



Head Teachers' Records Management Skills and Their Relationship with Decision-Making in Selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between head teachers' records management skills and decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division. The study was guided by three research questions: What relationship exists between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making? What relationship exists between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making? What relationship exists between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making? The study was anchored on the Big Bucket Record Retention Theory (2003), the Bounded Rationality Theory of Decision-Making (1957), and Systems Theory (1940). A descriptive survey research design was adopted. From a population of 140 head teachers, a sample of 103 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire and analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed statistically significant and very strong positive relationships between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making ($r = .981, p < .001$), the management of non-statutory records and decision-making ($r = .988, p < .001$), and record retrieval and decision-making ($r = .985, p < .001$). The findings indicate that effective management of statutory and non-statutory records, together with prompt record retrieval, is strongly associated with head teachers' decision-making. The study recommended regular training in records classification, filing, indexing, storage, retrieval, and digital records management.

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KEYWORDS:

statutory records, non-statutory records, records management, record retrieval, decision-making.

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BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

UNESCO (2012) notes that records and archives have existed since humanity acquired the ability to document information in writing. The keeping of records and archives can be traced back to ancient civilisations, where records relating to births, property ownership, taxation, official matters, and private transactions were maintained to facilitate government administration, education, religion, and family affairs. The medium on which information was recorded differed from one society to another and evolved over time, ranging from the clay tablets of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires of the third millennium to the wooden tablets used in Greece, the papyrus scrolls of Egypt, and the parchment and vellum of medieval Europe.

Oneil (2019) postulates that over a century ago, attitudes towards records management and archival processes were far less methodical, as records were often kept in a haphazard and old-fashioned manner, if they were preserved at all. The history of records management can therefore be traced back to the late nineteenth century.

According to Oneil (2019), during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were no established rules governing records retention. Practical considerations such as finance, space, and available resources played a major role in determining how records were stored and managed. Once records were no longer considered necessary, there were often no formal or legal guidelines

regulating their destruction. In the United Kingdom, however, several government bodies were established during the late nineteenth century to regulate the retention and preservation of important records. The Public Record Office was established in 1838 to oversee the preservation of key public records and to ensure that such records remained accessible to researchers. In addition, the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts was appointed in 1869 to regulate the retention of private records in accordance with the functions of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. As a result of these developments, specialised document storage facilities were established across the country. Furthermore, an increasing number of records management companies began providing integrated services that linked various regions and institutions. These companies established warehouses in strategic locations within cities and towns to facilitate the collection, delivery, and retrieval of documents between branches and to meet the growing records management needs of organisations with wide geographical coverage.

The study was anchored on the Big Bucket Record Retention Theory (2003), the Bounded Rationality Theory (1957), and the Systems Theory (1940). The Big Bucket Record Retention Theory, originally referred to as “flexible scheduling”, was first propounded in 2003 by the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). According to Cisco (2008), compliance with records retention policies begins with employees who create, receive, and use records within organisations. Organisations continually seek effective ways of simplifying the classification of records into appropriate retention categories. The theory advocates for the grouping of records into broader retention categories or ‘big buckets’ in order to simplify records management practices and improve consistency in records classification. With fewer retention categories available, employees and automated categorisation systems are more likely to classify information consistently, thereby ensuring compliance with organisational records retention requirements. This approach also reduces the risks associated with retaining records for excessively long periods and minimises the costs involved in records storage, maintenance, and retrieval.

The Bounded Rationality Theory was proposed by Herbert Simon in 1957 to challenge the assumption of complete human rationality in decision-making. According to Simon (1957), individuals are unable to obtain or process all the information required to make perfectly rational decisions. Consequently, they rely on the information available to them in order to arrive at decisions that are satisfactory rather than optimal. The theory argues that decision-makers operate under conditions of limited information, limited time, and limited cognitive capacity. In contrast to the Rational Decision-Making Theory, which assumes that decision-makers are fully rational, the Bounded Rationality Theory recognises that individuals cannot always identify every possible alternative or evaluate all consequences objectively. Under the rational model, the decision-maker is assumed to recognise all possible solutions to a problem, understand all potential consequences of each alternative, evaluate those consequences according to personal values, rank the alternatives appropriately, and select the option that maximises organisational objectives. However, Simon argued that such complete rationality is rarely attainable in real-life situations.

