



## QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT OF OFFICE FORMS, STATIONERIES, RECORDS AND EQUIPMENT AMONG CLERICAL STAFF IN EDUCATION BOARDS IN KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the quality of management office forms, stationeries, records and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Out of a total population of 156 subjects, a sample size of 112 participants comprising 68 clerical staff and 44 senior administrators were selected using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A self-designed, structured, expert validated questionnaire titled: "Quality of

### Introduction

Although office management is essentially the duty of office secretaries and clerical staff, yet the educational manager, whether managerially trained or not, have oversight function on the activities of every category of his staff. He should be able to assess, lead, guide and supervise the way and manner clerical staff discharge their responsibilities in the execution of their official duties. Some of these duties that are critical in this regard include management of office forms, stationeries, records and equipment among others (Allcock, 2017). Clerical staff are operationalized in this study to simply to refer to staff who are specifically employed to keep records on account in an office. In this study, an office is a building, a room or set of rooms where people work, usually sitting at desk or other convenient furniture. Office forms are printed papers or cards in which headings and spaces are provided to fill up by handwriting or typing for the purpose of providing required information. Office stationaries are consumable items necessary for daily operations of an office especially for writing and other activities. Office records are, electronic or hardcopies of forms, created, issued, and maintained as information by a person or an organization in pursuit of legal obligations, record of business transactions or administrative decisions. Office equipment are apparatus and machines designed to do a particular job in the office. Quality is a standard of office practice in terms of how satisfactory or unsatisfactory the performance is. Management is the art of planning and execution of day-to-day activities for effective running of an office. It is clear that no office job can be successfully executed which out relevant forms to capture



Management of Office Practice Questionnaire” (QMOPFQ) based on a five-point scale was used to collect data. The instrument was pilot tested using test re-test method. A reliability index of 0.83 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient at 0.05 level of significance. All the 160 copies of instrument administered were retrieved and analyzed using simple frequencies, percentages and grand mean. It was found that the quality of management of office forms, stationaries, records and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was low and not satisfactory. It was therefore recommended that clerical staff should be involved in the design and production of office forms, procurement of office stationaries, be held accountable for updating and preserving office records as well as be given the opportunity to update their knowledge of use of modern office machines and equipment.

**Keywords:** Quality, Management, Office Forms, Stationeries, Records, Machines, Equipment

information and necessary data in an organization. Stationaries are like fuel in a car without which no work can be done effectively. Office machines have no doubt drastically reduced over dependence on manual operations and enhanced the speed and efficiency of office jobs. This study is necessary in order to examine the extent to which these critical variables are given pre-eminence in office practice among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical basis of this paper is drawn from Max Weber’s bureaucratic theory of management, which advocates that all administrative activities for the smooth running of day-to-day activities of an organization, should be based on comprehensive record keeping. Cook (2019) maintained that record keeping is central for effective and efficient management in every organization. Records provide information on what has happened in the past, what is going on at present and what is projected to happen in the future. This means that without records there can be no proper data for planning and policy evaluation. Manga (2019) argued that improper record keeping especially by clerical staff has affected educational planning and policy implementation at various levels of administration. This theory is relevant and applicable to this study as it validate the need of proper management of office forms, stationaries, record and equipment as a pre-requisite of efficient and effective office practice and overall service delivery.

### **Review of Related Literature**

One of the ways of measuring the quality of clerical staff in organizations is to assess their ability to design and produce various office forms required for various transactions. According to Azuka and Christopher (2015), clerical staff are expected to be familiar with different types of office forms used on daily basis. Not only that, they are expected to be able to correctly design and produce required forms when the need arises. Bhatia (2011) highlighted that all forms designed by clerical



staff should be written in simple language have specific titles, serial number and special instructions clearly stated in the forms. Miller (2013) stated that clerical staff should be able to design file Jackets, folders, letter headed papers and receipts of various colours, sizes and textures, with adequate margins for stapling, punching and binding. Pearce-Moses (2015) posits that clerical staff should have the skill of designing electronic forms for various uses. He advised that any forms designed should have sufficient blank spaces to capture the required information or data.

