

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Recordkeeping in an organizational set-up is very important and cannot be overemphasized. This is because continuity depends on availability of useful records of past activities. In a complex organization like that of the university, it is not possible to keep every information in the brain because the volume of information is heavy, therefore records must be kept.

The keeping of records predated the existence of man. For instance, in Genesis 1 and 2 God kept a chronological record of all his creations of the world from day one when he created the heaven and earth to the seventh day when he rested from all his works which he had made.

In Nigeria, Education law demands that every educational institution should keep certain school records such as log book, admission register, visitors book, inventory book, account book etc. The keeping of record is often organized around a life cycle that all records should follow viz-creation, storage, retrieval (for use as needed), retention and disposition which includes protecting all vital documents (records).

According to the International Organization for Standardization 2001, record can be defined as information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person in pursuance of legal obligation or in the transaction of business.

Mbiti (1978) sees school records as comprising all the books and files or other document containing information relating to what goes on in that school, who is in the school as well as what type of property the school owns.

According to the Fund and Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary (2000), record is an account in writing or other permanent form serving as a memorial or authentic evidence of facts or events. It is regarded as information handed down or preserved.

Record management is the practice of maintaining the records of an organization from the time they are created up to their eventual disposal; this may include—classifying, storing, securing and destruction (or in some cases, archival preservation) of records. Record

management is primarily concerned with the evidence of an organization's activities and is usually applied according to the value of the records rather than their physical format. In the past, record management was sometimes used to refer to only to the management of records which were no longer in everyday use but still needed to be kept (semi-current or inactive records) often stored in basement or offsite. More modern usage tends to refer to the entire life cycle of records – from the point of creation right through until their disposal.

An academic record or academic transcript is an official statement of all results achieved through study. It includes a complete listing of all the courses, the credit points achieved for courses and the grade point average (G.P.A), if applicable and a complete status, if you have already graduated from your course. Additional information is provided to help understand your academic record.

Every student who has ever been enrolled at the university will have details of their achievements recorded in the university database, the official record of these achievements is called an academic record or academic transcript; this record details your entire academic history with the university.

Record keeping occupies a strategic position in the efficient and effective management of the university system. In fact, it is central in the administration of institutions of learning because it documents the planning and implementation of appropriate courses of services allowing monitoring of work. In the conventional paper based organization such as the universities, paper continues to be viewed as the materials for records in administrative documentations (Igwoke 2008). The approach is for records created in the course of day-to-day business of the universities to be stored and kept in hard copies as evidence of an action, decision or process. However, the process of record keeping provides a framework for keeping, maintaining and providing for the disposition of records and what is contained in them. They are therefore intended to benefit all members of staff by facilitating continuity and evaluation of services and preserving privacy. This framework is provided for by guidelines designed to educate people on decisions regarding professional record keeping. For instance, American psychological association (APA 2007) contains the "ethical principles of psychologist and code of conduct" generally required for the maintenance of appropriate records of psychological services.

In Nigeria, just as in America, the nature and extent of the record will vary depending upon the purpose, setting and context of the services. However, whatever the record may be, it is important that the staff get familiar with the legal and ethical requirements for record keeping in their specific professional context and jurisdiction. Generally, record keeping must be guided by some level of confidentiality, proper maintenance security, preservation of the content and context etc (Uwaifo 2004, Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu 2007).

Unfortunately, the Nigeria situation in the business of record keeping and management especially in the university system has not been too successful because of lack of management components (Omeyi, 1997).

Writing in support of the above finding, Ibiam (2004) noted that many years of neglect had done great damage to the education sector and record keeping is not an exemption. In his view, Iginodala, (1998) believes that personnel (secretaries and filing clerks) who maintain the registry system with filing cabinets containing the paper evidence of university business are inadequate and in fact ignorant of their responsibilities. This calls to question the reliability and authenticity of records kept in such a system. Giving credence to this Afolabi (1999) asserted that record management practice in Nigeria has a number of problems which may include insufficient skilled and experienced record management personnel and possibly, low priority of record management in the scheme of things. Awe (2000) viewed the problem in record keeping from the perspective of these bodies – government, university management, the staff and the students. He accused these bodies of being responsible for unavailable/inaccurate/incomplete and dishonest records. And according to (Ututlu 2001) these adversely affect planning for and provision of structures and facilities, adequate funding, proper formulation and review of policies. Other associated problems of record keeping identified generally in the educational system in Nigeria include lack of record manual and filing guidelines which lead to loss of vital information (Egwunyenga 2005) and inadequate computer terminals (Oketunji, 2002) others are difficulty in record retrieval and lack of appreciation by management and staff of the need for well controlled records (Egunletti 2001). The result of the foregoing is high profile failure in accountability.

