

*Full Length Research*

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Archival Management for Sustainable Development of Federal Universities in North Central States of Nigeria

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This study adopted a descriptive study. It examined three research questions as follows; How are archival materials acquired; What are the 21<sup>st</sup> century standard of archival resources; and the challenges of managing archival resources. The population comprised 72 librarians from three institutions; Universities of Abuja, Jos and Makurdi. Two instruments namely; check list and the questionnaire were used for data collection, total enumeration technique was employed. Sixty-nine representing (95%) questionnaire was returned and used for the analysis. Data generated were analyzed using simple percentage and presented in descriptive form. The findings revealed University of Abuja has the highest available facilities as well as human resources for archival information services. Acquisition of archival materials revealed an overall result of (3.14) which portrays Gifts and Donations mostly the means of acquisition, while insufficient funds to carry out archival activities are the main problems in archival management. It concluded that lack of funding, archival personnel and inadequate infrastructures are challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century archival management for sustainable development of federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Archives, Management, Sustainable Development, Universities, Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> era which commemorates contemporary use of electronic gadgets to access and retrieve information in libraries with evidence of continued sustainability of digital and archival services. It is therefore pertinent to acquire archival resources for the purpose of posterity and the need to imbibe 21<sup>st</sup> century standard of managing these archival resources is orchestrated by some limitations. The essence of functional records management in universities libraries lies in its ability to

provide the right information in the right order at the right time, in the right format in the hands of the right personnel at a lowest possible cost (Harnad 2018). Today, archival management of library resources thrives in some electronic facets. Be it as it may, this paper looks at those challenges in focus.

## Concept of Archives

Archives are collections of historical records as well as the place in which they are kept. They are mainly the

primary documents of an institution that are accumulated in the course of running the institution or organization. Bellardo and Bellardo (1992) defined archives as “the document created or received and accumulated by a person or organization in the course of the conduct of affairs and preserved because of their continued value”. Therefore, archives can be seen as a collection of records and documents in different formats which are organized and managed by professionals because of their importance to parent institutions or organizations. Archives also consist of records that have been selected for permanent preservation because of their values. Archives also consist of records that have been selected for permanent preservation because of their values.

Records management as averred by Society of American archivists (2019) connotes a written or printed work of a legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof. In Nigeria, the need to preserve our heritage materials was recognized by Librarians, Archivists and Museum Curators in the early 50's. Records therefore, could be in any format, including text, images, or sound. However, the record concept is ultimately independent of any specific carrier or format which may be microfilmed and electronic records may be transferred from memory to disk or paper. This is obtainable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to electronic systems (Yeo 2009). Archival materials are unique because they can only be found in a single repository unlike library materials that can be found in the collections of other libraries.

The information contained in the archives are useful for research purposes. Styne as cited in Kemoni (2002) avers that archival information contributes immensely to research, individual enlightenment, provision of solutions to practical problems, benefits users and advances scholarship. Therefore, archival materials in the university libraries are useful for legal, administrative and research purposes. Examples of some of the archival materials are: minutes of meetings of university council, committees, senate, faculty board, congregation, clubs and association. Others are bulletins, conference papers, research reports, photograph, lectures such as inaugural lectures, legal documents (agreements, copyrights, deeds, instrument of gift and bequest), bibliography, convocation order of proceedings, speeches, financial records, video and sound tape recordings, students associations and alumni publications etc. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries had many non-textual documentary forms e.g. magnetic tapes, machine readable forms, sound recordings, films, motion pictures, photography video tapes those in regardless of their physical characteristics, are considered to be potential archival materials (Akporhonor & Iwhiwhu, 2007) These archival materials are housed within the university library and managed by Librarians.

Archives collect original unpublished material or

primary sources. The records held by archives are unique and irreplaceable. By their very nature archival materials are fragile and vulnerable to improper handling. If an archival document is lost, stolen, or irreparably damaged, the information it contains is lost forever. The unique nature of archival material has led archives to develop stringent security procedures. Researchers cannot browse through the stacks as they do in a library, an archival material can only be consulted in supervised reading rooms. As well, a myriad of rules govern how documents must be handled. These regulations usually are explained as part of the admission process and first-time researchers adapt quickly to these aspects of their new environment. While the importance of archives might not be obvious to everyone, its impact on the university libraries' effective function is indisputable. The archival unit of the university library is often in the special collection division where it houses Archives which primary mission is a place for teaching and learning made possible by the orderly retention and disposition of all university documents.

