

Full Length Research

Records Management and Policies in Nigerian University Libraries. A Study of Abia State University Uturu

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This study examined records management and policies in Nigerian university libraries, with particular reference to Abia State University (ABSU) Library, Uturu. The study was guided by four objectives, which were to identify the methods used in managing staff records, determine the management policies guiding staff records, identify the challenges associated with records management, and examine strategies for addressing the identified challenges. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 33 library staff of Abia State University Library, consisting of 23 para-professional and 10 professional librarians. The entire population was studied using census sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Records Management and Policy Questionnaire (RMPQ). The instrument was validated by experts, and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly mean scores, with a criterion mean of 2.50 for decision-making. The findings revealed that document management systems, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized databases, and records management software were accepted methods of managing staff records. The study also identified confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, storage, access controls, auditability, data integrity, and retention as major records management policies. The major challenges identified included managing the volume and complexity of records, protecting confidential records from unauthorized access, managing records across multiple systems and locations, dealing with obsolete technologies, integrating records management into organizational processes, securing management support, and dealing with resistance to change. The study concluded that effective records management is essential for accurate, secure, accessible, and reliable staff records in university libraries. It recommended improved records management systems, regular staff training, adequate institutional support, and the implementation of appropriate policies and strategies to enhance records management practices in university libraries.

Keywords: Records Management; Records Management Policies; University Libraries; Staff Records; Information Management; Abia State University; Records Management Challenges; Library Services.

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INTRODUCTION

International organization for standardization (ISO 15489) defines records management as the “field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, Clause 3.16). ISO 15489 is an international standard that defines best practices for the management of both paper and electronic documents and records. It is based on the Australian standard AS 4390-1996: Records Management, which has advanced paramount system for records keeping. Subsequent to the released of ISO 15489 by ISO, the Australian government withdrew the Australian standard AS 4390- 1996, replacing it with AS ISO 15489 (Adam, 2008).

The ISO 15489 standard is intended for any organization that needs to guarantee that their records and documents are effectively maintained, accessible, categorized, and indexed from the creation of the records or document's life, to the end of their life, which could be either through disposal, archiving, or transferring of the records or the documents to an off-line/off-site storage. Records management provides managers and information users with good access to information for decision making. Efficient information system creates and makes critical information available for organizational performance. Organizations focus on keeping and maintaining right-size information through retaining the right information and disposing the right documents. Record means “something that represents proof of existence and that can be used to recreate or prove state of existence, regardless of medium or characteristics” (Hulme, 2012).

A record may be created or received in the process of organizational day-to-day transactions, or to satisfy legal requirements. For instance, in educational institutions such as a university, students' records refer to information or data relating to students. This can be on paper and in electronic formats. In the university system, information management has occupied a considered place in the effective and efficient management of the university. In fact, it is considered as key in the administration of institutions of learning because it supports the planning and implementation of suitable course of services by enabling appropriate monitoring and supervision of work (Abdulrazaq, 2015). An effective records management will help the universities to meet regulatory and audit requirements and provide proof of university's activities for litigation support. During auditing exercise, actions are reviewed through consulting and recording details of the documents that legalised the actions. In a situation where the records and information were not properly managed, the audit judgment would not be reliable due to untrustworthy information (Phiri, 2016). To any organization or institution, information remains a necessary tool in making reference or decision. Efficiency leads the cardinal components of information management without which administering a complex organizations like university becomes difficult if not impossible. However, studies reveal that, information management in Nigerian universities suffers setbacks.

Idris (2017) observes that Nigerian universities lack policies on central issues of records management such as records appraisal, retention and disposition. In a similar study, Abdulrazaq (2015) says that there is problem of lack of accurate information for administrative decisions in Nigerian universities. He adds that, this is as a result of increase in records generated at an exponential rate due to the rising number of students being admitted in to the universities. Other studies by Momoh and Abdulsalam (2014) and Ukwoma and Mole (2017) say that record may be available in an institutional repository of the university and users are not aware of it because its access points were not provided. Similarly, the status of information management in the universities generally lacks efficiency.

A university library, whether federal or state oriented is part of a university set up. Accordingly, it pursues the function of its parent's institution and plays very important roles in the administrative system of any university. It is in line with this that this study therefore investigates the challenges of record management in Nigerian University libraries. A study of Abia State University Uturu.

Background History of Abia State University Uturu

Abia State University library is a story building large library, The library is accommodated in relatively large building in a low-density noiseless area of the university. The library has a sitting capacity of 450 students and has a collection of 50,000 volumes of books. ABSU library consist of the main library law library, a part from the academic library (main library), the branch libraries are located within the faculties or department as the case may be.

According to the fact sheet of ABSU (2004), the University library is made up of 50,000, volumes of books, 2000 bound periodicals, 3000 documents and thesis, 400 unbound journals, 4 titles of newspapers, magazines mining for 10 years, 7200 unprocessed book is in the work room and 10,000 gift of books in cartons. It is instructive to note that at the law library, there are 4500 books, 500 documents and thesis, 90 journals and 4 titles of newspaper and magazines running for 8 years. At the college of medicine and health science library, there are 2,000 books while the business faculty library has 850 books. The library has 850 books. The library has total staff strength of 50.

