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Use of Electronic Records Management System on Administrative Staff Performance in Public Polytechnics, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The management of information across organizations have shifted from the traditional methods to the digital space and this has been necessitated due to the infusion of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This has become an important tool in the form of Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) for the day-to-day running of the office environment across organizations of which offices in tertiary institutions are not an exception. However, the reverse is the case in most public tertiary institutions in Nigeria which are still grabbling with the old order of managing its records. It is based on this premise that this study investigated the impact of using ERMS on the performance of administrative staff across the public polytechnics in Edo state, Nigeria. The Study adopted a positivist research paradigm and a quantitative research approach. Study population was 245 administrative staff while stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of 74. Adapted Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) research instrument was administered to users which revealed Administrative staff of public polytechnics in Edo State have accomplished a lot as a result of the use of ERMS. Computer/internet as well as technical assistants are available within the institutions to support administrative staff in the use of ERMS in case of any system malfunction or physical support. The study concluded that the availability of the facilities in these institutions and the ability of office managers to use the facilities had a great impact on their performance.

Keywords: Electronic Records Management System, Records Management, Administrative Staff

Word Count: 246

Introduction

In this modern age, the continuous increase in the volume of information has transformed the manner in which organizations, both public and private carry out their businesses. Significant changes have taken place in the nature of the information being generated, stored, processed and distributed. Although technology can help to manage the creation and the processing of information, if used without understanding the records and information management principles, it will only invite haphazard effects (Abdullah, 2017).

Records is seen as an information created, received and maintained as evidence and as asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. While there are many purposes of and benefits to records management, it is to be highlighted here that a key feature of records is their ability to serve as evidence of an event. Proper records management can help preserve this feature of records (Ahmed, 2020).

Records management has to do with everything involving how records are controlled right from when they are created down to when they are finally disposed of. It involves how records are created, received, maintained, used and finally disposed of. It is very important for the success of any business organization. When we say a record, we are simply referring to a document that involves business transaction which has to be documented. This may be letters, memoranda, reports etc. that exist both in the paper form and electronic form. Records in paper form may be physically saved in cabinets, boxes or other means while records in digital form may be saved using electronic storage devices or cloud (Ashantti, 2019).

Managing records has to do with making sure that records are systematically managed throughout their lifecycle. Since records are the life and sole of any business organization, they should be efficiently and systematically controlled from their creation, reception, usage, protection as well as their disposition. Records management has to do with the way an organization systematically controls its records throughout the records' life cycle. This is necessary in order for business organizations to meet all the requirements for the successful operation of their businesses including the legal aspects as well as what the community expects of them (Ambira, Kemoni & Ngulube,2019). In all business organizations, to be a good records manager means recognition of the significance of records and how to manage such records together with a good strategy on how to make sure that the records remain safe and also in a good format. This is necessary for the successful operation of any business.

For this reason, an organization needs to keep the necessary documents that will be accessible for both business operations and other matters. Records management is very important for the public sector since it serves as an important tool for good business governance and efficient administration. Records provide information for improved planning and decision-making. Records also provide evidence for government accountability and transparency and are often subject to specific legal requirements. In government bodies, records provide evidence of

communications, decisions and actions. In the process, some of the records the government officers make will be retained as national and provincial archives (Alex, 2017).

Polytechnic records, whether in manual or automated form, houses the institutions' information that describes all aspects of students' management. It is an essential tool in running the day-to-day activities of the institutions. It is needed in carrying out business operations both within and outside the institutions. The introduction of Information Technology (IT) into businesses, educational institutions and government agencies has resulted in an information explosion and caused an increase in records volume of incredible proportions. Educational institutions are mostly affected by this growth as much of the information is channeled into businesses and government offices in the form of records for administrative effectiveness. Records managers and other category of staff in all the establishments, private or public institutions and government offices need records and archives for planning, decision making and control.

