appraisals, as well as, a record of their personal development which include the social development, the ability to work with others, to take responsibility, and the development of learning skills are essential. These records could be grouped broadly into staff records, pupils' records, materials or facilities records, and administrative records.

Staff records: These include personal records of staff such as staff individual files containing staff certificates, promotion letters, pay slips, and particulars such as registered numbers, identification numbers, academic and professional qualifications, staff appraisals, among others.

Pupils' records: These include, admission registers, pupils' individual files, cumulative records, continuous assessment scores, pupils' attendance registers, pupils' exercise books, and report cards.

Materials records: Under these are, inventory books or stores ledger, cash books, time-tables and receipt books.

Administrative records include the log book, staff attendance registers, staff movement book, minutes books of staff, School Management Committee (SMC), and Parent Teacher Association (PTA), duty rosters, and functional charts.

In examining how school programmes can succeed, Musaazi (1982) showed that for this to happen, especially those that have to do with guidance and counselling, schools must keep accurate records on all students. Guidance and counselling is concerned about helping the individual to know himself better; and knowing oneself is a holistic activity involving not only the cognitive which is the amount of knowledge and understanding one has, but also the affective which includes the moral character, courtesies, honesty, hard work, good attitudes and personality development, but also the psychomotor which are the skills to perform activities. The teacher has a responsibility of monitoring the educational progress of pupils and to assist those who are under-achieving. Besides, he also needs to have intimate knowledge of his pupils, knowledge of careers available and the job market. Records give the teacher a better understanding of each individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

Records can serve as a guide to new teachers posted to a class, or when students start misbehaving or showing unusual behaviour. The teacher could refer to the student's past history for a possible explanation. If class attendance registers, cumulative records and continuous assessment records are kept, it is easier to decipher a regular and punctual student from a truant; a brilliant and serious student from a very low achieving and lazy student. When such observations are made the teacher can adopt appropriate measures to rectify the problem. Well kept records can lead to an all round improvement in education. A good system provides the teacher with relevant information about the student, his special interests, weaknesses, work habits and general interests, and general learnability. Reports should be based on factual knowledge and not on opinions. Good record-keeping help achieve this. A successful reporting system depends upon the keeping of good records, but this appears to be one of the weakest points of most schools in Africa. There appears to be some problems in the recording of school events and resources. At times, vital records are either lacking or are poorly organised such that the information can not be justifiably used for development purposes. Often, very few schools keep regular and up-to-date records.

Dean (1987) supported this and added that a good reporting system gives the school an overall view of its work and helps the administration to plan better programmes for pupils. By a good reporting system is meant that the keeping of records should not be lopsided but all embracive covering all facets of the school. The responsibility of the headteacher is to see to it that adequate records are kept

not only on the materials, finances, time, but also on the personnel such as the staff and pupils. Furthermore, appropriate records have to be passed on to the next stage of education of the learner, and that parents are kept informed of their children's progress.

Craig (1990) equally posited that teachers need to keep records about their pupils. The ways teachers record pupils' work should be efficient, useful and related to anticipated outcomes. Efficiency here implies that continuous assessment must be well planned and executed systematically to reflect pupils' true performance. Records have to conform to the school's agreed approach, the ways in which they enable future work to be planned, the ways they are used by the teacher to build upon the learning profile of the student in a diagnostic way, and the ways they reflect the targets and programmes of study of the national curriculum. The school's agreed approach to the conduct of continuous assessment is that it must be well planned and systematic, among others. The import of this is that the teacher should not administer tests and assignments whenever he pleases. These must be well planned and made known to all who have a stake in them so that adequate preparations are made to do them. Surprise tests and examinations should be avoided as much as possible.

Farrant (2004) on his part maintained that much of the efficiency of the headteacher's decision-making depends on the quality of information about the school that is available to him. Records help him do this. For instance, in requesting for textbooks, reading books or furniture for a class or the school he must be able to state with precision the enrolment of each class and the entire

school in general. Again, in requesting for teachers, he must justify it by the enrolment and not just the number of classes. Some of these records are highly indispensable and by regulation must exist wherever there is a school; examples are the log book, admission register and class attendance registers. Others are not mandatory or legally binding, yet they are very useful in the school.

Everard, Morris and Ian (2004) observed that resource control was necessary in all organisations. By resource control entails making sure that material resources such as syllabi, textbooks, teachers' guides, tools, equipment and money are present by keeping up-to-date inventories and accounts which are periodically checked. The implication of this is that the inventory book and cash book of the school must be active and working so that at any given time, the amount of resources available in the school can easily be determined. In other words, they must be adequate (available and up-to-date). For example in adopting both perpetual and physical count of resources the headteacher is able to tell at any given time the stock of materials, the quantities with teachers and pupils, and those in the stores or borrowed. Resource control has the benefit of making staff and pupils realize where equipment, materials, books, or space are available for use; ensures that obsolete and redundant equipment and books are cleared out upon authorization by giving to pupils or auctioning, and if possible replacing them with modern usable ones, making sure that resources do not get lost, and reminding staff, students and the relevant publics that there is a resource available about whose potential they had forgotten.

Meaning of Records

According to Emery (2005), records are the various documents that are generated, received and filed by any office. Records are the written matter or documents prepared or received for future use. A record could be a format-paper, electronic or computerized, digital and or voice. Bhatia (2005) also posits that a record could be in the form of correspondence such as a letter, notice, circular, memos, agendas, minutes, agenda, invoice, voucher, picture, chart, diagram, report, return or statement, fliers, news clippings, student grade sheets such as transcripts, results slips or continuous assessment scores, certificates, testimonials, registers, books of account, purchase orders, tapes and microfilms or any other documents. A record can take the form of a database or its elements like film, sound recording, among others. Records could be in manual or electronic such as the automated records management control system. An automated records management control system uses database technology to index records for storage.

A record constitutes some form of tangible evidence of the operations or transactions of an enterprise. For instance, a receipt stamped 'paid' confirms that an amount of money was paid on such a day to such a person or institution; the minutes of meetings attest to the fact that the meeting was held in such a venue, at such a time, and was chaired by such a person, and the members who were present or attended were such people. They are the outputs that record each and every business and administrative transactions of an institution and details about its members of staff, students and all its external contacts. For instance, teachers'

lesson notes, output of work and report cards show that the teachers prepare and teach, as well as set exercises, project/homework and tests and mark and communicate results to learners. Teachers' promotion letters testify that they have been graded to such ranks, and their pay slips confirm the salaries that they receive. A record is the final statement about the transaction, business process or what happened. According to http://www.jisc.infonet.ac.uk/infokits (2010), records are the products or outputs that record the activities, administrative, and business transactions of institutions and are required to provide detailed information about learners, members of staff as well the school resources, among others. The school's survival, progress and continuation hinge on it. Records form the collective memory of the organisation that must be available beyond the memory or working life of any single member of the institution. This is so because individuals in the organisation come and go as some are transferred, retire, or die, but the organisation exists for a very long time.

A record could be a tangible object or digital information such as x-rays, medical certificates, databases, e-mails, or office documents, among others. Once written, the record must not be altered across time. Records substantiate what, where, when, why, or how employees of the institution did something for, and on behalf of.

Records Management in Historical Perspectives

The concept of records management is not new. Fess and Niswonger (1981) posited that people in all civilizations have maintained records of various kinds to

determine the months, calendar of the year; farming seasons and business activities.

According to Read-Smith, Ginn and Kallaus (2002), records management involves systematically controlling the creation, preservation, organisation, distribution, storage, and retrieval to the disposal of records. Indeed, it has been established that records management existed over 7,000 years ago, yet the concept is quite new, having its new routes in the mid 20th century. They maintained that the Babylonians were known to have the oldest types of records which were clay tablet records concerning the payment of wages around 3600 B.C. In the same way, Penn and Pennix (1989) were of the view that the historical perspective of records management could be traced to the Sumerian civilization with the first records around 5000 B.C which were on cuneiform tablets. The temple priests who controlled the Sumerian society managed these records which were predominantly concerned with business activities such as the collection of taxes, existing stocks and inventories of various resources and loans contracted.

It is noteworthy that there are numerous evidences of record keeping and systems of accounting control in Babylonia during the dynasties of King Hammurabi (1792 – 1750 B.C.) and Nebuchadnezzar II (630 – 562 BC) but also in ancient Egypt particularly during the time of the New Empire (1530 – 1050 BC). Government and administration were executed through the creation and use of records, and all records were preserved in the libraries of the rulers. Later, the libraries were used as safe keeping to store records such as literature collections, information on medicine, religion and science. As time went by, records

management took various forms shifting from clay to papyrus, to parchment, and then to paper. The management of records was in the hands of scribes or teachers and literates such as the philosophers, priests, nobles, landed gentry and rulers. Iwhiwhu (2005) similarly opined that records have been with man since his creation. The form in which it is managed however has not been static but dynamic and so keeps on changing with time.

A case file system was established in Rome in AD 1200 which instituted records retention and disposition practices. This system also saw the establishment of registries to manage records. By this system, documents that came into the organisation and those that went out of it were numbered. The system used numbering, logging, and registering of every incoming and outgoing documents.

There were dramatic changes in records management towards the end of the 18th century and in the 1930s. France established the Archives Nationale in 1789 to unify the administration of archives as well as, the records of public agencies. The Greek city states also managed records, whilst the earliest known English records were compiled at the direction of William the Conqueror in the eleventh century to ascertain the financial resources of the kingdom. As some records were found to have outlived their usefulness and merely occupied space a British Order in Council was passed in 1877 authorizing the destruction of valueless material. Similarly, the first General Records Disposal Act was established by the United States Bureau of Efficiency in 1889. The United States Bureau of Efficiency did not relent in its efforts to improve records management.

Consequently in 1913, it had the nod in its advocacy for the introduction of labour-saving office equipment which has greatly influenced record keeping practices throughout the world. In 1934, the United States established its National Archives which resulted in the development of the life cycle concept of records management which has thrived to this day.

It is worthy to mention that records management is not alien to Africa. Anaman (1980) pointed out that, illiterate farmers in Africa over the ages used pieces of sticks, marbles and pebbles to count yields of crops and the number of animals a farmer had, as well as, keep track of the months in the year so as to determine precisely the correct planting season. These were later kept as records. He maintained that Arabic language was used in some parts of Africa to keep farm records, and cowry shells for exchange currency.

In Ghana, the Public Records and Archives Administration Act (Act 535) was passed in 1997. Consequently, a records management manual was prepared for records offices and archival administration in the country which has been in operation till now.

Meaning of Records Management

Place, Byers, and Uthe (1980) opined that records management is a process involving a life cycle which runs from the creation through retention, maintenance and preservation (retrieval is necessary) and then transferring them to long-term storage and finally to their ultimate disposal. It is the systematic management of all records and the data that they contain. Cheryl and Stiegler (1989) similarly pointed out that records management involves creating,

organizing, protecting, using, storing, and disposing records. Records management is primarily concerned with the evidence of an organisation's activities. In the past, records management was used to refer only to the management of records which were no longer in everyday use but still needed to be kept - 'semi-current' or 'inactive' records often stored in basements or offsite. More modern usage tends to refer to the entire 'lifecycle' of records - from the point of creation right through until their eventual disposal.

The headteacher generates records in the school by creating them. 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 cumulative record books are entered with the relevant data. Relevant information may be created on teachers into the staff record books or their individual files. Some records in the school are received from education authorities, the Municipal Assembly and others. Almost every day headteachers receive official letters and circulars from their authorities particularly the Municipal Education 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, minutes 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 the books could be tended in a court of law in evidence to a case.

Harvey (1989) supports this view when he opined that records management 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. It involves creating a system that will control the quantity, quality, and cost of records. Knowing what to store is important since it is not every material that is to be stored.

In the school, many kinds of documents are processed or received, but they are not all of equal value. Some have to be immediately thrown away after use or after they have been read since they will not be used afterwards. Pupils completed exercise books, report cards, staff attendance and movement books may not need to be kept for a long time after the end of the academic year. Others however, are of such vital nature that they are essential to the operation of the institution that they must not be destroyed, but instead, enter a records management system for varying lengths of time. The log book, admission register, pupils' attendance registers and the inventory book are vital records that must be preserved for varying lengths of time.

Littlefield and Peterson cited in Arrora (1980) hold a similar view that records management is concerned with the records creation, distribution, maintenance, retention, preservation, utilization, retrieval and disposal; and advanced to say that the term records management is broad and includes forms, reports, reproduction of written material, filing, records retention, microfilming and related services. Stewart and Westgate (2000), posit that records management has some functions key to which is the creation of records. This refers to the

development and design of new forms and records and their control. It deals with the development of efficient methods of entering data in the documents, as well as, the length of time records are to be stored.

Bhatia (2005) supported this view and proceeded to state that the object of keeping records is to enable information to be readily available to management when required. Whilst some records are required to be kept by law, others are to meet the needs of management in planning and controlling activities. Records management control could be the duty of one person such as the headteacher or secretary. However, where the records system is large and complex, it may require a records manager and support staff with some special training. Procedures for the creation, retention, and discarding of records vary from office to office.

According to http://www.jisc.infonet.ac.uk/infokits (2010), records management is the process of systematically managing records together with the data or information that they contain. Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia (2010) posits that traditionally, records were held on paper or more recently on microfilm or fiche, but are now held increasingly within electronic systems. Information Management Services (2010) on its part points out that records management is the field of management that is responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records. Good records management is based on the principles of regular review and controlled retention or destruction of information. Information has a life cycle which involves it passing through a series of phases from creation to final disposition. The

disposition could be through a controlled destruction process or being added to the long-term or permanent record (the archive) of the institution. Records have to be managed and maintained so that they meet the needs of the organisation, defends the institution and its people against all external demands, is complete with all regulatory and statutory requirements, is able to provide both the primary and secondary evidence of a transaction or business process which is admissible in a court of law, is kept , maintained or stored in the most economical manner, and is disposed of in a way that is auditable, and meets all environmental and other requirements.

The management control of records is termed records management. What this means is that records assist in tracing materials so that they do not get lost. As a process, it spans from the creation of records up to their ultimate disposal. This includes preparation, classification, storage of records, and making them available as and when required. Good records management is concerned with the use of proper methods and procedures where records are well protected, are easy to find, not unduly space consuming and are not retained beyond their usefulness.

