



Academic Records Management Practices among Public Primary School Head Teachers in Chalinze District, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study investigates the management of academic records in public primary schools within Chalinze District, focusing on identifying the types of academic records managed, the practices employed, and the methods used to maintain these records. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study utilized a descriptive research design incorporating questionnaires and interviews. Data were collected from 87 respondents, including heads of schools, assistant head teachers, and academic teachers, using a 49-item Likert scale questionnaire. Analysis involved mean scores and t-tests to assess significance. Findings indicate that primary schools in Chalinze District manage various records such as certificates, transcripts, academic performance records, attendance lists, and financial records. Head teachers play pivotal roles in ensuring comprehensive records management, including enrolment, attendance monitoring, and oversight of academic documentation. They also facilitate access to records for stakeholders and collaborate to ensure accuracy and completeness, particularly for students with special needs. Key records management practices identified include document capture, creation and classification of records, maintenance of storage, retention of valuable records, and disposition of obsolete records. The study concludes that effective records management is critical for school administration and recommends capacity-building initiatives and improved administrative practices to enhance records management in primary schools.*

Keywords: Records management, Primary schools, Head-teachers, Academic records, Management practices

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1. Introduction

Academic records are crucial for monitoring students' progress and facilitating efficient school administration. These records include pupil admission and withdrawal documents, attendance logs, staff records, punishment books, and school rules. These play a significant role in the effective operation of educational institutions as indicated by (Ozigi, 2021). Financial records, such as receipts, cash books, and bank statements, are also essential components that contribute to the overall management of schools. Proper management of these records ensures smooth administrative processes and

supports various aspects of school management, including scheduling, staffing, accounting, and disciplinary actions (Alabi and Mutula, 2022). These records provide critical data for decision-making, enabling teachers and school administrators to make informed decisions in schools.

Maintaining accurate and up-to-date academic records is vital for the smooth functioning of schools. According to Touray (2021), the proper management of these records is beneficial not only to teachers and school heads but also to school inspectors, parents, and researchers. Alabi (2022) further notes that academic records belong to the

school and should be securely managed within the institution. The responsibility of managing these academic records lies primarily with the school heads, who must develop and implement effective management strategies. Tella (2019) organized that school heads should ensure that academic records are systematically organized, properly labelled, and securely stored in cabinets with controlled access to maintain their integrity and confidentiality.

Experience is a key factor in the effective management of academic records. Ofeimu *et al.* (2018) argue that head teachers with more experience tend to possess better skills and knowledge in record management. Ereh and Okon (2019) distinguish between less experienced heads, with fewer than seven years in the role, and more experienced heads, with over seven years. However, there is some debate regarding the impact of experience on record management performance. While Osakwe (2018) found that more experienced head teachers performed better in record management in schools, Okoli and Onuigbo (2021) did not observe significant differences between the performance of more and less experienced heads. This inconsistency highlights the need for further research into the role of experience in the management of academic records by school heads.

Inefficient management of academic records can have negative consequences for school administration. Alabi (2017) stresses that effective records management is essential for the organized administration of educational institutions. Challenges such as inadequate staffing, insufficient storage equipment, lack of training, absence of guiding policies, and difficulties in accessing necessary information from students have been identified as significant obstacles to effective records management (Ameyaw and Frempong-Kore, 2020). These challenges underscore the importance of addressing the issues that hinder the proper management of school academic records.

In Tanzania, the management of academic records in primary schools reflects several significant issues. Chachage and Ngulube (2021) observe that although records may be accurate, they are not always well managed by primary school heads. Mohamed (2018) highlights that despite the critical importance of these records, they are often inadequately handled. Mukanya (2020) reports that improper record-keeping practices lead to inefficiencies, such as delays for parents seeking records and inadequate storage facilities. These challenges point to the need for improved practices in managing academic records in Tanzanian schools. The necessity for better records management practices in primary schools, particularly in the Chalinze District, motivates further research.