The Systems Theory (1940) is one of the modern management theories that examines the relationship between an organisation and its environment. The theory was propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s. According to Nwankwo (1982), a system is a unit made up of a series of interrelated and interdependent parts in which the functioning of one part affects the operation of the whole system. The systems approach to education views the educational process as an interconnected input–output system. In this regard, teaching and learning are regarded as complex processes involving the interaction of people, resources, and information. These elements serve as inputs within the educational system, while the outputs consist of individuals whose knowledge, skills, attitudes, and performance have improved in desirable ways.

Contextually, records management and archival practices remain underdeveloped in many organisations and institutions in Cameroon. Apart from a few multinational corporations and selected public institutions where records management policies are enforced by organisational leadership, archival management is still not considered a major administrative priority in most establishments. In privately owned organisations, unlike many public institutions, concerns relating to taxation, accountability, and legal compliance have encouraged some degree of attention towards records management practices, although such attention remains limited. Kamto (2006) observed that the concept of business archives is relatively absent within Cameroonian managerial policies and administrative culture. Historically, the colonial and neo-colonial presence of Europeans in Cameroon contributed significantly to the development and preservation of archives. However, following independence and the emergence of new national priorities, the importance attached to records and archives gradually declined. During the early years of independence, many organisations and institutions paid little attention to records preservation and archival management. Kamto (2006) further noted that, despite increasing awareness of the importance of records management, there is still a shortage of comprehensive archival policies and professionally trained records management personnel capable of designing and implementing effective archival systems in Cameroon. Consequently, the number of skilled personnel required to manage archival operations effectively remains inadequate. Since December 2000, the Government of Cameroon has made efforts to strengthen the management and preservation of the country’s collective memory through legal and institutional reforms. As a result, the National Assembly enacted Law No. 2000/010 of 19 December 2000 relating to archives and records management. In addition, the Government signed Enforcement Decree No. 2001/958/PM of 1 November 2001 to facilitate the implementation of the law (Kamto, 2006). Yerima (2012) reported that the former Minister of Arts and Culture, Ama Tutu Muna, emphasised that effective management of records and archives could significantly promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in Cameroon. The Minister further highlighted the need

for appropriate legal instruments and institutional frameworks to improve archival management practices in the country. More recently, efforts have been made at both national and international levels to strengthen digital records preservation and records management practices in Africa, including Cameroon. Margaret and Basma (2019) noted that the International Council on Archives Africa Programme organised a two-day digital records preservation training workshop for participants from several African countries, including Cameroon. Similarly, recent studies by Katuu (2019) and Ngoepe and Saurombe (2021) emphasised that effective digital records management has become increasingly important for institutional accountability, administrative efficiency, and evidence-based decision-making in educational and public institutions across Africa.

Conceptually, records are regarded as documented evidence generated through individual or organisational activities and preserved for future reference and accountability. According to Amos (2017), records are the by-products of organisational or individual activities, regardless of the medium in which they are captured, and can be retrieved and used as evidence of transactions and decisions. Fasasi (2004) defines school records as information or data collected on various aspects of school operations and preserved for future use. Similarly, Mbua (2003) describes records as documented statements relating to school personnel, learners, finances, infrastructure, facilities, and school-related activities that are systematically collected and preserved for administrative purposes.

Hrach (2004) further explains that school records constitute a comprehensive collection of documents concerning services provided to learners, including admission details, assessments, evaluations, lesson plans, reports, and related student information. Weggant (2005) also views records as information collected and preserved concerning specific activities or subjects for future reference. The importance of records lies in their ability to assist administrators in making effective decisions, formulating policies, and ensuring institutional accountability. A head teacher who fails to attach importance to proper records management is likely to encounter administrative difficulties in the long term. Records of past events and activities are essential for planning, monitoring attendance, managing fees, evaluating learners' progress, and making informed administrative decisions.

Statutory records, according to Odeniyi and Adeyanju (2020), are records that schools are legally required to maintain in accordance with educational laws and regulations. These records must be made available whenever requested by educational authorities or government inspectors. Examples include admission and withdrawal registers, attendance registers, schemes of work, timetables, logbooks, movement books, staff minutes books, lesson notes, and examination records.

