AN APPRAISAL OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT COURSE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,MINNA, NIGERIIA

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ABSTRACT

This research work assessed undergraduate students' performance in records management course in the department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology Minna. The study involves the use of documentary sources to assess 400 level students' performance in Records Management in respect of continuous assessment, examination scores and the overall performance of 151 students in 400 level. Literatures related to the course were extensively reviewed - hence it is a case study. Findings shows that 2 (1%) of the students scored between 70-100% which was "A" grade; 12(8%). The other students scored between 60 to 69% which was "B" grade while 62 (41%) scored between 50-59% being "C" grade. It was found that 16 students representing 11% had scores of between 45 - 49% being "D" grade and 50 students representing 33% scored between 40 - 44% which is "E" grade. Further analysis shows that 09 (06%) students failed the course with scores between 0 -39 graded as "F" (Failed). A thorough analysis shows that 62 of the students obtained "C" grades. Further analysis shows that 50 (33%) students scored very low grade of E, i.e. ordinary pass. As way forward, students should take their continuous assessment very serious and ensure that they work o all the "Reading list" assignments given them..

Keywords: Records Management Courses; Students Performance; Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria; Library Schools.

CONCEPT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Institutions, organizations, ministries and parastatals are confronted with the ever growing nature of records which are generated as various activities take place in offices. Efficient records management is therefore crucial. Record management can be viewed from two perspectives, i.e management functions and management elements. While management functions has to do with the planning, organizing, staffing, budgeting, controlling, directing and other managerial activities, the management elements are concerned with records creation, use and retention,

disposition and protection of records in any given organization.

Record management as a function and as an element is concerned with the managerial activities of planning, staffing, controlling budgeting e.t.c. in relation to record creation, use and retention as well as protection and disposition of records (ELIS Vol.25). The importance of records in any given organization cannot be overemphasized hence they serve the legal, administrative, societal, legislative, procedural, accounting and auditing purposes.

RECORD MANAGEMENT AS A COURSE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Records management is a 400 level course 3 unit core course offerred in first semester of the fourth year of the five year of undergraduate programme in the Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna. It is coded as LIT 417: RECORDS MANAGEMENT (3 UNITS).

The course contents include:
- History of Archives and Records Management
- Principles and technique of Records Management
- Methods of preservation
- Organization and description of Records
- Archival/Records collection in Nigeria
- Problems of Acquisition and use of Records in Nigeria.

(Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2001-2006 pp.17 and 31)

The breakdown of the course contents into units or subunits is thus as follows:

(1) Introduction — concept of record; records found in various organizations; categorization of records; Records management; objectives of records management and elements of Records Management. Lifecycle of records.

(2) History of Archives and Records Management
   a. Ancient and Early Archives; Access policy
   b. History of Archives and Records Management

(3) Principles and Techniques of records management
   a. Principles — Planning, organizing, staffing, funding, budgeting, controlling, directing, etc.
   b. Techniques — categorization, gathering, location, charging out records

(4) Methods of Preservation
   a. Causes of damage to library and archival materials as well as records, -Human, biological, chemical, environmental and

natural causes/agents.
b. Methods of the preservation of library materials and records –
Environmental control, storage and handling, physical method,
security measures, hygiene and cleanliness.
(5)   Organization and description of records;
a. Filing systems: Alphabetic, subject, numeric and geographic
filing systems.
b. Direct and indirect filing system.
(6)   Archival/records collections in Nigeria – Kaduna, Ibadan etc.
(7)   Problems of acquisition and use of records in Nigeria –
Funding,   staffing,   preservation   problems,   attitude   of
government, etc.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The essence of teaching is to impart knowledge of particular course or
subject to students. For the teacher to be able to assess his/her strength
and weakness in teaching a subject, he is required is to evaluate
students using several devices such as class participation, short quiz,
tests and the end of the term/semester examination. All these forms of
assessments are calculated together with the overall performance
analyzed and these results need to be published regularly. Courses
examined in the field of librarianship are also published to assess
students# overall performance and the strength/weakness on the part of
the teacher.

