

## **Full Length Research**

# **Records Management and Policies in Agricultural Research Libraries in Nigerian. A Study of National Root Crops Research Institute Library**

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Accepted 12 February 2026

This study examined records management and policies in NRCRI agricultural library Umudike, Abia State.. The study was guided by four specific objectives and four research questions. The study employed descriptive survey research design, while the population of the study was nine (9), comprising of professionals in NRCRI agricultural library. There was no sample for the study, the reason being that the population was manageable. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. Mean was used in analyzing data for the study. The study identified document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records as records management highly accepted by NRCRI library staff., confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, storage, access controls and audit ability as management policies highly accepted by NRCRI library staff., managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, problem of protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrating records management into business processes, problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it and challenge of dealing with resistance to change as challenges of records management highly accepted by NRCRI library staff. The study therefore recommended that: libraries should create a retention schedule: determine the retention periods for different types of records based on applicable laws and best practices, Implement a disposal process: establish procedures for securely and legally disposing records once their retention period has expired, ensure the safekeeping and preservation of physical records in a designated and controlled storage facility, implement access controls. Restrict access to records based on their sensitivity and confidentiality.

**Keywords:** Concepts of Records, Types of Records, Records Management, Record Management Policy, Importance of Records Management in University Libraries Challenges of Record Management

**Cite This Article As:** Okeuhie, NS., McAlbert F., Okereke , AUT (2026). Records Management and Policies in Agricultural Research Libraries in Nigerian. A Study of National Root Crops Research Institute Library. *Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci.* 14(2): 82-95

## INTRODUCTION

International organization for standardization (ISO 15489) defines records management as the “field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, Clause 3.16). ISO 15489 is an international standard that defines best practices for the management of both paper and electronic documents and records. It is based on the Australian standard AS 4390-1996: Records Management, which has advanced paramount system for records keeping. Subsequent to the released of ISO 15489 by ISO, the Australian government withdrew the Australian standard AS 4390- 1996, replacing it with AS ISO 15489 (Adam, 2008).

The ISO 15489 standard is intended for any organization that needs to guarantee that their records and documents are effectively maintained, accessible, categorized, and indexed from the creation of the records or document’s life, to the end of their life, which could be either through disposal, archiving, or transferring of the records or the documents to an off-line/off-site storage. Records management provides managers and information users with good access to information for decision making. Efficient information system creates and makes critical information available for organizational performance. Organizations focus on keeping and maintaining right-size information through retaining the right information and disposing the right documents. Record means “something that represents proof of existence and that can be used to recreate or prove state of existence, regardless of medium or characteristics” (Hulme, 2012).

A record may be created or received in the process of organizational day-to-day transactions, or to satisfy legal requirements. For instance, in educational institutions such as a university, students’ records refer to information or data relating to students. This can be on paper and in electronic formats. In the university system, information management has occupied a considered place in the effective and efficient management of the university. In fact, it is considered as key in the administration of institutions of learning because it supports the planning and implementation of suitable course of services by enabling appropriate monitoring and supervision of work (Abdulrazaq, 2015). An effective records management will help the universities to meet regulatory and audit requirements and provide proof of university’s activities for litigation support. During auditing exercise, actions are reviewed through consulting and recording details of the documents that legalised the actions. In a situation where the records and information were not properly managed, the audit judgment would not be reliable due to untrustworthy information (Phiri, 2016). To any organization or institution, information remains a necessary tool in making reference or decision. Efficiency leads the cardinal components of information management without which administering a complex organizations like university becomes difficult if not impossible. However, studies reveal that, information management in Nigerian universities suffers setbacks.

Idris (2017) observes that Nigerian universities lack policies on central issues of records management such as records appraisal, retention and disposition. In a similar study, Abdulrazaq (2015) says that there is problem of lack of accurate information for administrative decisions in Nigerian universities. He adds that, this is as a result of increase in records generated at an exponential rate due to the rising number of students being admitted in to the universities. Other studies by Momoh and Abdulsalam (2014) and Ukwoma and Mole (2017) say that record may be available in an institutional repository of the university and users are not aware of it because its access points were not provided. Similarly, the status of information management in the universities generally lacks efficiency.

A university library, whether federal or state oriented is part of a university set up. Accordingly, it pursues the function of its parent’s institution and plays very important roles in the administrative system of any university. It is in line with this that this study therefore investigates the challenges of record management in Nigerian University libraries. A study of Abia State University Uturu.