The quality and caliber of clerical staff could be assessed by the way and manner they manage office stationeries at their disposal. In the first place, Tracy (2016); believe that effective clerical staff should have the skill of negotiating the prices of office stationeries and should be conversant with the application of due process in procurement of office stationeries. Edem and Ajetumobi (2016), stated that clerical staff should not only be able to place precise orders for small purchases but should have the ability of placing orders for contract of purchasing large quantities of office stationeries. Iyanda (2019) states that effective clerical staff should know the procedure of receiving large supplies of office stationeries as well as the correct storage procedures. Igwe and Nwosu (2007), posited that clerical staff should be able to know the kind of facilities required in a store room for proper storage of office stationeries. They should be able to keep up to date record of inventory of office stationeries to keep track of stock and flow of stationeries. Ahukannah (2016) highlighted that efficient clerical staff should be able to protect office stationeries from damage as well as ensure adequate security from being stolen.

Office records provide a documentary and electronic information on office transactions and other official correspondence for present action and future reference. Ahukannah and Chukwumezie (2008) states that competent clerical staff should be familiar with various types of office records available in the office. They should be able to ensure that office records are properly and correctly written for ease of understanding by users. Onusanya (2010) highlighted that clerical staff should of high integrity ensure that do not forge a falsify office records for corrupt practices. They promptly report cases of tampering, lots or theft of office records for necessary actions. Bostico (2014) posits that qualified clerical staff are able to update office records regularly and should be able to duplicate office records to serve as backup against unforeseen eventualities. Idoko (2018) suggested that professional clerical staff should be able to preserve office records from damage by water, fire, dust, insects and pests. They should also be able to restrict unauthorized access to classified confidential and secrets records. Harrison, Odina and Fosu (2014) submitted that efficient clerical staff ensures that office records are systematically stored for easy access when required for official security of office records both physically and electronically.

Clerical duties in recent times have become more complex and versatile due to the advent of technology and its impact on various aspects of clerical activities. A qualified, competent and productive clerical staff should be familiar with the application of modern technological machines and equipment to ease his or her work in the office. According to Whalen (2018) clerical staff are expected to be very familiar with various staff are expected to be very familiar with various types of offices machines and equipment and should have satisfactory technical skills of making optimum utilization of the technological devices in performing various clerical tasks. Ahukannah (2012) stated that clerical staff should particularly know how to use numbering and punching machines, calculating and bookkeeping machines as well as how to service them and effect minor



technical repairs. Lucky and Jennings (2012) opined that clerical should be able to make correct use of stapling, perforating and spiral binding machines. They should have the skill of using Dictaphones, Teleprinters, and fax machines correctly. Bailey (2015) highlighted modern clerical staff should be computer literate to be versatile in use of laptops, printers, flash drives, compact discs, photocopiers and intercoms. They should also exhibit competence in use of internet facilities in line with national and international standards.

### **Statement of the Problem**

When clerical staff are employed, they are expected to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. This is because to a large extent the success of every administration depends on quality of clerical services in an organization. But in recent times there is a huge public outcry that clerical staff operating in education boards are grossly incompetent and inefficient in the discharge of their statutory duties. It appears that some of them lack proficiency in designing office forms and capacity to manage office stationeries satisfactorily. Some clerical staff seem to be found wanting in their record keeping practices. In addition some of them appear not to be so conversant with the use of information and communication technology equipment to cope with modern electronic office operations. These challenges tend to affect the overall quality of service delivery in education board in Kebbi State.