This study therefore seek to provide an extensive literature review in
relation to course contents as well as provide an analysis of the
continuous assessment, examination scores and the overall performance
of students of Library and Information Technology of the Federal
University of Technology, Minna.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
The objective of the study is to assess 400 level students' performance in
Records Management course in the first semester examination of
2007/2008 session.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Literatures were reviewed in relation to the course contents. Librarian
Glossary (1999) sees record as document that is preserved on factual
basis in permanent form regardless of media or characteristics. It is also
regarded as a unit of information preserved in written, typescript or coded
form. Based on these, one can say that record can be documented in

paper form, audio or computerized format. Records, as cited by Encyclopedia of Library and information Science Volume 25 (1978), cover planning, controlling, organizing, training, promoting and other managerial activities that have to do with records creation, maintenance and use as well as records disposition. This source enumerated some records management elements such as records creation, maintenance, use and retention, scheduling and protection. One can rightly say from this analysis that these elements form the lifecycle of records in any given organization.

On the history of archives and records management world wide, Abioye (2002) provides historical antecedents of early and modern archives as well as access policy. The early archives (known as ancient archives) were characterized by the invention of writing. The two most popular earliest forms of writing were those of Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Sumerian cuineform. The development of writing materials such as the clay tablet, parchment, papyrus and paper were closely linked to the invention of writing. The earlier archives were maintained for both record keeping and reference purpose. As for the modern archives, the French Archives Law was the first archival law passed while the first modern archives in the whole world was that of the French Archives. The French Archives Act brought about unrestricted access to archives by every citizen. The modern archives concept spread from France to various parts of Europe and the rest of the world.

Access policy varies from one country to another. Britain operates a 50 year access rule which was established by her Public Records Act of 1958. This was reduced to 40 years and later to 30 years by the 1967 Act. The U.S seemed to have a more relaxed rule on archives because of its Freedom of Information Law. In Nigeria, the Public Archives Ordinance of 1957 did not limit the date for access to archives. Nigeria apparently followed the access policy of Britain which reviewed downward the access policy from 50 to 40 and later to 30 years. In 1992 this issue was finally settled and a new archival legislation called the National Archives Decree was enacted in 1992 which fixed a definite date limit as well as "relaxed the rule of access to public archives in Nigeria", which introduced the 25 years rule...

Privacy versus public access was one of the major considerations governing access to public archives. This has to do with right to access "Unauthorized disclose of information contained in archives relating to personal or private matters". For example in Nigeria one is restricted from

gaining access to public archives that are related to the private life of individuals.

ELIS (1978) observed that after 145 years of the existence of the United States of America, the legislative body passed the National Archives Act. This act was the first official act establishing an agency for the records of federal government. Historians were the major practitioners in the National Archives and they soon became the cadre of personnel to assist agencies in the management of information explosion that came as the aftermath of World War II. Records were subsequently disposed on schedule basis.

The Hoover Commission was established in 1946 by the US government to draft a blue print for the post-war government. One of the assignments given to the Hoover Commission was paperwork management. The commission which was chaired by Emmetti Leahy uncovered countless examples of excessive record keeping costs and this resulted in its proffering recommendations for the establishment of a house keeping agency known as General Services Administration. The Commission equally recommended the transfer of the National Archives to the House Keeping Agency.

The commission's recommendation broadened the responsibilities of House Keeping Agency was designated as the National Archives and Record Service (NARS). Very important was the passage of Federal Records Act which made NARS to perform the functions of retention, scheduling, records centres and records systems. The Federal government in U.S. therefore gave records management the recognition it to function effectively. The Federal Records Act provides a 1976 bicentennial version of records management to include managerial functions and management elements.

The continuous process of records creation, management retrieval and disposition was recognized by Glasscoe Commission set up in Canada in 1960. This commission was known as the Royal Commission on the Organization of the Government of Canada Records Management/Archival Agency similar to that of the NARS in the United States and it is still in operation to date by the Dominion Archivist in Canada.

In the early 1950s, "Emmett Leahy took record management into the private sector and since then records management" has grown

tremendously and hence "become more of an important administrative cost reduction techniques available to management". There has been a tremendous growth in the Association of Records Managers and Administrators with over 4,000 members and 75 chapters all over the world. The growth in membership is as a result of the demand for experienced records management personnel.

The principles of archives management is not different from those used in records centres as well as libraries. Aina (2004) in his paper enumerated some principles of managing library and information services such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, budgeting. Related to this was Adams (2005) in a study of the management of chieftaincy records in Ghana who revealed among the findings that 47 staff were counted in 14 offices visited that had staff assigned the duty of managing records. Out of five staff members, only one had any form of formal training through workshops. On the funding of the traditional council offices, the researcher observed that the financial requirements were included in the budget estimates of the secretariat. Government funding covered staff salaries of councils, provision of equipment and stationeries, allowances and other expenditures.

