RETENTION AND DISPOSITON OF PERSONNEL RECORDS IN FEDERAL HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: **This article presents retention and disposition in federal higher educational institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Records and management of records, problem statement, the retention and disposition of records, challenges and possible solutions to personnel records management in the 3 institutions were studied. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The findings for the study were discussed and result was presented in form of tables, figures, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The challenges were discussed and possible solutions were also provided. Conclusion was drawn and recommendations were presented.**

Keywords: **Retention, Disposition, Personnel Records, Educational Institutions.**

1.   INTRODUCTION

Different scholars and international organizations have viewed record in different ways; Records are documents or other electronic or physical entity in an organization that serves as evidence of an activity or transaction performed by the organization and that requires retention for some time period (TechNet SharePoint Server, 2010). Records are fundamental tools in the activities of government. They serve as the memories of an institution. They are an asset to institutions, and are useful in solving problems. Records are also useful for planning, investigation, controlling and detecting problems. The aim of records management is to provide the right information at the right time, in the right order, to the right users at the lowest possible cost. Records represent all documentary materials such as correspondence, forms, reports, drawings, maps, photographs and appear in various physical forms such as paper, cards, microfilms, tape, CD-ROMS etc which can be preserved for short or long term. In a similar vein, University of Pretoria (2010) states that a record is information that is recorded in any form; created or received routinely in the course of the university's business or correspondence; and retained by the university as evidence of such activity. Stuart and Bromage (2010) stress that the concept of the original, authentic, and reliable record should remain a fundamental principle for organizations regardless of where records are being created and managed. The University of Manchester (2010) concurs that a record is any piece of recorded information that is produced, received or kept by the university as part of its business processes and which provides evidence of a specific activity can be defined as a record. Therefore, the concept of record can be seen as information captured for use and re-.use at a time or a later time as evidence of an activity or action undertaken, on a basis on which future decision or action are made. The retention and disposition of personnel records in educational institutions is indeed unassailable.

2.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The retention and disposition of personnel records is a critical variable for effective management in nay institution. However in many developing nations and Nigeria in particular, poverty of retention and disposition of personnel records

is a problem, such problems includes improper management of records of deceased and retired staff, damaging and deteriorating records, misplacement of files, lack of professionals to handle records and others.

Federal tertiary educational institutions in Adamawa State of North Eastern Nigeria are parts of institutions in Nigeria and might not be excluded from the problems of poor retention and disposition of personnel records. Moreover, there seems to be scarely of studies on retention and disposition of personnel records in Federal Tertiary Educational Institutions in Adamawa State. This study explores the issue of retention and disposition of personnel records in Federal Tertiary Education Institutions in Adamawa State.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a) What schedules for retention and disposition of records are adopted in Federal Tertiary Educational institutions in Adamawa State?

c) What are the challenges associated with personal records management federal tertiary Educational institutions in Adamawa state?

c) What are the possible solutions to personal records management in federal tertiary Educational institutions in Adamawa state?

4. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The survey research design was suitable for this study because the study seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence or absence of what is investigated. Mohammed (2015) opined that Survey research design is widely regarded as being inherently quantitative and positivistic, and is contrasted to qualitative methods that involves participant observation, unstructured interviewing, case studies, focus groups, questionnaires etc. Osuala (2013) described survey research design as the one that focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour. Survey research design according to Osuala do more than merely uncovered data, it allows a researcher to interpret, synthesize and integrate data to implications and interrelationship. The study area consists of three Federal Tertiary Educational institutions, namely; Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Federal College of Education Yola and Federal Polytechnic Mubi all in Adamawa State. The researcher used questionnaire for data collection because the respondents were literate and have the capability of filling the questionnaires without any assistance from anybody. Another reason is that the respondents were widely spread over a geographical location. Osuala (2013) maintained that questionnaires are advantageous whenever the sample size is large enough to make it uneconomical for reasons of time or funds to observe or interview every subject. The population of this study comprised record managers in the records management offices, Administrative officers, Secretaries and Exams officers in the 3 federal tertiary institutions in Adamawa State of Nigeria. The total population of the study for the three higher educational institutions in Adamawa state is 1,687 (Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola (404) Federal College of Education, Yola (550) and Federal Polytechnic Mubi (733). Questionnaires' were distributed to only personnel that are directly involved in records management. The data generated from the research questions were analysed using SPSS Mean and Standard Deviation.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first aspect of the analysis is demographic information which deals with the basic data on the respondents from the Institutions (Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola, Federal College of Education Yola and Federal Polytechnic Mubi). It was important to find out from the respondents their age, gender, marital status, and educational background. These specific characteristics would affect their participation in the study, because individual responses or perceptions on some issues may vary. The data involves respondents' Response rate, gender, age, level of education and number of years worked with the institutions which is presented as follows;