The archive receives records or information and which are processed according to archival standards, physically houses, protect and make available for public use and for permanent preservation. The study of archives covers the training of archivist-librarians specially trained to maintain and build archives of records of information intended for historical preservation, Not only does the archivist preserve historical items, he or she also has other responsibilities within the museum. Nongo, (2015) study on ways archival resources are preserved and conserved in federal university libraries in north central shows to a high extent Cleaning and dusting of library resources, binding, fumigation and reformation. The archivist handles rare and delicate artifacts in museums or arts organizations. A museum archivist is an expert responsible for preserving records and artifacts he or she also oversees the arrangement, cataloging and exhibition of museum collections, acquires and preserve items for permanent storage or display.

### **Concept of Management**

In contemporary times, Koontz and O'Donnel (2002) defined management as an operational process initially best dissected by analyzing the managerial functions. To them, the five managerial functions are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, leading, and controlling. In every organization or institution, there are various objectives set aside to be achieved. These could be adequately achieved when human and materials resources are properly managed. Saka (2010) describes library management “as the process that involves the selection, acquisition, processing, organizing, storage and preservation of information materials be it in manual or electronic/digital format and disseminating information

to satisfy the needs of the users". He said proper management of university libraries would lead to a better performance and the achievement of the desired objectives. The quest for better library archival management is on the increase because of information explosion, especially in this digital age. Shead (2010) defines management as: *"The organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives, and measuring results. Management also includes recording and storing facts for later use or for others within the organization. Management functions are not limited to managers and supervisors. Every member of the organization has some management and reporting functions as part of their job"*. As important as management of archives in federal university libraries is paramount, Ritzenthaler and Mary Lynn, (1993) identified controlling archival use and policies for using archives include items such as:

- *Researchers may use materials only in the supervised reading room, bring only a pencil and note paper into the reading room after storing all coats and bags near the entrance; (Some archives provide paper and check it before users' leave).*
- *Use only one folder or box at a time.*
- *The use of the following are not allowed; Smoking eating, drinking, or use of audio equipment which would disturb others.*

The university management requires libraries that are established in the universities to serve as systematic information resource bank of recorded knowledge organized by professionals in order to serve parent institutions. They also provide the information needs of researchers such as undergraduates, Post-graduates, Lecturers and non academic staff. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) maintain that the university libraries acquire materials, published and unpublished, print and non-print in some depth and globally in almost all the fields of

knowledge. Aiyegunle and Moneme (2006) gave a clearer picture of the function of university libraries as they revealed that, they are places where collection of materials are organized to provide physical, bibliographical and intellectual access to target group by trained staff who provide services and programme related to the information needs of such a group. Enwere (1992) identified the reluctance on the part of management to accepting the cost of installing a reliable Records Archivist for management of records programme. According to him, management views the cost of employing an Archivist while not appreciating the costly effect of poor handling of records to the system in terms of time wasted in searching for misplaced or loss of records.

### An Overview of Sustainable Development

A United Nations (UN) open working group was formed in 2012 to develop the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with the intention of building on progress made under the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG). On 25 September 2015 the Member States of the United Nations agreed on the 17 sustainable Development Goals which are they United Nations Initiative. It is officially known as "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The recent policy on sustainable development is aimed at sustainability at various levels which is geared towards provision and enhance achievements of those commitment that makes life worth living encompassing of educational, social and economic gains that secures the future. Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". (WCED, 1987). Among the 17 SDG is **Goal 4** which is to: **"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"**. our focus is encapsulated in goal 4 since it also involves the need to enhance sustainable development in Libraries and Archives being educational aspects for teaching, learning and research.



**Figure 1.** The Sustainable Development Goals with the 17 targets. Sources Osborn (2015)

El-kalah, Mohammed and Aniki (2016) are of the view that 'sustainability is a term that has been exposed to trans-disciplinary variables as the concept has an array of views and extensions. So they posit that sustainability is "the ability or capacity to support, keep moving, or endure". it implies the ability to prolong.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Our focus is on 21<sup>st</sup> century archival management for sustainable development of federal universities in the North Central States of Nigeria. Library archival materials are unique in nature because of the information they contain. The importance of Archives in federal university libraries is demonstrated through its effectiveness in preservation, conservation and dissemination of information, which is literally for research, teaching and learning purposes. Federal university libraries deserve to have the maximum preservation and conservation practice in order to retain the information they contain for a very long period of time. The worry is the tendency that libraries risk losing the intellectual contents as well as cultural heritage and other sources of information if their archival resources are not well managed. In the event that universities, lack records retention and disposition policies or schedules, it leads to the congestion of records which are disorganized and poorly managed as such, neglect archives in the Federal Universities in the North Central States of Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to investigate 21<sup>st</sup> Century archival management of federal university libraries in the North Central States of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify archival resources in federal university libraries in the North Central.
2. Investigate the methods of acquisition of archival materials into the federal university libraries in the North Central States of Nigeria.
3. Establish the Challenges of Management of archives in federal university libraries in North Central.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the available archival resources in federal universities in the North Central States.
2. How are the archival materials acquired into federal university libraries in the North Central States.
3. What are the challenges in management of archives in federal universities libraries in North Central States.

