

Evaluation of Archives and Records Management Courses in Library and Information Science Schools in South-East, Nigeria

¹Ujoununna, Justice Chinonso., ²Nyemezu, O. Chidaka, ²Ogonu, John Gibson., and ²Blessing Esuru Ahiauzu

¹Department of History, Archives and Records Management, School of Histories, Languages and Cultures, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

²Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The profession of Library and Information Science (LIS) started as an interdisciplinary field of study. Generally speaking, LIS is a profession that deals with the organization and the universe of knowledge, creation, access, collection, and preservation and or packaging of information either in physical and digital formats to serve purposes such teaching, research, and legal documentations. This paper therefore looks at an assessment of academic lecturers (librarians) in South-East Nigeria to establish from among them, their realignment into the area of Archives and Records Management research in these academic institutions. To establish the extent to which they acquire degrees in this area and offer first degree, masters and PhD degrees in Archives and Records Management. The paper also tries to find out how many of these departments are named after Archives and records Management and to establish if the naming affects the progress significantly. In doing this, academic librarians in Abia State University, Imo State University, Enugu State University, Ebonyi State University and Anambra State University were studied as case study sites. The paper finds out that none (except in one case) of these academic librarians have PhD in Records Management, none of the universities studied named the department Archives and Records Management, none offers first degree and direct masters or PhD as a degree. The null hypothesis tested was rejected to agree that the naming affects the progress of the departments in the recent times as students are no longer fashionable to LIS as it were. The paper recommends that LIS schools should change as the demand changes and that academic librarians should start acquiring degrees in this area of research to increase the potential of sustainability. The paper concludes that the profession is stagnant in South- East Nigeria as no significant changes has been adopted by the Schools studied in either research or nomenclature of academic research output in this area.

Keywords: Assessment, Archives, Records Management, E-Economy, Librarians, South-East, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Records management may be seen as the process of collecting, arranging, classifying and cataloguing, processing and storing as well as disseminating records for easy retrievals and use in a standard procedural approach. According to Abrizah, (2019), Records Management (RM) ensures that legal processes are followed in the creation and handling of all kinds of information materials. Records could be managed physically or digitally. Managing digital record is also a complex task because it comprises of the entire life-cycle of the record from the creation, collection, classification and analysis, organization and interpretation, storage and retrieval and providing ongoing access to the said records (Duranti, 1997). Records could be physical or digital. In managing digital or physical records, it is important to bear in mind that these records vary in nature; their timely disposal must be arranged for the fixed life, and long-term preservation for those records with historical value. It has become a global view that digital records should be managed even though some countries are yet having challenges from the early stage as technology evolves from time to time. The interest of this paper is the management of archival and digital records in an electronic economy focusing on academic

librarians in South-East, Nigeria.

Records management as a discipline or area of research interest, perhaps, concerns multiple roles in that; it covers the organizational, technical and legal issues, and which must be considered in managing records from time to time. This is what McDonald (2005) sees as types of records management. He went on to state that that one major type of record management is to manage records to meet legal purposes. McDonald (2005:23) sees records management as terms of recordkeeping laws and policies. For instance, some progress has been made over the past ten years in establishing accountability frameworks for the management of information including information in records. He went on to state that the effective management of digital records is not just a technology issue but requires an infrastructure of laws and policies, standards and practices, systems and technologies, and leadership capable of continually aligning the infrastructure in support of the business of an organization. It is these lacks of laws, policies and organized systems that many countries like Nigeria are facing in the legal system as a challenge of admissible records in digital format with contemporaneous issues such as evidential weight (McDonald, 2005:18). Therefore, this study is aimed at assessing academic librarians in South-East State universities who have realigned or yet to realign their research interest and studies into this filed as their core research interest to develop the discipline.