Place, Byers and Uthe (1980) pointed out that it has been estimated that one thousand, five hundred trillion pieces of paper are on file in offices and store rooms. Every year, the contents of 62 million file drawers are added to this total. Furthermore, studies show that, of the total, 35 percent could be destroyed today and not missed. Another 20 percent is equally useless. Of the remaining papers, 95 percent are useful for five years or less. About 50 percent of this bulk can be

kept in low-cost storage rather than in high-cost office space. Only one percent must be kept permanently.

The proper storage of records is crucial. Records management is concerned with developing a system of storing records and identifying which records will be kept; arranging records in an organised manner so that they can be found quickly; protecting records from damages or loss, and determining how long records should be stored. Today, records may be stored by manual or automatic methods, the latter being electronic storage via the computer. As an organisation expands, its filing and retrieval activities may become mechanized or automated. As a business gets closer to the concept of a total information system, the closer it gets to the integration and centralization of its filing functions. The organisation may therefore use computer for storing, interrelating, and retrieving a mass of information with speed and precision which otherwise would have been impossible through manual or semi-automatic process. Records management by electronic means is still low in most Ghanaian public basic schools. Most rural communities have no electricity, moreover few schools have computers. Also, many headteachers 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 use and deterioration. 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 of. Equally important is the implementation of such decisions by personnel responsible for this. Critical of

these is the headteacher or the secretary who must conscientiously follow institutional guidelines on what should and what should not be stored, and what system is to be used to file what is kept. This involves two control measures, namely, filing management and filing operation. By filing management is meant that measures are taken to stop the production and retention of useless papers. By filing operation, specific procedures are formulated to identify the most efficient and economic ways to file and make accessible those papers that are found to be useful. Records may be stored in any of the following storage equipment;

File folders. File folders are used for keeping varied documents that are placed in a file on a given topic or subject. They facilitate the grouping of records and protect them.

Subdivision Guides: Subdivision guides are made of rigid material like heavy pressed cardboard. Each one bears a metal tab into which is inserted a card indicating the subdivision of file folders that follow it. These rigid guides divide the file drawer into sections and so make it easier to locate records quickly.

Storage racks and filing cabinets: File folders could be kept together in special racks or cabinets. Filing cabinets are very common in offices. Most cabinets consist of a vertical arrangement of drawers; others are pull-drawer filing cabinets, and lateral or shelf-style cabinets. External labels are often affixed to the outside of the filing cabinets. Each drawer may be labeled so that its contents are easy to identify. Electronic records: These are computer generated word – processing storage media which include cassettes and cartridges, disks and diskettes, and video tapes and microfilm.

Principles of Records Management

Harvey (1989) posited that a number of principles needed to be followed when devising a system for filing. Bhatia (2005) was of the same view and identified these principles as the objectives of records management. The principles include that, records have a historical function. Records provide an orderly account of progress and make it possible for management to check on the progress of activities, business or work. For instance, in the basic school the log book and admission register provide valuable history about the school and its personnel. The log book tells the exact date the school was established, who established it, which teachers were present, the number of pupils who were used to start it and the teachers who have worked in it till the present time. It further records the significant happenings in the school.

Also, the reputation of records is justified by references to costs involved and purpose to serve. Records are created for various purposes and not just for the sake of creating them. For instance, the admission register is created to capture vital information on every pupil who enters the school from his entry to exit. The inventory book is created to keep the stock of resources; whilst class attendance registers, staff attendance and movement books are used to monitor and supervise pupils and teachers' attendance to school. The creation and storage of records should be economical in terms of equipments used and space occupied. Economy in the cost of installing the system, capital cost, running costs, and labour costs have to be taken into account. Compactness has to be considered as the system may or may not fit into the available space.

The safety of records is also crucial in an organisation. Records need to be safely preserved to prevent mutilation, loss or misuse. Records should be safe from damage against such things as fire, deterioration from dirt, dust and loss, and the security of confidential records.

Furthermore records should be suitable. The overall suitability of the system for its purpose within the context of the conditions in which the entity operates is essential. This implies that the school has a purpose and the records are designed to fulfill those purposes. Each school may have peculiar circumstances, so the records management of each school may vary to some extent, yet serve the same purposes. For example, schools in deprived communities might not have storage infrastructure like offices and storerooms to keep school materials including records. However, it is still required that the headteachers of these deprived schools manage records well, preserve, use, and dispose of obsolete records that are no more useful. The indexing of the system must be appropriate for the purpose and provide enough cross referencing for documents that cover a number of areas.

Again, records have periodicity. Records have to be preserved only for the period that they are useful. Another issue with records is the need for verification. The import of this is that headteachers must ensure that records are accurate and authentic; so they must be verified from other evidence. For instance, whether teachers and pupils attend school regularly and punctually must be evidenced not only in the attendance books but also in the log book, queries and other reports. In addition, whether pupils are progressing in school or not must be reflected not

only in their class exercise books, homework books but also in their continuous assessment records and report cards. The system should be accurate, and up-to-date with the filing not lagging behind. As such, each organisation must tailor its filing system to its needs and ensure that it is flexible enough to cope with changes, particularly those related to the expansion of the system and the current requirements of management. Furthermore, there is the need for classification of records. Records should be classified according to any or a combination of these; chronology, alphabetic, numeric, alpha-numeric, geographic, departmental, subject, among others.

Added to this is the issue of accessibility. Records should facilitate the preparation of statements or reports regarding the current business position or school situation. By means of up-to-date records, the business position of the organisation can be known. Records ensure the availability of information speedily and in form. For records to be useful, they must be promptly located and made available when required.

There is also the need for simplicity in records management. The system used should be simple enough to be understood and operated easily to avoid any confusion that could lead to delays in retrieval. The equipment used and the methods of operation should be simple to understand and easy to remember and handle. The system should also be adaptable when circumstances change. That is, there should be flexibility and elasticity. The filing system should be flexible enough to allow desirable changes from time to time. It should also be flexible

and elastic enough to provide for expansion to take increasing numbers of records.

Records also have an analytical function. Records facilitate comparison. They ease comparison of the performance of the organisation between one time and the other, and between organisations. The implication of this is that records make it easy to compare the performance of personnel between one time and the other, and between or among themselves, or the school's performance with others. Another important aspect of records is that they have a control function. There must be controls to keep track of any documents removed and to trace them where necessary. They help detect inefficiency and wastage of resources.

Finally, some records are the result of legal formalities. Such records assist in the establishment of the genuineness of facts in disputes, serve as proof of transactions and may be used as evidence in the support of arguments in disputes or law suits. These records must be preserved for specified periods of time due to some laws.

The Mechanics of Records Management

This refers to directives, forms, and filing systems in records management. According to Penn and Pennix (1989), directive system is the policy and procedure statement issued by an organisation that governs its records management.

Form systems: Records management often requires the use of forms. A form is a tool used to create or collect, organise and transmit information. Daver (1988) outlined five important aspects of forms. These are that, records managers

have to design forms in a manner that is easy to complete and provide data that can easily be used; give specific instructions on how the form is to be used; identify each form with a number; centralize the responsibility for both control and design of the form, and avoid duplication of entries in different forms.

Categorizing records is also known as classifying, unitizing or filing records. Cheryl and Stiegler (1989) argued that records could be categorized according to their degree of importance such as vital, important, useful, and nonessential; or alphabetic, numeric, and alphanumeric; subject, departmental or chronological. This view is equally supported by Harvey (1989) and Stewart and Westgate (2000).

Vital records are materials that are so important that the organisation cannot function well without them. Such records are kept in order to protect the organisation from legal action or to prove that laws are being followed, hence provide it with security. Records providing proof of ownership of property, inventories, machinery, and buildings are original records that can not be replaced and must be kept well for a length of time specified by law. In schools, the log book, admission register, inventory books, certificates and promotion letters are examples. Since these records can not easily be replaced, they must be stored where they are safe from theft, fire and other damage.

Important records are necessary for the continued operation of the organisation. Unlike vital records, important records can be replaced, though replacement can be both difficult and expensive. These records include invoices,

accounting records, payroll records, personnel records, and cumulative records of learners.

Useful records are essential for the smooth running of the day-to-day functioning of the organisation. Though they can be replaced, their loss could cause a lot of inconvenience. Examples are minutes of meetings, time-tables and teachers' schemes of work.

Non essential records provide useful information, but are not of lasting interest to the institution. Examples include notices of meetings or workshops, advertisements, news releases and requests for information. Once they have served the purpose they have to be disposed of.

Records could also be classified according to classes, forms or grade levels, subject areas or by individuals. Records could also be unitized according to clients, names of projects, names of departments, or names of locations. Again, records may be unitized by time period (chronology), alphabetic order, numeric, and alphanumeric.

Records could be unitized by names of clients. The records of each individual go into one file folder. Examples are files of teachers or students. Records could be classified by the names of various projects in the school such as farm records, feeding, academic, science and technology, craft, among others.

Information could be categorized according to names of departments such as geography, science, mathematics, education and music. A school community may comprise a number of locations where pupils hail from. Pupils' files could therefore be classified by the names of locations or street names. Files could be

arranged in alphabetical order. Files could also be numbered serially for easy identification or location.

Alphanumeric systems: This system of filing combines letters of the alphabet and numbers. Each part of the code forms either an alphabetical or numerical unit, and files are sequenced within it. Example, courses for students may be labeled Econs.1, Econs. 2 or Bus 1

Release for Filing and Utilization of Records

According to Cheryl and Stiegler (1989), records could be divided into active and inactive files. Frequently used records are stored in active files, whilst those not used on regular basis are placed in inactive files. Inactive material is retained for research purposes, legal reasons, historical reasons, or to protect the reputation of the institution.

According to Stewart and Westgate (2000), documents have to be released before they are filed. The implication here is that the record has played its part in an information processing sequence and is now ready to be put aside. For example, outgoing letters are mailed or posted, whilst its copy is released for filing. The mailed or dispatched letter is the output and its copy that is put on file is the record.

Incoming letters constitute the input and have to be kept on hand for processing and filed only after the response to them has been completed. When it is completed, a rubber stamp indicating the word 'File' plus the headteacher or officer's initials on the document shows the record has been completed and should be filed. When a circular is sent to the school, teachers may have to read it

and sign or place a check mark against his or her name. The headteacher has to keep all letters addressed to him well in the appropriate file; hence, he is not to put all letters in the same file but to classify those belonging to the same group in one file. It is equally important that the headteacher does not have to forget to write the date each letter was received clearly and promptly on it. Similarly when he sends letters out he is to do the same on the copies of letters he files in his office. It is expected that the files are kept neat, clearly labeled, and safely kept. The person in charge of filing must look for evidence that the document has been released before filing it. In case of doubt, he has to return it to the person responsible for releasing it since perhaps action on it might not have been completed. In the public basic school however, such processes may not be required as the headteacher does the filing himself.

Stewart and Westgate (2000) posited that utilization of records is concerned with the development of efficient procedure through which the records move. Efficient utilization of records largely depends on the quality with which the information is entered into the records. This makes it easy for the desired records to be retrieved and delivered to the desired place in time. According to Bhatia (2005) records could be transferred annually, twice-yearly or perpetually. Annual transfer: This system involves the transfer of the contents of the files to less expensive storage areas at the end of the year. Twice-yearly transfer plan happens when files are transferred twice a year in two phases. At the end of six months, the records are transferred to a half way location. Six months later, the records in the halfway location are moved into storage, and a new set moved into

the halfway location. Perpetual transfer takes place when files are regularly examined and material that is no longer needed are pulled and placed in a transfer file.

Good Record Keeping

GES (1994) suggests that to keep efficient records, it is important for the headteacher to observe the following; he needs to make prompt entries into the record books such as stores- ledger, cash book, or receipt book; ensure that no erasures are made in accounts books; cancel wrong entries and mistakes neatly and initial them; for books of accounts make entries in blue or black ink only; from time to time render accounts to stakeholders like staff and PTA of whatever resources or monies that have been received or spent and have the school accounts ready for auditing or inspection at any time.

For purposes of bank reconciliation, the cheque stubs in the cheque book should be filed in, so that he can keep track of the account. He may at periodic times request the bank for a statement of account. When this is done, the statement will help him check all the deposits and withdrawals made. These have to be cross –checked with the deposits and payment slips for reconciliation. Again, it is imperative for the headteacher to keep proper records of all monies received and payments made. He must issue receipts for all monies received and promptly enter them in the cash books. The receipts and other entries constitute vital records. All receipts must be filed. When receipts are not available, he has to prepare honour certificates to cover the payments. As soon as money is collected, they should be paid into the appropriate quarters.

According to http://www.jisc.infonet.ac.uk/infokits (2010), managing records effectively has several advantages. When records are well organised, information is easily retrieved. Records that are correctly filed and stored are easily accessible, and this facilitates transparency, accountability and democracy. Orderly and efficient flow of information enables the organisation to function effectively and efficiently, reliable records that are also authoritative are created and maintained in an accessible, intelligent and usable way. There is the need for laid down procedures regarding records management. A retention and disposal programme ensures that the organisation maintains only those records it really needs to function; controls are exercised to ensure that only authorized persons have access to the information, thus preventing information or the records themselves from being stolen or damaged. This guarantees the confidentiality and privacy of records, and prevents the inappropriate disclosure of information that could harm the institution or infringe the privacy rights of individuals.

Managing physical records require some effort. Records need to be identified and authenticated. Records have to be examined, filed, carefully handled and retrieved when needed. It is always necessary to examine a record to ensure that it is authentic and that it has not been forged, and that any damage, alteration or missing content is documented. In extreme cases records are subjected to x-ray, radio-carbon dating, microscope or chemical analysis. Again, in storing records, it is essential to ensure that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. For this purpose, file rooms may have specialized environmental controls against temperature and humidity. File cabinets may be

used in offices. Vital records could be stored in disaster resistant safe or vault to protect them against fire, flood, earthquakes and conflicts. In extreme cases, records may require both disaster –proofing and public access. The circulation of records is equally important. When a record is retrieved for use, it is important to track it till it is returned to its normal storage area. Disposal of records does not always mean their destruction. It may mean transfer to a historical archive, museum, or an individual. Destruction of records ought to be authorized by law, statute, regulation, or operating procedure, and the records should be disposed of with care to avoid inadvertent disclosure of information. The process needs to be well-documented, starting with a records retention schedule and policies and procedures that have been approved at the highest level. An inventory of the records disposed of should be maintained, including certification that they have been destroyed. Records should never simply be discarded as refuse. Most organisations use processes including pulverization (crushing or grinding), paper shredding (cutting into pieces to render it unreadable), or incineration.

