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INFLUENCE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, WORK ENVIRONMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN LAGOS STATE JUDICIARY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of records management practices, work environment and administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 328 administrative staff of Lagos State Judiciary, Nigeria. Total enumeration was used. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.93 to 0.94. A response rate of 100% was achieved. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (multiple and linear regression) statistics. Findings showed that records management practices and work environment jointly influenced administrative effectiveness (*Adj. R*² = 0.333, *F*(2, 326) = 39.520, *p* < 0.05). Records management practices had a significant influence on administrative effectiveness (*R*² = 0.290, *t*(326) = 8.897, *β* = 0.538, *p* < 0.05). Work environment had a positive significant influence on administrative effectiveness (*R*² = 0.160, *t*(326) = 37.337, *β* = 0.400, *p* < 0.05). The study concluded that records management practices and work environment contribute to administrative effectiveness. It has recommended that judges should motivate staff to come early to work, encourage team work, sustain good records management practices and conducive work environment to enhance administrative effectiveness.

Keywords: Administrative effectiveness, Lagos State Judiciary, Records management practices, Work environment, Records management

INTRODUCTION

Administrative effectiveness has been given attention by researchers and administrative personnel, especially in the judiciary. According to Mabala (2018) the UK government under its parliament makes the laws and the judges do interpret the laws. These laws guide the judiciary and are made out of grievances in the society brought by individuals, representatives in the legislature. According to Hofstede's score, UK is among the highly individualized countries and hence individuals such as civil servant do not depend on their decisions much to politicians, confidence is what leads them to stand on their decisions. There is latent harmony between the powerful and the powerless and also cooperation among the powerless can be based on solidarity. Remarkable progress has been seen in Latin-American statutes and case

law in terms of procedural principles guaranteeing a fair trial, the efforts to staunch the proliferation of repetitive claims, now called artificial claims, have failed for several reasons (Ricardo, 2016). These reasons range from the lack of specialized courts and procedural laws sensitive to the public-law nature of administrative disputes to the fact that administrative authorities lack the necessary independence and technical expertise to perform their institutional role.

In Nigeria, the complexity in the administrative process in many organizations requires a modernized system approach to ease the process. Performance of systems such as that of the judiciary cannot be realized without effective administration. Administrative effectiveness is about the steady accomplishment of administrative duties and timely realization of set objectives. Administrative effectiveness can be measured through administrative extent of accountability, administrative performance improvement, effective resources management, monitoring, appropriate delegation of tasks, timely discharge of duties and constant meeting of targets (Akinfolarin, 2017). Areas in administrative administration include; staff personnel administration, financial management students' personnel administration, record management, maintenance of facilities among others. According to Ikediugwu (2016), good administrative managers must carefully and effectively handle resources particularly money, material and machines including computers are lacking in Nigeria which thus calls for a hug evaluation as it relates to records management practices.

The availability of information for use by administrators to adjudicate judicial cases depends on the way records have been physically managed. Some of the information contained in judicial records includes case files, court registers, record book and case books. Generally speaking, the success of the judiciary in performing its administrative obligations largely depends on the use of documented information. Some of these records are historical while some are rhetorical or phenological in nature. Historical and legal records were the earliest forms of records to be created and used for making judicial decisions by the courts. Judicial records constitute an important class of public records especially in Nigeria. These records are created by the judiciary and other institutions such as the police, army, ministries, government agencies, corporate bodies and other private organizations or individuals. Records are vital to every aspect of governance process; they are valuable assets that need to be managed by any organization or institution. They fulfil an important function in the society by providing evidence and information about the transactions of individuals and organizations.

Records serve as a basis for review, study and evaluation of all happenings in the court. They serve as a communication link between an organization and its clients. In this context, Mohammed (2009) posited that the written record if accurate and complete is useful both to the institution and its clients in any transactions. Records could be in any physical format or media and must be kept in the context and structure in which they were created to maintain their usability, authenticity, reliability as well as integrity. It is a common knowledge that a basic concept in records management is the records life cycle. The life of a record goes through phases starting from when it is created or received by institutions such as the judiciary, leading to records creation and capture, records maintenance, records access, records retention, records retrieval, records storage, records management policy before it can finally be destroyed or archived permanently according to the records retention or disposal policy of the organization.

