Title: Availability and use of Records for decision making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Abstract

Records provide evidence of policies and support decision-making in an organisation. This study examined the use of records for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Survey design of the ex-post facto type was used and premised on the records life cycle model. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to select seven (7) provinces out of 14, random sampling technique was used to select 720 administrative priests and this was followed by disproportionate random sampling technique to select 50% of them. This gave a total of 360 respondents. A questionnaire placed on a 2-point Likert scale of disagree and agree, and tagged the Church Decision-making Questionnaire (CDMQ) (r=0.89) was the main instrument used for data collection. A total of 347 copies of useable questionnaire were retrieved. This represents 96.39% response rate. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics and multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings show that, there was significant positive relationship between records use (r = 0.45), and decision-making. The joint influence of the use of records on decision-making {R = 0.47} accounted for 20.9% of the total variance in the church's decision-making ($F_{(4, 431)} = 29.68$). Thus, the use of records ($\beta = 0.42$; $t = 8.92$) was found to have a significant influence on decision-making. Further, it was also found that, there was no significant difference among the provinces in their levels of records' use for decision-making ($F_{(7, 428)} = 1.06$; $p>0.05$). Consequently. It was concluded that, the use of records had great influence on decision making.

Keywords: records, decision making, vital records, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Introduction

Information is perceived as a driving force for understanding the past, achieving success in the present and forecasting the future of all organisations; it is at the heart of all human endeavours and serves as a key resource and an exploitable asset in the home, in the workplace, as well as in the society at large. Also, all rational organisations have policies, procedures and modus operandi put in place in order to achieve their set goals and objectives. For conformity and consistency, these policies, procedures, modus operandi, goals and objectives are written down in the form of records which are meant to be referred to for the day-to-day running of the organisation.

Records are unique and irreplaceable sources of information without which the distinctively human creative and adaptive characteristics cannot thrive to the fullest extent possible. As an organisational resource, records serve several functions in the operation of an organisation. According to Popoola (2000), what actually keeps the civil service going in any modern state is recorded information called "records," which are used for administration, decision making and management. Records can provide evidence of the organisation's functioning or administrative structure, they document business transactions and demonstrate compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, they contain factual information about the organisation and its stakeholders (for example dates of appointment or financial data) and they are used as reference materials for the organisation to inform the current or past decision making process. There is a wide variety of records that an organisation should keep as a matter of good policy and sound administration. Some records, however are required to be kept by law e.g. employment records and tax records. Other types of records are administrative records e.g. minutes, agendas, staff records, student records, financial records, estates, complaints and litigation; research records e.g. experimental notes, teaching records e.g. course materials, prospectuses, and annual reports (Government of Western Australia, 2008).

Records come in many formats: physical paper in files, such as memos, contracts, marketing materials, and reports; electronic messages, such as e-mail content and their attachments and instant messages; content on the website, digital images, video and audio files as well as the

documents that reside on flash drives, desktops, servers, and document management systems and information captured in the organisation's various databases. In whatever format, a record has three characteristics: the first one is content; the information contained therein, the second one is the context; the circumstance under which it was created i.e., when, how, why; its relationship with other records, and the third characteristic is the structure; which relates to the format that enables understanding of the contents and the relationships between the different elements of the record (International Council on Archives, 2005).

Records management involve the care of records from 'birth to death'- if record ever dies! Records management practices are the series of activities involved in the management of records right from creation to disposal. It covers the management of records through their life-cycle. This starts with records creation and runs through records utilisation and maintenance and finally to records disposal or retention when they are either destroyed (within the legal and operational requirements of the business) or preserved in the archives if they have enduring value (IRMT 1999 in Ngoepe, 2008). Garden (2003) also defines records management practices (processes) as the process of records capture, records classification, records storage, records preservation, records access, records tracking and records disposal.

The value of a well-managed record lies in its utilisation. Also, the fact that records are available or accessible as at when needed does not mean they are being used. Studies that dwell on records management and utilization have received considerable attention by researchers. Odutola (2003) opines that the management of records is one thing, access to and use of the available record is another. More so, no organisation can survive without access to accurate and reliable information relevant to their business and prompt utilisation of same. Records utilisation as defined by Dervin and Nilan (2003) is a situation where the user makes sense of discontinuous reality in a series of information use behaviours. A record makes meaning only when consulted and information extracted therein used and applied effectively.

All organisations wish to excel and improve on their previous performance and get better result. In this regard, to succeed and achieve the organisational goals at the lowest cost possible there is a need to recognise some "pillars of management" which need to be erected and nurtured in order to achieve these goals. Among these are issues like decision making. Records are a major 'pillar' on which these activities rest.

