

Challenges of Records Management Practices in the Ministry Of Information and Strategy, Lagos State, Nigeria

Vincent E. Unegbu

OludipeBolajiAdenike

Information Resources Management Department
Babcock University, PMB 21244, Ikeja, Lagos Nigeria

E-Mail: vinunegbu@yahoo.com

Mobile Phone No: +08131581233

Abstract

Records management is more than generation of records and storing them. More challenging activities are involved, especially, in the ministries where bulky records are created each day. The research looked at the record management practices of the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos, Nigeria and the challenges it faces in administering its public record generation and disposal services and how the services affect the Ministry's decision making. Total enumeration method was used on the 37 employees of the Ministry. Data was collected through questionnaire and 35 of the respondents' filed the questionnaire. It was analysed using SPSS analytical package and reported in discrete figures, percentages; and two hypotheses were tested using Chi Square at 0.05 degree of significance. Among the findings are that effective implementation of records management practices positively enhances organisational performance and that proper records management practice positively brings about easy decision making in the organization. It is recommended that the Ministry should have a records retention schedule and that the workers should be given training on electronic record keeping.

Keywords: Records management, Records storage, Records classification, Records filing, Records life cycle, Records management policy.

Introduction

Records management is an aspect of work that managers often look down on until they need a vital record that is not within reach. Records management is the practice of maintaining the records of an institution or organization or a body from the time they are created to the time they are eventually disposed of. This includes classifying, storing, securing, and disposing (by destruction or, in some cases, archival preservation). "Records management is not just about collecting and keeping records, but also concerns the knowledge of which records to keep, where they must be stored, for how long they should be kept and managed, and who should have access to the data" (Corporate Storage, 2010). Records management does not only mean just the classification and segregation of files, it involves how to take care of the documents.

Good records management can enhance organisation's performance even its decision making abilities. Where these apply, there are lots of benefits, including timely retrieval and safe

storage. Of course, these cannot be achieved without qualified staff. Records are created on daily basis in any viable organisation. Organisations should ensure that any record created can be used to support evidence of its transactions in a court of law. Therefore if employees do not adhere to recordkeeping policies, the integrity of the recordkeeping system and indeed the whole organisation could be questioned.

Background of the Study

According to Popoola (2000), what actually keeps the civil service going in any modern system of government is recorded information called "records," which are used for planning, decision making, and controlling. The need for a records management programme in all organizations cannot be overstressed in the digital age. Enwere (1992) argues that bad records keeping and lack of policy guidelines in records management programme in Nigerian public service have led to inefficiency in administration and to the loss or unavailability of vital information needed for decision-making. Therefore, this study wants to investigate what obtains in the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos. There are a number of challenges associated with records management practices in Nigeria today. These challenges can be insufficient skilled and experienced records management personnel, low records management task in the scheme of things, and insufficient funds (Afolabi, 1991). There is the need to examine the records management practices in Ministry of Information and Strategy. Doing this will help the managing body in organizational planning, decision making and implementation.

History of Lagos State

Prior to the Portuguese name of Lagos being adopted, Lagos was originally called Eko, which stems from either Oko (Yoruba: "cassava farm") or Eko ("war camp"), by its Bini conquerors. Lagos State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria. It is one of the earliest states created in Nigeria being created on May 27, 1967 by Decree 14 of 1967 when Nigeria was restructured into a federation of 12 states (Lagos State, 2003; Lagos State Government, 2011). Lagos was the capital of Nigeria from independence in 1960 till 1991 when Nigerian federal capital was moved to Abuja, the present capital of Nigeria (Federal Capital Abuja, 2003). Lagos has an area of 356,861 hectares of which 75,755 hectares are wetlands, yet it has the highest population, which is over five per cent of the national estimate for it. The state has a population of 17 million out of a national population estimate of 150 million. The UN estimates that at its present growth rate, Lagos state will be the third largest mega city of the

world by the year 2015 after Tokyo in Japan and Bombay in India. Of this population, Metropolitan Lagos, an area covering 37% of the land area of Lagos State is home to over 85% of the State population (Lagos State, 2012). It has 20 nationally recognised local governments with its capital at Ikeja.

Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos: The Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos is an arm of Lagos State which is responsible for gathering information and managing Lagos State official records for the smooth running of the state in line with other ministries.

