



Research Paper

Management of Students' Records in Academic Departments of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina, Nigeria

Abdullahi Abubakar Yaya

Musa Abdullahi Central Library
Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at investigating the management of students' records in academic departments of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic. The main objective of the study was to examine the management of these records. The study investigated the kinds of students' records available in academic departments of the institution under study; facilities used in managing students' records. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and questionnaire was used for data collection. Simple frequency tables and percentages were employed to present, interpret and analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires. Finally, it was revealed that poor maintenance culture and lack of disaster control plan were the major challenges. The study recommended that automation of students' records and proper maintenance culture should be maintained.

KEYWORDS: *Information and Communication Technology, Students Records, ICT Facilities, Record Management.*

Received 29 December, 2020; Accepted 10 January, 2021 © The author(s) 2021.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION

A record is regarded as any recorded data regardless of its format or medium created or received by any individual or organisation and kept for, decision, policies, legal, function, transactions or evidential purposes. Records are very critical in an organizational setup that its importance has been recognized beyond academic setting because of its information, research and educational value. This is because continuity depends on availability of useful records of past activities.

The term 'record' derived its origin from the Latin word "recordari" meaning to be mindful of, or to remember (Abdulrahman, 2015). It refers to recorded information, regardless of form or medium, received and maintained by an agency, institution, organization or an individual.

Reitz (2004) defined records management as the field of management devoted to achieving accuracy, efficiency and economy in the systematic creation, retention, conservation, dissemination, use and disposition of the official records of a company, government agency, organisation or institution whether in physical or electronic form, usually undertaken by a professional trained records manager on the basis of thorough records survey.

Management of students' records in academic department is an important task for efficient and effective management of academic activities. In the conventional paper based organizations such as the educational institutions, paper continues to be viewed as the material for records in the academic documentations. Generally, record keeping must be guided by some level of confidentiality, proper maintenance, security, preservation of the content and context, among others (Iwhiwhu, 2007).

Commenting on the relevance of students data to the institution, Eghosa (2017) noted that for educational development, personnel, educational planners and administrators need to have adequate and accurate data of students' enrolment and student's school records for effective planning and management of the educational system. The enormous rise in the number of students in the institution as well as the multiplicity of programmes have made polytechnic personnel to handle a very large quantity of data which must be accessed in order to provide information for various purposes.

In this regard, records management is an issue of great concern to governments, parents, students, individuals and organizations. In the past, desperate efforts were made to improve the situation in many institutions through the introduction of computers and internet services as well as development of database

management. Although all these efforts did not seem to help the situation as the records management system was still conventionally paper-based and manual in operation (Akor and Udensi, 2013).

Popoola (2003) noted that there were problems on records creation in Nigerian Universities. He further added that the main problem was their effective creation and control. This is because records management requires more funds, space and equipment among others in the university and Polytechnic systems. Accurate and up-to-date students' records are required to ensure equity, fair-play and justice in the award of graduation and prizes to students. The Ngulube & Chinyemba (2005) holds the view that records management is about the capturing and maintaining of accurate, complete, reliable and useable documentation of activities of an organization in order to meet legal, evidential, accountability and social/cultural requirements.

Abdulrahman (2015) is of the view that management is concerned with the organization and directing of different kinds of resources for specific purposes. Adequate management as can be seen from the above definitions involves five principles; Planning, Organization, Staffing Supervision and Control.

- Planning;- It involves policy formulation, stating objectives and goals of the university, budgeting, preparation of programme of services as well as procedure and methods.
- Organizations;- It implies organizing both the human and material resources together towards the actualization of the set objectives or goals. This will help to give one sense of direction. That is, placing the right resource in the right place at the right time for the execution of the university goal.
- Staffing;- This relates issues in terms of personnel, their adequacy, training and ethical conduct.
- Supervision;- This involves inspecting the job performance of the staff, instructing and guiding, correcting and advising the subordinate staff.
- Control;- This entails ensuring quality of the services provided by the records personnel in the university. It also involves conformity with laid down standards in records management.

