

STRATEGIES IN PRESERVING RECORDS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PENSION SERVICES BY KADUNA STATE PENSION BUREAU, KADUNA, NIGERIA

Andrew Yero

Kaduna State University Library, Kaduna
andrewyero4real@gmail.com, 08032848669

Dr. Babangida Umar Dangani,

NCE, BLIS, M.Sc., PhD, (ABU) FIIA, FICA, FIMC, CLN, MNLA, CLIP, MALA
Kaduna State University Library, Kaduna
nadangani44@gmail.com, 08032965114

Dr. Michael Esegwu, CLN, MNLA

Kashim Ibrahim Library,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
yaw4mi@gmail.com, 08025726783

Abstract

The study investigated Strategies in Preserving Records for Administration of Pension Services by Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna, Nigeria. The following objective was set for actualization by this study what are the strategies adopted for the preservation of records for administration of pension services at the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna State, Nigeria? Quantitative research methodology was adopted using a descriptive survey design. Data was collected through a self-developed questionnaire administered to 90 staff members across various departments within the Bureau. Of these, 85 copies were retrieved and found worthy for analysis. The study revealed that the Kaduna State Pension Bureau adopts multiple preservation strategies, including climate-controlled storage, use of archival-quality materials, digital backups, access controls, disaster preparedness, regular maintenance, CCTV surveillance, long-term digital preservation standards, and periodic inspections to ensure the security and longevity of its records. In conclusion, despite the robust strategies put in place for the preservation of records at the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, a lot is needed to be done that the strategies are sustained. It was recommended that in order to add up to the existing methods of preserving records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna Nigeria, the Management should perform necessary repairs or replacements to preserve the integrity of storage materials available at the Bureau.

Keywords: Administration, Kaduna State, Pension Bureau, Pension Services, Record Management

Introduction

The administration of pension services is a fundamental component of public sector governance. Over the years, the need for efficiency, transparency, and accountability in pension administration has intensified. A core driver of this efficiency is an effective records management system. Without well-structured records management practices, pension bureaus can face operational disruptions, delays in pension disbursements, and challenges in ensuring the rights and entitlements of retirees. This study focuses on the records management practices for the administration of pension services at the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Nigeria. The Bureau is tasked with managing various categories of pension-related records, processing retirement benefits, and liaising with relevant stakeholders, including financial institutions and government databases.

Records management encompasses the systematic control of records throughout their life cycle, from creation or receipt, classification, maintenance, and use to their final disposition. The Kaduna State Pension Bureau handles a wide variety of records, including application forms, financial records, correspondence, online application data, scanned documents, integration logs with payroll systems, and inputs from government and financial databases. The effective handling of these records is essential to pension administration as it affects the timely processing of pension claims, reduction of fraud, and enhancement of service delivery. The availability and reliability of these records ensure that pensioners receive accurate and timely payments while also facilitating auditing and policy formulation processes (Saffady, 2021; Yusuf et al., 2023).

The types of records managed by the Pension Bureau reflect the complexity and interdependence of administrative functions. Application forms, both in hardcopy and online versions, are used to initiate the pension enrollment process. Financial records provide information on payments, deductions, and entitlements. Correspondence, both internal and external, documents communication between the Bureau and stakeholders. Additionally, digitization efforts have led to the integration of scanned documents and digital imaging techniques. These records are further enriched by data exchanges with payroll systems, government databases, and financial institutions, which require interoperability and high data integrity (Hawash et al., 2023; Marutha, 2022).

To manage this vast array of records, the Bureau employs several organization strategies. These include the use of master files and transaction files to track ongoing and completed processes. Records are also arranged in chronological, alphanumerical, alphabetical, and subject-based order depending on the purpose and use. This systematic organization facilitates quick access to information, reduces redundancies, and supports decision-making. For instance, master files may contain details of retirees' service years and entitlements, while transaction files document payment history and communication logs. Chronological and alphanumerical arrangements are particularly useful for indexing bulk records and referencing them during periodic reviews (Chaputula, 2022; Triantafyllou et al., 2023).