The first stage or phase of the Records Life Cycle is creation and capture. Records are created or received through the daily transactions of an organization. For the judiciary the records that may be created or received can include printed reports, emails, phone messages, documents that detail the functions, policies, decisions or procedures of the organization which services as an evidence of transaction. The next stage of the records life cycle is the maintenance of records. These stages involve the filing, retrieving, duplication, printing, dissemination and use of the content or the information in the records. At the disposition or retention phase, records are evaluated to ascertain their relative value and level of inactivity in the organization. When records are evaluated for their value it signifies if they will be sent to the archives for continued management and use as a historical document of value or permanent disposal through destruction. Ile e tal. (2015) empirically noted that records management has attracted increasing attention in recent years as a result of growing sophistication of administrative practice in the increasing complexity of organizations, coupled with the enormous expansion of the quality of information. This means that in order to manage the life cycle of records in offices, secretaries should have the needed knowledge and competencies.

Records management practices is an area of necessity for every organization because it helps to deal with the transaction that covered the life cycle of records, which is from the creation of transaction, use, maintenance and disposition of the documents and records. According to Lawal (2018) records management practices influence the job performance of employees in an organization. In the context of judiciary, records management has the tendency of predicting the outcome of administrative effectiveness. Effective records management practices,

according to Chinyemba and Ngulube (2012) involve establishing systematic control at every stage of the record's life cycle, in accordance with established principles and accepted models of records management. They further stressed that to effectively manage records, it must go through a life-cycle which consists of the creation and capture, classification in a logical system, maintenance and use, and disposition through destruction or transfer to an archives for long term storage. Effective records management practices cannot be sustained in a poor working environment. This is because, environment is germane to administrative effectiveness.

Work environment can be described as everything which surrounds a system of operation. Environment involves the physical and geographical location as well as the immediate surroundings of the work place. Work environment as a concept is used in management sciences to describe the conditions of work in an organization. There are different work environment such as physical, social, behavioural and psychosocial work environments. According to Budie e tal (2019), the physical work environment and employee satisfaction is pivotal for companies as it enhances perceived productivity and organizational performance. Office concepts and their workspaces can affect employee satisfaction. Psychosocial work environment deals with interpersonal and social interactions that influence behaviour of individuals in an organization or in the workplace. It is assumed that an organization that pays attention to its psychosocial work environment, helps to increase the productivity of employees in the organization. Al Omari e tal (2017) are of the view that many factors could influence the employee's job performance including equipment, physical work environment, meaningful work, standard operating procedures, reward for good or bad systems, performance expectancy, feedback on performance, in addition to knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Work environment takes into consideration elements such as temperature, ventilation, lighting, ventilation, furniture, temperature and other facilities that allow for smooth work process in an organization. Work environment can significantly influence administrative effectiveness in the judiciary in which the resultant effect may negatively affect the outcome of court proceedings. In the judiciary, the physical facilities that constitute the environment of work for an administrator takes into consideration power supply, physical facilities, lighting level, computer facilities and internet facilities. According to Chandrasekar (2011), work environment plays an important role in an organization and it directly affects the performance of an employee. Ivan (2007) postulates that employees look for enabling work environment to

ensure best contribution towards the achievement of the organizational goals. In the judiciary, increased administrative effectiveness can be as a result of better good working environment.

According to Al Omari et al (2017) good working environment will have sufficient ventilation, sunlight and acoustic environment. On the contrary, when there are clustered offices and cluttered work environment, the efforts of administrators will diminish, and this will affect smooth work processes. Whereas, good and conducive working environment will promote emotional and physical fitness of administrators. The desire to work will be enhanced and their performance outcomes will be increased. A study conducted by Amusa, Salman and Ajani (2014) discovered that poor work environment coupled with infrastructure problem are a major determinant of frustration among their staff. Therefore, the need to investigate the influence of records management practices and working environment on administrative effectiveness of the judiciary sector in Lagos state cannot be overstated.

The role of the judiciary in fulfilling their mandate such as adjudication of justice and other services to the society requires a conducive working environment. In Nigeria, it is a common knowledge that the environment of work especially as it relates to the public sector is never conducive for any administrative functions. Some offices do not have air condition, lighting and administrative apparatus for smooth work process. According to Okieze and Obi (2004), the judiciary cannot perform its administrative responsibilities without a conducive working environment. There is no doubt that efforts are made by state governments to upgrade the statues and the infrastructure of public institutions but the extent to which this is done in Lagos state has not been empirically determined. Therefore, for an effective administration to take place it is of necessity that the work environment of courts should be examined. It is on this note that this study seeks to investigate records management practices, work environment and administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary.