The role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in improving the general management of information cannot be downplayed. This is affirmed by the ability of ICTs to capture, store, retrieve, analyze and transmit large volumes of information across various locations. The adoption of ICTs in records management has not only been crowed generally as eminent in improving the reliability and effectiveness of records, but it has also been gloated for strengthening service delivery through its various tailor-made innovative applications and programmes such as the electronic records (Yusuf, 2014; Park, 2021**)**. Records management has gone through series of advancements for a long time now as a result of the adoption of ICT. This has improved the way tasks are performed in organizations (Pan, 2017; Akpomi, & Ordu, 2019).

The integration of ICT in the performance of functions at the organizational level is necessary for increased efficiency, competitiveness and cost effectiveness (Rick, 2016). On the other hand, ICT which is computer-based technology has to do with the processing, storage and distribution of data. It refers to technology used for collecting and processing various forms of information (Olayemi, 2017). The adoption of technology has changed the management of records in organizations. Most organizations in today's world now use ICT in their businesses. This is necessary so as to cope with the increase in the volume of information the organizations generate (Lyman, 2014; McCaffrey, 2021).

Much organizational activities lead naturally to the creation of records, but few organizations seek to record everything that they do. Written communication generates records, but most spoken communication leaves no records unless a written note is made, so also manual and physical task can also pass unrecorded. However, new ways of working and new technologies often make it simpler to create records where none were created in the past. Records are generally accounts of facts, events and issues created and stored in any physical form as authentic evidence for reference. A record has to be related to an activity carried out by an organization or an individual, and "this activity and the function it supports determine the provenance of the record, that is, the record is evidence of that activity" (Popoola, 2020). Records serve as essential proof of the business that was conducted and should remain unaltered

over time for as long as they are needed. As evidence of official business, records have an on-going use as a means of management, accountability, operational continuity, legal evidence and disaster recovery.

From the forgoing, it can be deduced that recorded information have undergone series of changes in the ways they are contained and even how they are produced from one human civilization to another, dating from the time of the papyrus, clay tablets, skin and paper down to the present age of electronically generated records using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). A record is not defined by its physical format or storage medium, its age, or the fact that it has been set aside for preservation, nor is it simply a form of recorded information. The essential characteristic of a record is that it provides evidence of some specific activities. Traditionally, organizational staff created records manually, using pen, ink or a typewriter. In the modern world, most records are created using digital technology, by interaction with a computer programme. Records maintained digitally are known to record managers as electronic records (or digital records). Both terms refer specifically to records created or received electronically, which are then maintained in electronic form, as opposed to records created using word-processing or other software and then printed on paper (Popoola, 2020; Okuonghae & Bakare-Fatungase, 2023**)**. Electronic records are evidence of organizational activities and are generally the computerized versions of traditional paper records. Sources of electronic records range from Desktop Publications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and email, to corporate databases etc.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its associated facilities have grown rapidly in the management and service delivery of tertiary institutions over the last few decades. Paper-based records are fast giving way to electronic records in most developed countries and crawling gradually into the developing countries including Nigeria. The electronic records management system is designed to alleviate the limitations associated with the paper-based records management system and helps improve the quality of immediate retrieval of information within the sector. Unfortunately, the implementation of large-scale information technology projects such as electronic records management system seems to be associated with high failure rate. The challenge can be perceived to be even higher in developing countries including Nigeria. It was observed that some public tertiary institutions in Nigeria still use the traditional record management system. In this traditional record management system, the greatest issues are lack of space for the increasing number of tertiary institutions' records. The concern for physical space for storage of paper records has been a challenge that many institutions keep battling with. For this reason, the paper seeks to investigate the impact of use of ERMS on administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State, Nigeria.

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of use of electronic records management system (ERMS) among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State. However, the specific objectives are to:

1. identity the level of use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State.

2. determine the ease of use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State.

3. ascertain the societal views on the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State.

4. ascertain the existence of technical infrastructure supporting the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State.

