

Full Length Research

Information Management Practices and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria

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Accepted 22 April 2026

The general objective of the study is to investigate the information management practices and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. The survey research design was used for the study. The research constructed two research questions which were analyzed based on mean differentials. The research adopted proportionate and simple random sampling techniques to investigate a sample of 226 from the population of 543 staff in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire with a reliability co-efficient of 0.78% was used to collect data for this study. Findings showed that organization of information has significant relationship with staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria (χ^2 cal = 77.416 \geq χ^2 tab = 21.03) and information management policy and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria (χ^2 cal=62.135 \geq χ^2 ta =21.03). The research concludes that since information management practices contribute to staff job efficiency, libraries should sustain such practices and improve on them. This study therefore, recommends that, for effective organization of information, there is need to integrate cross-functional strategies, and investment in organization of information should be guided by both intelligence techniques and business strategy and needs. That information management policy should determine if information contains ideas that will be valuable and useful to the staff. The study further recommends provision of current and relevant information instead of multiple choice of information and unauthentic information.

Keywords: Information Management Practices, organization of Information, Information Management Policy, Staff Performance, Polytechnic Libraries

Cite This Article As: Unegbu, MC., Ukah, GO (2026). Information Management Practices and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci. 14(3): 180-187

INTRODUCTION

Information management Practices (IMP) is the collection and management of information from one or more sources and the distribution of that information to those who have right to it (Robertson, 2005). The management as used in this context means the organization of and control over the structure, the processes and the delivery of information. Ravi (2017) considers information management practices as the systematic imaginative and responsible management of information in order to create and use information that will contribute strategically to the achievement of an organization's

goals and make sure that groups and individuals have efficient access to and make effective use of the information, they need to do their work and to develop themselves. Information management involves a continuous cycle of closely related activities such as identification of information needs, acquisition and creation of information, analysis and interpretation of information, organization and storage of information, information access and dissemination and information use (Robertson, 2005).

Maceviciute and Wilson (2002) define information management practices to include developing and implementing information policy and strategy; data creation and management; processing, storage and information delivery; and information usage. Effective information management combines technological innovations and intelligent processes to deliver cost effective information compliance and data protection. This suggests using the information technology and other accessories to create, organize, store, process and distribute information to those who have to use them for the achievement of organizational objectives (Ravi 2017). Robertson (2005) states that information management practices can be viewed from both technical and management points of view; technically, information management includes all systems and processes such as web content management, document management, records management, digital asset management, learning management systems, enterprise search (the technical infrastructure) used to support the information management programmes. The author views information management practices as the organizational, social, cultural and strategic factors that must be considered in order to improve information in organizations. This stresses the importance of managerial and technical roles in any effective information management programme.

Reddy, Srinivasu, Rikkula, and Rao (2017) posit that information management practices is a corporate responsibility that needs to be addressed and followed from the top-level managers to the lower-level employees to ensure effective and efficient creation, storage, processing and distribution of information to support operations and other decision-making activities in an organization, be it digital or otherwise. Weintraub, Owens and Jedinak (2013) have underscored the importance of information management practices in the achievement of organizational goals. The strategic role of information management in giving a company major advantage over the competition it faces in the local and global marketplace cannot be overemphasized. Creating strategic information requires that the manager understands the entire firm and its relationships with external agents in the environment such as suppliers, consumers, workers, and rivals. According to Laudon and Laudon (2010), a firm can succeed if it can develop strategies to confront five competitive forces that shape the structure of its industry. The competitive forces are competitors' rivalry, threat of new competitors, customers' bargaining power, the availability of substitute products or services and suppliers' bargaining power (Meriel, 2010).

It is argued that businesses can counter the threats of competitive forces that they face by implementing five basic competitive strategies provided by information management, which include cost leadership, product differentiation, innovation, growth and alliances (O' Brien and Marakas, 2008). Furthermore, information management practice has the objective of processing recorded information and distributing them to all users as efficiently as possible to ensure that the value of information is identified and exploited to achieve the fullest benefits. To be able to achieve these objectives, information needs to be managed like all other resources. Saloojee, Groenewald and Dutoit (2017) argue that the main idea underlying information management practice is that as organizations purposefully and systematically manage their other resources such as financial and human resources, they should do likewise for their information resources and processes. That is to say, all the classical function of managing organizational resources must be applied to information management as well. These managerial functions include defining informational goals, providing leadership, developing informational policies, allocating appropriate resources, training staff, and evaluating information and providing feedback (Henczel, 2000).