Preservation of records is a crucial aspect of records management, particularly in the context of pension administration where documents often need to be retained for several decades. The Kaduna State Pension Bureau employs a combination of preservation methods, including the use of physical storage units such as cabinets, boxes, shelves, and acid-free folders. For electronic records, cloud storage, databases, microfilm, digital imaging, and adherence to long-term

preservation standards are used. Regular inspection and maintenance of physical storage conditions help to prevent deterioration, while digital preservation techniques ensure that electronic records remain accessible and uncorrupted over time (Zulkipli et al., 2022; Ajibade & Mutula, 2021).

Modern records management trends call for the integration of digital systems such as Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS), blockchain technologies, and cloud computing to enhance transparency, reduce fraud, and improve accessibility. Studies have shown that institutions that invest in these systems witness improvements in operational performance, user satisfaction, and regulatory compliance (Asogwa, Ezeani & Asogwa, 2021; Hawash et al., 2024). The adoption of these technologies, coupled with staff training and institutional support, is crucial for transforming the Kaduna State Pension Bureau into a more responsive and efficient institution.

Therefore, records management is indispensable to the effective administration of pension services. The Kaduna State Pension Bureau must continuously adapt its practices to align with technological advancements and global best practices. By addressing the existing challenges and embracing innovations, the Bureau can improve service delivery, enhance accountability, and build trust among retirees and stakeholders alike.

Statement of the Problem

Records are essential documents as other public resources such as assets and finances. Public records therefore should be accorded some measure of importance or value placed on other public resources. This includes their management. This is because record management determines the success or failure of every engagement. One of such engagements is administration of pension services, in which records management is central in its process. Records management is aimed at preparing, arranging, storing and retrieving of records and information when they are needed. It refers to the whole range of activities which an organisation should perform to properly manage its records. Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) affirmed that, records management is important because it supports an organisation to make decisions based on evidence, meet operational, legal and regulatory requirements, be open and accountable, enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness, and maintain organisation or collective memory.

Despite a growing body of literature on the importance of electronic records management (ERM), many state-level pension bureaus in Nigeria, including Kaduna State, continue to grapple with legacy systems. Chaputula (2022) found that in many developing contexts, e-records systems remain underutilized due to lack of infrastructure, inadequate training, and limited political will. In the same vein, Dootson et al. (2021) observed that while digital transformation is sweeping through public services globally, many African states lag behind in transforming their records management practices.

Specifically, the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, though mandated to handle pension matters efficiently, still faces challenges related to manual data entry, integration with payroll systems, digitization of documents, and data retrieval. The inefficiencies experienced during pension verification exercises, delays in payments, and poor complaint resolution may be symptoms of

broader records management problems. These challenges echo the findings of Barigye, Kasekende, and Mwirumubi (2022), who noted that institutional performance in public organizations is significantly tied to how well records are organized, accessed, and preserved.

Previous studies have largely focused on the general challenges of public service records management in Nigeria, particularly in the education and health sectors (Asogwa, Ezeani & Asogwa, 2021; Osebahiemen, 2024). However, little attention has been paid to records management specifically within pension bureaus at the state level, especially in northern Nigeria. This constitutes a significant gap in literature, particularly because pensioners are often among the most vulnerable segments of the population and require timely access to their entitlements.

Moreover, no recent empirical study appears to have evaluated the types of records available, organizational systems in place, mechanisms for retrieval, preservation strategies, disposal methods, or challenges faced by the Kaduna State Pension Bureau in managing pension records. Although digital transformation is gaining ground, as reported by Hawash et al. (2024), there is paucity of research on how state pension bureaus in Nigeria are navigating this change, and what gaps remain in their records management systems.

Research Question

1. What are the Strategies Adopted for the Preservation of Records for Administration of Pension Services at the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Records Preservation in Pension Bureaus

Preservation is defined as a variety of activities related to sustaining materials in a usable state, whether in their original form or in some other usable form. Preservation helps archivists and records management practitioners to use the records again because such records are still accessible and in good condition to be used again (Kootshabe & Mnjama, 2014). This study subscribes to the notion that preservation relates to assigning of resources, and planning and executing of policies, procedures and processes encompassing maintenance, examination, conservation and refurbishment in order to confirm adequate protection of documents (Ngulube, 2003).