Different decisions are usually made in organisations in the course of running them. An organisation's life is filled with constant series of decision making which is widely recognised as a key aspect of management and administration, and most managers and administrators see decision making to be the most crucial element of organisational management. The most important thing about decision making is the fact that it is basic to all managerial functions of planning, organising, leading and controlling the organisation. The speed with which the decisions are made and the quality of the decisions made depend on the availability of information which enables all relevant factors and issues to be considered before decision is made. The effective use of records and archives in decision making is therefore governed by the extent to which the records and archives have been organised and managed and by the extent to which the decision makers are able to obtain access to and use records and archives in making decisions (Alwis & Higgins, 2001). This is because records management is only a powerful instrument for success when it is used constructively. It is only a potential aid when it is stored away and not used either for administration or for decision making.

Decision making in the process of administering the church constitutes a great task such that church administrators and decision makers will have to refer to church records and archives. The demand for appropriate, adequate and timely information for management decisions in the church today appears challenging. The church system is expanding in an unprecedented rate. As the system and its organisation expand, so do the problem of administration and decision making (Choo, 2008). It is to this end that, church records management programme should focus on the identification, maintenance, safeguarding, and properly disposing of useful and vital records from all the committees and groups formed within the church. Good records management is good stewardship and can establish an effective and efficient church ministry at all levels.

The Anglican Communion is an international association of national and regional Anglican churches. There is no single "Anglican church" with universal juridical authority as each national or regional church has full autonomy. As the name suggests, the Anglican Communion is an association of these churches in full communion with the Church of England (which may be regarded as the mother church of the worldwide communion) and specifically with its principal primate, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Aboluwoye, 2011). The Anglican Churches worldwide were in this communion and unity until the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) became opposed to the liberal inclinations of the Episcopal Church of the United States and the Anglican

Church of Canada, which led to the acceptance of non-celibate homosexuality and non-celibate homosexual clergy which led to the autonomy and secession of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

The Anglican Church sets its foot on the soil of Nigeria in 1842 through the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) led by Rev. Henry Townsend. The Church began in Abeokuta on December 25, 1842 through the then Revd. Samuel Ajayi Crowther (a Yoruba ex-slave) from where it spread through the length and breadth of Nigeria (Usikaro, 2009). It has become the second-largest province in the Anglican Communion, as measured by baptized membership, after the Church of England. It gives a current membership of over 18 million, out of a total Nigerian population of a little over 196 million (Anglican Consultative Council, 2012). The Anglican Church constitutionally referred to as the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is organised into fourteen (14) ecclesiastical provinces. It has rapidly increased the number of its dioceses and bishops from ninety-one (91) in 2002 to a hundred and sixty-one (161) at the present. The administrative headquarters is located in Abuja.

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has always played meaningful role in the development of the nation and in the promotion of an ideal society that is based on the principles of truth, brotherhood, justice, fairness and the fellowship of all mankind (Omole, 2011). The changing circumstances of the Nigerian environment are also reflected through the involvement of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) members in the church processes. Since it came into existence, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has also reflected and contributed to the history and growth of Nigerian society through all seasons and moments in more than 150 years (Omayajowo, 2004).

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is headed spiritually and administratively by the Primate with each of the fourteen provinces headed by an archbishop, followed by the bishops that head each diocese. At the diocesan level, the bishop is deputized by the provost who heads the cathedral that serves as the head quarter seat of each diocese. The diocese is in turn segmented into archdeaconries headed by administrative archdeacons, and finally the archdeaconries are subdivided into parishes headed by priests (Odukoya, 2008). Fape (2009) also reported that offices are created in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) for administrative conveniences, through which the affairs of the church are run from one level to another. Hierarchically, administrators and decision makers in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican

Communion) include the synods (general, provincial and diocesan), the diocesan boards, standing committees, greater chapters and the parochial church committees (PCC). This hierarchical order is represented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