The management of these problems would mean the development of efficient

and ineffective options within and between universities this indeed requires urgent attention. Ogundele (2001) believes there is serious training need for staff. Full introduction and sustenance of computer and internet services as well as record management integration (Baje 1998; Fadokun 2004) adequate manual classification, security, storage facilities and funds are generally recommended for good record keeping (Tower 2004). It is hoped that if these options are adopted in the university system, perhaps most, if not all the problems associated with record keeping would have been addressed.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Record keeping can be viewed as very important in any organization as it helps in the storage/preservation and retrieval of vital information needed for future purposes. Unfortunately, in Nigerian universities today, not much importance is attached to record keeping. This has resulted into the dearth of useful information needed for the growth and expansion of these institutions.

Records keeping and management practice in Nigerian universities is bedeviled with a lot of setbacks such as: inadequately trained staff who are incompetent to be in charge of record keeping, the use of manual system rather than computerized methods for storing vital information, the negative attitude of staff towards record keeping, improper security of records, lack of record keeping policy, inadequate resource as well as lack of record retention and deposition schedule.

Undoubtedly, having accurate records is paramount to avoiding a disconnection and ensuring a cohesive continuity in the affairs of any organization with the inclusion of Nigerian universities.

2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions were postulated for this study

1. Does the level of workload of staff in charge of record keeping affect the efficient management of students' academic records in University of Benin?
2. Does the level of qualification of personnel in charge of keeping records affect the proper management of students' academic records in the University of Benin?
3. Does the experience of personnel in charge of students' academic records affect the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin?

4. Does the attitude of staff in charge of record keeping towards continuous update of the methods of collecting and storing records affect the proper management of students' academic records in the University of Benin
5. Does the use of computerized methods for keeping records affect the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin
6. Does adequate entry of students' academic result affect the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin?
7. Does correct proof reading and grading system affect the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin.
8. Does the enormous task of record keeping affect the proper management of students' academic records?

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypothesis will guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of workload of staff in charge of record keeping and efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin.
2. There is no significant relationship between the level of qualification of personnel in charge of keeping records and efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin.
3. There is no significant relationship between the experience of personnel in charge of students' academic records and the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin.
4. There is no significant relationship between the attitude of staff in charge of record keeping towards continuous update of the methods for collecting and storing records and the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin
5. There is no significant relationship between the use of computerized methods for keeping records and efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin
6. There is no significant relationship between adequate entry of students' academic result and proper management of students' academic records in the University of Benin.
7. There is no significant relationship between correct proof reading and grading system

and inefficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin

8. There is no significant relationship between the enormous task of keeping records

and inefficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin

1.5 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The ultimate desire of this project is to find out:

1. If unskilled, inadequately trained, grossly overburdened staff is a factor militating against the efficient management of students' academic records.

2. If the use of computerized methods for keeping records promotes the efficient management of students' academic records.

3. Also to know if the attitude of staff toward continuous update of the methods of keeping records affects the efficient management of students' academic records.

4. Finally, if proper entry of students' academic results, correct proof reading of students' academic results and efficient grading systems affect the management of students' academic records in the university of Benin.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study is to identify the factors affecting efficient management of students' academic records in the university of Benin. This study will be of paramount importance to students. In other words, it will help students to have a comprehensive data and easy access to their academic records at any given point in time. It will also help those who are in charge of record keeping in the university have easy storage, update and retrieval of academic records. This study would equally contribute to the body of literature already existing by way of expanding the knowledge of the factors affecting efficient management of students' academic records as well as its usefulness to future research.

1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research work was intended to examine the factors affecting efficient management of students' academic records in the university of Benin. The limitation includes:

1. This study was limited to departments in some selected faculties in the university of Benin

2. Finance was a major limiting factor of the study.

3. The inadequate literature in this area of study is one of the major problems encountered in the study.

Basic assumptions

- 1.Improvement in the attitude of staff towards record keeping leads to improvement in the efficient management of students' academic records in the University of Benin
- 2.Better methods for collecting and storing data results in the availability of accurate and reliable data.
- 3.All the departments used followed the same method of record keeping.
- 4.Proper entry of students' result, correct proof reading and efficient grading system lead to efficient management of students' academic record.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Record – This is an account or report of what has happened in the past

Efficient – This means ability to work well or ability to produce the required result

Management – Management is the act of planning, organizing, directing, controlling, commanding, budgeting and staffing.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC RECORDS

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