Records Managers

According to Stewart and Westgate (2000) ideally, the institution's records manager (the headteacher in the case of the public basic school) should be a fully trained and experienced professional. Whatever the level of experience, the institution still needs to give him the necessary training or courses as continuing professional development. People with Information Technology Management Information System or data protection background may be seen as suitable. It should however not be assumed that previous experience is sufficient

and therefore, further training is deemed unnecessary. Records management control could be the duty of one person such as the headteacher or secretary. However, where the records system is large and complex, it may require a records manager and support staff with some special training. The records manager who is the headteacher in the basic school, is responsible for filing, retrieving, and organizing the files as well as signing files in and out of central records and keeping a log of who borrows the files. When this happens, all the office staff have to be familiar with the operation of central records and have to know the procedures to follow to obtain files. They must also know how to route documents for filing.

The Records Manager is responsible for drawing up guidance for good records management practice and ensuring compliance with the overall policy. Such guidance must be concerned about records creation, filing, classification schemes; retention schedules, storage and maintenance of records; and the final disposition of records to the historical archive or destruction. They should also be responsible for maintaining the audit trail of all records destroyed, codes of practice and legislation, and keep an accurate record of activities. In the public basic school the headteacher is the records manager. He is the key manager of the records, the task of which he sometimes performs in addition to his teaching. Unfortunately however, most often they are not trained professionals in records management.

Location of Records

Cheryl and Stiegler (1989) posited that schools often decide on their best places to store records. Factors to consider for the storage of records are convenience and security. For many headteachers, the convenience storage includes the use of desk drawers, file cabinets, shelves and cupboards in offices or storerooms. GES (1994) points out that it is the headteacher's responsibility that school items are kept in the school store and office. However, in the absence of these, he might have to keep them in his house. But where the headteacher is staying out of the town in which the school is located, he might keep them in a room in the School Management Committee chairman or Parent Teacher Association chairman's house or the chief's palace. But wherever he keeps these materials he has to ensure that the room is airy enough and has sufficient sunlight; that from time to time, he has to open doors and windows to let in fresh air and some sunlight, he has to ensure that he does not place the record books on the bare floor or lean them directly against the wall to protect them from the destructive activities of termites and dampness. Finally, he has to lock the doors and windows of the room and keep the keys unless he is travelling outside the school where he has to entrust the school to his assistant. Security; it is essential that in making decisions for the storage of records, consideration should be given to protecting records from theft, loss, fire, and even from unauthorized eyes. Records may be stored in decentralized or centralized files. A school may adopt a decentralized file storage system where the records are stored in many locations in the school. Alternately, files may be stored or located in one place such as the

school office. This is the centralized file system. Many schools find the centralized system preferable as it is easier to provide fireproof storage, locking doors, and limited access. Others use a combination of both. Some renowned schools have employee clerks who retrieve the records themselves, hence, do not allow any other person to do so. These clerks are solely responsible for filing and retrieving records. Since these clerks are trained in correct filing procedures, fewer records are lost or misfiled. Additionally, records are better protected from fire, smoke, water damage, or theft in centralized files. For example, records may be stored in locked cabinets in a fire-proof vault. The privacy and confidentiality of the records can also be protected by allowing only authorized employees to enter the filing area.

Wherever records are stored they must be accessible. There are three types of access; open access, selected access, and closed access.
Open access is where anybody can take and use the records. The danger here is that users may not return the records, or where they do, they will put them in the wrong place, or just dump them. Selective access is where only a few people are authorized to use the records. Closed access system happens where only the staff employed for the purpose extracts records for users. This is the best in terms of control of records.

Uses of Records

Cheryl and Stiegler (1989) posited that records provide essential information to educational administrators, managers, government and other stakeholders to base their decisions. Records provide the necessary information

through past and present records for the purpose of planning, policy – making, coordination and control functions, provided these records are properly classified and preserved so as to be located promptly as and when needed. Consequently, records have to be systematically maintained, preserved with due care, and made available to management quickly and accurately. Not only do records provide information that is necessary for decision – making, but also they provide a history of the organisation and its activities. Records serve as memory units of the office. Records may be required and used for legal purposes. Compliance with legal and statutory requirements such as the maintenance of books of accounts and registers for a specified period is facilitated. Records in the form of summarized statements may be available to ascertain the financial health of business at a glance.

Records provide documentation or proof that an action had taken place or not. For instance, a receipt marked 'paid' provides proof that payment was made. Records of income and expenditure in the cash book of a school show monies received into the school and what was expended and on what they were expended. Continuous assessment scores and Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results over the years show individual student's achievements in the various disciplines. Comparisons of these achievements reveal whether the school or student is improving or declining in her performance so as to know what to do. Continuous assessment records serve a number of functions in the school system. They provide the basis for initial assessment of pupils' skill levels enabling the teacher to decide what to teach. They assist the teacher to monitor progress over

time and to systematically observe pupils' improvements in response to the teaching given. The information can be used to evaluate and identify successful teaching methods and help the teacher to decide what to teach next. Alternatively, when pupils' progress is slower than expected, records assist decisions about what steps can be taken to put learners back on course for success.

An official record may be seen as the encyclopedia of the various activities undertaken by employees in the organisation. Records provide running commentary of the activities that take place in the day-to-day organisational life. Whitehead (1993) argued that records are relevant for business to be efficiently carried out. They provide proof that contracts were made or whether obligations were fulfilled or not. In so doing, any questions could be answered efficiently and quickly. Accurate records enable queries to be easily dealt with and also make it possible to compare present performance with past achievements and to detect any problems arising long before they would otherwise be noticed.

In firms, businesses and institutions, systematic records have saved many from bankruptcy. For example, vital records such as book-keeping records have enabled them to know how much they owe creditors, and how much they are owed by debtors. Accurate and detailed information is important to management if they are to make right decisions and run their institutions properly. A lack of credible information causes costly errors to be made.

One of the main objectives of education according to Kochhar (1970) is the development of the physical fitness of the learners. It is therefore crucial to periodically evaluate the health status of pupils through medical check – ups in

order to diagnose and discover any possible health problems that are likely to develop into physical challenges such as visual, hearing or speech which often retard their progress in other areas. The hospital book enables the headteacher and relevant stakeholders of the school to know the health problems of teachers and pupils and how best to assist them. For example, the PTA could mobilize resources to assist any school personnel who require an expensive medical operation or drugs beyond his means. The headteacher could also recommend a teacher for sick leave or maternity leave and recruit a supply or temporal teacher to take his place so that pupils are not disadvantaged by his absence. Finally, effective records assist the teacher's communication with other people. Records are vital for communicating information collected about pupils, and teachers may have to communicate to a variety of people about this. The success of this information exchange depends on both the quality of records kept and the thought and sensitivity with which details are related. Effective communication depends on the accuracy and completeness of the information one has and upon how it is used.

According to Shirley and Solity (1987), records are useful to pupils experiencing success, acts as a powerful motivator and incentive to continue working hard. By providing frequent feedback on academic and social progress clearly and positively, the teacher facilitates pupils' learning of new skills. Parents on their part are naturally keen to know how their children are progressing. They appreciate seeing evidence of improvements and being given a well balanced picture of their wards' overall development.

Basically therefore, records serve three major purposes. First, they serve as an administrative record of the recent activities of any office or department, and thus, assist departmental members with day- to- day operation of the department or office. Secondly, records serve legal purposes, and finally, they serve as an historic record of the activities of an office, department or institution.

The Physical Maintenance, Retention and Disposal of records

Stewart and Westgate (2000) argued that this stage is concerned with the preservation of important and essential documents and the disposition of those which are unnecessary and are no longer required by the organisation. It is further concerned with the shifting of the records from high cost storage areas to low cost storage ones. Information on paper (manual) is still the commonest means of keeping records. The life cycle of all records is divided into four stages: creation, active use, inactive storage for occasional use or legal reasons, and final disposition – destruction or archival storage. Worthless records do not have to be stored, and stored records have to be periodically reviewed to dispose those that have become useless, and to transfer those that have permanent value or possible future use to inexpensive storage areas. A retention schedule that has been approved by top management helps office workers to identify different types of records and their disposition. Following a records retention schedule provides greater storing and retrieving efficiency and space savings are increased.

Bhatia (2005) supported this view and argued that records may mount as they keep on coming into the school. Storage then becomes difficult unless something is done about this, cramming and overflow of material may occur. One

solution to this is to file only essential records (those classified as vital, important, or useful). Another solution is to clean the file on a regular basis and dispose of records that are no longer needed. This is done according to a retention schedule or records management manual. The retention schedule tells how long each type of record should be kept and how records are to be disposed of.

Often, vital and important records are stored permanently; they are never destroyed. Useful records may be destroyed when they are no longer needed. Records are often divided into active and inactive files for storage purposes. Frequently used records are stored in the active files, whilst those no longer used on regular basis may be transferred to the inactive files.

Pruning procedures: This involves making decisions on records to be retained and stored and those that should be removed and destroyed at particular periods. Often, a list describing what information must remain on the file following the pruning process is provided. When overflow arises, a decision has to be made to withdraw and destroy the older documents or store them somewhere else as archival materials. When this happens, the records maintenance system will have the current records at hand for day-to-day use, whilst the archival files which are not likely to be required for immediate use, are often stored elsewhere where the space has less value.

Some archival records must by law be kept for a prescribed period. According to Kommeh (2008), King's College in London developed record keeping practices that captured, maintained, and disposed of, or destroy records with evidential characteristics in accordance with obligations under the Freedom

of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Limitation Act 1980. The provision of the disposal schedule offer guidance to staff on the need to retain certain records for periods as specified by law, to destroy some records when no longer needed, and to archive records of permanent value.

Most departments and agencies have policies concerning when a record is to be declared dead and is to be disposed of. However, dead records are to be destroyed with special care for any confidential documents. Records could also be put under suspended animation in the archival storage when thinning and withdrawal takes place.

In sum, records management is a process involving a life cycle of creation, maintenance, preservation, usage, retention and ultimate disposal. It includes forms, reports, reproduction of written material, filing, retention, microfilming, among others. Ideally, the institution's records manager (the headteacher) should be a fully trained and experienced professional. Records management usually has a directive system that governs its operation. Records management is not new. It has been with man since his creation. Records are the various documents generated, received and filed by an office. Records management is important because records help to control organizational resources thereby protecting materials from getting lost. Records protect and defend personnel in the organisation and reveal their performance with the view of enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency.

Challenges to Records Management

GES (1994) posits that school records are a valuable source of information on teachers' personal qualities, attitude to work, preparation for teaching, work output, punctuality, sick days and school attendance, as well as contain pupils' background information, their attendance to school, interests, strengths and weaknesses.

It however, identifies teachers' lack of knowledge of keeping continuous assessment records, heavy workload due to large class sizes, irregular entry of marks, non availability of record cards and delays in record cards reaching the schools as some challenges inhibiting effective records management. Other challenges include errors in calculations, late submission of records by teachers to the headteacher, lateness and absenteeism on the part of both teachers and pupils and failure to record them adequately. Again, lack of funds for printing continuous assessment record booklets, tests and examination questions, reluctance on the part of teachers to fill in record cards such as cumulative records as it is thought to be tedious, headteachers' inability to ensure that assessment forms and cumulative records are properly filled in by teachers, and failure by headteachers to see to it that teachers and pupils sign for any equipment or books they borrow.

With regard to the management of financial records some of the challenges identified include headteachers' inability to obtain receipts to cover monies paid, and when receipts are not available, their inability to prepare honour certificates to cover the payment. Others include delays in the payment of monies

to the appropriate account, failure to make prompt recording of sums of money received leading to misapplication, misappropriation or embezzlement, and poor record keeping. GES (1994) again saw storage to be a problem. It pointed out that the ideal place to keep school materials incuding records were in school offices and storerooms provided these places were secure. However, it points out that in schools where there are neither offices nor storerooms, these materials could be kept in the headteacher's, SMC Chairman or PTA Chairman's house, or Chief's Palace. Furthermore, GES (1994) points out that loss through fire, insects, rodents, leakage, and tampering due to theft, or unauthorized eyes are hazards to the maintenance of any record system. "There have been known instances where sensitive files have simply disappeared (Wellman, 2003, p.148).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments used for gathering the data, and the procedure for collecting and analyzing the data, which include the pre-test and the main study.

Research Design

The descriptive survey was considered suitable for this study. Researchers like Nwana (1981), Gay (1992), Oppenhiem (1996) as well as Cooper and Schindler(2000) posit that the research design is the researcher's overall plan or blue print that guides him in the collection, measurement and analysis of data. They recommend that every research requires a design which clearly spells out what the variables, hypotheses or research questions are, the timing and frequency of collecting the data to answer the research questions, the setting in which the data is to be collected, and the nature of communications with subjects.

Osuala (1987) saw the descriptive research design as a study which investigates the nature of a phenomenon with the view of giving a picture of a situation or a population. According to Leedy (1989), the method "looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena at the moment and describes precisely what

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the researcher sees" (p.140). Descriptive survey aims principally at observing, describing and documenting aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs rather than explaining them. Furthermore, renowned researchers like Best and Khan (1998) posited that, given phenomena often followed a common pattern. Whatever one observed about people at any particular time could be replicated at other times provided the same conditions pertained. Neuman (2003) equally supported this view.

This study sought to investigate the status of records management in public basic schools in the Tarkwa –Nsuaem Municipality. It sought to find out whether the headteachers created the records, whether they were maintaining or keeping them well, whether they were using them, and whether they disposed of useless records. The principle is that, in each school, the records have either been created and are adequate (implying here that they are available and up-to date), or are inadequate - poorly created or highly inadequate meaning that they are not even available.

A few criticisms have been levelled against the descriptive research design by researchers like Fraenkel and Wallen (2001). They argued that the descriptive survey had several setbacks as items in the instruments could lack clarity and could be misleading such that the survey results could vary significantly depending on the wording of the items. Again, they contended that questions or statements that respondents have to respond to may lack clarity or could even be misleading. Furthermore, they maintained that untrustworthy results could come about as respondents could opt not to tell the truth. Again, they were of the view

that getting respondents to complete questionnaire and have them returned to the researcher on time so that meaningful analysis could be made is often difficult. Finally, that respondents may delay or fail to meet deadlines, others might not complete and return them at all; whilst some may even throw the questionnaire away. Despite these seeming disadvantages, I saw that the study could be successfully carried out by administering questionnaire to the headteachers and circuit supervisors and observing records in the sampled schools, thereby triangulating both data to answer the research questions that I had formulated. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human bahaviour. They argued that where triangulation is used in interpretive research to investigate different actors' viewpoints, the same method or accounts will naturally produce different sets of data.

