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Management of Records in University Libraries in the South-South Zone of Nigeria

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Introduction

Universities the world over are centres for academic pursuits as well as place where learning is sought at its maximum level. A university library, be it federal or state owned, is part of a university set up. Accordingly, it seeks to advance the functions of the institution (Kumar, 1987) by generating and transacting information in form of records for teaching, learning, research and for administration in the course of its daily activities (Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu, 2007). In other words, records are created and used in the operation of a university and its library. For a university library to function effectively and carry on with its services, there are usually one form of record or the other. Records are synonymous with human activities and have existed for centuries (Esse, 2000). Records are any recorded information, regardless of form or medium received and maintained by an agency, institution or organization, or individual in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of business of any kind (Charman, 1990). Thus records are documentary evidence of transaction made or received in pursuance of legal obligations regardless of the physical form or characteristics of the media. They are information identified by the particular functions they perform in support of business, accountability and cultural heritage. They substantiate who did what, where and when.

According to Popoola (2000), what actually keeps the civil service going is any modern system of government are recorded information, which are used for planning, decision making and controlling. For any effective planning decision-making and controlling to take place, there must be timely access to records. University libraries are great producers of records, some of the very vital university libraries record include, financial, and personnel records (Asogwa, 2004).

Financial records refers to all records in respect of financial matters including budget requests, actual budget allocation, statement of expenditure, shipment receipt and invoices, requisition and purchase orders, receipt of moneys received or expended. Of all the record generated in the university library, personnel records pose one of the greatest challenges. Employee or personnel records may be defined as those that contain initial application forms, results of physical examination, periodic appraisals, transfers and promotion etc. Emmerson (1984) argued that personnel records pose a particular problem because of their bulk, longevity and sensitivity. Professional literature on records management pays little or no attention at all to the subject of the management of personal records. Yet, these records occupy large area in public offices. Most archival institutions are reluctant to accession personnel records in their custody, arguing that these records occupy valuable office space, which cannot be justified (Republic of South Africa, Circular, 1963).

Records and archives occupy different ends of a continuum, records become archives after they have been appraised and found worthy of permanent preservation in an institution.

Odlyzko (2000) and Rebore (2005) see records management as the management science of controlling the quantity, qualities and costs of records and it encompasses the procedural system operations, space, equipment and staff required to administer the records. In the same vein, Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000) Venne (2001), Efunbayo (2003), Chris (2006), Ijaduola and Sotunde (2006) have posited that proper records management go a long way in enhancing effective administration of a university. Nonetheless, despite the indispensable value of records and the gargantuan amount of money spent on its creation and maintenance, proper management of records that will lead to economy and efficiency in their creation used and maintenance as well as disposition is seldom considered the top priority of the university system (Popoola, 2003). Week (1986) identified the following component as major component of records maintenance: filing system, retention and disposal and preservation. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide empirical data on how record are managed in federal and state university libraries in south-south zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher's preliminary observation of records management in federal and state university libraries in Nigeria revealed that there is a poor recovery and haphazard arrangement of records. Although a lot of records are generated daily from the activities of the administrative division of some of these university libraries, very few studies have focused on the extent to which these records are management. Accordingly, the study seeks to provide empirical data on how records are managed in the federal and state university libraries in the south-south zone of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine how records are managed by the federal and state university libraries in the south-south zone of Nigeria. Specifically the objective is to:

- Identify the types of records created by the federal and state university libraries in the south-south zone of Nigeria
- Find out the types of storage facilities available for the management of the records in the federal and state university libraries
- Determine how records are maintained by the federal and state university libraries

Methodology

The survey research method was used. The expos-facto design was employed for this study. The study population is made up of university librarians, their deputies and all heads of division/section/units of ten (10 federal and state university libraries in the south-south zone of Nigeria. The choice of the categories of people is justified by the fact that only heads of divisions/sections/units together with the university librarians and deputies create and used records for decision-making or library administration. The population of the study is 83. The sample for the study is the same as the population of librarians in the ten federal and state university libraries. The population was small enough to be used as the sample which is 83. The questionnaire copies were personally administered on out of which 77 were returned making a percentage of 92.8%. The reliability of the instrument was the test retest using Pearson's product moment correlation co-efficient. The Pearson's moment correlation co-efficient was 0.84. The data in the study was analyzed and presented using frequency count and percentile analysis.

Table 1: South-south zone university libraries indicating universities librarians, deputy universities librarians and heads of divisions/sections/ units.

