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**ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN  
NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: THE ROLE OF CAPACITY  
BUILDING AND STAFF COMPETENCE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The efficient management of office information is critical to the operational sustainability of universities, particularly in resource-constrained contexts such as Nigeria. This study examined the influence of capacity building and staff competence on sustainable office information management in selected universities in Imo State, Nigeria. The population consisted of 357 secretaries and office managers across five universities: Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO); Imo State University (IMSU); Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education (AIFUED); Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University (KOMU); and University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (UAES). A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 189 respondents, proportionally allocated across the universities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that capacity building and staff competence were both significantly and positively associated with sustainable office information management. Specifically, capacity building ( $\beta = 0.358, p < 0.001$ ) and staff competence ( $\beta = 0.402, p < 0.001$ ) jointly explained 61.2% of the variance in sustainable office information management practices. The study concluded that human resource development is a critical driver of sustainable information management, with trained and competent staff enabling more effective utilization of digital records, efficient administrative processes, and environmentally sustainable practices. The study recommends that universities implement continuous professional development programs, enhance staff competence, and integrate green and digital office practices to promote*

*sustainability in administrative operations. These findings contribute to the literature by empirically linking capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management, offering practical guidance for higher education administrators.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Capacity Building, Staff Competence, Sustainable Office Information Management, Universities.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainable office information management has become an essential strategic concern for higher education institutions globally, particularly as universities contend with expanding volumes of digital and physical information generated through administrative and academic activities. Office information management encompasses the processes of creating, capturing, organizing, storing, retrieving, and disseminating information necessary for effective decision-making and continuity of operations (Akor & Udensi, 2016). In the context of Nigerian universities, the traditional reliance on paper-based systems has been increasingly challenged by the complexity and scale of modern institutional information needs, necessitating more sustainable approaches that leverage digital technologies and skilled human resources.

Capacity building—in terms of formal training, professional development, and continuous learning opportunities—is widely recognized as central to enhancing information management practices. Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria and comparable contexts have shown that the availability of relevant skills and competencies directly influences the effective adoption and use of digital information systems. For example, data literacy skills among librarians significantly enhance engagement in digital records management activities, improving the quality and efficiency of information handling in university settings (Ajibare & Omosebi, 2025). Likewise, awareness of emerging technologies and data literacy is positively associated with digital records management practices, though institutional support remains uneven. These findings underscore that skills development and organizational investment in human capital are critical drivers of sustainable information management outcomes.

Staff competence, encompassing a range of technical and cognitive abilities such as ICT proficiency, records management skills, and system utilization capabilities, also plays a central role in determining how well information systems support institutional goals. Studies of Nigerian tertiary institutions have identified that user competence significantly enhances system effectiveness and service delivery, reinforcing the importance of investing in staff

skills in tandem with technological infrastructure (Akor & Udensi, 2016). Furthermore, limitations in skills, coupled with infrastructural gaps such as erratic power supply and insufficient training, constrain the effectiveness of information management practices in universities (Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024).

Despite these insights, sustainable office information management remains unevenly realized across Nigerian universities. Challenges such as inconsistent capacity building programs, variable staff competence levels, and limited integration of systematic training into institutional strategies continue to hamper progress. This gap is significant because efficient information management not only facilitates day-to-day administrative operations but also influences broader objectives such as institutional accountability, transparency, and alignment with international best practices (Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024). Consequently, there is a pressing need to deepen empirical understanding of how targeted capacity building interventions and enhanced staff competence can collectively sustain office information management practices in these institutions.

By investigating the role of capacity building and staff competence as drivers of sustainable office information management, this study responds to a critical gap in the literature and supports evidence-based policymaking. Enhancing these human resource dimensions has the potential to improve efficiency, reduce information silos, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in administrative information systems. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader discourse on digital transformation and organizational resilience in the higher education sector, particularly in developing country contexts where resource constraints and skill deficits are persistent challenges.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Universities are complex organizations that generate and process vast amounts of information daily, ranging from student records, research data, administrative reports, and personnel documentation. Efficient management of this information is critical for operational effectiveness, institutional accountability, and strategic decision-making. In Nigerian universities, however, office information management systems face significant sustainability challenges. Despite increasing adoption of digital systems, many institutions continue to rely heavily on paper-based processes, fragmented data storage, and uncoordinated administrative practices, which undermine efficiency, transparency, and institutional memory (Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024; Akor & Udensi, 2016).