### **Research Method**

This paper adopted a descriptive survey of three federal university libraries in North Central States of Nigeria namely, University of Abuja, (UNI ABJ), University of Agriculture Makurdi (FUAM) and University of Jos. The researcher conducted the study in one of the six geopolitical zones which is the North Central Zone which has about 12 Universities both State and Federal, but it has six (6) Federal Universities. The choice of the area of study stems from the fact that, the historical and political background is eventful and there is need to keep those concrete information for posterity purpose.

It adopted a descriptive survey design because, it is aimed at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner those features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2006). Therefore, this study aims at obtaining data on and describing 21<sup>st</sup> century archival management in federal universities in North Central Nigeria for sustainable development. Two instruments were used to collect data: A structured questionnaire, Management of Archival Resources in Federal University Libraries (MAFUL) and an observation check lists on the archival resources available viz; human resources, furniture, electronic and physical resources. Seventy two librarians from the three federal university libraries formed the study population. Owing to the small size of the population total enumeration technique was employed. Sixty-nine (95%) out of 72 administered questionnaire returned from respondents and were valid for data analysis. Data generated were analyzed using simple percentage and presented in the descriptive form.

### Research Findings

**Research Question 1:** What are the available archival resources in federal universities in North Central States Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Observation Check list of Available Archival Resources in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	UAM			JOS			ABJ			TOTAL AVAILABLE
		AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA	AU	ANU	NA	
	<b>FURNITURE</b>										
1	Tables	√					√	√			2
2	Chairs	√					√	√			2
3	Display stands			√			√	√			1
4	Notice board/bulletin			√			√		√	r	-
5	Periodical display rack			√	√					√	1
6	Fans	√					√	√			2
	<b>ELECTRONIC FACILITIES</b>										
7	Television			√			√			√	
8	Scanner			√			√	√			1
9	Printer			√			√	√			1
10	Flash Drives			√			√	√			1
11	Photocopier			√			√	√			1
12	Flash Drives			√			√	√			1
13	Overhead Projector			√			√	√			1
14	Computer software			√			√	√			1
15	Online database			√			√	√			1
16	Photo camera			√			√	√			1
	<b>PHYSICAL FACILITIES</b>										
17	Space			√			√	√			1
18	Catalogue			√			√	√			1
19	Guidebook			√			√		√		
20	Newspaper	√			√			√			3
21	Information leaflets	√			√				√		2
22	Journals	√			√			√			3
	<b>HUMAN FACILITIES</b>										
23	Medical Curators			√			√			√	
24	Archivist			√			√			√	
25	Senior librarians	√			√			√			3
26	Librarian 1	√			√			√			3
27	Librarians II	√			√			√			3
28	Assistant Librarian	√			√			√			3
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>			<b>8</b>			<b>22</b>			<b>40</b>

Key= AU= Available and in use, ANU= Available and not in use, NA= Not available,

In Table 1, it is noticeable that the University of Abuja had the highest available furniture, electronic facilities, physical facilities e.g space, catalogue, Journals, and human resources as well for the archives services. It is obvious that both university of Jos and Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, had no space for archives, the tables and chairs sighted were just for the staff which was a single table and chair to be occupied by the Librarian Archivist assigned to the archives. Furthermore, newspapers, information leaflets and journals were sighted on the table. However, there is information that attention has been drawn to include the project of an archival building structure for the university.

