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Disaster Prevention and Records Disposition Practices among Administrative Secretaries in Public Universities in Enugu State

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate disaster prevention and records disposition practices in the digital era among administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised 145 respondents, including 18 business education lecturers and 83 ICT staff from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and 6 business education lecturers and 38 ICT staff from Enugu State University of Science and Technology. A structured 30-item questionnaire developed by the researchers was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.84 for disaster prevention practices, 0.79 for records disposition practices, and 0.87 for the instrument overall, indicating high reliability. The final analysis was based on 132 usable responses. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while an independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that the item means for disaster prevention practices ranged from 2.64 to 3.97, and item means for records disposition practices ranged from 3.51 to 3.98, indicating that both sets of practices were perceived as required to a high extent in public universities. The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff. It was recommended that university management should provide adequate digital infrastructure, funding, and continuous training to enhance disaster prevention and records disposition practices of administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State.

Keywords:
Disaster Prevention, Records Disposition, Administrative Secretaries, Digital Era, Records Management, Electronic Records

Introduction

The digital era has profoundly transformed the creation, storage, and management of information in contemporary organizations, particularly in higher education institutions. The proficient use of digital technologies in records administration has the potential to improve administrative efficiency and guarantee institutional sustainability. Schwab (2016) asserts that the digital era signifies a phase characterized by swift technological progress in computing and communication, fundamentally changing the generation and utilization of information. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) described the digital era as a setting marked by the integration of digital technologies into every facet of organisational activities, encompassing information management. In this study, the digital era operationally denotes a technology-driven environment in public institutions where records are primarily generated, processed, and managed through electronic means.

Digital records management has become increasingly vital for university administration. Public universities face growing risks of data loss, cyber threats, system failure, inadequate retention control, and weak records disposition practices. Previous studies have discussed electronic records management broadly (Asogwa, 2012, 2013; Ngulube, 2018; Ezeani, 2020), but limited empirical attention has been paid specifically to disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities in Enugu State. Existing studies have often focused on libraries, records centres, or general ICT adoption, leaving a significant gap in understanding the current implementation levels of disaster prevention and records disposition in university administrative systems. This gap is consequential because weak disaster prevention and records disposition practices can threaten institutional continuity, accountability, regulatory compliance, and administrative efficiency.

Public universities are government-owned and publicly funded institutions of higher education established to promote access and equity in education.

Johnstone (2004) characterised public universities as government-owned institutions of higher education primarily funded by public resources. Nigerian public universities are institutions created by federal or state governments to further education, research, and community service in accordance with national development objectives (Okebukola, 2015). Records management in these institutions is increasingly shaped by the digital age, and an effective records management system can improve administrative efficiency and ensure institutional continuity. The International Organization for Standardization (2016) defined records as data generated, collected, analysed, and preserved as proof and information by an entity or individual, in accordance with legal responsibilities or during business transactions. Records management encompasses the systematic processes employed to oversee records from their inception until their final disposition. Disaster prevention is crucial for protecting records from risks that could result in loss or destruction. Ohio State University (2022) described disaster prevention as the formulation and execution of policies designed to safeguard essential records against disasters such as fire, flood, and system failure. Effective safeguarding of records must be complemented by appropriate management of records at the conclusion of their lifecycle through systematic records disposition procedures.

Administrative secretaries play a vital role in implementing records management policies in public universities, particularly in the digital era. Akor and Udensi (2013) characterise administrative secretaries as specialists tasked with overseeing office information and records management. Okoro (2012) characterised administrative secretaries as individuals who execute clerical and administrative functions, encompassing record-keeping and document management. Notwithstanding the significance of disaster prevention and records disposition practices in the digital era, public universities in Enugu State encounter numerous obstacles in the efficient management of their institutional records. These challenges encompass inadequate digital infrastructure, absence of comprehensive records management policies, insufficient personnel training, and ineffective implementation of disaster recovery strategies. This study, therefore, examined the extent to which disaster prevention and records disposition practices are implemented in public universities in Enugu State, with particular reference to the perceptions of business education lecturers and ICT staff.

