

## Integration of Archive Unit in School Libraries for the Development of Library Services in Nigeria

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### Abstract

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This paper reviewed literature with the aim of highlighting the need and relevance of integrating archive unit into school libraries in Nigeria as a way of leveraging the Development of School Library Services in Nigeria. Information needed to actualize this paper was gathered from secondary sources of data which were obtained from textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, online sources etc. This involves reading meaning into materials consulted for purpose of achieving a reliable conclusion. Scholars observed that, inadequate knowledge of school record keepers, untimely supply of records to school management and lack of zeal on the part of school teachers regarding keeping records among others hinder the accessibility of non-current school records despite their informational value. In response to this, there is the need to highlight on the relevance of such informational records and the need for the integration for their sections in every school library in Nigeria. It is worthy to note that irrespective of its size the archive unit in a school library remains an integral part of a library system and a fundamental impetus to effective information services. Every school library in Nigeria should endeavour to establish an archive unit to accommodate semi-current and non-current school records for their research value, fiscal/financial value, legal value and administrative value.

**Keywords:** *School Libraries, School Records, Archive unit, Integration, Nigeria*

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### **Background to the Study**

There are several definitions of school library by several authors in the field of Library and Information Science. For example, Cummins (2001) defined school library as a learning resource center responsible for making available a total learning package required by students, teachers and even parents. This is the type of library found in primary and secondary schools. Elaturoti (1990) viewed the school library as an integrated institution of the school providing a variety of book materials which have been selected, acquired, and organized in support of the entire school programmes. The school library is also seen as a learning laboratory that provides opportunity for pupils to develop information skills and develop commitment to information decision-making. As summarized by Aina (2014) school libraries are libraries attached to schools: pre-primary, primary and senior high school. In any case, school libraries are maintained by professionals who are called School or Teacher Librarians. According to Fayose (1995) a school library is that part of school where a collection of books, periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, films, and filmstrips, videotapes, recording of all types, slides, computers, study kits, and other information resources are housed for use by teachers and pupils for learning, recreational activities, personal interest and inter-personal relationships of children in school.

As found in primary and secondary schools, this type of library is primarily accountable for processing, preserving, updating and disseminating current information resources to its user community. School libraries are integrated institutions of their parent organizations which provide a variety of information bearing objects which should also be regarded responsible for preserving semi-current and non-current school records for their historical, legal, cultural and other values. These types of records are usually acquired and preserved in a library section or unit called *Archive*.

Information generated by the school such as school calendars, admission registers, school cash books, visitors' book, punishment book etc., which are worthy of providing reference services to future users are found mostly neglected in our school libraries. This has been attributed to inadequate knowledge of records keepers (mostly non professionals), untimely supply of records to school management and lack of zeal on the part of teachers regarding keeping of records, among others (Durosaro, 2002). These types of worthy information resources are transformed to semi-current and non-current school records and are usually acquired and preserved in a library section or unit called *Archive* for their historical, legal, cultural and other values. Archival unit in a library therefore, provides reference services and access to records and provides environmentally stable and secured storage and preservation of resources for use by future generation. Baro and Eze (2016) identified that, in Nigeria, many secondary schools both public and private in nearly all villages and towns are established without consideration for including school libraries. Education authorities who know the importance of school libraries fail to include libraries in the process of planning to establish secondary schools. This renders the availability of school libraries in Nigeria to be inadequate. However, despite the effectiveness of information management and services provided by archive unit in school libraries, researches indicated that in addition to the limited number of school libraries in Nigeria,

there is still unavailability of archival section or unit in school libraries in Nigeria. Hence, a need to promote the integration of archival unit in school libraries for effective management of school records is extremely imperative. In response to this therefore, this paper highlights the relevance of archival unit's integration into school libraries in Nigeria as a way of complementing effective information services provided by such libraries.

### **Concept of Archive**

Cunningham and Phillips (2005) defined record as “information created, received, maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or business. Apart from the creation stage, the records life cycle has three distinct phases which are: the active or current phase - when the records are in regular use. These records are needed frequently so they are in readily accessible office spaces; semi-active or semi-current phase - when the records go out of regular use with perhaps minimal or occasional referencing. Records are not needed for day-to-day businesses, and the in-active, dormant or archive phase - when the records are disposed or transferred to the archives for permanent preservation.