The following questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

2. How easy is the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

3. What are the societal views on the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

4. What technical infrastructure exists to support the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

Literature Review

Electronic Records Management System

Electronic record is defined as information that is kept in an electronic media and is readily available for access and editing. An Electronic Records Management System, also referred to as ERMS, is a computer programme that is designed to store and to track the movement of records (Fletcher,2016; Aliyu, Bappa, & Anthony, 2019). The system enables the identification of specific changes that are made on a record and find out who made the changes. ERMS does expedite the management, generation and custody of information for specified purpose with the control on how the records are accessed and used. Electronic Record Management Systems also have modules that apply retention schedules for specific and groups of records. Electronic records make it easier, efficient and effective to capture and manage records at all the stages of records management. ERMS have the capability of capturing all the records created by the business operations of an organization. Good ERMS are able to capture the information together with all the metadata that is associated to any particular record.

Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) is known as a records management system that aids the administrative staff to conduct their day–to–day business that rely on records, data organization, and account integration. ERMS is a software application for organizations that manage users' data with regard to the status of their records. ERMS reduces the time spent on administrative tasks and allows the management to access to users' records. It also processes and generates statements through the use of ID number which automatically shows the status of the records (Umi & Zawiyah, 2019). Furthermore, ERMS refers to a system that is intended for electronic records custody, archiving, storing, integrating records management capabilities (Pan, 2017). Furthermore, ERMS provides functionality to capture, store, and process, circulate, preserve and dispose of electronic records (Joshi & Singh, 2017; Ambira, Kemoni & Ngulube, 2019).

Use of Electronic Records Management System

The perceived likelihood of use of ERMS is dependent on the direct effect of four key construct. The first on the list is performance expectancy. Staff should have the belief that using the system will help them to attain gains in job performance. The next is effort expectancy which is the degree of ease associated with the use of the system. The use of electronic records management system should be easy for the staff to operate effectively. The third is social influence. This is the way staff perceive the views of others as to whether they should use the new technology. The effect of social influence is significant when the use of technology is mandated. In the mandatory context, individuals might use technology due to compliance requirement, but not personal preferences. Facilitating conditions is the last on the list. This is an individual's believe that an organization's and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of the system. Facilitating conditions have a direct positive effect on intention to use, but after initial use, the effect becomes non-significant. These metrics (performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) are obtained from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) propounded by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis in 2003. The study of Bakare (2017) was underpinned by UTAUT to show use of SMT by academic librarians in South-West, Nigeria

The application of the technologies in the workplace has redefined inter and intra-organizational communication, has streamlined business processes to ensure benefits, such as higher productivity, the wellbeing of employees and the satisfaction of consumers (Ile & Ojohwhoh, 2020). To achieve such benefits, companies make massive spending on technologies. However, investment in ICT implementation does not guarantee successful deployment and often bring low returns (Pan, 2017). The results of market research suggest that the success rate of new technology adoption in organizations, whereby technologies bring expected return on investment (i.e. improved performance), is below 30 percent. The number is less optimistic if considered the companies, who could improve performance, but could not sustain the improvements in the long-term. Given the consequences of technology adoption on organizations' performance and a cost-revenue structure, the technology utilization-acceptance gap remains one of the major areas of research in the IS literature.

Organizations rely heavily on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to conduct businesses, resulting in the generation of e-records in large volumes. These records are key to organizations in achieving their objectives and extracting knowledge for decision-making and problem-solving. Therefore, these records should be retained to provide evidence of what activities have been carried out. These records should be managed systematically and effectively to avoid problems if organizations are involved in litigation cases and to reduce the risk of fraud and corruption associated with the management of the information created (Issa & Wamukoya, 2018).

