

Information and records management for efficient and effective service delivery in tertiary institutions: The case of Federal Polytechnic Ugep.

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Abstract

The study assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of information and records management in Federal Polytechnic Ugep. Using key informant interview (KII) on 15 respondents and structural questionnaire administered to 75 respondents from the institution; the research investigates the strategic importance of information management in enhancing institutional performance. The Central Limit Theorem, was used to analyse the data using percentages, arithmetic mean and standard deviation. Results showed that 56 percent of respondents affirmed that the institution have a clear policy for creating and capturing records while 53 percent held that, records are accessible to authorized personnel in a timely manner. In terms of level of awareness of information technology and Infrastructure only 44 percent of respondents confirmed to have received training. Findings also revealed that only 52 percent respondents have the technical knowhow in the use of digital tools for records management while 69 percent confirm high staff strength to manage its records. Accordingly, 30 percent of respondents confirm a centralized unit of record management. This further proves that the institution has no clear-cut institutional policies on information and records management. Also 27 percent of respondents held that the institution has a policy on access and security for records while only 29 percent confirm retention and disposal policy. The findings highlight the critical role of effective information and records management in promoting operational efficiency in tertiary. That much is still desired by the management for the efficient output and proactive service delivery.

Keyword: Information, record management, efficiency, service delivery

Introduction

Effective administration and management of records in any institution is strategic in the growth, development and success of that organization. Record management is a field of management that is essential for the systematic and efficient control of creation, use, maintenance, receipt, and disposal of records and involves the process of storing and maintaining information and evidence related to business transaction and activities in record form (Coetzer, 2012). This is strategic in higher institutions of learning because, it supports the planning, and implementation of suitable course of actions that enable monitoring and supervision of teaching, learning and research in every institution (Abdulrazaq, 2015).

In Nigeria, tertiary institutions are established to produce high-quality manpower, for the growth and development of both the management of the institution, the host community and the nation at large. Nevertheless, no tertiary institution can achieve its aims, goals, objectives, mission, vision of satisfying users' needs through teaching, learning and research, without effective and efficient records management. This is due to the fact that, they have composite institutional environmental systems that are records-driven and rely greatly on records to carry out its schedules and functions effectively. Records management have occupied a considerable place in the effective and efficient management of tertiary institutions, and records are useful resources in the administration of institutions of higher learning. Apart from the Library, which is saddled with the responsibility of acquiring, preparing, organizing, storing, information resources, the registry of higher institutions is charged with the responsibilities of creating, maintaining, and organizing students, staff and managing records of both print and non-print (Ajibola 2022).

For tertiary institutions such as university akin to the polytechnic, Alison (2021) held that registry staff in the universities are responsible for record keeping, and managing these records in accordance with best records keeping practices procedures. It is also affirmed that, the registry is the heart of every tertiary institutions administration, where administrative and academic activities radiate into all forms and so generate large volumes of physical and electronic records and documents on a daily basis, and thus determines the functionality of the system (Okebukola 2017). Unfortunately, tertiary institutions registries in Nigeria are lacking skills, techniques and even equipment for proper records keeping and documentation of staff and administrative document, which are the bedrock of any institution's success. Ajike and Alegbeleye, (2021), observed that incidence of lost files, mutilation and misplacement of records are common in public universities. Nigerian universities administrators are frequently worried about the frightening rate of misplacement and even loss of vital records and the slow speed at which needed records are retrieved from storage in a university registry where three types of records exist: students record, staff records, and management records (Dano & Ibrahim, 2021).

Higher institutions have numerous challenges ranging from academic and administrative record management, preservation and reformatting on the preservation of library resources which are overwhelming and have resulted in the inability of student to secure international scholarships, delay in staff promotion, poor public image, low graduation or degree completion rates, high dropout rates among students, admission irregularities, to low status university rankings in Nigeria (Akin -Fakorede, 2017, Ifere, etal 2024). Ideally, tertiary institutions are meant to ensure that students, staff and management records are appropriately acquired, prepared, organized, stored for easy accessibility and timely retrieval and dissemination for effective and efficient management and administration.