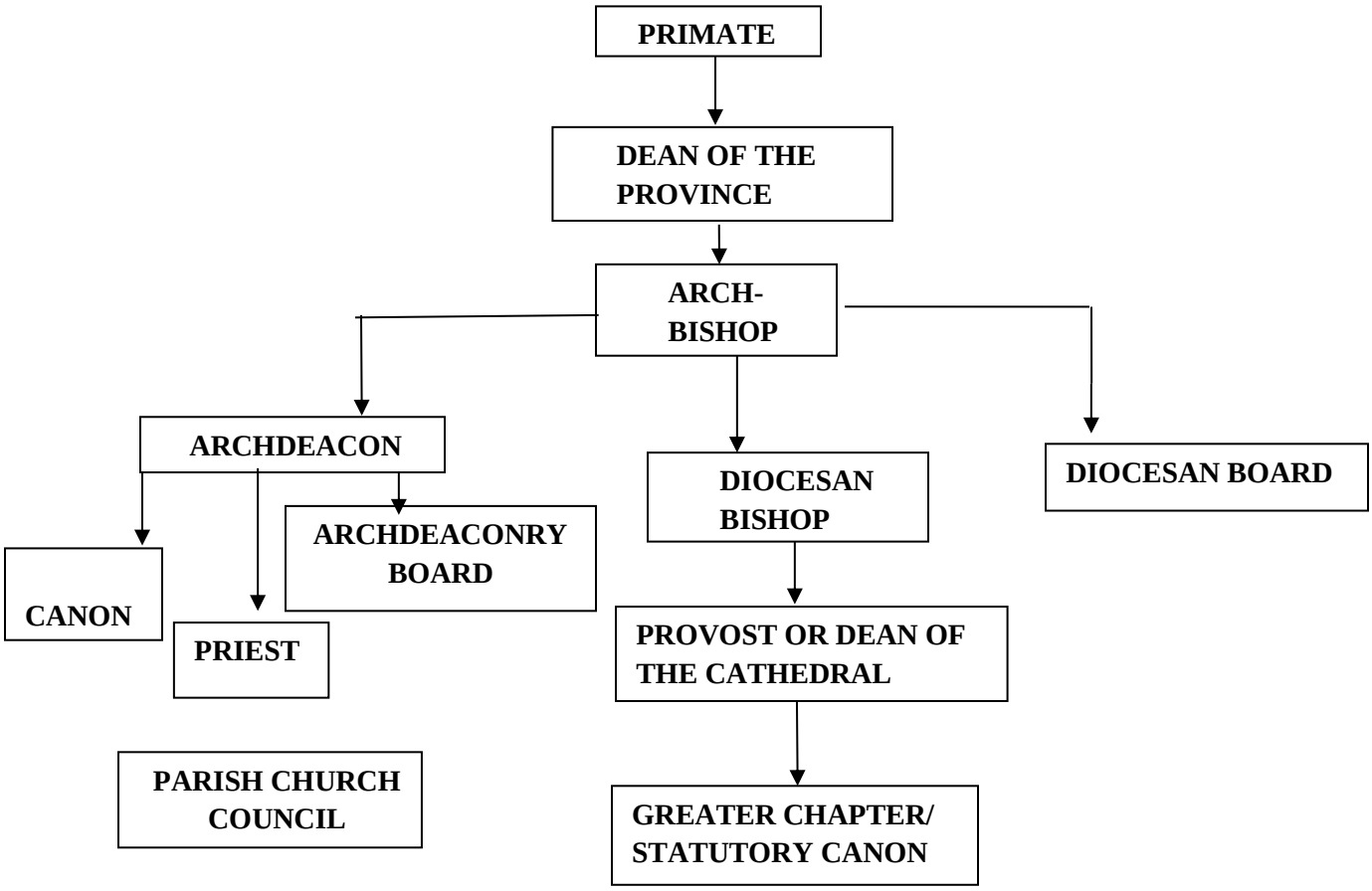


Figure 1: Hierarchical organogram of decision makers in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican) Communion

Decision making is an important aspect of administration in all organisations. The need for a decision arises in organisations because a leader or an administrator is faced with a problem and alternative courses of action are available. In deciding which option to choose he will need all the information which is relevant to his decision; and he must have some criterion on the basis of which he can choose the best alternative. This axiom is of no less importance in the church. In addition to praying for a divine guidance before decision is made in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), records are being consulted when taking crucial decisions. Precedents in decision making are also taken into consideration. It is important to note here that these precedents

are based on previous records. It is the act of making reference to records that the retired primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) led the Anglican Churches in Africa to secede from the Church of England as the latter rescinds on one of the recorded articles of the Anglican and biblical faith which frowns at gay marriages and consecration of gay bishops in the ordained ministry (Odukoya, 2008).

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) generates huge quantities of data and information in the course of its activities. In the church, records are created and used on a daily basis to document actions, confirm decisions, identify rights and responsibilities, and communicate information. The records of the developments and decisions of the church, whether in traditional paper form or electronic, are important sources of information about its life. These records can include records of the general synod and the national office units of the church, records of diocesan synods, records of individual priests, records of congregations from across the dioceses and provinces, records of church officials, records of the various theological colleges, records of the women and girls' organisations and records of church publications. Other categories of records of the church are in the form of minutes of meetings, newsletters, annual reports, programmes, personnel records, staff pension and retirement records, the preacher's book, membership register, tithes record book or register, visitor's book, programme analysis book or register, minutes' files, cash book, ledger, income and expenditure analysis book, as well as photographs and recordings.

The records of the church are classified as administrative, legal, fiscal, and canonical records of the diocese, as well as records of other institutions, personal papers, and publications that document the history of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) within diocesan boundaries. These records are important now and in the future – for example, they will be needed by church leaders and administrators who are responsible for planning and decision making in the church. Researchers from historical societies, students and scholars will also find them useful in analysing the history of the church. These records may also be needed by the church for legal reasons and could help to protect the church and its members in cases of litigation. It is therefore vital that these records be properly created in the first place, then carefully stored and well managed.