The advent of the digital era has transformed records management procedures in public universities, especially with regard to disaster prevention and records disposition. Despite the widespread adoption of digital technologies, significant challenges persist in ensuring the protection, proper maintenance, and systematic disposal of institutional records. University records are increasingly vulnerable to risks such as data loss, cyber threats, inadequate backup systems, and insufficient storage facilities, potentially compromising administrative efficiency and institutional continuity. The implementation of disaster prevention and records disposition practices appears inconsistent across institutions, with some universities still relying on outdated techniques alongside digital systems. This situation can be attributed to deficient digital infrastructure, a scarcity of technical expertise, ineffective policy execution, and inadequate training of administrative staff responsible for records management. These challenges may result in the accumulation of outdated records, impede information retrieval, and heighten the risk of record loss or destruction. Without adequate attention to these concerns, public universities risk disruptions in administrative operations, loss of critical information, and diminished service delivery effectiveness in the digital era. It is therefore essential to examine the extent of implementation of disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities in Enugu State to provide evidence-based solutions for improving institutional records management.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine disaster prevention and records disposition practices in the digital era among administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The extent of disaster prevention practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State.
2. The extent of records disposition practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State.
3. The challenges associated with disaster prevention and records disposition practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are disaster prevention practices implemented in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State?

2. To what extent are records disposition practices implemented in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State?
3. What are the challenges associated with disaster prevention and records disposition practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff on the extent of disaster prevention practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State.

H_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff on the extent of records disposition practices in the digital era in public universities in Enugu State.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theoretical frameworks: the Records Lifecycle Theory and the Socio-Technical Systems Theory. These two frameworks collectively provide a robust conceptual basis for examining disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities in the digital era.

The Records Lifecycle Theory, developed by the American records management tradition and subsequently refined by scholars such as Penn (1994) and Shepherd and Yeo (2003), posits that every record passes through a sequence of distinct phases: creation or receipt, distribution, use, maintenance, and final disposition. This theory assumes that records have a finite lifespan and that each phase of the lifecycle requires specific management interventions to ensure the integrity, accessibility, and eventual disposal of records in accordance with institutional and legal requirements. In the context of this study, the Records Lifecycle Theory provides a framework for understanding how disaster prevention practices protect records at the active and semi-active stages, while records disposition practices govern the terminal stage of the lifecycle. The theory connects directly to the research questions by focusing attention on the extent to which universities implement protection and disposal procedures that align with the structured lifecycle model.

The Socio-Technical Systems Theory, pioneered by Trist and Bamforth (1951) and further developed by Emery and Trist (1960), holds that organisations are complex systems in which the technical subsystem (ICT infrastructure, hardware, software, records systems) and the social subsystem (personnel, skills, norms, policies, training) interact continuously to produce organisational outcomes. The theory assumes that neither technology alone nor people alone can guarantee effective records management; rather, the interaction between both subsystems determines performance. In this study, the Socio-Technical Systems Theory explains how institutional variables such as staff training, policy implementation, funding, and infrastructure jointly shape disaster prevention and records disposition outcomes in public universities. Together, the Records Lifecycle Theory and the Socio-Technical Systems Theory explain the phenomenon under investigation, situate the methodology within a theoretical tradition, and provide a lens through which the findings are interpreted.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Digital Era

The digital era is defined by the extensive utilisation of digital technologies for the generation, storage, processing, and distribution of information within organisations. It signifies a shift from conventional paper-based methods to electronic systems that improve the speed, precision, and accessibility of information. Laudon and Laudon (2020) characterised the digital era as the integration of information and communication technology within organisational processes to enhance efficiency and decision-making. Ezeani (2020) asserts that the digital era has transformed records administration by enabling organisations to electronically handle substantial volumes of data through databases, cloud systems, and networked platforms. Nonetheless, despite these benefits, the digital era also poses risks including data loss, cyber threats, and system breakdowns (Ololube, 2019). These challenges necessitate that institutions, particularly public universities, implement comprehensive disaster prevention and records disposition strategies to safeguard their digital records.