However, despite this importance of records in teaching, learning, research, growth and development, the registry of these institutions appears to be deficient in records management and utilization. For instance, there is usually delay in the preparation of staff and student's information which ranges from admission letters, departments of study, school fee schedule payment, missing results, and other matters. It is also observed that, staff and students' documents are being tucked in files and stored in Cabinet which is prone to mutilation deterioration and disaster. This makes the staff have difficulties in attending to cases in the institution on time. The most worrisome situation is the non-introduction of new innovative practices, poor management of records, low graduation and admission rates due to poor record management, and on-the job training. This situation has consequences not only on the staff and management, but to education system.

The thrust of this paper therefore is first to investigate the relationship between size of organizational structure of information and records management for efficient and effective service delivery in the federal polytechnic Ugep. Second is to identify the types of information and records management practices for efficient and effective service delivery in Federal Polytechnic Ugep. Third is to determine the level of awareness of information technology infrastructure and records management for efficient and effective service delivery in tertiary institutions. Ascertain the types of institutional policies in information and records management for efficient and effective service delivery in tertiary institutions. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Sections 2 and 3 reviewed the relevant empirical studies and theoretical foundations; Section 4 describes the overview of Federal Polytechnic Ugep while Section 5 explains the methodology and analysis using qualitative data. Finally, the article concludes by synthesizing key findings, and proposing policy recommendations.

Theories of records management

This paper adopts an eclectic approach by employing several relevant theories to study information and record management for efficient service delivery in tertiary institutions. The various theoretical underpinnings are anchored on the Record continuum theory, which views records management as a continuous process emphasizing the interconnectedness of record keeping activities across different contexts. Additionally, the paper employs information lifecycle management which focusses on managing information through stages like creation, use, maintenance and disposal, relevant for the understanding of record management process. Since record management has to do with innovation and technology, therefore the Technology acceptance model (TAM) and the System Theory are relevant. They enhance the adoption of technologies in information and record management systems as well view organizations as system where information and records management are integral components interacting with other parts such as registry and academic components for efficiency and service delivery in the case of tertiary institutions

Literature review

Literature reviewed focused on diverse opinions of scholars on Information and Records Management for Efficient and Effective Service Delivery in Tertiary Institutions. Tertiary institutions are established to provide a wide range of advance education and training, conduct research of advance knowledge in solving problems, equip learners with specialized skills and competencies for the workforce. They also foster critical thinking in problem solving, contribute to the economy growth and development of every nation. However, Scholars have identified various challenges in information and records management in tertiary institutions, and this challenge varies according to the institution's management. Okoli and Eke (2020), emphasized on the importance of employing professional records management, staff and training for records management of personnel for efficient service delivery in tertiary institutions. While, Mureebe, and Lwanga (2023), Senabulya (2013), held that since records are a backbone of any organizations performance, therefore, the ultimate objective of decision making in a tertiary institution is based on right information created from records obtained which might prolong an organizations survival, and service delivery. Related studies by Adu-Oppong and Asante (2014); Odeyemi, Issa and Saka (2011); Akin-Fakorede and John (2017) also emphasized that, the structure and organization of record management must be based on key components of management best practices.

However, several challenges faced by tertiary institutions in information and records management ranges from inadequate records management system, lack of trained personnel, inadequate storage facilities, poor records keeping practice, insufficient technology adoption. For libraries of tertiary institutions, the serious issue that has bothered librarians in knowledge and records management is how to ensure that effective records management policies are implemented by establishing clear guidelines and procedures to manage records and organize knowledge. Another problem is investing in technologies to streamline records management processes and improving on storage facilities to enhance infrastructure and equipment to support effective records management which will in turn enhance efficient and effective service delivery in tertiary institutions. Ugah, (2007), Ngeope & Ngulube (2012), Mabera (2020), & Mabera (2017) established that for an organization to have efficient and effective service delivery, it must identify mutilation, vandalism, damage and disaster, Purposeful and displacing arrangement of records. For Akinfolarin (1992), Yusuf & Iwu(2010), Nwezeh & Shabi (2011), Byamugisha (2010), Ajibero (1995), poor management of library records is a global issue and so, tertiary institutions as the nerve center or the hub for knowledge

management should use the human and material resources at its disposal to organize and management tertiary institutions records both administrative and academic.

