



## **Channels of Record Management in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the channels of record management utilized in tertiary institution libraries in Rivers State. It aimed to address two objectives and corresponding research questions. The study's population comprised 48 professional and non-professional librarians from Rivers State University and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, with an accessible population of 46 respondents. A survey design and purposive sampling technique were employed to select respondents and collect data through a self-structured questionnaire titled Channels of Record Management in Tertiary Institution Libraries in Rivers State. The data were analyzed using simple percentages and mean scores. Findings revealed various channels of record management, including paper filing systems, cloud storage systems, enterprise content management systems, and workflow business management processes. Additionally, benefits such as supporting managerial decision-making, ensuring continuity, maintaining confidentiality, improving service delivery, and upholding the integrity of academic citation were highlighted. The study concluded that collaboration platforms, digital record storage systems, and knowledge-based document management systems are largely unavailable due to inadequate provision, leaving paper filing systems as the predominant method of record management. Recommendations were made for tertiary institution libraries to adopt electronic record management systems to reduce reliance on paper filing, which consumes significant space and creates clutter. Additionally, records that have reached the end of their lifecycle should be properly destroyed or disposed of to maintain efficiency and organization.

**Keywords:** Channels, Libraries. Library Records. Record Management, Tertiary Institutions.

### **Introduction**

Tertiary institutions around the world serve as centers for academic excellence and advanced learning. These institutions, which include universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, research institutions, and similar organizations, play a critical role in generating and maintaining records to support teaching, learning, research, and administrative functions (Ologbosere et al., 2024). Records, as defined by Saffady (2021), are information created, received, and maintained as evidence or for business transactions, often in compliance with legal or organizational requirements. The importance of records in tertiary institutions



cannot be overstated, as they define the institution's identity and serve as evidence of its compliance with its mandate.

In tertiary institutions, specific records are maintained to facilitate daily operations, and these can be systematically identified through functional analysis (Asogwa et al., 2021). Functional analysis helps to determine key records and activities essential to the institution's direction and management. Channels of records management are the pathways through which records are created, processed, stored, and accessed. These channels in tertiary institutions include paper filing systems, digital record storage, email systems, collaboration platforms, document management systems, enterprise content management systems, and workflow and business process management systems. Paper filing systems involve the manual handling of physical documents, such as memos, reports, and invoices, while digital channels leverage electronic systems to create, organize, and store records. Uka and Ekweowune (2019) highlight the shift to digital record management in the modern era, with processes like online registration, electronic result notifications, and transcript issuance becoming the norm. Digital channels offer significant advantages, such as increased efficiency, accessibility, and cost savings, compared to traditional paper-based methods.

The primary purpose of records management in tertiary institutions is to ensure proper documentation of institutional activities, effective record disposition, and compliance with institutional regulations. Records management facilitates accountability by providing timely and accessible information on administrative actions, such as resource allocation and utilization (Guto & Jumba, 2021). Additionally, it establishes policies, procedures, and standards for managing records effectively. Proper records management offers numerous benefits to institutions. Shepherd (2016) asserts that well-managed records support accountability, enhance service delivery, aid managerial decision-making, promote transparency, and ensure continuity in policy execution and administration. With these advantages in mind, it is crucial for tertiary institutions to adopt effective records management systems, integrating both traditional and digital approaches to improve organizational efficiency and support their academic and administrative goals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the invaluable role records play in the administration of organizations; records managers/librarians often exhibit misconceptions and indifference to the management of records. This disposition is as a result of a lack of resources, poor library financing, inappropriate staff and training, lack of tools and techniques provided by the management of the institutions. These often lead to significant waste of time, human effort, material space and money that would surprise one if they were to realize its magnitude and implications. Records management is very vital in tertiary institution library for effective realization of state goals and objectives. The researcher wonders why despite the vital role record management play in the administration of tertiary institutions library, management of institutions would not invest into proper record management. It is for this reason the study on



Channels of Record Management in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria is carried out.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to determine the channels of record management in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- I. identify the channels of record management in tertiary institution libraries.
2. determine the benefits of the channels of record management in tertiary institution library.