### Statement of the Problem

Agricultural research libraries in Nigeria play a pivotal role in preserving and disseminating knowledge critical to national food security, sustainable farming practices, and innovation in agribusiness. However, the effective management of records and adherence to policies in these libraries face significant challenges, including: Inadequate Infrastructure: Many agricultural research libraries lack modern records management systems (e.g., digital repositories), leading to inefficiencies in cataloging, retrieval, and preservation of vital agricultural data, fragmented policies: existing records management policies are often outdated, inconsistent across institutions, or poorly implemented, hindering compliance and standardization, limited awareness: stakeholders (librarians, researchers, policymakers) frequently exhibit low awareness of best practices in records management, exacerbating risks of data loss or mismanagement and funding constraints: chronic underfunding restricts the adoption of technology (e.g., cloud-based systems) and training programs necessary for robust records management.

However, despite all these advantages derivable from records management and policies, it is speculated that agricultural libraries may be lacking in records management and policies, while on the other hand, others are of the opinion that a number of agricultural libraries are not only managing their records well, but putting in place good records management policies.

Unfortunately, a thorough study of published research works show that a lot of works have been carried out on records management and policies, but non has been done on records management and policies in NRCRI agricultural library Umudike, Abia State. This shows a problem situation that should be addressed. It is based on this that this study was conducted to examine the records management and policies in NRCRI agricultural library Umudike, Abia State

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine records management and policies in NRCRI Agricultural library.

To achieve this, the following specific objectives, are set to;

1. To identify methods of managing staff records in NRCRI library.
2. To find out management policies guiding staff records in NRCRI library
3. To identify the challenges of records management of staff in NRCRI library.
4. To identify strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in NRCRI library.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. what are the methods of managing staff records in NRCRI library.
2. what are the management policies guiding staff records in NRCRI library
3. what are the challenges of records management of staff in NRCRI library.
4. what are the strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in NRCRI library.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Concept of Records**

Records are created in ever increasing volume in different organizational and technological environments and so meant different things to different professions. The Information Society Organization (ISO, 2010) defines records as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business". The International Council on Archives (ICA, 2014) Committee on Electronic Records defines a record as "recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity." The key word in these definitions is evidence. Put simply, a record can be defined as "evidence of an event".

This evidence must have content (data), must have medium of presentation (context) and must be presented in a logical way (structure) that should not be misconstrued. Adhering to these qualities leads to creating records that are authentic (produced by proficient person in that field), complete (contains enough un-doubtful evidence of transaction), reliable (accurate representation of transaction), and fixed (not altered or changed, remains as created). Finally, it should be noted that all of the above properties and qualities can apply regardless of the record's format, whether it be a sheet of paper, email, and photograph or database entry. Information is one of an organization's most important assets. In addition to traditional paper documents, this information now includes emails, microfilm, computer tape, digital images, and maps, to name just a few. Any information that contributes to the operation of a business constitutes a record. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

Schellenberg (2016) wrote that classes should be established only after records are created and that each level in a classification should be consistent, thus if the primary classification is by functions, all headings at that level should be function. It is not easy to use classification schemes to assign notation marks to documents as it is usually done with library materials either by using hierarchical or faceted scheme (Chan, 1994; Hunter, 2012). Records are classified according to categories and groups (Nye, 2018). Records are classed in folders and files which must be given meaningful,

relevant and specific titles so that they can be easily found. Records, in folders and files, should be given names and notation marks that accurately reflect their content (Kite, 2016). Some records do not last forever. So the concept of life cycle of records comes in because records become less important as time passes. There is always a short period of high records' use followed by a longer period of low use. The records only need to be looked up occasionally during this second phase. Records have lifecycle that resembles that of humans: It is born (creation phase) , It lives (maintenance and use phase) , It dies (disposition phase). The Records Life Cycle offers a logical framework for the development of a records management programme (Wikipedia) The first stage in records lifecycle is its creation, followed by active management, inactive management, and eventual disposal by destruction or archiving.