Non-statutory records, on the other hand, are records maintained primarily for internal administrative purposes and are not legally compulsory. Asamonye et al. (2019) explain that such records are useful for the smooth functioning of the school and may include school calendars, seminar and workshop records, confidential reports, requisition books, suggestion boxes, and health records. Bodang et al. (2019) maintain that non-statutory records contribute significantly to administrative convenience and organisational efficiency.

Nakpodia (2009) defines records management as the systematic control of the creation, maintenance, use, storage, and disposal of records. According to Bola (2013), records management strategies are intended to ensure efficiency, accountability, compliance with statutory requirements, proper coordination of records systems, and effective preservation of important information throughout the records life cycle. However, Bola (2011) argues that inadequate understanding of records management processes and the life cycle of records often results in difficulties in retrieving information needed for effective decision-making and responding to institutional demands. Such weaknesses may create administrative delays and dissatisfaction among staff, learners, and parents. Lewes (2021) identified several benefits of effective records management, including preservation of institutional memory, evaluation of progress, facilitation of comparison, enhancement of decision-making, and improvement of operational efficiency. Organisations that manage records effectively are better positioned to make evidence-based decisions and maximise the value of institutional information. Conversely, poorly managed records may expose institutions to legal, financial, and administrative challenges. Information is one of the most valuable organisational assets and must therefore be properly documented, stored, and protected.

The life cycle of records is a fundamental concept in records management. According to Jenny (2021), the records life cycle describes the stages through which records pass from creation to eventual disposal. The process generally consists of four stages: creation, maintenance, storage, and disposal. During the early stages, records are actively used and accessed frequently; as time passes, their use may decline and they may eventually be archived or disposed of in accordance with institutional retention policies. At each stage, records should be classified and stored in ways that allow authorised users to retrieve accurate information promptly. The usefulness of a record therefore depends not only on its preservation but also on whether it can be located and accessed when required.

Record retrieval refers to the systematic process of locating, accessing, and presenting stored records when they are required for administrative use. Amos (2017) emphasises that records are preserved so that they can be retrieved and used as evidence of transactions and decisions. In educational institutions, effective retrieval depends on clear classification, accurate indexing, consistent filing, appropriate labelling, and reliable access procedures for both paper and digital records. Bola (2011) argues that weaknesses in records management often create difficulties in retrieving information needed for decision-making and responding

to institutional demands. When school records cannot be retrieved promptly, head teachers may face delays in planning, learner placement, staff management, budgeting, supervision, and the resolution of disciplinary or welfare matters.

Record retrieval is closely connected to the accessibility, authenticity, and security of institutional information. Odeniyi and Adeyanju (2020) maintain that school records should be available whenever they are required by administrators or educational authorities, while Babalola et al. (2021) describe records as the lifeblood of organisational systems because they support continuity, coordination, planning, and decision-making. Effective retrieval systems therefore require organised storage locations, reliable indexes, controlled access, and procedures for returning records to their proper files after use. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2022) observed that poor documentation practices are associated with administrative inefficiencies because relevant information is difficult to retrieve when needed. From a systems perspective, record retrieval links stored information to administrative action by ensuring that decision-makers receive accurate and timely evidence.

Fred and Allan (2012) define decision-making as the process of choosing among alternatives in order to achieve specific objectives. Decision-making is central to educational administration because it influences leadership, communication, motivation, and organisational change. Mbua (2003) describes decision-making as a purposeful process of selecting one course of action from several alternatives in order to achieve desired goals. Agbor and Wemba (2017), citing Fonkeng and Tamanjong (2009), explain that the decision-making process involves identifying problems, recognising alternatives, searching for solutions, and selecting the most appropriate course of action. The success of any school is closely linked to effective administrative decisions. Eisenfuhr (2011) defines decision-making as the process of selecting a course of action from several alternatives in order to achieve intended outcomes. In educational institutions, school administrators are expected to make decisions that guide the effective functioning of the school. Although all stakeholders may participate in decision-making to some extent, administrators bear the primary responsibility for making strategic and operational decisions. Simon (1960) identified three major types of decision-making: programmed, non-programmed, and group decision-making. Programmed decisions are structured, repetitive, and routine decisions guided by established procedures and policies. Such decisions are usually made in response to familiar situations and can easily be handled through standard operating procedures.