Again, the method was found appropriate as the variables and procedures could be determined and described as accurately and completely as possible, and the data analyzed, organised and presented systematically using tables, frequencies and percentages to arrive at valid and accurate conclusions. The descriptive research design also provided me with a lot of information from a large number of cases (headteachers, circuit supervisors and school records) to work with. This gave an accurate picture of the situation of records management in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality at the time. Besides, the data that was collected did not require to be subjected to any cumbersome mathematical calculations, resulting in ease of analysis.

The descriptive survey was further found suitable because the study sought to explore both quantitative and qualitative methods in the research. I formulated research questions and then collected data to answer the questions. Descriptive surveys often engage the use of instruments such as questionnaire and observation to elicit and analyze a lot of information from a wide range of respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample which was representative so that generalizations could be made for the entire population on the basis of the findings.

Population

An essential ingredient of descriptive survey is the need to clearly and carefully define the population. Leedy (1989) posited that a careful definition of the population and its proper delimitation in order to set the exact parameters so as to ensure discreteness is very crucial.

The headteachers of the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality and the circuit supervisors constituted the population. There were 74 headteachers based on the premise that any primary school and Junior High School which were together, or any double-stream school under the administration of the same headteacher was considered as one school in this study. There were five educational circuits in the municipality, each under a circuit supervisor namely, Dompim, Fiase, Nsuaem, Tarkwa and Benso. These circuits and their respective number of schools were; Dompim 18; Fiase 15; Nsuaem 15; Tarkwa 14, and Benso 12.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of 63 headteachers of the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality distributed as follows; Dompim 15; Fiase 13; Nsuaem 13; Tarkwa 12; and Benso 10. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) a sample size of 63 is adequate for a population of 75.

The researcher visited the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipal Directorate of Education and collected a list of all the schools which had been classified under the various circuits. He then listed and numbered all of them serially in a sampling frame, circuit after circuit. Dompim circuit schools were numbered 01 to 18, Fiase 19 to 33, Nsuaem 34 to 48, Tarkwa 49 to 62, and Benso 63 to 74.

Simple random sampling was carried out to get the sample. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the samples for the circuits were proportional to their populations so as to ensure fairness. For instance, to get the sample schools for Dompim, the serial numbers 01 to 18 were written on slips of paper; each serial number on a slip of paper was then carefully folded up and kept in a bowl and mixed up. The researcher then picked a slip of paper from the bowl without looking into it. He then opened it to see the number on it. Then he ticked on the sampling frame the number and school that corresponded to that on the slip of paper. This process was repeated until the sample size of 15 schools was obtained. Circuit after circuit the process was carried out in this manner until the various sample sizes were derived.

Research Instruments

Basically, two research instruments, questionnaire and an observation guide were employed for the study. The questionnaire was used as it is an effective tool in gathering information from many respondents. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990), questionnaire is suitable in collecting data from a large number of respondents and it also guarantees their anonymity. Armstrong (1999) equally supported its use in descriptive surveys.

I constructed questionnaire for the headteachers in the sampled schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality and the circuit supervisors. The questionnaire for the headteachers consisted of four sections. Section A consisted of statements to which respondents had to tick any of the options Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The section examined how records were managed in the schools.

Section B examined the factors that enabled good record keeping. Section C sought to know the extent to which the essential records were adequate (available and up-to-date) or inadequate (not up-to-date) or highly inadequate (not even available). Respondents were required to tick any one of four options, Very Adequate, Adequate, Inadequate, or Highly Inadequate according to the status of each record in the school. Section D was an open ended item which sought the challenges headteachers encountered in the management of school records.

The Questionnaire for the circuit supervisors enquired whether their headteachers created, preserved, used, stored, unitized and disposed of obsolete

records; whether they observed school records during their visits and supported headteachers, whether the schools had adequate storage facilities for keeping records, and whether there were records management manuals. Here respondents were restricted to choose any one of the four options in each case. Finally, respondents were asked for the apparent challenges facing headteachers in the management of school records. This item made it possible for respondents to express their views as they felt appropriate unlike the earlier restriction to options provided by the researcher in the closed-ended case. The other instrument which I used for the study was observation. An observation guide was prepared and used. Observation as a research technique is argued to be suitable as it provides ready information. Out of the 63 sampled public basic schools in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality, 35 had their records observed.

The use of these two instruments helped me to triangulate data to treat the research questions. Appendices A, B, and C show the instruments that were used, namely, the questionnaire for headteachers and circuit supervisors, and the records observation schedule which I personally used to observe the records in 35 schools. Both face and content validity were ensured. I ensured that the instruments were based on the content of the research and nothing else. Also, the content validity was certified by both supervisors of mine who are senior lecturers at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), and by a pilot-test.

Pilot-test

A pilot-test was conducted in November 2009 with a view of finding out the suitability and internal consistency of the instruments with regard to their strengths and weaknesses. This was in line with Leedy (1989) who posited that, all questionnaires need to be pilot-tested on a small population of similar characteristics. Such a procedure became necessary in order that I could discover whether there were some items that were ambiguous and difficult to be understood by respondents, or whether they were requesting for information I never intended to. Neuman (2003), for example, argued that the conduct of a pilot-test is essential as it "is a means of improving the quality and reliability" of the instruments (pp. 181, 182).

The pilot-test involved five public basic schools in the Prestea Huni-Valley District of the Western Region of Ghana. This district was selected as it had similar characteristics with the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. For instance, until it's creation in 2008, it was under Wassa West district just as Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality. This meant that they were both under the same management and administration. All the four heads of departments in the Prestea –Huni- Valley District Education Office were education officers in then Wassa West District Directorate of Education. Geographically, both are in the Western Region of Ghana. They share common borders and belong to the Wassa Fiase traditional area.

The items were strictly based on records management in the public basic schools which is the content of the thesis. The items in the instruments were

judged to have content validity as they were a representative sample of the content areas and directed at answering the research questions. In sum, the questionnaire was found suitable for the collection of the necessary information for the study and particularly for answering the research questions that I had formulated.

The reliability (internal) consistency coefficient was determined by the use of the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 15. The Cronbach Coefficient Alpha for the headteacher questionnaire was .70 while that for the circuit supervisors was .72. These were found acceptable as Wikipedia provides that .70 is an indicator of high internal consistency of the research instrument and that a cut-off of .60 is acceptable. The questionnaires were therefore judged reliable.

Data Collection Procedure

A month's time-table was drawn up so that I could personally administer and collect the questionnaire as well as observe the records in the sampled schools within that period. First, I collected a letter of introduction from the Director of IEPA (see Appendix D) which I photocopied enough to go round the schools involved in the study. I then personally visited the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipal Directorate of Education where I presented the original letter of introduction to the Director of Education which informed her of my presence in her municipality. As she was not present at the time, the Deputy Director of Education in charge of Supervision and Monitoring gave me the nod to carry on with the study.

I then personally visited each sampled school where I familiarized myself with the headteachers and informed them of my mission. I then gave to each of the headteachers a copy of the letter of the Director of IEPA together with a set of the headteachers questionnaire. I discussed and agreed with them that I would retrieve the completed questionnaire in a week's time.

In a week's time, I went back to retrieve the questionnaire. In some cases however, I was compelled to visit the school three or four times in order to retrieve the data as in most cases either I did not meet the headteacher because he had gone to attend a workshop of National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP), headteachers' meeting, or had not yet had time to complete the questionnaire. For the circuit supervisors, I met the Deputy Director for Supervision and Monitoring to know the itinerary of each Circuit Supervisor and to have their mobile phone numbers. Through this, I was able to meet them and deliver the questionnaire to them which they responded for me to retrieve within three days.

After the collection of the completed questionnaire, I then visited each of the 35 sampled schools to observe their records using the observation schedule. A month was used for the records observation because, though I had targeted to complete the administration of both instruments by the end of December 2009, the study continued until the end of February 2010 because of interruptions such as the NALAP workshop, sporting activities, meetings, 'go and come syndrome' and the Christmas break. Fraenkel and Wallen (2001) posited that, one major weakness of descriptive surveys is the use of questionnaire where it is often

difficult to get respondents to complete and have them returned to the researcher on time. Four respondents did not complete and return their questionnaire at all. A good number of the headteachers appeared reluctant to release their records for me to observe. I had to apply tact before I could do so. Though initially, some of them were reluctant for the exercise perhaps because they did not want to expose any lapses in their records, eventually they were aroused and raised questions demanding to learn more from me about how some of the key records were managed.

Data Analysis Procedure

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) observed that "descriptive surveys do not typically require complex statistical analysis. According to them, data may consist of determining frequencies and percentages for the major variables in the study (p.435)." Consequently, the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) was used to analyze the data and the results were presented in frequencies and percentages.

Research Question One was intended to find out how records were managed in the schools. Section A of the headteachers' questionnaire sought to answer this. Frequency counts of the number of respondents who strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed were taken and expressed in percentages. These percentages helped determine how records were managed in the schools. The frequency counts of the responses of the circuit supervisors' were also taken and compared with the former to derive at the conclusion.

Research Question Two tried to find out the factors that enabled good records keeping in the schools. Responses to items in Section B of the headteachers' questionnaire were used to answer this. The frequency counts of the number of headteachers who strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed were taken and expressed in percentages which helped determine the factors that enabled good record keeping in the schools.

Research Question Three sought the extent to which records were adequate (available and up-to-date). Responses to items in Section C of the headteachers' questionnaire were used to answer this. Data from my observation of the records were used to triangulate the findings.

Research Question Four sought for the challenges headteachers encountered in the management of school records. Items in Section D of the headteachers' questionnaire were used to answer this and triangulated by data from my observation of the records, as well as the apparent challenges inhibiting the management of school records identified by the circuit supervisors.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to examine the status of records management in public basic schools in the Tarkwa –Nsuaem Municipality. This chapter discusses the results of the data collected from the structured questionnaire administered to 63 headteachers of the public basic schools and five circuit supervisors, as well as, the observation of the various records in 35 of these schools. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the study. The findings are based on the research questions that covered areas like how records are managed, factors that enable good records keeping, the extent to which records are adequate in the schools, and the challenges headteachers encounter in the management of records.

Out of the 63 questionnaires that were administered to the headteachers, 59 (93.7%) of them were completed and retrieved. All the five questionnaires that were administered to the five circuit supervisors were completed and retrieved. The items were analyzed using the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) and presented in frequencies and percentages. Ary et al (1990) observed that descriptive surveys do not usually require complex statistical analysis. Data may consist of determining the frequencies and percentages. The results are presented and discussed as follows:

How Records are Managed in the Schools.

Research Question 1: How are records managed in the schools?

Records management according to Read-Smith, Ginn, & Kallaus (2002), involves systematically controlling the creation, preservation, organisation, distribution, storage and retrieval to the disposal of records. The research question sought to find out whether respondents performed these activities in the schools. To answer Research Question 1, two sets of data were used; Table 1 which presents the responses of headteachers on how records are managed (Section 'A' of Appendix A), and Table 2 (based on Appendix 'B') those of Circuit Supervisors on the same, where SA means Strongly Agree, A is Agree, D means Disagree, and SD is Strongly Disagree.

Table 1

How Records are Managed (Headteachers' Responses)

Statements	Responses			
	S A	A	D	SD
	N %	N %	N %	N %
You keep staff records, pupils' records, and materials inventories.	27 (45.8)	32 (54.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
You manage records as a key responsibility.	25 (42.4)	20 (33.9)	13 (22.0)	1(1.7)
The Inventory book helps you track school materials.	44 (74.6)	15 (24.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 1 Continued

Statements	Responses			
	SA	A	D	SD
	N %	N %	N %	N %
Records provide you with valuable information for decision making.	43(72.9)	16 (27.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Class registers are thrown away or burnt at the end of the academic year.	2 (3.4)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	55(93.2)
You hardly spend time managing school records.	3 (5.1)	17(28.8)	32 (54.2)	7(11.9)
The log book and admission register are preserved permanently.	51(86.4)	8 (13.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Your school has a records management manual (retention schedule) from GES.	7 (11.9)	38 (64.4)	14(23.7)	0 (0.0)
You store records in a centralized location to guarantee their security and confidentiality.	28 (47.5)	24(40.0)	6(10.1)	1(1.7)
You file only essential records.	3 (5.1)	17(28.8)	28(47.5)	11(18.6)
You unitize school records.	28 (47.5)	30(50.8)	1(1.7)	0 (0.0)
You periodically review stored records so as to dispose of those that have become obsolete.	8(13.6)	31(52.5)	17(28.8)	3(5.1)

Table 1 indicates that with regard to the keeping of records, majority of the respondents indicated that they saw records management as one of their major responsibilities. All of them unanimously agreed that they kept the essential records like staff records, pupils' records and material inventories. Since they considered records management as a major duty, majority of them spent a good deal of time managing school records. These results conform to Kochhar (1970), Farrant (2004) and Bhatia (2005), who all opined that the headteacher owed it a duty to keep the essential records like pupils' admissions and attendances, staff records and material inventories.

With regard to the organisation of records, almost all the respondents except one indicated that they unitized their records. However, majority of them did not agree that they filed only essential records. The Table indicates that 39 (66.1%) of the respondents did not agree that they filed only essential records, whilst 20 (33.9%) agreed.

The implication of this is that majority of the headteachers were of the view that it was not only the essential records that they filed, but that any record that came into the school or was created in the school, was filed. This view however contrasts sharply with the views of the various writers on records management like Cheryl and Stiegler (1989), Bhatia (2005) and Emery (2005) who argued that records need to be controlled. Valueless records need not be kept. Only useful records have to be kept. In effect, the 20 respondents who represented a percentage of 33.9 were right in their response.

With regard to the preservation of records, all respondents unanimously agreed that they preserved the log book and admission register permanently. Furthermore, majority of them, 55 (93.2%) did not agree that they threw away these records or burnt them at the end of the academic year. The assertion of the respondents is in line with Kochhar (1970) and Farrant (2004) who were of the view that the log book and admission register were vital records that had to be preserved permanently. Again, Table 1 shows that with regard to the storage of records, majority of the respondents indicated that they stored their records in one central place which enhanced records security and confidentiality.

On the usage of records, Table 1 indicates that all respondents unanimously agreed that records provided them with valuable information for decision making. This view of theirs conforms to that of Whitehead (1993) who opined that records provide evidence that decisions were made, or that obligations had been fulfilled. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) further supports this by pointing out that individuals are able to participate fully in discussions leading to the making of good decisions when they are fed adequately with the right information. Again, respondents unanimously agreed that the inventory book was used to track school materials thereby minimizing or preventing their loss.