1.1 Response Rate of Respondents

The sample size consisted of 234 respondents who were given the questionnaires; drawn from 3 federal institutions (Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola, Federal College of Education Yola and Federal Polytechnic Mubi). The response rate was as shown in table 1.1

Table 1.1 Respondents Response Rate

| Respondents institution	Sample Population	Response	Response rate (%)
Mautech	82	76	92.7
FCE Yola	74	71	95.9
Fed.Poly Mubi	78	73	93.6
Total	**234**	**220**	**94.02**

From the table 1.1, out of the 234 questionnaires administered, the study achieved an overall response rate of 94.02% with the highest response rate being that of Federal College Education Yola at 95.9% and the lowest being that of Modibbo Adama University of Technology,Yola, at 92.7%. After several follow ups the researcher observed the reason for non-response rate being respondents' busy schedules which made it impossible to achieve a 100% response. This gives the impression that majority of the respondents are from the Federal College Education Yola, Having a high response rate of 95.9%.

Table 1.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percent
25 years and below	9	4
26-35 years	166	75.5
36-45 years	31	14.1
46 years and above	14	6.4
Total	**220**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 1.2 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents, 166(75.5%) of the respondents were within the age brackets of 26 years to 35 years. Again, 31(14.1%) were within the age brackets of 36 years to 45 years, 14(6.4%) were also within the brackets of 46 years and above while 9(4%) were between the age brackets 25 and below. This implied that majority of the institutions administrative staff are below the age of 36 years, who are very energetic and can help the institutions to achieve their target or objectives.
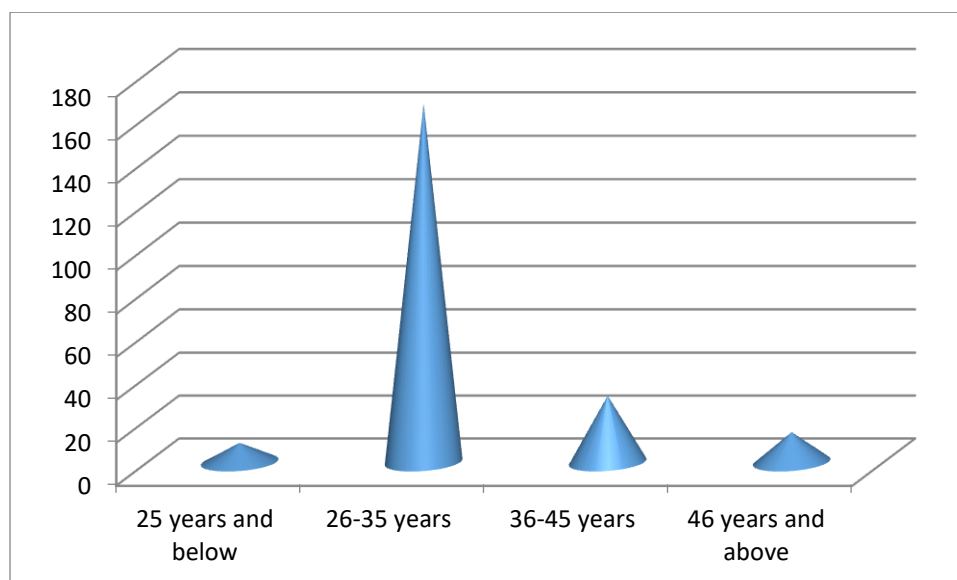
Figure 1.1 Age distribution of the respondents

1.2 Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender as either male or female. The responses were as shown in the table 4.3 below.

