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ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE
ADMINISTRATION IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE NIGER DELTA
REGION OF NIGERIA

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated electronic records management and effective administration in Federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 148 senior registry staff responsible for record management in the registry department of the federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The census sampling technique was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 140 respondents in the registry department of the federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between electronic records management and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that federal universities invest in and prioritize the creation of electronic records and ensure that electronic records creation processes are userfriendly, standardized and aligned with best practices in information management, among others.

**Keywords:** Administration, Electronic Records, Electronic Records Management, Federal Universities. Niger Delta Region

#### Introduction

Electronic records management ensures that records remain useful and accessible using computers and other electronic devices. The usefulness of records in organizations has made the achievement of tasks much easier and better, staff members do not have to information struggle to access relevant documented. Matlala and Maphoto (2020) opined that no organization could thrive and survive without records in decision-making, planning, and competition among counterpart. This makes it crucial that records increase as organizations progress from one phase to another. Diverse organizations make use of records in their day-to-day operations. The reason is that every activity carried out is documented for future purposes of reference. retrieval, and use.

The fundamental operations in any university are teaching, learning, research, and community development. As universities embark on admitting students for study and recruiting staff to perform services, records are created through their profiles. Practices of teaching, learning, research, and community development have also resulted in gathering developing records through notes/lecture notes, learning techniques where the students attend to assignments, and carrying out personal research activities. These activities have generated many records used in universities and produced different kinds of records that indicate that the University is carrying out its statutory functions. For the university to have access to the created records of both students' enrolment/ academic performance of their intellectual pursuit which takes the form of students' results, transcripts, and assignment/completed research work, the need to preserve and manage these records becomes essential. Also, non-academic records are required and used in the University Accreditation Purposes and promotions. If some of these records are not properly kept and managed but are misappropriated and become lost, then valuable evidence of the institution would be lost forever.

The International Organization for Information Standardization and on Documentation (ISO 15489) (2016) defined records as indispensable information created, received, and maintained as evidence. The records serve as an asset to growth based on the tasks that the individual is made to perform. Records have proven to be an entity that affirms events and historical displays (Bakare, Abioye, & Issa, 2016). The management of records has witnessed many transformations from analogue to digital. The advent of information and communication technology (ICT) brought a notable turning point in records management.

Azameti and Adjei (2013) noted that in public tertiary institutions, the lack of adequate equipment to manage electronic records is a major indictment of the administration's commitment to record-keeping. In like manner, Barde et al. (2019) studies reveal that retrieval of students' academic records was slow and time-consuming due to poor record management. Therefore, for Federal Universities in Nigeria to manage electronic records, they require adequate funds to acquire all the necessary facilities and employ skilled manpower to manage electronic records.

### Statement of the problem

Despite the numerous benefits associated with electronic records management in universities, challenges persist regarding the availability of records. This is because records are difficult to create, particularly in the absence of uniformity in format and an overwhelming fear of technology being obsolete. These concerns arose from the researcher's personal experience. Poor management systems could lead to embarrassing situations for universities requested documents are not readily available. The identified issues could hinder effective administration, development strategy, and supervision of the university systems. Delays in graduating students may also occur. These problems were identified based on the

researcher's exposure at the Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, interactions with colleagues at the sample universities, and existing literature on records management in Nigerian universities. Considering the background of the study and existing research and knowledge gap in the areas of electronic records management (ERM) in universities, the researcher attempts to investigate ERM and effective administration in Federal Universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## Objective of the study

This study aims at investigating the relationship between electronic records management and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Specific objectives are to:

- 1. Ascertain the relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- 2. Examine the relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- 3. Explore the relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- 4. Determine the relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

- 1. What is the relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

- 3. What is the relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
- 4. What is the relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

## **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance to guide the study:

- Ho¹. There is no significant relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- Ho<sup>2</sup>. There is no significant relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- Ho<sup>3</sup>. There is no significant relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>. There is no significant relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

#### **Literature Review**

Records over the decayed have taken different forms such as papyrus, clay tablets, paper, and now electronic. The advent of information communication technology brought management. about electronic records includes records management Electronic creating, using, maintaining, protecting, and disposing of electronically generated records to provide evidence of business activities (Ambira, Kemoni & Ngulube, 2019). Ibeh & Ezeabasili

(2024) states that good record keeping is crucial for institutions because it forms the basis for future planning. It helps them learn from past experiences and keep accurate information. Proper records management also ensures that institutions can be accountable to their stakeholders (Ibrahim, 2021).