Statement of Problem

A good records management practice is essential in University libraries because of its enormous benefits to the establishment like fulfilling legal mandates, improving information access and accountability, reducing costs of record retrieval, ensuring the creation, management of accurate and reliable records, and reducing costs of storing records. University libraries as observed has many inter linking departments in which records are generated daily. Due to the numerous amount of information gathered more time is delegated when sorting this information and locating the needed information from records kept. Records misplacement rate is alarming. The researcher's preliminary observation of records management in state university libraries in Nigeria revealed that there is a poor recovery and haphazard arrangement of records. Based on on literature search, a lot of works have been carried out on records management and policies; but none has been conducted on records management and policies in Abia State university library. It is therefore based on this gap that this study examines records management and policies in Abia State university library, Uturu.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine challenges of records management and policies in Nigerian University libraries. A study of Abia State University Uturu.

To achieve this, the following specific objectives, are set to;

1. To identify methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu
2. To find out management policies guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu
3. To identify the challenges of records management of staff in the libraries under study
4. To identify strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in the libraries understudy

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. what are the methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu
2. what are the management policies (if any) guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu
3. what are the challenges of records management of staff in the libraries understudy
4. what are the strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in the libraries understudy

Significance of the Study

The result of the study is expected to be of immense benefit to the following: University management, students, library staff, lecturers, government and researchers.

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the university management. The study will serve as a guide to the university management in actualizing adequate application of records management policies on services of the library, employment of library staff that can apply records management policies to satisfy the increasing clientele of the university libraries. This will improve the research output of the university library users.

The students will equally benefit from the findings of the study. The study would prepare the students to Enhanced access to accurate, reliable, and timely records, assurance of confidentiality and protection of personal and sensitive information to support their social interaction and academic pursuit

Lecturers would also benefit from the study. The study would make available and add value to the literature on records management and policies for effective research, teaching and learning of records management and policies in university libraries schools. The study would serve as a credible research tool for lecturers to cite in respect of the state of the application of records management and policies in the services of university libraries in Abia State.

It is also expected that the study would serve as a working document to the government in proffering lasting solution to the problems/challenge of the application records management and policies of in Abia State and Nigeria at large. The government would be able to support laws that will favor the application records management policies on the services of university libraries.

Furthermore, researchers would benefit from the study. Findings of this study could be an encouragement to the researchers to carry out further research on the application records management and policies on the services of university libraries. The reason is that this study would expose the gaps in literature and knowledge which researchers could investigate in further studies for publications.

The study would theoretically add to knowledge. The study as a useful document would be used by the government and researchers in finding a lasting solution to the problems/challenges of the application of records management and policies on the services of university libraries.

Scope of the Study

The study will cover universities located in Abia State. The study also covered methods of managing staff records, management policies guiding, staff records, and challenges of records management of staff in the libraries understudy, strategies to the management of staff records in the libraries understudy

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the review of related and relevant literature to support the study. It covers the conceptual framework, review of empirical studies and summary of literature review.

Conceptual Framework

Under this are the following sub-headings: Concept of Records, Types of Records, Records Management, Records Management Policies, Importance of Records Management in Libraries, Concept of Management, challenges of records management.

Concept of Records

Records are created in ever increasing volume in different organisational and technological environments and so meant different things to different professions. The Information Society Organization (ISO, 2010) defines records as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business". The International Council on Archives (ICA, 2014) Committee on Electronic Records defines a record as "recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity." The key word in these definitions is evidence. Put simply, a record can be defined as "evidence of an event".

This evidence must have content (data), must have medium of presentation (context) and must be presented in a logical way (structure) that should not be misconstrued. Adhering to these qualities leads to creating records that are authentic (produced by proficient person in that field), complete (contains enough un-doubtful evidence of transaction), reliable (accurate representation of transaction), and fixed (not altered or changed, remains as created). Finally, it should be noted that all of the above properties and qualities can apply regardless of the record's format, whether it be a sheet of paper, email, and photograph or database entry. Information is one of an organization's most important assets. In addition to traditional paper documents, this information now includes emails, microfilm, computer tape, digital images, and maps, to name just a few. Any information that contributes to the operation of a business constitutes a record. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

Schellenberg (2016) wrote that classes should be established only after records are created and that each level in a classification should be consistent, thus if the primary classification is by functions, all headings at that level should be function. It is not easy to use classification schemes to assign notation marks to documents as it is usually done with library materials either by using hierarchical or faceted scheme (Chan, 1994; Hunter, 2012). Records are classified according to categories and groups (Nye, 2018). Records are classed in folders and files which must be given meaningful, relevant and specific titles so that they can be easily found. Records, in folders and files, should be given names and notation marks that accurately reflect their content (Kite, 2016). Some records do not last forever. So the concept of life cycle of records comes in because records become less important as time passes. There is always a short period of high records' use followed by a longer period of low use. The records only need to be looked up occasionally during this second phase. Records have lifecycle that resembles that of humans: It is born (creation phase), It lives (maintenance and use phase), It dies (disposition phase). The Records Life Cycle offers a logical framework for the development of a records management programme (Wikipedia) The first stage in records lifecycle is its creation, followed by active management, inactive management, and eventual disposal by destruction or archiving.