Non-programmed decisions, however, are unique and unstructured decisions that arise from unfamiliar situations where existing procedures may not apply. These decisions often involve higher levels of uncertainty and risk and therefore require careful judgement and analysis. Such decisions may demand greater expenditure of time and resources because there are no established procedures for addressing the issues involved. Group decision-making involves the participation of several individuals in the decision-making process. According to Simon (1960), this approach allows members of an organisation to contribute ideas, deliberate collectively, and reach decisions either through majority agreement or group consensus. In educational settings, group decision-making encourages collaboration, inclusiveness, and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

According to Lipham and Hoeh (1974), there are three major types of decision-making, namely routine decision-making, heuristic decision-making, and compromise or negotiated decision-making.

Routine decision-making refers to a programmed form of decision-making that follows established procedures and routines. In this type of situation, decision-making processes are usually structured hierarchically, and formal procedures are followed when making decisions. Certain decisions are therefore taken by designated individuals, committees, or administrative bodies in accordance with existing rules and organisational policies. Simon (1981) and Weick (2001) observed that decisions which are frequently made within familiar contexts tend to rely on pre-programmed and routine procedures because such situations are predictable and well understood by administrators. According to Odor (1995), heuristic decision-making places less emphasis on rigid hierarchical structures and formal procedures. Instead, the process allows individuals the freedom to explore different ideas and possible solutions relating to a particular problem. The process is characterised by open discussion, flexible problem definition, and creative thinking. Heuristic decision-making therefore encourages decision-makers to contribute their ideas freely in order to identify suitable solutions to organisational challenges. This form of decision-making is particularly useful in situations where problems are complex, unfamiliar, or require innovative solutions.

Compromise or negotiated decision-making involves strategies for managing conflicts that may arise due to differences in cultural values, role expectations, interests, or opinions among individuals within an organisation. According to March (2010), this type of decision-making seeks to achieve mutual understanding and consensus among stakeholders through negotiation and compromise. In educational institutions, negotiated decision-making is often necessary when administrators, teachers, parents, or other stakeholders hold differing views concerning school policies and administrative practices.

There are several processes involved in decision-making (Sonal et al., 2016). However, two of the most important models of decision-making commonly discussed in educational administration are the Rational Decision-Making Model and the Bounded Rationality Model (Fred & Allan, 2012).

The Rational Decision-Making Model assumes that decision-making is a logical and systematic process in which decision-makers attempt to maximise the achievement of organisational objectives by carefully considering all possible alternatives before selecting the most appropriate option. The model is based on the principle of rationality, which assumes that administrators have access to adequate information and are capable of evaluating all available alternatives objectively. According to Sonal et al. (2016), the

rational decision-making process involves several stages, including careful analysis of the existing problem, identification and definition of the problem, examination of the details of the situation, establishment of criteria for resolving the problem, development of an action plan, and implementation of the proposed solution. Similarly, Fred and Allan (2012) identified the following major steps in rational decision-making: identification of the problem, generation of alternative solutions, evaluation of the alternatives, selection of the most appropriate alternative, implementation of the decision, and evaluation of the outcomes of the decision. The Rational Decision-Making Model is widely considered useful in educational administration because it promotes systematic analysis, careful planning, and evidence-based decision-making. However, critics argue that the model may not always be practical in real-life situations where decision-makers face limitations such as inadequate information, time constraints, and organisational pressures.

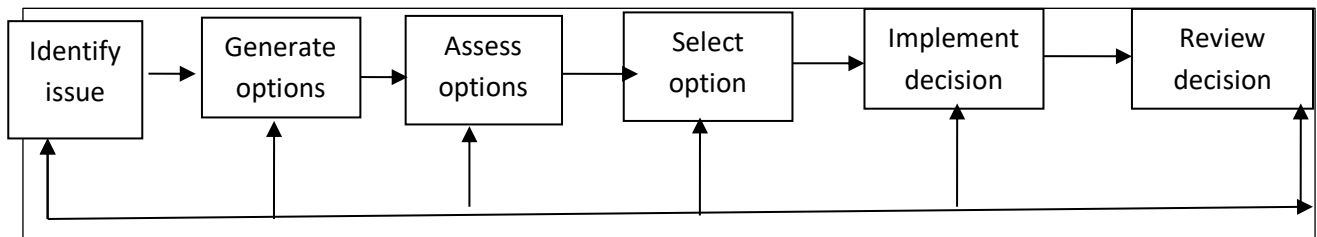


Figure 1: Rational Model of Decision-Making
Source: Adapted from Fred and Allan (2012).