Facilities used in the Management of Students' Records

Records are processed and kept either in hard copy or electronic format. However, hard copy source documents of records can also be scanned into the Collaborator Electronic Records Management System (Eden, 2018). In this age of globalization there is a shift in global development agenda and the Nigerian government is introducing some reforms in our educational system with a view to repositioning it in line with the vision of Information and Communication Technology (Osakwe, 2012). Gama (2008) classified technologies, which are elements of ICT facilities in libraries and information centres as follows:-

- Information Machine e.g. Computers
- Media Communication for example Radio and Television.
- Telecommunication technologies and equipment e.g. satellite, facsimile machines.

The purpose and essence of any record system is the right information in the right place in the right order, at the right time for the right person at the lowest cost (David, 2017).

The use of information technology cannot be ignored in any sphere of human endeavours. David (2017), highlights the facilities as computer-related technology used to process, store and transmit data. It is a generic term referring to a technology which is being used for collecting, storing, editing and passing on of information in various forms. ICT has transformed the way in which organizations store and manage information (Iwhiwhu, 2005). Organizations today have adopted the use of ICT in order to cope with the ever increasing information generated within the organization (Lyman, 2014). Stressing the use of technology in records management, David (2017) opined that in developing record keeping solutions, it is necessary to understand the evolution that is taking place in the use of technology. Modern data storage facilities like computers, microfilm, CD-Rom, Cassettes, E-mail, collaboration software and hardware, technological advancement had contributed to the effective storage and management of school and students records (Osakwe,2012). The application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to the management of records in offices therefore, will go a long way in making such records accessible and usable.

Methods of Preserving Students' Records

Odogwu (2007), is of the view that, today, preservation is an umbrella term for many policies and options for conservation treatments. Alegbeleye (1997) proposed a model that could be used in preserving and conserving records. The model could be used at three different levels;

- Minimal level
- Middle level
- Full scale level

Minimal Level: the level refers to the measures to improve the physical handling of the materials when they are circulated amongst the users through cleaning, proper placement of the materials, minor repairs etc.

Middle Level: this comprised all elements under the minimal level plus preventive conservation. This includes environmental control and provision of a moderate stable temperature, humidity and controlling exposure to light and pollutants.

Full Scale Level: it embraces both the minimal and middle levels. This can only be achieved through photocopying, microfilming, de-acidification, lamination book binding in case of book form of material and digitization.

Challenges Faced in Managing Students' Records

Effective records management involves creation, storage, retrieval, maintenance, disposition and use of compact and other manual or electronic means. A number of reasons could be responsible for this challenge. Recordpoint (2018) states the common challenges facing records management which includes information overload, lack of resources, lack of awareness, keeping everything is not the best policy. Other are decentralization, facing today, preparing for tomorrow, maturity and expense.

With these issues in mind, government agencies face fundamental hurdles in the implementation and enforcement of a plan to modernize their records and information management programs. Against this background, students' records should be adequately managed for future use. This enables school administrators to know the academic and general progress of their students and also to report to parents or guardians when necessary. This also enables school administrators to inform employers who may require certain information about their students for employment when out of school.

Problem Statement

The fact that educational records are very vital in the management of educational institutions, it is disheartening to observe that many Nigerian Tertiary Institutions do not take record keeping seriously and most of their essential records are badly stored and are not properly secured. As a result of this, cases of lost or misplaced documents as well as butchered or incomplete files become a common occurrence in these institutions. This is a bane of the Nigerian higher educational system as not only affect the smooth, effective and efficient running of the schools, but grossly affects staff and students who often need such records for important purposes.

It is against this background that the current study sought to investigate on how students' records are managed in academic departments of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina. This was to find out the challenges faced in managing such records and to recommend effective techniques in their management.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to find out the management of students records in the academic departments of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina. To achieve this, the following specific objectives were designed to be achieved.