1.1 Research Questions

This study investigated academic records management practices among public primary school head teachers in the Chalinze District, Tanzania. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What types of academic records are managed by headteachers in public primary schools?
2. What records management practices are employed by headteachers in public primary schools to ensure effective academic records management?
3. What methods do headteachers use for managing academic records in public primary schools?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Katz's Theory of Managerial Skills and Role Theory, providing a structured approach to understanding the research problem. Katz's Theory of Managerial Skills, developed by Robert L. Katz (1974), identifies three essential managerial skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skills involve expertise in specific areas, such as finance or design, which are crucial for lower-level managers. Human skills pertain to interpersonal abilities and leadership, which are essential for all managerial levels. Conceptual skills involve the capacity to think through complex situations, which is important at higher managerial levels. Katz's theory underscores that effective leadership relies on a balance of these skills rather than merely innate traits. While the theory offers valuable insights into managerial skills, it may simplify the role of technical skills across different management levels. This framework is pertinent for school heads, who can apply these skills to develop management strategies, allocate resources, and ensure effective record-keeping.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Types of Academic Records Managed in Primary Schools

Research on the types of academic records managed in primary schools reveals various records essential for effective school management. Mosweu (2022) utilized quantitative and content analysis data analysis methods in South Africa and identified several types of records, including books and files containing student results, course schedules, transcripts, health records, financial statements, class lists, and corrective files. Falolo *et al.*

(2022) conducted a study on student registration and records management services, highlighting that records typically include attendance registers, log books, fee registers, teacher's attendance registers, cash books, correspondence registers, examination registers, stock registers, and visitor's books. Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) explored the role of school records in Nigeria, discussing documents, books, and data files that provide important information about school activities and history. Despite the insights these studies provide, they primarily focus on the types of records rather than their management practices, which this study aims to address.

2.2.2 Various Records Management Practices Used by Head Teachers

Effective records management practices are critical for maintaining the integrity and accessibility of academic records. Ngulube (2019) found that primary schools in Zimbabwe often struggle with poor record integrity due to inadequate adherence to best practices. Adebowale and Osuji (2008) emphasized the importance of effective recordkeeping systems, whether electronic or paper-based, for maintaining well-organized records. Oyedipe *et al.* (2021) highlighted ongoing challenges in records classification, suggesting improved strategies were needed. Akinloye *et al.* (2020) stressed the role of head teachers in records management and advocated for training to enhance their skills. Idhalama *et al.* (2023) and Asamoah *et al.* (2023) emphasized the importance of proper retention schedules and comprehensive records management programs. Masoud and Komba (2023) and Kavuta and Nyamanga (2020) pointed out that integrating ICT and managerial training could address gaps in records management and enhance school efficiency.

2.2.3 Methods Used by Head Teachers in Academic Records Management

The methods used by head teachers in managing academic records vary widely. Didacus (2021) conducted a study in Ghana using a case study design and found that many schools rely on manual methods for storing records, such as bookcases, drawers, files, and boxes, due to a lack of electronic equipment such as desktop computers, tablets, and laptops. Bodang *et al.* (2019) examined innovative principles and record-keeping techniques in Nigeria, finding that records are managed manually and electronically, with recommendations for incorporating digital records to enhance documentation. Matina *et al.* (2019) studied records management practices in Zimbabwe and found that electronic methods, including email, electronic files, audio-visual files, microform files, and scanned files, are used, though this requires validation in other contexts like Tanzania.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted in Chalinze District, which was chosen for its unique demographic characteristics that blend rural and urban elements. The district has 125 primary schools, suitable for examining issues relating to school management practices. The sample size was determined using Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb, which suggests estimating sample size by considering four times the standard deviation in statistical distributions. With a population size of 339, this calculation resulted in a sample size of 85 respondents. However, additional data was gathered from 2 more respondents during the data collection process, bringing the total sample size to 87. Therefore, the sample includes 28 school heads, 28 vice-school heads, and 21 academic teachers. Data collection methods also involved interviews with the District Education Officer (DEO) for qualitative insights. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and interview measures of record management practices based on a 5- points Likers scale given as Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