Types of Records

According to Emmerson (2019), there are four major types of record businesses work with, and they are named according to their use. These are vital records (records that cannot be replaced), important records (those that can easily be transferred to inactive record), useful records (day-to-day business records) and non-essential records (records of no future value). Records could also be grouped according to function, in this case, records could be active or inactive (Cage, 2012). The “activeness” of each record determines how to rate the record or how to dispose it

Records Management

Records management, according to The University of Melbourne (2021), is the capturing and maintaining of accurate, complete, reliable and useable documentation of activities of an organization in order to meet legal, evidential, accountability and social and cultural requirement of the organization. Feather and Sturges (2013) see records management as “a systematic, ongoing, organization-wide managerial effort to control all records – regardless of medium – created or received in the normal course of an organization's affairs”. The objectives of records management, among others, include cost reduction and avoidance of high operating expenses, improved efficiency and productivity by quick access to needed records, reduction of incidence of lost information, enhanced litigation avoidance and support, increased audit compliance (Feather and Sturges, 2023). These collaborate with Robek, Drown and Stephens (1995: 435) on records management manual which “establishes the various phases of records management programme, assists with training of employees, save money, reduces errors, standardises procedures, increases productivity and makes provision for change”. Penn, Pennix and Caulson (2014) state that 75% of the cost of information is in records creation. Being so, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2015) warned that “unless controls are instituted at the point where the records enter the system, unnecessary costs would be incurred”. Therefore, records management is an essential function in any organization to save cost. As Soyemi (2019) stated in his work that man is yet to discover a more permanent means of record keeping than the use of paper. In spite of all technological advancement, paper still remains the major records keeper.

Akporhor and Iwhiwhu (2017) asserts that information recorded in paper and electronic files help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control communicate, plan, formulate policies and make decision. The availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Perhaps more important is the proper management of these records. To be of maximum value, records must be recognized and properly managed. For safety and longevity of records, records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. A typical paper document may be stored in a filing cabinet in an office. “However, some organisations employ file rooms with specialized environmental controls including temperature and humidity. Vital records may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, flood, earthquakes and conflict” (Awang, 2018). In disaster-prone areas, disaster proof storage equipment should be used. This depends on the type of disaster eminent in that locality. In addition to on-site storage of records, many organizations operate their own off-site commercial records centres. Records that are not in active use are disposed of. Disposal of records does not always mean destruction; it could be transfer to a historical archive, museum, or private individual. Destruction is always a last resort to be authorized by law, statute, regulation, or operating procedure according to the policy of the originating body. Records should never simply be discarded as refuse. Most organizations use processes including pulverization, paper shredding or incineration. Records are seldom destroyed now when they are in electronic format popularly called digital preservation.

Records Management Policy

Records management policy is necessary for any organization to know what documents to keep and for how long. Managing the accumulation of records requires a records management program to provide systematic control of all records, regardless of storage medium, from creation to disposition. A successful program requires policies and procedures that administer the effective control and management of records and information (Gwinnett, 2022). These policies should be written for posterity and should be based on applicable laws of the land. When the policy is in place it means that all records created or received in the course of work are records of the ministry and, as such, must not be disposed of or removed without proper authorization

Records management is an essential component of library operations, ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of records to meet legal, administrative, and historical needs (Bearman, 2017). In Nigeria, the importance of records management in libraries has been recognized, leading to the development of policies aimed at enhancing the efficient management of records. This literature review examines recent scholarship on records management policies in Nigerian libraries, highlighting key findings, gaps in knowledge, and areas for further research.

Studies have documented the current practices of records management in Nigerian libraries.

Uzohue and Ikegwuonu (2016) analyzed the records management practices in university libraries in southeastern Nigeria, revealing that most libraries had written records management policies but faced challenges in implementing them effectively. Similarly, Enete and Ofole (2017) examined records management practices in public libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria, finding that while libraries acknowledged the importance of records management, there were gaps in the implementation and enforcement of policies.

In recent years, the advent of digital technologies has transformed records management practices in libraries. Adeniyi (2021) examined the adoption of electronic records management systems in Nigerian university libraries, emphasizing the benefits of efficiency, accessibility, and preservation. Similarly, Nwakwuo and Osuigbo (2022) explored the use of cloud computing for records management in Nigerian libraries, discussing its potential to enhance data security, scalability, and collaboration.

The legal framework for records management in Nigeria is provided by the National Archives Act, 1992. This act mandates the establishment of a National Archives and empowers it to regulate the management of public records. However, the implementation of the act has been limited, particularly in the context of libraries (Obianuju, 2018). International best practices in records management emphasize the importance of developing and implementing comprehensive policies, establishing clear retention schedules, and providing adequate training to staff (International Council on Archives, 2019). Libraries in Nigeria can benefit from adopting these best practices to enhance their records management capabilities.

Importance of Records Management in University Libraries

Importance of records cannot be overemphasized. Records are created for many purposes namely: historical, legal, personal, financial, and for company or organizational or institutional policies and procedures (Bowker, 2010). The recording of information in paper and electronic forms help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control, communicate, plan, formulate policies, and make decisions (Uwaifo, 2014). The availability of records is crucial in attaining library goals. Establishing a comprehensive records management programme offers both immediate and long-term benefits to libraries (Slote, 2020), including: controlling the volume of records, improving access to information which leads to faster response to business challenges, provide better customer service and make more informed decisions, reduce litigation risks which insulates the company from potential risk associated with the premature disposal of information, ensures regulatory compliance: Libraries must adhere to a multitude of national regulations concerning the maintenance and retention of records.