1. To find out the kinds of students' records available in the academic departments of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina.
2. To examine the purpose of using students' records in the departments.
3. To determine the facilities used in managing students' records in the departments.
4. To establish the methods used in preserving students' records in the departments.
5. To find out the challenges faced in the management of students records in the departments

II. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey method was adopted in this study. This method describes a current situation with a subject and involves collection of data to answer the research questions (Sam & Elizabeth, 2007). The population of the study comprises 81 participants from 27 academic departments. Considering the study population, which is 81, the whole population was sampled. There are three categories of respondents. They include, Heads of Departments, Examination Officers and Secretaries. Structured questionnaire was personally developed by the researcher and validated by expert to elicit data from the respondents. Table of frequency count and percentage were used in analysing the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eighty one (81) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents also 27 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to each of the three categories of respondents (Heads of Departments, Secretaries and Examination Officers). Out of this number, 64 were duly filled and returned. This represents 79% return rate as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

S/N	Respondents	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage
1.	Heads of Departments	27	21	26
2.	Examination Officers	27	19	23
3.	Secretaries	27	24	30
	Total	81	64	79

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 show that 21(26%) questionnaire were from the head of departments, 19(23%) are from Examination officers and 24(30%) from the secretaries.

Personal Data of the Respondents

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	62	97
2.	Female	2	3
	Total	64	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the result in Table 2, show that the male respondents were the majority with 62(97%) responses and 2(3%) were females. This implies that there were more males amongst the respondents than the female. This signifies that most of the custodians of the student records were male.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1.	18-25	0	0
2.	26-35	17	27
3.	36-50	31	48
4.	51 and above	16	25
	Total	64	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The results presented in Table 3 reveal the age of the respondents. From the table, it can be seen that no respondents were between ages the of 18-25years. Respondents between 26-35years were 17 (27%) in number, follow by 31(48%) who were between 36-50 years of age. Only 16 (25%) are between the ages of 51 and above. From the results, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of 36-50 years. This implies that the custodians of student records has the requisite exprience to handle students records.

Table 4: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	OND/Diploma	5	8
2.	HND	12	19
3.	Degree	18	28
4.	Masters	26	40
5.	PhD.	3	5
	Total	64	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The result in Table 4 show the educational qualifications of the respondents. From the table, it can be seen that 5 respondents representing 8% were OND/Diploma holders, 12(19%) respondents are HND holders, 18(28%) were Degree holders, and 26(40%) had Masters, while only 3(5%) had PhD. Conclusively, this means that majority of the respondents were has the required knowledge to handle such records.

To achieve the main objective of the study, the respondents were ask to indicate the kinds of students records available in the department under study as shown in table 5

Table 5: Availability of Students' Records in the Academic Departments

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	64	100
2.	No (if no why?)	0	0
3.	Total	64	100

Source: field work 2020

Table 5 above indicates that all the 64 respondents representing 100% agreed that students' records were available in academic departments. This implies that all the respondents agreed to this claim.

Table 6: Kinds of Students' Records Available in the Department

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Admission Letters	64	100
2.	Acceptance Letters	64	100
3.	Letter of undertaking	64	100
4.	Letter of Guarantor	64	100
5.	Approved Students' Results	19	30
6.	Students Transcripts	17	27
7.	Application Form	64	100
8.	Examination Records	59	92

Source: field work 2020

The Table 6 show the responses regarding the kinds of students' records available in the department. The findings indicates that all the 64 respondents representing 100% agreed that students admission letter, acceptance letters, undertaking letter, guarantors' letter and application forms were among the kinds of students' records available. Approved students' result 19(30%), students' transcripts 17(27%) and examination records 59(92%). Therefore, it can be concluded that students' admission letter, letter of undertaking, letter of guarantor, students' notification of results and application form were the major kinds of students' records available in the department. The findings of this study is in line with the study of Ahmed (2017) which found the same kinds of records generated in federal universities in Nigeria. It is also consistent with that of Idris (2017) who identified a number of students records right from admission up to graduation in most of the Nigeria universities.