Disaster Prevention

Efficient disaster prevention is crucial and directly influences organisational resilience and operational continuity. The National Archives and Records Administration (2019) characterised disaster prevention as strategies employed to achieve significant objectives, including risk mitigation, records safeguarding, operational continuity, and information security. The United Nations Records and Information Management Guidance (2024) asserts that disaster prevention must rely on the systematic identification of essential records and potential

hazards, followed by the implementation of preventive measures and routine testing to ascertain the attainment of protection objectives. According to the VinciWorks Group (2022), the various measures employed in disaster prevention fulfil four primary objectives: safeguarding essential documents, ensuring business continuity, maintaining regulatory compliance, and protecting institutional assets. Implementing effective prevention strategies that identify, safeguard, and secure sensitive records can augment organisational preparedness and resilience.

Records Disposition in the Digital Era

Records disposition is an essential element in institutional resilience and in enhancing the capabilities of administrative secretaries (National Archives, 2019). It is a records management practice designed to ensure organisations retain only those documents of ongoing value while securely disposing of records that have met their retention criteria (Carmen, 2024). Records disposition equips institutions to meet regulatory requirements and sustain information governance, and is typically regarded as the final phase in the records lifecycle. It involves the authorised destruction, deletion, or transfer of records that have fulfilled retention period criteria and are not required for ongoing or forthcoming audits or litigation.

In the digital era, disposition provides guidance on retention schedules, disposition techniques, documentation requirements, and authorization protocols. Ontario Tech University (2020) asserts that records disposal is crucial for organizational effectiveness by offering structured methods to administrative secretaries, thereby enabling them to manage information assets efficiently across complex digital records systems. The primary objective is to equip administrative secretaries to perform duties in document lifecycle management, including destruction, archive transfer, and third-party custody arrangements. Christopher (2023) recognized systematic disposition techniques as essential variables for achieving regulatory compliance and operational efficiency in contemporary organizations. An effectively executed disposition programme enhances organizational efficiency and mitigates storage expenses and legal liabilities. An adept administrative secretary is expected to undertake the following disposition activities:

1. Creating guidelines for organizing and tracking disposable records across repositories;
2. Identifying official copies of university records and ensuring transitory copies are destroyed before retention periods expire;
3. Compiling disposition records lists using disposition authorisation forms and ensuring all eligible records are properly documented.

Records disposition is particularly critical for Nigerian public universities, which face persistent challenges in information governance, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency.

Challenges Associated with Disaster Prevention and Records Disposition in the Digital Era

Records disposition provides the knowledge, skills, procedures, and understanding needed to manage organizational information effectively. The realization of its objectives depends on how effectively the following challenges are addressed.

1. Lack of Retention Schedules: Many administrative units lack formal retention schedules specifying how long different record types must be maintained and when disposition is appropriate, undermining the systematic nature of records disposition in public universities.
2. Untrained Administrative Secretaries: Many higher institutions offering administrative services suffer from a shortage of properly trained administrative secretaries in records disposition practices. Records management has become a repository for staff from various units who are assigned disposition responsibilities without proper training in retention requirements and legal compliance.
3. Poor Documentation: Inadequate documentation of disposition actions remains a major challenge. The National Archive (2024) noted that insufficient proof of disposition has been maintained, leading to a shortage of disposition authorization forms, destruction certificates, and audit trails, rendering disposition programmes ineffective and non-compliant.
4. Infrastructural Challenges: Records disposition in the digital era requires up-to-date systems and facilities to manage both physical and electronic records. Most universities have poorly equipped records centres and lack secure destruction facilities, and many institutions manage disposition without proper authorisation systems or tracking mechanisms.
5. Poor Policy Framework: The records disposition policy framework in Nigerian public universities has not been adequately responsive to changes in compliance requirements or the evolving needs of administrative units. Disposition policies and procedures are often not developed for emerging record types, and

responsibilities for disposition are frequently unclear or improperly assigned.

Public Universities in Enugu State

Scholars have defined public universities in various ways. According to Britannica (2023), a public university is an institution of higher education financed and managed by governmental bodies that offers programmes across multiple disciplines and awards degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Jaja (2023) regards it as a tertiary institution tasked with imparting knowledge, skills, and training to students who have completed their secondary education and wish to pursue further study for future employment. Public universities exhibit characteristics such as public funding, governmental oversight, affordable tuition, diverse student demographics, and institutional commitment to research and community service (Fuller, 2018). Effective operation of public universities yields numerous societal benefits, including employment generation, human capital development, research and innovation, enhanced social mobility, and national development (Elegant, 2022).