Okoli and Eke (2020) emphasized on the importance of employing trained and professional records management personnel in a tertiary institutions library to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery. For Mureebe, & Lwanga (2023), Senabulya (2013), their emphasis was on records as a back bone of any organizations performance. Adu-Oppong & Asante (2014); Odeyemi, Issa & Saka (2011); Akin-Fakorede & John, (2017), dwell on the key component of management as best practices for an organization to achieve its aims and objectives. Ugah, (2007), Ngeope & Ngulube (2012), Mabera (2020), & Mabera (2017), they argued that an organization must identify mutilation, vandalism, damage and disaster and ensure accountable and transparent management programs to have an efficient and effective service delivery.

Overview of Federal Polytechnic Ugep

The Federal Polytechnic Ugep is among the seven polytechnics established by Federal Government of Nigeria in 2020, but took effect in February 2021, with the objectives of increasing access to higher education for citizens, promoting economic development, encouraging advance research and innovation, improve human capital and foster social mobility and equity, not just for the Ugep indigenes alone, but for Cross River State and the entire country at large. Ugep town that houses the Federal polytechnic is a prominent city in Central Cross River State, Nigeria. It is situated in Yakurr Local Government Area, and serves as the Local Government Headquarters. Ugep is known for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant socioeconomic activities. It is an important commercial nerve Centre around the regions close to it, with a thriving market and agricultural industry. The town is surrounded by the lush forests and fertile land, making it suitable for farming and other agricultural activities. Ugep is a major producer of crops such as yams, cassava, plantain, and cocoa. It is bounded to the North by the Ekor Community to the South by Adim community in Biase local Government, to the East by Ediba community in Abi Local Government Area and to the West by Nkpani and Agoi villages all in Yakurr Local Government Areas of Cross River State. Ugep is one of the largest indigenous towns in Africa and serves as a significant hub for the Yakurr people. It is located in Latitude 5° 48' 31.14" N and Longitude 8° 4' 51.528 E at an average elevation of 101 meters, within the time zone of Africa/Lagos, and a population of above 420,000 according to (GLOBEHEAL 2018), updated data.

Methodology

The study employed mixed methods of key informant interviews and surveys, where instrument (questionnaire) were administered, and respondents were interviewed in the Federal Polytechnic Ugep. Data was collated and analysed from a sample of respondents to gain insight into the types of information and records management practices, level of awareness of information technology infrastructure and records management, the size of organizational structure of information and records management and types of institutional policies in information and records management. Instruments were administered to eighty-five (85) respondents using survey methods while twenty respondents were interviewed. The selection was done using probability sampling technique from the registry department, library department, security department, and ICT departments, with the schedules of collating, organizing, preserving, storing, and retrieving information for users in the Federal Polytechnic Ugep. Out of the Eighty five questionnaires administered randomly, only Seventy five (88.2%) were properly responded to and returned while 10 (11%) instruments were incomplete or not

returned. In all, seventy five structured questionnaires were used; to represents the sample size derived using the Creswell formula.

The Central Limit Theorem then was used for the analysis of qualitative data obtained from respondents. The Central Limit Theorem originally traced to Abraham de Moivre 1738 is one of the most fundamental statistical tool of analysis, which takes average of sample means as population mean to accurately predict the characteristics of a population. It is a parametric test with high statistical power on non-normally distributed large sample size, usually greater than 30. The theorem states that, “given sufficient number of randomly selected, independent samples (or observations), the means of those samples will follow a normal distribution even if the population sampled does not” (Robert, 2007, Turney **2023**). That, in an unevenly normally distributed population, the distribution of sample means approaches normality as the sample size increases (Robert, 2007). The beauty of this theorem is that; since sampling distributions is key to all statistical inferences, it forecloses the rigor of obtaining information from the entire population of interest, by sampling subsets of the population for making valid inferences. However, since it is difficult and unscientific to arbitrarily choose a sample size, the Creswell (2013) formula was used to choose the sampling size for this study. Therefore, the central limit theorem supports the use of sample size to draw inferences about the population without knowing much of the population.