Mureebe and Lwanga (2023) conducted a study on the effect of records creation on service delivery among private Institutions of learning. The study assessed the effect of records creation on service delivery among private higher Institutions of learning. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire. The study population was 102 participants. This includes top management, records officers, student leaders, heads of departments, academic staff, and administrative assistants. A cross-sectional design was adopted for this study. The findings of the study revealed that record creation has a positive and significant influence on service delivery (p<0.01). Similarly, Thabakgolo and Nsibirwa (2022) conducted a study on the value accorded to electronic records: a reflection of information culture among selected parastatals in Botswana. One of the study's objectives is to ascertain the state of records creation and capture in the parastatals. The findings revealed that policies and procedures for record creation were not followed.

Adeyanju (2020) conducted a study on electronic records management systems and efficiency at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. The study aimed to establish if electronic record management and turnaround time in the treatment of memoranda in the University of the Lagos administration were significantly related. The study revealed that the use of an electronic management system in distributing information to staff was effective. Majority also maintained that distortion of information through the electronic system was minimal. The study, further revealed that distributing information through electronic media could be hampered by the irregular supply of electricity but the safety of information distributed through such medium

is always guaranteed. The finding, therefore, positive relationship showed between а electronic record management and the distribution of information in the University. In like manner, Elisha (2014) examined the role of information communication technology (ICT) in the creation and distribution of records in the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC). The findings of the study established that there are different technologies used in the creation and distribution of records and they encompass hardware and software which include the use of computers, websites, networking devices. Electronic Document Management Systems (EDMS), telephones, public address system. CCTVs. Biometric systems, and social networks. The study concludes that ICT has played a major role in creating and distributing records in the UCC. This is evidenced in the secure, quick retrieval and update of records, accuracy in disseminating records capture, tracking records in databases, and other measures.

The use of electronic records has enormous benefits compared to other forms of records. Wandiri (2020) conducted a study on optimization of electronic records management systems and performance in public institutions: a case study of the Ministry of Land and Physical Planning registry. One of the objectives is to explore how the use of an electronic records management system (ERMS) influences the performance of the Ministry of Land and physical planning. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 56 respondents in the cadre of records managers, land registrars, information technologists. heads of administration, land assistants and secretaries. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire. Findings from the study revealed that the perceived use of electronic records management systems and organizational performance have a positive correlation. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the government should set up clear policies that are meant to safeguard and enhance the use of ERMS in its institutions. Also, Onvekachi and

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Nwereka's (2022) research on Electronic Records and Administration of Educational Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. The study revealed a significant relationship between the use of electronic records in students' results and certificates and school administration in educational tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Disposal of records is the last phase in the records life circle. When records have met their retention requirement, they are deposed following a retention schedule. Ezeonwurie and Ernest (2021) assessed the implementation of electronic records management practices by secretaries of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Kano state. Five research questions guided the study. The study's findings showed that secretaries across MDAs in Kano state do not implement electronic records disposal policies. It was recommended that secretaries should update themselves by getting acquainted with electronic record management practices. Allison (2017) states that electronic records should be properly disposed of to avoid unauthorized access to vital information.

## Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale distributed with the aid of two research assistants.

The study population consists of 148 staff in four selected departments in the registry across the ten federal universities.