Given the critical role of public universities, it is essential to adopt efficient administrative practices, particularly through skilled administrative secretaries, to sustain institutional effectiveness. Records management in the 21st century can enhance university administration by prioritising systematic information governance, digital preservation, and regulatory compliance. Miller (2022) observed that integrating technology into administrative functions, including electronic record systems, cloud storage, and automated disposition workflows, improves institutional efficiency and equips universities to address contemporary information management challenges.

Empirical Review of Related Studies

A number of empirical studies have examined records management, disaster prevention, and records disposition in Nigerian and African universities, though with varied methodological orientations and contextual focuses. Asogwa (2012) investigated the challenges of managing electronic records in developing countries and found that inadequate infrastructure and lack of skilled personnel constitute major constraints affecting records management in Nigerian institutions. The study emphasised the need for capacity building and institutional investment in ICT infrastructure. A related study by Asogwa (2013) reinforced these findings, noting that records managers in sub-Saharan Africa frequently operate without adequate policy frameworks or technical support systems. Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu (2017) examined challenges and prospects of electronic records management in Nigerian universities and identified poor funding, weak policy implementation, and inadequate training as recurring constraints. Their findings align with the challenges identified in the present study, particularly with respect to infrastructure and human resource limitations. Ngulube (2018) reviewed records management in the digital era across African contexts and found that the transition from paper-based to digital records management remains uneven, with many institutions struggling to implement consistent retention and disposition schedules. Ezeani (2020) found that digital transformation of records management in Nigerian universities is hindered by electricity instability, limited digital literacy among administrative staff, and the absence of formal retention policies.

Popoola (2019) examined organisational records management practices and service delivery in Nigerian universities and found a significant positive relationship between effective records management and service quality outcomes. The study concluded that systematic retention scheduling and documented disposition procedures are critical for improving administrative efficiency. These findings collectively establish that the challenges of disaster prevention and records disposition are well-documented at the conceptual level but remain insufficiently examined empirically in the specific context of public universities in Enugu State. The present study addresses this gap by providing quantitative evidence on the extent of implementation of disaster prevention and records disposition practices, drawing on the perceptions of business education lecturers and ICT staff.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to elicit information from respondents on disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The two institutions surveyed were the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), selected as the only established public universities in the state. The target population comprised 145 respondents; business education lecturers and ICT staff from both institutions and since the population was manageable, no sampling was necessary. Data was collected using a structured 30-item questionnaire organised into three sections addressing disaster prevention practices, records disposition practices, and challenges, with

responses measured on appropriate five-point scales and a criterion mean of 3.00 adopted for decision-making.

The instrument was face-validated by five experts, with their suggestions incorporated before final administration. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.84, 0.79, and 0.87 for the respective sections and overall instrument. Of the 145 questionnaires administered, 132 were duly completed and returned, giving a response rate of 91.0%. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-tests were used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: Extent of Disaster Prevention Practices

Table 2 presents the mean responses of respondents on the extent of disaster prevention practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Disaster Prevention Practices in Public Universities

S/N	Disaster Prevention Practices	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	Ensure office records systems are effective, efficient and transparent	3.73	0.87	High Extent
2	Ensure storage facilities are secure with fire and flood protection	2.64	0.77	Moderate Extent
3	Protect electronic records through backup procedures	3.22	0.83	Moderate Extent
4	Inspect storage areas regularly for safety and damage	3.52	0.82	High Extent
5	Train personnel on secure records handling	3.83	0.92	High Extent
6	Maintain proper records management and disposal procedures	3.17	0.90	Moderate Extent
7	Protect vital records for emergency access	3.71	0.85	High Extent
8	Train personnel on emergency response procedures	3.97	0.93	High Extent
9	Develop formal disaster recovery plan	3.10	0.80	Moderate Extent
10	Test and update disaster recovery plans regularly	2.71	1.00	Moderate Extent

Key: X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 2 indicate that item means for disaster prevention practices ranged from 2.64 to 3.97. Seven of the ten items had means at or above 3.50, indicating that those practices are perceived as implemented to a high extent. Three items had means between 2.50 and 3.49, indicating moderate-extent perceptions. The items with the lowest means were "Ensure storage facilities are secure with fire and flood protection" ($\overline{X}$ = 2.64) and "Test and update disaster recovery plans regularly" ($\overline{X}$ = 2.71), suggesting these specific areas require targeted institutional attention. The grand mean for disaster prevention practices was 3.36, indicating a moderate-to-high overall extent of implementation. Standard deviation values ranged from 0.77 to 1.00, indicating relative consistency in respondent ratings.