The validity of the instruments was piloted and tested by five schools in Morogoro Municipal, and the reliability of the instruments was tested through the Cronbach Alpha technique and yielded 0.720 that is above the accepted standard of Cronbach Alpha test this tested the internal consistency of the variables in the questionnaire. Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyse quantitative data and presented using tables, percentages, and means. Descriptive statistics of mean and percentages were used to answer the research questions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Types of Academic Records Managed by Head Teacher in Public Primary Schools in Chalinze District

The findings, detailed in Table 1 below, show a consensus among respondents, including head teachers and other teachers, regarding the types of records maintained. These include certificates and transcripts, academic performance records, class lists, course schedules, health records, financial records, pupil disciplinary files, inventories of books and files, pupil profiles, and furniture inventories. While most records showed statistically significant differences at the 1% and 5% levels, health records and desk and chair inventories were found to have uniform presence across the primary schools studied, with p-values of 0.200 and 0.277, respectively. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates a meaningful disparity in mean rating scores of heads and teachers regarding school records, emphasizing the need for intervention and improvement

in academic records management practices to ensure standardized procedures across schools in the district. When DEO consulted on the types of academic records managed by head teachers in public primary schools, they responded by mentioning “*syllabuses for different subjects, schemes of work, banks of questions, results logs, classroom teaching log books, reference books, students’ progress cards, club information, and register books.*”

These findings align with the study by Mosweu (2022) of South Africa, which identified similar types of

academic records managed in primary schools, such as books and files containing information, student results, course schedules, transcripts, health records, financial statements, class lists, and disciplinary files. Additionally, the results corroborate the insights of Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015), who emphasized the importance of maintaining school records, including documents, books, and data files, which contain essential information about school activities and development. They highlighted that these records are vital for investors to learn and develop skills in school documentation, thereby strengthening school management, planning, and administration.

Table 1: Types of academic records managed by the head teacher in public primary schools in Chalinze District

Type of academic record	Ward	N	Mean	Decision	Chi-square-p value
Certificate and transcripts as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.2917	Agree	0.004**
	Vigwaza	21	1.4286	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0000	Agree	
	Total	87	1.1954	Agree	
Academic performance as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.2500	Agree	0.016**
	Vigwaza	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2299	Agree	
Class lists/attendances as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.2917	Agree	0.003**
	Vigwaza	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2529	Agree	
Course schedules and timetables as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.3333	Agree	0.017**
	Vigwaza	21	1.3810	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0000	Agree	
	Total	87	1.1954	Agree	
Health records as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5417	Agree	0.200
	Vigwaza	21	1.4286	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.2381	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.2857	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3793	Agree	
Financial/monetary records as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5000	Agree	0.009**
	Vigwaza	21	1.3333	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2644	Agree	
Pupil disciplinary files as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5833	Agree	0.049*
	Vigwaza	21	1.6190	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.1905	Agree	

Type of academic record	Ward	N	Mean	Decision	Chi-square-p value
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.1905	Agree	
	Total	87	1.4023	Agree	
Books and file inventories as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.4167	Agree	0.004**
	Vigwaza	21	1.4286	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.2857	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3103	Agree	
Pupils' profiles as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.3333	Agree	0.003**
	Vigwaza	21	1.4286	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.2381	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2644	Agree	
Desk and chair inventories as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.4167	Agree	0.277
	Vigwaza	21	1.5714	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.2381	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3218	Agree	
Laboratory inventories as kind of records managed at school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	2.4167	Agree	0.007**
	Vigwaza	21	2.8095	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	3.0000	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.7619	Agree	
	Total	87	2.4943	Agree	

