

ASSESSMENT OF UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR RECORDS

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to assess record management of the University of Calabar Registry. In carrying out this study, four (4) research questions were posed. The study sample population comprised of 50 staff. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The research questions were answered using frequency and percentages. The major findings of the study revealed: ineffectiveness in record management practices, incompetent personnel, inadequate infrastructural facilities. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made: Efforts should be made for training of staff to handle the universities' record, provision of adequate fund and enough infrastructural facilities.

Key Words: Assessment, Records, University of Calabar

Introduction

In any organization, the keeping, preservation and management of its records is one of the most important functions. These records are so important to the office that they must be properly managed in order to effectively serve the purpose for which they were created. These records are the cumulative documents produced by persons in the organization in the course of their daily routine.

The keeping, preservation and management of records is for the present and future generations. Records therefore, can be defined as a valuable documented information or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in electronic, stored in written form or an information received by an organization in connection with the transaction of its business and of vital

importance for achieving the goals of the university and also appropriate for preservation because of its information value.

Records are assets of the university because of its usefulness and serves as the corporate memory of the institution. International standards Organization (ISO) 15489-1: 2001 defines records as information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. The ISO 15489:2001 continues to define record management as "the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and designing, implementing and administering specialized systems for managing records and integrating records managements into business systems and processes. Such records management programmes should include files management, forms management, directives management, registry management, vital records management, disaster management, record preservation reports management and archives management. Sound records management systems in a university will assist the administrators realizing accountability and transparency and good governance in their conduct of business operations. To control the creation and growth of records, to improve efficiency and productivity of staff, to assimilate new records management technologies and to safeguard vital information to support better management decision making and planning (Popoola, 2007). The establishment and execution of functional records management system should be anchored on good theoretical frameworks, that is, records life cycle and record continuum models.

Records are so important to organizations and society as a whole. Aguolu (2009) has acknowledged that, even that knowledge brought together to help the organization was originally derived in part from the available records of the society where one belongs.

The importance of proper records keeping is further commented by Nzotta (1992) where in a law court scenario. It could be considered an herculean task for fair trails if there were no recorded or easily retrievable proceedings of similar or previous traits to help judges arrive at good decision for a case on hand. It is therefore very important for records to be recorded and preserve archive and all administrative information in any easily retrievable format for good administrative purposes.

Statement of the problem

Many establishments have been facing the problem of bulky records and this is in the increase. The University of Calabar Registry is not an exception to this menace. Record keeping problems are common to the different and various sections of the Registry, especially as divisions, departments and units have increased, with this comes increase in quantity of information generated. Jacobson (2005) in his opinion has asserted that the creation of these various sections of the Registry have helped expand records, hence the problem of managing this records.

Record is being created but not properly managed. Most of the time, we hear of missing records or misplaced record. A case is that of Bakassi peninsula, Nigeria lost because of inadequate records; therefore, this becomes an issue of great concern to government, parents and students. Therefore, the researcher seeks to find out those problems that hinder effective record keeping. For instance, types of records kept, record maintenance strategies, effectiveness of record maintenance and problems associated with record maintenance in the Registry of University of Calabar.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study include the following:

- i. To identify the types of records available in the University of Calabar Registry
- ii. To identify records maintenance strategies adopted
- iii. To determine the effectiveness of record maintenance
- iv. To examine problems associated with record management

Research methodology

Survey research method was used to carry out this research because of its large population. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 50 staff out of 210 staff from the Registry of University of Calabar. The instrument used for collecting data for this study was questionnaire. The instrument before use was face-validated by presenting draft copies to senior academic staff, who are experts in research and statistics to ascertain face and content validity. The validity and reliability of the instrument were properly ascertained by three educational research experts.

Presentation of results

The results are presented in the order in which the research questions were stated in chapter one.

Research question one: What types of records are available at the University of Calabar Registry? To answer this question, the data collected was analyzed as presented in table 1.