Research Question 2: Extent of Records Disposition Practices

Table 3 presents the mean responses of respondents on the extent of records disposition practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Table 3: Mean Responses on Records Disposition Practices in Public Universities

S/N	Records Disposition Practices	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	Creation of guidelines for records disposition	3.71	1.05	High Extent
2	Identification and destruction of transitory records	3.94	0.97	High Extent
3	Compilation of disposition records list	3.90	0.99	High Extent
4	Verification of records before	3.82	0.99	High Extent

	disposition			
5	Removal of records under legal retention	3.51	1.14	High Extent
6	Destruction of obsolete records	3.77	1.16	High Extent
7	Application of retention schedules	3.98	0.86	High Extent
8	Documentation of disposition activities	3.95	0.98	High Extent
9	Authorization of disposition process	3.87	0.99	High Extent
10	Use of proper disposition methods (e.g., archiving, secure destruction)	3.83	1.09	High Extent

Key: X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 3 show that item means for records disposition practices ranged from 3.51 to 3.98, all above the criterion mean of 3.00. All ten items recorded means within the "High Extent" range (3.50–4.49), indicating that respondents perceive records disposition practices as implemented to a high extent in public universities. The grand mean for records disposition practices was 3.86. The highest-rated item was "Application of retention schedules" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.98), while the lowest-rated was "Removal of records under legal retention" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.51). Standard deviation values ranged from 0.86 to 1.16, indicating moderate variation in respondent ratings.

Research Question 3: Challenges Associated with Disaster Prevention and Records Disposition Practices

Table 4 presents mean responses on the challenges associated with disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Table 4: Mean Responses on Challenges Associated with Disaster Prevention and Records Disposition Practices

S/N	Challenges	GX	Bus. Edu. X_1	SD_1	ICT X_2	SD_2	t-cal	t-tab	Dec.
1	Inadequate digital infrastructure for records management	3.72	3.80	0.66	3.64	1.14	0.58	1.96	A
2	Lack of regular training on disaster prevention practices	3.68	3.74	0.70	3.62	1.10	0.49	1.96	A
3	Poor funding for records management systems	3.81	3.88	0.64	3.74	1.12	0.62	1.96	A
4	Inadequate implementation of records retention policies	3.59	3.66	0.68	3.52	1.15	0.55	1.96	A
5	Risk of cyber threats and data loss	3.75	3.82	0.61	3.68	1.09	0.60	1.96	A
6	Lack of backup and disaster recovery systems	3.63	3.70	0.69	3.56	1.13	0.52	1.96	A
7	Poor electricity supply affecting digital records systems	3.84	3.90	0.63	3.78	1.11	0.57	1.96	A
8	Inadequate skilled personnel in digital records management	3.66	3.72	0.67	3.60	1.16	0.48	1.96	A
9	Resistance to adoption of digital records practices	3.41	3.48	0.72	3.34	1.18	0.44	1.96	A
10	Lack of institutional policies guiding records disposition	3.57	3.64	0.66	3.50	1.14	0.53	1.96	A

Note: GX = Grand Mean, X_1 = Mean for Business Education Lecturers, SD_1 = Standard Deviation for Lecturers, X_2 = Mean for ICT Staff, SD_2 = Standard Deviation for ICT Staff, t-cal = t-calculated, t-tab = t-table value, A = Agreed.

Table 4 shows that respondents agreed with all ten items listed as challenges, with grand means ranging from 3.41 to 3.84. The highest-rated challenge was "Poor electricity supply affecting digital records systems" (GX = 3.84), followed by "Poor funding for records management systems" (GX = 3.81). The lowest-rated was "Resistance to adoption of digital records practices" (GX = 3.41). These results indicate that respondents recognise inadequate digital infrastructure, poor funding, lack of training, cyber threats, and poor electricity supply as substantial challenges affecting effective disaster prevention and records disposition practices. The calculated t-values for all items were below the 1.96 critical value at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff regarding the challenges.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 5 presents the summary results of the independent samples t-test used to test the two null hypotheses.