To store a document, it is necessary to consider the stage of the life cycle of the document. For example, the documents which are in regular use (active) should be housed within the generating office or inside the offices where they are used or in the record office. The records which are semi-active are taken away from the busy office space to the record centre. When the records are not longer referred to occasionally and are worthy of permanent preservation they are referred to as archives and transferred from the records centre to the archival institution (Archives). Maidabino (2010) suggested that, the idea to keep and use record of knowledge and information for reference and permanent preservation can be linked to the earliest time of human history. History has showed how people of the ancient era kept records of their thoughts and their experiences on items at their disposal. Clay tablets, papyrus role, palm-tress, bark of trees, animal skins, stones etc, for example were used for some purposes and historical documentation. With the development of paper and other non-textual documentary forms such as films, photographs, video tapes, still and motion pictures and related machine-readable forms, archival records then continued to appear on special physical characteristics. Archive can be said to have existed for almost as long as records have been kept. Archives are non-current records preserved because of their administrative, legal, historical, and cultural and other values archival agencies promote reliable, visible and accessible collection for use. The archives provide reference service and access to the records. They provide environmentally stable and secure storage and preservation of resources for use by future generations.

In International encyclopedia of information and library science, Feather and Sturges (2003) opined that “Archives is a plural noun with variety of meaning. It refers to both a type of repository and the written materials held there”. Evans (1988) described archives as having constituted one of the world's primary sources of information that grew uniquely out of the activities of the organizations, institutions, families and individuals.

The nature and coverage of archival resources include books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, either by documentary materials regardless of physical form characteristics generated or received by a department or organization in connection with the transaction of its business and preserved as evidence of its functions, policies, decisions, operations or activities or because of the information value in them (Evborokhai, 1990). Archival records therefore, are non current records of an organization, individuals or families created, received, and preserved because of their administrative, historical, legal, cultural or other values. School library archive will play a vital role to the community, because they promote reliable archival records keeping and maintaining a visible accessible and known collection. Hence, such unit enables and promotes best practices in the management of government records in all formats from the point of creation for as long as they are required to support the need of government and the people.

After records are received by the school library, they will be processed by a professional teacher-librarian following professional archival standards and procedures. Every effort is made during processing to maintain integrity of the records as a group, while at the same time making them usable to researchers and preserving them for long and short term deterioration. The processing steps as brought by university archive guidelines include: re-folding and re-boxing the materials into acid-free archival folders and boxes; placing photographs and other special formats materials in proper archival enclosures; removing non permanent or duplicate materials; arranging the materials, and describing the materials with a folder-level and summary description.

In fact, archival records document the past, and provide information for future endeavours. They preserve school history for future generations. When recorded information is lost or destroyed, much of it can never be replaced those portion of the information, replacement is often a result of recollecting and may contain considerable distortion from the original records (Chukuma, 2006). For a school document to be managed for archives, the document should have certain values which are research value, fiscal/financial value, legal value, administrative value, etc. Some of the considerations taken into account during appraisal include: Physical volume, frequency of use, administrative and operational need served by the records, legal and fiscal regulation governing the retention, historical significance, etc.

The Records Management Bulletin (2002) opined that the records have a life cycle similar to that of a biological organism. This is because it is born (creation phase), it lives (maintenance phase) and it dies (disposition phase). The disposition phase of the life cycle is critically important to the legal and economical maintenance. Many school records can be legally destroyed at the end of their active lives. Others become semi-active and should be retired to a record storage area for more convenient storage. Records with continuing long term value are then sent to the school library Archives for permanent storage. The non-current records if allowed to remain under unsatisfactory storage condition in the school environment can be easily destroyed by natural elements such as water, fire, insect etc. Thus, there must be a system to manage these resources.

### **Significance of School Records**

School records occupy strategic position in the effective and efficient organization and administration of the school. It helps for effective planning and implementation of appropriate course of actions, thereby introducing proper monitoring of school activities tasks (Dorcas, 2013). According to Durosaro (2002) records are important tools for effective planning and administration of a school. School records as official documents, books and files containing essential and crucial information of actions and events which are kept and preserved in the school offices for utilization and retrieval of information when needed.

School records are official transcripts or copies of proceedings of actions, events, or other matters kept by the school manager. School records could be viewed as authentic register or instruments or documents of official accounts of transactions or occurrences which are preserved in the school office. Thus, record keeping is an important activity in schools (Sunmola, 2008). These records give a lot of information about the school that will enable head teacher to take decisions and also assess the progress of the school. Law requires some of the records kept in the school.