Statement of Problem

A good records management practice is essential in Ministry of Information and Strategy because of its enormous benefits to the establishment like fulfilling legal mandates, improving information access and accountability, reducing costs of record retrieval, ensuring the creation, management of accurate and reliable records, and reducing costs of storing records. The ministry of information and strategy as observed has many inter linking departments in which records are generated daily. Due to the numerous amount of information gathered more time is delegated when sorting this information and locating the needed information from records kept. Records misplacement rate is alarming. Workers, who go for verification of their documents, compliant of time wasting in retrieving their records. When this happens, it leads to low productivity in the organization, therefore, there is need to compile the challenges faced in the ministry and highlight possible solutions to them. It is in this light, that the research work ought to examine and assess what constituted bottleneck in the records management practices in the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the challenges of records management practices in the Ministry of Information and Strategy (MIS) Lagos State and its effect on the organization's performance. To achieve this, the following specific objectives, are set to;

1. Examine the records management policy of the Ministry of Information and Strategy of Lagos State.
2. Determine the type of filing system used in keeping records at the Ministry of Information and Strategy.
3. Examine how records are stored and secured
4. Check the quality of the employees
5. Determine how helpful the records are in the staff's decision making.

Research Question

1. Does the ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos State have any viable records management policy?
2. What type of filing system does Ministry of Information and Strategy use in records management?
3. What equipment does Ministry of Information and Strategy use in records storage?
4. Are the workers in Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos qualified to serve?
5. Are records in the Ministry helpful in decision making?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were tested on the course of the research. Having alternate hypothesis made no difference since rejection of one meant the upholding of the other.

1. Effective implementation of records management practices does not enhance performance in the ministry.
2. Proper records management practice does not bring about easy decision making in the ministry.

Significance of the Study

This research work is essentially significant at this time because it will bring into limelight the essence of records management practice in the ministry of Information and Strategy. It is sensitive to highlight that the research work will contribute to the existing knowledge and literature on records management practice not only in Nigeria but also in Africa. The research work will help policy makers, especially elected record managers in appreciating the role of public sector records management in the larger governance process and its role in decision making of any organization.

Scope of the Study

This research work was carried out at the Ministry of Information and Strategy Alausa, Lagos State; the study was limited to the registry and administrative department and other departments involved in records management. It was aimed at assessing the records management practices in the Ministry of Information and Strategy and to test its perceived effect on decision making of the ministry.

Literature Review

A well structured records management practices and procedures result in a number of benefits to an existing private or public sector. Some of these benefits are: fulfilling legal

mandates, improving access and accountability, reducing costs for the retrieval of records, ensuring the creation and management of accurate and reliable records, and reducing the costs of storing records (Omenyi, 2001). All these help in time gain in decision making since records give vital information for good decisions. Literature is reviewed along these lines.

Definition of Records

Records are created in ever increasing volume in different organisational and technological environments and so meant different things to different professions. The Information Society Organization (ISO, 2001) defines records as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business". The International Council on Archives (ICA, 2004:10) Committee on Electronic Records defines a record as "recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity." The key word in these definitions is evidence. Put simply, a record can be defined as "evidence of an event". This evidence must have content (data), must have medium of presentation (context) and must be presented in a logical way (structure) that should not be misconstrued. Adhering to these qualities leads to creating records that are authentic (produced by proficient person in that field), complete (contains enough un-doubtful evidence of transaction), reliable (accurate representation of transaction), and fixed (not altered or changed, remains as created). Finally, it should be noted that all of the above properties and qualities can apply regardless of the record's format, whether it be a sheet of paper, email, and photograph or database entry.

Information is one of an organisation's most important assets. In addition to traditional paper documents, this information now includes emails, microfilm, computer tape, digital images, and maps, to name just a few. Any information that contributes to the operation of a business constitutes a record. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

Classification of Records

Classification, in the sense of grouping things systematically, has been described as a basic human activity (Bowker & Star, 2000). Professionally and simpliciter, "classification is the systematic arrangement of objects, ideas, books, or other items which have like qualities or characteristics into groups or classes" (Gates, 1974: 41). Feather and Sturges (2003: 78) defined classification as "The systematic organization of books, serials and other documents

in all media by their subject matter”. So, generally, classification has to do with grouping documents according to their content for easy accessibility and retrieval.

This is not exactly with records classification in archives. Classification of books is different from classification of records or documents. Schellenberg (1956) wrote that classes should be established only after records are created and that each level in a classification should be consistent, thus if the primary classification is by functions, all headings at that level should be function. It is not easy to use classification schemes to assign notation marks to documents as it is usually done with library materials either by using hierarchical or faceted scheme (Chan, 1994; Hunter, 2002). Records are classified according to categories and groups (Nye, 2008). Records are classed in folders and files which must be given meaningful, relevant and specific titles so that they can be easily found. Records, in folders and files, should be given names and notation marks that accurately reflect their content (Kite, 2006).