### **Literature Review**

This study is anchored on the Record Continuum Model (RCM) proposed by Upward (1998) and the Record Life-Cycle Theory developed by the National Archives of the USA in the 1930s. The Record Continuum Model emphasizes the inclusive nature of records with continuing value and highlights their traditional, evidential, and memory-based purposes. It unifies activist and record-keeping approaches, stressing the importance of collaboration and strategic partnerships with stakeholders. Upward (1998) also describes the model as a graphical tool for understanding the interconnected relationships between records and their broader societal and organizational contexts. The Record Life-Cycle Theory complements the RCM by providing a framework for records management operations, focusing on the stages of record creation, distribution, maintenance and use, appraisal, and eventual disposition. This theory ensures a systematic approach to managing records from inception to their final disposition, thereby supporting efficient recordkeeping practices. This study's significance lies in its contribution to the body of literature and its practical relevance to policymakers. It provides insights that can guide the formulation of effective policies to support decision-making by record managers and activists in Nigeria.

Ologbosere et al. (2024) examined the combined impact of records management and information security on organizational agility among employees in selected organizations in Abeokuta, Nigeria. Using a survey research design, the study sampled 120 employees (male = 64, female = 56) through a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed with regression statistics to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that records management and information security significantly influenced organizational agility ( $\text{Adj } R^2 = 0.502$ ,  $F(2,117) = 19.330$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). The study concluded that employees' ability to effectively receive, create, use, store, and retrieve information enhances an organization's responsiveness to changes in the business environment, thereby improving agility and goal achievement. Recommendations include providing adequate resources and space for effective records management and information security to ensure adaptability to environmental changes. Saffady (2021) highlighted the fundamentals of records and information management, emphasizing the importance of professional practices in achieving efficient organizational administration. Guto and Jumba (2021) explored the relationship between electronic records management



and public organization credibility through a systematic review and content analysis. The study leveraged current online resources using data mining techniques. Results showed a strong relationship between electronic records management and organizational credibility. The authors recommended the full adoption of electronic records management systems (ERMS), the development of policies tailored to records administration, and the training of skilled personnel to address technological advancements.

Mukred et al. (2022) investigated the role of electronic records management systems (ERMS) in enhancing the competency of educational institutions in Yemen. Using a quantitative approach, 350 questionnaires were distributed among academicians and managers in the Yemeni public education sector. Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) revealed that ERMS significantly influenced the behavioral intention to adopt such systems and positively impacted educational institutions' competencies. The study emphasized the importance of ERMS and cloud dimensions in supporting educational efficiency, with findings providing insights for theoretical and practical advancements in ERMS implementation.

Tsvuura and Ngulube (2021) assessed the digitization of records and archives at two state universities in Zimbabwe, focusing on whether a framework or model existed for smooth implementation. Adopting a qualitative multiple-case research design, the study revealed that the universities lacked structured frameworks for digitization. A centralized model was recommended to streamline the digitization process, integrating best practices, top management support, and centralized approaches to enhance digital records and archives management.

Asogwa et al. (2021) evaluated the state of digital records management in Nigerian university libraries, analyzing data from 231 academic librarians and senior administrative staff across 12 federal universities. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, a checklist, and oral interviews, analyzed using SPSS version 20. The findings revealed the availability of ICT facilities but limited utilization, inadequate planning, and insufficient adoption of international best practices. Recommendations included increased funding, reliable power supply, comprehensive internet services, and global best practices to improve e-records management.

Similarly, Asogwa et al. (2021) assessed the preparedness of Nigerian university libraries for digital records management. Data collected from 84 librarians across 18 federal universities showed that while ICT infrastructures were available, preparedness for their use was low due to inadequate funding, intermittent power supply, and the absence of e-records management policies. Recommendations included increased budgetary allocations, reliable electricity, and the development of policies to support digital records management. The study emphasized that without proper preparedness, university libraries risk the inaccessibility of digital records over time.