Table 5: Summary of Independent Samples t-Test Results for Hypotheses H_1 and H_2

Hyp.	Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
H_1	Disaster Prevention	Business Edu. Lecturers	24	3.59	0.82	130	0.58	0.563	Not Rejected
H_1	Disaster Prevention	ICT Staff	108	3.58	1.01				
H_2	Records Disposition	Business Edu. Lecturers	24	3.81	0.87	130	0.61	0.542	Not Rejected
H_2	Records Disposition	ICT Staff	108	3.79	1.02				

Note: df = degrees of freedom; t-cal = t-calculated; significance level = 0.05.

The results in Table 5 show that for H_1 (disaster prevention practices), the t-calculated value of 0.58 was less than the t-table value of 1.96 at 130 degrees of freedom ($p = 0.563 > 0.05$). Accordingly, H_1 is not rejected. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff on the extent of disaster prevention practices in public universities in Enugu State. For H_2 (records disposition practices), the t-calculated value of 0.61 was also less than the t-table value of 1.96 at 130 degrees of freedom ($p = 0.542 > 0.05$). H_2 is therefore not rejected. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of the two groups on the extent of records disposition practices. These findings suggest that both business education lecturers and ICT staff share broadly consistent perceptions regarding disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities.

Discussion

The descriptive results established that disaster prevention practices are perceived as important in public universities in Enugu State, with a grand mean of 3.36, indicating a moderate-to-high extent of implementation. Specific items, such as training personnel on emergency response procedures ($\bar{X}$ = 3.97) and training personnel on secure records handling ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83), recorded the highest mean ratings, suggesting institutional awareness of the importance of human capacity in disaster prevention. However, the relatively low means recorded for the provision of fire- and flood-protected storage facilities ($\bar{X}$ = 2.64) and the regular testing of disaster recovery plans ($\bar{X}$ = 2.71) are noteworthy. These items, which fall within the moderate-extent range, indicate that infrastructural and procedural aspects of disaster prevention require more sustained institutional investment and policy attention. These findings corroborate those of Asogwa (2012), who found that effective disaster prevention strategies are essential for protecting records against risks such as fire, flood, and technological failure in Nigerian institutions. The International Council on Archives (2016) similarly emphasised that disaster preparedness is a critical component of records management in modern institutions. From the perspective of the Records Lifecycle Theory, these findings suggest that while institutions demonstrate awareness of preventive practices at the use and maintenance stages of the records lifecycle, structural weaknesses at the preservation and protection stages remain a concern.

The findings on records disposition practices revealed a grand mean of 3.86, with all items falling within the high-extent range. The application of retention schedules ($\bar{X}$ = 3.98) and documentation of disposition activities ($\bar{X}$ = 3.95) recorded the highest means, suggesting that respondents perceive systematic and documented disposition as widely recognised requirements in public universities. Shepherd and Yeo

(2003) affirmed that proper records disposition ensures valuable records are preserved while obsolete ones are appropriately disposed of, a position consistent with the high mean ratings observed in the present study. Penn (1994) further noted that effective records disposition reduces storage congestion and enhances efficiency in records management systems. Viewed through the lens of the Records Lifecycle Theory, the high mean ratings suggest that administrative staff recognise disposition as a terminal but essential phase of the records lifecycle, even if the actual implementation of disposition procedures may be uneven across institutions.

The findings on challenges revealed that inadequate digital infrastructure (GX = 3.72), poor funding (GX = 3.81), lack of regular training (GX = 3.68), cyber threats (GX = 3.75), and poor electricity supply (GX = 3.84) are the most prominently perceived challenges affecting disaster prevention and records disposition. These findings are consistent with Asogwa (2012), Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu (2017), and Ezeani (2020), all of whom identified infrastructure deficiencies and inadequate training as major constraints on records management in Nigerian universities. From the Socio-Technical Systems Theory perspective, these challenges reflect an imbalance between the technical subsystem (ICT infrastructure, backup systems, power supply) and the social subsystem (trained staff, policy enforcement, institutional commitment), confirming that effective records management requires the concurrent development of both dimensions. The agreement between business education lecturers and ICT staff on these challenges, as evidenced by the non-significant t-test results ($p > 0.05$), further underscores that the challenges are perceived as systemic and cross-professional, rather than specific to any single respondent group.