Some records do not last forever. So the concept of life cycle of records comes in because records become less important as time passes. There is always a short period of high records’ use followed by a longer period of low use. The records only need to be looked up occasionally during this second phase. Records have lifecycle that resembles that of humans:

- It is born (creation phase)
- It lives (maintenance and use phase)
- It dies (disposition phase)

The Records Life Cycle offers a logical framework for the development of a records management programme (Wikipedia)

The first stage in records lifecycle is its creation, followed by active management, inactive management, and eventual disposal by destruction or archiving.

Types of Records

According to Emmerson (1989), there are four major types of record businesses work with, and they are named according to their use. These are vital records (records that cannot be replaced), important records (those that can easily be transferred to inactive record), useful records (day-to-day business records) and non-essential records (records of no future value). Records could also be grouped according to function, in this case, records could be active or inactive (Cage, 2012). The “activeness” of each record determines how to rate the record or how to dispose it.

Importance of records cannot be overemphasized. Records are created for many purposes namely: historical, legal, personal, financial, and for company or organisational or institutional policies and procedures (Bowker, 2000).

Records Management

Records management, according to The University of Melbourne (2001), is 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 and cultural requirement of the organization. Feather and Sturges (2003: 547) see records management as “a systematic, ongoing, organization-wide managerial effort to control all records – regardless of medium – created or received in the normal course of an organization’s affairs”. The objectives of records management, among others, include cost reduction and avoidance of high operating expenses, improved efficiency and productivity by quick access to needed records, reduction of incidence of lost information, enhanced litigation avoidance and support, increased audit compliance (Feather and Sturges, 2003). These collaborate with Robek, Drown and Stephens (1995: 435) on records management manual which “establishes the various phases of records management programme, assists with training of employees, save money, reduces errors, standardises procedures, increases productivity and makes provision for change”. Penn, Pennix and Caulson (1994:14) state that 75% of the cost of information is in records creation. Being so, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005: 10) warned that “unless controls are instituted at the point where the records enter the system, unnecessary costs would be incurred”. Therefore, records management is an essential function in any organization to save cost. As Soyemi (2009) stated in his work that man is yet to discover a more permanent means of record keeping than the use of paper. In spite of all technological advancement, paper still remains the major records keeper.

Akporhor and Iwhiwhu (2007) asserts that information recorded in paper and electronic files help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control communicate, plan, formulate policies and make decision. The availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Perhaps more important is the proper management of these records. To be of maximum value, records must be recognized and properly managed.

For safety and longevity of records, records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. A typical paper document may be

stored in a filing cabinet in an office. “However, some organisations employ file rooms with specialized environmental controls including temperature and humidity. Vital records may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, flood, earthquakes and conflict” (Awang, 2008). In disaster-prone areas, disaster proof storage equipment should be used. This depends on the type of disaster eminent in that locality. In addition to on-site storage of records, many organizations operate their own off-site commercial records centres.

Records that are not in active use are disposed of. Disposal of records does not always mean destruction; it could be transfer to a historical archive, museum, or private individual. Destruction is always a last resort to be authorized by law, statute, regulation, or operating procedure according to the policy of the originating body. Records should never simply be discarded as refuse. Most organizations use processes including pulverization, paper shredding or incineration. Records are seldom destroyed now when they are in electronic format popularly called digital preservation.

Records Management Policy

Records management policy is necessary for any organization to know what documents to keep and for how long. Managing the accumulation of records requires a records management program to provide systematic control of all records, regardless of storage medium, from creation to disposition. A successful program requires policies and procedures that administer the effective control and management of records and information (Gwinnett, 2002). These policies should be written for posterity and should be based on applicable laws of the land. When the policy is in place it means that all records created or received in the course of work are records of the ministry and, as such, must not be disposed of or removed without proper authorization.

Training Staff

Once records management policies and procedures are created and adopted, it is important to train all staff members in their implementation and to ensure that staff members follow the policies and procedures. Following training, staff members should be held accountable for their records management activities (Oyedokun, 1999). For good management of records, it is important that various categories of personnel involved in the management of information, records and archives - administrators, IT personnel, records managers and archivists - as well as the records creators and users – be well trained (McLeod, Hare, and Johare, 2004).