Tella et al. (2022) examined the awareness and perception of blockchain technology in library and archive management in Nigeria during the fourth industrial revolution. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires from 10 librarians and 10 archivists across five libraries and five archives in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Findings revealed high awareness and positive perceptions of blockchain technology as a tool for storing, preserving, and sharing information in distributed settings. However, challenges such as high implementation costs and sustainability issues were identified. The study called for further research in other geopolitical zones to generalize the findings.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a survey research design to explore the channels of records management at Rivers State University and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. According to Amadi (2020), a survey involves studying a group of people considered representative of a population. Amadi further explained that when all members of the group participate in answering the research questions, a complete census occurs. In alignment with this, the researcher conducted a complete census, distributing the data collection instrument to the entire population of the study. The study population consisted of all professional and paraprofessional librarians working in the Central Library of Rivers State University and the Library of Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. Data obtained from the offices of the librarians in both institutions revealed that the Rivers State University Central Library had 11 professional librarians and 21 paraprofessional librarians, while the Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library had 2 professional librarians and 14 paraprofessional librarians. This resulted in a total population size of 48 librarians. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study, whereby the researchers specifically selected professional librarians from both institutions as respondents. As noted by Nwankwo in Amadi (2020), purposive sampling is a method that involves the deliberate selection of individuals who possess specific attributes relevant to the study. This approach was employed to ensure the respondents were well-suited to address the study's objectives. The questionnaire used as the research instrument. The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the items, ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and mean scores. A mean criterion table was developed to facilitate the interpretation of results and provide insights into the findings.



**Table 1: Population Distribution Table**

| S/N          | Name of Institutions                      | Number of Professional Librarian | Number of Para Librarian Professional |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1            | Rivers State University                   | 11                               | 21                                    |
| 2            | Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Library | 2                                | 14                                    |
| <b>Total</b> |                                           | <b>48</b>                        |                                       |

The questionnaires were distributed to the librarians and were retrieved by the researcher upon completion by the respondents.

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

A total of 48 questionnaires were administered to the respondents which are professional librarians working in the libraries. The sample size for this study was 48. However, due the busy schedule of the librarians, the researcher was only able to administered 46 questionnaires out of the 48 the study sought to Investigate. The table below shows the percentage rate of questionnaires administered

**Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaire**

| QUESTIONNAIRE              | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Sample size                | 48        | 100%       |
| Questionnaire Administered | 46        | 96%        |
| Not Administered           | 2         | 4%         |

Table 2 shows that 96% of the sample size was used for this study

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Institution**

| Questionnaire                    | Frequency | Percentage  |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| RSU                              | 32        | 65          |
| Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic | 16        | 35          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>27</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The table above indicates that majority (65%) of the librarians that respondent fare from RSU while the minority area from Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic (35)



**Research Question 1:** What are the types of channels of records management in tertiary institutions libraries?

**Table 4:** Mean response on the type of channels of records management in tertiary institutions libraries.

| Items                                     | SA | A  | D  | SD | X    | Decision |
|-------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| Paper filling system                      | 42 | 4  | 0  | 0  | 3.91 | Accepted |
| Digital record storage system             | 36 | 5  | 3  | 2  | 3.63 | Accepted |
| Collaboration platforms system            | 5  | 9  | 3  | 29 | 1.78 | Rejected |
| Electronic (e-mail) record system         | 3  | 7  | 18 | 18 | 1.89 | Rejected |
| Cloud storage system                      | 42 | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3.84 | Accepted |
| Enterprise content management system      | 36 | 5  | 3  | 2  | 3.63 | Accepted |
| Work flow and business management process | 23 | 15 | 3  | 5  | 3.21 | Accepted |
| Knowledge base and intranet system        | 15 | 18 | 9  | 4  | 2.95 | Rejected |
| Document management system                | 44 | 2  | 0  | 0  | 3.95 | Accepted |

Table 5 shows mean response on the type of channels of records management in tertiary institutions libraries in Rivers State. The table shows that the type of channels of records, control of records and storage with a weight mean of 3.97, 4, 4, 3.97 and 4, respectively. However, item 4 & 8, were rejected as scored below the expected criterion of 3.9 3.



