Information Impact

Records Availability and Information Use as Determinants of Decision Making Pattern of Polytechnic Administrators in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigate record availability, information use and decision making pattern of administrators in Polytechnics in Edo and Delta States. Correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 279 administrators comprises four public polytechnics in Edo and Delta States. Total enumeration sampling techniques was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage and statistical mean. Three hypothesis were formulated; 1 and 2 were tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Cooefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance, while hypotheses 3 was tested using multiple regression. The study founf that the records available in the Polytechnics includes minutes of meetings, admission list, policies and procedures; the extent of use of information from records by Polytechnics administrators was high; the decision making pattern of the administrators includes organization and storage of information, and review of previous decision outcomes; the extent of contribution of records availability and information use to the administrators' decision making is high; there is significant relationship between records, information use and administrators' decision making pattern; and there is significant relationship between information, use and administrators' decision making pattern. From the findings, it was recommended that Polytechnic Administrators should ensure that every decision made in the polytechnic is premised upon the series of records available in the Polytechnic. Therefore, the study has considered amongst other issues the concept of decision making pattern of Administrators in the Polytechnic system, based on the use of available records.

Keywords

Records, administrators, decision making, availability, information use,

Introduction

Polytechnics house a great number of academic and administrative staff, engaging in service responsibilities leading to important decisions on daily basis. Through staff the Polytechnic play roles in the immediate community and national development. In spite of the diversity in the programs run by the Nigerian polytechnics, which are characterized by multiple goals and objectives, the fact still remains that these goals are pursued through their main functions and activities of learning, teaching, research and public service.(Akinwumi, Isak & Nze, 2005). The internal functions of a Polytechnic include, but not limited to the task of admission of students, management of students profile, cause administration, Welfare Service, and certification of studies. The Polytechnic is an institution of higher learning which award OND and HND in various academic disciplines and by extension gives room for acquisition of knowledge.

Susnea (2013) defined record as all documents which assists the organization to carry out its business and which are thereafter reserved as evidence of its transaction. Therefore, record management is the use of systematic and scientific control of recorded information that is required for the operation of the organization. The aim of record management is to achieve the best retrieval and exploitation of business record in the organization's system and also to improve the efficiency of record making and keeping. ISO15489 (2016) has normalized the term record to include both electronic and physical record. Record is a thing or a piece constituting a piece of evidence about the past, present, or even the future, especially when it is in a permanent form. On the other hand, record management is an organizational function devoted to the management of information in an organization throughout it's life cycle, from the time the record is born to when it is living an active life to its its eventual disposition.

Decision making according to Morais & de Almeida (2012) is the process of ranking feasible alternative and selecting the best one by considering multiple criteria. It is comprised of four steps

1.   Information acquisition
2.   Decision-making mode
3.   Decision results acquisition
4.   Ranking alternatives in a sequence

Decisions such as managing the endowment fund in the trustee, maintaining and creating new resources to the management and development of the Polytechnic, and the curriculum of the schools are made by administrators. Records and archives provide the information that is required by those who make such decisions (Atulomah, 2011).

The records of an establishment such as the Polytechnic system stand as her corporate memory and serve as a guide for effective planning and decision making. Records are priceless to Polytechnic administrators in order to take advantage of past decisions, good record keeping is the bedrock of planning for the future of the Polytechnic system. Popoola (2000) claims that records availability and management is the bedrock of

business activity. If there is no information, the management is crippled in its planning and decision-making processes.

Therefore the non-availability of records or lack of use of information embedded in records by Polytechnic administrators for decision making may affect the quality of decisions that would be reached and invariably affect the output of such Polytechnic system. Records document the decision and activities of the Polytechnic and serve as a benchmark by which future activities and decisions are measured. Records are important for providing evidence; however, records are only valuable if they are accessible when needed.

The problem associated with storage, preservation and presentation of large volume of the information in paper form have made the administrative process difficult. Records and information available in the polytechnics are admission/ matriculation records, enrolment/ registration records, academic cumulative records,/transcript, convocation/award and disciplinary records and financial records. Administrators in polytechnics need records and information to enhance decision making. In the same vein, the speed and quality with which decisions are made depends on their availability of Records and information use that enables all relevant factors and issues to be considered before meet. Hence, studies on record availability and information use have been outdone subsequently because there are factors militating against decision-making pattern of Polytechnic administrator which include: lack of knowledge and experience, the ability to integrate the knowledge, skills and experience and thorough understanding of the use of available records and information in decision making.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine records availability, information use and decision-making pattern of the administrators in polytechnics in Delta and Edo States. The specific objectives are:

(i)   To ascertain the types of records available in the polytechnics in Edo and Delta states

(ii)   Determine the extent of information use by administrators

(iii)   Examine the administrator's decision-making pattern

(iv)   Examine the extent of contribution of Records availability and information use for administrator's decision making.