Importance of Records Management in Organization

The recording of information in paper and electronic forms help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control, communicate, plan, formulate policies, and make decisions (Uwaifo, 2004). The availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Establishing a comprehensive records management programme offers both immediate and long-term benefits to companies (Slote, 2000), including: controlling the volume of records, improving access to information which leads to faster response to business challenges, provide better customer service and make more informed decisions, reduce litigation risks which insulates the company from potential risk associated with the premature disposal of information, ensures regulatory compliance: Organisations must adhere to a multitude of national and industry regulations concerning the maintenance and retention of records. A records management programme determines which records must be kept and for how long to ensure regulatory compliance thereby avoiding destroying records too soon and not being able to produce them when legally required, improving efficiency and productivity thereby saving time that could have been wasted searching for misfiled records, safeguarding vital information to help them recover or resume operation after a disaster situation, assimilating new information technologies which allows ministries to integrate cost effective and high performance systems and equipment to assist in protecting and managing records, which facilitates the standardisation of information processing and control, and preserving the corporate memory of the organization. Accurate records are necessary to provide appropriate background information when planning for the future.

Methods of Filing

The importance of record-keeping and filing systems cannot be too highly stressed. A well-planned system contributes significantly to efficiency of operation as well as to a company's image. Whether records are filed in a computer or in a steel cabinet, they have to be readily accessible (National Archives of Australia, 2003). Some of the questions one should ask are: What are the records? Where should they be filed? Who uses the records? How often are they used? How are they used? How are the records referred to? What is the size of each record? How many of each record are filed? Who else has copies of the same record? Answers to these questions give clue as to how and where the records should be filed.

One may discover that the needed information is difficult to obtain due to the filing system or lack of one. In analysing filing systems' sustainability, one can repeatedly have to expand the file system capacity, maintaining duplicate files of the same information, filing material to

protect the function, and not because of information or legal requirements, using a filing system or equipment for non-records storage, file folders are too full for easy access, the filing drawers or shelves are too full for easy access or one cannot find the information required in the first places looked at, the analysis is now complete - the records inventory reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the record-keeping system. Once you have analysed your records inventory, you should determine the type of media to file the document (paper, microform, electronic, etc). Also determine proper equipment for adequate storage and retrieval, proper systems to complement the equipment and the required record retention schedule and facility (Kennedy and Chauder, 1998). Using the basic filing procedures of inspecting, marking, follow-up and cross-reference, sorting and finally filing, which is the actual placing of documents in folders in a pre-determined plan, the curator utilizes any of the following filing systems: Alphabetical, Numeric, Geography, Subject, or Chronologic (Australian Government, 2007). All these methods have advantages and disadvantages and one must decide which one would be best for the organization.

With large volumes of records being produced daily, the need for organized system of retrieval becomes necessary. Businesses today use different types of retrieval systems, ranging from paper organization to expensive databases. However, regardless of the complexities involved, the goal is the same: pull the right record at the right time to help with business decision-making (Lawson, 2008). There are computer programs or networks that help to facilitate document retrieval, such systems as file name finder or folder name search engine (Musah, 2008). Slightly more advanced programs use coded and tailored email software programs to help find specifically desired email records rather than files or folders. These programs use the same design model of an inputted name as a search parameter (Musah, 2008).

Weeding is a task that must be done to decongest the store. It must not be done haphazardly. There must be a policy guiding it, otherwise, valuable materials may be destroyed. Such guidelines by Goldberg (2000) could be adopted. Weeding has advantages in any organization. A collection that is continuously weeded doesn't look over-crowded and is much more appealing to patrons who want to browse. When old, faded and grubby titles are removed the collection looks fresh and inviting. Weeding also helps the librarians to invest in sections that are of interest to patrons.

Research Methodology

The design for this study is descriptive or survey research design. This method is appropriate because of the sample size and focus of the staff. The descriptive design method also provides the basis for eliciting possible policies for solving the problems. This method is also chosen because it will help to describe, examine, record, analyse and interpret the variables that exist in this study.

The population is the staff members of the registry and administrative departments of the Ministry of Information and Strategy consisting of thirty seven workers (37). So, total enumeration technique was adopted because of the small size of the population. The main instrument employed in this study is a designed questionnaire having a 5-point- modified-likert type of rating scale opinion, ranging from strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) to allow for response to each of the statements in agreement or disagreement. The questionnaire was personally administered and retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis

Simple number count and percentages were used in the data analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17th edition. The test statistic employed is the Chi-Square which is represented by the Greek sign X^2 and is represented by the formulae|

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$$

e

Where:

\sum = summation

O = frequency observed

E = frequency expected

In analysing the data and testing the stated hypothesis, frequency (f), and simple percentage was used to analyse all the variables of the collected data while Chi –square (X^2) was used to analyse and test the stated hypothesis in the related sections of the questionnaire. The interpretation was used to discuss, summarize, draw conclusions and make necessary recommendations. Chi-square and simple percentage (%) was applied to accept or reject the specific hypothesis.