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) uses records for wide-ranging purposes such as documenting the work of its workers, informing the decision of diocesan bishops to prefer priests to a higher rank, confirming pensions, leave, and health benefits, confirming or reviewing

policies and procedures, providing information about past actions or decisions. Despite the myriads of advantages derivable from records and its management over the years, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has often times been faced with the problem of information storage and retrieval. Omole (2011) noted that the church, like any other organisation is becoming increasingly complex and faced with complex managerial problems of decision making engendered by the continuous influx of records with little or no structure for their management.

Before a decision is made in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), there is a need to consult records. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) records therefore needs to be seen as important organisational resource that has the ability to enhance efficient and effective decision making which is as important as one of the factors of production like money, machine, materials and men. It is in view of all these that this study sets out to investigate records management practices as factors influencing decision making and the administration of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Objectives

The following objectives guided the study:

i. What type (s) of records are available in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)?
ii. To what extent do administrators of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) utilise the available records for decision making?
iii. How readily available are the records of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion for decision making?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis below, generated for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the use of records and decision-making in the administration of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

H_{02}: There is no significant difference among different provinces in their levels of use of records for decision making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Review of related literature

The decision making body and the administrative structure of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is clearly expressed in this maxim; "the Anglican Church is *episcopally* led and *synodicall*y governed. The Bishop is the spiritual and administrative head of a Diocese

who oversees the affairs of the Diocese. However, Fape (2009) has reported that the offices shown on figure I was created in the Anglican Church for administrative conveniences, through which the affairs of the church is being run from one level to another.

The administrative bodies of the Anglican Church constitute the church's decision makers. Never-the-less, each decision making body is headed by or is made up of at least one priest as listed on Figure I. These decision making and administrative bodies of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) according to Fape (2009), Usikaro (2009) and Odukoya (2015) are segmented as discussed below:

The Lambeth Conference, which is presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, is a meeting of all Anglican Bishops worldwide at Canterbury in Europe (England). It meets every ten years. It is an advisory body whose resolutions and discussions can lead to doctrinal agreements. Anglican Consultative Council is a worldwide body of Anglicans that comprises of Primates and Metropolitans, including some laities on representative basis. It is an advisory body and does not make resolutions mandatory on any Diocese.

The Synod is the highest decision making body of the Anglican Church. The synod, also known as the council is the legislative arm of the diocese and the convocation of the elected and appointed representatives of the church convenes to decide issues of doctrine, administration or application. It consists of the house of bishop, house of clergy, and the house of laity. Its decisions are laws and its usually binding within its jurisdiction. The synod is of three major categories namely, the general synod which comprises of representatives from provinces presided over by the primate and metropolitan, the provincial synod which comprises of representatives from dioceses within a province and the diocesan synod which is presided over by the bishop. Synod discusses issues relating to culture and happenings that affects the church's internal and external structures. Resolutions and decisions taken at such synods are usually made known to the public through the national dailies in form of communiqué (Usikaro, 2009). Cox (2008) posits that the three categories of synod are vested with the authority of taking decisions at different levels of the Church. There is no way the diocese could be run without a guiding document or records. This document is the Church's constitution which informs the synod on its right to take decisions on behalf of the diocese. Its decisions have the same power of law as that of the legislative arm of the government.

The next body in the decision making process of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is the province and primate. This consists of a number of dioceses and is headed by the archbishop who is also known as the primate and metropolitan. The metropolitan and primate preside over the meetings of the house of bishops also known as the Episcopal synod, the general synod and the standing committee of the province. He also presides over the election of new bishops, confirmation of their elections, their consecration services and inauguration of new dioceses. Ranked next to the primate is the dean of the province, who is the most senior archbishop by presentation. For administrative purpose, there are some small Provinces known as Ecclesiastical Provinces in the Church of Nigeria. These Provinces are headed by Archbishops, who presides over the Provincial Council Meetings of the Provinces (Fape, 2009). The Archbishops are assistants to the Primate and are accountable to him.

A Diocese is a major constituent part of a national church (province) within the Anglican tradition. It is headed by a Diocesan Bishop. Diocese from the Greek *diokesis*, meaning "administration" is the district under the supervision of a Bishop. It is also known as a bishopric. A Diocese is divided into parishes (in the Anglican Church into Archdeaconries and Parishes). This structure of Church administration is known as Episcopal polity (Diara, Okoli, & Nche, 2014). The administrative body of a Diocese is the Diocesan Synod, which is responsible for formulating major policies for implementation by the cooperating congregations. In between the years of Synod, the affairs of a Diocese are overseen by the Diocesan board which meets quarterly.

The Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board are made up of representatives of different congregations within the Diocese who are usually elected during the vestry meeting every year. Other members are Bishop's nominees who are his advisers on various matters of interest relating to the growth and development of the Diocese.

Another important organ of the Diocese is the Diocesan Board of Finance. This is the Board saddled with the responsibilities of preparing the annual budget. It also receives the reports of the annual audited accounts of the Diocese. The Provost or Dean is the most senior Priest who heads the Cathedral on behalf of the Bishop.