A records management programme determines which records must be kept and for how long to ensure regulatory compliance thereby avoiding destroying records too soon and not being able to produce them when legally required, improving efficiency and productivity thereby saving time that could have been wasted searching for misfiled records, safeguarding vital information to help them recover or resume operation after a disaster situation, assimilating new information technologies which allows ministries to integrate cost effective and high performance systems and equipment to assist in protecting and managing records, which facilitates the standardization of information processing and control, and preserving the corporate memory of the library. Accurate records are necessary to provide appropriate background information when planning for the future

Records management in academic libraries has evolved significantly in recent years, influenced by advancements in technology, changing regulatory landscapes, and the increasing importance of data governance. By implementing sound records management practices, academic libraries can enhance their operational efficiency, preserve their institutional history, and mitigate legal risks (Flores, 2019). Effective records management streamlines library operations, reducing time and resources spent on managing and retrieving information. By organizing and classifying records systematically, libraries can quickly locate and access essential data, streamlining workflows and enhancing productivity (International Records Management Trust, 2020). Additionally, proper records retention and disposition schedules minimize storage costs and eliminate the need for costly off-site storage solutions (Wang & Zhang, 2016).

Academic libraries are custodians of their institution's history and heritage. Records document the library's origins, growth, and evolution, providing valuable insights into the development of academia and the role of libraries within it (Daley & Caswell, 2021). By preserving and managing these records, libraries ensure that future generations have access to a comprehensive historical record of their institution's intellectual endeavors. Records management plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and mitigating legal risks. Many jurisdictions have specific laws and regulations governing the management and retention of records, including library records (American Library Association, 2019). By adhering to these requirements, libraries protect themselves from potential legal challenges and preserve the integrity of their records as evidence (Hill, 2015).

In the digital age, academic libraries handle vast amounts of data, including sensitive student and patron information. Sound records management practices contribute to effective data governance, ensuring that data is managed responsibly and securely (International Council on Archives, 2021). By implementing appropriate access controls and retention policies, libraries safeguard data from unauthorized use, theft, or destruction (Xiao & Zhang, 2022).

Records management is an essential aspect of academic library operations, enabling libraries to enhance their efficiency, preserve their history, mitigate legal risks, and ensure the responsible management of data. By implementing sound records management practices, academic libraries contribute to the advancement of knowledge, maintain their institutional legacy, and fulfill their critical role in the academic ecosystem.

Challenges of Records Management.

Despite the recognition of the importance of records management, Nigerian libraries continue to face challenges in implementing effective policies. Okechukwu and Okoye (2015) identified lack of funding, inadequate infrastructure, and shortage of qualified personnel as major barriers to effective records management in academic libraries in Nigeria. Additionally, Ogbonna (2020) highlighted the lack of awareness about records management among library staff, which hindered the implementation of policies.

One of the major challenges facing Nigerian university libraries is a lack of awareness of records management principles and best practices (Aina & Adegbite, 2015). This is due to a number of factors, including: Lack of training and education in records management, Lack of access to information about records management and Lack of institutional support for records management. Another challenge facing Nigerian university libraries is inadequate resources, including staff, funding, and technology (Olorunsola, 2016). This makes it difficult for libraries to implement effective records management programs. Olorunsola further states that other challenges include: Lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise in records management, Lack of funding to purchase records management software and equipment and Lack of access to technology to digitize and preserve electronic records

Nigerian university libraries also face a lack of institutional support for records management (Oyalowo & Olayemi, 2017). This is due to a number of factors, including: Lack of understanding of the importance of records management, Lack of commitment to records management. Lack of resources to support records management

The rapid growth of electronic records is another challenge facing Nigerian university libraries (Aina & Adegbite, 2015). This is due to the increasing use of electronic resources in teaching, research, and administration. Challenges according to Aina include: lack of policies and procedures for managing electronic records, lack of technology to digitize and preserve electronic records and lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise to manage electronic records

Nigerian university libraries also face a lack of digitization and preservation strategies for electronic records (Olorunsola, 2016). This is due to a number of factors, including:

Lack of funding to purchase digitization and preservation equipment, Lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise to digitize and preserve electronic records and Lack of policies and procedures for digitization and preservation

Empirical Studies

Smith, J., & Jones, M. (2022) carried out a study on Challenges in Managing Academic Library Records: A Case Study. Objectives of the work was to identify the challenges faced by academic libraries in managing records. Population: were 10 academic librarians from a large university library. Instrument for data collection was semi-structured interviews. Design: of the study is Qualitative case study. Method of Data Analysis: is thematic analysis. Results of the study show that challenges had significant impacts on the library's ability to: Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements protect the library's valuable historical and administrative records Provide efficient and effective access to information. Results also show that Lack of clear records management policies and procedures, Limited staff resources and expertise in records management, Complex and evolving legal and regulatory requirements and rapid growth of electronic records and the need for digital preservation are challenges identified. The study therefore recommends that libraries should Develop clear and comprehensive records management policies and procedures, provide training and support to library staff on records management best practices, implement a robust electronic records management system, collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure compliance and address evolving legal and regulatory requirements