In some organizations, managing e-records is problematic because of the lack of established policies, and the lack of support from qualified, experienced personnel. One way of overcoming the problem is to adopt an electronic system, a robust example of which in use is an electronic records management system (ERMS). An ERMS allows organizations to assign a particular life cycle to the information created as records. It has the functionality to capture, receive, use, manage, maintain and dispose of electronic records rather than having to manage paper-based and analog records (Malekani& Alphonce, 2022). The purpose of managing records is to provide evidence of business activity when required. This is achieved by capturing contextual information (metadata) about the records being created, linking records involved in the same business activity, applying security controls to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the records, and by imposing disposal requirements on the records held within the system (Odhiambo, 2019). For an ERMS to function properly within an organization, records managers and information technology (IT) professionals must work together to integrate the ERMS with other information content applications. An ERMS accepts and manages the records that it imports from other sources within the initiative. Usually, the ERMS can be integrated with an electronic document management system (EDMS) to provide a fully integrated solution (Phiri & Tough, 2018).

Polytechnics producing hundreds of records each day means that after a given period of time, the records accumulate huge volumes of paper records. This may bring about difficulty in locating some records and also lack of sufficient space to carry all the records before they are disposed. This becomes the major challenge for paper records. The lack of awareness among administrative staff has made it difficult to establish electronic records management programme. Staff are not fully informed and trained about electronic records management. This is because the resources are not on ground for effective training. As a result, they are not aware of the relevance and worth of electronic records management. This has led to a lack of space for the increasing volume of the institutions' records and safety of the records as well as poor integration of records management and Information Technology (IT) usage. This has also led to the challenge of retrieval of information within these institutions as it is always very difficult (at times impossible) to locate some records. All these anomalies may lead to the loss of image of such institution. Hence, the need to investigate the impact of use of ERMS on the performance of administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State, Nigeria.

Although there is literature on e-records management, many of those studies were conducted in fields other than tertiary institutions, including the mainstream civil service, businesses, and other organizations. The limited studies that have already been conducted in this field, however, offer a bleak image of the condition of e-records management in tertiary institutions. The relationships between governance, audit, risk and record keeping are a central concern of the discipline of records management (Haraldsdottir & Gunnlaugsdottir, 2018). Previous researches conducted were carried outside Africa and very few in Nigeria. Studies focusing on investigating the impact of use of ERMS seem to have received less attention. Hence, the uniqueness of this work which aims at investigating the concept among administrative staff in Public Polytechnics in Edo State, Nigeria. This is the gap this study has identified to fill in the research.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this work. A descriptive survey design describes a condition or phenomenon as it exists naturally without manipulations. This method is appropriate because it is found useful in the collection of data on phenomena as employed by earlier scholars that share similar context with that of this study[1].

The population of this work comprised of Two Hundred and Forty-five administrative staff in Public Polytechnics, Edo State, Nigeria. The two (2) Public Polytechnics in Edo State are Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi and Edo State Polytechnic, Usen. This is represented on the table below:

Table 1: Population of Respondents

S/N	Public Polytechnics	Population
1.	Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi	190
2.	Edo State Polytechnic, Usen	55
	Total	**245**

Source: field work, 2023

The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 74 (seventy-four) administrative staff. This represented 30% of the population studied. The population and sample are represented in the Table 2 below:

Table 2: Population and sample size of Respondents

S/N	Public Polytechnics	Population	Sample
1.	Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi	190	57
2.	Edo State Polytechnic, Usen	55	17
	TOTAL	**245**	**74**

Source: field work, 2023

The instrument for data collection was the UTAUT adapted questionnaire called: Use of Electronic Records Management System Scale (UERMS Scale).

Data Analysis

Data were collected by distributing the seventy four copies of the questionnaires to the respondents in their various institutions and the questionnaires were all retrieved. The analysis is done thus:

Table 3: Gender Analysis of Respondents

S/No.	Gender	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Male	20	27
2.	Female	54	73
	Total	**74**	**100**

Table 4: Age Analysis of Respondents

S/No.	Years Range	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	20 – 30	15	20
2.	31 - 40	26	35
3.	41 – 50	18	25
4.	Above 50	15	20
	Total	**74**	**100**

Table 5: Marital Status Analysis of Respondents

S/No.	Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Single	28	38
2.	Married	46	62
	Total	**74**	**100**