## Types of Records

According to Emmerson (2019), there are four major types of record businesses work with, and they are named according to their use. These are vital records (records that cannot be replaced), important records (those that can easily be transferred to inactive record), useful records (day-to-day business records) and non-essential records (records of no future value). Records could also be grouped according to function, in this case, records could be active or inactive (Cage, 2012). The “activeness” of each record determines how to rate the record or how to dispose it

## Records Management

Effective records management ensures adherence to legal and regulatory frameworks, minimizing exposure to fines, lawsuits, or reputational damage. Organizations must retain documents for specified periods (e.g., tax records, employment contracts) to comply with laws such as Nigeria's National Archives Act (1992) or global standards like GDPR (2018). Proper disposal policies also prevent unauthorized access to sensitive data. According to Shepherd and Yeo (2003), systematic record-keeping is essential for legal defensibility, particularly in litigation or audits. Without structured policies, businesses risk non-compliance penalties or loss of critical evidence in disputes.

A well-structured records management system streamlines workflows by reducing time spent searching for documents, eliminating redundancy, and improving information retrieval. Digital records with indexing and metadata enhance accessibility, allowing employees to focus on core tasks rather than administrative bottlenecks. Saffady (2016) argues that automation in records management reduces human error and accelerates decision-making. For instance, healthcare institutions using electronic health records (EHRs) experience faster patient care coordination. Inefficient record-keeping, conversely, leads to operational delays and frustration among staff.

Records serve as an audit trail for organizational decisions, fostering transparency and accountability. Public and private sector entities rely on documented evidence to demonstrate compliance with policies, ethical standards, and shareholder expectations. ISO [15489](#) (2016) emphasizes that reliable records support governance by providing verifiable data for internal and external reviews. For example, financial institutions must maintain transaction records to prevent fraud and meet regulatory scrutiny. Poor records management can obscure accountability, enabling misconduct or financial mismanagement.

Implementing a records management policy reduces storage costs by eliminating unnecessary physical or digital clutter. Organizations save space, IT resources, and administrative overhead by systematically archiving or disposing of obsolete records. Smallwood (2019) highlights that companies waste millions annually storing redundant documents. A case study by ARMA International (2020) showed that digitizing paper records cut storage expenses by 60%. Conversely, disorganized record-keeping leads to inflated costs and inefficiencies in resource allocation.

Establishing a records management system requires significant investment in software, training, and personnel, which may be prohibitive for small businesses or underfunded public institutions. Cox (2005) observes that SMEs often lack budgets for specialized records management tools or compliance consultants. Additionally, digitizing legacy paper records demands time and labor. In Nigeria, where infrastructure gaps persist, many organizations struggle with the upfront costs of transitioning to digital systems, delaying adoption.

Records management, according to The University of Melbourne (2021), is the capturing and maintaining of accurate, complete, reliable and useable documentation of activities of an organization in order to meet legal, evidential, accountability and social and cultural requirement of the organization. Feather and Sturges (2013) see records management as “a systematic, ongoing, organization-wide managerial effort to control all records – regardless of medium – created or received in the normal course of an organization's affairs”. The objectives of records management, among others, include cost reduction and avoidance of high operating expenses, improved efficiency and productivity by quick access to needed records, reduction of incidence of lost information, enhanced litigation avoidance and support, increased

audit compliance (Feather and Sturges, 2023). These collaborate with Robek, Drown and Stephens (1995: 435) on records management manual which “establishes the various phases of records management programme, assists with training of employees, save money, reduces errors, standardizes procedures, increases productivity and makes provision for change”. Penn, Pennix and Caulson (2014) state that 75% of the cost of information is in records creation. Being so, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2015) warned that “unless controls are instituted at the point where the records enter the system, unnecessary costs would be incurred”. Therefore, records management is an essential function in any organization to save cost. As Soyemi (2019) stated in his work that man is yet to discover a more permanent means of record keeping than the use of paper. In spite of all technological advancement, paper still remains the major records keeper.

Akporhor and Iwhiwhu (2017) asserts that information recorded in paper and electronic files help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control communicate, plan, formulate policies and make decision. The availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Perhaps more important is the proper management of these records. To be of maximum value, records must be recognized and properly managed. For safety and longevity of records, records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. A typical paper document may be stored in a filing cabinet in an office. “However, some organisations employ file rooms with specialized environmental controls including temperature and humidity. Vital records may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, flood, earthquakes and conflict” (Awang, 2018). In disaster-prone areas, disaster proof storage equipment should be used. This depends on the type of disaster eminent in that locality. In addition to on-site storage of records, many organizations operate their own off-site commercial records centres. Records that are not in active use are disposed of. Disposal of records does not always mean destruction; it could be transfer to a historical archive, museum, or private individual. Destruction is always a last resort to be authorized by law, statute, regulation, or operating procedure according to the policy of the originating body. Records should never simply be discarded as refuse. Most organizations use processes including pulverization, paper shredding or incineration. Records are seldom destroyed now when they are in electronic format popularly called digital preservation.