TABLE 1
Records kept by the Registry

S/N	N	A	D	A%	D%
1	50	37	13	74	26
2	50	31	19	62	38
3	50	29	21	58	42
4	50	40	10	80	20
5	50	45	5	90	10
TOTAL	250	182	68	72.8	27.2

The information contained in table 1 shows that 72.8% as against 27.2% of the 250 responses agreed that legal, administrative, historical, admissions, examination and certificate records are available in the Registry.

Research question two: What are the record maintenance management strategies adopted? The data collected through the instrument was analyzed and presented in table 2.

TABLE 2
Records maintenance in the Registry Strategies

S/N	N	A	D	A%	D%
1	50	22	28	44	56
2	50	36	14	72	28
3	50	4	46	8	92
4	50	9	41	18	82
5	50	11	39	22	78
TOTAL	250	82	168	32.8	67.2

The information contained in table 2 shows that out of 250 responses, 32.8% agreed that the record maintenance strategies adopted by the University Registry were appropriate, whereas, 67.2% disagreed. A detailed scrutiny of the analysis reveals that 72% of the 50 responses to item no. 2 agreed that the filing together of documents on same or similar subject was appropriate while 28% disagreed. This result shows only one method or strategy was considered to be appropriate and fully implemented.

Research question three: To what extent does record maintenance in the Registry enhance administrative effectiveness? The data collected was analyzed and presented in table 3.

TABLE 3
Effectiveness of record maintenance in the Registry

S/N	N	A	D	A%	D%
1	50	16	34	32	68
2	50	12	38	24	76
3	50	17	33	34	66
4	50	21	29	42	58
5	50	18	32	36	64
TOTAL	250	84	166	33.6	66.4

The information contained in table 3 shows that 33.6% agreed that the record maintenance adopted by the University Registry was effective, while 66.4% responses showed that the record maintenance adopted by the Registry was ineffective.

Research question four: What are the problems associated with record maintenance and management at the Registry? The data collected was analyzed and presented in table 4.

TABLE 4
Problems associated with record maintenance in the Registry

S/N	N	A	D	A%	D%
1	50	20	30	40	60
2	50	35	15	90	10
3	50	34	16	68	32
4	50	38	12	76	24
5	50	29	21	58	42
TOTAL	250	156	94	62.4	37.6

The information from table 4 shows that the overall result indicates that 62.4% against 37.6% of responses agreed, indicating there are problems associated with record maintenance and management at the Registry. However, 60% of responses to item 1 disagreed that there was a problem of proliferation of records.

Discussion

A brief summary of the findings derived from the results presented above are discussed below. The discussion is organized based on the research questions posed in chapter one.

I. Records kept by the Registry

The finding on the types of records kept by the Registry included legal, administrative, historical, academic records. This finding agrees with the assertions of Afolabi (1987) that the legal documents of a university include: agreements, deeds, copyrights, abstracts of title, bye laws, bids, administrative bonds and building contracts, certificates of incorporation, affidavits, etc. He emphasized that these documents are vital to the university in case of dispute or court cases. In Afolabi's view, historical records relate to records for documenting university polices, key personnel, major transactions, processes and events. Senate records, council records and policy planning records from National University Commission (NUC), fall under historical records (Daramola, 1990).

Jackson (1978), Nwosu (1993) and Aschner (1983) referred to these documents as vital records. They asserted that these records if lost or

destroyed would prove to be embarrassing or damage the reputation of the management team because it will render the university incapable of restarting its operations in a reasonable length of time. They are of the opinion that these types of records are considered irreplaceable and should be stored in a vital records protective environment.

According to Wallace (1987), administrative records of an organization generally are the ones that relate to the organizations operations or functions like personnel information, operations manual or organizational charts.