Table 6: Educational Qualification Analysis of Respondents

S/No.	Years Range	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	NCE/ND	09	12
2.	HND/B.Sc	46	62
3.	M.Sc/MBA	19	26
4.	Others	-	-
	Total	**74**	**100**

Table 7: Working Experience Analysis of Respondents

S/No.	Years Range	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	0 – 10	14	19
2.	11 - 20	31	42
3.	21 – 30	17	23
4.	Above 30	12	16
	Total	**74**	**100**

Table 8: Tabular Analysis of Responses to Research Question One

What is the level of use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

Items	Statement	Variables	Responses	Percentage (%)
1.	ERMS enhances my work effectiveness	SA A D SD	41 25 6 2	55 34 8 3
Total			**74**	**100**
2.	ERMS increases efficiency in my work	SA A D SD	40 34 - -	54 46
Total			**74**	**100**
3.	ERMS enables me to accomplish tasks quickly.	SA A D SD	40 23 5 6	54 31 7 8
Total			**74**	**100**
4.	ERMS gives me greater control over my work.	SA A D SD	53 21 - -	72 28
Total			**74**	**100**

Table 9: Tabular Analysis of Responses to Research Question Two

How easy is the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

Items	Statement	Variables	Responses	Percentage (%)
1.	ERMS is easy and flexible to use.	SA A D SD	62 12 - -	84 16 - -
Total			**74**	**100**
2.	My interaction with the ERMS is clear and understandable.	SA A D SD	23 29 13 9	31 39 18 12
Total			**74**	**100**
3.	It is easy to get information using ERMS to do what I want to do.	SA A D SD	34 23 12 5	46 31 16 7
Total			**74**	**100**
4.	It is easy to detect and correct errors in students' records using ERMS.	SA A D SD	19 30 14 11	26 40 19 15
Total			**74**	**100**

Table 10: Tabular Analysis of Responses to Research Question Three

What are the societal views on the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

Items	Statement	Variables	Responses	Percentage (%)
1.	People who influence my behaviour think that I should use the ERMS.	SA A D SD	36 38 - -	49 51 - -
Total			**74**	**100**
2.	My colleagues encourage me to use ERMS.	SA A D SD	25 45 4 -	34 61 5 -
Total			**74**	**100**
3.	In general, my organization has supported the use of ERMS.	SA A D SD	25 30 15 4	34 41 20 5
Total			**74**	**100**
4.	My boss influences my intention to use ERMS.	SA A D SD	11 14 28 21	15 19 38 28
Total			**74**	**100**

Table 11: Tabular Analysis of Responses to Research Question Four

What technical infrastructure exists to support the use of ERMS among administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State?

Items	Statement	Variables	Responses	Percentage (%)
1.	I have the resources necessary to use ERMS.	SA A D SD	36 38 - -	49 51 - -
Total			**74**	**100**
2.	The ERMS is compatible with other systems I use.	SA A D SD	25 45 4 -	34 61 5 -
Total			**74**	**100**
3.	ERMS has availability of technical assistance i.e. a specific person (or group) is available for assistance with ERMS difficulties.	SA A D SD	25 30 15 4	34 41 20 5
Total			**74**	**100**
4.	I have access to a computer/internet whenever I need it.	SA A D SD	28 21 11 14	38 28 15 19
Total			**74**	**100**

Results

This section deals with the results obtained from the analysis of data. 74 questionnaires were issued out to the various respondents in their schools and they were all retrieved representing a 100% retrieval rate. The following results emerged from the demographic data:

On the gender, the females are more among the population study as they have a percentage of 73. The respondents with the age ranges of 31 – 40 years are more among the population with a percentage of 35. On the marital status, there are more married respondents among the population study with a percentage of 62. On the educational qualification of respondents, those with HND/B.Sc are more with a percentage of 62. While the respondents that have worked between the ranges of 11 – 20 years are more among the population study with a percentage of 42.