This study aims to introduce the importance of archives and records management profession in the Library and Information Science Faculty in Nigeria through the evaluation of the critical stakeholders adopting its introduction in South-East Nigeria. By doing this investigation, the gap will be identified and possible solutions recommended for the way forward.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, Library and Information Science schools in South-East, Nigeria namely, ABSU, COOU, ESUT, EBSU, and IMSU, have been teaching courses related to ARM and yet not been awarding degrees in Archives and Records Management. The products of these universities are seen in many institutions in Nigeria as employees related to the profession of ARM such as Museums and archeological and repository institutions. There has been compliance from official and unofficial sources that the archives and records management courses been taught are no longer adequate with regards to the needs of the profession and the country under LIS discipline. In addition, the emergence of ICT has also brought a new perspective in Archives and Records Management as a course of study. There is hardly any empirical study known to the researcher on the evaluation of Archives and Records Management discipline in these LIS schools in South-East, Nigeria. As a result, whether the courses offered are adequate or not; or negative of the current realities of the country or not, remains speculative. This is what this research saw and wants to evaluate the archives and records management courses in South-East, Nigeria, focusing on credit loads, staffing, facilities, naming, curriculum contents, and ICT Components.

Objective(s) of the Study

The general objective of this study is to evaluate archives and records management discipline in State owned universities in South-East Nigeria to establish if they have aligned their teaching and research interest in archives and records management discipline to meet with current realities of the information profession.

1. To examine total credit load in the curriculum of Archives and Records Management under LIS schools in the region.
2. To establish if there are qualified staff members with masters or PhD to teach in Archives and Records Management in LIS Schools.
3. To Find out if Library Schools are named after Archives and Records Management and if yes, to establish if it operates a separate curriculum.
4. To establish if the LIS schools award Archives and Records Management as First, Masters or PhD degrees in studied schools.
5. To establish if the name (nomenclature) of the department influences student's choice of admission (development of the discipline).

Research Questions

However, the Specific research questions are:

1. What total credit load is in the curriculum of Archives and Records Management under LIS in the school under study?
2. How many qualified staff members with masters or PhD to teach in Archives and Records Management in school under study?
3. Does the Library school named after Archives and Records Management and if yes, does it operate a separate curriculum in the school under study?
4. Does the school understudy award Archives and Records Management as First, Masters or PhD degrees?
5. Does the name (nomenclature) of the department influences student's choice of admission (development of the discipline)?

Research Hypothesis

A null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between ARM curriculum and LIS Curriculum in library schools in South-East, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEWED

Records are documents of important information. They are evidence of events, activities, transactions and meeting among individuals, groups and entities. Records show what has happened in the past, agreements taken or to take place etc. A record is a specific piece of information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity. It comprises sufficient content, context and structure to provide evidence of that activity in a progressive manner. It is not ephemera: that is to say, it contains information that is worthy of preservation in the short, medium or long term. From the above definition, one can identify concepts which are essential to the definition of records such as content, context, medium and structure (see also Duranti, 1999). This could be used as carrier of information and proof of one's business activities (Ujoununna & Ezenwuzor, 2019). One can also see the definition of records by scholars supporting this definition above such as those from Duranti (1999:85), InterPARES (2022), among other definitions.

Another scholar argues that for an organization to remain a functioning business entity, it has to create, keep, and manage a wide range of records (Abrizah, 2011). He went further to state that recordkeeping practices within an organization are (in broad terms) a reflection of its particular responses to the environment in which it operates. Expressing his view on the concept of what period of time is governed by a host of factors and many of these may be outside of the organization. However, this study is not after records but an assessment of records management as an academic discipline by academic librarians in South-East, Nigeria.

This definition by Abrizah (2011:13) above reminds readers of the concept of records management. In the context of this study, it is both a concept and an academic discipline. Although some scholars (Kanzi, 2010, InterPARES, 2022: pp) have argued that is a profession. As it is, but this study has preferably chosen to review literature on records management as a concept and academic discipline. My justification is that academic discipline gives rise to a body of profession for which is their product. The process of managing records to document what it claims to record from the time of creation to disposal period following all standard procedures that is required by law to ensure the probative values of the records are maintained is referred to as RM.