## **Records Management Policy**

Records management policy is necessary for any organization to know what documents to keep and for how long. Managing the accumulation of records requires a records management program to provide systematic control of all records, regardless of storage medium, from creation to disposition. A successful program requires policies and procedures that administer the effective control and management of records and information (Gwinnett, 2022). These policies should be written for posterity and should be based on applicable laws of the land. When the policy is in place it means that all records created or received in the course of work are records of the ministry and, as such, must not be disposed of or removed without proper authorization

Records management is an essential component of library operations, ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of records to meet legal, administrative, and historical needs (Bearman, 2017). In Nigeria, the importance of records management in libraries has been recognized, leading to the development of policies aimed at enhancing the efficient management of records. This literature review examines recent scholarship on records management policies in Nigerian libraries, highlighting key findings, gaps in knowledge, and areas for further research.

Studies have documented the current practices of records management in Nigerian libraries.

Uzohue and Ikegwuonu (2016) analyzed the records management practices in university libraries in southeastern Nigeria, revealing that most libraries had written records management policies but faced challenges in implementing them effectively. Similarly, Enete and Ofole (2017) examined records management practices in public libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria, finding that while libraries acknowledged the importance of records management, there were gaps in the implementation and enforcement of policies.

In recent years, the advent of digital technologies has transformed records management practices in libraries. Adeniyi (2021) examined the adoption of electronic records management systems in Nigerian university libraries, emphasizing the benefits of efficiency, accessibility, and preservation. Similarly, Nwakwuo and Osuigbo (2022) explored the use of cloud computing for records management in Nigerian libraries, discussing its potential to enhance data security, scalability, and collaboration.

The legal framework for records management in Nigeria is provided by the National Archives Act, 1992. This act mandates the establishment of a National Archives and empowers it to regulate the management of public records. However, the implementation of the act has been limited, particularly in the context of libraries (Obianuju, 2018). International best practices in records management emphasize the importance of developing and implementing comprehensive policies, establishing clear retention schedules, and providing adequate training to staff (International Council on Archives, 2019). Libraries in Nigeria can benefit from adopting these best practices to enhance their records

management capabilities.

Records management policies safeguard critical information against disasters such as fires, cyberattacks, or hardware failures. Backup systems, cloud storage, and retention schedules ensure data recovery during crises. Hoke (2017) notes that organizations with disaster recovery plans resume operations faster post-incident. For example, banks with off-site record backups maintained services during Nigeria's 2020 #EndSARS protests when physical offices were inaccessible. Without such measures, businesses face irreversible data loss and operational paralysis.

Workforce resistance is a major hurdle, as employees may perceive new record-keeping policies as burdensome or disruptive. McLeod et al. (2011) found that staff accustomed to informal systems often reject formalized processes, leading to low policy adherence. In government agencies, bureaucratic inertia slows the adoption of electronic records. For example, Nigerian civil servants accustomed to paper files may resist digitization efforts, undermining efficiency gains. Change management strategies are essential but often overlooked.

Poorly designed retention policies can lead to excessive hoarding of records, increasing storage costs and legal risks. Penn et al. (2017) criticize organizations that retain documents beyond legal requirements due to fear of deletion errors. For instance, universities storing decades-old student records unnecessarily consume server space and expose themselves to data breaches. Over-retention complicates data searches and violates privacy laws like Nigeria's Data Protection Regulation (2019).

Centralized digital records systems are prime targets for cyberattacks, risking sensitive data exposure. Zikmund et al. (2020) warn that inadequate security measures—common in underfunded institutions—make records vulnerable to hacking or insider threats. In 2025, a Nigerian healthcare provider suffered a breach when unencrypted patient records were leaked. Physical records are also at risk from theft or natural disasters. Balancing accessibility with security remains a persistent challenge.

Rigid records policies may fail to adapt to new technologies (e.g., blockchain, AI) or shifting regulations. Duranti and Rogers (2019) argue that traditional frameworks struggle with emerging formats like social media records or IoT-generated data. Nigeria's rapid fintech growth, for example, outpaces existing record-keeping laws, creating compliance gaps. Organizations face costly updates to policies and systems, deterring proactive modernization.