This includes establishment, student affairs, examination and records, and admission departments in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Census Sampling Technique was adopted using the entire population of the study. To ensure a high response rate, two research assistants were briefed and engaged to help in administering the questionnaire to the respondents. A total of 140 questionnaires were returned representing 94.6% success rate. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in line with the research questions using descriptive statistics frequencies and percentages. of The hypotheses were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool. The research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

# Population of the Study

The population of the study was one hundred and forty-eight (148) Senior Registry staff responsible for record management in the Registry Department of the 10 federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Table 1: Population of the Study** 

S/ NO	Name of University	Admission s	Establishment Division	Exams & Records	Studen t Affairs	Total
1	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike	3	4	4	3	14
2	University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	4	4	5	3	16
3	Federal University Otuoke (FUOTUOKE)	2	4	3	3	12
4	University of Calabar (UNICAL)	5	3	5	5	18
5	Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE)	4	4	5	4	17
6	Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko (NMU)	3	2	4	3	12
7	University of Benin (UNIBEN)	4	4	4	3	15
8	Federal University of Technology (FUTO)	3	3	4	3	13
9	Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA)	3	4	4	3	14
10	University of Port Harcourt	4	5	4	4	17
	TOTAL					148

Researcher's Field Data (2022).

## **Presentation of Result**

Table 2: The relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	r	Р	Sig
Effective administration	140	2.67	0.51				
Creation of electronic records	140	2.97	0.45	139	.455	.000	Sig

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 explores the correlation between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The findings in Table 1 indicate that the joint relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration correlates r = 0.455 which means

there is a strong positive relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration. This indicates a positive correlation, suggesting that the creation of electronic records helps ensure effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 3: The Relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	r	Р	Sig
Effective administration	140	2.67	0.51				
Distribution of electronic records	140	2.83	0.61	139	.256	.002	Sig

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 examines the association between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The result indicates that the joint relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration has a correlation coefficient of r = 0.256 which

means there is a moderate positive relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration. This suggests that the distribution of electronic records can influence effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 4: The Relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	r	Р	Sig
Effective administration	140	2.67	0.51				
Use of electronic records	140	2.50	0.52	139	.468	.000	Sig

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4 outlines the connection between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The table (Table 3) indicates that the joint relationship between the use of electronic records and effective

administration has a correlation coefficient of r = 0.468 which means there is a positive correlation between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 5: The Relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	R	Р	Sig
Effective administration	140	2.67	0.51				
Disposal of electronic records	140	3.08	0.58	139	.691	.000	Sig

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The findings in Table 5 explore the correlation between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The results indicate that the relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration has a correlation coefficient of r = 0.691 which means there is a positive relationship. This suggests that prompt disposal of electronic records influences effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## **Test of Hypotheses**

**HO**<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 6 below presents the result of the relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 6: Relationship between creation of electronic records and effective administration

S/N	Variables		Effective administration	Creation of electronic records	Decision
1.		Pearson Correlation	1	455 <sup>**</sup>	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
		N		140	
2.	Creation of electronic records	Pearson Correlation	455 <sup>**</sup>	1	Significant
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
		N	140		

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2-tailed)

Source: Fieldwork. 2023

The table (Table 6) reveals that the creation of electronic records (r =.455; p <0.05) has a significant relationship with effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This implies that there is a positive linear association between the creation of electronic records and effective

administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

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**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The result of the relationship between distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 7: Relationship between distribution of electronic records and effective administration

S/N	Variables		Effective administration	Distribution of electronic records	Decision
1.	Effective administration	Pearson Correlation	1	.256**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	
		N		140	
2.	Distribution of electronic records	Pearson Correlation	.256**	1	Significant
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		
		N	140		
	**0	orrelation is sig	nificant at the 0.05	(2-tailed)	

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 7 result shows that the distribution of electronic records (r =.256; p <0.05) has a significant relationship with effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This implies that there is a positive relationship between the distribution of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**HO**<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 8 presents and discuss exclusively the relationship between the use of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 8: Relationship between use of electronic records and effective administration

S/N	Variables		Effective administration	Use of electronic records	Decision
1.	Effective administration	Pearson Correlation	1	1 .468**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
		N		140	
2.	Use of electronic records	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1	Significant
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
		N	140		
	*	Correlation is sid	unificant at the 0.05	(2-tailed)	

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2-tailed)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The table (Table 8) reveals that the use of electronic records (r =.253; p <0.05) has a significant correlation with effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**HO**<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the disposal of electronic records and

effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 9 below presents the linear association between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

