

# Records Management and Preservation Practices in Motor Registration and Licensing Offices in South-West Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study investigated the status of records management in the motor registration and licensing offices in south-west Nigeria. This is because there have been many instances at the licensing offices in Nigeria of misplaced or lost records thus raising a question on how records are managed.

**Methodology:** Survey research method was adopted, and questionnaire was used to gather data. The respondents are the entire staff of the licensing offices at the state capital of the six states that constituted the zone. 150 copies of questionnaire were administered to the personnel on random basis out of which 118 (79%) were duly completed and returned.

**Findings:** Analysis of data obtained revealed that management of records at the licensing offices is poor and lack modernity. There are no adequate records management facilities in the offices besides cabinet storage and dusting of records. There are no policy documents for records management, there is absence of designated records management staff and departments; Proper training, workshops and skills in records management are lacking amongst the personnel.

**Implications:** This study has implications on the management of records in licensing offices in south-west Nigeria because records support decision-making, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and other activities consequently records management and preservation are crucial. Records management and preservation focus on efficient and systematic control of records that are created as a result of activities and transactions among individuals, in public and private establishments.

**Originality/value:** The study in conclusion recommends the institutionalization of records management policies, the appointment of a records manager, training and re-training of existing staff, and adoption of ICT to manage records.

**Keywords:** Records, Records management and preservation, Records-licensing offices in Nigeria, Financial and security records-Nigeria

**Paper Type:** Empirical

## Introduction

Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) described records as the evidence of what an organization does. Records capture business activities and transactions, such as contract negotiations, business correspondences, personnel files, and financial statements of organizations. ARMA identified two formats of records in any organization. These are physical paper in our files, such as memos, contracts, marketing materials and reports. Electronic messages, such as e-mail contents and their attachments and instant messages content on the website, as well

as the documents that reside on PDAs, flash drives, desktops, servers, and document management systems. Information captured in the organization's various databases (ARMA, 2010). The ISO 15489-1:2001 defines records as information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. A record can be either a tangible object or digital information such as birth certificates, medical x-rays, office documents, databases, application data, and e-mail.

The Society for American Archivists (2010) provides a robust definition consisting of seven elements. These are written or printed works of legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof. Data or information that have been fixed on some medium, that has content, context, and structure, and that is used as an extension of human memory or to demonstrate accountability. Data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference. An instrument filed for public notice (constructive notice), Audio: A phonograph record. Computing: a collection of related data elements treated as a unit, such as the fields in a row in a database table. Description: an entry describing a work in a catalog; a catalog record (SAA, 2010).

Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu (2007) described records as all documentary materials such as correspondences, forms, reports, drawings, maps, photographs, that appear in various physical forms, e.g., papers, cards, microfilms, tapes, CD-ROM's, etc, which can be preserved for short or long periods. They are resources that serve many functions in the operation of an organisation such as a university library. Uwaifo, (2004) observed that availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Perhaps more important is the proper management of these records. To be of maximum value, records must be organized and properly managed. This underscores the need for records management. The ISO defines records management as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. Records management according to ISO involves planning the information needs of an organization; identifying information requiring capture; creating, approving, and enforcing policies and practices regarding records, including their organization and disposal; developing a records storage plan, which includes the short and long-term housing of physical records and digital information; identifying, classifying, and storing records, coordinating access to records internally and

outside of the organization, balancing the requirements of business confidentiality, data privacy, and public access; executing a retention policy on the disposal of records which are no longer required for operational reasons, according to organizational policies, statutory requirements, and other regulations that may involve either their destruction or permanent preservation in an archive.

Shepherd and Yeo (2003) identify four different purposes of using records which are for information and decision-making, for evidence, for compliance and for societal or cultural purposes, while organisations and individuals outside the creating organisations may use them for historical, sociological, scientific or other research. Hence, records, whether stored in electronic form, on paper or in other media are key manifestation of an organisation's unique information asset. While the importance of records management might not be obvious to everyone, its impact on the ability of an organisation to function effectively is indisputable. It is only through the operation of a well-run records management program that an organisation retains control of its corporate memory, which allows an organisation, either public or private, to conduct its business. Records management is more than retention, storage, and disposition of records. It entails all records management requirements and policies that allow an organisation to establish and maintain control over information flow and administrative operations. For this reason, it is necessary for organisations to familiarize themselves with the role of records management in their daily operations.