### **Objectives of Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. find out the quality of management of office forms among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State;
2. investigate the quality of management of office stationeries among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State;
3. ascertain the quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State; and
4. determine the quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the quality of management of office forms among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?
2. What is the quality of management of office stationeries among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?
3. What is the quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?
4. What is the quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design was used in this study. All the four Education Boards comprising the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Teacher's Service Board (TSB), Science and



Technical Education Board (STEB) and the Arabic and Islamic Education Board (AIEB) all in Birnin Kebbi Headquarters were used in the study. Out of total of 160 subjects a sample size of 112 participants made up of 68 clerical staff and 44 senior educational administrators in the four education boards were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. A researcher designed, expert validated structured questionnaire titled: “Quality of Management of Office Practice Questionnaire” (QMOPQ). The 33-item instrument with four sections was based on five-point scale to measure quality from: 1 point = Very Low Quality (VLQ = 0-39%); 2 points = Low Quality (LQ = 40-49%); 3 points = Moderate Quality (MQ = 50-59%); 4 points = High Quality (HQ = 60-69%); and 5 points = Very High Quality (VHQ = 70-100%). The mean score of 3 points and above on the scale was used as cut-off for satisfactory quality while below 3 points is unsatisfactory quality. The instrument was pilot tested using test retest method. A reliability index of 0.83 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient at 0.05 level of significance. All the 160 copies of the instrument administered were returned and analyzed using simple frequencies, percentages and grand mean of items presented in tabular form.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the quality of management office forms among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?

**Table 1: Quality of Management of Office Forms and Clerical Staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State**

S/N	Item Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Quality	Decision
1.	Clerical staff are familiar with various types of office forms	50%	3.0	MQ	Satisfactory
2.	Clerical staff are able to design and produce various types of office forms, files, and folders	10%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
3.	All forms produced by clerical staff have title and serial numbers	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
4.	Special instructions are captured in such form	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
5.	The typing and printing of office forms is legible and neat	70%	5.0	VHQ	Satisfactory
6.	All forms have adequate left margin for stapling, punching and binding	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
7.	Sufficient blank spaces are provided in each form	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
8.	Clerical staff are able to design various types of electronic forms	10%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
	Grand Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	29%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory

### Key:

VLE= Very Low Extent

LE= Low Extent

ME= Moderate Extent

HE= High Extent



VHE= Very High Extent

Table 1 shows that the grand mean rating 29% and scale of 1.0 shows that the quality of management of office forms by clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of very low quality and therefore unsatisfactory. Item 5 shows that the quality of typing and printing of office forms was of very high quality and therefore satisfactory with a scale of 70% and maxim scale of 5 points. All other items in the table were rated low quality with rating between 10% - 40% on a scale of 1.0 to 2.0 which indicated indicate low quality and therefore unsatisfactory.

**Research Question 2:** What is the quality of management of office stationeries among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?

**Table 2: Quality of Management of Office Strategies among Clerical Staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State?**

S/N	Item Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Quality	Decision
1.	Clerical staff are familiar with various types of office stationeries	70%	5.0	VHQ	Satisfactory
2.	Clerical staff have skills of negotiating purchase of office stationeries	10%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
3.	Clerical staff follow due process in procurement and planning orders for office stationeries	20%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
4.	Clerical staff have skills of receipt of suppliers and issuance of office stationeries to staff	30%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
5.	Clerical staff have technical skill of inviting tenders for bidding by contractors of stationeries	10%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
6.	Clerical staff know the procedure for proper storage and retrieval of office stationeries	60%	4.0	HQ	Satisfactory
7.	Clerical staff keep accurate inventory office stationeries	30%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
8.	Clerical staff have the skill of protecting office stationeries from damage or theft	60%	4.0	HQ	Unsatisfactory
	Grand Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	36%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory

**Key:**

VLE= Very Low Extent

LE= Low Extent

ME= Moderate Extent

HE= High Extent

VHE= Very High Extent

The grand mean rating of 36% on a scale 1.0 shows that the quality of management of office stationeries among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was very low and therefore unsatisfactory. Items 1 and 8 in table 2 with ratings of 70% to 60% on a scale of 5.0 and 4.0 respectively however, shows that the level of familiarity of the various types of office stationeries was satisfactory.