Note: ** is statistically significant at 1%, and * is statistically significant at 5% (Source: Field Data)

4.2 Mean rating on roles played by head teachers in managing academic records at their schools

The findings, as outlined in Table 2 below reveal that both head teachers and teachers play crucial roles in managing school records. These responsibilities include overseeing the comprehensive management of records related to enrolment, attendance, and academic performance; accurately documenting students' demographic information; managing records for extracurricular activities and achievements; ensuring the accuracy of records for students with special needs; facilitating access to records for stakeholders such as parents and educational authorities; and transferring

records for students moving between schools. The mean ratings from a five-item questionnaire show statistically significant differences in these roles across schools at the 1% and 5% significance levels.

The District Education Officer (DEO) of Chalinze District confirmed these roles, emphasizing the importance of head teachers in managing academic records. The DEO noted that school heads are integral in overseeing records related to students' achievements, collaborating with staff to ensure accuracy, and providing access to records for stakeholders. This supports the views of Dorcas (2013), Muhammad *et al.* (2022), and Spillane (2017), who advocate for effective administrative practices, including delegation of tasks, accurate record-keeping, and monitoring adherence to record management guidelines.

Table 2: Mean rating on roles played by head teachers in managing academic records at their schools

Roles	Ward	N	Mean	Decision	Chi-square p-values
The school head ensures comprehensive management of academic records, including enrolment, attendance, and academic performance	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.2083	Agree	.016**
	Vigwaza	21	1.4762	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.1905	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2299	Agree	
The school head oversees the accurate and timely documentation of students' demographic information in academic records.	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.2083	Agree	.008**
	Vigwaza	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.2857	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2644	Agree	
The school head plays an active role in managing academic records related to students' extracurricular activities and achievements.	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5000	Agree	.076
	Vigwaza	21	1.4762	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.3810	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3678	Agree	
The school head collaborates with teachers and staff to ensure the accuracy and completeness of academic records for students with special needs or accommodations	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.3750	Agree	.025*
	Vigwaza	21	1.6667	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.1905	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.1905	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3563	Agree	
The school head facilitates access to academic records for relevant stakeholders, including parents, guardians, and educational authorities.	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.3750	Agree	.014*
	Vigwaza	21	1.4762	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.1905	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2759	Agree	
The school head ensures that academic records are utilized effectively to monitor students' progress and inform decision-making regarding interventions and support	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.4167	Agree	.012*
	Vigwaza	21	1.4762	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Total	87	1.3678	Agree	
The school head collaborates with other schools or educational institutions to facilitate the transfer of academic records for students transitioning between institutions	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.6250	Agree	.010*
	Vigwaza	21	1.7143	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Total	87	1.4943	Agree	
Overall, the school head plays a crucial role in ensuring the comprehensive and effective management of students' academic records in our primary school	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.3750	Agree	.000*
	Vigwaza	21	1.5238	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena zomozi	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Total	87	1.2529	Agree	

Note: ** statistically significant at 1% level and * is statistically significant at 5% level (Source: Field Data)

4.3 Records management practices used by head teachers of public primary schools to ensure effective academic records management

Finding in Table 3 below indicate that both head teachers and teachers utilize several key practices, including document capture, creation of records such as examination scripts, classification, storage maintenance, retention of valuable records, appraisal, and disposal of obsolete records. Analysis of mean ratings from a five-item questionnaire revealed significant variations in these practices across schools, with statistical tests at the 1% and 5% levels confirming these differences. Notably,

the evaluation and appraisal of records showed no significant variation, with a p-value of 0.130, suggesting consistency in these procedures across schools.

The findings align with the District Education Officer's (DEO) observation that schools employ various management practices and tools, including iPads, for improved record handling and record-keeping policies for retention and disposal. This supports the work of Alabi and Mutula (2023) and reflects broader literature on incorporating ICT in records management (Cheng, 2018; Matina, 2019; Olalere *et al.*, 2021; Muhammad *et al.*, 2022).