Table 9: Relationship between disposal of electronic records and effective administration

		Effective administration	Disposal of electronic records	Decision
Effective administration	Pearson Correlation	1	.691**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		140	
Disposal of electronic records	Pearson Correlation	.691**	1	Significant
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	140		
	administration  Disposal of	administration  Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed)  N  Disposal of Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed)	administration  Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed)  N  Disposal of Pearson .691** Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed) .000	Effective administration  Pearson 1 .691** Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed) .000  N 140  Disposal of electronic records  Pearson 1.691** 1 Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed) .000

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The result in Table 8, examines the relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The result reveals that the disposal of electronic records (r = .666; p < 0.05) has a significant relationship with effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This implies that there is a positive association between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## **Discussions of the Findings**

The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between the creation of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The high level of relationship could be credited to the fact that most of the universities engaged in the creation of electronic records which is essential for the success of organizations. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Mureebe and Lwanga's (2023) study which revealed that record creation has a positive and significant influence on service delivery (p<0.01).

The findings from research question two showed that there is a significant relationship between the distribution of electronic records effective administration federal and in universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This showed that electronic record distribution allows for quick and easy access to information, communication facilitates better among university units, leads to cost savings by reducing the need for physical mail, printing, and other traditional distribution methods, and enhances the security of sensitive administrative information. This finding is supported by Adeyanju (2020) whose finding revealed a positive relationship between electronic records management and distribution of information in the university.

The results from research question three and hypothesis three demonstrated a significant positive correlation between electronic records

effective administration federal and in universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. often streamline Electronic records administrative processes, leading to increased efficiency, time savings, and enabling easy access to information from different locations. It also contributes to data accuracy and integrity. It can lead to cost savings by reducing the need for physical storage, paper, and manual recordkeeping processes, and compliance with regulations. This finding is supported by the position of Wandiri (2020) whose findings show that the perceived use of electronic records management systems and organizational performance has a positive correlation. In like manner, Onyekachi & Nwereka's (2022) findings revealed a significant relationship between the use of electronic records in students' results and certificates and school administration in educational tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Finally, the findings of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This ensures that the universities adhere to legal and regulatory contributing requirements, to effective administration, optimizing resources by eliminating unnecessary data storage costs and protecting data privacy and confidentiality. Eliminating unnecessary records clutter and allows administrators to focus on relevant and current information, enhancing the efficiency of administrative tasks. This finding agrees with Ezeonwurie & Ernest (2021) who noted that weeding of electronic records that have no storage value be disposed of. This will effective administration improve as only relevant electronic records are kept and distributed for effective decision-making. This result is consistent with Allison's (2017) study which revealed that electronic records should be properly disposed of to avoid unauthorized access to vital information.

## Conclusion

The study examined electronic records management and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the creation, distribution, use, and disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The test of hypotheses also showed that there is a significant relationship between the creation, distribution, use, and disposal of electronic records and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The positive relationship implied that implementation of electronic records practices positively influences effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In other words, a direct relationship exists between electronic records management and effective administration in federal universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

#### Recommendations

Based on the results obtained from the study, the researcher recommended that:

- Federal universities should continue to invest in and prioritize the creation of electronic records. Ensure that electronic record creation processes are userfriendly, standardized, and aligned with best practices in information management.
- 2. Enhance the distribution mechanisms of electronic records to support efficient communication and collaboration. Implement systems that facilitate secure and seamless information sharing among administrative units and stakeholders.
- Encourage the effective use of electronic records by providing comprehensive training programs for staff and administrators. Promote awareness of the benefits of electronic record systems

- and ensure that users are proficient in leveraging these systems for improved administrative processes.
- 4. Develop and strictly adhere to electronic records disposal policies. Implement secure and compliant methods for disposing of obsolete or sensitive records. Ensure staff are well-trained in disposal procedures to mitigate risks and maintain data integrity.

By implementing these recommendations, federal universities in the Niger Delta region can further enhance the positive relationship between electronic records management and effective administration, ultimately contributing to the overall success and sustainability of these institutions.

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