Table 1.3: Gender

Response	Frequency	Percent
Male	76	34.5
Female	144	65.5
Total	**220**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 1.3 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Clearly, it can be seen from the table that female respondents dominate the study representing 65.5% while 76 respondents making 34.5% were males. This confirms the perception that administrative duties are female dominated and that males generally do not show interest in that.

1.3 Work experience of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their work experience in years. The responses were as shown in the table 4.4 below.

Table 1.4: Number of years worked

Response	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	32	14.5
6-10 years	71	32.3
11-15 years	94	42.7
16 and above	23	10.6
Total	**220**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 1.4 indicates the number of years respondents have worked in the institutions. Thirty-two (32) respondents representing 14.5% of them have worked for five years or less in the institutions. Seventy-one (71) respondents making 33% have served in the institutions for 6-10 years, ninety-four (94) respondents representing 42.7% have spent between 11-15 years in the institutions and the remaining 23 of the respondents representing 10.6% have served over 16 years in the institution. It therefore indicates that respondents have experience in proper records management and help preserves the institutions memory. This is in line with the assertion made by Gude (1992) that as people work continuously for a long time on a particular task, they become more conversant with the best practices and tenets of the work and subsequently develops best attitudes towards high performance.

1.4 Personnel Records Management Practices in the institutions

This study sought to find out if the Institutions had organized records classification system and whether officials were managing records according to it. The responses were as shown in table 4.5

Table 4.5 Personnel Record Management practices in the institutions

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	NO	8	3.6	3.6	3.6
	YES	212	96.4	96.4	100.0
	Total	220	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Fieldwork, 2019

Results from Table 1.5 shows that 212(96.4%) strongly declare that Personnel record management is practiced in the institutions whereas 8(3.6%) said that personnel record management is not practiced in the Federal institutions. This depicts that the administrative staff were sure that Personnel record management is been practiced in the institutions. For emphasis, it is been clearly illustrated in the figure below.
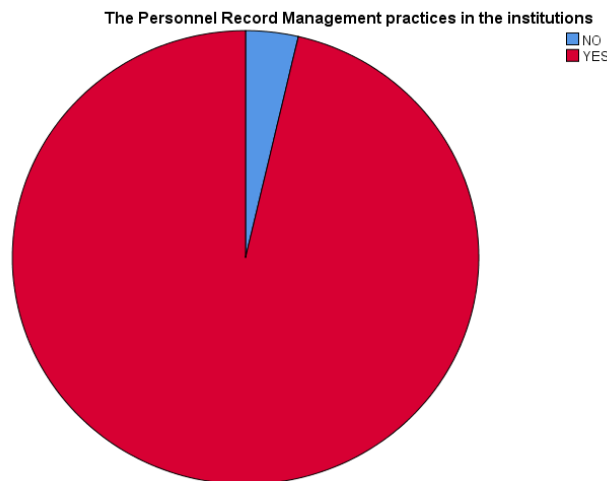
Figure 1.2: Personnel Record Management practices in the institutions

Source: SPSS

1.5 Type of Personnel Record Management Practice Adopted in the Institutions

The study sought to determine what type of records arrangement systems used in the institutions as given in table 1.6 below

Table 1.6   Type of personnel Record management practices

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	manual method	41	18.6	18.6	18.6
	Electronic method	14	6.4	6.4	25.0
	Both Manual and Electronic	159	72.3	72.3	97.3
	Others	6	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	220	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 1.6 demonstrates clearly that 41(18.6%) keep their office documents manually, 14(6.4%) store their records electronically while 159(72.3%) store their records both manual and electronic forms while 6(2.7%) have other ways of keeping records. The results show that majority of the respondents used both manual and electronic forms in data storage, making the retrieval of records easy. This is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1.3 Type of Personnel Record Management Used in the institutions