Preservation integrates the storage and handling of records (Arp, 2019). Iyishu & Nkanu (2013) opined that preservation refers to recognizing and photocopying impaired resources to reinstate their value with the purpose of accessing the information they contain. Preservation is a perception referring to the reflexive protection of archival resources in which no physical treatment to them transpire.

Effective records preservation is a critical component of records management in pension bureaus. These institutions are responsible for maintaining long-term, sensitive information that affects retirees' rights, financial records, and organizational accountability. The preservation of such records ensures their continued accessibility, authenticity, and reliability over time, regardless of changes in format or storage media. Various methods are adopted to safeguard both physical

and digital records in pension bureaus, combining traditional archival practices with emerging technologies.

Physical records remain a significant part of pension bureau documentation. To preserve these documents, organizations utilize controlled environments that minimize exposure to heat, humidity, dust, and pests. Maintaining physical storage facilities with appropriate environmental controls helps prevent deterioration of paper-based records (Saffady, 2021). These facilities often include designated storage rooms with restricted access to enhance security and reduce the risk of unauthorized handling.

Archival-quality boxes are commonly used to store and protect documents from physical damage and environmental factors. These boxes provide a structured way to organize files while reducing their exposure to light, pollutants, and physical wear. According to Dahiru and Almustapha (2024), properly boxed records are less prone to bending, tearing, and contamination, especially when stored for extended periods.

Steel filing cabinets and lockable drawers offer additional layers of security and organization. These cabinets are essential for housing frequently accessed documents in a secure and accessible manner. Their use supports compliance with data protection regulations by ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to sensitive pension information (Ajibade & Mutula, 2021).

Shelving units enable the orderly storage of large volumes of boxed records and binders. In many pension bureaus, adjustable metal or wooden shelves are used in archives or records rooms to accommodate different sizes and types of documents. Barigye, Kasekende, and Mwirumubi (2022) note that well-labeled shelving systems improve retrieval efficiency and reduce clutter, thereby supporting effective space utilization and safety.

To prolong the life of paper records, pension bureaus increasingly adopt acid-free folders and archival-quality boxes. These materials help prevent acid migration, yellowing, and brittleness that typically occur in standard paper storage. The use of acid-free containers aligns with global preservation standards and supports long-term access to essential documents (Marutha, 2022). Routine inspections help identify early signs of damage or decay in physical records. Regular maintenance, including dusting, pest control, and structural assessments, is necessary to ensure the longevity of stored documents. Osebhaiahmen (2024) emphasized that periodic audits and inspections are essential for detecting vulnerabilities in storage conditions and for initiating timely corrective actions.

To enhance durability and reduce dependence on fragile paper records, pension bureaus often convert key documents into microfilm or scanned digital formats. Microfilming, though an older method, remains a reliable preservation technique due to its longevity and resistance to tampering. Digital imaging, on the other hand, allows for easy duplication and access, contributing to faster service delivery (Zulkipli et al., 2022).

Digital preservation standards such as the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model and ISO standards guide pension bureaus in maintaining the integrity and accessibility of electronic records over time. These standards ensure that digital files are properly formatted, stored, and migrated to new platforms as technologies evolve (Triantafyllou et al., 2023). Adopting such standards also supports compliance with data retention laws and enhances trust in digital record-keeping.

Cloud storage solutions are increasingly utilized for their scalability, redundancy, and ease of access. Pension bureaus adopting cloud-based systems can benefit from off-site backups, data encryption, and real-time collaboration, reducing the risks associated with physical damage or on-site system failures. Hawash et al. (2023) emphasize that cloud technologies not only improve security and cost-effectiveness but also support remote accessibility, especially in post-pandemic digital environments.