Data Collection, Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with the description of the analysis of data collected through the distribution of questionnaire. Data analysis was based on the number of questionnaire retrieved from the respondents. A total number of 37 questionnaires were administered, 2 were not retrieved. So our analysis was based on 35 as our total study size.

Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

This section asked questions about the bio-data of the respondents which includes, sex, age, ministry, department, marital status, etc.

Out of the 35 respondents, 13(37%) were males while 22(63%) were females, showing a high population of females. Twenty-six (74.2%) of them were between 20 and 39 years of age; 5 and 4 for 40-49 and 50 and above respectively. So, majority of the workers were young and probably energetic. Sixty percent were single while the remaining 40% were either married or divorced.

Table 1: Departments of the Respondents in the Ministry

Departments	Frequency	Percent
Registry	4	11.4
Administration	10	28.6
Public Enlightenment	4	11.4
Press & PR	4	11.4
Accounting	5	14.3
Strategy	5	14.3
Info Production	3	8.6
Total	35	100.0

The respondents come from each of the 7 departments of the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos State as indicated in Table 1. None of the respondents has a qualification below Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and Bachelors degree. Since none of them has any degree below those degrees, invariably, the workers are well read.

Records Policy

Do you have a records management policy in Ministry of Information and Strategy?

The Ministry has a well documented records policy guide which all the workers are aware of. This is very commendable. Unfortunately, the Ministry has no weeding policy. This could be interpreted to mean that no weeding goes on in the Ministry or it is done at will. But the Ministry has an effective retention policy which cancels the non availability of weeding policy. It means that only needed documents are retained. On how long they keep their records, 91% said 1-5 years while 3% for each case said 6-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16-20 years respectively. This means that majority of the documents are destroyed or archived at the end of the fifth year or only the top officials are aware of what happened to the documents after five years which the majority of the workers do not know. On type of records kept, 100% of the respondents agree that they keep financial records and legal records, and other valid records.

Types of Records Created in the Ministry

Each of the workers responded on the types of materials they create in the ministry. Their response is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: What type of records do you create in your organization?

	Positive Responses	
Kinds of records	Frequency	Percentage n=35
Letter	35	100.0
Directives	35	100.0
Mails	35	100.0
Reports	35	100.0
Policy in procedure manual	16	45.7
Financial	35	100.0
Legal	35	100.0
General maintenance manual	10	28.6
Historical or archival	5	14.3
Periodicals	23	65.7

Table 2 shows result of types of record created by the Ministry of Information and Strategy as follows; all the respondents (100%) indicated that they keep letter, directories, mails, reports, financial, and legal records, and general maintenance manual 28.6%, historical or

archival 14.3%, policy in procedure manual 45.7%, and periodicals 65.7%. It implies that the most created types of records are letters, directives, mails, reports, financial, legal, and periodicals. Answering to the question on how they would describe the types of materials kept in the ministry, 29% of the respondents agree that record kept by the Ministry are described as active, while 57% of the respondents agree that vital records are kept and 14% of the respondents agree that semi active records are kept in the organization. This means that more of vital records are highly preserved than active records. On records classification, both manual and electronics systems of classification are in use.

Filing System in the Ministry

The Ministry uses various filing systems. They file by author, title, subject, publication, date, and by publisher. This is pertinent because clients pose questions from different angles and demand fast answers which this varied systems of filing provide fast solutions to. This implies that the ministry makes use standard filing systems and is commendable.

Records Storage System in the Ministry

The Ministry of Information and Strategy uses different storage systems depending on the type of material and in which department. They keep safe their records on Compact Disks (Cds), flash drives, wooden cabinets, file jackets and metal shelves.

Records Management and Challenges in the Ministry

This section makes use of the Likert scale to analyse the answers of the respondents from seven research questions posed to them. The data collected are shown on the tables generated. Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D) and Undecided (U).

Table 3: Effective implementation of records management policies enhances organizational performance.

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	15	42.9
A	17	48.6
SD	2	5.7
D	1	2.9
U	0	0
Total	35	100.0

From Table 3 above, 91.5% of the respondents agree that effective implementation of records management policies enhances organizational performance, while only 8.6% disagree, and none undecided. The implementation of records management policy is therefore highly encouraged as a catalyst for better organizational performance in the Ministry of Information and Strategy.