Research Questions

(i)   What types of records are available in the polytechnics in Edo and Delta states?

(ii)   To what extent are information used by administrators?

(iii)   What are the decision-making pattern of administrators?

(iv)   To what extent is the contribution of records availability and information use for administrators' decision making?

Hypothesis

1.   There is no significant relationship between records and availability and decision-making pattern of administrators in polytechnics in South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

Records are information created, sent, and received in the course of one's job. Records provide evidence of various units, business activities and functions, whether it is a Polytechnic record(such as school records, research or personal reports), depends on the information it contains and the context of its creation can be in paper, digital or other formats.

In the opinion of Mulikat (2018) record can serve as a two for performance assessment both by individuals, organizations and government agencies. It is important to note that information is the currency of democracy and for individual members of the community to be able to evaluate the success or otherwise of the Polytechnic progress, to be able to assert their rights to debate issues of the day, citizens must have access to information created, distributed by institutions. It is a necessary requirement for continuous Survival and transformation of the institution and Nigeria in particular and the world in general. At such, the availability of proper description or organization and use of archival Records will no doubt influence the effective roles of archives in terms of social transformation (Ikonne & Jegede, 2019). To avoid the risk of allegations or scrutiny, it is important to keep a record of every decision made including who made its, how it was made command any alternative options that were consulted and consider, and the reasons for the decision in any organization governed by principle of responsibility, both planning and action must be a matter of record. That is an axiomatic fact. Unless there is a way of reconstructing the Genesis of the past deliberation, responsibility and determination may exist in name but is not insured in fact.

Polytechnics, by the nature of their functions, generate a lot of records. Summer inclined to students, some to lecturers and others to the administrative functions of the institution. According to Iwhuwhu (2005), polytechnics generate an immense quantity and bewildering variety of Records everyday. Various department or schools create and use record for the purpose of documenting their activities full stop institutions of higher learning therefore, needs meticulous records throughout their life cycle.

Chinyeuba (2011) posit that without robust record management program in place, polytechnics cannot claim to be accountable and transparent. Chinyeuba and Ngulube (2005) highlight that proper records management could help polytechnics to manage their information efficiently fulfill their mandate, protect them from litigation, preserve their corporate memory and foster accountability and good governance.

Managers need quality information to help them make valuable decisions to achieve company goals and objectives and improve services and productivities (Mind Tools Community, 2010). In order to identify the information needs of administrators, one needs to adopt various methods to identify and gather information that is relevant to the need of the users.

Lawal (2009) recognize the major steps in the process of identifying information needs, which include the study of subject (s) of interest to the organization, study of the organization and its environment, study of the immediate environment of the users, study of the users, identification and recording of information need and analysis of the identified information needs. The identification of relevant information is one step in the formal decision-making process resulting in evaluating and deciding whether information should be considered as a candidate for use in decision making (Akhter, 2010). As Perkins (2001) states, there are plenty of information around, but too much of the wrong kind and not enough of the right kind.

Furthermore, if information is not properly disseminated, its usefulness and value in critical decision making is lost. Hence, there is need to identify and evaluate potentially relevant and useful information in the particular environment of users as the basis of efficient information systems and effective information services.

Decision-making in the Polytechnic system is always by committee. Each Polytechnic has about 20 committees and each is expected to have specialized with focus of activities. This entails the analysis of available options. Search decisions may have to do with providing solutions to specific problems e.g. course unit system, receipt examinations, broad and recurrent issues like financial allocations, (financial and general purpose committees of council) or recruitment and rewards as in appointment and promotion committees or with discipline as in the joint committees or academic board and council on discipline, what is most common to all the committees decision and choice of one out of alternatives.

Decision-making in the Polytechnic system is an administrative function and invariably requires information in the form of Records (Atulomah, 2011). Administration is definitely seen as an act of getting things done. Emphasis is placed upon processes and methods for ensuring Incisive action. Decisions are made at different levels in the Polytechnic. Activity decision is being made about allocation of budgetary resources, the prioritization of programs, commissioning of new projects, the closure of unproductive Ventures, the information to release to the public or the level of classification that setting information requires. Records and archives provide the information that is required by those who make the decision.