Table. 1: Analysis of information and records management for an efficient and effective service delivery in Federal Polytechnic Ugep

S/N	Objectives /Questions	No. of Samples that identified it (X)	Mean (M)	X-M	(X-M) ²	Percentage (%)
1	Information and records management practices					
	i) Does your Institution have a clear policy for creating and capturing records	42	33.88	8.12	65.93	56
	ii) Are records accessible to authorized personnel in a timely manner ?	40	33.88	6.12	37.45	53
2	Level of awareness of information technology and Infrastructure					
	i). Have you received training on information technology systems used in your institution?	33	33.88	-0.8	-0.64	44
	ii) Do you know how to use digital tools for records management?	39	33.88	5.12	26.21	52
3	Size of organizational structure of information and records management					
	i) Does the institution have dedicated staff to manage its records effectively?	52	33.88	18.12	328.33	69
	ii) Is the institution equipped with a centralized unit for managing records across the different departments of the institution?	23	33.88	-10.88	-118.37	30
4	types of institutional policies in information and records management					
	i) Is there a policy on access and security for records in your institution?.	20	33.88	-13.88	-192.65	27
	ii) Does your institution have a retention and disposal policy for records?	22	33.88	-11.88	141.13	29
		271			910.71	

Source: Field Survey 2025

$$\text{Variance } (\sigma^2) = \frac{\sum(X-M)^2}{n-1} \\ = \frac{910.71}{7} = 130.10$$

$$\sigma \text{ Standard deviation } (\sigma) = \sqrt{130.10} = 11.41$$

Based on the Central Limit Theorem:

$$z = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$$

this is exactly standardized when $n \geq 30$

when $X = 75$ and mean (μ) = 33.88

then $Z = \frac{75-33.88}{11} = 3.74$

99%

Analysis and discussion of findings

This report presents findings of key informant interview (KII) and survey using structured questionnaire administered to respondents from the institution. The study interviewed 15 key informants (KI), and administered 75 structured questionnaires to respondents such as administrative staff, library staff, who are para-professionals, librarians, security personnel and principal officers saddled with the schedules of information and knowledge management in the Polytechnic. In one of the data (KII) received from a male respondent who holds a higher degree and staff of the ICT department. it was recorded that, information and records in the polytechnic are managed both manually and electronically. It was also observed that, electronic records management practices give efficient service delivery. But in managing these records, there are challenges ranging from power supply, infrastructure and poor systems management and maintenance; that, there is no available software package for student and staff to access, retrieve and manage information. The few databases subscribed to are not made available to all staff but only used by the principal officers. Furthermore, the respondent called for a shift in technological cloud base storage systems which will enhance efficient and effective service delivery. The study also recommended that, Institutional policies like quality assurance should be more active in the polytechnic. Also, maintenance compliance by staff and students should be of top priority.

In another development, the study interviewed, library staff on the level of awareness of information technology and infrastructure. It was observed that, the library acquires, selects, organizes, preserves, retrieves and disseminate information using its resources manually. After acquisition, the library receives the resources, assign accession numbers, call numbers, classification numbers, and stamp, which could be TETFUND and school stamp. The (KII) also observed that, the resources are shelved for users manually. In analysis of the result from the structured questionnaire, the standard deviation also helped a great deal to determine where values of frequency distributions are allocated in relation to the mean. It helped the study to determine probabilities of information and records management practices, technology, infrastructure, organizational structure and institutional policies

The central limit theorem was applied. According to the central limit theorem, even if the population is not normally distributed as the sample size increases, the distribution of the sample means approaches the normal distribution. Thus, using this formula allows conclusions to be drawn about the population of the study without knowing much of the population other than what is extracted from the sample.