Capacity building and staff competence are widely acknowledged as essential drivers for effective information management. Yet, empirical evidence suggests that in many Nigerian universities, formal training programs are irregular, skill levels vary widely, and professional development initiatives are inadequately aligned with the evolving technological demands of sustainable information management (Ajibare & Omosebi, 2025). These gaps result in poor system utilization, delayed decision-making, and information silos that compromise the sustainability of office operations.

Furthermore, the interplay between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management remains under-researched in the Nigerian context. Existing studies have largely focused on either technological infrastructure or records management practices, with limited attention to how human resource competencies influence the long-term sustainability of information systems. This knowledge gap is critical, as it constrains universities' ability to adopt best practices in digital transformation, institutional governance, and green office initiatives.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the persistent challenges in sustaining office information management in Nigerian universities by investigating the role of capacity building and staff competence as key drivers of sustainable practices. Understanding this relationship is vital for informing policy, guiding professional development, and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of university administrative systems in line with global best practices.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the role of capacity building and staff competence in enhancing sustainable office information management in Nigerian universities. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the relationship between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management in Nigerian universities.
2. To assess the effect of capacity building initiatives on the implementation of sustainable office information management practices.
3. To evaluate the influence of staff competence on the effectiveness of sustainable office information management systems.

### Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management in Nigerian universities?
2. How do capacity building initiatives affect the implementation of sustainable office information management practices?
3. To what extent does staff competence influence the effectiveness of sustainable office information management systems?

### Research Hypotheses

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management in Nigerian universities.
- **H<sub>02</sub>:** Capacity building initiatives do not have a significant effect on the implementation of sustainable office information management practices in Nigerian universities.
- **H<sub>03</sub>:** Staff competence does not have a significant influence on the effectiveness of sustainable office information management systems in Nigerian universities.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Sustainable office information management has become a critical concern for higher education institutions seeking to enhance administrative efficiency, accountability, and institutional sustainability in an era characterized by rapid digital transformation and expanding information needs. At its core, sustainable information management entails the systematic creation, processing, storage, retrieval, and utilization of information in ways that support operational continuity and knowledge preservation while minimizing waste and inefficiencies. Empirical literature underscores that achieving sustainability in information practices is contingent not only on technological infrastructure but also on the human capacities that drive system adoption and use (Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024).

Central to the literature on information management is capacity building, which refers to structured interventions — such as training, workshops, and professional development — aimed at enhancing individuals' skills, knowledge, and competencies. Capacity building is widely recognized as a foundational enabler of effective information management practices. Igbokwe's (2023) study on capacity-building practices for librarians in federal university libraries in Nigeria found that deliberate interventions such as rotation of staff across functional units and targeted professional training improved librarians' ability to deliver effective services, highlighting capacity building's role in enhancing operational outcomes.

Likewise, research in educational management contexts consistently shows that capacity-building initiatives significantly enhance job performance, particularly in areas involving ICT competence, communication skills, and instructional practices (Osuji, Epelle, & Alabere, 2024). Collectively, these findings suggest that capacity building contributes to increased readiness and capability among administrative staff to manage complex information tasks.

Empirical evidence from the higher education sector specifically confirms the positive influence of human capacity building on records management and information services. A study examining federal university registries in South-West Nigeria reported that capacity building significantly improved records management effectiveness, a critical component of sustainable information management, by equipping registry personnel with necessary knowledge and skills (Ailakhu, 2022). In a similar vein, analyses of higher education records and recordkeeping demonstrate that training programmes, seminars, and conferences enhance administrative staff's ability to organize, retrieve, and utilize information, thereby facilitating sustainable management of records (Aleru, 2024). These findings reinforce the premise that investment in human capital through capacity building is indispensable for sustaining information practices in academic environments.