In terms of records preservation, Akussah (1991) enumerated some agents of deterioration to traditional library and archival materials in the "Harsh" Ghanaian environment. Some of the identified agents include chemical agents mainly lignin and wood pulps; environmental factors such as high temperature, high humidity, high sunshine; while biological agents include those of microbiological agents like fungi, bacteria and insects, rodents and man himself. Human factor contributed more to higher destruction of library and archival materials as well as through stealing, mishandling of materials, etc. Natural disasters equally deteriorate records by way of rainstorms, earthquakes, floods and fire outbreaks, etc.

Related to the above threats/agents, Odogwu (2006) in his write-up include preservation methods such as binding, digitization and microfilming of newspapers. One other method include fumigation of newspapers. Preservation of newspapers like any other materials and records are not without problems; they include insufficient air-conditioning, "epileptic power supply, insufficient funds and modern equipment; lack of trained professionals in preservation, etc. Recommendations were given as to how to solve the anomalies stated above".

Related to Odogwu (2006), Muhammed (2006:118) enumerated four (4)

causes of deterioration to library materials and these include:-
  (i) Inherent chemical instability of the components of library materials;
  (ii) Unstable environmental conditions in the area where collections
       are stored
  (iii) Inappropriate storage and handling practices;
  (iv) Disasters

Writing on the preservation of library materials, Ola (2004) enumerated some causes of deterioration of library materials such as environmental factor and human factor as a result of careless handling. Three factors are important while taking decision regarding preservation and conservations. They include the building, interior of the building and the collection. From the problems of space and deterioration of materials, the advent of the use of microforms as preservation tool has made has further progressed into electronically storage of archives using computers via CD and CD-Rom technology, etc.

In a survey research on records management programme in Osun State Civil Service in Nigeria, Popoola (2000) submitted that the format of records creation in Osun State Civil Service is paper and that the creation of records range from handwritten to typewritten and occasionally both and where it is desirable. Among his other findings was that the estimated total no of records created, maintained and used in the state civil services was 1,369,444 records with a standard deviation of 173 records. The breakdown shows that active records being created, maintained and used were 250,000; semi active records totaled 34,222 while inactive records numbered 772,222 – being the highest records created, maintained and used. On records appraisal, scheduling and disposition, Ppoola's findings revealed "that 97.1% respondents claimed that their establishment have no standard retention/disposition schedule for records" and as such piling up of records occupy very large space.

As regards records maintenance and storage, Popoola lamented that there are only three major ways of filling records manually and they include alphabetic, numeric and alphanumeric. Findings revealed that out of 35 respondents, 32 (91.4%) used functional heads/code member, while 5.7% combined the subject and code member method. Further findings revealed that 2.9% adopted both code number and functional heads filing systems. There was no indication on the use of new computer-based filing system and records storage. The study revealed that information retrieval devices in the registries include registers, guides and indexes.

On record security and protection, analysis shows that two methods are used in protecting records from possible disasters in the state civil service. These methods are smoke detection and fire alarm/detection devices. The study also touches the area of personnel management in record management programme in Osun State Civil Service. The study indicated that the educational qualification of the Registry staff is very low with 80% respondents having GCE O/A level, while 14.3% obtained certificates in personnel management. Majority of the respondents claimed not to have specialized training in records management.

As far as records management is concerned in Nigeria, records acquisition, use and preservation are negatively affected by inadequate staffing, funding, preservation and agents of deterioration, hence Akussah (1991) posits that human, biological, chemical, environmental, staffing and funding can negatively affect records acquisition and use. Adams (2005) identified preservation as the major problem in the management of chieftaincy records in Ghana. The researcher further observed that there was no purpose-built offices and storage areas for records; while offices and storage rooms were not sealed and that windows and doors are left open with sunlight penetrating through. Dust entered the offices. Active files in the offices were fairly clean but inactive records are full of dust.

METHODOLOGY
This involved the use of documentary sources such as marked examination scripts, Continuous Assessment Tests records, marked scripts, overall result for the course as well as question papers. These documentary sources were consulted to generate data. Permission was sought from the Head of Department via the Departmental Examination Officer on the use of the documentary sources with the purpose for their use clearly stated.