Result obtained from the survey shows that the mean will lie outside the standard deviation by a probability of 0.5 and 99 percent respectively. This implied that there was a ninety-nine percent (99 percent) probability that all of the listed variables used to test information and records management practices were correct. Provided that the probability of

its correctness is greater than its non-acceptance; therefore, it is concluded that these variables do indeed have an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of information and records management practices in Federal Polytechnic Ugep.

In terms of the information and records management practices, only 56 percent of respondents attest to the fact that the institution have a clear policy for creating and capturing records while 53 percent of respondents held that records are accessible to authorized personnel in a timely manner. The situation is so because, many staff and students are not aware of the institutional information and record management policy. However, awareness of the institutional information and record management policy and accessibility of needed information by staff is sacrosanct to the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution.

Results from the survey on the level of awareness of information technology and Infrastructure in Federal Polytechnic Ugep, had only 44 percent of respondents to have received training on information technology systems used in the institution. This shows that many staff are left untrained and unaware of the technological system in operation by the institutions. Therefore, this may impede on the efficiency and overall output expected from staff. Knowledge of the type of technology in use is very important to the users or the community for which this technology is being used on. Findings from the survey also reveal that only 52 percent of respondents know how to use digital tools for records management both administratively and within the Institutions library. The remaining have no knowledge or have not attended any formal training on the use of digital tools for record management. This figure shows that there is much to do in terms awareness and training on the use of digital tools for records management for Federal institutions such as Federal Polytechnic Ugep.

Survey result on the size of organizational structure of information and records management in the institution present, 69 percent of respondents confirming the fact that the institution have reasonable number of staff to manage its records effectively. This percentage is high enough for productivity and efficiency for service delivery by the institution. However, the fact remains, without training and putting square pegs on square holes these sufficient number of staff would amount to not if not properly engaged by the institution. Therefore, it is pertinent for the management of the institution to assigned responsibilities according to expertise and need. This way productivity will be encouraged.

A negligible 30 percent of respondents held that the institution is equipped with a centralized unit for managing records across the different departments of the institution. This number therefore confirms the fact that the institution has no proper centralized unit for managing records and information. In a multicampus institution like the Federal Polytechnic Ugep, it is important to have a centralized and well managed information unit to meet the contemporary demands.

From the survey, it is glaring that the institution has no clear-cut institutional policies in information and records management. This is further confirmed by as low as only 27 percent of respondents attesting to the fact that the institution has a policy on access and security for records, while the remaining percentage disagree to this fact. In a similar development, only 29 percent of respondents agree to the fact that the institution have a retention and disposal policy for records while the remaining 69 percent differ in this perspective. Given the results from the survey, it therefore shows that there is much to be desired by the management of the institution in terms of institutional policies on managing records and information for the efficient output of the institution.

Conclusion

The importance of efficient records and information management in an academic institution like the federal polytechnic Ugep cannot be jettisoned given its profound implications for service delivery and overall outcome. The paper was able to identify the extent of information and records management practices, the level of awareness of information technology and Infrastructure, the size of organizational structure of information and records management, and the centralized unit for managing records within the institutions. By measuring efficiency and effectiveness of information and record management, we found that efficient service delivery is triggered by four distinct variables; level of awareness, size of organizational structure, extent of centralization of information and the extent of information and records management practices.

To achieve efficient service delivery therefore, access to information and records must be of paramount interest to management, and of particular concern to libraries and information managers. Information must be transparent contrary to asymmetric information ideas. This can be achieved through information managers, resources and designated libraries by adopting new information techniques.

The study revealed that for the Federal Polytechnic Ugep to have an efficient and effective service delivery and satisfy users' needs, it must have good record management practices, it must determine the level of awareness of information technology infrastructure, it must as well Identify the size of organizational structure of information and records management and also ascertain the types of institutional policies in information and records which is the main objective of the establishment of the polytechnic.

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