The preservation of records in pension bureaus demands a multifaceted approach that combines physical safeguards with digital innovations. From the use of archival boxes and acid-free folders to cloud storage and digital imaging, each method contributes uniquely to the broader goal of ensuring the long-term availability and integrity of pension records. As the volume and complexity of data increase, pension institutions must continue to invest in preservation practices that are aligned with global standards and technological advancements (Saffady, 2021; Yusuf, Kurniasih, & Setyono, 2023).

Preservation of records and archival management is carried out to prevent information materials from disappearing and to prevent the staining of papers and media materials that would result in the loss of the information they incorporate so that there is a need to preserve these records (Rhys-Lewis & Forde, 2013). However, it is expensive to keep all the institutional records due to the costs related to staff, money and space. The cost of keeping records includes maintenance, migration, cataloguing and accessibility of all the conserved records. According to Lor and Snyman (2005), electronic records preservation would need perpetual maintenance of specialized resources to read old-style electronic material and it would need ongoing creation of stored records in current formats. However, it would be unrealistic to keep institution generated records permanently (Ngulube, 2003). Preservation involves recording keeping activities such as maintenance, examination, conservation and restoration.

The maintenance process includes the regular maintenance of records and archives, certainly in the existing and semi-current records environment, when they are stored in offices or records sections; preservation improves the general protection of records against conservational risks or other physical damages (Duranti & Rogers, 2019). Examination of records incorporates preliminary techniques applied to regulate the original resources and structure of an element and to regulate the degree of its deterioration, modification or loss, and should be carried out during the preservation process (Harris & Schur, 2006).

During the conservation process, the protection of archival resources should be done by the limited physical treatments required to counterattack further deterioration, which would not unfavorably distress the reliability of the original material or source (Putcell, 2019). Restoration is

the function that repairs an element when a replica of the original tool is extremely significant than the conservation of the reliability of the tool. Restoration is not usually regarded as an archival function (Harris & Schur, 2006). These activities are undertaken to physically protect and defend records and archives (Ngulube, 2003).

Research Methodology

This study adopted the quantitative research method with the use of survey research design which is widely recognized as suitable for both large and small populations where the researcher seeks to collect data from a representative sample. The Population of the study consisted staff of the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna involving those who manage records. A total of 90 staff cutting across various Departments such as Account, Administration and Registry. Total enumeration sampling technique was used to select 90 staff this is because the population is small and manageable. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed descriptively using simple frequencies and percentages presented on table in order to ease comprehension.

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

A total of ninety (90) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to three (3) Departments at the Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna. Eighty-five (85) copies representing 94.5% of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved. The high response rate was achieved because the numbers were small and manageable and also the persistent follow ups by the researcher and research assistants. The response rate of the respondents based on their Departments is presented on Table 1

Table 1: Response Rate

S/No	Departments	Copies of questionnaire distributed	Copies of questionnaire retrieved	Percentage (%) of retrieved copies of the questionnaire
1	Administration	20	18	20.0
2	Finance	43	41	45.6
3	Registry	27	26	28.9
	Total	90	85	94.5

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2024

Table 1 presented the response rate of the respondents based on their departments. 18(20%) of the respondents were from the Administration Department, 41(45.6%) of the respondents were from the Finance Department and 26(28.9%) of the respondents were from the Registry Department. On the overall, this implies that a majority of the respondents filled and submitted the questionnaire which will give room for generalization of the findings of this study.

Strategies for Preserving Records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna

The researcher sought to find out the methods used in the Preservation of Records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna. In order to achieve this a list of Preservation methods were provided to enable respondents select accordingly. Table 4.5 presents the data collected and analyzed.