Kanzi (2010:18) argues that Records management is necessary because "individuals or organizations create records to support the activities that they carry out". It is for this reason that professionals should be adequately trained to be certified as experts who manage these records in such organizations. Citing scholars in support of

this view, Dearstyne, (1985) Agere et al, (1999), and Makhura (2005) all claim and posit the view that records management is based on the premise that records require managing, in the sense that other local governmental resources need managing. Though they argue in line that the discipline records management is so important that the individuals and government bodies can not do without records management, these studies did not discuss or investigate the progress of nomenclature, interest of academic staff and its influence among students and their choices of choosing the course as their preferred course in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is the research gap that has been identified and which the present study intends to fill.

According to Historical Association of United Kingdom in their website and scholarship titled Archives and Records Management Continuing Professional Development, the group of professionals maintained that in evaluating the ARM profession courses, certain indices are considered. Such indices include, course content, curriculum, facilities for teaching including ICT tools, staffing and credit load. Also such compulsory courses one must satisfy in the course of teaching and learning to be awarded a degree in ARM including access and use of archives and records, the record-keeping professionals, creation and capture, concepts and contexts, curation and stewardship, dissertation. Other optional modules with credit load are collections care, database theory and practice, digital resources in the humanities, historical bibliography, manuscript studies, reading and interpretation of archives from 1500, individual approved study A (Practical demonstration project), oral historical: creation to curation, information literacy, and knowledge organization. There are also other courses different school are allowed to include in their curriculum including General Studies and alike. However, the above curriculum is central and unique to any school teaching Archives and Records Management.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a Survey Research Design (SRD) to evaluate the archives and records management courses in Library schools in South-East, Nigeria, focusing on credit loads, staffing, facilities, naming, curriculum contents, and ICT Components. Survey Research Design is a systematic method of gathering information from respondents for the purposes of describing the attitudes of the larger population of which the individuals represent (Enaronia, 2005). This methodology was found most appropriate because of the nature of the population, cultural background, attitudes, etc of the respondents who are unique and share the same working interest as academic librarians. The respondents are academic lecturers in Library and Information Science schools in state owned university. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique, this is a sampling procedure in which a researcher purposely selected certain groups as sample because of their relevance to the investigation under study. Only State Library and Information Science owned universities were studied. The staff studied are only academic staff from graduate assistants to professorial levels. Below is the distribution of the population of the study. The scope of this study is to cover South-East State universities. This is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria with states like Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The state universities are Abia State University, Uturu, Dept. of LIS, Anambra State University, Uli, (now Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Uni) Dept. of LIS Ebonyi State University, Abakalika, Dept. of LIS, Enugu State University, Dept. of LIS and Imo State University, Owerri, Dept. of LIS. These are state universities in this region with the library department well established and accredited by the National Universities commission.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data analysis and discussion were presented using statistical analysis and tools such as tables, percentages and charts generated using SPSS and google tools.

Table 1: Distribution of Sampled size of the Population

S/No	Names of State Universities and LIS Schools Involved	Population of Academic Librarians	Sample
1	Abia State University, Uturu, Dept. of LIS	13	13
2	Anambra State University, Uli, (now Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Uni) Dept. of LIS	12	12

3	Ebonyi State University, Abakalika, Dept. of LIS	5	5
4	Enugu State University, Dept. of LIS	7	7
5	Imo State University, Owerri, Dept. of LIS	14	14
Total:		51	51

Structured Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Google form was used as a method of distribution. Google Form Questionnaire was used due to its convenience and capacity to cover the distance and direct contact from NALSE Directory was used to reach the respondents directly via their WhatsApp contact numbers. The questionnaire has yes or No questions for easy assessment for research questions one to four while research question five has High extent and low extent influence and a comment section for others “option”. A pilot study was carried using Federal Owned Universities in South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The respondents that participated in the pilot study were 20 respondents. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.89, which means that the instrument is reliable. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the significant difference between variables in hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 2.0 version.