**Research Question 3:** What is the quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?

**Table 3: Quality of Management of Office Records among Clerical Staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State**

S/N	Item Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Quality	Decision
1.	Clerical staff are familiar with various types of office records and their correct entries	70%	5.0	VHQ	Satisfactory
2.	Clerical staff regularly update records and dispose expired ones	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
3.	Clerical staff properly protect from damage by water, fire, dust, pests and insects	50%	3.0	MQ	Satisfactory
4.	Clerical staff ensure the security of office records from theft and unauthorized access	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
5.	Clerical staff systematically store record store for speedy retrieval for official action	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
6.	Clerical staff have the skill of duplicating records for backup	50%	3.0	MQ	Satisfactory
7.	Clerical staff do not forge or falsify records	50%	3.0	MQ	Satisfactory
8.	Clerical staff promptly report tempering or loss of vital records	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
	Grand Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	48%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory

**Key:**

VLE= Very Low Extent

LE= Low Extent

ME= Moderate Extent

HE= High Extent

VHE= Very High Extent

Table 3 shows that grand mean rating of 48% and mean of 2.0 is an indication that the quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of low quality and unsatisfactory. Item 1 in table 3 show that in 70% of cases, clerical staff are familiar with various types of records in the board, while item 2, 4, 5 and 8 with a rating of 40% each on a scale of 2.0 shows low quality and therefore unsatisfactory performance in the items.

**Research Question 4:** What is the quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State?

**Table 4: Quality of Management of Office Machines and Equipment among Clerical Staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State?**

S/N	Item Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Quality	Decision
1.	Clerical staff are familiar with the various office machines and equipment	30%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory



2.	Clerical staff know how to use stapling, punching, perforating and spiral binding machines	50%	3.0	MQ	Satisfactory
3.	Clerical staff know how to operate numbering machines, calculators, typewriters and bookkeeping machines	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
4.	Clerical staff know how to operate Dictaphones, Telephones, Teleprinters, fax machines, and intercoms	20%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
5.	Clerical staff know how to use typewriters, computers keyboards, laptops, printers, flash drives and Compact Discs	30%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
6.	Clerical staff know how to effect minor services know how to effect regular cleaning, minor servicing and minor repairs of equipment	20%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory
7.	Senior clerical staff are able to mentor junior one on utilization and maintenance of machines and equipment	40%	2.0	LQ	Unsatisfactory
	Grand Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	33%	1.0	VLQ	Unsatisfactory

**Key:**

VLE= Very Low Extent

LE= Low Extent

ME= Moderate Extent

HE= High Extent

VHE= Very High Extent

Table 4 shows the grand mean rating of 33% on a scale of 1.0, which indicates that the quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State is of very low quality and therefore unsatisfactory. Table 4 shows that with the exception of item 2 which was rated 50% indicating that clerical staff moderately know how to use stapling, punching and perforating machines while all the other items were rated between 10% - 40%, which was generally low and unsatisfactory as indicated on a scale of 1.0 to 2.0 across the items.

**Summary of Findings**

1. The quality of management of office forms among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of very low quality and unsatisfactory.
2. The quality of management of office stationeries among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was very low and unsatisfactory.
3. The quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of low quality and unsatisfactory.
4. The quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was very low quality and unsatisfactory.

**Discussion of Findings**

The first finding of this study shows that the quality of management of office forms among clerical staff in Kebbi State was very low and therefore unsatisfactory. Table 1 shows that they were unable to design and produce various forms with appropriate headings, serial numbers, clear



instructions, good margins and with adequate blank spaces to ease completion. They were also unable to design electronic forms in spite current global advancement in Information and Communication Technology. This was contrary to Azuka and Christoper (2015); Bhatia (2011) and Miller (2013) who provided at the competent clerical staff should be able to satisfactorily design, produce and utilize various forms, file jackets, folders, letter headed papers, receipts among others. This finding tend to suggest that either clerical staff in Kebi State education boards were not qualified or they were no involved in the design and production of office forms due to the tendency to patronize business centers in the metropolis for the production of office forms.