The Diocese is divided into archdeaconries for ease of administration which is made up of representatives elected from the cooperating congregations within the archdeaconry and is administered through the Archdeaconry Board. The archdeaconry is supervised by an Archdeacon. He assists the Bishop in the general administration and pastoral care of the Laity in his jurisdiction.

Decisions on eligibility of candidates for confirmation by the Bishop, recommendation of candidates for the ordained ministry, etc. is taken by the Archdeacon.

A church qualifies as a parish when it is headed by an ordained clergyman in the priest's order called a vicar. The vicar summons an annual vestry meeting at the beginning of each year, where members of the council are elected. The decisions taken at the Parish Church Council meetings are usually in agreement with the diocesan synod and its decisions is binding on the Parish.

Decision making is one of the most important activities in which church administrators engage daily. The success of a church or diocese is critically linked to effective decisions. Decision making is a process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired result (Eisenfuhr, 2011). This definition has three key elements. First, decision making involves making a choice from a number of options. Second, decision making is a process that involves more than simply a final choice from among alternatives. Finally, the "desired result" mentioned in the definition involves a purpose or target resulting from the mental activity that the decision maker engages in to reach a final decision.

Decisions are made at all levels of the church organisation. The archbishop makes decisions concerning d Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)'s visions and mission. Then diocesan bishops make tactical decisions concerning those visions and mission to accomplish them in relation to their own dioceses. Administrative priests then make other operational decisions to carry out the day-to-day activities of the archdeaconry, and, finally, parish priests make decisions in their parishes. Administrative decision making is assumed to be rational. By this we mean that church administrators make decisions under certainty: They know their alternatives; they know their outcomes; they know their decision criteria; and they have the ability to make the optimum choice and then to implement it (Towler, 2010). According to the rational model (which will be seen later in the theoretical frame work and conceptual model section on which this study is premised), the decision making process can be broken down into six steps (Schoenfeld, 2011).

The first of these processes problem identification. When a problem is identified, alternative solutions to the problem are generated. These are carefully evaluated, and the best alternative is chosen for implementation. The implemented alternative is then evaluated over time to assure its immediate and continued effectiveness. If difficulties arise at any stage in the process, recycling may be effected. Thus, we see that decision making is a logical sequence of activities.

That is, before alternatives are generated, the problem must be identified, and so on. Furthermore, decision making is an iterative activity. Decision making is a recurring event, and church administrators can learn from past decisions.

Church exists to achieve certain goals, such as building up the total man and contributing their quota to the society. Within the church, each section or sub-section has goals. Establishing these goals becomes the basis for identifying problem areas, deciding on courses of action, and evaluating the decision outcomes. A decision is said to be effective if it helps a church administrator to achieve the vision of the church. Failure to achieve the vision becomes a problem, and the church administrator is ultimately responsible for solving it. Effective decision makers are keenly aware of the importance of properly identifying the problem and understanding the problem situation.

Kepner and Tregoe (2005) developed a method of problem analysis that suggests that the first step in decision making, identifying the problem, is the most important step. According to these authors, providing a good definition of the problem affects the quality of the decision. Their method suggests that it is often easier to define what the problem is not, rather than what it is. Also, the problem and its solution are prioritised with other problems, to clarify its relative importance. The final step is searching for cause-effect relationships. The process of identifying problems requires surveillance of the internal and external environment for issues that merit attention (Verschaffel, 2011). In addition to identifying problems, church administrators must also define the situation, which is partly a matter of determining how a specific problem arose. This is an important stage, because the situation definition plays a major role in subsequent steps.

Once the problem has been identified, the second step in the decision making process is to generate alternative to the problem. In developing these alternative solutions, church administrators must first specify the goals that they hope to achieve through their decision. Once church administrators have determined their goals, they can search for alternative means of reaching them. Information must be collected regarding each of the alternatives and their likely consequences.

More specifically, the church administrator must seek to learn as much as possible concerning the likelihood that each alternative will result in the achievement of various outcomes, and the extent to which those outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives being sought. Ideally, the church administrator should seek to generate as many

alternatives as possible and should attempt to ensure that the alternatives are relatively diverse, that is, not highly similar to one another. The extent of the search for alternatives is limited by the importance of the decision, the cost and value of additional information needed to evaluate alternatives, and the number of people affected by the decision (Zopounidis, 2011a, b). The more important the decision, the more attention is directed to developing alternatives. The length and thoroughness of the search for alternatives depends on the cost of evaluating additional alternatives (Narayanan, 2005). Moreover, the greater the number of people affected by a problem, the more likely the organisation will conduct a lengthy and thorough search for alternatives (Ehrgott, 2011).