RESULTS

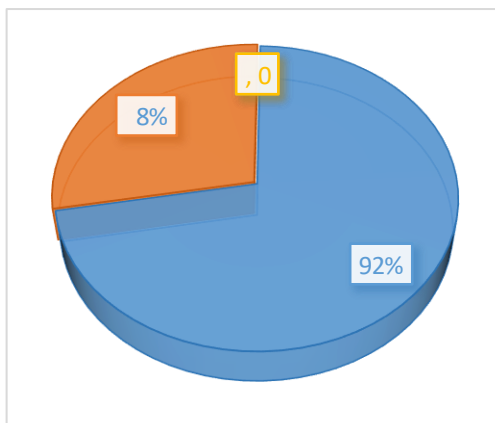


Figure 1: Is Total Credit Load in the curriculum

A total of 47 (92%) of the respondents out of the total population of 51 (100%) studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agrees in one voice that less than 6 credit units is what is taught in Archives and Records Management in LIS schools in South-East, Nigeria. The implication of this is only 3 respondents said different view representing only 8% of the population. This is means that in a curriculum of 2unit credit load per course, only 1 to 3 courses represent Archives and Records Management in these library schools. This is also means that the number of courses taught by librarians in the Library Schools studied are less than 5 courses and represents poor curriculum component. It also means that there is majority of the ARM courses untaught and the LIS schools are yet to realigned their core research interest to Archives and Records Management.

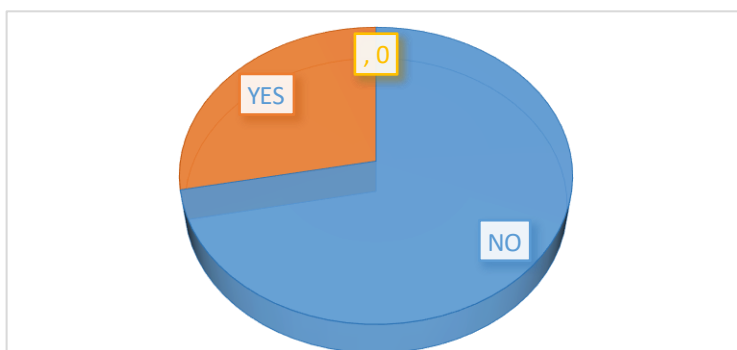


Figure 2: Qualified staff with Masters or PhD to teach in ARM

A total of 49 (96%) respondents out of the total population of 51 studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agrees in one voice by ticking “NO” that there are no staff with Master and PhD degrees in Archives and Records Management. The implication of this is that the number of academic librarians in the Library Schools studied holding degrees in Archives and Records Management is still not encouraging as only 4% of the population has actually obtained a full degree in ARM to be deem professionally qualified to teach in the emerging discipline.