Table 2: Strategies for Preserving Records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna

S/No	Strategies for preserving Records	Applicability of Preservation strategies at KSPB				Remarks
		Applicable		Not Applicable		
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
1	Storing Records in a secure, climate-controlled environment to prevent deterioration	78	91.8	7	8.2	Positive
2	Using archival-quality materials such as acid-free folders, boxes and sleeves to protect physical documents from damage	80	94.1	5	5.9	Positive
3	Maintaining digital copies of all records to safeguard against loss due to physical damage or disaster	53	62.4	32	37.6	Positive
4	Implementing access controls to restrict unauthorized access to both physical and digital records	63	74.1	22	25.9	Positive
5	Perform necessary repairs or replacements to preserve the integrity of storage materials	31	36.4	54	63.6	Negative
6	Developing and implementing a disaster preparedness plan to mitigate risks such as fire, flooding or theft	49	57.6	36	42.4	Positive
7	Regular cleaning and dusting	58	68.2	27	31.8	Positive
8	Use of CCTV Cameras	55	64.7	30	35.3	Positive
9	Using long-term digital preservation standards	60	70.6	25	29.4	Positive
10	Conducting regular inspections of physical storage areas to identify signs of deterioration or damage	45	52.9	40	47.1	Positive

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 revealed the various strategies used for preserving records in the Kaduna State Pension Bureau. Strategies that were adopted by 50% and above of the respondents included: storing records in a secure, climate-controlled environment (91.8%), using archival-quality materials such as acid-free folders and boxes (94.1%), maintaining digital copies of records (62.4%), implementing access controls (74.1%), developing and implementing a disaster preparedness plan (57.6%), regular cleaning and dusting (68.2%), use of CCTV cameras (64.7%), applying long-term digital preservation standards (70.6%), and conducting regular inspections of physical storage areas (52.9%). These findings indicate a strong adherence to both physical and digital preservation methods by the Bureau.

However, the strategy of performing necessary repairs or replacements to preserve the integrity of storage materials was not widely practiced, with only 36.4% of respondents indicating its applicability and 63.6% stating otherwise. This suggests a gap in the maintenance aspect of records preservation which may have long-term implications on the durability of physical storage tools and the overall safety of archived information.

The findings on the strategies of preserving records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau align with best practices in records management literature, which emphasize the importance of both physical and digital preservation techniques (Popoola & Oluwole, 2021). The widespread adoption of climate-controlled environments, archival-quality materials, and access controls demonstrates an awareness of environmental and security threats to record longevity, reflecting standards recommended by international archival authorities (International Records Management Trust, 2020). The implementation of disaster preparedness plans and digital preservation standards further indicates proactive efforts to ensure business continuity and protect critical information against unforeseen disruptions (Nwalo, 2018).

Despite these strengths, the low emphasis on performing repairs or replacements of storage materials reveals a weakness in the physical upkeep of storage infrastructure. As Omeluzor et al. (2020) noted, neglecting physical maintenance can accelerate the deterioration of valuable records, potentially leading to irreversible data loss. This suggests that while the Bureau has embraced modern preservation strategies, there is still a need to improve routine maintenance practices to achieve a more holistic preservation framework. Therefore, institutional policies should prioritize training, funding, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that physical repair protocols are integrated into preservation routines for sustainable recordkeeping.

From the foregoing, the study revealed that the Kaduna State Pension Bureau adopts multiple preservation strategies, including climate-controlled storage, use of archival-quality materials, digital backups, access controls, disaster preparedness, regular maintenance, CCTV surveillance, long-term digital preservation standards, and periodic inspections to ensure the security and longevity of its records.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Kaduna State Pension Bureau has demonstrated a robust and multi-faceted commitment to the preservation of its records. The Bureau's adoption of a comprehensive set of strategies, ranging from climate-controlled environments and archival-quality materials to advanced digital backups and stringent security measures like CCTV surveillance and access controls, ensures the long-term security and integrity of its vital pension information. This proactive and thorough approach, further strengthened by disaster preparedness and adherence to digital preservation standards, positions the Bureau as a diligent guardian of its records, safeguarding them for the future.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. In order to add up to the existing strategies of preserving records in Kaduna State Pension Bureau, Kaduna Nigeria, the Management should perform necessary repairs or replacements to preserve the integrity of storage materials available at the Bureau. Also, it should document the exact standards for climate control (18–20°C, 45-50% relative humidity), the specifications for archival-quality materials, the frequency and methods for digital backups, and the protocols for access control into a single, official policy document. Improve upon the current budget to cover technology upgrades, archival supplies, and continuous staff training.

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