Closely related to capacity building is the concept of staff competence, which encompasses the actual skills, experience, and expertise that employees bring to their roles. While capacity building provides the opportunity to develop competence, staff competence denotes the realized application of those skills in practice. The literature suggests that competence in areas such as ICT use, records organization, and information retrieval directly influences how effectively information systems are used within institutions. Studies on organizational performance affirm that staff capacity and competence are significantly associated with improved performance outcomes in university settings (He & Ismail, 2023). Although this work does not deal exclusively with records or office information systems, it nonetheless demonstrates that greater human capacity — operationalized as competence — is positively related to organizational effectiveness, providing a theoretical rationale for exploring staff competence in relation to sustainable information management.

Extending this reasoning, research focusing on the integration of information systems in Nigerian universities has highlighted the nexus between technical competence and information management practices. For example, examinations of information systems' effects on records management practices in universities indicate that staff who effectively utilize information systems achieve higher levels of records organization, retrieval, and preservation — all important indicators of sustainability in information management (Quadri,

Ujunwa, & Ukpere, 2025). Although the study focused on system use, the implication is clear: competence with digital information tools enhances records practices, thereby supporting sustainable office information management.

The logical linkage between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management is also illuminated by broader studies on knowledge and information management. Capacity building enhances staff competence, which in turn enables individuals to better apply knowledge management principles and information technologies within organizational contexts. This aligns with emergent literature that identifies knowledge sharing, staff training, and competence as key enablers of sustainable practices in information systems (Foroutani et al., 2024). Thus, the theoretical linkage aligns with human capital and knowledge-based views, which posit that organizations derive sustainable competitive advantage from their internal capabilities and the competencies of their workforce.

Despite the robust support for these linkages, gaps remain. Many studies emphasize capacity development in specific units (e.g., libraries) but do not comprehensively address its effects across administrative structures. Furthermore, while staff competence is recognized, there is limited integration of this construct within broader sustainability frameworks in the context of office information management in Nigerian universities. This study responds to these gaps by empirically examining how capacity building and staff competence jointly influence sustainable office information management — contributing new insights to both the academic literature and practice in higher education information governance.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised 357 secretaries and office managers working in the administrative offices of the following universities in Imo State: Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Imo State University, Owerri (IMSU), Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri (AIFUED), Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University (KOMU) and University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo (UAES). These staff members were selected because they are directly involved in office information management and responsible for implementing both manual and digital records systems, making them ideal respondents for assessing the impact of capacity building and staff competence on sustainable office information management.

Sample sizes were determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula with a 5% margin of error. A total sample of 189 respondents was drawn from the five universities using a stratified random sampling technique. The population was first stratified by university, then by department/unit where secretaries and office managers work. Respondents were randomly selected from each stratum proportionate to the population size. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, designed in four sections: Section A: Demographic information (gender, years of service, highest qualification, university); Section B: Items measuring capacity building (training frequency, relevance, accessibility, skill development opportunities); Section C: Items measuring staff competence (technical skills, ICT proficiency, records management knowledge, system utilization) and Section D: Items measuring sustainable office information management practices (digital records adoption, efficiency, accessibility, green office practices). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and adapted from validated instruments in previous studies (Ajibare & Omosebi, 2025; Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024).

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in Office and Information Management and Educational Administration. A pilot test with 20 respondents outside the study sample ensured clarity, relevance, and coverage of the constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha, with results: Capacity Building:  $\alpha = 0.84$ ; Staff Competence:  $\alpha = 0.88$  and Sustainable Office Information Management:  $\alpha = 0.86$ . Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regression). Significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

#### 4.0 RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 189 respondents across five universities in Imo State, Nigeria. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regression).