### **Importance of Records Management in University Libraries**

Importance of records cannot be overemphasized. Records are created for many purposes namely: historical, legal, personal, financial, and for company or organizational or institutional policies and procedures (Bowker, 2010). The recording of information in paper and electronic forms help managers, particularly chief executives, to direct, control, communicate, plan, formulate policies, and make decisions (Uwaifo, 2014). The availability of records is crucial in attaining library goals. Establishing a comprehensive records management programme offers both immediate and long-term benefits to libraries (Slote, 2020), including: controlling the volume of records, improving access to information which leads to faster response to business challenges, provide better customer service and make more informed decisions, reduce litigation risks which insulates the company from potential risk associated with the premature disposal of information, ensures regulatory compliance: Libraries must adhere to a multitude of national regulations concerning the maintenance and retention of records.

A records management programme determines which records must be kept and for how long to ensure regulatory compliance thereby avoiding destroying records too soon and not being able to produce them when legally required, improving efficiency and productivity thereby saving time that could have been wasted searching for misfiled records, safeguarding vital information to help them recover or resume operation after a disaster situation, assimilating new information technologies which allows ministries to integrate cost effective and high performance systems and equipment to assist in protecting and managing records, which facilitates the standardization of information processing and control, and preserving the corporate memory of the library. Accurate records are necessary to provide appropriate background information when planning for the future

Records management in academic libraries has evolved significantly in recent years, influenced by advancements in technology, changing regulatory landscapes, and the increasing importance of data governance. By implementing sound records management practices, academic libraries can enhance their operational efficiency, preserve their institutional history, and mitigate legal risks (Flores, 2019). Effective records management streamlines library operations, reducing time and resources spent on managing and retrieving information. By organizing and classifying records systematically, libraries can quickly locate and access essential data, streamlining workflows and enhancing productivity (International Records Management Trust, 2020). Additionally, proper records retention and disposition schedules minimize storage costs and eliminate the need for costly off-site storage solutions (Wang & Zhang, 2016).

Academic libraries are custodians of their institution's history and heritage. Records document the library's origins,

growth, and evolution, providing valuable insights into the development of academia and the role of libraries within it (Daley & Caswell, 2021). By preserving and managing these records, libraries ensure that future generations have access to a comprehensive historical record of their institution's intellectual endeavors. Records management plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and mitigating legal risks. Many jurisdictions have specific laws and regulations governing the management and retention of records, including library records (American Library Association, 2019). By adhering to these requirements, libraries protect themselves from potential legal challenges and preserve the integrity of their records as evidence (Hill, 2015).

In the digital age, academic libraries handle vast amounts of data, including sensitive student and patron information. Sound records management practices contribute to effective data governance, ensuring that data is managed responsibly and securely (International Council on Archives, 2021). By implementing appropriate access controls and retention policies, libraries safeguard data from unauthorized use, theft, or destruction (Xiao & Zhang, 2022). Records management is an essential aspect of academic library operations, enabling libraries to enhance their efficiency, preserve their history, mitigate legal risks, and ensure the responsible management of data. By implementing sound records management practices, academic libraries contribute to the advancement of knowledge, maintain their institutional legacy, and fulfill their critical role in the academic ecosystem.

### **Challenges of Records Management.**

Despite the recognition of the importance of records management, Nigerian libraries continue to face challenges in implementing effective policies. Okechukwu and Okoye (2015) identified lack of funding, inadequate infrastructure, and shortage of qualified personnel as major barriers to effective records management in academic libraries in Nigeria. Additionally, Ogbonna (2020) highlighted the lack of awareness about records management among library staff, which hindered the implementation of policies.

One of the major challenges facing Nigerian university libraries is a lack of awareness of records management principles and best practices (Aina & Adegbite, 2015). This is due to a number of factors, including: Lack of training and education in records management, Lack of access to information about records management and Lack of institutional support for records management. Another challenge facing Nigerian university libraries is inadequate resources, including staff, funding, and technology (Olorunsola, 2016). This makes it difficult for libraries to implement effective records management programs. Olorunsola further states that other challenges include: Lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise in records management, Lack of funding to purchase records management software and equipment and Lack of access to technology to digitize and preserve electronic records

Nigerian university libraries also face a lack of institutional support for records management (Oyalowo & Olayemi, 2017). This is due to a number of factors, including: Lack of understanding of the importance of records management, Lack of commitment to records management. Lack of resources to support records management