Table 4: Proper records management practice brings about easy decision making in your organization

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	13	37.1
A	11	31.4
SD	6	17.1
D	4	11.4
U	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Table 4 shows that 37.1% of the respondents strongly agree that proper records management practice brings about easy decision making in the organization, while 31.4% of the respondents agree, 17.1% strongly disagree, and 11.4% disagree and 2.9% were undecided. It implies that the Ministry is aware of the importance of proper records management practices.

Table 5: Good records management practice brings about smooth discharge of administrative duties.

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	13	37.1
A	20	57.1
SD	0	0
D	2	5.7
U	0	0
Total	35	100.0

Table 5 above shows that, 94.3% of the respondents agree that good records management practice brings about smooth discharge of administrative duties, while only 5.7% of the

respondents disagree. It also implies that the Ministry of Information and Strategy is conscious of the important role of good records management on administrative discharge.

Table 6: Electronic storage medium in my organization has the challenge of virus attack from time to time.

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	0	0
A	16	45.7
SD	9	25.7
D	7	20.0
U	3	8.6
Total	35	100.0

From Table 6, the result shows that 45.7% of the respondents agree that electronic storage is faced with virus attack from time to time, while 25.7% strongly disagree to that assertion, 20.0% disagree and 8.6% were undecided in their opinion. The varied answers is an indication of naive in the knowledge of the internet or electronic system as a record storage medium. This implies that the administrative bodies should give orientation to the record keepers on electronic storage and its challenges. Virus attack is a prominent issue in network environment.

Table 7: Cost of records maintenance is a challenge in my organization

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	0	0
A	13	37.1
SD	9	25.7
D	12	34.3
U	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

From Table 7, with only one-third (37%) of the respondents agreeing that cost of records maintenance is a perceived challenge in the organization and a whopping 63% disagree to

that assertion shows that the records section is well funded. If this painted picture is true, it should be encouraged.

Table 8: Lack of trained and qualified personnel is a records management challenge in our office.

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	8	22.9
A	8	22.9
SD	11	31.4
D	8	22.9
U	0	0
Total	35	100.0

Table 8 shows that 45.8% agree that lack of trained and qualified personnel is a records management challenge in the ministry, while 54.2% of the respondents disagree, and none was undecided in opinion. This split (almost bracket) in opinion means that there are trained personnel in the Ministry who may not be professionals in the field. Qualification wise, none of the workers has any qualification below OND, how come then that they see qualification as a challenge in records management in the Ministry.

Table 9: Inadequate funding forms part of the challenges faced in the Ministry?

Options	Frequency	Percent
SA	4	11.4
A	16	45.7
SD	7	20.0
D	6	17.1
U	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

From Table 9, 57% of the respondents agree that inadequate funding forms part of the challenges faced in the office while 43% of the respondents disagree assigning those who are undecided to those who disagreed. This result could be interpreted to mean that many of the workers are not sure of the funding of the Ministry.

Testing of Hypothesis

Apart from the analysis drawn from the questionnaire administered, to fully balance the study, testing of hypothesis of the study would be done with the use of the chi-square, testing it at 0.5% level of significance.

$$\text{Formula: } X^2_c \sum \left[\left(\frac{o-e}{e} \right)^2 \right]$$

4.3.1 Hypothesis 1

H₀: Effective implementation of records management practices does not enhance organisational performance.

H₁: Effective implementation of records management practices positively enhances organisational performance.

Using Research Question 1 of Table 3

O	E	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o-e)^2}{E}$
15	18	3	9	0.5
17	18	1	1	0.05
2	18	16	256	14.2
1	18	17	289	16.05
0	0	0	0	0
				31.25

Source: Adopted from Table 3

$$X^2_c = 31.25$$

At 5% level of significance

$$V = 5-1$$

$$X^2_t = 9.49$$

$$V = 4$$

Since $X^2_c > X^2_t$

$$X^2_t = 9.49$$

That is $X^2_{31.25} > X^2_{9.49}$

Hence, we reject the H^0

Decision Rule: Since the completed X^2 is greater than the tabulated, hence H^0 is rejected. Therefore, we conclude that effective implementation of records management practices positively enhances organisational performance.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Proper records management practice does not bring about easy decision making in your organization.

H₁: Proper records management practice positively brings about easy decision making in the organization.