The third step in the decision making process is evaluating each of the alternatives generated in step 2. In evaluating an alternative, church administrators must ask the following three questions: “is the alternative feasible?", "is it a satisfactory alternative?" and "what impact will it have on people?” (Grant, 2011). Failure to meet this condition is the single most likely reason for failure of the decision making process to solve problems (Hastie, 2010). Once the church administrator has evaluated all of the alternatives, he attempts to choose the best alternative. The evaluation phase will have eliminated some of the alternatives, but in most cases two or more will remain. How does a church l administrator decide which alternative is the best? One approach is to select the alternative that is feasible, satisfactory, and acceptable to the church (Gilboa, 2011). Because most situations do not lend themselves to sophisticated mathematical analysis, the church administrator uses this available information in combination with judgment and intuition to make the decision (Mendel, 2011). The basis of judgment should be how close the outcomes or consequences of the alternatives come to achieving the desired goals of the church.

After choosing an alternative, the church administrator faces the challenge of implementing the decision. A sound decision can fail if implemented poorly. It is useful, therefore, to consider some suggestions for successful implementation (Ahmed, 2011). Church administrators need to make sure that the alternative is clearly understood. This is accomplished by communicating the decision to all involved units and sub-units, they also need toencourageacceptanceofthealternativeasanecessarycourseofaction, provide enough resources to make the alternative succeed, establish workable timelines and assign responsibilities clearly. In other words, what should be done by whom? Because the solution of most administrative problems requires the combined effort of different units and level of the church administration

The final step in the decision making process is evaluating the effectiveness of the decision. When an implemented decision does not produce the desired results, there are probably a number of causes: incorrect definition of the problem, poor evaluation of alternatives, and/or improper implementation. Among these possible causes, the most common and serious error is an inadequate definition of the problem. When the problem is incorrectly defined, the alternative that is selected and implemented will not produce the desired result. Evaluation is important because decision making is a continuous, never-ending process. Decision making does not end when a church administrator votes yes or no. Evaluation provides church administrators with information that can precipitate a new decision cycle. The decision alternative may fail, thus generating a new analysis of the problem, evaluation of alternatives, and selection of a new alternative. Some experts suggest that many large problems are solved by attempting several to support the vital work of decision making and administration both now and also to be recorded for posterity, good management of records and information is fundamental to a well-functioning organisation since it supports business activity and provides a basis for efficient service delivery. It also provides the mechanism whereby both the private and public sectors can account for their decisions and actions. An appropriately managed record will provide a basis for transparent, informed and quality decision making. There is research evidence suggesting that better use of information can improve decision making (Ittner and Larker, 2006; Davenport and Harris, 2007). 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.

In order to make appropriate decisions, administrators must have appropriate information. “In today’s work environment, the administrator that has the relevant data first often wins, either by making the decision ahead of competition, or in case of a religious setting, by making a better, more informed decision” (Venter, 2004). Good records management practice can help to ensure that administrators and decision makers in the church have the information they need when they need it. Decisions are only as good as the information on which they are based. “To make proper decisions, administrators should have background information (documentation provided by records) to use as a basis for evaluating the alternatives (forecasting past experiences, consequences experienced by other organisation, provided by records) and means for validating the decisions (feedback and control mechanism provided by records)” (IRMT, 1999).

In looking at the use of information for decision making, there is an overriding causal model under pinning the analysis. The basis of the work in this regard is extracting information from records to enable decisions to be made. Thus the assumption is that if there is better records management practice this will enhance better information leading to better decisions. This is a rational view of decision making which is implicit in much of the management research in the field. Many tools, techniques and technologies have been developed to support the extraction of information from records to inform decision making. It is widely regarded that humans are efficient 'pattern recognizers', and that this ability is part of our evolutionary heritage, as discussed by Bolhuis and Goodman (2005). Despite the long development period of this ability, decision making is often flawed because decision makers are often influenced by emotion, personal perception, and numerous subjective influences (Kahneman and Tversky, 2000, Oatley and Johnson-Laird, 2002). Hence, without adequate records, human beings are naturally prone to making irrational or biased decisions. It is in recognition of the importance of records and record management to decision making that Kennerley and Mason (2008) stated that decision makers use data to make decisions rather than judgment or intuition.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design of the ex-post facto type. Kerlinger (1973) states that ex-post facto research is a systematic and empirical research in which the researcher does not have direct control over independent variables because they are inherently not manipulated.

Population of study are the decision makers of the church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) who are of the designation of Archdeacons, Deans, Bishops Archbishops and the Primate. These are 720 across the 14 and 160 dioceses of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). The multistage sampling technique was used to arrive at 50% of the population, this gave a total of 360 respondents (Table 1). The potential respondents are known and the selection was based on the fact that the group has the requisite knowledge and experience to contribute to the study.

A questionnaire placed on a 2-point Likert scale of disagree and agree, and tagged the Church Decision-making Questionnaire (CDMQ) was the main instrument used for data collection. These were sent to respondents by e-mail and postage. A total of 347 copies of useable questionnaire were retrieved out of the 360administered. This represents 96.39% response rate.