In the course marking answer scripts, these were sorted into groups according to the variables measured. These variables include question number(s) answered, and marks scored by individual student. The continuous assessment record and the examination result were used to produce the final results. Simple descriptive statistical analysis involving frequency tables and percentages were used for easy interpretation of the data obtained.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Based on the data collected from the documentary sources, findings are

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highlighted below with the aid of tables:-

TABLE I:
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SCORES IN CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT USING FREQUENCY TABLE (40%)

Mark score(s)	No of students	Percentage%	Mark/scores	No of students	Percentage%
30 – 40	-	-	14	6	4
29	-	-	13	6	4
28	1	1	12	2	1
27	5	3	11	-	
26	3	2	10	3	2
25	12	8	9	-	-
24	5	3	8	-	-
23	8	5	7	-	
22	11	7	6	-	
21	9	6	5	-	
20	33	22	4	3	2
19	12	8	2	-	
18	9	6	1		
17	12	8	0		
16	7	5			
15	4	6	Total	151	100

The table above shows that there was no single student that had continuous assessment score of between 40 and 29. It revealed that only 1 (1%) students scored 28 marks in continuous assessment while 5 (3%) students scored 27 out of 40 marks. An encouraging performance was also noticed with 12 (8%) students scoring 25 marks as this represents 5% and 62.20%.

It was discovered that 33 (22%) students scored 20 marks. This mark represents 50% score. This number of students form the bulk population and hence they are in the majority.

All students whose continuous assessment score fell below 16 marks

were deemed to have performed below expectation. Others include 2(1%) students who scored 10 marks and 4 marks respectively. It should be noted however that there was no students that scored between 9 and 5 as well as 3 and 1 mark respectively.

TABLE II:
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT BY SCORE RANGE

Mark interval/ range	No of stu- dents	Parentage %
35 – 40	-	-
30 – 35	-	-
25 29	21	14
20 – 24	66	44
15 – 19	44	29
10 – 14	17	11
5 – 9	-	-
0 – 4	03	02
TOTAL	151	100

The table above shows the range of continuous assessment (CA) scores with the corresponding number of students. There was no students that have CA score of between 35 and 40 as well as 30 and 35. This may be attributable to the fact that CA had different assessed aspects, i.e test, assignments, class attendance and short quiz. Students are likely to miss one or two of the various CA which may negatively affect their total CA scores. It was shown that 21 students representing 14% had CA scores of between 25 with 29 marks being the highest.

Five (5) questions were set and students are expected to answer any three (3). The table below clearly indicates the question number with their corresponding question descriptions. The table also shows the number of students that attempted the various questions with each question carrying 20 marks

TABLE III:
AN ASSESSMENT OF QUESTION NUMBER(S) ATTEMPTED IN THE EXAMINATION

Question number	Examination question	Number of students	Percent-age (%)
1	Trace the historical development of archives and records management worldwide with emphasis on Egypt, France, Britain and Nigeria	42	10
2	Critically examine any five (5) principles of records management in any given organization	110	26
3	Explain the essential methods of preserving records in Nigerian university libraries	123	30
4	Account for the various impediments to records collection and use in Nigerian public libraries, ministries and parastatals.	54	13
5	Briefly explain the followings: lifecycle of records; techniques of records management, budgeting systems, horizontal specialization and vertical differentiation; threats to library materials; direct and indirect filing systems.	88	21
	TOTAL	417	100

From the above table, one interesting thing that can be discovered was that the total frequency was 417 which is the same figure for the course code i.e LIT 417. The total frequency or number of students responding to three (3) out of five (5) questions was 417. It should be noted that there are 151 students that sat for the continuous assessment and examination in LIT 417 course.

It was discovered that question number 3 (Essential methods of preserving records in Nigerian university libraries) was the question 123 (30%) students attempted and answered. This shows that records management revolves around various methods of preservation by way of storage and handling; bnding, laminating, digitizing, hygiene and cleanliness; security measures etc. Next to this is question number 2 (Explanation of any five (5) principles of record management in any given

organization. The table revealed that 110 (26%) students attempted this question which may be attributed to the fact that principles of management can be administered/used in any organization including record centres or unit be it library, information centres, hospitals, ministries etc. It should be noted that the principles of managing libraries are the same principles used in managing record centres or units of any organization.