Using Research Question 2 of Table 4

O	E	o-e	(o-e) ²	<u>(o - e)²</u> E
13	18	5	25	7
11	18	7	49	31
6	18	12	144	126
4	18	14	196	178
1	18	17	289	271
				613

Source: Adopted from Table 6

$$X^2_c = 613$$

At 0.5% level of significance

$$V = 5-1$$

$$X^2_t = 9.49$$

$$V = 4$$

Since $X^2_c > X^2_t$

$$X^2_t = 9.49$$

That is $X^2_{613} > X^2_{9.49}$

Hence, we reject the H^0

Decision Rule

Since the completed X^2 is greater than the tabulated, hence H^0 is rejected. Therefore, we conclude that proper records management practice positively brings about easy decision making in the organization.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study was carried out using the Ministry of Information and Strategy as a case study. A total enumeration method was adopted for the 37 respondents. The Ministry of Information and Strategy has more female employees than their male counterparts. And majority of the workers are young, energetic and not married. Majority are from the administrative department and have work experience of about 10 years. All of the employees have OND/NCE or first degree.

Most of the ministry's records are kept for about 1-5 years from the creation date, and financial records, legal records and other valued records are considered the best kinds of records being kept by the Ministry of Information and Strategy. Varied filing systems are in use and the documents are stored in both manual and electronic systems.

It is noted that, effective records management brings about better organizational performance, easy decision making, and smooth discharge of administrative duties and the electronic storage devices available are sometimes prone to virus attack; cost of records management is a foreseen challenge and inadequate funds in the office contributes to some challenges faced by the employees.

Conclusion

The issue of records management practices in the Ministry of Information and Strategy is something that needs more attention and should be treated as crucial in the development of Lagos State information system at large. This is evident from the just concluded study. From the findings of this study, it is concluded that:

The employees of Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos State are aware of what records management is, the importance of creating, keeping, and managing records. The ministry has records management policy and keeps vital records.

Good records management practice brings about smooth discharge of administrative duties. However, finance is an inhibiting factor in the discharge of their duties.

Recommendation

Based on the research findings, the following are recommended to be considered by the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Lagos State.

- The Ministry of Information and Strategy should concentrate more on developing an effective and more efficient electronic type of records classification and storage since these will enable easy and faster record keeping and retrieval and guarantees safety of records kept.
- Retaining records beyond their useful lifespan should be discouraged and also disposing vital records is detrimental to the health of the ministry, therefore, there should be mandated, state-wide procedures for legal disposition of all records, all departments in the Ministry should gain a consistent policy with uniform standards.
- The administration should make sure that professionals are employed. Having a degree does not make one competent to work in a records centre.
- The records managers should be sponsored or encouraged to attend seminars hosted by the professional bodies. Proper orientation and in service training should be given to both new and old workers of the ministry on records management.
- Virus attack is a serious issue in network environments. The record keepers should attend seminars on networking problems or internet challenges.

Bibliography

- Afolabi, M. (1991). Education and training achieves and records managers in Africa. *Annual Conference of the Society of Nigeria Archivists*, 17. May. p 61 - 7.
- Awang, A. B. (2008) *Managing Your Record: Managing Physical Records*.
www.managing-records.blogspot.com/2008/03/managing-physical-records.html. Cite visited July 16, 2012.
- Australian Government (2007). "Note for File: A Report on Recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service". Commonwealth of Australia, Available at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/mac/noteforfile.pdf>.

- Bowker, Geoffrey C and Susan Leigh Star (2000). *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. MIT Press, 2000.
- Cage, M. (2012) "Categories of Records in Records Management" www.ehow.com/list_7629218_categories-records-records-management.html. Cite visited July 15, 2012.
- Chan, L. M. (1994) *Cataloging and Classification: An Introduction*, 2nded. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chinyemba, A. & Ngulube, P. 2005. "Managing Records at Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus" in *South African Journal of Information Management*, 7(1). URL: [http://journals.sabinet.co.za/WebZ/images/ejou/info/info_v7_n1_a2.html?sessionid=\[18 August 2007\]](http://journals.sabinet.co.za/WebZ/images/ejou/info/info_v7_n1_a2.html?sessionid=[18 August 2007]).
- Corporate Storage Services (2010) About Records Management <http://www.corporatestorageservices.com/about-records-management.html> Site visited June 27, 2012.
- Emmerson, P, ed.(1999)*How to Manage Your Records: A Guide to Effective Practice*. Hemel ICSA Publishing Ltd,.
- Enwere, J.C. (1992) "Records Management in Nigeria: To be or Not to be?" *Nigeria Library and Information Science Review*, 10(1/2), p. 61-7.
- Feather, J. And Sturges, P. (2003) "Classification" *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science* New York: Routledge.
- Federal Capital Abuja (2003) "Abuja" www.onlinenigeria.com/links/abujaadv.asp. Site visited July 15, 2012
- Gates, J. K. (1974) *Guide to the Use of Books and Libraries*, 3rded. New York: McGraw-Hill Company.
- Goldberg, E.(2000)"The Retrieval Problem in Records Retention Management". Translation and notes by M. Buckland. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 43: 295-298. May.
- Gwinnett County (Georgia) Public Library (2002). *Records Management Policy*, 2nd ed. Chicago: Public Library Association of the American Library Association.
- Hunter, E. J. (2002) *Classification Made Simple*, 2nd ed. Aldershot: Gower.
- International Council on Archives (2004) *Records Management*, 2nd ed. Paris: ISAAR (CPF).