The final stage of records management has to do with records disposal which is guided by a records retention schedule. Majority of the respondents, 45 (76.3%) maintained that their schools had records retention schedules from the Ghana Education Service, while 14 (23.7%) refuted this. Again, majority of the respondents, 39 (66.1%) agreed that they periodically reviewed stored records so

as to dispose of those that had become obsolete. This is consistent with the views of the various writers on records management who all argued that records had a life-cycle involving records creation, retention, filing, classification, storage, maintenance and final disposition to the historical archive or destruction. These sometimes necessitate the pruning of records. Table 1 further shows that 20 (33.9%) disagreed with the statement. Perhaps, this was because they had acknowledged that they had no records retention schedules from the Ghana Education Service. Without such an authoritative document, there was nothing to guide them to dispose of any record.

In sum, most of the headteachers indicated that they kept the essential records in the school. That is, they created, organized, preserved, stored, used and disposed of records. Records assisted them to monitor the movement of resources. Besides, the records provided them with vital information to make well-informed decisions. Majority of the respondents were of the view that they had records retention schedules to guide them in the management of records, though some maintained that they had none of that sort. Majority of the headteachers also maintained that they periodically reviewed stored records in order to dispose those that had become useless. From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that records are managed in the schools by their creation, organisation, preservation, use and storage of the records and finally, the disposal of the records.

Circuit Supervisors' Views on how Records are Managed in the Schools

The responses of Circuit Supervisors were elicited on how records were managed in the schools. Items in Appendix 'B' were used to find answers to this question. Their responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

How Records are managed in the Schools (as observed by Circuit Supervisors)

Statements	Responses			
	S A	A	D	S D
	N %	N %	N %	N %
Your headteachers keep the essential records.	3 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	0 (0.0)
Most headteachers in your circuit do not keep adequate school records.	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	0 (0.0)
Headteachers in your circuit do not classify school records.	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	1(20.0)
Your headteachers make school records available to stakeholders when required.	3(60.0)	2(40.0)	0 (0.0)	0(0.0)
You seldom observe school records during your visits to the schools.	2(40.0)	0(0.0)	2(40.0)	1(20.0)
You often support headteachers who have difficulties in records management.	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 2 Continued

Statements	Responses			
	S A	A	D	S D
	N %	N %	N %	N %
Your headteachers protect records from hazards like fire, rainwater, rodents and thieves.	2 (40.0)	2 (40.0)	1(20.0)	0 (0.0)
No filing is practised in your schools.	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	1 (20.0)
Your headteachers preserve the Log books and admission registers permanently.	5(100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0(0.0)
Your headteachers often dispose of dead or obsolete records upon authorization.	1(20.0)	1(20.0)	2 (40.0)	1(20.0)

With regard to the keeping of the records, it is observed from Table 2 that majority of the respondents agreed that most of their headteachers kept adequate school records. Again, majority of the circuit supervisors agreed that they observed school records during their visits to schools. Furthermore, all of them unanimously agreed that they often supported headteachers who had difficulties in managing their records.

In examining how records are organised, Table 2 reveals that, most of the respondents agreed that their headteachers classified and filed their records. This is in line with Cheryl and Stiegler (1990) who argued that filing involved arranging and storing documents in an orderly manner so that they could be easy to locate. Hence, it was necessary for individuals and institutions to file their records. With regard to the preservation of records, respondents unanimously agreed that their headteachers preserved the log books and admission registers permanently. Table 2 shows that four (80.0%) of them also agreed that their headteachers protected records from hazards like fire, rainwater, rodents and thieves. Table 2 also indicates that with regards to the storage of records, majority of the respondents, three (60.0%) of the respondents were of the view that all schools in their circuits had adequate storage facilities for their records. This is consistent with the view of Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) that one of the features of the effectively managed schools was that they had good storage facilities like offices and stores for the safe keeping of instructional materials including school records. By this response it could be inferred that the schools were effective. With regard to the use of records, all respondents unanimously agreed that their headteachers made school records available to stakeholders who needed to use them.

Finally, with regard to the disposal of records, majority of the respondents indicated that their schools had records management manuals from the Ghana Education Service. However, majority of the respondents disagreed that their headteachers often disposed of dead or obsolete records upon authorization.

Table 2 shows that three (60.0%) disagreed with the statement, while two (40.0%) agreed with it. The two (40.0%) respondents who disagreed with the statement perhaps were of the view that records need not be declared dead or obsolete. Hence, all records are to be preserved permanently. Such a view is however, contrary to those of most of the writers of records management who argue that records management is a process which ultimately ends up with disposal. Dead material must be discarded.

From these discussions, it is evident that most respondents were of the view that all the records management practices happened in the schools. Therefore, it may be concluded that records are managed to some extent in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality by headteachers creating, preserving, storing, organising, using and disposing of records.

Factors that Enable Good Record keeping in the Public

Basic Schools in the Tarkwa –Nsuaem Municipality

Research Question 2: What factors enable good records keeping in the schools?

To answer Research Question 2, responses of headteachers were elicited on the factors that enabled good records keeping in the schools. Items in Section 'B' of Appendix 'A' were used to find the answers to this question. According to GES (1994), the factors that enable good record keeping include: the keeping of proper records of account, collecting and paying money promptly into the appropriate account or person responsible to receive it, ensuring that only information that will be used is included in school records, records being readily available when needed, rendering accounts to stakeholders from time to time,

long-term and frequently used record forms should be durable, and records should be stored so as to prevent loss and tampering with.

Table 3

Factors for Good Record keeping in Schools (Headtechers' Responses)

Statements	Responses			
	S A	A	D	S D
	N %	N %	N %	N %
You make prompt entries of all school resources into the record books.	43 (72.9)	16 (27.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
You render accounts to stakeholders from time to time.	23 (39.0)	32 (54.2)	2 (3.4)	2 (3.4)
Your school records are stored in a manner that prevents loss or tampering with.	6(10.2)	28 (47.5)	24 (40.6)	1(1.7)
You keep proper records of all monies received and payments made.	48(81.4)	11(18.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
As soon as you collect any school money, you pay it into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official.	36 (61.0)	21(35.6)	1(1.7)	1(1.7)

Table 3 indicates that all respondents unanimously agreed that they made prompt entries of all school resources into the record books. Again, Table 3 shows that all respondents unanimously agreed that they kept proper records of all monies received and payments made. By keeping proper records of all monies received and payments made, implied that, their cash books and receipts were accurate and up-to-date. This meant that the cash books clearly and accurately spelled out the income the school received and the expenditures that were made.

Again, majority of the respondents, 57 (96.6%) of them agreed that, as soon as they collected any school money, they either paid it into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official. Perhaps, headteachers had realized that they had to make prompt entries into the record books so that they would not forget the details about school resources particularly those that had been supplied to staff and pupils and those borrowed, so that they would not get missing. Also, by collecting and paying money into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official, the headteacher would not be tempted to use the school's money for his private ends which would plunge him into accountability problems for which he could be charged by auditors for financial malfeasance such as embezzlement, misappropriation or misapplication of funds. Again, majority of the respondents, 55 (93.2%) agreed that they rendered accounts to stakeholders from time to time. This is in line with GES (n.d) which states that the headteacher has to from time to time, render accounts to his staff and the Parent –Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC) of the monies he collects and spends. Bellack, Harold, Hagman, Harlan, Hobbs and Johnson

(1961), Musaazi (1982), and Dean (1987), all recommend that the headteacher has to periodically render accounts of his stewardship to the community. This is because the school was established to serve the needs of the community. As a social institution and a public enterprise, it is charged with providing the best type of educational programme for the learners. The focus is the educated child who will be the citizen of tomorrow. Repetitions, school drop-outs and failures constitute waste in the educational system. Dean sums this up in the following words: 'A head forgets at his peril that he is spending public money and is accountable to parents and the School Committee' (p.185).

By making prompt entries of all resources into the record books, keeping proper records of all monies received and payments made, and ensuring that whatever money is collected is paid into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official, they had nothing to fear about. This is consistent with GES (1994) which specifically states that to keep efficient records, the headteacher should make prompt entries in the cash book and other financial records and that he is to have his school accounts ready for auditing at any given time.

Table 3 further shows that majority of the respondents indicated that their schools stored their records in a manner that prevented loss or tampering with. Closely connected to the storage of records, was the form in which the records were stored. This is presented in Table 4. In Table 4, Man. means Manual, Elec. is Electronic, while Man. and Elec. stand for Manual and Electronic.

Table 4

Form in which Records are Managed

Item	Form		
	Man	Elec	Man and Elec
	N %	N %	N %
In what form are your school records managed?	56 (94.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (5.1)

With regard to the form in which the records were kept, Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents, 56 (94.9%) indicated that their records were in manual form. Only three (5.1%) showed that their records were in both manual and electronic form.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the factors that enable good record keeping in schools include records managers making prompt entries of all school resources into the record books, keeping proper records of all monies received and payments made, paying into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official as soon as school money is received, and rendering accounts to stakeholders, among others. Majority of the respondents were of the view that these factors that enabled good records keeping existed in their schools.

The Extent to which Records are Adequate

Research Question 3: To what extent are the essential records adequate in the schools?

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To explore the adequacy of the records in the schools, items in Section 'C' of the questionnaire for headteachers in Appendix 'A' were used. The items and their respective responses are presented in Table 5. In the Table, the interpretations are: VA means Very Adequate, A is Adequate, Inad means Inadequate; while Hi.Inad. stand for Highly Inadequate.

Table 5 shows that the headteachers indicated that the log book was the record that was best kept in the schools. All respondents indicated that the log book was either very adequate or adequate. The respondents perhaps held this view as they used the log book almost everyday to record significant happenings in the school. Visiting education officers and circuit supervisors also record the purpose of their visits and their findings during the visits in the log book.

Next in terms of adequacy were the cash book, pupils' report cards, and staff attendance book. In all three of these records, no respondent indicated that the record was inadequate or highly inadequate. Taking the cash book for example, all respondents unanimously indicated that the record was either very adequate or adequate. The capitation grant is now the main means of income for the public basic schools in Ghana since the payment of school fees by parents has been cancelled. For the headteacher to be able to access the capitation grant, he must ensure that records in the cash book are accurate.

Table 5

Extent of Records Adequacy (Headteachers' Views)

Records	Adequacy			
	V A	A	Inad	Hi.Inad
	N %	N %	N %	N %
Log Book	28 (47.5)	31 (52.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Admission Register	26 (44.0)	29 (49.2)	3 (5.1)	1 (1.7)
Class Registers	27 (45.7)	29 (49.2)	3 (5.1)	0 (0.0)
Inventory Book	12 (20.3)	43 (72.9)	4 (6.8)	0 (0.0)
Staff Minutes Book	15 (25.4)	38 (64.4)	3 (5.1)	3 (5.1)
SMC Minutes Book	6 (10.2)	30 (50.8)	18 (30.5)	5 (8.5)
PTA Minutes Book	8 (13.5)	44 (74.6)	6 (10.2)	1 (1.7)
Staff Records Book	10 (16.9)	46 (78.0)	3 (5.1)	0 (0.0)
Staff Attendance Book	25 (42.4)	34 (57.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Staff Movement Book	6 (10.2)	35 (59.3)	18 (30.5)	0 (0.0)
Annual School Census	14 (23.7)	40 (67.8)	3 (5.1)	2 (3.4)
Cumulative Record	18 (30.5)	37(62.7)	4 (6.8)	0 (0.0)
Continuous Assessment	18 (30.5)	38 (64.4)	2 (3.4)	1 (1.7)
Punishment Book	3 (5.1)	11(18.6)	36 (61.0)	9 (15.3)
Cash Book	25 (42.4)	34 (57.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Waybills File	6 (10.2)	18 (30.5)	28 (47.4)	7 (11.9)
Pupils Report Cards	25 (42.3)	34 (57.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Visitors Book	12 (20.3)	40 (67.8)	6 (10.2)	1 (1.7)
Correspondence Files	11 (18.6)	41(69.5)	7 (1.9)	0 (0.0)
Receipt Books	10 (16.9)	44 (74.6)	3 (5.1)	2 (3.4)
Hospital Book	4 (6.8)	21 (35.6)	24 (40.7)	10 (16.9)
Audit Reports	4 (6.8)	9 (15.3)	17 (28.8)	29 (49.1)

GES (n.d) specifically points out that the headteacher is to maintain financial records in the cash book, and that such a record should report on all capitation grants received and how it has been disbursed with all appropriate receipts and documentation.

With regard to the pupils' report cards, Table 5 indicates that the respondents unanimously indicated that they were adequate. The pupils' report cards are the medium through which parents and pupils get to know whether the latter are progressing or retrogressing. The report cards are the means through which teachers account to parents for their stewardship. Teachers are aware that it is their responsibility to give the report cards to the pupils at the end of the term and they know that parents and pupils will require them. As such, they ensure that they complete the entries in the pupils' report cards for them to take home. This could account for their adequacy.

The respondents were again unanimous in their indication of the adequacy of the staff attendance book. That, respondents rated the adequacy of this record high perhaps is indicative of the value they attach to it. Teachers use the attendance book every working day to record their attendances to school, particularly their times of arrival and departure from the school. It is the record that proves that teachers are in school. In the case where a headteacher levels an allegation against a teacher about his irregularity in school, such allegation should be backed by records in the staff attendance book. This record could be tended in a court of law in evidence of a case concerning the regularity or punctuality of a teacher to school when required.

From Table 5 it is again observed that majority of the respondents indicated that the class attendance registers were adequate. That majority of the respondents indicated that the registers were adequate is consistent with Kochhar (1970) who pointed out that the class attendance registers are absolutely necessary and that teachers must treat them with the care and attention they deserve. As such, they should be marked as soon as the class assembles at the prescribed time. To Kochhar, the class attendance registers should be preserved for five years. However, in the Ghana Education Service, most headteachers are aware that the registers are to be preserved for at least ten years.

From Table 5, it is again observed that majority of the respondents indicated that the admission registers were adequate. That majority of the respondents indicated that the admission register was adequate is perhaps indicative that respondents are aware that it is a vital record in the school which must be kept well. This is consistent with Kochhar who pointed out that the admission register is a vital record that must be preserved for a very long time; special care therefore needs to be taken so that no mistakes are made in the recording of data in it.