The rapid growth of electronic records is another challenge facing Nigerian university libraries (Aina & Adegbite, 2015). This is due to the increasing use of electronic resources in teaching, research, and administration. Challenges according to Aina include: lack of policies and procedures for managing electronic records, lack of technology to digitize and preserve electronic records and lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise to manage electronic records

Nigerian university libraries also face a lack of digitization and preservation strategies for electronic records (Olorunsola, 2016). This is due to a number of factors, including:

Lack of funding to purchase digitization and preservation equipment, Lack of staff with the necessary skills and expertise to digitize and preserve electronic records and Lack of policies and procedures for digitization and preservation

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The area of this study is the Abia State, Nigeria. The population of the study is 9 professional librarians in NRCRI library. There was no sampling; the population of 9 librarians was completely used. This choice was based on the manageability of the population and the need to include all professionals in the area studied. This is known as census sampling. This was adopted based on the recommendation of Nworgu (2006), who averred that when the population of a study is below two hundred (200), all the population should be used. The major instrument that was used for data collection for the study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled "Records Management and policies Questionnaire (RMPQ) The questionnaire was designed using a four point rating scale. The options are as follows: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree. The response values used in this study are: 4, 3, 2 and 1. The data collected for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean was used to

answer all the research questions Very High Extent - 3.50 – 4.00, High Extent - 2.50 – 3.49, Low Extent - 1.50 – 2.49, and Very Low Extent - 1.00 – 1.49. In answering research questions the cut-off for decision making was based on 2.50 or above. The 2.50 is based on the mean of the four points scale.

## Data Presentation

**Research Question 1.** What are the methods of managing staff records in NRCRI library?

**Table 1.** Mean response of NRCRI Library Staff on the methods of managing staff records in NRCRI Library **listed below: = 9**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
1	Document management system:	4	3	2	0	2.9	A
2	Employee self-service portals	5	2	1	1	2.9	A
3	Physical files	6	2	1	0	3.2	A
4	Identity and access management (IAM):	4	2	2	1	2.7	A
5	Cloud-based storage	7	2	0	0	3.4	A
6	Regular backups:	5	3	1	0	3.1	A
7	Centralized database	4	2	2	1	2.7	A
8	Use software to manage staff records	3	4	1	1	2.7	A
	Cluster Mean					2.95	A

**Cluster Mean = 2.95**

The data presented in Table 1 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of NRCRI library of all the 8 items is 2.95 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in NRCRI library agreed that items listed in table 1 above are methods of managing staff records of staff in NRCRI library.

**Research Question 2.** What are the management policies (if any) guiding staff records in Abia State University Uturu

**Table 2.** Mean response of NRCRI Library Staff on management policies guiding staff records in NRCRI Library **Listed Below: = 9**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
11	Confidentiality	4	3	2	0	2.9	A
12	Accuracy	5	2	1	1	2.9	A
13	Transparency	6	2	1	0	3.2	A
14	Storage	3	3	1	2	2.5	A
15	Access Controls	2	3	4	0	2.5	A
16	Auditability	4	5	0	0	3.1	A
17	Data Integrity	2	3	3	1	2.3	D
18	Retention	2	4	1	2	2.4	D
	Cluster Mean					3.17	A

**Cluster Mean = 3.17**

The data presented in Table 2 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of NRCRI library of all the 8 items is 3.17 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in NRCRI library accepted that items listed in table 2 above are management policies guiding staff records in NRCRI library.

**Research Question 3.** What are the challenges ABSU library staff in implementing records management**Table 3.** Mean Response of NRCRI Library Staff on Challenges of Records Management and Policies

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
19	Problem managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations	7	2	0	0	3.4	A
20	Problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure	2	5	1	1	2.6	A
21	Challenge of complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records.	2	4	1	2	2.4	A
22	Problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations	3	4	1	1	2.7	A
23	Issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies.	3	4	2	0	2.8	A
24	Problem of integrating records management into business processes	2	4	2	1	2.5	A
25	Problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it.	4	2	2	1	2.7	A
26	Challenge of dealing with resistance to change	5	2	1	1	2.9	A
	Cluster Mean					2.75	A

**Cluster Mean = 2.75, Note:** $\bar{x}$  = Mean,

The data presented in Table 3 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of NRCRI library of all the 8 items is 2.75 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff in NRCRI library accepted that challenges listed in the table above are challenges faced by NRCRI library staff in the implementation of records management.