The second findings of the study show that the quality of management of office was very low and therefore unsatisfactory. Table 2 shows that clerical staff lack skills of negotiating, procurement procedure, skill of inviting tenders and keeping of accurate inventory of stationeries. This was contrary to Tracy (2016), Edem and Ajetumobi (2006), who advocates that clerical staff should be skillful in negotiation, procurement, receipt, storage and disbursement of office stationeries to staff in an organization. Their poor level of ability in regard tend to suggest that they are not involved in production of tenders, bidding process, award of contract, procurement and supply of stationeries. The tendency was for top management staff to monopolize procurement of supplies of stationeries. However results in table 2 also show that clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State were familiar with the various types of stationeries and were skillful in protecting the stationeries from damage and theft. This was in line with Iyanda (2019), Igwe and Nwosu (2007), who suggested that clerical staff should be skillful and storekeeping and preservation of stationeries for the time of replenishment of stocks to the time they are used up. They should not only be familiar with current types of stationeries but also of latest innovation in the manufacture modern stationeries.

The third finding of the study show that the quality of management of office records among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of low quality and therefore unsatisfactory. Table 3 show that clerical staff did not regularly update records, are negligent in protecting office records from damage or securing them from theft, and their records were not systematically kept for ease of retrieval when required. In some cases they did not promptly report loss of vital records. These findings were contrary to Ahukannah and Chukwumezie (2008) and Omusanya (2010) who advised that clerical staff should always be ready to update and protect official records under their care. However, table 3 also shows that clerical staff are familiar with various types of office records, are able to duplicate records for backup and they were not involved in forging and falsifying records. This was line with Bostico (2014) and Idoko (2018) who posited that clerical staff should be of high integrity and very resourceful in this discharge of their duties.

The fourth finding of this study shows that the quality of management of office machines and equipment among clerical staff in education boards in Kebbi State was of very low quality and therefore unsatisfactory. Table 4 show that clerical staff were ignorant of the existence of modern office machines and equipment. They lacked the skill or ability to operate various machines and equipment and are unable to effect minor servicing or repairs when the need arises. This finding was contrary to Whelen (2018), Ahukannah (2002), Lucky and Jennings (2012) who posited that clerical staff should be conversant with up to date inventions of modern office machines and equipment in line with rapid development in Information and Communication Technology. Their low level of familiarity with modern office machines and equipment tend to suggest that the education boards did not place priority in purchasing latest technology to update the quality of office machines and equipment and thereby directly help in updating the knowledge clerical staff on their skills operating the equipment. It also tends to suggest that little or no opportunities were given for regular workshops on utilization of various machines and equipment for effective discharge of clerical duties in the Education Boards.



### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study have shown that the quality of management of office forms, stationeries, records and equipment among clerical staff in Education Boards in Kebbi State was very low and therefore unsatisfactory. This in fact is demonstrated by their low level of knowledge and poor skills in executing critical and basic clerical services on the specific items investigated. This low quality if not performed could be as a result of poor quality of clerical staff employed, lack of modern office stationeries, office machines and equipment to create familiarity with the apparatus of their office. Also lack of regular workshops and lack of involvement of clerical staff in procurement of supplies may have immensely contributed toward depriving item of necessary skills and experiences that were supposed to help in uplifting the quality of their managerial abilities.

### **Recommendations**

1. To improve the quality of management of office forms, clerical staff should be more involved in the designed and production of office forms instead of contracting business centers for these jobs.
2. To improve quality of management of office stationeries, clerical staff should be involved in writing of tenders, bidding, negotiations and procurement of office stationeries as well as in the receipt, storage and issuance of office stationeries.
3. To improve quality of management of office records, clerical staff should be held responsible for regular update of office records and to ensure proper preservation and security of office records. Necessary facilities should be provided to them for proper storage and retrieval of office records.
4. To improve the quality of management of office machines and equipment, clerical staff should be empowered to attend regular workshops and national conferences on management of office machines and equipment so as to update their knowledge on the existence of latest technology and the operations of the equipment for effectively discharge of their duties.

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