Majority of the respondents again indicated that continuous assessment records were adequate. A total of 56 (94.9%) headteachers indicated that they were adequate, while three (5.1%) indicated that they were inadequate. Continuous assessment is now the means by which learners are assessed, and it forms a component of 30% of the overall score in each discipline at the Basic Education Certificate Examination by which the pupil is finally graded. This is

consistent with Farrant (2004) who pointed out that continuous assessment should depend on assessments that are carefully kept about a pupil's work throughout his course building up gradually into a profile of his performance.

Table 5 also shows that a total of 54 (91.5%) respondents indicated that the annual school census was adequate. The annual school census is carried out yearly. Education office officials are often tasked to ensure that the exercise is successfully carried out. These officials assemble the headteachers at the Education office and distribute the forms to them for the filling of the data. The headteachers come along with the necessary documents like class attendance registers, admission registers, log books and staff records books to enable them fill the data accurately. The import of this is that, no room is allowed for any lapses in the recording of data in these records, hence their adequacy.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that cumulative records were adequate. Indeed, Table 5 reveals that all the records were adequate except four, namely, the punishment book, hospital book, audit reports and waybills. A good number of schools did not keep the hospital book. The table indicates that majority of the respondents, 34 (57.6%) indicated that it was inadequate. According to the headteachers, their reasons for not keeping the record are that access to health care is now dependent on the possession of a National Health Insurance (NHIS) card and not the sending of any hospital book to the health centre. Moreover, the paucity of doctors and nurses and pressure on their work due to the high patient/doctor ratio means that if teachers and pupils send the hospital books to the health centres, doctors and nurses will not have

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time to record information in them. The practice of some headteachers not keeping the hospital book is however inconsistent with GES (1994) which stressed that each school has to keep a hospital book in which it records the health status of staff and pupils and that hospital chits should even be designed and issued to the wives and children of teachers.

Table 5 also shows that majority of the respondents indicated that waybills were inadequate. According to the headteachers, they used the stores issues and stores receipt vouchers to collect materials from the Municipal Education Office. Waybills were not issued to them, hence, their inadequacy. With regard to the punishment book, majority of the respondents maintained that the book was inadequate. Some headteachers were of the view that the punishment book served no useful purpose since teachers seldom sought permission from them before punishing pupils. Moreover, some maintained that though they had been administering punishments without recording in any punishment book, there had never been any problem. Some maintained that improved discipline in their schools did not make it necessary for any pupils to be punished; hence there was no need for a punishment book. Again, there were no audit reports. According to the respondents, though auditors audited their school accounts, no reports were sent to the schools after the auditing.

In sum, the respondents were of the view that all records were adequate except the punishment book, waybills, hospital books and audit reports. Having examined the responses of the headteachers, I personally observed the records in

35 of the public basic schools to find out the extent of their adequacy. My

findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Extent of Records Adequacy in Schools (Researcher's Observation)

Record	Adequacy			
	VA	A	Inad	Hi.Inad
	N %	N %	N %	N %
Log Book	8 (22.8)	21 (60.0)	6 (17.1)	0 (0.0)
Admission Register	0 (0.0)	12 (34.3)	18 (51.4)	5 (14.3)
Class Registers	11 (31.4)	18 (51.4)	6 (17.1)	0 (0.0)
Inventory Book	0 (0.0)	8 (22.8)	8 (22.8)	19 (54.3)
Staff Minutes Book	12 (34.3)	15 (42.8)	6 (17.1)	2 (5.7)
SMC Minutes Book	6 (17.1)	9 (25.7)	0 (0.0)	20 (57.2)
PTA Minutes Book	16 (45.7)	18 (51.4)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
Staff Records Book	12 (34.3)	15 (42.8)	8 (22.8)	0 (0.0)
Staff Attendance Book	5 (14.3)	9 (25.7)	15 (42.8)	6 (17.2)
Staff Movement Book	0 (0.0)	11 (31.4)	15 (42.8)	9 (25.8)
Annual School Census	22 (62.8)	13 (37.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Continuous Assessment	4 (11.4)	15 (42.8)	16 (45.7)	0 (0.0)
Punishment Book	4 (11.4)	8 (22.8)	5 (14.3)	18 (51.5)
Cash Book	8 (22.8)	23 (65.7)	4 (11.4)	0 (0.0)
Waybills	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (100)
Pupils' Report Cards	0 (0.0)	31(88.6)	4 (11.4)	0 (0.0)
Visitors' Book	9 (25.7)	18 (51.4)	6 (17.1)	2 (5.7)
Correspondence Files	4 (11.4)	11 (31.4)	20 (57.1)	0 (0.0)
Receipt Books	0 (0.0)	30 (85.7)	5 (14.3)	0 (0.0)
Hospital Book	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (20.0)	28 (80)
Audit Reports	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (100)
Records Management				
Manual	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (100)

Table 6 shows that the best kept record as observed by the researcher was the annual school census. I found out that the record was very adequate in 22 (62.8%) schools, whilst it was adequate in the remaining 13 (37.1%) schools. This perhaps implied that particular care and attention was given to the annual school census. In the annual school census, education authorities take stock of all school resources both human and material. This conforms to Owolabi (1996) who opined that in order to plan and execute educational policies and programmes effectively and efficiently, it is essential that the existing stocks are known so as to determine what more needs to be done.

Next, was the PTA minutes book. All the PTA minutes books that I observed were adequate except one. This implied that the PTAs periodically held meetings and kept minutes, hence, they were active. This supports GES (1994) which points out that the headteacher needs the support of other members of the community to enable him work effectively. It is essential for him to establish a PTA which is an association of all parents and guardians of pupils in the school as well as the teachers. With their numerical strength, members of the PTA are often able to mobilize resources to support the school.

According to Table 6, pupils' class attendance registers were next in terms of adequacy. A total of 29 (82.8%) schools had their registers rated as adequate; while six (17.2%) schools had theirs rated as inadequate. The results conform to those of the headteachers as depicted in Table 5. The staff records book was next in adequacy. As many as 27 (77.1%) of the schools had their staff records identified as adequate, while eight (22.9%) were found to be inadequate. This

finding conforms to those of the headteachers in Table 5. Table 6 again shows that the visitors' book was adequate. This implied that stakeholders were interested in the schools, as such, often visited them. In the visitors' books could be seen the Date, Time of Visit, Name and Address of Visitor, Purpose of Visit, Time of Departure and Signature. This conforms to Farrant's (2004) view that the visitors book should contain the names and addresses of all those who visit the school and the purpose for the visits. The headteacher must however ensure that the visits do not interrupt with instructional work. Farrant indicated that when the book is properly kept, it provides a permanent and useful record of the interest taken in the school by outsiders. It also provides the means of contacting these people when the need arises.

Table 6 again indicates that the cash book was adequate. A total of 31(88.5%) schools' cash books were adequate, while four (11.5%) were inadequate. These results again perhaps reveal the particular interest and attention paid to the record. The capitation grant is now the major source of income for the public basic schools in Ghana, since the payment of school fees by parents and guardians has been cancelled. For the headteacher to be able to access the capitation grant he must not only prepare a School Performance Improvement Plan (SP1P) by which he adheres to the regulations governing the use of the captitaion grant, but that records in the cash book are comprehensive and accurate. GES (n.d) specifically points out that the headteacher is to maintain financial records in the cash book, and that such a record should report on all

capitation grants received and how it bas been disbursed with all appropriate receipts and documentation.

Furthermore, Table 6 shows that the log book was adequate. A total of 29 (82.8%) of the schools had their log books rated as adequate, while six (17.2%) were inadequate. The adequacy of the log book meant that headteachers used it frequently to record significant happenings in the school. As the log book is a vital record that must be preserved permanently, I examined both current and past log books since the school's establishment. Some schools however, could not find their past log books. For instance, a school which was established in 1903 could not find its log books for the period 1903-1972, whilst another that was established in 1938 could not find the log books for the period 1938-1987. Special mention however needs to be made of Abontiakoon (Akoon) Anglican Primary School which was established in 1943, and Tarkwa Roman Catholic Primary school established in 1947, both of which had their log books intact since their establishment. As a Deputy Director of Education, I signed the log books of the schools whose records I observed stating that I had observed the records in the school as part of the requirement of my Master of Philosophy Degree programme at the University of Cape Coast.

Table 6 also shows that most of the staff minutes books were adequate. This implied that majority of the staff held regular staff meetings and kept minutes. The results corroborates with those of the headteachers in Table 5. The results are further in line with GES (1994) which posited that the staff of each

school needs to have staff meetings and keep minutes. The staff minutes should give a concise record of all policies and action plans agreed upon.

Other records that were adequate were continuous assessments and pupils' report cards. Both results corroborate with those of the headteachers in Table 5 where a total of 56 (94.9%) respondents indicated that the continuous assessment records were adequate, whilst all respondents unanimously indicated that the pupils' report cards were adequate.

With regard to the records that were inadequate I observed that three records were virtually not kept in the schools. These records were records management manuals, audit reports, and waybills. This is evident in Table 6. However, Table 5 shows that 13 (22.1%) respondents indicated that they had audit reports, 24 (40.7%) indicated that they had waybills, whilst all respondents had earlier on indicated that they had records management manuals. It is seen here that respondents did not tell the truth. This conforms to Fraenkel and Wallen's (2001) assertion that a major disadvantage with the use of questionnaire was that respondents could withhold the truth.

With regard to the inadequacy of the audit reports, the failure of auditors to send audit reports to the schools after auditing their accounts is a set back to the effective management of the record since without such feedback the records managers are unable to know their strengths and weaknesses. My findings on the inadequacy of the audit reports and waybills conform to the headteachers' responses in Table 5. That is, in both Tables 5 and 6, both records were inadequate. Table 6 also shows that the punishment book was inadequate.

Again, Table 6 shows that the inventory book was largely inadequate. As many as 27 (77.1%) were inadequate. These results did not conform to those of Table 5 where only four (6.8%) were said to be inadequate. I observed that most headteachers found this record difficult to use. The last entries in most of the inventory books were about ten years ago. This situation rather seems unfortunate as the inventory book is expected to contain detailed and accurate information about the school's materials. It is in effect, the life-wire of the school. Its apparent neglect by headteachers obviously has serious repercussions not only on the school, but also the tax-payer, government, teachers and pupils. Without a proper record of the school's resources to facilitate effective monitoring and supervision, materials may be taken away and easily get lost. Pupils and teachers would have fewer syllabi, handbooks, textbooks, reading books and equipment to work with, which would no doubt adversely affect their effectiveness and efficiency. Bellack, Harold, Hagman, Hobbs and Johnson (1961) summed this up by saying that the effectiveness with which teachers work together for the attainment of educational goals and the efficiency with which they use resources, indicate whether or not the school is managed well.

The admission register was similarly inadequate. In Table 6, 12 (34.3%) schools' admission registers were adequate, whilst 23 (65.7%) were inadequate. These results are inconsistent with those in Table 5 where majority of the headteachers, 55 (93.2%) indicated that the admission registers were adequate, while four (6.8%) were inadequate. My findings were that some headteachers failed to enter detailed information into the admission register. Most of the newly

recruited headteachers did not know how to make entries into the register. A case in point was a headteacher of a Junior High School who found out during my visit that he had wrongly made entries into two of the registers which required that he rectified the whole process which was not only going to be time consuming but was also going to make the registers dirty. A suitable alternative was to apply to the Municipal Education Office for new admission registers. This situation is inconsistent with the views of Kochhar (1970) who argued that the admission register should contain a full record of all the pupils admitted to the school. Special care therefore needs to be taken to ensure that there are no mistakes whatsoever with regards to the information entered, particularly the date of birth of pupils as courts of law often require them for evidence when there are disputes. GES (1994) similarly maintains that the document which proves that a pupil has been admitted to a school is the admission register and that a child becomes a pupil when his name is written inside the admission register and he is given an admission number which he carries along till he completes. Complete entries need to be made on each pupil on the first day on which s/he attends the school. My findings on the inadequacy of the admission register however supports Farrants observation that "this is often the worst kept of all the records and yet it can be one of the most useful".

Other records that were inadequate were the hospital book, staff attendance book, staff movement book and SMC minutes book. Both Tables 5 and 6 agree that the hospital book was inadequate. With regard to the staff attendance book, whilst in Table 5 the respondents unanimously indicated that it

was adequate, my observation as presented in Table 6 reveals that 21 (60.0%) staff attendance books were inadequate. I also observed that some headteachers did not record their attendance in the book. In some schools, the staff attendance book was placed in the staff common room or on a table on the veranda where teachers arrived and signed, whilst the headteacher was at the office. In some schools, there were no reliable school clocks to tell the exact time. Also, most of the staff attendance books did not have their pages numbered to deter recalcitrant teachers tearing away pages. With regards to the staff movement book it was also inadequate. Though some schools kept them, they were not used effectively.

Table 6 again reveals that the SMC minutes book was inadequate. This is in contrast with the results in Table 5 which showed that the SMC minutes book was adequate. That the SMC minutes book was inadequate meant that the SMCs hardly met and so did not keep minutes. The implication was that the SMCs were not actively involved in the management of the schools as enshrined in the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) provisions which recognized community ownership of schools. The reasons advanced by headteachers for the ineffectiveness of the SMCs were that members were reluctant to attend meetings because they expected some remuneration which the schools could not afford. Some SMCs also misconstrued the concept of community ownership of the school to mean authority and control over the headteacher and his staff which led to some frictions. These situations conflict with Asiedu-Akrofi's (1978) assertion that the day-to day running of the school should be left to the professional competence of the headteacher and his staff. He, however, maintains that the

SMCs are the representatives of the stakeholders of the school particularly the community the school belongs. Since the school is the community's the presence and involvement of the SMC in the school proves that the school is a pubic agency. Its affairs must concern all stakeholders and not teachers alone.

Finally, Table 6 reveals that correspondence files were inadequate. Most schools had two or three files in which they loosely placed all circulars and official letters. Headteachers explained that the Ghana Education Service never supplied files to the schools. This situation is however inconsistent with GES (1994) which pointed out that the headteacher has to keep all letters addressed to him well in the appropriate file and that he must not forget to write the date each letter was received clearly and promptly on it. Similarly, when he sends letters out, he has to do the same on the copies of letters he files in his office. It further cautions the headteacher not to put all letters in the same file but to classify those belonging to the same group in one file. Since correspondence is an essential means of communication among the relevant stakeholders of the school, the headteacher has to classify the files, keep them neat, clearly labelled and safe. According to Asiedu-Akrofi (1978), after the school has succeeded in establishing rapport with the community, the next hurdle is how to reach out to all parents, guardians and people who are interested in the affairs of the school. It is noteworthy that some headteachers who had difficulties in making entries in the record books like the admission register and inventory book asked me for support. A circuit supervisor also appealed to me to fix a day after the exercise to support her understand how the records were to be managed by the headteachers which I

did, and they all appreciated it.   In sum, 11 (47.8%) records were adequate. They were, the annual school census, PTA minutes book, class attendance registers, staff minutes book, log book, continuous assessments, visitors' book, cash book, staff records book, pupils' report cards and receipt books.