The third in the rank of questions answered by the students was question number 5, i.e. brief explanation of some concepts as covered in the course outline. Analysis using answer/marked scripts indicates that 88 (21%) students answered the question by brief explanation of 5 concepts such as life cycle of records; techniques of records management, budgeting systems, horizontal specialization and vertical differentiation, threats to library and archival materials and direct and indirect filing systems.

TABLE IV:
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN AN EXAMINATION
(60 MARKS)

Scores	Number of Students'	Percentage (%)
56 – 60	—	—
51 – 55		
46 – 50	01	01
41- 45	03	02
36 – 40	19	12
31 – 35	47	31
26 – 30	24	16
21 – 25	40	26
16 – 20	09	06
11 – 15	06	04
6 – 10	01	01
1 – 5	01	01
Total	151	100

The table above is an analysis of students' performance in the semester examination of LIT 417 Records Management course. The maximum marks for the examination is 60%. The analysis above has clearly shown that none of the 151 students that sat for the examination had a score of between 51 and 60. It was discovered that 47 (31%) of students' had scores of between 31 and 35. The next set of students' had scores of between 21 - 25 marks and they are 40 in number which represents 26% of 151 students. This is a fair performance as the range between (31-35)

and (21 - 25) is 10.

The table further indicates that in between the latter and former exists a mark range of 26 - 30 with corresponding number of 24 (16%) students. The students' performance with regards to 26 - 30 marks is a good performance and very interesting but few students scored high marks, i.e. 3 (2%) of students scored between 41 and 45 marks out of 60%. Only 1 (1%) student had a score of between 46 and 50 marks. All these when added together form 15 (23%) of students with appreciable performance in the examination.

Critical observation revealed that 17 (12%) students performed below expectation in the examination, i.e. students who scored below 16 and 1 mark. The breakdown as shown in the table revealed that 9 (6%) students scored between 16 and 20 marks; 6 (4%) students scored between 11 and 15 marks; while 1 (1%) student scored between 6 and 10 as well as 1 - 5 respectively. They are likely to be part of the students that scored D, E, and F grades in the overall performance as shown in the table below.

Analysis of students' performance/final scores in both Continuous Assessment and Eexamination are given below..

TABLE V:
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION. FINAL SCORE

Grades	Score % range	Number of students	Percentage Score(%)
A	70 – 100%	02	01
B	60 – 69%	12	08
C	50 – 59%	62	41
D	45 – 49%	16	11
E	40 – 44%	50	33
F	0 – 39%	09	06
Total		151	100

Source: Examination Result, LIT 417. First semester 2007/2008
Department of Library and Information Technology, FUT Minna

The table above shows the columns for grades range of scores with their corresponding number of students as well as percentages. It was discovered that after adding both the Continuous Assessment and Examination scoreS 2 (1%) of the students had "A" grade. It should, however, be noted that it is not easy in any examination to have many students scoring 70 and above. Analysis has shown that 12 students representing 8% of 151 students scored "B" grade with the score range of

60 – 69%. This is equivalent to second class (Upper Division) which is not always easy to attain. Analysis of students' performance revealed that 61 (40%) students scored "C" grade within the range of 50 59%. Most students fall within this range or category and hence second class lower division usually constitute the larger percentage of graduands in most undergraduate courses.

On the "D" grade column as revealed in the table shows that 16 (12%) students scored between 45 and 49% which may be as a result of students not paying particular attention to Continuous Assessment or not being able to express themselves fully in the examination. On the "E" grade column, it was found that 50 students representing 33% of the 151 students scored between 40 and 44% which may be attributable to the reasons given for "D" grade students. After adding up the continuous assessment (CA) and examination scores, it was discovered that only 9 (6%) of students failed the course. This may be attributable to very low performance in continuous assessment and examination. They are likely to be students that missed some lectures or revision/correction exercises after the CA test or revision exercise against the coming examination.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY
1.   Only 68 students had scores of between 20 and 28 marks in continuous assessment which shows that students do not take continuous assessment very serious.
2.   It was discovered that 57 students scored below 30 marks in the examination. Both 1 and 2 above affect the students' overall grade in the course. Probably students could not make time to read the materials referred to in the reading list given to them or they did not attend lectures regularly.
3.   Majority of the students scored "C" and "E" grades in the overall performance in record management course.

WAY FORWARD
1.   Students should take Continuous Assessment very serious.
2.   Students should read all the references or reading lists given to them by their lecturers so as to prepare them for examination.
3.   Class attendance and participation should be accorded priority

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