**Research Question 2:** What are the benefits of records management in tertiary institutions libraries in Rivers State?

**Table 6:** Benefits of Records Management

| S/N | Items                                                               | SA | A | D | SD | X    | Decision        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Continuity policy Accepted                                          | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | <b>Accepted</b> |
| 2   | Support managerial decision making                                  | 41 | 5 | 0 | 0  | 3.89 | Accepted        |
| 3   | Provides evidence of organizational activities for ligation support | 39 | 3 | 1 | 3  | 3.69 | Rejected        |
| 4   | Records are available when needed                                   | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 5   | Transparent policy formulation                                      | 41 | 3 | 1 | 1  | 3.82 | Rejected        |
| 6   | Privacy and confidentiality maintained                              | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 7   | Conducts business in accountable manner                             | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 8   | Enhances quality service delivery to its clients                    | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 9   | Protect the rights of employees                                     | 39 | 3 | 1 | 3  | 3.69 | Rejected        |
| 10  | Support transparent policy formulation                              | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 11  | Streamline document storage                                         | 42 | 4 | 0 | 0  | 3.91 | Accepted        |
| 12  | Ensure accuracy and integrity of academic citing                    | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 4    | Accepted        |
| 13  | Organize, store and deliver information to employees                | 39 | 3 | 1 | 3  | 3,69 | Rejected        |

Table 6 illustrates the mean response to the benefits of records management in tertiary institutions libraries in Rivers State. From the responses provided, continuity policy supports managerial decision making, records are available when needed, privacy and confidentiality are maintained, conducts business in an accountable manner, enhances quality service delivery, streamlines document storage to its clients, and ensures accuracy and integrity of academic citing were accepted with a mean weight of 4, 3.89, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3.91 and 4 respectively. However, providing evidence of organizational activities for ligation support,



transparent policy formulation, and protecting the rights of employees was rejected with a weighted mean of 3.69, 3.82, and 3.69 they scored below the expected criterion of 3.89.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study highlight the types of channels used for records management in tertiary institution libraries in Rivers State. The study identified paper filing systems, digital records storage systems, cloud storage systems, enterprise content management systems, workflow business management processes, and document management systems as the prominent channels of records management. However, other options provided in the questionnaire, such as collaboration platform systems, digital record storage systems, and knowledge base and intranet systems, were not widely utilized. These findings align with those of Uka and Ekwonwune (2019), who reported that paper filing systems, digital record storage systems, and cabinet filing systems are the key channels for records management. The study underscores the importance of adopting proper records management channels across all levels of library operations.

The study also revealed several benefits of records management in tertiary institution libraries, including ensuring continuity of policies, supporting managerial decision-making, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, promoting accountability, enhancing quality service delivery, streamlining document storage, and ensuring accuracy and integrity in academic citation. These findings align with those of Mukred et al. (2022) and Guto and Jumba (2021), who emphasized the benefits of records management as eliminating unnecessary duplication of information, facilitating easy identification and accessibility of records, and improving decision-making processes.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the channels of record management in tertiary institution libraries in Rivers State, focusing on Rivers State University and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. The findings revealed that the predominant channels of records management include paper filing systems, digital records storage systems, cloud storage systems, enterprise content management systems, workflow business management processes, and document management systems. However, collaboration platforms, knowledge-based systems, and electronic (email) records systems were found to be less utilized, reflecting the limited adoption of advanced electronic record management tools. The study also identified the benefits of effective records management were highlighted, including the continuity of policies, support for managerial decision-making, timely availability of records, maintenance of privacy and confidentiality, enhanced service delivery, streamlined document storage, and assurance of accuracy and integrity in academic citation. These findings underscore the critical role of records management in ensuring organizational efficiency, accountability, and the effective administration of library services.

The study concluded that while some digital record management systems are being utilized, significant gaps exist in the adoption of more advanced systems due to resource and



infrastructure constraints. It recommends that tertiary institution libraries prioritize the adoption of electronic record management systems, proper disposal of outdated records, and greater autonomy for librarians in managing their record-keeping processes to improve service delivery and operational efficiency.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Tertiary institution libraries should use electronic channels of record management systems to minimize the use of paper filing system and cabinet which occupy much space and litter of files when the cabinets are full.
2. Records that are no longer required in the activity of the institution libraries, which are in the final phase of their life-cycle, should be properly destroyed or disposed to create space for new records.
3. Librarians and libraries in tertiary institution libraries should be given mandate to manage their record, and to do all their business processes and systems independently so as to ensure quality service delivery to its clients without the interference of the management of the institutions.
4. Library levies paid by students at the beginning of each session (included as school fee payment) should be handed over to the management of the libraries for proper upkeep of the libraries. These levies should go into the library purse as libraries have so much information resources to acquire and do in house training for its staff.

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