Figure 3: Library School named after Archives and Records Management

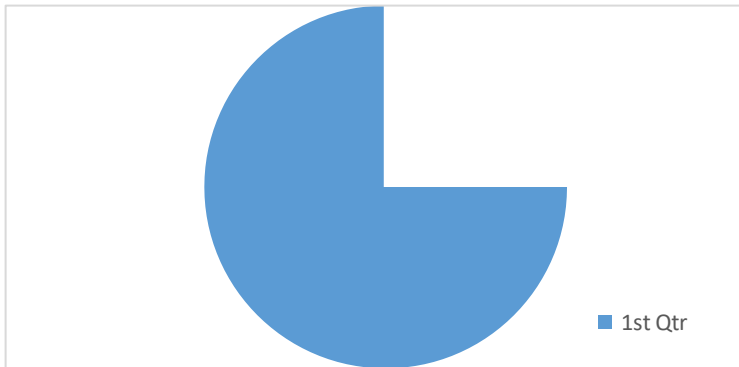


Figure 3.1: Name of ARM as Nomenclature

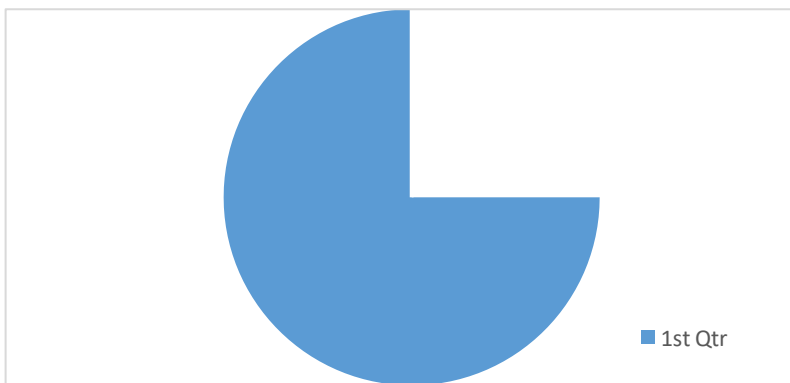


Figure 3.2: Operating a separate Curriculum

All of the respondents out of the total population of 51 (100%) studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria ticked “NO” that Records Management is not named after the department as at the time of this study in their schools. And figure 3.2 confirms that there is no separate curriculum for ARM courses on any of the awarding degrees as at the time of this study. The implication of this is that the Library Schools studied has not realigned their nomenclature to Archives and Records Management.

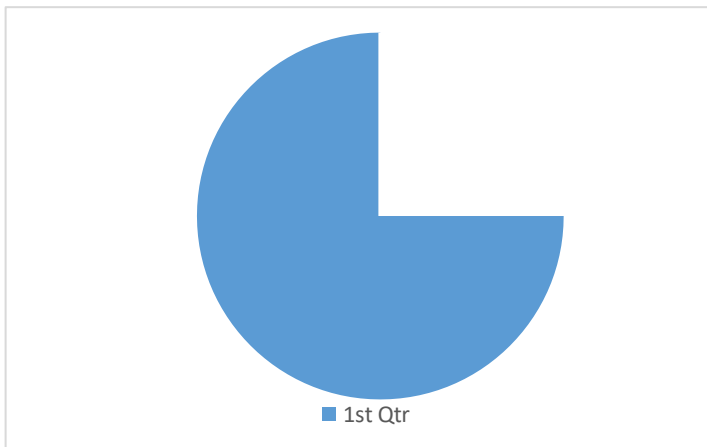
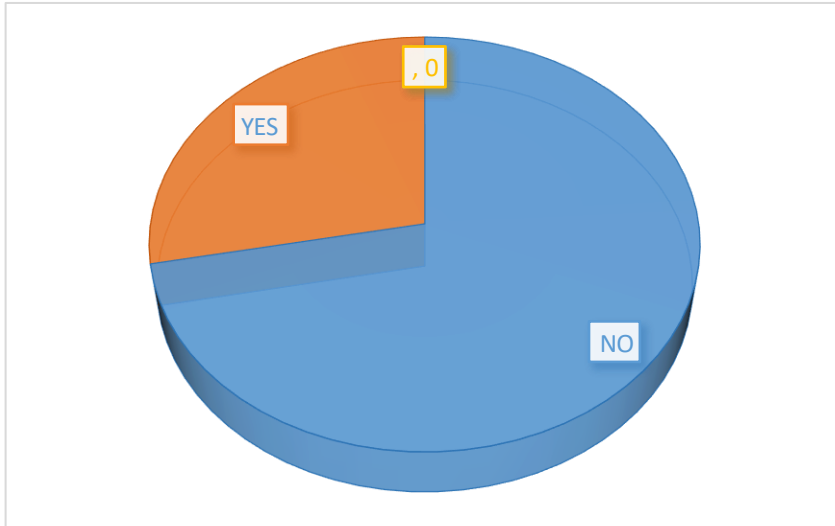