This well exceeded the minimum (384) that would provide 95% confidence level (Kuby, 1999). Completed copies of the questionnaire were ascertained for completeness, collated, coded, fed into the computer and analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions originally known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The research questions were analysed using Descriptive Statistics, while the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient in multiple regression analysis.

Table 1: Sampled Respondents

Provinces	**Sampled Dioceses (87)**	**Total of Admin. Priests**	**Sampled priests**	**Questionnaire return rate**
Lagos	Lagos, Ijebu, Egba, Badagry, Remo, Yewa, Lagos-West, Ijebu-North, Lagos-Mainland, Egba-West, Ifo, Awori, Ijebu-South-West (13)	38	19	18
Niger	On-the-Niger, Awka, Nnewi, Aguata, Ogbaru, Ihiala, Niger-West, Mbamili, Amichi (9)	62	31	29
Ibadan	Ibadan, Ilesa, Osun, Ile-Ife, Oke-Osun, Ibadan-North, Ibadan-South, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Ife-East, Osun-North, Ilesa-South-West, Ijesa-North, Osun-North-East, Oke-Ogun, AjayiCrowther, Ijesa-North-East (17)	134	67	65
Ondo	Ondo, Ekiti, Akoko, Owo, Akure, On-the Coast, Ekiti-West, Ekiti-Oke, Ilaje, Irele/Ese-Odo, Ile-Oluji, Ido-Ani (12)	90	45	43
Bendel	Benin, Asaba, Warri, Sabongida-Orra, Ughelli, Oleh, Esan, Ika, Western-Izon, Akoko-Edo, Etsako, Ndokwa, Sapele (13)	136	68	66
Enugu	Enugu, Nsukka, Abakaliki, Oji-River, Awgu-Aniri, Enugu-North, Ngbo, Ikwo, Afikpo, Nike, Udi, Eha-Amufu (12)	90	45	43
Abuja	Abuja, Kafanchan, Makurdi, Otukpo, Gwagwalada, Lafia, Kubwa, Zonkwa, Kwoi, Zaki-Biam, Gboko (11)	71	35	34
Diocesan Seats	Diocesan Bishops	98	49	48
The Primate	Headquarter of the Church of Nigeria (Abuja)	1	1	1
	Total	**720**	**360**	**347**

Results

Table 2: Type(s) of records are available in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Types of records available	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Administrative /operational records	338 (97.4%)	06(1.7%)	03 (0.9%)
Financial records/fiscal records	339 (97.7%)	02 (0.6%)	06 (1.7%)
Personnel records	318 (91.6%)	26 (7.5%)	03 (0.9%)
Legal records	336 (96.8%)	01 (0.3%)	10 (2.9%)
Research records	303 (87.3%)	23 (6.6%)	21 (6.1%)
Historical/archival records	312 (89.9%)	20 (5.8%)	15 (4.3%)
Vital records (certificates of incorporations, inaugurations, etc.)	347 (100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Committee records	313 (90.2%)	20(5.8%)	14(4.0%)
Others	302 (87.0%)	22 (6/3%)	23(6.6%)

Table 2 reports the type (s) of records available in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), all (100%) dioceses agreed that vital records such as certificates of incorporations, inaugurations, etc., are available in their dioceses. This is closely followed by financial/fiscal records which recorded 97.7% percentage of availability. Availability of records designated by others as mentioned by the diocese include records on different arms of the church, church programmes, completed, on-going, and proposed projects.

Table 3: Frequency of the use of records for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Frequency of records' utilisation	Daily	Weekly	monthly	Periodically	seldom
Administrative /operational records	303 (87.3%)	27(7.8%)	11 (3.2%)	06 (1.7%)	0 (0%)
Financial records/fiscal records	23 (6.6%)	13(3.7%)	306(88.2%)	05 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
Personnel records	14 (4.0%)	22(6.3%)	137(55.5%)	143(41.2%)	31 (8.9%)
Legal records	04 (1.9%)	09(2.6%)	11 (3.2%)	297(85.6%)	26 (7.5%)
Research records	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	05 (1.4%)	325(93.7%)	17 (4.9%)
Historical/archival records	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	07 (2.0%)	334(96.3%)	06 (1.7%)
Vital records (certificates of incorporations, inaugurations, etc.)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	333(96.5%)	14 (4.0%)
Committee records	34 (9.8%)	23(6.6%)	247(71.2%)	37 (10.7%)	06 (1.7%)

Table 3 reports the frequency of use of the records of the church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), 96.5% of the respondents make use of vital records periodically while 87.3% of

them make use of administrative records on a daily basis. Also, no respondent make use of research records, historical or archival records and vital records either on a daily or weekly basis.

