

UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.17 (1); ***January-June, 2024*** https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL:* http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

ASSESSING RECORDS AVAILABILITY AND PROTECTION PRACTICES IN ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

Amobi Chinelo Maryann
Department of Technology and Vocational education
Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email- cm.amobi@unizik.edu.ng

Ufondu, Chidiebere Christopher
Department of Technology and Vocational education
Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
E-Mail: cc.ufondu@unizik.edu.ng

Ogbuefi, Theodorah Ogechukwu
Department of Technology and Vocational education
Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ochiaghaoge@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study assessed records availability and protection practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-east Nigeria. Two research questions with three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria. The population of this study comprised 83 staff in the alumni relations offices of public owned colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi States respectively. The entire population was studied without sampling, since the population is manageable. Hence, the sample size for the study is 83 staff. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha and the coefficients are 0.87, 0.83 showed that the instrument is reliable. Findings of the study show that there are significant differences in the extent of application of records availability and protection management practices in alumni relations offices based on types of institutions (Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnic). Therefore, the highest means obtained by Polytechnics implies that, Polytechnics are better than other institutions (Universities and Colleges). It is therefore recommended that tertiary institutions should digitize their records to improve service delivery and improve efficiency in operations in South-Eastern tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Tertiary Institutions and Records Management Practices

Introduction

Tertiary educational are designed to produce well-educated, well-informed people. These institutes offer a formal education that includes scheduled teaching and learning activities in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. The external and internal levels of management of tertiary educational institutions can both be considered (Chineze and Olele, 2011). The National Universities Commission (NUC), a statutory agency with the authority to direct and control the operations of Nigerian Universities, is the federal government's external arm. For polytechnics and colleges of education, respectively, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) have the same authority. Internally, the Provosts and Rectors serve as the Senate's senior officers, with the Registrars serving as the Senate's secretaries. These Senates oversee the internal academic operations of the universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics. The fact that tertiary institutions must answer to their owners—who may be Federal, State, or private—makes them accountable to their owners, which may be Federal, State and private individuals, make it mandatory for them to operate an efficient record management practice.

This research work is interested in records availability and protection management practices. Availability refers to the quality of being able to be reached or used. Availability is the status of accessibility at a particular point in time. In the word of Joshua (2011), availability expresses how a material can easily be gotten and used for a particular purpose and time. In the view of Nicholas in Ihionkhan (2015), availability is the ability of a user to access information or resources in a specific location and in the correct format. Within the framework of records management, availability refers to the need for an organization to maintain records in a manner that ensures timely, efficient and accurate retrieval of needed information (Chaterera, 2012). The capacity of alumni relations office of tertiary institutions to carry out its mandate effectively depends on the availability of necessary and sufficient documents of present and past students.

The availability of students' information plays a major role in facilitating the purpose of alumni relations office in tertiary institutions. Hence, Atulomah (2011) averred that, the availability of records management practices form the basis for formulating policies, managing resources and service delivery. It enables staff of alumni relations office to find students' information easily and efficiently. This may be achieved through a functional alumni association in tertiary institutions with elected officers governing its affairs can come in either to make personal donations or facilitate such donations based on their networks and affiliations as members and ambassadors of the institution.

According to Chaterera (2012), protection in the context of records management refers to the requirement for a record keeping program to offer a reasonable level of security to important records like private, confidential, and top-secret files as well as those records that are essential for the continuity of an organization. In addition to protecting and limiting the transfer of student information to unauthorized parties, records management procedures also enable sharing

of information inside higher institutions on a need-to-know basis. In accordance with the privacy policies of tertiary institutions, care should be taken when making copies of student papers that contain confidential information to guarantee that the copy is guaranteed the same level of protection as the original. In essence, employees of the office of alumni relations must see to the protection and preservation of students' documents and information from all manageable threats within and outside tertiary institutions.

As a result, alumni relations offices are crucial to the management and performance of higher institutions. To assist alumni in the management of their school, especially by informing them of developments and soliciting their feedback on them, alumni relations offices must be established. Their alma mater's activities are made easier by the alumni relations office (Newman and Petrosko, 2011). Students—past, present, and future—are perhaps the most valuable resources for any educational institution. Alumni are increasingly important to an institution's success and are viewed as its shareholders (Semova, 2012). The main goal of tertiary institutions' alumni relations offices is to improve ties between students and their alumni while enhancing the status of their parents tertiary institution.