Population of Study

S/N	Name of University Library	Status	UL	DUL	Head of div/ sec/unit	Total
1.	University of Port-Harcourt Library, Port-Harcourt	Fed.	1	1	6	8
2.	John Harris Library, University of Benin	Fed.	1	1	7	9
3.	University of Calabar Library, Calabar.	Fed.	1	1	6	8
4.	University of Uyo Library, Uyo.	Fed.	1	1	6	8
5.	Ambrose Alli University Library, Ekpoma.	Fed.	1	1	6	8
6.	Rivers State University of Science and Technology Library, PortHarcourt	State	1	2	6	9
7.	Cross River State University of Science and Technology Library, Calabar.	State	1	1	6	8
8.	Delta State University Library, Abraka.	State	1	1	7	9
9.	Akwa-Ibom State University of Technology Library, Uyo.	State	1	1	6	8
10.	Niger-Delta University Library, Wilberforce Island, Yenogoa.	State	1	1	6	8
	Total		10	11	62	83

Key: UL=University Librarian, DUL=Deputy University Librarian, DIV=Division, Sect = Section

Source: University Librarians (Research field work,2009)

Data Analysis and Discussion

What are the types of records created in university libraries?

Table II: Type of Records Created in university libraries

TYPES OF RECORD	Status of university library	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
Financial Records						
Budget requests	Federal	31	93.94	2	6.06	100
	State	31	70.46	13	29.54	100
Actual budget allocation	Federal	30	90.9	3	9.1	100
	State	31	70.46	13	29.54	100
Statement of expenditure	Federal	25	75.76	8	24.24	100
	State	33	75	11	25	100
Shipment receipts and purchase order	Federal	24	72.73	9	27.27	100
	State	30	68.18	14	31.82	100

Receipts of money received or expended	Federal	25	75.76	8	24.24	100
	State	26	59.09	18	40.91	100
Personnel Records						
Initial application form	Federal	24	72.72	9	27.28	100
	State	30	68.19	14	31.81	100
Result of physical examination	Federal	23	69.69	10	30.31	100
	State	30	68.18	14	31.82	100
Interview notations	Federal	21	63.63	12	36.37	100
	State	23	52.28	21	47.72	100
Periodical appraisal / promotion/ confirmation records	Federal	26	78.79	7	21.21	100
	State	35	79.55	9	20.45	100
Transfers	Federal	25	75.75	8	24.25	100
	State	36	81.81	8	18.19	100
Personnel Records	Status of university library	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
Disciplinary actions	Federal	25	75.76	8	24.24	100
	State	38	86.36	6	13.64	100
Releases and retiring	Federal	22	66.67	11	33.33	100
	State	28	63.63	16	36.37	100
Taxes paid	Federal	15	45.46	18	54.54	100
	State	21	47.73	23	52.27	100
Organisational Records/Service Records						
Manuals	Federal	28	84.85	5	15.15	100
	State	41	93.18	3	6.82	100
Reports	Federal	29	87.88	4	12.12	100
	State	42	95.46	2	4.54	100
Directives	Federal	28	84.85	5	15.15	100
	State	42	95.46	2	4.54	100
Minute of meetings	Federal	28	84.85	5	15.15	100
	State	41	93.18	3	6.82	100
Policy statement	Federal	24	72.73	9	27.27	100
	State	27	61.37	17	38.63	100
Machine-readable records	Federal	23	69.7	10	30.3	100
	State	19	43.18	25	56.82	100

Table II shows that federal university library create more financial records, budget requests records is the record mostly created for federal university libraries with 31 (93.94%) for federal as against 31 (70.46%) for state. For personnel record the records created for both federal and state is periodic appraisal/promotion/confirmation records with 26(78.79%) to 35 (79.55%) of state university libraries for organisation record federal university and state university libraries create more of reports records.

Table II: Storage facilities available for records management in federal and state university libraries

What types of storage facilities are available for records management in federal and state university libraries?

Type of Storage Facilities	Status of University	Agree Strongly/ Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
cupboard	Federal	22	66.66	11	33.34	100
	State	33	75	11	25	100
wooden shelves	Federal	21	63.64	12	36.36	100
	State	31	70.46	13	29.54	100
steel shelves	Federal	29	87.88	4	12.12	100
	State	43	97.73	1	2.27	100
drawers for flat files	Federal	26	78.78	7	21.22	100
	State	36	81.82	8	18.18	100
box files	Federal	20	60.61	13	39.39	100
	State	29	65.91	15	34.09	100
top of tables / floor	Federal	14	42.42	19	57.58	100
	State	21	47.73	23	52.27	100
electronic formats	Federal	23	69.7	10	30.3	100
	State	21	47.72	23	52.28	100

From table III librarian in state and federal university libraries agree and strongly agree that the storage facilities mostly use is steel shelves. The figure are 29(87.88%) federal university libraries as against 43 (97.73%) of the state university libraries respectively.