Records management is an essential part of administrative structure both in government and private organizations and has recently also become a significant issue in church administration. In conducting their activities, the Anglican church often need to consult records of their previous activities and decisions, for example, to provide background information, establish the existence of a precedent or to substantiate or refute a claim or allegation.

In Nigeria, books and other materials documented on paper form a greater percentage of records kept. Electronic records are less used for business and other transaction due to low level of ICT skills and availability of the technology. Books and other paper materials

have greater assurance of long and useful life if it was created on quality papers, paper fitted to meet the demand of heavy usage, housed in comfortable and conducive accommodation and promptly treated as necessary if worn out or damaged. This has made preservation of records created on paper books crucial and consequential.

Adcock (2010) stated that preservation specifically means the provision of an appropriate level of security, environmental control; storage, care and handling that will retard further chemical deterioration and protect library material from physical damage. The art of preservation of records and other information sources is as old as human civilization itself. Documents have existed in one form or another since man invented the art of writing, it was therefore natural for mankind to attempt to preserve them in view of their value to the society. The problem of preserving records became acute with the invention of printing in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, increased demand for paper and a shortage of paper fibers to meet that demand led to changes for the worse in paper making processes. It was then that the custodians of records became conscious of the need to take action to conserve and restore damaged documents.

Deterioration of records and other information sources is caused by various agents. Examples of such agents include light, moisture, dust particles, insects and acids. Also, this deterioration is associated with the normal ageing of paper. All paper irrespective of the materials from which they are made deteriorate with age, even when storage conditions are ideal. Such deterioration can only be minimized or at best be retarded. Deterioration due to all the above mentioned causes can be tackled by preventive measures and such measures constitute the preservation of records. Preservation of records on paper has been known to be quite essential because of the weather. Nigeria being a tropical country experience high rate of deterioration of records in government, business, health care, telecommunication etc. Various causes of decay and deterioration of records plague Nigeria, especially in revenue generating establishments such as Internal Revenue Services, Motor Vehicle Registration and Licensing offices, Hospitals and several other establishments. There is the need for

records management in the country because this will help in planning, development, decision making and implementation.

This study focuses on records management and preservation in Motor vehicle registration and licensing offices in South-West Nigeria. The focus on the establishment is due to its economic and security importance to the country. It is responsible for registration of all vehicular objects in the country, issuance of registration and security numbers, issuance of drivers' license, and generation of the much needed revenue for the country. Nigeria is a federation of thirty-six states and a Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The constituent states are charged with the responsibility of establishing and running the offices. This study aims at identifying the records management and preservation measures and problems in licensing offices in South-West Nigeria. This is with the aim of providing solution to problems of decay and loss of records on vehicle registrations and licensing of drivers. It is also to enable the personnel in the offices appreciate the value of information contained in the records and mobilize their efforts towards improving their conditions.

### **Statement of the Problems**

Licensing offices keep security, vehicular and financial records of immense value to the country. These records are expected to be trustworthy, complete, accessible and durable. The main types of records created in these offices are establishment records, personnel records, Registration ledger, Vehicle license ledger, Drivers' license ledger, and Master cash book. Records in these offices have become inaccessible or difficult to access due to poor management and deterioration. This situation is prevailing because most records in the office are paper based. Deterioration of paper materials is becoming embarrassing to the licensing offices, and therefore a lot of effort must be made to preserve the materials already available in licensing offices. Various scholars have at one time or the other lamented the short life of paper upon which records are created, they all seem to say in unison that most paper records are doomed and that these records may not out live this present generation. Williams (1990) stated that everything on paper is deteriorating today and will continue to deteriorate if not stepped down. This study therefore focused on

identifying records management and preservation facilities available in the licensing offices and offer suggestion on how to improve on management of records in these offices.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The need for effective management and preservation of records in the licensing offices is the main objectives of this study. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. find out whether records management and preservation program exist in the licensing offices;
2. find out the different types of storage facilities available in the offices and their adequacies;
3. find out the various filing systems used in the licensing offices;
4. find out the methods of preservation in use at the licensing offices;
5. find out what the licensing offices are doing to combat agents of deterioration;
6. determine the adequacy or otherwise of such measures and;
7. recommend ways to ensure preservation of records in the licensing offices