Library must therefore, be responsible for holding their staff accountable to capture, manage, store, share, preserve and deliver information appropriately and responsibly. Information management practice is very important in the achievement of organizational objectives (Otike, 2016). Robertson (2005) categorizes the evolution of information management into traditional era and technical era. The traditional era covers the period in which information was managed manually, using human brains and hands, cabinets, papers and pen or pencils. On the other hand, the technological era is the period in which information technology is introduced into the management of information programmes to address some of the inherent problems of the manual system. Effective information management involves three activities: planning methods; control procedures and organizational arrangements. This stresses the importance of management functions (planning, organizing, leading and controlling) in any information management programmes.

According to Curras (2006), information management practices refer to series of steps that can be taken to identify key activities in the management of information in an organization such as a library. The author further identifies information management practice steps as identification of required as well as available information, information capture, organizing scattered information to create information assets, sharing of information/knowledge for planning, budgeting and bringing about better results. Nzelum and Unegbu (2016) state that information management practices are a process that helps organizations find, select, organize, disseminate and transfer important information and expertise necessary for activities such as problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning and decision-making. From the preceding,

information management practices have become critical in information provision, dissemination, and use. However, its extent of practice varies among people of varied professions, groups and interest. There is at present no known documented empirical evidence on information management practices and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-East and South-South, Nigeria. The implication of this is that any idea or thought of information management practices and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria is speculative and needs investigation. This is the gap in knowledge which the study intends to fill.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. How does organization of information affect staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. How does information policy affect staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Literature Review

The term organization has been logically used in four deferent forms: as a process, as a structure of relationship, as a group of persons with a common purpose and as a system. An organization is viewed as a structural process for utilization of information accomplishes various set objectives (Hassard and Denis, 1990). In another form, organization refers to structure of relationship among people and their responsibilities, which is to achieve certain objectives. Organization is viewed as a group of persons contributing their efforts towards certain goals. Organization begins when people combine their efforts for some common purposes (Afolabi, 1991). Organization could be seen as the arrangement of activities in such a way that they systematically contribute to the achievement of the organizational goal (Evans, 2015). Information organization in this study refers to the way information is arranged, to ensure that it is made available and accessible to the users. It comprises those factors, units or elements with definite responsibilities which individually and collectively contribute to effective information innovation and delivery, and at the same time led to user's satisfaction. These tasks have been identified as broad tasks which contain tangible elements of information organization that have implications across areas of information research including retrieval, interaction and personal information management. Information organization process can involve the assignment of contextual metadata to documents, structuring of information objects via some document models, creation of new documents, which serve specific roles or creation of abstracted structure including index, database and data objects.

Scott (1992) posits that Organization is viewed as system with people, facilities, processes and objectives. The system concept recognizes that organization is made up of components, each of which has unique properties, capabilities and mutual relationships. The constituent elements of an organization link together in such complex ways that actions taken by one unit have far reaching effect on others in their efforts toward attainment of goals. Information organization is essential for day-today operations for information seekers. With good organization, the patrons are provided with timely, appropriate and useful information in their different fields of specialization. This is because, universities in Nigeria have developed rapidly in academic achievement (NUC, 2004). Organization of information makes users to succeed in carrying out independent research. Scott (1992) notes that the concept of organization of information is an effective and complex process, which involves environment with complex human behaviours, namely, cognitive, economic, political/managerial, task culture and physical aspects of life, technologies and social structures, which exist within and respond to an environment. In the information/management system, a library organizes information to users and obtains feedback to know whether the organized information satisfy their needs based on their determinations and importance of the information to them; in the cognitive system, the library organizes the accurate information for clientele to understand (be informed), acquire and utilize new knowledge, which links back to the providers of the services to know how accurate the information services are.

In the economic system, the library organizes and supplies information according to programme and user's demand for quality, timely and valuable information. The social structure is concerned with staff/user relationship; while the task structure consists of all the services with procedures, schemes according to standards of library activities. In the physical structure, there are facilities and materials (e.g., buildings, desks, books, films, shelves, furniture, etc.) in addition to information and communication technologies, examples, computers/internet, e-mail, websites) and others. The author concludes that each system is dominated by the environment for provision of information, organizing of information according to values, preferences of users, knowledge of users and organizing of alternative sources of information. Information/managerial, cognitive and economic structures infuse with the other circles of social structure, technologies, task culture, and physical structures with due processes. In this regard, information organization becomes

necessary in human association in order to facilitate information provision and attainment of a common purpose and development.