Table 3: Various records management practices used by head teachers of public primary schools to Ensure Effective Academic Records Management

Record management practice	Ward	N	Mean	Decision	Chi-square p-value
Capture/ receiving document	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.8333	Agree	.000**
	Vigwaza	21	3.3333	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.7143	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	3.0952	Agree	
	Total	87	2.4713	Agree	
Creation of academic records example of examination scripts	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5833	Agree	.041*
	Vigwaza	21	1.7143	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.5714	Agree	
	Total	87	1.4943	Agree	
Classification of records	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.6667	Agree	.005**
	Vigwaza	21	1.8095	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.7619	Agree	
	Total	87	1.5862	Agree	
Maintenance of storage places	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.6250	Agree	.005**
	Vigwaza	21	1.8095	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0952	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.8095	Agree	
	Total	87	1.5862	Agree	
Retention of value academic records	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.6250	Agree	.000**
	Vigwaza	21	1.8571	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.0476	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.4286	Agree	
	Total	87	1.4943	Agree	
Evaluation/appraisal of academic records	Talawanda/Msoga	24	1.5417	Agree	.130
	Vigwaza	21	1.6190	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	2.0952	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.4762	Agree	
	Total	87	1.6782	Agree	
Disposition/destruction of academic records which has lost its value	Talawanda/Msoga	24	2.5000	Agree	.000**
	Vigwaza	21	2.6667	Agree	
	Bwilingu	21	1.3333	Agree	
	Ubena/Ubena zomozi	21	1.8571	Agree	
	Total	87	2.1034	Agree	

Note: ** statistically significant at 1% level and * is statistically significant at 5% level (Source: Field Data)

4.4 Methods used by Head Teachers to Ensure Effective Academic Records Management in Public Primary Schools in Chalinze district

The findings in Figure 1 suggest that in the schools studied, there is a reliance on both manual and electronic methods for managing academic records. A significant

portion of respondents (33.3%) believe that manual record-keeping, using traditional tools like counter/register books, files, and cards, is still prevalent and adequate for their needs. A similar percentage (35.6%) indicates that secure storage, such as lockers, is in place for important documents. However, only 28.7% view these manual methods as truly effective. Interestingly, 35.6% also recognized that some records are maintained electronically, reflecting a blend of

traditional and modern practices. This blend of methods suggests a transition phase in record management, where schools maintained manual practices while gradually incorporating electronic systems. The DEO interviewed explained that there were increasing practices of records being stored electronically by the head teacher or a teacher familiar with computers. This digital method, which uses tablets, computers, and software, is popular in the district because it is efficient and convenient. However, the DEO noted that the main challenge would be the need for more technical experts to address issues when the electronic devices fail.

These findings align with those reported by Gama (2010), who identified diverse electronic methods like email and scanned files on a survey of records

management practices in circular primary schools in metropolitan local government areas (MLGAs) of Kano State. However, this finding contrasts with Didacus (2021), Ameyaw and Frempong-Kore (2020), and Akussah and Asamoah (2015) in their studies on the methods used by school heads for effective management and administration of school records in Ghana and findings from Matina *et al.* (2019), who reported predominantly methods used in Zimbabwean schools. They found that manual methods, including bookcases, drawers, files, and boxes, were predominantly used to store school records. School records, which encompass critical information about staff, students, services, facilities, and programs, are typically maintained by head teachers and other administrative staff in the school office.

