

CHALLENGES FACING RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the challenges facing records management in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka. The research design adopted for the study is the survey method using the questionnaire to illicit information from the respondents. The target population consists of fifty (50) staff (academic and non-academic) of the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and tabulations were used in analyzing the data. The study revealed the absence of ICTs, absence of a purpose built records centre and absence of records' managers as major challenges facing records management in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

Keywords: Challenges; records management; ICTs.

INTRODUCTION

Records are information created, received and maintained as evidences by an organization or persons in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business (Herrold 2000). The International Council on Archives (ICA) defined records as "recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional/individual activity and comprises content and context to provide evidence of the activity.

Records can also be tangible objects or digital information which has value to an organization. For example birth certificates, medical x-rays, office documents, databases and application data.

Obaro (2002) defined records as documents of an account, event or fact in permanent form, irrespective of media format.

However, records management is the practice of maintaining the records of an

organization from the time they were created up to their eventual disposal (Houghton 1993). Therefore, the act manner, practice or pattern of managing, handling, supervising or controlling records is known as records management.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

To meet the challenges of managing work, managers must understand the potentials of records management which include the source of the records, how to retain the records and develop the management of the records.

Over the years records have been kept in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka for future reasons and references. Without the proper management of records in the Institute such as records identification, location, retrieval of students files, examination results, students' data cards, records of registered students in each department, records of graduating and non-graduating students and so on, it will be a difficult office duty for staff of the Institute.

These records are important and may be needed by both staff and students at any time. The possibility of having them as at when needed depends on the way the records are kept and managed. Therefore, this study is set to investigate the challenges associated with records management in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is set to:

1. Investigate the kinds of records found in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.
2. Highlight the various forms of records management used in keeping records in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.
3. Examine the challenges facing the management of records kept in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the kinds of records found in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka?
2. What are the various forms of records management used in keeping records in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka?
3. What are the challenges facing the management of records kept in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every organization needs to keep records for historical, informational and business values. There are different types of records found in an organization. They include staff records, employment records, job performance records, customers records, correspondence records, business records, legal records, deeds of agreement, management policy records, accounts records, departmental records, acquisition records, sales records, minutes of meetings, building plans records, and so on (Obaro and Obaro 2013).

Amagada (2009) stated that a higher percentage of records found in institutions of learning are students' records showing their years of entry, subject qualifications, proposed courses of study, statement or certificates of results, school fees receipts, birth certificates or age declaration, academic performance of students, promotional and graduation records.

Denyer (1999) gave four categories of records found in an organization as folder system records, card index records, envelopes records and combined application form records. He further stated that the types of office files found in an organization include Lever Arch files, Concertina files, Motorized files and Transfer files.

Lever Arch files are the commonest files used in storing records in general use in offices. Concertina files are those files made of cardboard and contain a number of separate pockets, being flexible in capacity by reason of their concertina like gussets along each end of the file.

Motorized files are those files for large concerns. These take the forms of an electrically operated console whereby the seated operator merely pushes a button or the dialing of a letter and brings out the relevant filing tray into vision and within reach.

Transfer files are needed when either the equipment cannot accommodate any more folders, however tightly packed or there is a vast amount of 'dead' materials which need clearing out.

No matter the method used, the choice of storing records will certainly have an effect on the efficiency of the storage system. So the planning of records management includes planning the information needs of the organization, developing records storage plan which include the short and long term housing of physical and digital information and executing a retention policy on the disposal of records which are no longer required for operational reasons.

From the foregoing, records management practices aid the capture classification and on-going management of records throughout their life cycle.

According to the World Bank (2007) records keeping faces so many challenges which include using computerized information systems in records management, limited capacity to manage records, over crowded and unsuitable storage of paper, absence of purpose built records centre, poor security, confidential control and absence of core staff competencies.