Figure 4: Award of Archives and Records Management as First, Masters or PhD degrees in your Department

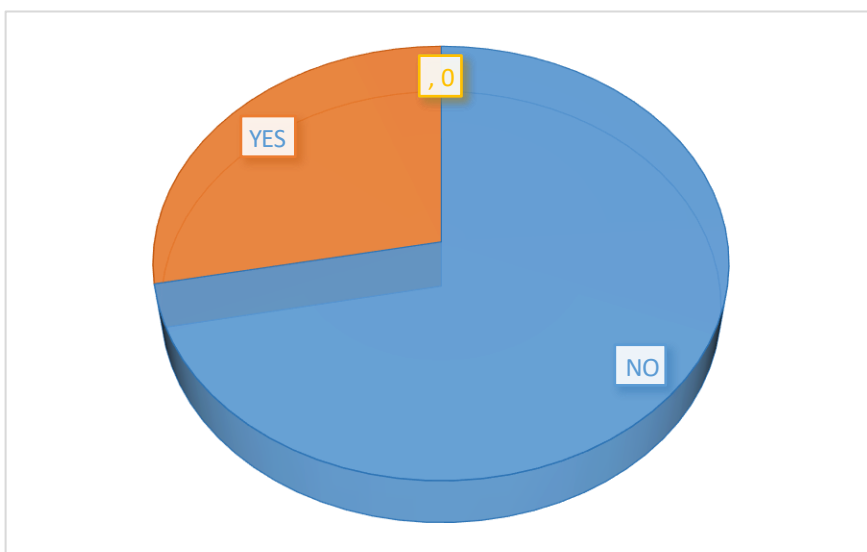
Award of First Degree

All the respondents out of the total population of 51 (100%) studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agree in one voice by ticking “NO” that Records Management is not awarded as first degree in their Department. The implication of this is that none the library schools studied awards ARM degrees as first degree and is still not obtainable in South-East state owned universities.



Award of Masters Degree

A total of 17 (33%) respondents out of the total population of 51 studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agree by ticking “Yes” that Master’s Degree is awarded in the area of Records Management in their Departments, while 34 (66%) disagreed by ticking “NO” that Records Management is not awarded as Master’s degree in their Department. The implication of this is that many of academic librarians in the Library Schools studied have little or no idea if RM degree is awarded at Masters level in these library schools. It also means that the percentage is low and not relevant to conclude is obtainable using an average of the half of the population as parameter. However, on the “others” option indicating comments, 28 of the respondents commented that is an area of specialization where research is conducted but not awarded as a separate degree different from MLIS. It also means that RM still not obtainable in South-East state owned universities.



Award of PhD Degree

As observed in the above option where a total of 17 (33%) respondents out of the total population of 51 studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agree by ticking “Yes” that Master’s Degree is awarded

in the area of Records Management in their Departments, the same group of respondents also agree that PhD degree is obtainable in these universities in South-East, Nigeria while the same group of 34 (66%) respondents also disagreed by ticking “NO” that Records Management is not awarded as PhD degree in their Department. The implication of this is that many of academic librarians in the Library Schools studied also have little or no idea if RM degree is awarded at PhD level in these library schools. It also means that the percentage is low and not relevant to conclude is obtainable using an average of the half of the population as a parameter. However, on the “others” option indicating comments, the same group of 28 respondents also commented that is an area of specialization where research is conducted but not awarded as a separate degree different from PhD LIS. It also means that RM still not obtainable in South-East state owned universities.