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study cannot be over emphasised because without adequate management and preservation of records, the offices may find it difficult to carry out their statutory functions. Improper records management may make accessibility difficult and consequently affect decision making and accountability. The findings of the study will facilitate effective records management, create awareness about records management and inform the need for records management training in licensing offices. The study is also of significance because it is an attempt to ensure that licensing offices refocus their attention on preservation

### **Scope of the Study**

The study covered the six licensing offices in the six states that constitute the South-West geopolitical zones of the country. The states are Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. One main licensing office, located in the state capital, is selected from each state. The licensing offices are the central licensing offices in Ado-Ekiti, Ikeja, Abeokuta, Akure, Osogbo and Ibadan. The study will focus on the assessment of long-

term preservation of records in these licensing offices. The respondents are personnel in the establishments that are responsible for keeping and maintenance of records in their registries.

### **Literature Review**

Records help in planning, decision making and implementation of development plans. In the words of Uwaifo (2004) information recorded on paper and electronic files help managers, particularly chief executives to direct, control, communicate, plan, formulate policies, and make decisions. The availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. To be of maximum value, records must be organized and properly managed. Davenport and Harris (2007) concluded that to support decision making and administration, records and information is crucial in organisations. Records support business activity and provide a basis for efficient service delivery. They also provide the basis for transparent, informed and quality decision-making. The use of information to improve decision making and organisational administration is a topic that is receiving considerable attention with academics and consultants attempting to provide insights into how information can better be used. Atulomah (2011) observed that in the context of an organisation's business activities, records are used to provide a corporate memory, formulate policy, make appropriate decisions, achieve greater efficiency, improve productivity, establish consistency, meet statutory and regulatory requirements, protect the organisation's interest and those of its staff and clients, reduce the risk associated with evidence of decisions and actions, and also document activities and achievement. Furthermore, Venter (2004) concluded that in order to make appropriate decisions, administrators must have appropriate information. He specifically stated that "in today's work environment, the administrator that has the relevant data first often wins, either by making the decision ahead of competitors, or in case of a religious setting, by making a better, more informed decision". Good records management practice can help to ensure that decision makers in public and private organizations have the needed information to take decisions.

Records management in organisations aims at achieving efficient records creation, utilisation and maintenance processes. The attainments of

these goals require organisation, good storage and preservation facility that will permit easy accessibility of records. Ambur (2003) submitted that the failure of organisations to build proper records management into their business and decision making systems is the root cause of the waste, fraud and abuse generated by the systems particularly by those who have attained positions of power within the organisational hierarchies as well as other “insiders” who have special expertise and authority to manipulate those systems. For these set of people, this lack of sound and proper records management gives them the opportunity for self-gratification, aggrandizement and personal profit while to the organisation, it is the root cause of failure to uphold her common interest and achieve the goal of her existence.

Coetze (2012) described records life cycle as an analogy of the life of a biological organism which is born, living, and then dies. Records are created and vigorously used in relation to their purpose (reason for their creation). In other words records that do not fulfill their purpose become irrelevant and unnecessary, while those that serve their purpose become active. When a record is no longer useful (i.e. it no longer serves its purpose), a decision is made as to whether the record should be preserved or disposed of. Thus a record is created, used as long as it has continuing value, and then transferred to national archives or destroyed. Shepherd and Yeo (2003) explained that the records continuum concept was developed in the 1980s and 1990s in response to criticism of the records life cycle model.

In a continuum, there are no separate steps. Managing records is seen as a continuous process where one element of the continuum passes seamlessly into another. Pemberton (2003) agreed that the Records Continuum concept is a variation of the Records Life Cycle concept, and argues that it takes a higher intellectual view of records since it follows an integrated model rather than one that is made up of stages. The model stresses the need for records professionals to be involved in the earliest planning stages of information systems. Millar (2008) identified four actions of records and archives management under the Records Continuum model as follows:

Identification and acquisition: Records management actions are the creation or

acquisition of records, while archives management actions relate to the selection and acquisition of archives. Intellectual control: Records management actions include the classification of records within a logical system, while archives management actions relate to the arrangement and description of archives. Access: Records management actions relate to the maintenance and use of records, while archives management actions relate to the description of archives. Physical control: Records management actions are disposed by destruction of records or their transfer to national archives, while archives management actions relate to the preservation of archives.