However, 12 (52.2%) records were inadequate. They were the inventory book, admission register, records management manual, hospital book, audit reports, waybills, files of correspondence, punishment book, cumulative records, staff attendance book, staff movement book, and SMC minutes book. The status of records management in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality was inadequate.

Challenges Headteachers encounter in the Management of Records in the Public Basic Schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality

Research Question 4: What challenges do headteachers encounter in the management of records?

The challenges inhibiting records management in the schools which were identified by the headteachers, circuit supervisors and me, were the following; first, was the issue of poor school infrastructure. Some school buildings were dwarf- walled, others had weak doors and windows that could hardly be locked to make records secure, while others had leaking roofs. Some schools had neither offices nor storerooms. Coupled with these were inadequate storage facilities such as cupboards, storage racks, filing cabinets, boxes and open shelves.

Next, was inadequate in-service training given to headteachers and circuit supervisors on records management, particularly the newly recruited ones. Sometimes, these personnel were recruited from the classrooms without any proper orientation or training given them. When this happened, headteachers did not know how to manage the records. Similarly, circuit supervisors were unable to supervise and support headteachers to manage school records effectively since they lacked the requisite knowledge and expertise on how records were managed.

Poor supervision of records management in the schools by education officers including circuit supervisors constituted another challenge. Headteachers complained that personnel of the education office who visited the schools hardly observed school records. This seeming disinterest in the management of records in the schools was a contributory factor to the inadequacy of the records.

Another challenge was poor handing-over of schools. Some outgoing headteachers failed to hand-over the school properly to their successors before leaving to their new schools when on transfer or proceeding on retirement. Sometimes, some of them did not hand-over at all. When this happened, school materials including vital records often got lost.

Headteachers complained of lack of time to fill the records. According to them they had a lot of work to do which did not permit effective records keeping. It however appears to me that there is poor time management in the schools. For instance, during my data collection, headteachers of the primary school and Kindergarten One to Primary Three teachers were away from school for a whole week attending a workshop on the National Literacy Acceleration Programme

(NALAP), a workshop that emphasized the use of the first language as the medium of instruction in the lower primary school. Though the workshop was good in itself, its timing in which some teachers and headteachers were taken away from the school for a whole week at the expense of effective teaching and learning was not good enough.

Sporting activities and attendance at meetings during instructional hours were other factors. Headteachers were said to be attending headteachers' meetings or visiting the Municipal Education Office for school materials, whilst teachers attended Ghana National Association of Teachers meetings during instructional hours. All these activities ate into precious time which could have been utilized not only for effective teaching and learning, but also to manage school records. It is noteworthy that the Director General of the GES (1993, April 22), issued a circular on the issue of loss of contact hours in schools, yet the practice persists.

Another challenge was the uncooperative attitude of some parents. Some parents failed to provide the essential information about their wards such as their full names, date of births, hometown, names of parents, number of siblings, among others that were needed by headteachers to make entries into the record books. Also, some parents arbitrarily transferred their wards without ensuring that their cumulative records accompanied them. When this happened, the headteachers in the pupils' new schools had to find ways of creating new cumulative records and 'cooking' some continuous assessment scores for such pupils which often did not truly reflect the pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Lack of computers in most schools and the absence of electricity in most rural communities constituted another challenge. Though a few schools in the Tarkwa township had a few computers, most rural communities did not have computers and electricity. Moreover, computer literacy was quite low in the basic schools. Since, most headteachers were computer illiterate they could not manage records by electronic means. Most of the records were therefore in manual form.

Hazards often resulting in the destruction of record materials were other challenges. Insecurity of records as a result of theft, recalcitrant teachers tearing away pages of record books or even carrying record books like log books and staff attendance books away, were yet other challenges. Some records were destroyed by rodents such as mice, cockroaches and termites. This conforms to GES (1994) which identified loss through fire, insects, rodents, leakage, and tampering due to theft or unauthorized eyes as hazards to the maintenance of any record system. "There have been known instances where sensitive files have simply disappeared (Wellman, 2003, p.148).

The paucity of doctors, nurses and psychologists in Ghana is an inhibiting factor to the effective management of the cumulative record. No public basic school has a doctor or a psychologist who periodically visits it to attend to the health needs of pupils and teachers. The few doctors and nurses available in the hospitals hardly have time to visit individual schools. This situation is inconsistent with Kochhar (1970) who opined that a programme of periodic visual and audio testing should be established in the school starting from the Kindergarten. Guidance and counselling coordinators are woefully inadequate. The teacher on

whom the greater task of maintaining the cumulative record rests is occupied by instructional work at the expense of records keeping.

The introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was considered a challenge by headteachers as they felt that it rendered the use of the hospital book ineffective. According to them, in the past, when teachers and pupils went with the hospital book to health centres, not only were they promptly attended to, but treatment was free of charge. Nowadays however, individuals are treated at the health centres based on the possession of a health insurance card and not the sending of a hospital book to the health centre. No matter who one is, one will have to join the queue. Moreover, because of the high patient/doctor ratio, doctors hardly have time to fill- in any information in the hospital book if it is sent there. Besides, pupils and teachers who fall ill at home hardly report to school before attending the health centres. They go there without first reporting to school.

Unwillingness of teachers to provide the essential documents about themselves for filing is yet another challenge. This has to do with storage issues. Where teachers are not sure that the confidentiality of their records is guaranteed, they would not give important records to the headteacher to keep. For example, where school materials including records are stored in the homes of headteachers, SMC chairpersons' houses, or chiefs' palaces, teachers may feel that they are not secured and resist submitting their documents to the headteacher for filing. There have been instances where people including teachers have used payslips of colleague teachers to collect loans from banks or credit items from some agencies.

Others have falsified documents such as results slips, transcripts and certificates for employment and other purposes. For fear of these, teachers are often reluctant to release their vital documents to the headteacher for filing.

Headteachers also complained of large enrolments and lack of motivation for headteachers. They complained that the enrolments were rather too large, the records too many to fill, and the incentives rather too small to motivate them to work hard. According to them, the capitation grant, free school uniforms, and the school feeding programme had brought about increased enrolments in the schools. Large enrolments meant additional workload for all teachers including headteachers. Increased enrolment involved the creation, maintenance, preservation and storage of more records such as class attendance registers, admission registers, cumulative records and continuous assessment records. Keeping records on every teacher and pupil requires a great deal of time and is tedious too, yet there are no incentives for headteachers. The responsibility allowance for the headteacher was only GH¢1.00 a month which was not even paid. A school with an enrolment of 1,000 pupils means that there are 1,000 cumulative record booklets and continuous assessment records to fill. Teachers have to conduct and mark exercises, project / homework, tests, and end – of – term examinations. GES (1994) buttresses this when it points out that there is heavy workload on teachers particularly with large class sizes. Anderson and Van Dyke (1963) were against such a system and stressed that "few clerical demands should be made upon teachers to maintain school records. Use of professional personnel to perform clerical duties constitutes a false economy (p. 430)."

Another challenge that was pointed out by headteachers was that some headteachers were full-time class teachers while at the same time headteachers. This made their work tedious. However, from my observation, though it was true that most headteachers in the rural areas taught as well as managed the schools, it was equally true that most headteachers in the Tarkwa township and its immediate environs were attached and some had even completely detached themselves from teaching. It could be said that there was no reason for such schools to have their records not being up–to–date. In most of these schools where the headteachers had no classes of their own to teach, the situation was the same.

The absence of a records management manual was another challenge because headteachers did not know exactly when to dispose of certain records. When this happened, some records became rather too old, lost their colour, texture, beauty, and readability. Storage and retrieval became problems as there was congestion due to inadequate space. The absence of a records management manual is inconsistent with Bhatia (2005) who opined that the availability of a records retention schedule in every organisation that has been approved by top management helps office workers to identify different types of records and their disposal. Following a records retention schedule provides greater storing and retrieving efficiency and space savings are increased.

Forgetfulness and sheer negligence were seen to be other challenges. Sometimes, headteachers simply forgot to fill the records, others simply neglected them. With regard to audit reports, headteachers pointed out that though auditors audited their accounts, they often discussed their findings with them and then

logged in the log books. No audit reports were however sent to the schools afterwards.

Another challenge was the unwillingness of SMC members to attend meetings regularly; regular meetings could therefore not be held. Since meetings were not held, minutes could not be kept. Other SMCs were virtually dead. The reasons for this were that members of the SMC expected to receive some refreshments (something to eat or drink) during meetings, and remuneration for other services they rendered the school. When this was not forthcoming, they recoiled into their shells. This situation is inconsistent with Farrant (2004) who posited that School Committee meetings must be regular and that the minutes are to be kept by the secretary to the committee. The minutes should contain the date the meeting was held, the person who was in the chair, the place it was held, names of members who attended and those who were absent. The minutes should include a brief, accurate, and complete record of issues discussed and the decisions made.

Another issue was inadequate supply and delays in the supply of record materials. Sometimes, class attendance registers, report cards, teachers' lesson notebooks, and cumulative record booklets arrived in the schools late. Also, when supplies of record materials like the log book, admission register, and inventory books were depleted, it took some time between the application for fresh supplies and the actual supply of the materials.

Another challenge was that some teachers flouted the rules governing the administration of punishment in the schools. Some headteachers indicated that

some of their teachers did not seek permission from them before punishing pupils. The headteachers only became aware that teachers were punishing pupils when pupils refused to take the punishments from teachers. Some headteachers also explained that they did not keep punishment books because they did not administer corporal punishment. Punishments were rarely meted out to pupils due to improved school discipline. Some headteachers again pointed out that since the school had never encountered any serious problem with regard to the administration of punishments, they felt that there was no need for keeping the book.

Poor planning of school programmes and activities particularly with the conduct of continuous assessment was another challenge. An essential feature of continuous assessment is that it is holistic taking into account the pupil's total development- cognitive, affective and psychomotive, so as to discover the hidden talents, traits, capabilities, affects and skills. Consequently, a good deal of thought needs to be taken of what is to be assessed and how to assess it. The successful conduct of continuous assessment requires a plan or blue-print to guide teachers and learners. Kochhar (1970) suggested that at the beginning of each term, the headteacher needs to collect from each teacher a plan of continuous assessment in each subject. In this way, all teachers and pupils become aware when tests, projects, assignments and examinations are to be carried out. With such a plan, the headteacher must monitor to ensure that teachers follow the plan of continuous assessment systematically. Teachers have to ensure that enough exercises, homework and tests are set, marked, recorded, and the results

communicated promptly to the learners. The headteacher further needs to periodically check on the output of work–the number and quality of exercises, project/ homework, and tests given, marked and recorded. This will ensure that these activities are done on schedule. Headteachers need to give periodic in-service training on the proper conduct of continuous assessment to teachers, particularly at the beginning of the academic year to enable teachers know precisely what is expected of them. It appears that few headteachers give in-service training to their teachers on the systematic and proper conduct of continuous assessment. Most often, teachers do not draw continuous assessment plans to guide themselves and pupils. Consequently, continuous assessment is often carried out according to the whims and caprices of the teachers. Some teachers do not even mark pupils' exercises and tests and communicate the results promptly to the pupils so that they know how they have performed. Some headteachers hardly inspect pupils' exercises to ascertain the quantum of work done perhaps due to their heavy schedules. Pupils are often ignorant on when they will write tests and examinations.

The researcher also observed that the Distance Learning Programme ate into a good deal of time of some headteachers. Changes in the education system had resulted in teachers and headteachers upgrading themselves. Many of them were enrolled as students in the various universities. While on these programmes, they had to teach, supervise, manage the schools, as well as learn, do assignments, and go to write quizzes and examinations. These activities were obviously time

consuming and energy sapping. These then were the challenges headteachers encountered in the management of school records.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, recommendations and conclusion.

Summary of Research Process

The importance of good records to individuals and organisations cannot be over emphasized. The human memory is fallible and hence tends to easily forget the facts about events. It is therefore crucial that whatever significant happenings, decisions made, events, activities or actions taken should be documented not only to serve as history but to protect rights of personnel particularly those of pupils, defend headteachers in case there are problems as most of the records are required by regulations; ease accountability to stakeholders, and facilitate a better knowledge and understanding of school resources. To be able to accomplish this, effective records management is essential. The study therefore sets out to study the Status of records Management in Public Basic Schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality to enable the researcher gain a better understanding of how records are managed in the schools.

To begin with, four research questions were formulated. The first of these solicited views on how records were managed in the schools; the second was concerned with the factors that enabled good records management in the schools.

The third research question sought to examine the extent to which the records were adequate in the schools; whilst the fourth, looked at the challenges headteachers encountered in the management of school records.

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population size consisted of 74 headteachers and five circuit supervisors. A sample size of 63 headteachers was drawn using the simple random sampling without replacement, whilst all the five circuit supervisors in the Municipality were purposively included in the study. The records in 35 schools were observed by the researcher.

Two data gathering instruments used for the study were questionnaire for the headteachers and circuit supervisors, and a records observation schedule which was prepared and used by the researcher to observe the records in 35 schools. Triangulation was therefore used in the study.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested in five public basic schools in the Prestea-Huni-Valley District, while the actual study in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality began with the administration of the questionnaire to the 63 headteachers and five circuit supervisors. Fifty-nine (93.7%) of the questionnaire administered to the headteachers were completed and retrieved. The entire questionnaire for the five circuit supervisors were completed and retrieved.

The responses of the respondents were then analyzed using the Statistical Product for Service Solution and presented in frequencies and percentages. The same was done with the results of the observation.

Summary of Findings

The following findings were made about the status of records management in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality.

1. With regard to the management of records, all headteachers were of the view that they saw records management as a key responsibility of theirs and that they managed the essential school records like staff records, pupils' records, and inventories of materials. Their views, however, appeared to contradict what was really on the ground. For instance, I observed that most of the headteachers did not keep inventories of their schools' resources as well as enter data in detail in the admission register, cumulative records, and continuous assessment, among others.