The following are the results from the responses to the four research questions:

Administrative staff of public polytechnics in Edo State have accomplished a lot as a result of the use of ERMS. The use of ERMS by administrative staff is easy and flexible thereby making it easily understandable. Management and other members of the institutions encourage and support the use of ERMS among administrative staff of public polytechnics in Edo State. Computer/internet as well as technical assistants are available within the institutions to support administrative staff in the use of ERMS in case of any system malfunction or physical support.

Discussion of Findings

Administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State have accomplished a lot as a result of the use of ERMS. This is because the use of ERMS has resulted to increased efficiency and effectiveness thereby enhancing the overall output. With the use of ERMS, tasks are accomplished quickly with less fatigue. This makes the administrative staff have control over their work. This finding agrees with Ile and Ojohwhoh, (2020) who asserted that the application of technology in the workplace leads to higher productivity, wellbeing of employees as well as satisfaction of consumers.

Electronic records management system is easy and very flexible to use by administrative staff of Public Polytechnics in Edo State. The use of ERMS by administrative staff is clear and understandable. It is easy to get information using ERMS. Also, it is easy to detect and correct errors in students' records using ERMS. This can be found in Semanur, (2019) where he stated that the use of ERMS tends to be easy as it allows administrative staff to retrieve information quickly and with flexibility. This saves them the time previously spent on searching for records in the institution.

Management, staff and other members of the institutions encourage and support the use of ERMS among administrative staff. This is as a result of the efficiency of the use of

ERMS. Records stored using ERMS are secured and are of utmost confidentiality as confidentiality promotes best practice for managing the records. The use of ERMS by administrative staff also ensures the security of the records by ensuring that the integrity of records is maintained. This was confirmed by Davis, (2020) who found that, users' opinions are thought to affect the use of ERMS as the social influence factor has been shown to have a significant impact on intention to use ERMS. Data integrity in the ERMS positively affects the efficiency of operations and the quality of decisions. This is because integrity of records safeguards the authenticity, accuracy as well as ensuring the completeness of such records. The use of ERMS by administrative staff ensures the security of the records by ensuring that information is easily and readily available and in the same format when required as well as enhancing their safety. The use of ERMS has eased the management and retrieval of information thereby bringing efficiency through time management.

Computer/internet as well as technical assistants and other necessary resources are available within the institutions to support administrative staff in the use of ERMS. The use of ERMS is compatible with other systems used. Also, technical assistance is always available in case of any challenge faced by the administrative staff in the course of using the systems.

Conclusion

Information management has gone through series of advancements for a long time now as a result of the adoption of ICT. This has improved the way tasks are performed. The adoption of technology has changed the management of information in tertiary institutions as the institution in Edo State now use ICT in managing their information in order to cope with the increase in the volume of information they generate. Technology has helped to manage the creation and the processing of information in tertiary institutions in Edo State.

Offices of the tertiary institutions in Edo State are well equipped with ICT devices that facilitate productivity, accuracy and efficiency of work. The availability of these facilities in these institutions and the ability of office managers to use the facilities had a great impact on their performance. The result of such performance is quick retrieval of information as well as enhancing the security of such information. The use of ICT in managing information in tertiary institutions has transformed the office managers' office from paper more to paper less thereby enhancing economy of space as storage of information is being done in the computer system without making use of papers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this work, the following recommendations were made:

- Management of tertiary institutions in Edo State should be made to understand that the knowledge and application of digital methods in managing information is very vital for high productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of work.

- Since the world of work is changing so rapidly, there is a constant need for retraining the office managers in the use of ICT gadgets for ease and flexibility of work.

- Management of the institutions should encourage administrative staff on the use of ERMS since it ensures quick retrieval as well as security of records.

- Management of institutions should provide adequate facilities as well as the technicians ERMS to be fully incorporated and implemented in tertiary institutions so that office managers can be equipped to face any challenge of records management in such institutions.

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