Coetze (2012) Preserving records effectively means that documents must always be placed, handled, consulted and/or displayed in a way that minimizes the risk of damage and takes into account their size, shape, and physical condition. The records must be stored in a safe and secure location and displayed under appropriate preservation conditions (e.g. avoiding areas of unsuitable temperature and humidity or areas directly affected by ultra violet light), and if they are moved, they must be moved with care between locations. Proper accounts must be kept at all times of the precise location of all records, including those temporarily withdrawn or undergoing administration (i.e. referencing, cataloguing, etc.). In cases where serious damage or loss has taken place, it is imperative for the right staff to be alerted immediately in order for corrective measures to be taken.

Iwhiwhu (2005) noted that for records to be adequately cared for, separate building and storage facilities have to be provided. There should be a secure room or a vault for vital records. Creating records without proper plans for their maintenance leaves the records in shambles, which causes chaos in an organization. Afolabi (1991) observed that Records management practice in Nigeria has a number of problems. They include insufficient skilled and experienced records management personnel, low priority of records management in the scheme of things, and insufficient funds. There is the need for records management and conservation in public and private organisations. Perhaps more important is the proper management of the records in security and financial institutions like Motor registration and licensing offices.

Alegbeleye (2007) defined preservation as an umbrella term for many policies and adoptions of action including conservation treatments. He opined that preservation is the acquisition, organisation, and distribution of resources to prevent deterioration or to renew the usability of selected group of materials. Jordan (2003) defined preservation as an umbrella term for an array of activities; principles, practices, and organisations that together help ensure the usability, longevity, and accessibility of recorded knowledge. According to Iwhiwu (2007), two long-term preservation approaches often advocated within the archival and library preservation communities are migration and emulation. Migration is the process of converting a digital object from one data format to another. It involves the current transfer of electronic records from one hardware or software configuration or generation to subsequent configurations or generations.

Walker (2013) defined preservation as all managerial, technical and financial considerations applied to retard deterioration and extend the useful life of (collection) materials to ensure their continued availability. Preventive measures can considerably extend the useful life of collections, and are usually much more cost-effective than intervention taken to remedy damage after deterioration has taken place. He identified the external causes of deterioration of collections as poor handling or storage, theft or vandalism, fire and flood, pests, pollution, light, temperature and relative humidity (RH). Forde (2007) argued that the primary goal of preservation is to prolong the life of documentary heritage and to ensure the long-term accessibility of such collections by government, agencies, institutions, business organisations and the public at large.

Ngulube (2003) stated that policies play a major role in that they clearly stipulate the responsibilities of the archivist, i.e. the preservation of archival materials of all types in order to guarantee access to the information they contain, both for the current generation of archives and records users, and for generations to come. Availability of policy provides a foundation or guide for effective management of records in an organization.

Ogunmodede, and Ebijuwa (2013) investigated various problems of conservation and preservation of records in libraries of African academic libraries. Particularly, it examined the overview of preservation and conservation of the resources. They also studied the causes of deterioration of records, among which are: natural aging process, level of use of the materials, inherent chemical content used in the process of paper making, high temperature, relative humidity, and improper handling. Various preventive measures were equally discussed. Different challenges facing preservation and conservation of records in African Academic Libraries were presented. Useful suggestions were made to ameliorate the situation. Among these are formulation of good policy on short-term to long-term preservation and conservation; recruitment of professionally trained conservators, and encouragement of training and retraining of staff; annual budgetary allocation for preservation and conservation; and establishment of bindery section with trained staff.

### **Methodology**

Survey research method was adopted for the study and questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents because of its fairly large population. The population of the study was the entire personnel at the headquarters of licensing offices of the six states that made up of South-West zone of Nigeria. The states are Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo, and Osun. This is estimated to be 150 personnel. The researchers administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents in their respective offices. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondent over a period of five weeks. Efforts were made to ensure that there were no multiple responses.

The rate of returns of the questionnaires distributed was good as 118 copies (79%) of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned. All the returned copies were found usable. Data analysis was done using inferential statistics and the findings were presented in tables. The analyses of data from the returned copies of the questionnaires are presented below.