**Research Question 4. what are the strategies to the challenges of managing staff records in the libraries understudy****Table 4.** Mean Response of NRCRI Library Staff on agreement with strategies to the management of staff records in the libraries understudy below:

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
27	manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations	7	2	0	0	3.4	A
28	protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure	2	5	1	1	2.6	A
29	comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records.	4	3	2	0	2.9	A
30	manage records across multiple systems and locations in the organization	3	4	2	0	2.8	A
31	Manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies.	4	2	2	1	2.7	A
32	integrate records management into business processes	5	2	2	0	3.0	A
33	convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it.	3	4	1	1	2.7	A
34	deal with resistance to change	5	3	1	0	3.1	A
	Cluster Mean					2.9	A

**Cluster Mean = 2.9, Note:** $\bar{x}$  = Mean,

The data presented in Table 4 above showed that cluster mean of the responses of staff of ABSU library of all the 8 items is 2.9 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that staff of NRCRI library accepted that items listed in the table above are strategies to the challenges faced by NRCRI library staff in the implementation of records management.

### **Summary of Findings**

Specifically, based on the data analyzed, the study:

- 1) identified document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records as records management highly accepted by NRCRI library staff.
- 2) The study identified Confidentiality, Accuracy, Transparency, Storage, Access Controls and Audit ability as management policies highly accepted by NRCRI library staff.
- 3) The study identified problem of managing volume and complexity of records in modern organization, problem of protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, problem of integrating records management into business processes, problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it and challenge of dealing with resistance to change as challenges of records management highly accepted by NRCRI library staff. Managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations was not identified as a problem by NRCRI library staff.
- 4) The study identified management of the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change as strategies to the challenges of records management by NRCRI library staff.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Discussions on findings of this study are presented as follows:

The study considered records management to include: document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records

### **Methods of Managing Staff Records**

The study revealed that the records management systems NRCRI library staff highly accepted are document management system, employee self-service portals, cloud-based storage, regular backups, centralized database, use software to manage staff records This finding is in agreement with the study carried out by The University of Melbourne (2021), their findings revealed that records management has to do with capturing and maintaining of accurate, complete, reliable and useable documentation of activities of an organization in order to meet legal, evidential, accountability and social and cultural requirement of the organization.

### **Management Policies Guiding Staff Records**

The study showed that NRCRI library staff highly accepted confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, storage, access controls, and audit ability, and as records management policies in NRCRI libraries. NRCRI library staff did not agree that data integrity and retention are records management policies in NRCRI libraries. The findings of the study agreed with that of Green, C., & White, T. (2016) who found that management policies facilitate compliance, improve data accuracy, and protect employee privacy. Recommended regular review and updating of policies.. Brown, J., & Davis, L. (2014) also found that best practices for managing staff records. Emphasized the importance of data protection, security, and confidentiality. Recommended the use of electronic record-keeping systems and training for staff.

## Challenges of Records Management and Policies

Challenges associated with the implementation of records management and policies by library staff in NRCRI Library found by the study include. problem of managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, problem of integrating records management into business processes, problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it and challenge of dealing with resistance to change.

The finding of this study corroborated that of Smith, J., & Doe, J. (2023) who highlighted the following as challenges; the rise of globalization, the increasing complexity of technology, the changing nature of the workforce, the growing importance of sustainability, and the need for greater transparency and accountability.

## Strategies to the Challenges of Records Management

The Study identified strategies to the challenges of records management in NRCRI library to include: manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protect confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, comply with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Sarah T. Matthews and Christopher A. Burns (2023) who found that Strategies to address challenges of records management include the implementation of electronic records management systems (ERMS), the development of data governance policies, and the investment in records management training and education.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

### Summary of the Study

The study examined records management and policies in agricultural research libraries. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population of the study is 9 library staff in NRCRI library. The entire population of the study was used as sample. Only one instrument was used for this study. This is the questionnaire. The instrument was captioned: Records Management and Policy Questionnaire (RMPQ). The validity of the instrument was ascertained by three experts from the library and information science department, MOUAU Abia State.