Table IV: Record Maintenance in the university libraries

How are records maintained by the federal and state university libraries?

Record Maintenance in University Libraries	Status of University	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
a) Filing						
alphabetic	Federal	31	93.94	2	6.06	100
	State	40	90.9	4	9.1	100
numeric	Federal	12	36.36	21	63.64	100
	State	32	72.73	12	27.27	100
alphanumeric	Federal	24	72.72	9	27.28	100
	State	38	86.36	6	13.64	100

subject	Federal	30	90.9	3	9.1	100
	State	40	90.9	4	9.1	100
code	Federal	14	42.43	19	57.57	100
	State	28	63.64	16	36.36	100
filed together	Federal	5	15.16	28	84.84	100
	State	17	38.64	27	61.36	100

	Status of University	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
all of the above	Federal	9	27.27	24	72.73	100
	State	28	63.63	16	36.37	100
other (please specify)	Federal	27	81.82	6	18.18	100
	State	24	54.54	20	45.46	100
b) By Retention						
Inventory / stock taking	Federal	28	84.85	5	15.15	100
	State	34	77.27	10	22.73	100
appraisal	Federal	25	75.76	8	24.24	100
	State	26	59.09	18	40.91	100
all of the above	Federal	17	51.51	16	48.49	100
	State	19	43.18	25	56.82	100
c) disposal of records						
shredding	Federal	19	57.57	14	42.43	100
	State	16	36.36	28	63.64	100
pulverizing	Federal	11	33.33	22	66.67	100
	State	21	47.72	23	52.28	100
burning	Federal	16	48.48	17	51.52	100
	State	27	61.36	17	38.64	100
maceration	Federal	11	33.33	22	66.67	100
	State	20	45.46	24	54.54	100
pulping	Federal	12	36.36	21	63.64	100
	State	21	47.72	23	52.28	100

	Status of University	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total %
		N	%	N	%	
incineration	Federal	11	33.33	22	66.67	100
	State	21	47.73	23	52.27	100
d) Preservation						
control of environment factors	Federal	29	87.87	4	12.13	100
	State	35	79.54	9	20.46	100
proper storage	Federal	31	93.94	2	6.06	100
	State	36	81.82	8	18.18	100
proper handling	Federal	31	93.94	2	6.06	100

	State	36	81.82	8	18.18	100
duplication	Federal	25	75.76	8	24.24	100
	State	41	93.18	3	6.82	100
dispersal	Federal	21	63.64	12	36.36	100
	State	25	56.82	19	43.18	100
regular cleaning	Federal	25	75.75	8	24.25	100
	State	37	84.09	7	15.91	100

From table IV, federal and state university libraries file more alphabetically with 31 (93.94%) as against 40 (90.90%) respectively federal and state university library dispose more by shredding and preserve more by proper handling.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Both federal and state university library create records, though more are created by the federal university libraries than the state university libraries, budget request records are the records most created in federal university library this result agree with earlier studies such as those of Asogwo (2004) and Morris (1992) who stated that basically four types of records are created in the library from table II, federal and state university libraries used mostly steel shelves as storage facilities, there are however shortages of storage facilities. This is in line with the study of Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu (2001) on the management of staff records in the university library were they noted that those are limited storage facilities hence some files were kept on tables from table iii, federal and state university libraries file more by alphabetic sequence. For retention and disposal, though the figures for the federal is a little higher. Federal university library dispose more of their record by shedding, while state university library dispose more by burning. This agrees with Osakwe (2009) when she observed that there were only three major ways of disposing records in universities in the south-south zone. Burning, outright sales and burring, modern method such as shredding, naceration or pulping were not frequently used. In light of the finding the following recommendations were made:

- i) State university libraries should create more records because they have historical financial and evidential value.
- ii) Adequate storage facilities should be used for records
- iii) Adequate filling systems should be adopted for filing record so that they can be retrieved easily. The basic type of filing system should be alphabetic, numeric, and alphanumeric filing system.
- iv) Proper retention and disposal should be done
- v) Environmental control and good handling practice will help extend the life of record sin the university libraries

vi) In-house training should be carried out.

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