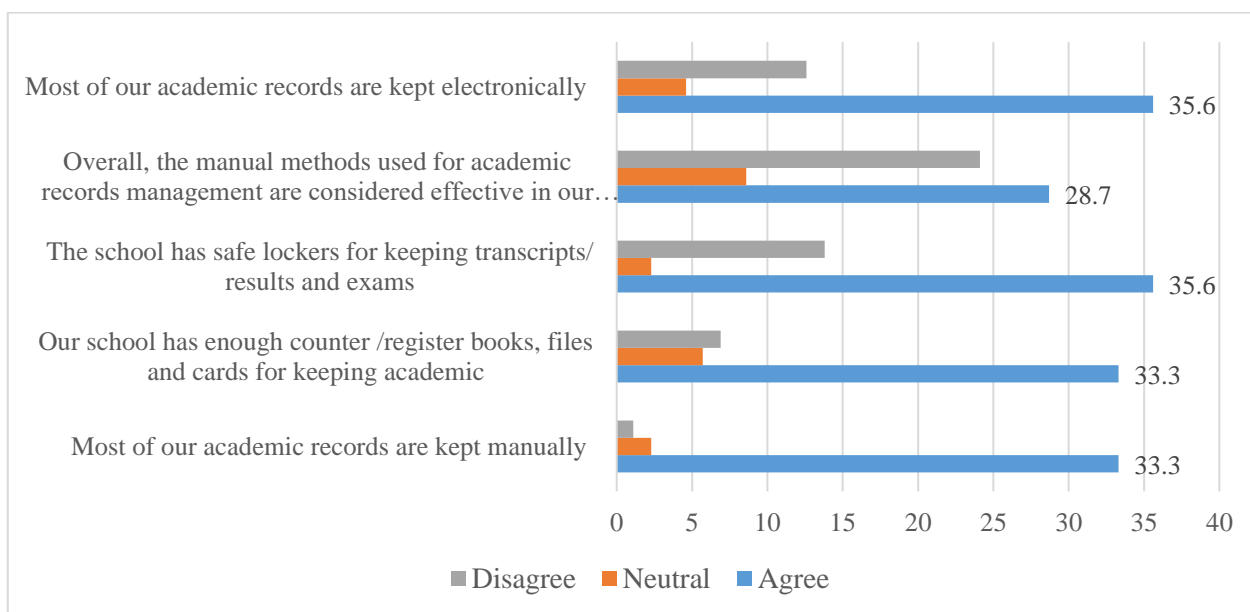


Figure 1 Mean score rating on manual methods used for school records management by heads of schools

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study comes to the conclusion that primary schools maintain both manual and electronic records. Maintaining accurate records is essential to managing primary school operations and improving administrative effectiveness. The administration of school records is greatly improved by head teachers who implement strong record-keeping procedures. On the other hand, inadequate oversight and a lack of dedication can cause problems with school operations. These results highlight the necessity of strict oversight and adherence to record-keeping best practices in order to enhance administrative effectiveness and educational results. The results highlight the fact that failure to maintain academic records in primary schools can result in criticism and compromise the efficiency of school operations. Thus,

achieving school goals requires giving proper record-keeping top priority.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the detailed findings and discussions from the study, the following recommendations can be derived to improve academic records management in public primary schools in Chalinze District:

1. The significant variation in records management practices across wards underscores the need for standardized guidelines and protocols. These guidelines should outline best practices for record creation, classification, storage, retention, and disposal, incorporating manual and electronic methods where applicable.
2. The study highlights varying perceptions regarding the availability and adequacy of record-keeping equipment and financial

resources across wards. To address this, resources should be distributed equally to ensure that all schools have access to the necessary equipment and infrastructure for effective records management.

3. Cooperation among school staff emerged as a critical factor influencing effective records management. This suggests fostering a culture of teamwork and shared responsibility for record-keeping tasks, ensuring comprehensive documentation of school activities and student progress.
4. Implementing a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of records management practices is essential. This recommendation involves establishing periodic reviews to assess compliance with guidelines, identify improvement areas, and celebrate successes.
5. Schools should prioritize investments in ICT infrastructure and digital tools that facilitate easier access to records by stakeholders. This step not only improves efficiency but also enhances transparency and responsiveness in educational administration.

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