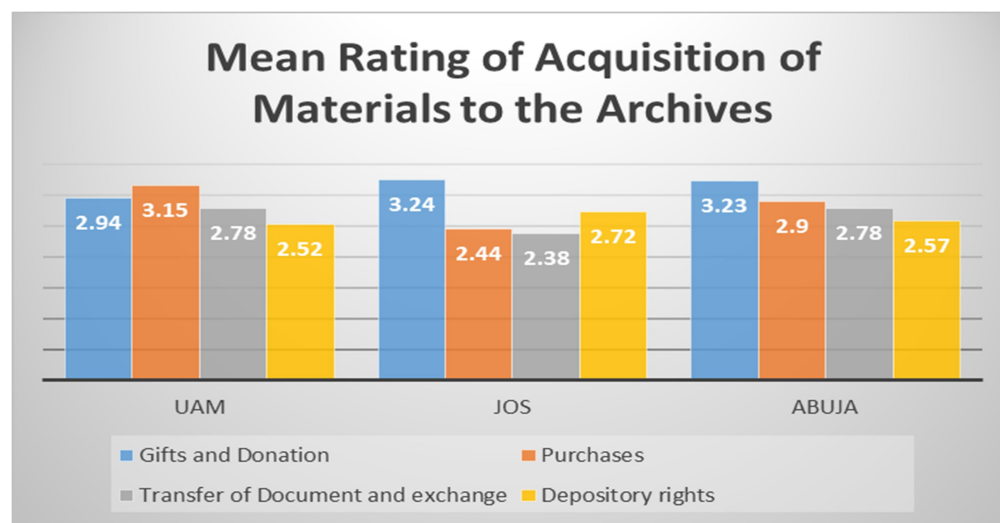
## Research Question 2

How are the archival materials acquired into federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Respondents in the three federal universities studied were required to indicate their opinions, on how archival materials are acquired into their university libraries.

**Table 2.** Mean Rating of Respondents on How Archival Materials are Acquired into the Archives in Federal University Libraries in North Central State Nigeria

S N	Name of institution	Name of institution						Total	R	D	
		UAM		JOS		Abuja					
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Gifts and Donation	2.94	.65	3.24	.80	3.23	.73	3.14	.90	1 <sup>st</sup>	A
2	Purchases	3.15	1.1	2.44	.71	2.9	.43	2.83	.29	2 <sup>nd</sup>	A
3	Transfer of Document and exchange	2.78	.67	2.38	.74	2.78	.53	2.65	.62	3 <sup>rd</sup>	A
4	Depository rights	2.52	.76	2.72	.56	2.57	.73	2.60	.88	4 <sup>th</sup>	A



**Figure 2.** Mean Rating of Acquisition of Materials to the Archives.

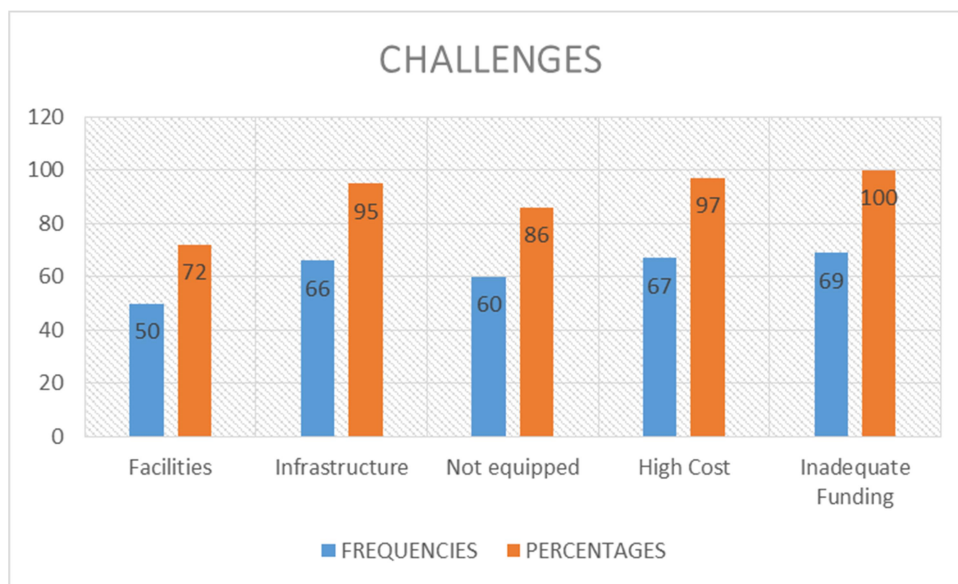
Table 2 and Figure 2 show the mean rating of the respondents on how archival materials were acquired into federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria. The results of the data analysis revealed that respondents agreed on item 1-4 as it relates to archival acquisition matters. This assumption is made with reference to the fact that the overall mean of items 1-4 are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Among the three academic libraries sampled in the study, the analysis showed that in UAM, item 3 had the greatest mean value of 3.15; in UNIJOS item 1 had the greatest mean value of 3.24; while in UNIABUJA item 1 had the greatest mean value of 3.23

Furthermore Table 2 and Figure 2 indication from the overall mean showed that item 1 (mean = 3.14) is ranked highest, while item 4 (Mean = 2.60) is ranked lowest. Apparently, the interview confirmed the findings above with University of Abuja, University of Jos and Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi having peculiar methods and policy to acquire materials for the archives which is stipulated thus; donations, standing order deposit from staff and purchase. However, Abuja University acquired its archival materials mostly through donations.