Almutairi (2011) conducted a study on factors influencing the organization of information in the Kuwaiti civil service. The study sought to evaluate the impact of personal and professional factors on public sector managers' information behaviour. Descriptive survey design using questionnaire was used for the study with 200 personnel as sample size. The result of the study identified lack of organization of information as the key variables that make a difference in job performance of managers. A similar study was conducted by Kahraman, Kaya and Cevikcan (2015) on the intelligence decision systems in enterprise organization of information in Turkey using correlation research design with a population of 7,567 staff, out of which 1,260 staff were randomly selected as sample. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The study identified intelligence technique as a new tool for organization of information. Intelligence technique was defined as systems that support decision making by gathering, analyzing and diagnosing problems, proposing possible causes of actions as well as evaluating the proposed actions. The study emphasized that for effective information organization, there is the need to integrate cross-functional strategies, and investment in organization of information should be guided by both intelligence techniques and business strategy and needs. Meriel (2010) used various ideas, concepts and research findings that have practical relevance for personal information to evaluate how individuals typically organize their information. The study was correlation design and 483 workers were chosen. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The results of the study indicate that information that is organized may serve three distinct purposes, namely easy records retrieval, reminds users on tasks that need to be done and represents the users' understanding of information items and how they relate to each other. The review further stresses the pivotal and vital role played by information management in improving organizational performance.

Information management policy is crucial for the effective and efficiency operations of nations and organizations. There are different information policies but they all have the aim of guiding how information should be managed. The national information policy is broad and other information policies can be derived from it. James (2016) asserts that good policy with regard to the building of the information society must not rely only on sufficient technical and material resources and skills, but also be coherent with other societal policies. Thus, an information policy is not formulated and implemented in vacuum. It also has to be aligned with other policies. Policy is asset of principles guiding decision-making. It provides a framework against which proposals or activities can be tested and progress measured (Spasoff, 2016). Ideally, a policy contains a definition of the problem being addressed, a statement of goals (the desired state of affairs), and at least the broad outline of the instruments (approaches and activities) by which the goals are to be achieved. In actual practice, policymaking is part of decision making in that policies emanate from the original decisions and become general statements or understandings that channel thinking in future decision making. Policies, while they are usually expressed in positive terms, are essentially limiting in nature since they dictate courses of action and are aimed at preventing deviation from that norm (Stueart and Moran, 2014).

Koontz and O'Donnell (2015) define policy as a general statement or understanding that guide thinking in decision making. According to Orna (2014), information management policy can mean prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs; a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives; a high-level overall plan embracing general goals and acceptable procedures. In the information and records management context, policy is what gives the lowest level file clerk the authority to deny a senior colleague access to certain categories of classified information or records. Just as the effective use of financial and human resources requires the establishment of financial and human resources policies, so also is the use of information resources requires a broad set of information policies. The terms information management policy and planning are sometimes used interchangeably, but this marks some of the harder questions that may have to be addressed in policymaking (Roper and Williams, 2015). Information policies incorporate national information policy, ICT, library, collection development policies and records management policies. Information management policy determines the kind of information to be created, acquired, collected, organized, stored, accessed, disseminated, used, retained and reused. It indicates the authorized people to use the information, whether it is free information or is not for free. It indicates where that information can be obtained and how. BCLA (2013) posits that information policy also establishes the rules within which private information providers and the media operate. The author further states that information policy includes the following areas: literacy, privatization and distribution of government, information, freedom of information access, protection of personal privacy, intellectual property rights, retention of archival copies of material and information rights. The term information management policy has been used to refer to policy initiatives that promote the use of tools and concepts associated with global information society with a view to realizing their potential in achieving national, social and economic development goals. This means that information policy approaches differ from country to country (James, 2016). Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) conducted a study on information management policy and employee productivity: a case study of community banks in the Upper East region of Ghana. The study used 80 questionnaires with descriptive survey design using hypothesis. It emerged from the study that some of the respondents were of the view that information management policy does not enhance positive impact on productivity while major of the respondents were of the view that information management policy, is the best and has positive impact on

productivity.