- International Organization for Standardization (2001). "ISO 15489-1: 2001 Information and documentation – Records management. Part 1: General", Geneva: ISO, section 3.15.
- Iwhiwhu, E.B., Akporhonor, B.A (2007). "The Management of Staff Records at Delta State University Library, Abraka, Nigeria". *Library Philosophy and Practise*, p.55.
- Kennedy, J and Chauder, C. (1998) *Records Management: A Guide to Corporate Record Keeping*. 2nd ed. London: Longman.
- Kite, R. (2006) "Records Management in the 21st Century" The Business Classification Scheme: Understanding the Business Classification Scheme. www.adventuresinrecordsmanagement.blogspot.com/2006/10/business-classification-scheme.html. Site visited July 16, 2012.
- Lagos State (2003) "Lagos State" www.onlinenigeria.com/links/lagosadv.asp?blurb=318. Site visited on July 16, 2012.
- Lagos State NgEX(2012) "Lagos State" www.ngex.com/nigeria/places/States/Lagos.htm. Site visited July 16, 2012.
- Lagos State Government (2011) "History of Lagos State" www.lagosstate.gov.ng/index.php?page=subpage&spid=14&mnu=null. Site visited July 15, 2012.
- Lawson, G. (2008). *Record Retrieval: Importance of Records Retrieval for modern Libraries, Revised and updated*. Austin, TX: Texas State Library and Archives.
- McLeod, J, Hare, C. And Johare, R. (2004) "Information and Training for Records Management in the electronic Environment – the (re)search for an Appropriate Model" In *Information Research* Vol. 9, No.3, April. Retrieved from www.information.net/ir/9-3/paper179.htm on July 16, 2012.
- Musah, A. "Freedom of Information and Records Management in Ghana" *African Journal of Library Archives and Information Science* 16, no. 1 (2006) [journal online] [accessed 26 November 2008].
- National Archives and Records Services of South Africa (2006) *Records Management Policy Manual*. Department of Arts and Culture, Republic of South Africa. www.scrib.com/doc/52571764. Cite visited July 16, 2012.
- Nye, B. E. (2008) "Records Classification: Do Big Buckets = Big Headaches?" www.ictus.com/docs/Big_Buckets_Classification.pdf. Site visited July 16, 2012.

- Omenyi, A.S. (2001). Effective Records Management: A Tool for Effective Counseling in the School Systems. *Journal of Counseling and Communication* (Counseling Association of Nigeria, Anambra State Chapter in conjunction with Guidance & Counseling unit, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka), 1,(1): 11- 15.
- Oyedokun A. O. (1999): Promote Proper Management and Security Records and Information. Records and Information Management Awareness Foundation, RIMA Foundation, a Not-for-profit NGO.
- Popoola, S.O. (2000). Records Management Programmes in Nigeria: A survey of the Osun State Civil Service. *Nigerian Libraries*, 34(1): 38.
- Penn, I. A., Pennix, G. B. and Caulson, J. (1994) *Records Management Handbook*, 2nd ed. Aldershot(Hants): Gower.
- Robek, M. F., Drown, G. F. and Stephens, D. O. (1995) *Information and Records Management: Document Based Information Systems*. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.
- Schellenberg, T. R. (1956) *The Appraisal of Modern Records*, *Bulletins of the National Archives*, No. 8 (October 1956) US National Archives 1956. Curled from www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/appraisal-of-cords.html. Cite visited on July 16, 2012.
- Slote, S.(2000). Records Management in the Library collections: Library Records Methods (3th ed.). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Uwaifo, S.O. (2004). Management Use of Records in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.
- Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (2009) "Records Management" en.wikipedia.org/Records_management. Site visited July 16, 2012.

Follow us on: [IRJLIS](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)