Statement of the Problem

In most countries around the world, the judiciary is granted the right to provide legal services to the citizenry of a society. They are expected to provide unbiased administration and uphold the rule of law in a democratic system. However, the judiciary has not been effective in the timely discharge of its responsibility as highlighted by Ndaguba et al (2018) argued that administrative effectiveness is versely affected by cronyism, cabalism, nepotism and sycophancy, including inadequate interaction of systems, institutions and structures are decried

as the bane of Nigeria's underdevelopment, which have had adverse negative effects on the educational and judicial sectors thereby undermining the well-being of the poor. A preliminary observation by the researcher also showed that the level of administrative efforts in the Judiciary in Lagos State is not good enough as demonstrated by gross delay in response time to applicants and litigants, coupled with poor team work, poor communication, inadequate staff commitment, accumulation of legal cases and low productivity.

Records management practices play an important role in the efficient, transparent, and accountable management of court processes and the capacity to influence administrative functions. Proper records management practices will ensure that there is prompt response to applicants and litigants as well as sufficient documentary evidence as it relates to the operations of the judiciary. This means that conducive work environment is likely to provide the right atmosphere for judicial staff to carry out their job and will enhance the administrative process of the Judiciary (Mnjama, 2012). Good records management practice may therefore ensure effective administrative process in the Judiciary when it comes to quick dispensation of justice but the challenges of administrative ineffectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary could be as a result of low records management practices and in conducive work environment. It is from these assertions that this study investigated the influence of records management practices and work environment as determinants of administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of the records management practices and work environment on administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary.

The specific objective is to:

1. determine the joint influence of records management practices and work environment on administrative effectiveness of the Lagos State judiciary.

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant joint influence of records management practices and work environment on administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The available records of the total population of administrative staff of the Lagos State judiciary showed that there are currently 328 staff working in the seven judicial commissions in Lagos state. The study adopted a total enumeration or census approach due to the manageable size of the population. Total enumeration is used when the population of the study is not too large and manageable which helps researchers to have a more intensive study of the population. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed structured questionnaire. The hypotheses formulated was analysed using simple and multiple linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 21).

RESULTS

Hypothesis One: There will be no joint significant influence of records management practices and work environment on administrative effectiveness in Lagos State Judiciary

Table 3: Multiple linear regression analysis of the joint influence of records management practices and work environment on administrative effectiveness

Predictors	Model	Beta (β)	T	P	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	ANOVA (Sig.)
(Constant)	1.266		4.251	.000*	0.342	0.333	39.520	0.000*
Records management practices	.392	.383	4.956	.000*				
Work environment	.249	.286	3.699	.000*				
Dependent Variable: Competiveness Predictor: (Constant), Predictor: (Constant), Records management practices, Work environment DF (F-Statistic) = 2, 326 DF (T-Statistic) = 325 The asterisked p-value implies significant The non-asterisked p-value implies non-significant								

Source: Field Survey Results, 2020.

Table 3 shows the multiple linear regression analysis for hypothesis three. The result showed that records management practices and work environment jointly influenced administrative effectiveness in Lagos State judiciary, based on the $F(2, 326) = 39.725, p < 0.05$. Relatively, records management practices ($\beta = 0.383; t(325) = 4.956, p < 0.05$) and work environment ($\beta = 0.286; t(325) = 3.699, p < 0.05$) had positive and significant influences on administrative effectiveness. Records management practices contributed highest to administrative effectiveness in Lagos State judiciary. The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adj. R) of

0.333 indicates that a combination of records management practices and work environment can only explain 33.3% of the changes in administrative effectiveness in Lagos State judiciary. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected. This finding implied that records management practices and work environment are indispensable factors that enhance administrative effectiveness in Lagos State judiciary.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the high level of administrative effectiveness of Lagos State Judiciary may be as a result of high level of teamwork, coordination and timeliness in the discharge of administrative duties. The Judiciary have a strong administration as observed in the level of collaborations in the organization. The study further concludes that the work environment significantly influenced the administrative effectiveness of the Lagos State Judiciary, this is due to the high level of work conduciveness in the Lagos State Judiciary. Also, records management practices had a significant influence on administrative effectiveness. This means that the judiciary seems to have made significant efforts to ensure that all records in the court are easily retrieved through well numbered and coded ID codes as well as other management practice

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The study recommends that the Lagos State Judiciary should carefully address issues of low productivity as a result of lateness to work, leaving before the work time is over and absentee rates. These issues will help the Judiciary remain effective administratively. Administrative effectiveness would be further improved if these points are addressed.

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