Table 4: Availability of records for decision making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Records availability for decision making	readily available	Closed access	Not readily available
Administrative /operational records	309 (89.0%)	27 (7.8%)	11 (3.2%)
Financial records/fiscal records	303 (87.3%)	31 (8.9%)	13 (3.7%)
Personnel records	313 (90.2%)	09 (2.6%)	25 (7.2%)
Legal records	19 (5.5%)	241 (69.5%)	67 (19.3%)
Research records	07 (2.0%)	19 (5.5%)	321(92.5%)
Historical/archival records	47 (13.5%)	297 (85.6%)	03 (0.9%)
Vital records (certificates of incorporations, inaugurations, etc.)	03 (0.9%)	337 (97.1%)	07(2.0%)
Committee records	324 (93.4%)	20 (5.8%)	03 (0.9%)

As reported on Table 4, a very high percentage of the respondents agreed that vital (97.1%), historical or archival (85.6%) and legal records (69.5%) are available to decision makers on closed access, this is likely to be attributed to the irreplaceable and sensitivity nature of such records. While, an equally high percentage also agreed that personnel (90.2%), administrative or operational (89%) and financial or fiscal records (87.3%) respectively are readily available to decision-makers, this could also be associated with these types of records being of utmost usefulness to the effective day-to-day running and accountability of the Church to its stakeholders. Further, as high as 92.5% of them agreed that only research records are not readily available to decision-makers. This could also be as a result of such not being too relevant for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Testing the Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the use of records and decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Table 5: Summary of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix showing relationship between records utilisation and decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Variable	Decision-making	Records Use
Decision-making	1	
Records Use	.445 (.000)	1

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between the use of records and decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) ($r = 0.45$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, H_{01} is rejected. The positive relationship implies that the more the records are put to use, the better the decision made or arrived at in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

H_{02}: There is no significant difference among different provinces in their levels of records' use for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Table 6: Summary of analysis of variance showing difference among different provinces in their levels of records' use for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Province	N	Mean	Std.D	Df	F	Sig.
Lagos	18	44.18	5.03			
Niger	29	42.96	3.79			
Ibadan	65	44.00	5.53			
Ondo	43	42.60	7.46			
Bendel	66	43.80	4.02	7, 428	1.059	.389
Enugu	43	42.98	3.75			
Abuja	34	42.52	3.88			
Bishops	48	42.53	6.18			
Primate	1	100.0	5.08			
Total	347					

Table 6 reveals that there is no significant difference among the provinces in their levels of records' use for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) ($F_{(7, 428)} = 1.06$; $p>0.05$). Therefore, H_{02} is not rejected but rather accepted.

Discussion and conclusion

From the analysis of data and subsequent testing of the research hypotheses raised, the following are the major findings.

The result of the data collected shows that all churches in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) creates or receives important and vital records. All the records (except vital, historical, archival, research and legal) created or received and kept by the church were found to be readily available for use when making decision. While the later were found to be kept in closed access, which means that, access to them can only be gained by permission. This could be as a result of the sensitive and/or confidential nature or the likely difficulty the church could face in recovering those kinds of records in circumstances of disaster. Being vital records, they are unique in the sense that, they are records needed to either operate the organisation

during a disaster, re-establish the organisation's functions after a disaster, or establish and protect the rights and interests of the organisation and its clients. Hence, the justification for their being kept in closed access. This is in agreement with the submission of the Records Department of the Government of South Australia who proposed that vital records are to be securely kept away from unauthorised access and disaster.

Other findings from the tested hypothesis also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between records' use and decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and that, there is no significant difference among the provinces in their levels of records' use for decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). This implies that records use is a good predictor of decision-making. The findings is supported by that of Roscoe (2012) who submitted that records can provide the most accurate account of a decision or activity, especially after much time has passed, stating that government has acknowledged the benefit of the use of records as a way of justifying and declaring government intent. The finding is also corroborated by that of Borglund and Öberg (2005) who found that one of the three uses of the formation extracted from records kept by The Swedish Companies Registration Office (SCRO), Swedish Health Care System, National Land Survey in Sweden and the Swedish Police Force was to support decisions making. The finding is also in tandem with that of Atulomah (2010) and Siyanbola (2012) who differently found that, decision-making of university administrators was significantly dependent on their use of records and that, accounting information has effects on management decision making respectively. It also corroborates the findings of Ngoepe (2008) who found that decision-making in the South African public sector was informed by sound use of records and the study of Webster, Hare and McLeod (1999) who found that 63.5% of the population studied agreed that records were managed to aid decision-making.

The study also found that majority of churches in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) creates or receives different types of records, and also have vital records which are necessary for the day-to-day running of the Church and decision-making.

Since it has been established by this study that, the use of records has significant relative influence on decision-making in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Church leaders or administrative priests in the Church should be encouraged to make more use of records and to always refer to records when decision is to be made. It has also been found that records management significantly influence decision-making in the church, and that church leaders need

well-managed records in order to have access to information that will enable them to formulate policy and make decisions. Thus, records management should be accorded a special attention due it in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

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