University of Kwazulu-Natal (2005) in articulating its mission to carrying out its statutory functions of learning, teaching, research and community service agree that evidence of these is generation of records which includes admission of students, examinations and similar papers as well as academic transcripts and certificates. This is to say that these academic records are vital to the operation of the university.

ii. Records maintenance adopted

The finding on the types or methods of record maintenance adopted by the registry shows that only one; "filing together of documents on same or similar subject" was fully operational while the other four were adjudged none or not fully operational.

This finding is in line with what the Council on Higher Education (2000) pointed out, that higher education information systems in South Africa were inadequate. From the finding, this could be said of the University of Calabar and particularly of the Registry division, that most of the records maintenance strategies adopted were inadequate.

iii. Effectiveness of record maintenance

The finding on the effectiveness of record maintenance adopted by the registry shows that the record maintenance adopted are ineffective. The reason may be that most of the forms of record maintenance mentioned in research question two were not in practice or they were not fully or appropriately implemented.

The finding agrees with Wallace (1987) that effective records maintenance is essential for the organization having immediate access to stored or filed records and immediate retrieval of information. Records being the means by which transactions are generated and followed up, they should be maintained effectively in such a way that records can easily be retrieved to

service the administrative, legal or historical purposes for which they are kept.

Asogwa (2004) noted that data which arise from the execution of legitimate functions of the university should be properly managed and secured. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in most institutions as Omenyi (1998) observed. In the same vein, Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000) stated that effective records management system provided information required for the proper function of the institution.

iv. Problems associated with record maintenance and management

The finding on problems associated with record maintenance and management shows that there existed problems of misplacement and loss of records, untrained personnel, poor preservation of records and shortage of accommodation or storage of space.

The finding is in support of Afolabi (2004) and Egwuyena (2003), that record management in Nigeria is affected by factors such as inadequate skilled and experienced personnel, lack of sufficient funds and low priority accorded it in relation to other things. They added that archaic record keeping methods and technology plus poor data storage facilities are amongst the problems militating against record maintenance and management.

Again, this finding agrees with what the Bankers Box (1981) identifies as some of the problems hampering record maintenance and management to include: poor office spacing and equipment, loss of important operating information and information needed for legal action.

Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to investigate the role of maintenance and management of records with specific reference to the University of Calabar. The research questions were on the types of records maintained, records maintenance adopted, effectiveness of records maintenance adopted and problems associated with records maintenance.

The study revealed that legal, administrative, historical and academic records are part of the records maintained in the university. The study also reveals that records maintenance and management play a vital role in the effective risk management, processes, better performance, improving service delivery, decision making, good governance, supporting accountability, fulfilling legal requirements, promoting and protecting human rights. Nevertheless, based on the findings of this study, it can be

concluded that record maintenance and management is not given the attention it deserves. It is plagued with numerous problems in the University of Calabar.

Recommendations

The major findings of this study revealed adoption of ineffective filing classification system, ineffective records maintenance and management strategies, incompetent record management personnel and inadequate provision of equipments and facilities. On the score of these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is recommended that the University Registry units and departments should consider adopting filing classification system suitable to the kind of records peculiar to its security, confidentiality, accessibility of records and economy of space, installation and operation should be given adequate attention when considering filing classification system to adopt.
2. The University management should appoint separate record officers for the different divisions of the Registry, faculties and other operational units of the University. These should be responsible for sound record management in their respective divisions and faculties.
3. The record officers should be provided with adequate training to ensure that they are well equipped to handle the responsibility of overseeing the welfare of the university records. The record officers should be dedicated to the records management function so as to promote and implement university's records management best practices.
4. The university management should appoint a Deputy Registrar charged with the responsibility of ensuring sound records management in the university. All the record officers should be accountable to the Records Registrar of the University. The Record Registrar should be responsible for developing a record control strategy so as to be able to control and manage all university records and prevent unauthorized removal and distribution of records.
5. The university Record Registrar should be a member of the university management team so as to ensure that all record management related issues are brought to the attention of the university management and are included in strategic and budget plans of the university.

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