According to Ibrahim (1997) school records are books, documents, diskettes and files in which are embodied information on what goes on in school (e.g. social, academic and non academic activities, important events, etc). School records are official transcripts or copies of proceedings of actions, events, other matters kept by the school manager. School records could be viewed as authentic registers or instruments or documents of official accounts of transactions or occurrences which are preserved in the school's office (Durosaro, 2007).

Moreover, Ibrahim (1997) listed some general significance of keeping school records to include: telling the history of the school and are useful historical sources; facilitating continuity in the administration of a school; facilitating and enhances the provision of effective guidance and counseling services for pupils in the social, academic and career domains; providing information needed on ex-students by higher and other related institutions and employers of labour for admission or placement; facilitating the supply of information to parents and guardians for the effective monitoring of the progress of their children/wards in schooling or performance; providing data needed for planning and decision making by school heads, ministries of education and related educational authorities; providing a basis for the objective assessment of the state of teaching and learning in a school including staff and students' performance by supervisors and inspectors; providing information for the school community, the general public employers as well as educational and social science researchers for the advancement of knowledge; enabling school heads to collate information on pupils and staff for decision making by higher authorities, the law courts security agencies and other related government agencies when occasion demands; providing a mechanism such as the school timetable for the productive management of time and coordination of school work and activities, and serving as data bank on which both the school head and staff and even students can draw on.

All school records are very useful. School records must be complete and be made available when the need arises. Iwhiwhu (2005) stressed the poor quality and quantity of manpower in records management in the school system. He emphasized that manpower is employed without prejudice to qualitative records management. Human resources management as the harnessing of the totality of the peoples' skills, energies, talents, latent capacities, social characteristics like beliefs to achieve educational objectives and simultaneously making people to be part and parcel of the school (Iyede, 2001).

School records are documented statement of facts about persons, events, facilities, proposal and activities in and about the school. They simply means those official documents, books and files containing vital information of actions and events concerning schools which are kept and preserved in school for utilization when needed. Even when existing schools are closed, the documents, of the schools are transferred to the Ministry of Education for safe keeping and used later (Durosaro, 2002). Durosaro further added that, records are important because they serve as major information tools that sustain the school and aid in achieving educational goals and objectives. Records restore teaching competence and maintain the trend in the history of teaching and learning processes. Record keeping helps to maintain continuity in the general educational process of the school programmes, when a new principal resumes duty in a school, the previous records kept guide him in his administrative duties and this may inform his take off plans. These school records are of various types.

### **Types of School Records**

Adebowale and Osuji (2008) viewed records as the documented information generated, collected or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an activity and that comprises sufficient content, context and structure to provide proof or evidence of the activity. Archival records are those materials which are inactive and substantive in content whether in paper or in an electronic format. Some records are created incidentally to the performance of the mission. They are “operational, support and service” types of records which are considered to be of temporary value to the agency and will be destroyed at some time. But some records remain active for varying number of years depending on the purpose for which they were created.

According to Durosaro (2002) school records are broadly divided into statutory records and non-statutory records. Statutory records are the records kept in accordance with the educational law and they must be produced on request by the agents of ministry of education on official inspection. Such records include: admission/withdrawal register, log book, attendance register, school time table, diary of work, visitors book, examination record book, time movement book, a copy of national policy on education, national curricula on different subjects, assignment books for teachers, query book, history of the school, transfer certificate books, pupils individual files, sports and games record file, school clubs/societies, annual leave roster, teachers' annual evaluation reports, education inspectors reports, organizational charts, minutes books, disciplinary committee file, school land papers, lesson plan/note for teachers among others. Non-statutory records

are school records kept for the purpose of administrative convinces such records include stock books, cash and account books, school calendar, health book, inventory book and staff minutes book.

### **Admission Register**

It is a record of all the pupils who are admitted to a school. The admission register usually contain the following items, the serial number and name of the pupil, his father's name, occupation and address, date of birth, date of admission to the school, the class to which he is admitted and date of withdrawal or migration from the school.

### **The School Calendar**

The school calendar is usually prepared at the beginning of each academic session. As a mirror where the probable dates of various events and activities to be done during the coming session is reflected.

### **Log Book**

The Log Book is specifically designed for the purpose of containing remarks of the school inspector or other important officers of the education department, who pay an official visit to the school. It contains a complete record of the important events that occur during the session.

### **Pupil's Attendance Register**

This is another important register which is maintained in each class and section, showing the names of the pupils on the roll of the class or section, during a month.

### **Teacher's Attendance Register:**

Also called Time Book is another useful record book to be kept in the school to know the actual time the individual teacher reports for duty in the morning and the time he or she closes finally. In modern times a time book is now opened for staff to check staff lateness to and absenteeism from school.