Yasodara and Weerakody (2016) in their study on impact of information management policy, reward management on job performance: mediation of job satisfaction: a case of private banks in Sri Lanka. It was a descriptive survey research design and 311 employees in private banks in Sri Lanka. The impact of information management policy, reward management on job performance was significant and partial mediation of job satisfaction on the above relationships was found out.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a questionnaire used as the primary instrument for data collection. The instrument, titled "information management practices and staff performance" (**IMPSPQ**), was administered to polytechnic library staff in the South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria.

The South-East Nigeria is one of the six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria comprising Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State. The South-east zone of Nigeria has a total population of sixteen million, three hundred and ninety-five thousand, five hundred and fifty-five (16,395,555) people with a growth rate of about 2.8% (Federal Government of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2007). Geographically the South-East, Nigeria is situated towards the Southern coast of Nigeria. It is bounded on the East by Cross River State West, Delta State; North, Kogi State, South, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States (Uya and Uchendu, 1999). The geo-political zone is acknowledged as one of the comparatively educationally advanced areas in Nigeria. The South-East, Nigeria has a total number of six (6) government owned polytechnic libraries, out of these, three (3) are federal government owned polytechnic while three are also state-owned polytechnic. They are; Abia State Polytechnic (AB1A POLY) Aba. Imo State Polytechnic (IMOPOLY) Umuagwo, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri (FPNO), Federal Polytechnic Oko (FPO) Anambra State, Akanu-Ibiam Federal Polytechnic (AIFP) Uwani and Institute of Management technology Enugu (IMT) Enugu.

The South-South zone comprises six states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. It is geographically bordered to the north by Kogi, Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, and Benue states, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the east by the Republic of Cameroon, and to the west by Ondo State. The zone experiences both wet and dry seasons, with favourable temperatures, and is characterized by a network of rivers, streams, and creeks including the Niger, Imo, Qua Iboe, and Cross Rivers. Major economic activities include farming, fishing, and industries such as food processing, palm and kernel processing, petroleum refining, cement production, and boat building (Uya & Uchendu, 1999). The South-South zone has a total of eleven government-owned polytechnic libraries, comprising four federal and seven state-owned institutions. These include: Federal Polytechnic Ikom (FPI), Cross River State Polytechnic Calabar (CRSPOLY), Federal Polytechnic Ukana (EPU), Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic Ikot Ekpene (AKPOLY), Federal Polytechnic Ekeowe (FPE), Bayelsa State Polytechnic Olebiri (BYSPOLY), Delta State Polytechnic Oghara (DELSPOLY), Federal Polytechnic Auchi (AUCHIPOLY), Edo State Polytechnic Oghara (EDOPOLY), Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rivers State (EAPOLY), and Rivers State Polytechnic (RSPOLY).

A total of 226 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among library staff in polytechnic libraries across both zones. Out of these, 178 questionnaires were returned and duly completed, resulting in a response rate of 78.8%, while 48 copies were not returned, giving a non-response rate of 21.2%. The returned questionnaires provided an adequate representation of the target population.

The sample size of 226 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1969) formula for finite populations. To allocate the sample proportionately across institutions, the proportionate sampling method was applied following Uzoagulu's (1998) formula. The actual respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each library staff member had an equal chance of being included in the study.

Analysis

Research Question 1

How does organization of information affect staff performance in polytechnic libraries?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Organization of Information and Staff Performance

S/N	Organization of Information and Staff Performance	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean Value \bar{X}	Decision
a.	Organization of information helps to identify information sources very easy	86	66	18	8	178	3.29	Significant
b.	Organization of information involves proper information flow system and faculties	77	62	26	13	178	3.14	Significant
c.	Organization of information provides information timely and accurately	85	65	17	11	178	3.19	Significant
d.	Organization of information encourages information utilization by users satisfactory.	86	68	17	7	178	3.30	Significant
e.	Organization of information does not provide information timely and accurately	35	5	67	71	178	2.02	Not Significant
	Significant Mean Value = 2.99							

Table 1 indicates that at a significant mean values of 2.99, organization of information relates to staff performance in four major aspects mainly because organization of information helps to proper identify information sources very easy ($X=3.29$), it helps staff for proper information flow ($X=3.14$), make staff to provide information timely and accurately ($X=3.19$) and encouraged information utilization by users' satisfactory ($X=3.30$). However, organization of information had insignificant relationship with staff because it was unable to provide accurate and timely information ($X=2.02$).