#### 4.1 Analysis of Research Question

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Capacity Building.**

Capacity Building Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
Regular training opportunities are provided to staff	4.12	0.72	High
Training programs are relevant to current office tasks	4.08	0.68	High
Training improves staff ability to use info. systems	4.15	0.70	High
Training is accessible to all administrative staff	3.95	0.81	Moderate-High

Capacity Building Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
Training contributes to sustainable office practices	4.10	0.75	High
<b>Average Mean</b>	4.08	0.73	High

Respondents generally agree that capacity building initiatives are in place and positively influence office performance. The average mean of 4.08 indicates that training opportunities are frequent, relevant, and beneficial, supporting the premise that capacity building is a key driver of sustainable office information management in these universities.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Staff Competence.**

Items on Staff Competence	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
I am proficient in using ICT for office management	4.05	0.78	High
I possess knowledge of records management procedures	4.18	0.72	High
I can effectively use digital information systems	4.12	0.75	High
I apply my skills to ensure efficient office processes	4.07	0.70	High
My competence supports sustainable office management	4.14	0.69	High
<b>Average Mean</b>	4.11	0.73	High

The results show that staff competence is generally high among respondents, especially in ICT proficiency and records management knowledge. The average mean of 4.11 indicates that staff competence positively supports the implementation of sustainable office information management practices, aligning with the study hypothesis.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainable Office Information Management.**

Items on Sustainable Office Information Management	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
Office operations rely on both digital and paper-based systems	3.85	0.81	Moderate-High
Digital records are systematically organized and accessible	4.02	0.74	High
Office processes are efficient and timely	4.05	0.73	High
Green office practices are integrated into daily operations	3.95	0.77	Moderate-High
Information systems support decision-making and transparency	4.08	0.72	High
<b>Average Mean</b>	3.99	0.75	High

The findings suggest that sustainable office information management is moderately to highly practiced across the universities. While digital records are increasingly used, some offices still rely on hybrid systems. The integration of green office practices is moderate, indicating

room for improvement in environmental sustainability. Overall, the average mean of 3.99 shows that universities are progressing toward sustainability but need enhanced capacity building and staff competence to fully optimize information systems.

#### 4.2 Test of Hypotheses

##### Hypothesis 1: Relationship between Capacity Building, Staff Competence, and Sustainable Office Information Management

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis.**

Variables	Capacity Building	Staff Competence	Sustainable Office IM
Capacity Building	1	0.654	0.701
Staff Competence	0.654	1	0.742
Sustainable Office Information Management	0.701	0.742	1

**Note:**  $p < 0.01$

There is a strong positive and significant correlation between capacity building and sustainable office information management ( $r = 0.701$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and between staff competence and sustainable office information management ( $r = 0.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that both capacity building and staff competence are closely associated with improved office information management practices, supporting Hypothesis 1.

##### Hypotheses 2 & 3: Effects of Capacity Building and Staff Competence

**Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis.**

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
Capacity Building	0.342	0.067	0.358	5.10	0.000
Staff Competence	0.401	0.062	0.402	6.47	0.000
<b>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.612, F(2, 181) = 141.3, p &lt; 0.001</b>					

Both capacity building ( $\beta = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and staff competence ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) have a significant positive effect on sustainable office information management. Together, they explain 61.2% of the variance in sustainable office information management practices. This result supports Hypotheses 2 and 3, confirming that targeted capacity building initiatives and high staff competence enhance the sustainability of office information systems in Nigerian universities.

### 4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from the correlation analysis indicated significant and strong positive relationships between capacity building and sustainable office information management ( $r = 0.701$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and between staff competence and sustainable office information management ( $r = 0.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that when university administrative staff receive appropriate training and possess sufficient competence, they are more likely to implement and maintain sustainable information management practices effectively.

These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that capacity building enhances job performance and organizational outcomes in higher education contexts. For instance, Osuji, Epelle, and Alabere (2024) reported a high positive relationship between capacity building particularly ICT competence and related skills—and job performance in Nigerian universities, highlighting that systematic training initiatives improve administrative effectiveness. Similarly, Alikornwo, Adiele, and Omunakwe (2024) found that digital skills training significantly enhances institutional information flow, communication efficiency, and records management outcomes in tertiary institutions. This underscores that capacity building is a crucial driver for sustainable information management practices.