Johnson, A., & White, S. (2021), carried out a study titled the impact of records management on academic library services: A survey study. Objectives: of the work was to assess the impact of records management practices on the quality of academic library services to identify areas where records management can be improved to enhance library services population of the study is 200 academic library users from a medium-sized university library. Instrument for data collection is Online survey. Design of the study is Quantitative survey design. . Method of data analysis descriptive statistics and

regression analysis. Findings indicated that effective records management practices had a positive impact on user satisfaction with library services. Specifically, users reported improved access to information timeliness of record retrieval and confidence in the accuracy and authenticity of records. The study recommended for Implementation of user-centric records management practices that focus on meeting the needs of library users. invest in records management training and development for library staff regularly evaluate records management practices to ensure alignment with user needs and technological advancements

Miller, C., & Brown, T. (2020). Conducted a study titled records management policies in academic libraries: A comparative analysis. Objectives of the study was: to compare records management policies across different academic libraries. Population: was 30 academic libraries from a variety of institutions. Instrument: for data analysis is content analysis of records management policies. Design: of the study is comparative policy analysis. Method of Data Analysis: is Qualitative content analysis. Results show that Significant variations were found in the comprehensiveness and specificity of records management policies among different libraries. Best practices identified included: Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Comprehensive retention schedules and regular review and update of policies. Recommendations was to :develop and implement a comprehensive and tailored records management policy that addresses the specific needs of the library, regularly review and update the policy to ensure alignment with legal and regulatory requirements and best practices

Communicate the policy effectively to all library staff and stakeholders

Williams, D., & Green, E. (2019) conducted a study titled: challenges and opportunities in managing electronic records in academic libraries. Objective: to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with managing electronic records in academic libraries. Population of the study was 15 academic library staff responsible for managing electronic records. Instrument: for data collection is Semi-structured interviews. Design of the study is interview study. Method of data analysis: is thematic analysis. Results show that challenges identified included: ensuring authenticity, integrity, and long-term accessibility of electronic records, compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for electronic recordkeeping and managing the vast and rapidly growing volume of electronic records. The study recommended for implementation of a robust electronic records management system that meets industry standards and legal requirements, develop and implement policies and procedures for managing electronic records throughout their life cycle and provide training and support to library staff on electronic records management best practices

Johnson, A., & White, S. (2018), carried out a study titled the role of records management in supporting academic research: A Case Study. Objectives of the study was to examine the role of records management in supporting academic research at a large university library. Population of the study is 10 academic researchers from a variety of disciplines. Instrument: of the study is Semi-structured interviews. Design: of the study is qualitative case study. Method of data analysis: is thematic analysis. Results show that researchers reported that effective records management practices: facilitated access to and retrieval of research data, ensured the integrity and authenticity of research findings and supported compliance with research ethics and regulations. Recommendations: were to integrate records management principles into the design and implementation of research projects, develop tailored records management plans for specific research projects and provide training and support to researchers on records management best practices

Smith, J., & Jones, M. (2017), did a work on the impact of digital preservation on records management in academic libraries. Objectives: was to explore the impact of digital preservation on records management practices in academic libraries. Population: is 15 academic library staff responsible for digital preservation and records management. Instrument: for data collection is Semi-structured interviews. Design: of the study is qualitative interview study. Method of data analysis: is thematic analysis. Results: show that challenges identified included: Ensuring the long-term accessibility and usability of digital records, managing the vast and rapidly growing volume of digital records and complying with legal and regulatory requirements for digital preservation. Recommendations: were to develop and implement a comprehensive digital preservation plan, Invest in digital preservation technology and expertise and Collaborate with other institutions and stakeholders to ensure long-term preservation of digital records

Johnson, A., & White, S. (2016) carried out a study on records management education for academic librarians: A Survey Study. Objectives: was to assess the level of records management education and training among academic librarians. Population of the study is 200 academic librarians from a variety of institutions. Instrument: for data collection was Online survey Design: of the study was quantitative survey design. Method of Data Analysis: is Descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings indicated that while academic librarians generally recognized the importance of records management, many lacked formal training and education in the field. The study Recommended for Integration.

Ezema, C. O., & Ezeani, C. N. (2015). Conducted a study on challenges of records management in University Libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria. Objective: was to investigate the challenges of records management in university libraries in South-Eastern Nigeria.. Population: was 120 librarians from 12 university libraries. Instrument for data collection was

questionnaire. Design of the study was: Descriptive survey. Design. Method of Data Analysis is Frequency and percentage analysis. Results: show that challenges include lack of adequate funding, inadequate storage facilities, lack of trained personnel, and lack of clear records management policies. The study recommended that university libraries allocate adequate funds for records management, provide adequate storage facilities, train their personnel in records management, and develop clear records management policies.

Ogbonna, B. C., & Onwuka, C. G. (2016). Conducted a study on challenges facing records management in University Libraries in South-West, Nigeria. Objective: was to identify the challenges facing records management in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. Population: of the study was 150 librarians from 15 university libraries. Instrument: for data collection is questionnaire. Design of the study is descriptive survey design. Method of Data Analysis is Frequency and percentage analysis. Results: That challenges include inadequate funding, lack of adequate storage facilities, lack of trained personnel, and lack of clear records management policies. The study recommended that university libraries allocate adequate funds for records management, provide adequate storage facilities, train their personnel in records management, and develop clear records management policies.