### **Cash Book**

The school cash Register is a record of financial transactions in schools. It also gives information about income and expenditure and promotes accountability and prevents corrupt and sharp practices (Ibrahim, 1997). Cash Book is a record of all money transactions occurring from day-to-day in the school.

### **Cumulative Record Cards**

Also called Cumulative Report Card is a Continuous record or combination of records which contains comprehensive information about each Pupil and which provides a summary of the pupil's career in the school.

### **Stock Register of Equipments**

This is kept in the school in order to record account of the equipment; books and other

articles bought for the school (Sunmola, 2008). This register keeps information of all the movable property of the school.

### **Reports to the Parents**

To get cooperation from the parents reports containing various information about the children are sent to the parents periodically. It contains information like the academic progress of the child, his health condition, participation in curricular and co-curricular activities and other important information.

### **Service Book**

The service book contains the service history of the employees. Information like the employee's date of appointment, his date of birth, educational qualifications, identification marks, permanent home address, transfer, leave accounts, date of increments, reversion if any of reinstatement etc., are carefully written in this book.

### **Syllabuses and Scheme of Work**

It is common to find that in some schools, when a new teacher arrives, he has difficulty in finding out what he should teach (Sunmola, 2008). It is important therefore for every head teacher of a school to have copies of the syllabus kept in the school environment.

### **Visitors' Book**

The school visitors' book according to Sunmola (2008) is a record book containing the list of important personalities visiting the school. It provides a very useful record of the general interest shown by the community in the school.

### **Punishment Book**

According to Sunmola (2008) punishment book is kept by the head teacher in order to record cases of punishment given to children and to ensure that the procedure for punishing any child has been followed.

### **Movement Book**

The staff movement book is a record that shows the whereabouts of a staff who reports in the school for duty but for good reasons have to move out of the school.

### **Query book**

The Query book is a record of queries sent to teaching and non-academic staff.

### **School Photo-Album**

The school head is expected to have photographs of events relating to staff, student, school surroundings and exhibitions taken during school festivals such as First year pupils' first day at school, Inter-house athletics meeting, competitions in sports and games, literary and debating society activities, cultural displays, meeting of clubs and societies, religious groups ceremonies, environmental sanitation exercises and speech and prize giving day ceremony (Sunmola, 2008).

### **Staff Responsibility List**

The staff responsibility list shows in clear terms the primary and secondary assignments given to staff in the school.

### **Disciplinary Committee File**

According to Sunmola (2008) a disciplinary committee made up of some teaching staff is established to consider cases of student's misbehavior in the school, the extent to which a student's misbehavior affects the image of the school, decision taken on the possible ways of correcting erring student and recommend how to prevent future reoccurrence of such erring behavior.

### **Annual Leave Roster**

According to Sunmola (2008) a file is opened for such staff annual leave roster for record purposes.

School non-current records need to be properly kept and preserved in a section that needs to be created in the school libraries as archive unit for future reference and accessibility. According to Popoola (2001), this entails scientific control of recorded information throughout the record life-cycle, that is, records creation, active records, semi-active records, inactive records and final disposition of records with goals of minimizing costs associated with records preservation, business operations and producing a high quality information services to users. Consequently, there is a need for the integration of archive unit in school libraries in Nigeria in order to take care of these school non-current records effectively and efficiently.

### **Need for the Integration of Archive Unit in School Libraries**

School libraries are expected to perform other functions in addition to the seven roles it plays as identified by Baro and Eze (2016) which include: Leading the teaching and learning of information literacy across the curriculum; Collaborating with teachers to embed information literacy across the curriculum; Providing training for teachers and students; Offering a suitable environment for research; Affording access to a wide range of resources; Facilitating opportunities to browse and discover; and Stimulating independent learning. It is also important to know that, the management of information as opined by Chukuma (2006) is as important as the management of money, people, materials and other resources of an organization. When the records created by the school are no longer referred to occasionally, and are not considered worthy of permanent preservation, they are referred to archive and transferred to the archival institution. Records that have no permanent value are separated from those records of enduring archival value with the aid of retention and disposal scheduled. 'Retention and Disposal' is an analytical process concerned with the economics derived from the use of high density, low cost storage of an archive and the timely destruction of obsolete or ephemeral records. This process makes use of inventorying and scheduling, records appraisal, file classification system, records centres, disposal scheduled and transfer to the archive.