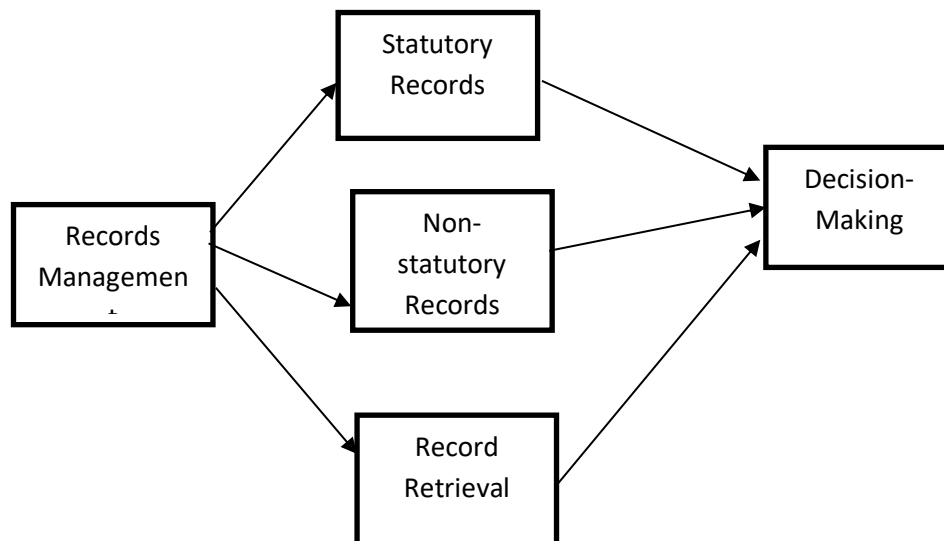


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study (Researcher, 2022)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

School administrators are responsible for ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of schools. The extent to which they successfully perform these responsibilities depends largely on their ability to make appropriate and timely decisions. Effective decision-making requires accurate and accessible records that can be retrieved promptly and used as reliable evidence for administrative planning and management. However, observations within many schools suggest that records management practices among some head teachers remain inadequate and that records are sometimes difficult to locate when needed. Such conditions may be associated with delays, inconsistencies, and weaker administrative decisions.

From the researcher's professional experience as a teacher, it has been observed that some head teachers experience difficulties in making timely and well-informed administrative decisions. In many cases, school records are poorly organised, inadequately stored, or inaccessible when required for decision-making. According to Thomassen (2002), trustworthy records provide reliable evidence that supports effective decision-making and institutional accountability. Similarly, Tanah (2015) affirmed that poorly managed records can hinder the progress and effective administration of schools. The problem addressed in this study is therefore the apparent relationship between weaknesses in records management and poor decision-making among head teachers. This problem is reflected in areas such as learner admission, teacher recruitment, procurement of school materials, and the management of school activities. Poor records management in these areas is commonly associated with delays, wastage of time and resources, administrative inconsistencies, and ineffective planning, which may disrupt the teaching and learning process. Wemba (2020), citing Njilah (2006), further observed that some teachers promoted to administrative positions or transferred to new schools demonstrate limited competence in records planning, filing, maintenance, and evaluation.

The concern of this study is therefore to determine whether the management of statutory records, the management of non-statutory records, and record retrieval are related to head teachers' decision-making. Gama (2010) opined that when records are poorly managed, school administration suffers because administrators may make contradictory or uninformed decisions. Pedagogically, poor management of curriculum-related records may disrupt the implementation of teaching and learning activities, while disciplinary records that cannot be retrieved promptly may create administrative and behavioural challenges. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the relationship between head teachers' records management skills and decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective

The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between head teachers' records management skills and decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To determine the relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.
2. To determine the relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.
3. To determine the relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What relationship exists between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division?
2. What relationship exists between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division?
3. What relationship exists between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