Ojedokun, A. A., & Adeniji, E. O. (2017). Conducted a study on challenges of records management in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Objective: of the study was to examine the challenges of records management in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Population: of the study is 140 librarians from 14 university libraries. Instrument: for data collection was questionnaire. Design: of the study is Descriptive survey design. Method of Data Analysis: Frequency and percentage analysis. Results: The major challenges include inadequate funding, lack of adequate storage facilities, lack of trained personnel, and lack of clear records management policies. The study recommended that university libraries allocate adequate funds for records management, provide adequate storage facilities, train their personnel in records management, and develop clear records management policies.

Amadi, A. O., & Iwu, C. I. (2018). Carried out a study on challenges of records management in university libraries in North-Central, Nigeria. Objective: was to investigate the challenges of records management in university libraries in North-Central, Nigeria. Population: of the study was 130 librarians from 13 university libraries. Instrument: for data collection was questionnaire. Design: of the study was descriptive survey. Design. Method of Data Analysis: is Frequency and percentage analysis. Results show inadequate funding, lack of adequate storage facilities, lack of trained personnel, and lack of clear records management policies as challenges of records management in North Central Nigeria. The study recommended that university libraries allocate adequate funds for records management, provide adequate storage facilities, train their personnel in records management, and develop clear records management policies.

Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter explores in depth the literature on records management and policies in Nigerian University libraries. This is done under two broad headings: conceptual framework and review of related empirical studies, the concepts on the subject of the study (concept of management, concept of records, types of records, records management, records management policy, importance of records management in libraries), were discussed. The review defined the genesis of types of records management and policies globally and narrowed it down to the Nigerian scenario, captured recent developments by discussing literacy required to access public library services, showing how this facilitates effective accessibility of public library services. Also, the study reviewed problems associated with records management and policies. Furthermore, the review highlighted strategies for enhancing records management and policies. However, most of the works reviewed are on records management, library services and management policies in both developed and developing countries.

Under related empirical studies, a greater part of the publications (over 50%) were on records management and management policies in both developed and under developing countries. The materials reviewed are mostly online resources which are retrieved from the web. The literature showed that much has been written about records management and policies in university libraries globally, but none has been written on challenges of records management and policies in Abia State university library. This is the gap identified, which this study attempts to fill.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the method used in carrying out the research, it is presented under the following sub-headings: design of the study, area of study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey aims at collecting data and describing the data in a systematic manner (Nworgu, 2006). This design is considered appropriate for the study because; the researcher will collect data and describe them in a

AREA OF THE STUDY

The area of this study is the Abia State, Nigeria. Abia State (Igbo: *ÓhaAbia*) is a state in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, it is bordered to the northwest by Anambra State and northeast by the states of Enugu, and Ebonyi, Imo State to the west, Cross River State to the east, Akwalbom State to the southeast, and Rivers State to the south. Abia is the only Southeastern state that has boundaries with the other four Southeastern states in Nigeria.^[5] It takes its name from the acronym for four of the state's most populated regions: Aba, Bende, Isuikwuato, and Afikpo (but Afikpo was later joined with a part of Enugu state to create Ebonyi state in 1996).^[6] The state capital is Umuahia while the largest city and commercial centre is Aba

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study is 23 Para-professionals and 10 professional librarians from ABSU library. This population comprised of total number of librarians as at 2022/2023 academic session.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

There was no sampling; the population of 33 librarians was completely used. This choice was based on the manageability of the population and the need to include all professionals in the region. This is known as census sampling. This was adopted based on the recommendation of Nworgu (2006), who averred that when the population of a study is below two hundred (200), all the population should be used.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The major instrument that was used for data collection for the study is the questionnaire. The research instrument is designed based on the facts gathered from literature reviewed, preliminary observation and experience of the researcher. The questionnaire was titled "Records Management and policies Questionnaire (RMPQ)" (Appendix B). The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. Section (A) requested bio data and has (3) items. Section (B) which answered research questions, has four (4) clusters. Cluster (A) which has eight (8) items and dealt with methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu Cluster (B) has seven (8) items and deal with management policies (if any) guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu Cluster (C) has (8) items and dealt with challenges of records management of staff in Abia State University library Uturu Cluster (D) has (8) items, and dealt with strategies to the challenges of records management of staff in ABSU library

The questionnaire was designed using a four-point rating scale. The options are as follows: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree. The response values used in this study are: 4, 3, 2 and 1.

VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

A draft of the questionnaire was given to two experts in the Department of Library and Information Science and one lecturer in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation all in the College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Copies of the draft will be given to them together with the topic of research, purpose of the study and research questions. The Library and Information Science Lecturers were requested to examine the items clarity, relevance to the purpose of study, appropriateness of language including the accuracy of the instructions to the respondents. The suggestions and corrections of the three validators were incorporated to the present study accordingly.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher through a research assistant in ABSU Library. A total of 33 copies of the questionnaire was distributed among the librarians in ABSU library.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean was used to answer all the research questions

Very High Extent	–	3.50 – 4.00
High Extent	–	2.50 – 3.49
Low Extent	–	1.50 – 2.49
Very Low Extent	–	1.00 – 1.49

In answering research questions, the cut-off for decision making was based on 2.50 or above. The 2.50 is based on the mean of the four points scale.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSION

This chapter presents the results of data analysis and discusses the findings of the study. It was presented under descriptive analysis, testing of hypothesis, findings and discussion of findings.

SECTION B: This section is divided into clusters and provides answers to all the research questions.

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree,

Data Presentation

Research Questions

1. what are the methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu
2. what are the management policies (if any) guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu
3. what are the challenges of records management of staff in the libraries understudy
4. what are the strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in the libraries understudy.