## Data Analysis

### Distribution of Respondents by State licensing Offices

S/N	STATE	Frequency	%
1	Ekiti	15	13
2	Lagos	28	24
3	Ogun	18	15
4	Ondo	20	17
5	Osun	13	11
6	Oyo	24	20
	Total	118	100

### Demographic Distribution of Respondents:

**Table 1: Age Distribution**

Age group	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
18-25 years	25	21	2
25-30 years	17	14	3
30-50 years	68	58	1
50 and above	08	07	4
Total	118	100	

Table 1 above shows the age distribution of the respondents that took part in the study. It is revealed from the table that out of the four age group, age 30-50 years have 16 respondents with (57.1%); age group 18-25 years have 6

respondents (21.4%) followed by age distribution 25-30, 4 respondents (14.3%) while age group 50 years and above have 2 respondents only with (7.1%)

**Table 2: Gender Distribution**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Male	51	43	2
Female	67	57	1
TOTAL	118	100	

The table 2 reveals the gender distribution of the respondents that participated in the study. It

shows that 51 of them (43%) were males, while 67 (57) were females. They were 118 in all.

**Table 3: Distribution by Marital Status**

Status	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Married	72	68	1
Single	38	32	2
Widow	8	07	3
Total	118	100	

The table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to their marital status. From the table 72 respondents (61%) of the population were

married; 38 respondents (32%) were single, while 08 respondents (7%) were widows.

### 4: Religion Distribution

Religion	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Christianity	57	48	2
Islam	61	52	1
Total	118	100	

Table 4 shows the religion distribution of the respondents from the table, 23 respondents

(47.9%) were christians while 258 respondents (52.1%) were muslims.

**Table 5: Highest Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
B.A, B.ED, B.SC	32	27	2
HND	22	18	4
NCE, OND	37	31	1
O'level	27	23	3
TOTAL	118	100	

The table 5 shows the educational qualification distribution of the respondents. It was revealed that the respondent with NCE/ OND constitute the majority with 37 (31%). This was followed by respondents with first degree which were 32 (27%). Next to these respondents were with school certificate which were 27 (23%).

**Table 6: Working Experience**

Experience per year	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1-10 years	51	43	2
11-20 years	55	46	1
21 years and above	13	11	3
Total	118	100	

The table shows the distribution of the respondents according to their working experience per year. It was revealed that 55 respondents have had 11-20 years' experience, this constitutes (46%); 51 respondents (43%) have had 1-10 years' experience with the job; while only 13 respondents (10%) have had 21 years or more with the job.

**Table 7: Measure Provided for Preservation**

Measures	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
General hygiene	72	61	1
Periodic inspection of storage area	42	35	2
Prohibition of food substances in storage area	04	04	3
None	-	-	-
Total	28	100	

Table 7 shows the measure provided for preservation of records by the licensing offices. From the measures put across to the respondents, general hygiene is a common measure being used as indicated by 72 respondents (61%) of the population. This is followed by periodic inspection of the storage area as indicated by 42 respondents (35%) while 04 respondents indicated prohibition of food substance in their storage areas as means of preserving records in their offices.

**Table 8: Means of keeping Abreast of Development in Records Preservation**

Measure	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Through books	55	46	1
Through friends	04	03	4
Workshop, seminars and conferences	34	29	2
Mass media	25	22	3
None of the above	-	-	-
Total	118	100	

Table 8 shows the measure used in keeping abreast of development in record preservation by licensing offices. It is evident from the table that 13 respondents indicated that their office does not use any of the above measures. Eight (8) respondents (28.6%) indicated workshops, seminars and conferences; 6 respondents (21.4%) indicated mass media, one person indicated books while none indicated through friends. Apart from the respondents that indicated no measure is being taken by their own office, workshop, seminars and conferences remain the popular measure taken by licensing offices to keep abreast of the development in record preservation



**Table 9: Sources of Funding Records Preservation in Licensing offices**

Sources of funding	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Parent body	118	100	1
Professional assistant	--	-	
Charitable organization	--	-	
Individuals	--	-	
Others	--	-	
Totals	118	100	

The table 9 shows the sources of funding records preservation by licensing offices. It is categorical from the table that the only source through which licensing offices fund preservation of

their records is through money provided by the parent body with 28 respondents (100%). All other sources are not functional.