H03: There is no significant relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in selected public, private, and mission primary schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division, Mfoundi Division, Cameroon. A descriptive survey research design was adopted because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large and heterogeneous population and describe the relationships between records management practices and head teachers' decision-making. The population of the study consisted of 140 head teachers, from which a sample of 103 respondents was selected using the simple random sampling technique. This technique ensured that all head teachers had an equal opportunity of being selected. Data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire comprising 42 items developed from the reviewed literature and organised around the management of statutory records, the management of non-statutory records, record retrieval, and head teachers' decision-making. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to ensure a high response rate and provide clarification where necessary. The validity of the instrument was established through expert judgement from specialists in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and the researcher's supervisor. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.995, indicating a high level of consistency. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the study variables.

FINDINGS

Verification of research hypothesis one

H01: There is no significant relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

The analysis was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making. The results presented in Table 1 indicate a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of $r = .981$ with $p < .001$, which is below the .05 level of significance.

Table 1: Verification of research hypothesis one

Correlations		Statutory records	Head Teachers' Decision-Making
Statutory records	Pearson Correlation	1	.981**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
Head Teachers' Decision-Making	Pearson Correlation	.981**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

Source: Fieldwork (2022).

The correlation coefficient ($r = .981$) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making. This means that stronger statutory records management is associated with stronger decision-making among head teachers. The result should not be interpreted as evidence of causation because correlation analysis establishes only the strength and direction of association between variables. Since $p < .001$ is below the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

Verification of research hypothesis two

H02: There is no significant relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

The analysis was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making. The results presented in Table 2 indicate a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of $r = .988$ with $p < .001$, which is below the .05 level of significance.

Table 2: Verification of research hypothesis two

Correlations		Non-statutory records	Head Teachers' Decision-Making
Non-statutory records	Pearson Correlation	1	.988**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
Head Teachers' Decision-Making	Pearson Correlation	.988**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

Source: Fieldwork (2022).

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis produced a coefficient of $r = .988$, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making. This means that stronger management of non-statutory records is associated with stronger decision-making among head teachers. The result should not be interpreted as evidence of causation because correlation analysis measures only the strength and direction of association between variables. Since $p < .001$ is below the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

It was therefore concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

Verification of research hypothesis three

H03: There is no significant relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

The analysis was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship exists between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making. The results presented in Table 3 indicate a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of $r = .985$ with $p < .001$, which is below the .05 level of significance.

Table 3: Verification of research hypothesis three

Correlations		Record retrieval	Head Teachers' Decision-Making
Record retrieval	Pearson Correlation	1	.985**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
Head Teachers' Decision-Making	Pearson Correlation	.985**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

Source: Fieldwork (2022).

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis produced a coefficient of $r = .985$, indicating a very strong positive relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making. This means that prompt and reliable retrieval of records is associated with stronger decision-making among head teachers. The result should not be interpreted as evidence of causation because correlation analysis measures only the strength and direction of association between variables. Since $p < .001$ is below the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

It was therefore concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed a statistically significant and very strong positive relationship between the management of statutory records and head teachers' decision-making ($r = .981$, $p < .001$). This suggests that effective management and utilisation of statutory records are associated with stronger decision-making among head teachers in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division. Schools in which statutory records are properly organised and utilised tend to provide head teachers with accurate information for administrative decisions. Statutory records serve as official sources of institutional information required for planning, monitoring, supervision, and accountability. Attendance registers, logbooks, admission registers, lesson notes, timetables, and staff records provide evidence that supports informed decisions. When such records are poorly managed or unavailable, school administrators may experience difficulty making timely and accurate decisions.

The findings are consistent with Wemba (2020), who argued that proper records management facilitates future planning and administrative efficiency by providing historical information for decision-making. Similarly, Aina and Mutsheha (2022) reported that educational institutions with effective records management systems demonstrated greater administrative efficiency because managers relied on accurate institutional data during planning and decision processes. However, Owan and Agunwa (2021) argued that leadership style, government regulations, and resource availability may also shape administrative effectiveness. The difference may be explained by variations in educational contexts and administrative structures.