The fact that graduates of higher institutions in South-East Nigeria are dispersed throughout the globe and are concerned about the advancement of their alma mater is not surprising. Alumni associations are able to maintain the memories and lengthy history of their universities through the records management procedures used by higher institutions. Analysis of record management strategies used by alumni relations offices of tertiary schools in Nigeria is crucial because records management is the one information drive of tertiary institutions. In Anambra State, it is considered that public universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics have effective record-keeping procedures. However, empirical data must be provided to back up this supposition. In light of this, the study aims to assess records availability and protection practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-east Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

In the context of alumni relations offices within tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria, there exists a critical need to assess the adequacy of records availability and protection practices. As these offices play a vital role in maintaining lifelong connections with alumni and supporting institutional growth, the absence or inadequacy of efficient records management may lead to various operational, institutional, and data security challenges. Despite the increasing reliance on digital systems and information technology in these offices, there is limited empirical research to comprehensively evaluate the extent to which records availability and protection practices are effectively implemented. This knowledge gap poses potential risks to data integrity, alumni engagement, and the overall effectiveness of alumni relations efforts in the region. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the current state of records management practices in South-East Nigerian tertiary institution alumni relations offices, identify existing challenges, and

provide insights for enhancing records availability and protection strategies to better serve both the institutions and their alumni communities

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess records availability and protection practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-east Nigeria, Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent of application of:

1. Records availability management practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South -East, Nigeria.
2. Records protection management practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South -East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the extent of application of records availability management practices of the staff of alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of application of records protection management practices of the staff of alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents from alumni relations office of tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria and the extent of application of records availability management practices
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents from alumni relations office of tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria and the extent of application of records protection management practices

Research Method

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria. The population of this study comprised 83 staff in the alumni relations offices of public owned colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi States respectively. The entire population was studied without sampling, since the population is manageable. Hence, the sample size for the study is 83 staff. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Assessing records availability and protection practices in alumni relations offices Questionnaire (ARAPPAROQ), developed by the researcher after the review of related literature. The instrument was validated by three experts. Two expert in Technology and Vocational Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In establishing the reliability for the instrument, copies of the instrument were administered to 20 staff in the alumni relations offices of public owned colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in Delta State who were not part of the research population. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha

formula to determine the internal consistency and co-efficient of 0.87, 0.83 for clusters A to B respectively .Cronbach co- efficient obtained show that the instrument is reliable. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in their institutions with the help of one research assistant in the alumni relations offices of each institution in Anambra, Enugu and Imo States. Required numbers of copies for each institution was given to the research assistant who distributed the questionnaire to staff in the alumni relations offices and followed them up with telephone calls and text messages. The distribution and collection of copies of the questionnaire lasted for two weeks. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' views. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Null hypothesis is accepted where the p-value is equal to or greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), at an appropriate degree of freedom; otherwise, the null hypothesis will be rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: Research Question 1: What are the mean ratings of staff of alumni relations offices on the extent of application of records availability management practices of tertiary institutions in South-East.

Table 1: Mean ratings of staff of alumni relations offices on the extent of application of records availability management practices of tertiary institutions in South-East.

S/N	Items To what extent do you:	*M*	*SD*	Remark
1	ensure that to students' records readily accessible	3.40	1.17	ME
2	ensure that students' records readily useable	3.19	1.21	ME
3	ensure that all students' records are properly labeled in cabinets	2.94	1.12	ME
5	ensure regular maintenance of students records in appropriate folder	3.27	1.23	ME
6	ensure that backup copies of students' records are created	2.94	1.31	ME
	Grand Mean	3.14		ME

Results from table 1 show that items 1-5 are practiced to a moderate extent. Grand mean of 3.14 also shows that the application of records availability management practices of tertiary institutions in South-East is applied to a moderate extent.

Research Question 2: What are the mean ratings of staff of alumni relations offices on the extent of application of records protection management practices of tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean ratings of staff of alumni relations offices on the extent of application of records protection management practices based on types of institution

S/N	Items	*M*	*SD*	Remark
	To what extent do you:			
7	ensure that security breaches of students' information are reported	3.08	1.17	ME
8	use database management tools to safeguard students records	2.80	1.30	ME
9	use encryption codes to prevent unauthorized access to students' records	2.59	1.21	ME
10	use firewalls application to protect students' records	2.66	1.17	ME
11	use antispyware to protect records from unlawful processing	2.75	1.20	ME
12	ensure that students records are protect from fire and other hazards	3.10	1.32	ME
13	ensure that security breaches of students' information are reported	2.69	1.23	ME
14	use database management tools to safeguard students records	3.12	1.27	ME
	Grand Mean	2.85		ME

Results from table 2 show that items 7-14 are practiced to a moderate extent. Grand mean of 2.85 again shows that the application of records protection management practices of tertiary institutions in South-East is applied to a moderate extent.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent of application of records availability management practices in alumni relations offices based on type of institutions (universities).

UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.17 (1); *January-June, 2024* https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 *Impact Factor*: 5.156; *2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;*
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

Table 3: ANOVA on the mean ratings of staff of alumni relations on the extent of application of records protection management practice based on the type of institutions

Source of variance	SS	MS	df	F	Sig-2Tailed
Between Groups	219.211	109.605	2	5.873	0.004
Within Groups	1482.958	18.662	80		
	1712.169	**22.78**	82		

The results in table 3 show that, F-ratio of 5.879 at 2df numerator and 80df denominator, with P-value 0.004 which is less than 0.05 (0.004<0.05). The first null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Consequently, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent of application of records availability management practices in alumni relations offices based on type of institutions (Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnic

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent of application of records protection management practices in alumni relations offices based on type of institutions (universities, colleges and polytechnics).

The results in table 3 show that, F-ratio of 7.880 at 2df numerator and 80df denominator, with P-value 0.001 which is less than 0.05 (0.001<0.05). The two null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Consequently, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent of application of records protection management practices in alumni relations offices based on type of institutions (universities, colleges and polytechnics).

Discussion of Findings

Application of Records Availability Management Practices Based on the Types of Institution

One important finding of the study is that the highest mean rating obtained by Polytechnics is suggestive that they have a better records availability management practices than Universities and Colleges of Education. The results showed that there is significant difference in the extent of application of records availability management practices in alumni relations offices based on types of institutions

(Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnic Therefore, the highest mean obtained by Polytechnics implies that, Polytechnics are better than other institutions (Universities and Colleges) in terms of records management practices in alumni relations offices. The result of this study is in consonance with Major and Omenu (2016) that examined the extent to which the records management systems of higher educational institutions in Bayelsa State and concluded that the records availability management systems adopted in higher educational institutions in Bayelsa State were grossly inadequate but that of polytechnics is better.

Application of Records Protection Management Practices Based on the Types of Institution

The study revealed that the highest mean rating obtained by Polytechnics is suggestive that they have a better records protection management practices than Universities and Colleges of Education. The results showed that there is significant difference in the extent of application of records protection management practices in alumni relations offices based on types of institutions (Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnic Therefore, the highest mean obtained by Polytechnics implies that, Polytechnics are better than other institutions (Universities and Colleges) in terms of records protection management practices in alumni relations offices. The result of this study is in line with the study of Njeru, Chege and Ng'eno (2018) which concerned with record protection management practices. However, Njeru, Chege and Ng'eno's study failed to determine the status of records protection management practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the state of records availability and protection practices in alumni relations offices of tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. Through a comprehensive analysis of data gathered from surveys, interviews, and document reviews, several key findings have emerged. This study underscores the significance of records management in alumni relations and recommends a proactive approach to address the identified challenges. The findings serve as a foundation for future research and as a guide for tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria to enhance their alumni records management practices for the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were arrived at to address issues identified records management practices particularly in Universities and Colleges of education in South-Eastern Nigeria.

1. A decentralized registry system should be established in Universities and Colleges of education to avoid unnecessary delays in accessing files.
2. Government should formulate records management policies to guide the officers in Universities and Colleges of education records management

3. Digitization of records should be done to improve service delivery and improve efficiency in operations in South-Eastern tertiary institutions.
4. The management should also plan for internal and external training for their record staff members to familiarize with the new trends in the field.
5. Automation of the records management system should be considered in the management of records in South-Eastern tertiary institutions

REFERENCES

Atulomah, B. C. (2011). Perceived records management practice and decision making among university administrators in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e- journal)*. 541.

Chaterera, F. (2012). Towards harnessing e-government adoption in Zimbabwe. *Mousaion,* 30(2), 92-107.

Chineze, U. and Olele, C.O. (2011). Academic accountability, quality and assessment of higher education in Nigeria. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, *3*(1), 1-22

Ihionkhan, C. E. (2015). *Assessment of the provision and resources utilization for the implementation of office technology and management curriculum in polytechnics in South-south Nigeria.* Unpublished Doctoral Degree Dissertation, Department of Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Joshua, K.W. (2011). *Utilizing available instructional materials for effective teaching of business studies in Ondo State*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Lagos State University, Lagos. Nigeria.

Major, N.B, and Omenu, F. (2016). Records management in higher educational Institutions in Bayelsa State: Implications for School Administration. *World scientific News, 26*, 11-20

Newman, M.D., and Petrosko, J. M. (2011). Predictors of alumni association membership. *Research in Higher Education, 52(*7), 738-759

Njeru, F.M., Chege, A and Ng'eno, E. (2018). An evaluation of records management practices at the parliamentary service commission of Kenya (PSC). *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2* (7), 515-522

Semova, M., (2012). *Added value of alumni networks to universities. Quality indicators for the work of alumni relation offices*. Annuaire de l Úniversite de Sofia. St. Kliment Ohridski Publication