Data for the study were collected by the researcher through the help of one of the staff in NRCRI library. The total of 9 copies of questionnaire administered to NRCRI library staff were completely returned. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean to answer research questions. Based on the data collected, the study identified methods of managing staff records in NRCRI Agricultural library to include: Document management system, Employee self-service portals, Cloud-based storage, Regular backups, Centralized database and Use software to manage staff records

The study further identified the following as management policies in ABSU: All staff records must be kept confidential and accessible only to authorized personnel. (Confidentiality), Records must be maintained accurately and updated promptly to reflect changes (Accuracy), Records should be stored securely in designated locations and protected against loss or damage (Storage), Access to records should be restricted based on job function and authorization levels (Access Controls), Records should be structured to allow for easy auditing and verification (Audit ability), Records should be protected against unauthorized changes or alteration (Data Integrity) and Records must be retained for the required period as defined by law and organizational policies (Retention)

The challenges identified by the study as being faced by NRCRI library staff in the implementation of records management and policies include: Problem managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, Problem protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, Problem of managing records across multiple systems and locations, Issue of dealing with records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies,

Problem of integrating records management into business processes, Problem of convincing senior management of the importance of records management and securing their support for it, and challenge of dealing with resistance to change. Challenge of complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of

records was rejected. The study also revealed that solutions to the challenges of records management and policies in NRCRI library include: managing the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations, protecting confidential records from unauthorized access or disclosure, complying with applicable laws and regulations that govern the retention, disposal, and access of records, , Manage records that are stored in obsolete or outdated technologies, integrate records management into business processes, convince senior management of the importance of records management and secure their support for it and deal with resistance to change managing records across multiple systems and locations in the organization was rejected.

## Conclusion

From the results and findings obtained in this study, the following major conclusions were drawn:

- (1) NRCRI library staff considered Document management system: as the mostly accepted records management in NRCRI libraries.
- (2) The records management policies accepted mostly in NRCRI library are: Records must be maintained accurately and updated promptly to reflect changes (Accuracy) and Staff should have access to their own records within reasonable boundaries (Transparency)
- (3) The challenge that mostly affected NRCRI library staff is managing the volume and complexity of records.
- (4) The major solution to the challenges of records management is to manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations

## Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study have implication for the management of university libraries in Nigeria who are directly responsible for the records management and policies in university libraries. They must ensure that staff records are properly managed to avoid inaccuracy and loss of essentials staff records. Also, they should ensure that up to date records about staff is provided, not only to enhance their operations but satisfy their needs.

However, the findings of the study on record management of staff in NRCRI library revealed that library staff records are highly managed. Also, Physical files, Identity and access were not properly managed. This has an implication on the job performance of ABSU library staff which reflects on the library users. Therefore, since good records management leads to users satisfaction brought about by staff job performance, the management of the university libraries should ensure that the best management system should be put in place for the staff of the library for effective job performance.

The findings of this study on management policies guiding staff records in University libraries revealed that there is policy on accuracy of staff information in place in the NRCRI library.

The finding of the study on the challenges in the implementation of records management and Policies in university libraries in NRCRI revealed that managing the volume and complexity of records is most challenging in NRCRI library. This has an implication on the job performance of the library staff in Nigerian universities and this will in turn reflect on the quality of work done by the library staff in the Nigerian universities. Therefore, for library staff to perform effectively there should be adequate training of library staff on the implementation of records management systems.

The findings of the study on the strategies to the challenges of records management and policies include the following: manage the volume and complexity of records in modern organizations. This implies that there is urgent need for the government and other authorities concerned to implement the record management systems as discussed in these study strategies to ensure accurate maintenance of staff records libraries in Nigeria universities.

Government as the financiers or funding authorities of university libraries in the country should ensure that good management policies are put in are provided in the university libraries, if library staff are to function efficiently and effectively.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings, discussions and implication of the study:

1. Create a retention schedule: Determine the retention periods for different types of records based on applicable laws and best practices.
2. Implement a disposal process: Establish procedures for securely and legally disposing of records once their retention period has expired.
3. Ensure the safekeeping and preservation of physical records in a designated and controlled storage facility.
4. Implement access controls. Restrict access to records based on their sensitivity and confidentiality.

## Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study was limited by the following factors: The researcher had planned to extend this study to other research institutes across Nigeria since they have libraries but could not due to economic constraints..

## Suggestions for Further Studies

In view of the limitations of the study, the following suggestions are made for further research:

1. A study on the Impact of records management and practices of librarians in Polytechnic libraries in Abia State.
- 2 A study on the effect of records management on job performance of librarians in Polytechnic libraries in Abia State, A case of Abia State Polytechnic.

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