The study further revealed a statistically significant and very strong positive relationship between the management of non-statutory records and head teachers' decision-making ($r = .988$, $p < .001$). Although non-statutory records are not legally required by educational authorities, they often provide supplementary information needed for school administration. Inventory records, committee reports, financial records, communication files, confidential reports, and staff development records supply additional evidence for planning and operational decisions. Effective management of these records is therefore associated with stronger decision-making among head teachers.

The findings indicate that some head teachers place greater emphasis on statutory records while giving comparatively less attention to non-statutory records. This practice may restrict access to useful administrative information and may be associated with slower or less comprehensive decision-making.

The findings agree with Mojapelo (2021), whose study in South Africa linked poor records management practices with weaknesses in school administration and organisational decision-making. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2022) similarly observed that poor documentation practices are associated with administrative inefficiencies because information is difficult to retrieve when needed. Other studies, however, suggest that non-statutory records may have a more limited role where decisions are driven mainly by official records and policy guidelines. Such differences may reflect variations in school administration and institutional dependence on supplementary documentation.

The findings also revealed a statistically significant and very strong positive relationship between record retrieval and head teachers' decision-making ($r = .985$, $p < .001$). This suggests that schools in which records can be located and accessed promptly tend to support stronger administrative decision-making. Record retrieval depends on clear classification, accurate indexing, consistent filing, known storage locations, controlled access, and the proper return of records after use. When retrieval procedures are reliable, head teachers can consult attendance, admission, financial, personnel, disciplinary, and instructional records before making decisions. By contrast, misplaced or poorly indexed records are associated with delays and decisions based on incomplete information.

The findings further indicate that many schools experience inadequate storage facilities, limited digital infrastructure, insufficient archival systems, and poor technological resources, all of which may constrain record retrieval. Bola (2011) emphasised that difficulties in retrieving information can delay policy formulation and decision-making, while Chinyemba and Ngulube (2022) linked documentation weaknesses with poor information access. Asogwa and Ezema (2023) also reported an association between digital records management and information accessibility. Nevertheless, record retrieval should be considered alongside leadership competencies, institutional policies, and organisational support structures. The observed correlation establishes a relationship but does not demonstrate that record retrieval alone causes improvements in decision-making.

CONCLUSION

Based on the correlation results, the study concludes that the management of statutory records, the management of non-statutory records, and record retrieval are each significantly and positively related to head teachers' decision-making in selected English Nursery and Primary Schools in Yaoundé VI Sub-Division. Head teachers are more likely to make timely and evidence-based decisions when official and supplementary records are effectively managed and can be retrieved promptly. These conclusions concern statistical relationships and should not be interpreted as proof that records management practices cause improvements in decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

To the Ministry of Basic Education

The Ministry of Basic Education should strengthen monitoring and supervision mechanisms to ensure that schools keep accurate, reliable, up-to-date, and retrievable records. Regular inspection visits should assess classification, indexing, filing, storage, access control, and retrieval procedures and provide technical support where weaknesses are identified. The Ministry should also issue clear guidelines for paper and digital records management and organise capacity-building programmes for head teachers and administrative staff.

To Head Teachers

Head teachers should strengthen records management by ensuring that both statutory and non-statutory records are properly created, classified, indexed, filed, stored, updated, and made retrievable. They should organise workshops, seminars, and practical training for teachers and administrative staff on records classification, filing systems, digital storage, access control, and retrieval procedures. Head teachers should establish clear file indexes, retrieval registers, and procedures for returning records after use. They should deliberately consult relevant records during administrative decision-making so that decisions are evidence-based, accurate, and consistent. Backup arrangements should also be developed for essential paper and digital records to support continuity and smooth transitions between successive school administrators.

To Teachers

Teachers should ensure that learners' records are accurately documented, clearly labelled, properly filed, and updated regularly. Such records provide information for instructional planning, learner assessment, progress monitoring, and administrative decisions. Teachers should collaborate with school administrators by submitting records promptly and following established filing and retrieval procedures.

To Parents

Parents should actively participate in school activities and maintain effective communication with school authorities concerning learners' records and academic progress. Increased parental involvement in school processes may contribute to more informed decisions concerning learners' academic development and welfare.

To Learners

Learners should be encouraged to participate appropriately in school activities and decision-making processes affecting their academic progress. They should also recognise the importance of maintaining academic records and using feedback from their performance records to improve learning outcomes and academic achievement.

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