Table 7: Purpose for Using Students' Records in the Departments

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Academic purpose	57	89
2.	Decision making	7	11
3.	Evidential purpose	4	6
4.	Graduation	5	8
5.	Reference	5	8

Source: field work 2020

Table 7 revealed that 57(89%) respondents indicate students' records were used for academic purpose. Other purposes as indicated by the respondents were decision making with 7(11%), evidential purpose 4(6%), graduation 5(8%) as well as reference 5(8%). From the data, it is obvious that academic purpose was the major reason of using students' records in academic departments. These records were kept due to the fact that they were needed for academic, decision making and reference purposes which can both be generated within or outside the institution (Nwaomah, 2015).

Facilities Used in Managing Students' Records in the Departments

Table 8: facilities used in managing students records in the departments

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	ICT facilities	18	28
2.	Cabinets	64	100
3.	Containers	0	0
4.	File Jackets	64	100
5.	Folders	9	14

Source: field work 2020

Table 8 show that cabinets and file jackets were the predominant facilities used in managing students' records as indicated by 64(100%) respondents. Similarly, ICTs and folders were also used in managing students' records as revealed by 18(28%) and 9(14%) respondents respectively. From the table, It is clear that none of the academic departments used containers in managing the students' records. Esther, Ngulube and Christine, (2011) noted that institutions still depend on paper filing systems to support their day to day records activities. Similarly, ICTs especially computers and photocopying facilities were used in the management of students' records.

Methods of Preserving Students' Records in the Departments

Table 9: Methods Of Preserving Students' Records In The Departments

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Cleaning (proper placement and minor repair)	64	100
2.	Environmental control	17	27
3.	Reprography	2	3
4.	De-acidification	1	2
5.	Lamination	0	0
6.	Regular and Periodic fumigation	6	9
7.	Digitization	0	0
8.	Access control	14	22

Source: field work 2020

Table 9 show the methods in preserving students' records in the departments. 64(100%) respondents indicates that cleaning was the main method used. This was followed by environmental control with 17(27%) respondents, reprography 2(3%) respondents, De-acidification 1(2%) respondent. Others were regular and periodic fumigation 6(9%) and access control 14(22%). Based on the findings, it is clear that cleaning and environmental controls were the main preservation method used in managing students' records in the department.

Challenges Faced in the Management of Students' Records in the Departments

Respondents were ask to state the challenges they encountered in the management of student records and their opinion is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Challenges faced in the Management of Students' Records in the Departments

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate facilities	57	89
2	Epileptic power supply	27	42
3	Inadequate trained manpower	6	9
4	Poor maintenance culture	34	53
5	Inadequate security measures	19	30
6	Lack of Disaster Control Plan	23	31
7.	Biological Agents	61	95
8.	Environmental Hazards	33	52
9.	Lack of Records Management Policy	24	38
10.	Poor funding	55	86

Source: field work 2020

Table 10 highlight the challenges facing the effective management of students' records in academic departments. The table revealed that 57(89%) respondents believed that inadequate facilities were one of the major obstacles in managing students' records. Others were epileptic power supply 27(42%), inadequate trained manpower 6(9%), poor maintenance culture 34(53%), inadequate security measures 19(30%), lack of disaster control plan 23(31%). Likewise, the respondents indicated that biological agents 61(95%), environmental hazards 33(52%), lack of records management policy 24(38%) and poor funding 55(86%) formed part of the challenges faced in managing the records of the departments under study.

IV. Summary of the Major Findings

1. The analysis of the demographic variables shows that most of the custodians of students' records were males. A higher percentage of the respondents were also found to be within the ages of 36-50 years. It was also found that majority of the respondents were married, this percentage reflects the general marital status of the total staff attached to all academic departments.
2. From the analysis of data gathered, it was found that students' admission letter, acceptance letters, letter of undertaking, letter of guarantor were the kinds of students' records available in the departments. Others were approved students' results, students transcripts, application forms and examination records are the major kinds of students' records available in Academic Departments of HUK Polytechnic.
3. The study found that the main purpose of using students' records is for academic related purposes. Others are evidential, reference and decision making purpose.
4. The major facilities use for keeping students records are: filing cabinet, file jackets and folders.
5. The main method for managing students' records is through proper cleaning, environmental control, periodic fumigation and access control.
6. Study revealed that biological agents, inadequate facilities and lack of maintenance culture were the major challenges facing effective management of students' records in all the academic departments of the

institution under study. These challenges pose a great threat to the records and their effective utilization. Other challenges found were lack of adequate and skilled manpower for the design and maintenance of Record Management Policy Disaster Control Plan in the institution.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is obvious that records have positive impacts on all facets of human endeavors and educational system is not an exception. The mechanisms in place for the management of students' records were found to be inadequate to provide an enabling environment for achievement of records management objectives. There were poor funding, lack of design and maintenance of record management policy, as well as disaster control plan formed part of the challenges.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the followings based on the findings.