The question then is whether these records are valuable to the decision makers and whether the decision-makers are aware of their existence and tours make use of them when making decisions. The effective use of information and information transfer

process is critical to good decision making and good administration (Ford cited in Aiyepeku, 1978). A manager turns to instructive decision if information is lacking. The Foundation of good management therefore is good information. According to (Goldhabaret, 1979) information increases individuals ability to effect decision-making and this increases a person's power. This was conducted by some other researchers, Naylor and Clark, Nystedt, as reported by O'Reil III (1980).

Research Methodology

The study adopts the correlation survey research design. The correlation study seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables by indicating the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables (Nworgu, 2015). The population of the study is 279 administrators in four public polytechnics in Edo and Delta States. These include one federal and 3 state polytechnic. They are Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State; Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara, Delta State; Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku. The entire 279 administrators were used for the study because the population was not large, making it manageable for the researcher. Total enumeration sampling technique was used to cover the entire 279 administrators in the polytechnics. The instrument used for this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is titled "Records Availability and Information Use as Determinant of Administrator's Decision-Making Pattern Questionnaire (RAIUDADMPQ). It was self-designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was scrutinized to ascertain face and content validity. The test-retest was employed for the reliability of the instrument; Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The correlation (r) 0.70 was obtained. The data obtained from the retrieved copies of the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics. Research questions 1 and 3 were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage while research question 2 was analysed using frequency counts and statistical mean. Hypothesis 1 was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Data Analysis and Results
Research Question One: What Types of Records are Available in the Polytechnics in Edo and Delta States?
Table 1: Records Available in the Polytechnics

Types of Records	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Minutes of meetings	194	98.5	3	1.5	197	100
Admission Records	193	98.0	4	2.0	197	100
Policies & Procedures	191	97.0	6	3.0	197	100
Sources from superior offices (verbal/textual records)	189	95.9	8	4.1	197	100

Financial Records	188	94.5	9	4.6	197	100
Polytechnic Archives	188	95.4	9	4.6	197	100
Legal records	188	95.4	9	4.6	197	100
Annual report	187	94.9	10	5.1	197	100
Correspondences	187	94.9	10	5.1	197	100
Service delivery record	185	93.9	12	6.1	197	100
Employment records	185	93.9	12	6.1	197	100
Senate extract	184	93.4	13	6.6	197	100

Table 1 reveals that the types of records available in the polytechnics include: minutes of meetings (194, 98.5%), admission list (193, 98.0%). The opinion of the respondents reveal that a number of records are available through which the polytechnic administrators can make decisions.

Research Question Two: To what extent is information from records used by polytechnic administrators?

Table 2: Extent of Information use from record by Administrators

Record Information	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean
• Annual reports	58	134	5	0	3.24
• Minutes of meetings	54	134	4	5	3.20
• Sources from superior officers (verbal/textual records)	51	137	3	6	3.18
• Admission records	51	137	3	6	3.18
• Financial records	33	144	4	16	2.98
• Legal	25	0	166	6	2.22
• Annual report	22	2	167	6	2.20
• Employment	23	6	155	13	2.20
• Polytechnic Archives	20	2	168	7	2.18
• Correspondences	20	4	159	14	2.15
Average Mean	**54**				**2.67**
Criterion Mean	**51**				**2.50**

Table 2 shows that the aggregate mean of 2.67 is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 which implies that the extent the polytechnic administrators use information from records is high.

Research Question Three: What is the decision-making pattern of polytechnics in Edo and Delta States?

Table 3 Decision-Making Pattern of Administrators in Polytechnics in Edo and Delta States.

Decision-Making Pattern	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Organize and store information I have used for decision making	185	93.9	12	6.1	197	100
Spend much time analyzing information for decision making	184	93.4	13	6.6	197	100
I base my decisions on information other than influence	183	92.9	14	7.1	197	100
Seek many alternatives before selecting the ones suitable for decision making	182	92.4	15	7.6	197	100
Review of previous decision outcome	180	91.4	17	8.6	197	100
Spend much time seeking information for decision making	176	89.3	21	10.7	197	100
I make decisions quickly without spending so much time	176	89.3	21	10.7	197	100
Search for relevant and available information within the institution	170	86.3	27	13.7	197	100
Use more guesses when making decisions	13	6.6	184	93.4	197	100
I discover that evaluation is a complex process so I sometimes avoid it	13	6.6	184	93.4	197	100