Conclusion

This study established that disaster prevention and records disposition practices are recognised as important requirements in public universities in Enugu State, with records disposition practices perceived as implemented to a higher extent (grand mean = 3.86) than disaster prevention practices (grand mean = 3.36). Specific areas such as fire and flood-protected storage facilities, regular testing of disaster recovery plans, backup systems, and digital infrastructure require targeted improvement. The study found no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers and ICT staff on either disaster prevention or records disposition practices, suggesting a broadly shared institutional awareness of both the importance and the limitations of current practices. Respondents identified inadequate digital infrastructure, poor funding, limited training opportunities, cyber threats, and unreliable electricity supply as the principal challenges constraining effective disaster prevention and records disposition in public universities in Enugu State. The study contributes to records management scholarship by providing empirical evidence on disaster prevention and records disposition as interconnected practices essential for institutional continuity, regulatory compliance, and administrative efficiency in Nigerian public universities.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study support the Records Lifecycle Theory by confirming that records disposition is perceived as a well-recognised terminal phase of the records lifecycle, while disaster prevention practices at the preservation stage remain comparatively weak. The study also reinforces the Socio-Technical Systems Theory by demonstrating that the persistent challenges of inadequate infrastructure, poor funding, and insufficient training reflect a systemic imbalance between the technical and social dimensions of records management in Nigerian public universities. Future research may productively extend these frameworks to examine how specific institutional policies mediate the relationship between socio-technical factors and records management outcomes.

Practical Implications

Registry departments, administrative secretaries, ICT units, and university management should prioritise the establishment of routine disaster recovery testing procedures, investment in fire and flood-protected storage facilities, and the development of structured training programmes for administrative secretaries in disaster prevention and records disposition. The relatively lower mean ratings observed for infrastructural items suggest that practical interventions targeting physical and digital infrastructure will yield the greatest improvements in disaster prevention outcomes.

Policy Implications

The findings indicate a clear need for university-wide records retention schedules, formal disaster prevention policies, digital backup policies, secure disposition procedures, audit trail requirements, and cyber incident response protocols. Government agencies and institutional governing councils should mandate the development and strict enforcement of

comprehensive records management policies that address both disaster prevention and systematic records disposition in public universities.

Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study covered only two public universities in Enugu State; findings may not be directly generalisable to public universities in other states or geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Second, the sample comprised business education lecturers and ICT staff, and did not include administrative secretaries, records officers, or registry staff, despite the study's focus on secretarial and records management practices. This constitutes a methodological limitation that should be addressed in future studies by including the primary population of interest. Third, data were based on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may be subject to social desirability bias or respondent recall limitations. Fourth, the study did not involve direct inspection of actual records management systems, disposition registers, or disaster recovery documents, limiting the depth of evidence on actual practice. Fifth, the cross-sectional design cannot establish causal relationships between institutional variables and records management outcomes. Future research employing longitudinal designs or mixed-methods approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping disaster prevention and records disposition in Nigerian public universities.

Recommendations

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

1. University management and government should provide adequate digital infrastructure, including modern ICT equipment, secure backup systems, fire and flood-protected storage facilities, and stable power supply with backup systems, to address the most critical infrastructural weaknesses identified in this study.
2. Regular training and retraining programmes should be organised for administrative secretaries, records officers, and ICT staff on modern digital records management, disaster prevention procedures, and systematic records disposition practices.
3. Institutional authorities should ensure the development and strict implementation of comprehensive policies guiding disaster prevention and records disposition, including formal retention schedules, disposition authorisation procedures, destruction certificates, and audit trail requirements.
4. Adequate technological support and maintenance strategies should be established to ensure continuous protection, accessibility, and proper management of digital records, with particular attention to cybersecurity and disaster recovery testing.
5. Future research should incorporate administrative secretaries and registry staff as primary respondents to obtain more direct evidence on disaster prevention and records disposition practices in public universities.

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