1. Polytechnic should carry out a functional analysis of its key functions, activities and transactions in order to establish guidelines for identifying the essential records series that need to be captured and maintained in its records system as well as periodic and regular fumigation.
2. The study recommend that legal, research and educational purposes should also be incorporated among the purposes of keeping students' records.
3. Adequate funds should be provided by the authority concerned for the procurement of adequate and sufficient ICT facilities
4. There should be full digitization of students' records in academic departments of the institution under study. This will certainly enable the institution to live up to expectation. In addition, a highly skilled technical support personnel need to be employed in the institution for installation and regular maintenance of ICTs facilities.
5. Seminars and workshops on record management should be organized by the institution for both academic and non-academic staff.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abdulrahman, A.B. (2015). Management of Universities Records for Effective Administration of Universities in North Central Nigeria. *Academic Journals: International Journal of Library and Information Science*. 47-54.
- [2]. Ahmed, A. I. (2017) Management of electronic records generated/received by Federal Universities in Nigeria, *International Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management*, 3(2), 106-121
- [3]. Akor, U.P., & Udensi., J. (2013). An assessment of record management system in establishment division of two universities in Nigeria. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 4(12), 88-96
- [4]. Alegbeleye, G. O. (1997). "Preservation of cultural Heritage: Need, Scope, Importance and Constraints". A key note address at a conference on the conservation of Cultural Heritage, Gabon.
- [5]. Chinyemba, A. & Ngulube P. (2005) Managing records at higher education institutions: a case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 7(1), 2.
- [6]. David, T. O. (2017). Application of information and communication technology (ICT) to the management of records in the head of services office, Asaba, Delta State, *Research Journal of Mass Communication and Information Technology*, 3(1), 1-9
- [7]. Eden District Municipality (2018) Records management policy, Council Resolution No: DC/E2/2018
- [8]. Eghosa., I. D. (2017) The use of ICTs in students' records management in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.
- [9]. Esther, N. S., Ngulue P. & Christine S. (2011) Managing records as a strategic resources in the government ministries of Tanzania. *Information Development*, 27(4), 264-279
- [10]. Gama, U. G. (2008), Reference and Information Service Delivery and the Utilization of ICTs University Libraries in Nigeria. Ibadan: Book Wright.
- [11]. Ifidon, S. E., & Ifidon, E. I. (2007). Basic principles of Research Methods. Benin-City: Goodnews Express Communications.
- [12]. Iwhiwhu, B. E. (2005) Management of records in Nigerian universities: problems and prospects. *The Electronic Library*, 23(30). Retrieved on 20/11/2019 www.researchgate.net/journal/0264-0473
- [13]. Nwaomah, E.A.(2015). Information and communication technology (ICT) usage on students records Management effectiveness in the Nigerian Universities. *Ijournals: International Journal of Social Relevance & Concern (IJSRC)*.
- [14]. Odogwu, N. J. (2007). Collection and preservation of historical documents for effective utilization in the National Library of Nigeria, *Nigerbiblios*, 18(1&2), 51-58
- [15]. Popoola, S.O. (2003). The status of records management in the state universities in Nigeria. Ibadan
- [16]. Popoola., S. O. (2003). Managing records for effective school administration in Nigeria. *Contemporary Issues in education management*. University of Ibadan. Retrieved on April 30,2012, from www.primejournal.org.
- [17]. Rain Tree.
- [18]. Reitz, J. M. (2004). Dictionary for library and information science, Chennai, Rain Tree