Table 3 shows the decision-making pattern of administrators in polytechnics in Edo and Delta States. The polytechnic administrators organize and store information used for decision-making (185, 93.7%), spend much time analyzing information for decision-making (184, 93.4%). This implies that the decision-making pattern of polytechnic administrators is favorable.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis I: There is no significant relationship between records availability and administrators decision-making pattern of administrators in Polytechnics in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between Records Availability and Administrator's Decision Making Pattern in Polytechnics

		Records Availability	Decision-Making Pattern
Records Availability	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1

197 | .440**
.000
197 |
| Decision-making pattern | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | .440**
.000
197 | 1

197 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

From table 4, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient r = 0.440. Since the significant value (Sig. 2 tailed) is 0.000 (which is lower than 0.05), it can therefore be concluded that there is significant relationship between records availability and administrators' decision-making pattern in Polytechnics in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that an increase in records availability improves the decision-making pattern of the polytechnic administrators.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the types of records available in the polytechnics include: minutes of meetings, admission list policies and procedures, and sources from superior officers. This is in agreement with that of Iwhiwhu (2005) who noted that polytechnic records support the administrative and educational research of the institution and the objective of the polytechnic through which vital institutional records such as minutes of meetings, conference proceeding/communiqués, and policies and procedures are kept for future reference and use. The finding also agrees with the position of Coetzer (2012) which highlighted that polytechnic records have to be part of a comprehensive records management system that ensures that all polytechnic records are properly and securely managed, replaceable (in the case of vital records), preserved, achieved and disposed of. Coetzer further said that in polytechnic system polytechnic archive, correspondences, conference proceeding/communiqués, and minutes of meetings are very vital and should be made readily available for institutional decision making.

The administrators used records such as technical reports, minutes of meetings, sources from superior officers (verbal/textual records), electronic records, government,

publications/gazetteers, correspondences, and maps/aerial records. The finding agrees with the assertion of Mind Tools Community (2010) which stated that managers make good use of quality information to make valuable decisions, achieve company goals and objectives and improve services and productivity.

The decision-making pattern of administrators in polytechnics, as revealed in this study, shows that the polytechnic administrators organize and store information used for decision, spend much time analyzing information for decision making, base decisions on information other than influence, and seek many alternatives before selecting the ones suitable for decision making. This implies that the decision-making pattern of the polytechnic administrators is favorable. This finding is in line with that of Ali (2000) which claimed that decision making in the polytechnic system is an administrative function which entails depending on analyzing information for decision making and making use of facts rather than influence and guess.

It was also revealed in the study that records availability and information use contributes adequately to decision making of polytechnic administrators. The responses from the respondents revealed that the polytechnic administrators base their decision making on: contacting relevant sources of information before decisions are made, use of relevant information during the process of decision making, use of complete/adequate information for decision making, and thorough analysis and interpretation of date and information from records files, and sound decision. This finding agrees with that of Thomasen (2002) which stated that worthy records contain reliable evidence of decision taken, right acquired and commitment made. Records availability and information use have in no small ways contributed to the administrator's decision making as the administrators use the information got from the records as the basis upon which decision is made.

Conclusion

This study investigated records availability, information use and decision-making pattern of administrators in polytechnics. The study provided empirical data on variables that predicted the decision-making pattern of administrators in polytechnics in Edo and Delta States. In the light of the findings obtained in this study, the following conclusions were reached. Minutes of meetings, admission list, policies and procedures, sources from superior officers etc., are the records available in the polytechnics; the extent of use of information from records by polytechnic administrators is high; the decision making pattern of administrators in polytechnics include organization and storing of information, quick decision making without spending too much time, and review of previous decision outcome; the extent of contribution of records availability and information use to the administrator's decision making is high; there is significant relationship between records availability and administrators' decision making pattern.

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Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, and in order to improve the decision-making pattern of the polytechnic administrators, the following recommendations are made:

1.   Since there are various types of records for decision making in the polytechnics, the polytechnic administrators should ensure that every decision made in the polytechnic emanates from the series of records available in the polytechnics.

2.   The polytechnic administrators should endeavour to make adequate use of the information in all the polytechnic records in the process of decision making, even including information contained in correspondences, financial records, senate extract, employment records, and legal records.

3.   The decision-making pattern of the polytechnic administrators should be such that can add value to the polytechnic, thus help tremendously in the achievement of the overall goals and objectives of the polytechnics.

4.   The polytechnic administrators should at every point ensure high contribution of records availability and information use to the administrator's decision making.

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