Source: SPSS

1.6 Retention and disposition schedules adoption in the institutions

The study sought to find out if the institutions have adopted the Retention and disposition schedules for their records. The responses were as shown in table 1.12 below

Table 1.7: Retention and disposition schedules adoption in the institutions(N=220)

Responses	N	Highly Adopted	Adopted	Not Adopted	Mean	Std. Deviation
Record retention schedules	220	72(32.7%)	130(59.1%)	18(8.2%)	1.76	.588
Record disposition Schedules	220	69(31.4%)	123(55.9%)	28(12.7%)	1.83	.632
Total	220	141(64.1%)	253(115%)	46(20.9%)		
Mean		70.5	126.5	23		

Sources: Fieldwork, 2019

As shown in the Table above Majority of the respondents with 253 responses for the items representing 126.5 of the mean value indicate that the institutions adopted the retention and disposition schedule and 141 response for the items representing 70.5 of the average values indicated that the institutions have highly adopted the schedules while only 49 respondents responses for all items indicated the institutions have not adopted the retention and disposition schedules. The study results indicated that the institutions have record inventory programs for the effective management of records. This implies that the institutions have documented records retention schedule that record categories and expected retention time periods. It also prevents excessive retention of records which will cause difficulties in retrieving records and result in space problems. This is in line with the assertion made by De Wet and Du Toit (2000) that record management has evolved from a paper-based function for the storage of an organization's miscellaneous documents to one concerned with the management of specific internal records in a multitude of media from creation to disposal through their active use as sources of information and ultimate review against retention schedules for their eventual distraction. The figures below clarify it.
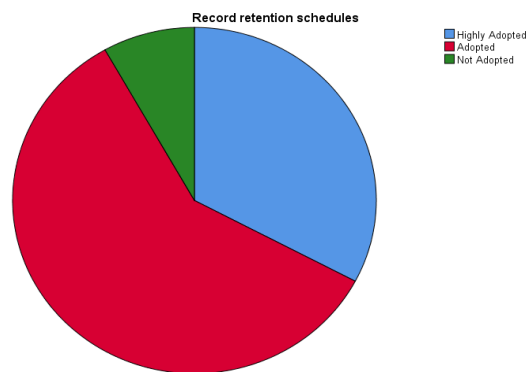

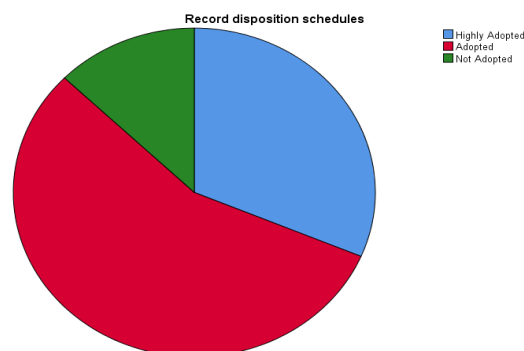**Figure 1.4 Record Retention Schedules**

Source: SPSS version 25

Figure 1.5 Record disposition schedules

Source: SPSS version 25

1.7 Efficiency of Record Retention and Disposition schedules

This study sought to find out the efficiency of record retention and disposition schedules adopted in the institutions. The responses were as shown in table 1.8

Table 1.8:Efficiency of record retention and disposition schedules in the institutions

Response	N	Highly Efficient	Efficient	Not Efficient	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regular Auditing	220	67(30.5%)	136(61.8%)	17(7.7%)	1.78	.571
Closing inactive files	220	66(30%)	122(55.5%)	32(14.5%)	1.85	.644
Maintaining dates for retention and disposal	220	76(34.5%)	113(51.4%)	31(14.1%)	1.80	.668
Destroying unwanted records properly	220	57(25.9%)	115(52.3%)	48(21.8%)	1.96	.691
Preserving inactive files	220	74(33.6%)	116(52.7%)	30(13.6%)	1.80	.659
Total	220	340	602	158		
Mean		68	120.4	31.6	602	