**Table 10: Frequency of Records Inspection in licensing offices**

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Weekly	-	-	
Monthly	-	-	
Quarterly	-	-	
Annually	113	96	1
Occasionally	05	04	2
Total	118	100	

The table 10 shows the frequency of record inspection and evaluation in licensing offices. From the table, 113 (96%) respondents indicated that record inspection in their offices is carried

out annually while only 05 respondents indicated that record inspection exercise is done occasionally in their offices. No respondent indicated weekly, monthly or quarterly.

**Table 11: Preservation and Restoration Equipment Available in the Licensing offices**

Equipment	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Binding equipment	28	100	1
Laminating machine	--	--	
Vacuum fumigator	--	--	
Disinfectant equipment	--	--	
Others	--	--	
Total	118	100	

The table 11 shows the preservation and restoration equipment available at the licensing offices. All the 118 respondents (100%) indicated availability of binding equipment.

While no other equipment was indicated. This imply that binding equipment remain the only equipment used by licensing office to preserve and restore their records.

**Table 12: Causes of Deterioration of Records in Licensing Offices**

Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Poor storage facilities	40	34	1
Pest infestation	19	16	4
Heat in the storage	25	21	2
Fungi infestation	07	06	5
Dust	24	18	3
Atmospheric conditions	06	05	6
Total	118	100	

Table 12 shows causes of deterioration problems encountered in the licensing offices. Poor storage facilities in the offices ranked highest as

40 respondents (34%) indicated this. Poor storage facilities is followed by heat in the storage area (21%); and dust (18%).Pest infestation was reported by 16% of the

respondents while 06 respondents (5%) indicated poor atmospheric conditions. It obvious from the table that deterioration problem facing the

offices are caused by poor storage facilities, dust and other atmospheric conditions, pest and fungi infestations.

**Table 13: Methods of Preserving Records from Disaster**

Methods	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Heat detector	0	0	--
Smoke detector	--	--	-
Dusting	86	73	1
Fumigation	32	27	2
None of the above	118	100	

Table 13 shows the methods of preserving records from possible disaster by licensing office. It indicates from the table that dusting with 27 respondents (96.4%) and fumigation with 20 respondents (77.4%) are the most common methods being used by licensing offices to preserve their records against possible disaster.

**Summary of Findings**

From the data analysis, it can be summarized that the types of records created and kept by most licensing offices include registration ledger, vehicle license ledger, and drivers’ license ledger and master cash book. Cleaning of records is the common measure used for record preservation. These are mainly physical forms of records. Attendance of workshop, seminars and conferences are means taken by licensing offices to keep abreast of the development in record preservation. The only source through which licensing offices fund preservation of their records is through statutory allocations. Records inspection exercise is done annually by all licensing offices. Bindery equipment remains the main equipment used by licensing offices to preserve and restore their records.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was conducted to investigate the status of records management and preservation in licensing offices in South-West Nigeria. The study revealed that they do not have modern records management systems besides filing and storage in cabinets. The findings of this study may help to influence records management policy and practices in licensing offices in Nigeria due to their economic and security importance. Recommendations of the study could help in the formulation of an appropriate policy for records management and preservation in licensing offices. Consequently, the following are recommended:

- Records management in every state licensing office should be centralized. There should be designated stores and personnel for management of records. Administrative staff specializing in records management should also be trained.
- There should be records management policy for every state licensing office. Every member of staff should be made aware of policy and procedures therein. The policy would provide guidance on issues relating to records management such as electronic records metadata standards, physical records management, the structure of classification systems, content management, long-term access and preservation.
- Filing system in the offices should be well organized so that records can be protected against loss and damage. This can be achieved with the use of fire and burglar proof file cabinets. The storage facilities in the licensing offices studied are poor and fall short of requirement for managing records of security and financial values.
- Appointment of records managers should be considered by the board of the licensing offices. The records managers have roles and responsibilities. The records manager is responsible for the overall control over the compilation, implementation, maintenance and utilization of approved filing systems and the records filed according to these systems.
- The records manager should ensure that the registry staff is trained in the allocation of reference numbers and in filing system maintenance procedures.

Records manager should train the existing personnel on records management. Workshops opportunities for them will also be advantageous so that they can always be alert on what they are doing.

- Adoption of ICT to facilitate transition of records from paper to the electronic form. The licensing offices should put in place facilities to convert their physical records into electronic ones. They could also shift towards generating their records electronically.

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