2. With regard to the factors that fostered good records management, all respondents were of the view that they existed in their schools. Majority of them maintained that, they made prompt entries into the record books of all school resources. From time to time they rendered accounts to stakeholders. As soon as they collected any school's monies, they paid it promptly into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official. They kept proper records of all monies received and payments made; most of them had their records in manual form, and they had adequate storage facilities for keeping their records. During my observation, however, I noticed that storage facilities were a problem in some schools. The Circuit Supervisors also identified storage to be a problem in the schools.

3. With regard to the extent to which records were adequate, while some records were adequate, others were not. Records that were adequate were the log book, continuous assessment records, class attendance registers, staff minutes books, PTA minutes books, visitors' books, staff records books, annual school census, cash book, pupils report cards, and receipt books.

Records that were not managed well were the inventory book, admission register, SMC minutes book, staff attendance book, staff movement book, cumulative records, punishment book, waybills, correspondence files, hospital book, audit reports and records management manuals (records retention schedule). The study revealed that 11 out of the 23 records observed were adequate. This represented 47.8%, while the remaining 12 representing 52.2% were inadequate.

4. The challenges headteachers encountered in the management of records included lack of orientation and in-service training on records management, poor storage facilities, destruction of records by rodents like mice, termites, and cockroaches; disasters such as fire, rain-water or thieves; the absence of a records management manual, inadequate or virtual lack of computers in most schools; lack of interest on the part of education officers in supervising records management in the schools; delays in the supply of record materials; inadequate motivation for headteachers, forgetfulness by the records managers to make entries into

the record books, and lack of time due to heavy workload on headteachers as a result of increased enrolment.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings of the study. Records are managed to some extent in the public basic schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality by headteachers creating, preserving, using, storing and disposing of records. However, whilst some schools do this, others do not.

The factors that enabled good record keeping in the public basic schools were that headteachers made prompt entries of all school resources in the record books. As soon as headteachers collected any school money, they paid it into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official; headteachers also kept proper records of all monies received and payments made and most schools had adequate storage facilities for their records.

On the whole, 11 (47.8%) out of the 23 records observed were adequate, while 12(52.2%) were inadequate. It may therefore be reasonably concluded that the status of records management in the Tarkwa –Nsuaem Municipality was on the whole inadequate.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1.   All headteachers and circuit supervisors, both old and new, should be given in-service training and proper orientation on records management with particular attention given to the admission register, log book,

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inventory book, cash book, cumulative records and continuous assessment records.

2. Education authorities, particularly circuit supervisors and personnel of the District Teacher Support Team, should be sensitized by the Supervision and Monitoring Department of the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Education Directorate to show interest in how records are managed in the schools. They should be equipped by the department with the requisite knowledge and skills through periodic in-service training, monitoring and supervision to effectively monitor, supervise, and support headteachers in the management of records.

3. The Ghana Education Service should ensure that there is a professionally trained guidance and counselling coordinator in each public basic school who will assist the headteacher in the effective management of cumulative records and the hospital book. This calls for the training of more guidance and counselling officers and posting them to the schools. Such counsellors should periodically hold in-service training for the rest of the staff of the schools on simple guidance and counselling techniques. 4. Headteachers and such guidance and counselling coordinators in collaboration with the Guidance and Counselling Coordinator of the Municipal Directorate of Education should liaise with the Municipal Director of Health services to draw up a plan to periodically send nurses, doctors and other medical personnel to schools to diagnose teachers and pupils particularly their visual, audio, oral, dental, and their Human

Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) health status among others, with the view of improving them. The Municipal Assembly through the Social Services Sub-committee and Education Sub-Committee should assist in this direction.

5.   The headteacher, class teacher, counsellor, nurse and doctor should from time to time meet to discuss and take appropriate action on the records to find out if there is improvement in the social, physiological and psychological conditions of learners. Such meetings could take place once in a term.

6.   Headteachers and teachers should be trained by the Supervision and Monitoring Department and the training officer of the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Education Directorate in the art of creating and managing records on learners' social and emotional development by observing pupils both inside and outside the classroom.

7.   Headteachers should insist on receiving cumulative record booklets from colleague headteachers from whose schools pupils transferred. This should be a condition for admitting pupils on transfer from other schools to their schools. They should in turn readily forward cumulative records of pupils on transfer to other schools when such requests are made.

8.   With regard to continuous assessment records, the headteacher needs to make sure that teachers are given sufficient in-service training on how to conduct and manage continuous assessment records. The headteacher should receive a plan of continuous assessment from each teacher at the

beginning of each term and make it known to all teachers and pupils concerned. The headteacher should then monitor and supervise the conduct of class exercises, project/homework, class tests, quizzes and examinations and ensure that they are carried out according to the schedule. Again, headteachers should periodically collect pupils' exercise books to observe and find out the output of work of each teacher.

9.   The Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast should include records management as a course of study in its curriculum.

10.   Circuit supervisors should be recruited from among headteachers. This is to ensure that they have thorough knowledge and experience about the work of the headteacher they are directly supervising which includes records management.

11.   All schools and circuit supervisors must have copies of the headteachers' handbook which they must master as their 'bible' and which could be used to hold periodic in-service training for headteachers and teachers. The headteachers' handbook on its part is long overdue and should be revised by the Ghana Education Service.

12.   School infrastructure should be improved by Parent Teacher Associations and the district assemblies. Dwarf-walled school buildings should be completed, offices and storerooms should be provided in each school, while weak doors and windows should be fortified. Provision for offices and storerooms should be included wherever basic schools are built; while

cupboards, cabinets and open shelves should be provided by the SMCs, PTAs and the district assemblies for storage of records and other school materials.

13.   The headteacher needs to keep all school items received, bought or donated in the school store. As GES (1994) suggests, rooms used for this purpose must be accessible, airy and have enough sunlight. From time to time the doors and windows should be opened to let in fresh air and sunlight. Record books, files and other materials do not have to be kept on the bare floor or directly against the walls as these result in dampness and destruction by termites. The PTA or SMC could also help by finding a room near the school for the storage of the school items.

14.   To prevent any unfortunate happenings where records are sometimes destroyed by disaster such as fire, records should be stored in places that are fireproof and secure. A minimum precaution in all schools is to store the permanent records such as log books, admission registers, and inventory books in a fireproof vault, hence, schools need to be equipped with fireproof vaults by Government and the district assembly. If a vault is not available, it is desirable to maintain duplicate records containing the most important items of information and to store each set in a place safe from the risks that the other set is subject to. To minimize the destruction of records by thieves or recalcitrant personnel (teachers or pupils) tearing away leaves of record books, the pages of each record book must be numbered, as well as the record materials. For security reasons

however, the headteacher is required to always lock doors and windows and keep the keys, except he is going outside the school where he has to leave the keys with his assistant.

15. With regard to the staff attendance book, for it to serve any useful purpose, headteachers must be punctual and regular to school and make sure that they themselves record the right times they arrive and depart from the school each day in the book. They should be the first to arrive in the school and the last to leave. The attendance book should be signed in the presence of the headteacher and not kept elsewhere on the veranda or staff common room where teachers record the times they please. When classes begin, the headteacher should inspect the attendance of teachers.

16. Good time management by the headteacher is crucial. Contact hours should be judiciously used for teaching and learning. It is further recommended that the headteacher completes records in the admission register and cumulative record booklet for each pupil as completely as possible. Similarly, materials received or bought by the school should be promptly entered into the inventory book. The headteacher must file all vouchers, waybills and receipts.

17. Headteachers should form school management committees where there are none, reconstitute those that are defunct, and invite members periodically to meetings and have minutes kept.

18. On the part of the punishment book it is suggested that every public basic school should one. This is to protect pupils from brutalities, violence and

illegal punishments which are criminal acts. The headteacher must administer corporal punishment himself and rarely should he delegate this to any teacher. On no account must pupils be whipped or caned because they cannot read, or solve any problems academically. Caning or suspension should be recorded in the punishment book.

19. Schools with large enrolments should have a records manager whose sole duty is the management of school records in addition to the headteacher. Alternatively, each stream could be headed by a different headteacher to ease work. The Ghana Education Service should print and circulate to every public basic school a records management manual (records retention schedule).

20. With regard to the hospital book, each school needs to keep it. Finally, schools should be supplied with computers. All headteachers should not only be trained in school management and administration but should also be computer literate which will enable them to keep their records both in manual and electronic forms.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study treated the Status of Records Management in the Public Basic Schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality as a whole. It is suggested that further research be done in the following areas:

1. Status of personnel (staff and pupils) records management in the basic schools; status of administrative records management, or status of material resources records management in the basic schools.

2. A study of the relationship between records management and school effectiveness and efficiency in public basic schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality could be carried out.

3. Comparative Studies offer another opportunity. This research could be replicated in other districts or countries for the purposes of comparing the status of records management in public basic schools in chosen districts in Ghana, or between countries such as Ghana and other countries like the United Kingdom or the United States of America. Alternatively, a comparative study of records management in public basic schools and that of private basic schools in Ghana is possible.

4. A Comparative study could be done between records management in the public basic schools and the Second Cycle institutions in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (IEPA)

Questionnaire for headteachers on Status of Records Management in Public Basic Schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality

The questionnaire is meant to collect information for a study on the status of records management in public basic schools in the Tarkwa – Nsuaem Municipality. It is a research work. You will be contributing to its success if you answer the items as frankly and honestly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential, and be assured that your anonymity is guaranteed. Please, you do not need to write your name on it.

General Instructions

Please tick [√] the appropriate bracket or column or fill in the blank spaces where necessary. Please endeavour to answer all questions.

SECTION 'A'

Please, indicate with a tick [√] in each case the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. SA =Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. Note that for item 8, A retention schedule tells how long each type of record should be kept and how long records are to be disposed of.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	You keep staff records, pupils' records, and materials' inventories.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2.	You manage records as one of your key responsibilities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3.	The inventory book helps you track school materials and equipment.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4.	Records provide you with valuable information for decision making.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5.	Class registers should be thrown away or burnt at the end of the academic year.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6.	You hardly spend time managing school records	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7.	The log book and admission register must be preserved permanently.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8.	Your school has a records management manual (retention schedule) from the GES.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
9.	You store your records in a centralized location to guarantee their security and confidentiality.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10.	You file only essential records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11	You unitize (classify) your Records	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12.	You periodically review stored records so as to dispose of those that have become useless.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION B

Please indicate with a tick [√] in each case the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	You make prompt entries of all school resources (pupils, staff, materials, money) into the records books.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2.	You render accounts to stakeholders from time to time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3.	Your school has adequate storage facilities for keeping its records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4.	You keep proper records of all monies received and payments made.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5.	As soon as you collect any school money you pay it into the appropriate bank account or to the appropriate official	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

6. In what form are your school records managed?

Manual (paper)   [ ]

Electronic (computerized)   [ ]

Both manual and electronic   [ ]

SECTION C

Please indicate with a tick [√] in each case the situation of each of the following records in your school. That is, whether the record is Very Adequate (VA); Adequate (A); Inadequate (Inad); or Highly Inadequate (Hi.Inad). (Adequate here implies, available in sufficient quantity and up-to-dateness)

Records	V A.	A	Inad	Hi Inad.
1.Log book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2.Admission Register	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3.Class registers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4.Inventory Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5.Staff Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6.SMC Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. PTA Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8.Staff Records Book/ Files	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9.Staff Attendance Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10.Staff Movement Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11.Annual School Census	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12.Cumulative Records	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13.Continuous Assessments	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14.Punishment Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15.Cash Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Records	V A.	A	Inad	Hi Inad.
16.Way bills file	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17.Pupils Report Cards	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18.Visitors Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19.Correspondence Files	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20.Receipts books/ File	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
21.Hospital Attendance Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
22. Audit Reports File	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
23.Records Management Manual	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

24. If any record is inadequate or extremely inadequate, briefly state the reason(s)

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SECTION 'D'

25. What challenges (if any) do you encounter in the management (creation, preservation, use, storage or disposal) of school records?

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Thanks for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

(IEPA)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CIRCUIT SUPERVISORS ON STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE TARKWA-NSUAEM MUNICIPALITY.

The questionnaire is meant to collect information for a study on Status of Records Management in Public Basic Schools in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. It is a research work. You will be contributing to its success if you answer the items as frankly and honestly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Please indicate with a tick [√] in each case the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

Statements	Responses			
	S A	**A**	**D**	**S D**
Your headteachers keep the essential records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Most headteachers in your circuit do not keep adequate school records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Headteachers in your circuit do not classify school records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your headteachers make school records available to stakeholders when required.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Statements	Responses			
	S A	**A**	**D**	**S D**
You seldom observe school records during your visits to the schools.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
You often support headteachers who have difficulties in records management.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your headteachers protect records from hazards like fire, rainwater, rodents and thieves.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
All schools in your circuit have adequate storage facilities for their records.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your schools do not have records management manuals from the GES.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
No filing is practised in your schools.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your headteachers preserve the Log books and admission registers permanently	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Your headteachers often dispose of dead or obsolete records upon authorization.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

11. List any four (4) apparent challenges (if any) facing the headteachers in your circuit in the management of school records.

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Thank you.

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (I.E.P.A.)

RECORDS OBSERVATION GUIDE ON STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE TARKWA – NSUAEM MUNICIPALITY.

For each of the records, observe and tick [√] the most appropriate response .VA = Very Adequate; A = Adequate; Inad = Inadequate; Hi. Inad. = Highly Inadequate.

Records	V A.	A	Inad	Hi.Inad
1.Log book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2.Admission Register	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3.Class registers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4.Inventory Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5.Staff Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6.SMC Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. PTA/CTA Minutes Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8.Staff Records Book/ Files	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9.Staff Attendance Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. Staff Movement book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. Annual School Census	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12.Cumulative Records	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13.Continuous Assessment records	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14.Punishment Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Records	V A.	A	Inad	Hi.Inad
15.Cash Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
16.Waybills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17.Pupils' Report Cards	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18.Visitors Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19.Correspondence Files	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20.Receipts books/ File	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
21.Hospital Attendance Book	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
22. Audit Reports File	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
23.Records Management Manual	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

24. In what form are the records managed?

    Manual   [ ]

    Electronic   [ ]

    Both manual and electronic   [ ]

25. What are the apparent challenges facing headteachers in the management of

school records?

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

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Our Ref: EP/144.8/Vol.3/25   January 7, 2008

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter, **David Akolwin Agatba** is a graduate student of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the University of Cape Coast. He requires some information from your outfit for the purpose of writing a Thesis as a requirement of M.Phil degree programme.

We should be grateful if you would kindly allow him to collect the information from your outfit. Kindly give the necessary assistance that he requires to collect the information.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give.

Mr. Robert Appiah
Principal Admin. Asst.