Sources: Fieldwork, 2019

As shown in the Table above Majority of the respondents, with 602 response from the respondents having a mean value of 68 indicate that Records retention and Disposition are Highly efficient in the institutions, and 340 responses from the respondents having an average value of 68indicate that the institutions records retention and disposition are Highly Efficient, while 158 responses of the respondents having a mean value of 31.6 indicate that they not Efficient in the institutions. The mean scores of the response items are close to two indicating that we should opt for the needed options. Their Standard deviations are spread about the mean almost equally. Generally we conclude that the adequacies of record professionals' qualifications in the institutions are not adequate

1.8 Challenges associated with personnel record management in the institutions

The objective of the study was to determine effective and efficient records management practices for the institutions. The study sought to establish the challenges encountered in personnel record management in the management of records in the county. The responses were as shown in table 1.9 below

Table 1.9:Challenges associated with personnel record management in the institutions

Responses	N	Yes	No	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of Training	220	141	791	141	.64	.481
Inadequate Finances	220	109	111	109	.50	.501
Lack of Professional staff	220	121	99	121	.55	.499
Lack of ICT knowledge	220	116	104	116	.53	.500
Lack of Management support	220	123	97	123	.56	.498
improper utilization	220	107	113	107	.49	.501
Others	220	70	150	70	.32	.467
Valid N (listwise)	220					

Sources: Field work, 2019

From table 1.9 above, the main challenges indicated by the respondents were lack of training with an average value of .64 (141) and lack of management support with an average value of .56 (123). Other key challenges included: Lack of professional staff with an average value of .55 (121); Lack of ICT knowledge with an average value of .53 (116) and inadequate finances with an average value of .50 (109). Improper Utilization with a mean value of .49 (107) was also identified by a few respondents as a challenge while few others with mean value of .32(70) indicate that the institutions have other challenges. And the standard deviation tells us that the response items are not wiely spread out but are distributed around the actual means. Thus the institutions experienced various challenges including lack of training, unqualified staff and lack of management support. The results of this study are in agreement with studies conducted by

Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) and Abuki (2014) that indicate that challenges facing Record Management in the public sector include: lack of top management support on records management practice; lack of skills and training amongst records management practitioners; paucity of records management policies; record managers being employed at a low level; financial resource cuts and records management units reporting to senior managers that do not have an idea on Records management.

1.9 Possible solutions to the challenges in Personnel record management

The study sought to find out suggestions to address challenges facing records management in Federal institutions.

Table 1.10: Possible solutions to the challenges in Personnel record management

Response	N	Yes	No	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organize workshops, seminars	220	141	79	141	.64	.481
More funds to be allocated	220	107	113	107	.49	.501
employing qualified staff	220	112	108	112	.51	.501
Adequate training	220	154	166	154	.70	.459
Others	220	92	128	92	.42	.494
Valid N (list wise)	220					

Sources: Fieldwork, 2019

From the table 1.10, the major solutions indicated by respondents to address challenges facing Personnel records management in the Institutions were Adequate training with an average value of .70 (154) and organize workshops and seminars with a mean value of   .64(141). Other solutions indicated by the respondents included, employing skilled personnel/qualified staff with mean value of .51(112) and proper allocation of fund with an average value of .49 (107), while few among the respondents actually suggested other solutions like the proper utilization of the system etc and looking at the Standard deviation values it suggest that the respondents responses are not far from their actual means. Based on the results, training and organizing workshops and seminars were the major solutions to challenges facing records management in the institutions. The results of this study concurred with a study by Abuki (2014), which recommends automation of records management functions, training of staff, allocation of funds to records management and provision of storage facilities and staff as solutions to challenges facing records management.

6.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study recommends that institutional records centre be established for the retirement of non-current records.

2. Adequate training be given the staff on the technical skills for the organization and disposition of records.

3. Electronic records management system be adopted to the institutions studied

The study also recommend that there should be records management policies in the institutions studied

7.   CONCLUSION

The article placed definitions of records, records management and governance. It also presented problems problem statement, research questions, literature review and methodology adopted to the study. The findings were discussed and presented in the article in form of tables, figures and illustrations, recommendations were also made to the institutions for proper organisations or arrangement of the employee records.

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