Research Questions 2

How does information management policy affect staff performance in polytechnic libraries?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Information Management Policy and Staff Performance

S/N	Information Management Policy and Staff Performance	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean Value \bar{X}	Decision
a.	Information management policy ensures equal access to information for all	96	53	17	12	178	3.31	Significant
b.	Information management policy does not ensure equal access to information for all	23	16	75	64	178	1.99	Not Significant
c.	Information management policy does not ensure equal access to information for all	99	59	11	9	178	3.39	Significant
d.	Information management policy guides and regulates dissemination of information	107	52	13	6	178	3.46	Significant
e.	Information management policy does not guide and regulates dissemination of information	22	27	67	62	178	2.05	Not Significant
	Significant Mean Value =2.84							

As shown on Table 2, information management policy relates to staff performance because information management policy ensures equal access to information for all ($X=3.31$), information management policy helps to develop and govern available technological, legal and human infrastructure ($X=3.39$), and information management policy guides and regulates dissemination of information ($X=3.46$). These constructs are said to be significantly related to job performance because their mean values are up to or more than the significant mean values of 2.84. However, other indices such as information management policy does not ensure equal access to information for all ($X=1.99$) and information management policy does not guide and regulates dissemination of information ($X=2.05$) are said to have insignificant mean value ($X=2.84$).

FINDINGS

Finding indicates that there is a significant relationship between organization of information and staff performance in

polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria ($X^2_{cal}=77.416 \geq tab=21.03$; df 12). This relationship may have arisen because with organization of information, staff can properly identify information sources very easy, make proper information flow, provide information timely and accurately and encouraged information utilization by users' satisfactory (See Table 1). This implies that when staff are acquired sound organization skills because the library creates the opportunity for them to understand it, both the library and staff are better off. This is because staff will be confident to locate and organize resources properly which will increase the longevity of resources and good image of the library.

This finding agrees with the findings of Almutairi (2011) who identifies lack of organization of information as the key variables that make a difference in job performance of managers. The finding also agrees with the research outcome of Kahraman, Kaya and Cevikcan (2015) that for effective information organization, there is the need to integrate cross-functional strategies, and investment in information organization should be guided by both intelligence techniques and business strategy and needs. This finding justifies the theory of Motivated Information Management by W. A. Afrifi and J. I. Weiner in 2004 that individuals attempt to manage their uncertainty surrounding a particular communication issue through the use of information management strategies.

Finding indicates that there is a significant relationship between organization of information and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria ($X^2_{cal}=62.135 \geq tab=21.03$; df 12). This relationship may have arisen because with information management policy helps equal access to information for all, available technological, legal and human infrastructure and guides and regulates dissemination of information (See Table 2). This implies that when staff are equipped with information policy, their level of job performance will ultimately improve and enhanced.

This finding agrees with the findings of Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) that information management policy exists and clearly spelt out, it will minimize staff errors in job performance because issues relating to their job specifications are clearly and unambiguously stipulated. Ultimately, the staff may believe more confident to confront their tasks which may lead to improved services delivery and good organizational health. The finding also agrees with the research outcome of Yasodara and Weerakody (2016) who found that the impact of information management policy, reward management on job performance was significant and partial mediation of job satisfaction on the above relationships was found out. It also agrees with Saloojee, Groenewald and Dutoit (2017) who found that for the business value of information management and its investment; benefits to be realized, information management strategies should be aligned with the overall strategy of the organization. This finding justifies the theory of Motivated Information Management by W. A. Afrifi and J. I. Weiner in 2004 that individuals attempt to manage their uncertainty surrounding a particular communication issue through the use of information management strategies.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings above, the following conclusions were drawn.

The study has successfully investigated the information management practices and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. The study revealed that organization of information and information management policy have significant relationship between staff performance in polytechnic libraries in South-east and South-south, Nigeria. It was concluded that staff in polytechnic libraries need to know how to manage their information as it will enable them in successful information service delivery to users in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were proposed.

- i. The study also recommends that for effective organization of information, there is need to integrate cross-functional strategies, and investment in organization of information should be guided by both intelligence techniques and business strategy and needs.
- ii. The concept of policy underlines the effectiveness of communication process. Information management policy should determine if information contains ideas that will be valuable and useful to the staff.
- iii. The study further recommends provision of current and relevant information instead of multiple choice of information and unauthentic information.

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