**Research Question 3:** What are the challenges in management of archives in federal university libraries in North Central States?

**Table 3.** Challenges of Management of Archives in Federal University Libraries in North Central State Nigeria

S/No	CHALLENGES	Frequencies	Percentages %
1	Lack of Facilities	50	72
2	Inadequate infrastructure	66	95
3	Most archival buildings are not equipped with air conditioners to stabilize the temperature and humidity of the storage areas.	60	86
4	High costs associated with preservation and conservation of information resources in the federal university archives.	67	97
5	The prominent inhibitors to effective and efficient preservation and management of archives is inadequate funding.	69	100



**Figure 3.** Challenges of archival management for sustainable development of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

A four likert scale was used to determine challenges in adopting 21<sup>st</sup> century archival management for sustainable development in federal universities in north central states Nigeria.

Thus the scales was rated as follows; Strongly Agree =90%-100%, Agree 60%-89%, 50%-59% Disagree, Strongly Disagree = 50% and below.

It is obvious that Figure 3 shows a high rate of inadequate funding, high cost of acquiring archival resources for the management of its sustainability as well as lack of standardized equipment for archival storage or conservation and preservation.

**Discussion of Findings**

The finding revealed noticeably that the University of Abuja had highest available furniture, electronic facilities, physical facilities e.g space, catalogue, Journals, and human resources as well for the archival information

services. Also, findings on acquisition of archival materials revealed an overall result which portrays Gifts and Donations mostly as a means of acquisition, while insufficient funds to carry out archival activities are the main problems in archival management. The management of university libraries has become increasingly important over the last two decades, partly because of their growing size and complexity. This finding is positively in agreement with the above statement, Olatokun (2008) agrees that prominent inhibitors to effective and efficient preservation of archival information record centers include, Lack of fund as one of the greatest problems of archival resources. He stresses that almost all Nigerian University Libraries, Archives and information centers do not allocate sufficient funds in their annual budgets he further explained that this has really caused the low priority or lack of desired attention given to management of archival resources. Enumerated facilities that management is unable to provide for the archives are; fire-resistant or fireproof building and equipped with an appropriate heat/fire detection and suppression system, including smoke and heat detectors and fire extinguishers. Since most archives store a variety of materials together, each with different optimum storage conditions, management finds it impossible to provide ideal conditions for all materials in a particular period of time. To buttress the 21<sup>st</sup> century standard challenges in infrastructures, Imoniwe (2019) avers the authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of automated ways of managing record cycle because of the tendencies of change which is evolving over time.

## CONCLUSION

21<sup>st</sup> century archival management for sustainable developments in federal university libraries which is the focus of this research is a critical factor in disseminating library archival services and in reaching the attainment of the university's objectives and vision of libraries in total compliance of teaching, learning and research. Consequently, this study has revealed many wrong notion of archivist functionality in knowledge acquisition, organization, managed and disseminated across all professional fields or disciplines. It is revealed that inadequate funding, competent personnel and inadequate infrastructures are challenges in the sustainable developments of archives in federal university libraries. It is hoped that a careful implementation of the recommendations made here-in would serve as an impetus to the challenges.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ Adequate 21<sup>st</sup> century electronic archival resources and enhanced employ-ability of Archivists should be initiated and enforced in federal university libraries to facilitate its sustainable developmental services to meet global standards archives and recognition for tourist venues.
- ❖ Federal University Library Management should take the responsibilities of advocacy and sensitization for the need to improve on their archival repositories or collections. Historical collections both in physical and e-resources in compliance of copy right regulations would savour orchestrated limitations of archival resources.
- ❖ Archival infrastructures require massive renovation in federal university libraries to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century standard.
- ❖ It is pertinent to improve funding allotted to federal universities considering the fact that a lump sum would be accorded the library management for a face lift in archival structures. Finally, the researchers suggest financial autonomy advocacy for libraries to function effectively due to the complexity of the archives resources, it is required to provide facilities as well as infrastructures to accommodate a robust archives.

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