Similarly, the quality of management poses another challenge for records management. Other challenges include the absence of legislation to encourage modern records management practices, absence of a dedicated budget for records management and the poor management of the organizations resources.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is the survey method. The population consists of both the academic and non-academic staff of the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

The academic staff are thirty (30) in number while the non-academic staff are twenty (20) as at the time of this study. This will bring the total number of respondents to fifty (50). Thus fifty (50) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents by the researchers. The entire copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and the responses analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The interpretation and analysis are presented below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

TABLE 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	22	44%
Female	28	56%
Total	50	100%

Table 1 above shows that there are 22 (44%) male staff of the Institute and 28(56%) female Institute staff. This goes to show that there are more female staff in the Institute used for the study.

Table 2: Various kinds of records found in the Institute of Education

Types of record	Frequency	Percentage %
Students data file records	50	100%
Staff records	50	100%
University bulletins	50	100%
Exam records	50	100%
School fees records	50	100%
Sales of Institute form records	50	100%
Students' Result	50	100%
Minutes of Institutes staff meeting	50	100%
Business records	Nil	Nil
Correspondence records	Nil	Nil
Legal records	Nil	Nil

Table 2 above shows that the various kinds of records found in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka include students data file records, staff records, university bulletins, examination records, school fees records, sales of Institute form records, students results, and minutes of Institute staff meeting while records not found in the Institute include business records, correspondence records and legal records. This goes to show that the Institute is majorly concerned with academic and staff records. This goes to support Amagada (2009) who stated that a higher percentage of records found in Institutions of learning are students' records.

Table 3: various forms of records management used in keeping records in the Institute.

Forms of records management used in the Institute	Frequency	Percentage %
Individual office filing system	50	100%
General office filling system	40	80%
Office drawer system	40	80%
Open shelves system	40	80%
Records centre system	10	20%
ICT record system	5	10%

Table 3 above shows that the commonest form of records management technique for keeping records in the Institute of Education is the individual office filing system (50, 100%), followed by general office filing system, office drawer system, open shelves system, 40(80%) accordingly, followed by record centre system, 10(20%) with ICT Record system coming last with just 5(10%). This goes to show that ICT record system as a form of records management technique is still at its lowest level in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 4: Challenges facing the management of records in the Institute.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage%
Absence of ICTs	50	100%
Absence of a purpose built records centre	50	100%
Absence of records' managers	50	100%
Absence of budgets for records management	40	80%
Poor records storage facilities	30	60%
Inadequate filling shelves & drawers	20	40%
Absence of legislations on records management	10	20%

From Table 4 above the greatest challenges facing the management of records in the Institute include absence of ICTs, absence of a purpose built records centre and the absence of records managers (50, 100%) respectively. Others include absence of budgets for records management (40, 80%), poor records storage facilities (30, 60%), inadequate filing shelves and drawers (20, 40%) and the absence of legislations on records management (10, 20%).

One may, therefore, conclude that the absence of ICTs, a purpose built records centre and the absence of records' managers are greatly hindering effective records management practice in the Institute.

Discussion

The study testifies to the fact that records are highly generated by the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka and the highest types of records found in the Institute are students and staff records. All these records have historical, informational and fiscal values. These records will continue to maintain these values until their eventual disposal (Houghton 1993), thus the need for a records management policy that will enhance the safety and longevity of the records.

The study also showed that the records management techniques used by the Institute's staff are very ineffective and inadequate leading to the poor management of the records.

It was also discovered that the absence of ICTs, a purpose built records centre and the absence of records' managers are major challenges affecting the effective management of records in the Institute.

Ihediwa (2001) Opined that no matter the technique used in records management, the choice of storing records will certainly have an effect on the efficiency of the storage system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the data collected, one may therefore conclude that challenges of records management in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka hinge on the absence of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), even in this 21st Century where there is a lot of awareness campaign programs about the benefits of a paperless society, absence of a purpose built records centre, absence of records' managers among others.

Based on the findings and conclusions derived from the study, the following recommendations are made to enhance records management practices and to overcome the challenges facing records management in the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

1. Provision of computers and other ICT facilities for staff of the Institute.
2. Employment of qualified professional records managers and training of the Institutes' staff in the act of records management.
3. Building of a multi-purpose records centre for the Institute with modern records keeping equipment.
4. Making budgetary allocations for records management in the Institute.
5. Making legislations to back-up records management practices in the Institute.

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