According to Sunmola (2008) the school head must have accurate past information about the school to help him/her assess meaningfully the progress of the school. All school records are very useful. School records must be complete and be made available when the need arises. Records, which are not regularly kept, will be incomplete and misleading. Badly kept records can hinder the progress of the school.

To aid proper record keeping in our schools, it is necessary that the government and the other proprietors of school ensure supply of the required records books and information storage facilities as library archives. There is also a need for regular training programs and workshop to be mounted for school staffers on proper ways of keeping school records. Another area that demands proper attention in school is the information storage system. Most schools store records in files, put in cupboard or on bare floors. Termites, flood, fire or even storm may easily destroy these records. Schools should endeavour to get steel cabinets and other fireproof or termite-free storage facilities modern trend is to computerize data or use micro films, tapes, slides or other electronic media. As opined by Egwunyenga (2009) not all information can be considered as records until they satisfy such characteristics as genuineness and authenticity, that is, the information that records give must be true, correct and original; records must be comprehensive, accessible and secured.

According to Dorcas (2013) records management is the application of systematic and scientific control of recorded information that is required for the operation of the school. He added that, such control is exercised over the distribution, utilization, retention, storage, retrieval, protection, preservation and final disposition of all types of records within the school. The aim of records management is to achieve the best storage, retrieval and exploitation of school records in the school system and also to improve the efficiency of record making and keeping processes. With reference to problems associated with keeping of school records Eresimadu and Nduka (1987) identify them to include; untimely supply of records to school management, lack of thorough supervision by principals, lack of fund, inadequate knowledge of records keepers, corruption of data, lack of zeal on the part of teachers regarding keeping of school records, among others.

Idoko (2005) maintains that school record management will continue to suffer neglect and misappropriation unless school administrators employ desirable strategies for improving on school records management. He added that these strategies could be; placing high priority on the supply of necessary school records to schools, funds ear-marked for records management should be retired accordingly, opportunity should be given to school administrators for professional training course in the area of records keeping management and timely supply of school records, among others.

School records if appropriately kept provide useful information to an employer of labour who may want to recruit students for jobs such as testimonials, transcripts, certificates and reference letters. It also supplies the necessary information to school inspectors. According to Ereh and Okon (2015) on Keeping of Teachers' Records and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State Secondary Schools, Nigeria, they concluded that

principals should always ensure that teachers' records are accurately and adequately kept and updated for immediate and future use. The purpose of school records keeping is to ensure that accurate and proper records of students' achievements and growth during his/her school days are kept. Information on any school matters on students when made available to users when they requested for it facilitates research activities that will promote efficiency and effectiveness of the school system (Ogunsaju, 1989).

Therefore, records related to pupils/students academic performance should be given proper attention by the school management considering its future implications on pupils/students career development. Considering the defined roles of school libraries towards providing information relevant to school vision and mission, there is also need for special section to be created that should be charged responsible for identification and management of pupils/students basic records as archives, for permanent preservation for their historical, research, financial and other values. Also, going by the fact that there is no literature or any empirical based findings that relates school libraries with archives throughout the review, it is therefore important for a scholarly advocate for the need to integrate archive unit as an integral part of school libraries services for their preservative functions.

### **Conclusion**

School records can be used to assess the progress of the school. They can give information which will show whether the school is progressing or not. School records serve as sources of information for different people who are concerned and are interested in the school when they read through such records; they get to know more about the school. The logbook contains important happenings in the school, the admission register shows the number of children admitted each year, the visitor's book contains the names of outsiders who visit the school because of the interest they have in it. Parents know the performance and progress of their children through school records such as the report cards, continuous assessment record book, etc. They serve as reference materials about events and happenings that took place in the past or that affect the community in which the school is located. They can therefore become materials which people can refer to for one reason or another. School records can also provide information for the future educational planning, also be used as reference materials for both teachers and the administrators. The keeping of punishment book is to justify the type of punishment that has been given to any child. The cashbook shows the finance of the school in terms of what comes in and how such finances are spent. School library archive will be responsible for the preservation of school records for the financial, historical and research values. Hence, the integration of this archive unit into all school libraries in Nigeria is extremely imperative and will serve as the expansions of school library services in the country.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the objective of this paper, it could be summarized that the school records play a major role in providing first hand information about the school programmes and events. It is also worthy to note that irrespective of its size the archive unit in school library remains

an integral part of a library system and a fundamental impetus to effective information services. Therefore, this paper recommends that: Every school library in Nigeria should endeavour to establish an archive unit to accommodate semi-current and non-current school records for their research value, fiscal/financial value, legal value and administrative value.

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