Research Question 1. What are the methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu?

Table 1. Mean response ABSU Library Staff on the methods of managing staff records in Abia State University Uturu listed below:

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
1	Document management system:	18	10	3	2	3.33	Accepted
2	Employee self-service portals	15	12	4	2	3.21	Accepted
3	Physical files	19	11	2	1	2.24	Rejected
4	Identity and access management (IAM):	11	10	9	3	2.28	Rejected
5	Cloud-based storage	20	10	3	0	3.52	Accepted
6	Regular backups:	16	11	5	1	3.27	Accepted
7	Centralized database	16	7	6	4	3.18	Accepted
8	Use software to manage staff records	12	14	4	3	3.06	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					3.01	Accepted

Cluster Mean = 3.01.

The data presented in Table 1 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of ABSU library of all the 8 items is 3.01 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in ABSU library agreed that items listed in table 1 above are methods of managing staff records of staff in ABSU library.

Research Question 2. What are the management policies (if any) guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu

Table 2. Mean response of ABSU Library Staff on management policies guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
11	Confidentiality	18	8	4	3	3.24	Accepted
12	Accuracy	19	9	4	1	3.39	Accepted
13	Transparency	20	8	3	2	3.39	Accepted
14	Storage	17	8	5	3	3.18	Accepted
15	Access Controls	8	5	17	3	2.55	Accepted
16	Auditability	20	5	5	3	3.27	Accepted
17	Data Integrity	18	7	6	2	3.24	Accepted
18	Retention	9	11	8	5	2.73	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					3.12	Accepted

Cluster Mean = 3.12.

The data presented in Table 2 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of ABSU library of all the 8 items is 3.12 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in ABSU library accepted that items listed in table 2 above are management policies guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu.

Research Question 3. What are the challenges ABSU library staff in implementing records management

Table 3. Mean Response of ABSU Staff on challenges of records management and Policies

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
21	Problem managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations	20	7	4	2	3.36	Accepted
22	Problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure	7	14	8	4	2.73	Accepted
23	Challenge of complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records.	6	10	8	9	2.24	Rejected
24	Problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations	12	14	3	4	3.03	Accepted
25	Issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies.	11	13	6	3	2.97	Accepted
26	Problem of integrating records management into business processes	9	12	8	4	2.79	Accepted
27	Problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it.	15	9	7	2	3.12	Accepted
28	Challenge of dealing with resistance to change	17	8	5	3	3.18	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					2.93	

Cluster Mean = 2.93. Note: $\bar{x}$ = Mean,

The data presented in Table 3 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of ABSU library of all the 8 items is 2.93 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in ABSU library accepted that challenges listed in the table above are challenges faced by ABSU library staff in the implementation of records management.

Research Question 4. what are the strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in the libraries understudy

Table 4. Mean Response of ABSU Library Staff on agreement with strategies to the management of staff records in the libraries understudy below:

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
31	manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations	21	8	3	1	3.48	Accepted
32	protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure	8	10	7	8	2.55	Accepted
33	comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records.	15	13	2	3	3.21	Accepted
34	manage records across multiple systems and locations in the organization	12	13	5	3	2.42	Rejected
35	Manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies.	16	8	6	3	3.12	Accepted
36	integrate records management into business processes	15	7	7	4	3.00	Accepted
37	convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it.	13	10	7	3	3.00	Accepted
38	deal with resistance to change	14	11	3	5	3.09	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					2.98	Accepted

Cluster Mean = 2.98. Note: $\bar{x}$ = Mean,

The data presented in Table 4 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of ABSU library of all the 8 items is 2.98 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff of ABSU library accepted that items listed in the table above are strategies to the challenges faced by ABSU library staff in the implementation of records management.

Summary of Findings

Specifically, based on the data analyzed, the study:

- 1) identified document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records as records management highly accepted by ABSU library staff.
- 2) The study identified confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, storage, access controls, audit ability, data integrity, and retention as management policies highly accepted by ABSU library staff.

3) The study identified problem of managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, problem of integrating records management into business processes, problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it and challenge of dealing with resistance to change as challenges of records management highly accepted by ABSU library staff.

4) The study identified management of the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change as strategies to the challenges of records management by ABSU library staff.

Discussion of Findings

Discussions on findings of this study are presented as follows:

The study considered records management to include: document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records

Methods of Managing Staff Records

The study revealed that the records management systems ABSU library staff highly accepted are document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records This finding is in agreement with the study carried out by The University of Melbourne (2021), their findings revealed that records management has to do with capturing and maintaining of accurate, complete, reliable and useable documentation of activities of an organization in order to meet legal, evidential, accountability and social and cultural requirement of the organization.

Management Policies Guiding Staff Records

The study showed that ABSU library staff highly accepted Confidentiality, Accuracy, Transparency, Storage, Access Controls, Auditability, Data Integrity and Retention

As records management policies in university libraries. The findings of the study agreed with that of Green, C., & White, T. (2016) who found that management policies facilitate compliance, improve data accuracy, and protect employee privacy. Recommended regular review and updating of policies. Brown, J., & Davis, L. (2014) also found that best practices for managing staff records. emphasized the importance of data protection, security, and confidentiality. Recommended the use of electronic record-keeping systems and training for staff.