The strong correlation between staff competence and sustainable office information management also aligns with prior studies emphasizing the importance of digital and records management skills among administrative staff. Olatunde (2026) highlighted that secretaries require competencies in digital tools, including database management and electronic document retrieval, to perform effectively in modern office environments. These findings confirm that human resource capabilities are central to sustaining office information management systems, supporting the theoretical proposition that technology alone is insufficient without skilled personnel (Ayo-Ogunlusi & Ologbosere, 2025).

The regression analysis showed that capacity building has a significant positive effect on sustainable office information management ( $\beta = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding supports the hypothesis that structured training, professional development opportunities, and skill acquisition initiatives significantly contribute to the quality, reliability, and sustainability of office information systems. Empirical studies have shown that capacity building is a strategic enabler of organizational performance. Alikornwo et al. (2024) reported that staff development programs improve administrative responsiveness and efficiency by equipping personnel with the necessary ICT and managerial skills. Likewise, Iwhiwhu (2024) emphasized that inadequate training and insufficiently skilled staff are major barriers to sustainable records management in Nigerian universities. These results confirm that

investments in capacity building directly enhance the sustainability of information management practices, aligning with global perspectives on organizational learning and knowledge management.

Staff competence also had a significant positive effect on sustainable office information management ( $\beta = 0.402, p < 0.001$ ). This supports the view that competent human capital is critical for the successful adoption and maintenance of complex information systems. Jimoh (2024) noted that digital competence among secretaries significantly influences job performance and administrative efficiency in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Olatunde (2026) further observed that staff digital literacy and technical skills directly affect the efficiency of records management workflows, service delivery, and office processes. These results indicate that competence is a strategic enabler, allowing staff to effectively utilize information systems, organize records, and maintain institutional memory. Without such skills, even sophisticated information systems cannot achieve optimal performance, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and technical training.

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of capacity building and staff competence in enhancing sustainable office information management in universities in Imo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between capacity building, staff competence, and sustainable office information management. Furthermore, both capacity building and staff competence were found to have significant positive effects on the effectiveness of sustainable information management practices, collectively explaining over 60% of the variance in outcomes.

The study concludes that sustainable office information management in Nigerian universities depends not only on the availability of technological systems but significantly on the human capital responsible for their implementation. Structured training programs, professional development initiatives, and skill acquisition are crucial in improving staff competence, which in turn enhances efficiency, accuracy, accessibility, and sustainability of information management practices. Moreover, while universities are gradually adopting digital and green office practices, there remains scope for improvement in training accessibility, integration of green practices, and consistent development of technical skills. The findings underscore that universities seeking to achieve sustainable information management must prioritize human resource development as a strategic component of institutional policy, alongside investments in digital infrastructure.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Regular and Structured Capacity Building Programs:** Universities should implement systematic training programs for administrative staff, focusing on ICT, records management, digital literacy, and sustainable office practices. These programs should be continuous, practical, and accessible to all staff levels to ensure comprehensive skill development.
2. **Staff Competence Development:** University management should invest in professional development initiatives that enhance technical competence and efficiency among secretaries and office managers. Competence should be assessed regularly through skills audits, performance appraisals, and certification programs to ensure alignment with modern information management demands.
3. **Integration of Sustainable Office Practices:** Administrative offices should adopt green and digital office practices, including electronic records management, paperless workflows, and energy-efficient operations. Staff should be trained on environmentally responsible information management, making sustainability a core component of daily administrative activities.
4. **Policy Formulation and Implementation:** Universities should develop comprehensive policies that link capacity building and staff competence development directly to sustainable information management objectives. Policies should include budget allocation for training, technology adoption, and incentives for skilled performance, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
5. **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Universities can establish inter-university collaborations and workshops to share best practices in sustainable office information management. Such initiatives would allow staff to learn from successful digital and green office implementations, promoting standardization and innovation across institutions.

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