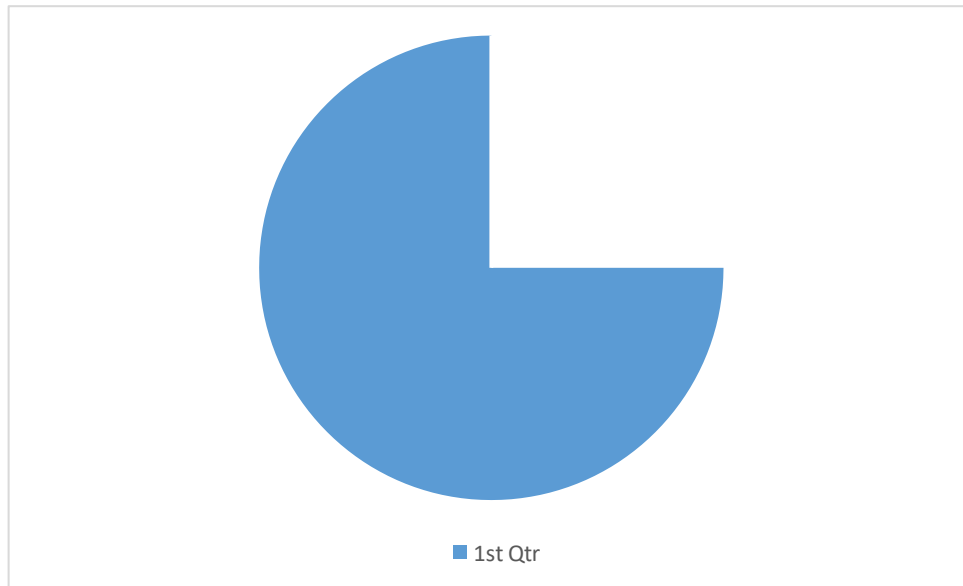


Figure 5: Influence of Nomenclature on Student’s Choice of Admission

All the 51 (100%) respondents of the study population studied in the state owned universities in South-East, Nigeria agreed by ticking “YES” that nomenclature influences the student’s choice of admission into the discipline. The implication of this is that the number of students admitted into the Library Schools studied in South-East state owned universities are progressively going low or higher as the discipline changes in line with 21st Century choice of courses by students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between ARM curriculum and LIS Curriculum in library schools in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 1: Correlation between ARM Curriculum and LIS Curriculum in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r – value	Sig. value	Remark
ARM Curriculum	51	4.447	6.331	0.723	045	Rejected
LIS Curriculum						
	51	4.235	6.043			

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tails)

Table 1 has shown that there is significant positive correlation between the nomenclature and the development of the discipline in South-East, Nigeria. The reason for this result is that calculated probability value of .045 is less than the 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) alpha level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis which stated that “there is no significant influence between the nomenclature and the development of the discipline in South-East, Nigeria” is rejected. Therefore, it is appropriate to state that there is significant influence between the nomenclature and

the development of the discipline in South-East, Nigeria. This is also in tandem with the responses of the respondents where the total population agreed that the nomenclature of the disciplines affects the choices of the students over admission.

Summary of the Findings

1. There is significant relationship between ARM curriculum and LIS Curriculum in library schools in South-East, Nigeria.
2. There are few Academic librarians in Nigerian South-East state universities who are professionally qualified to teach ARM.
3. No South-East state owned university awards ARM as a degree at all levels independently.
4. There is no separate curriculum for ARM in Library schools in South-East, Nigeria
5. The course content is not yet developed to meet the realities of the current Nigerian Archives and Records Management profession.

CONCLUSION

The research has been conducted, data collected were analyzed and literature reviewed. The study therefore concludes that there is a stagnant progress in the area of Archives and Records Management in the Library and Information Science Profession in South-East, Nigeria. The Academic librarians in South-East, Nigeria are yet to realign their core research interest in Archives and Records Management as only very few percentages of -1 hold any degree in this area. No library school has named her department after this evolving discipline as at the time of this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Library Schools at all levels should ensure the realignment of her academic staff into conducting researches on Records Management.
2. Library Schools should develop a curriculum that will ensure the award of Records Management as a full degree to students.
3. The nomenclature of LIS schools should be modified to suit the trending 21st Century professions.

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