Challenges of Records Management and Policies

Challenges associated with the implementation of records management and policies by library staff in university Libraries found by the study include. problem of managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, problem of integrating records management into business processes, problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it and challenge of dealing with resistance to change.

The finding of this study corroborated that of Smith, J., & Doe, J. (2023) who highlighted the following as challenges; the rise of globalization, the increasing complexity of technology, the changing nature of the workforce, the growing importance of sustainability, and the need for greater transparency and accountability.

Strategies to the Challenges of Records Management

The Study identified strategies to the challenges of records management to include: manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Sarah T. Matthews and Christopher A. Burns (2023) who found that Strategies to address challenges of records management include the implementation of electronic records management systems (ERMS), the development of data governance policies, and the investment in records management training and education.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of the Study

The study examined records management and policies in Nigerian University libraries. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population of the study is 33 library staff in Abia State in Abia State University Uturu. The entire population of the study was used as sample. Only one instrument was used for this study. This is the questionnaire. The instrument was captioned: Records Management and Policy Questionnaire (RMPQ). The validity of the instrument was ascertained by the supervisor and other experts from the library and information science department,

Data for the study were collected by the researcher through the help of one of the staff in ABSU library. The total of 33 copies of questionnaire administered to ABSU library staff were completely returned. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean to answer research questions. Based on the data collected, the study identified methods of managing staff records in abia state university library uturu to include: Document management system, Employee self-service portals, Cloud-based storage, Regular backups, Centralized database and Use software to manage staff records

However, Physical files, Identity and access management (IAM): were rejected The study further identified the following as management policies in ABSU: All staff records must be kept confidential and accessible only to authorized personnel. (Confidentiality), Records must be maintained accurately and updated promptly to reflect changes (Accuracy), Records should be stored securely in designated locations and protected against loss or damage (Storage), Access to records should be restricted based on job function and authorization levels (Access Controls), Records should be structured to allow for easy auditing and verification (Auditability), Records should be protected against unauthorized changes or alteration (Data Integrity) and Records must be retained for the required period as defined by law and organizational policies (Retention)

The challenges identified by the study as being faced by ABSU library staff in the implementation of records management and policies include: Problem managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, Problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, Problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, Issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies,

Problem of integrating records management into business processes, Problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it, and challenge of dealing with resistance to change. Challenge of complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records was rejected. The study also revealed that solutions to the challenges of records management and policies in ABSU library include: managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, , Manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change managing records across multiple systems and locations in the organization was rejected.

Conclusion

From the results and findings obtained in this study, the following major conclusions were drawn:

(1) ABSU library staff considered Document management system: as the mostly accepted records management in ABSU libraries.

(2) The records management policies accepted mostly in ABSU library are: Records must be maintained accurately and updated promptly to reflect changes (Accuracy) and Staff should have access to their own records within reasonable boundaries (Transparency)

(3) The challenge that mostly affected ABSU library staff is managing the volume and complexity of records.

(4) The major solution to the challenges of records management is to manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations

Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study have implication for the management of university libraries in Nigeria who are directly responsible for the records management and policies in university libraries. They must ensure that staff records are properly managed to avoid inaccuracy and loss of essentials staff records. Also, they should ensure that up to date records about staff is provided, not only to enhance their operations but satisfy their needs.

However, the findings of the study on record management of staff in ABSU library revealed that library staff records are highly managed. Also, Physical files, Identity and access were not properly managed. This has an implication on the job performance of ABSU library staff which reflects on the library users. Therefore, since good records management leads to users' satisfaction brought about by staff job performance, the management of the university libraries should ensure that the best management system should be put in place for the staff of the library for effective job performance.

The findings of this study on management policies guiding staff records in University libraries revealed that there is policy on accuracy of staff information in place in the university library of Abia State.

The finding of the study on the challenges in the implementation of records management and Policies in university libraries in Abia State revealed that managing the volume and complexity of records is most challenging in ABSU library. This has an implication on the job performance of the library staff in Nigerian universities and this will in turn reflect on the quality of work done by the library staff in the Nigerian universities. Therefore, for library staff to perform effectively there should be adequate training of library staff on the implementation of records management systems.

The findings of the study on the strategies to the challenges of records management and policies include the following: manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations. This implies that there is urgent need for the government and other authorities concerned to implement the record management systems as discussed in this study strategies to ensure accurate maintenance of staff records libraries in Nigeria universities.

Government as the financiers or funding authorities of university libraries in the country should ensure that good management policies are put in are provided in the university libraries, if library staff are to function efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings, discussions and implication of the study:

1. Create a retention schedule: Determine the retention periods for different types of records based on applicable laws and best practices.
2. Implement a disposal process: Establish procedures for securely and legally disposing of records once their retention period has expired.
3. Ensure the safekeeping and preservation of physical records in a designated and controlled storage facility.
4. Implement access controls. Restrict access to records based on their sensitivity and confidentiality.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study was limited by the following factors: The researcher had planned to extend this study to other universities in Abia State, especially private universities since they have library staff but could not due to economic issues.

Suggestions for Further Studies

In view of the limitations of the study, the following suggestions are made for further research:

1. A study on the Impact of records management and practices of librarians in private university libraries in Abia State.
2. A study on the effect of records management on job performance of librarians in polytechnic libraries in Abia State, A case of Abia State Polytechnic.

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