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Challenges Facing Record Management Practices at Egerton and Kabarak Universities, Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges Facing Record Management Practices at Egerton and Kabarak Universities, Nakuru County, Kenya. The study sought to examine the challenges facing record management practices at Egerton and Kabarak universities. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The total population of the study was 26,620. The study adopted formula by Kothari (2004) of the margin of error to determine an appropriate sample for student respondents, which resulted in 150. Kothari (2004) rule of 30% of the population was also used to determine the sample size for employees, thus the sample population of employees was 100. Total sample size for the study was 250 respondents (the 150 students and 100 employees). The study was guided by the Records Life cycle, the Records Continuum Model (RCM) and Records Management theories. A Questionnaire was used as data collection too for the study. Collected data were cleaned, coded and entered into the computer package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for analyses. The findings were presented using tables and figures in terms of frequencies and percentages. The study established that, both universities had over the years generated and managed different types of records such as admission information and learning materials like books and journal papers. The study noted that the universities had record management policies which affected service delivery and records inventory system in place. Records management challenges included inadequate financing, inadequate records management equipment and materials, inadequate manpower, poor infrastructure and no sustainable preservation techniques. The study concluded that, record management practices affected service delivery due to the nature of records generated and challenges experienced in their management. The study suggests that the universities should embrace automated systems. Universities should design and implement effective record management policies, provide adequate funding and favorable operating environment for staff. The employees should continually be trained on relevant records management practices.

Keywords: Influence, records, management practices, service delivery, Egerton and Kabarak Universities, Kenya

1. Introduction

Worldwide, institutions create records to support their day to day activities. However, in absence of effective record management system, records do not provide the necessary support and information might be lost causing problems for the institution (Richmond, 2010). To provide an efficient and effective administration that ensures that institutions run as smoothly as possible, there should be proper management of records. International organization for Standardization (ISO) 15489 (2001) explained records management as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of an information about business activities and transactions in the form of records (Freda,2014). In the past decades of revolution, the method of information storage and how it is generated, the rate at which records are supplied to the end- users has increased drastically as a result of technological advancement. The rate of flow of the information within the learning institutions from the archive, to the employees and students at times makes it difficult for an employee to ensure that all the records have been read before destroying. Any document created by any employee during the official working hours of the organization remains the property of the institutions and therefore the employees should create records and documents so that they are efficiently and effectively managed to support the business dynamics of that organization. In higher learning institutions, record keeping systems are weak to a point that their functioning ability becomes nearly minimal. This situation is particularly evident in many public

institutions of higher learning that are dominated by voluminous amount of record material and no clear policy on records management (United States Department of Labour, 2013).

Records management (RM) is the practice of maintaining the records of a company from the time they are created up to their eventual disposal. This may include classifying, storing, securing, and destruction (or in some cases, archival preservation) of records. The term record management may also be defined as "the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records". Further, it is worth noting that the term "records" means the information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business (National Archives of Australia, 2003). The aim of any records management departments is to provide professional assistance to management in managing the records and information required to take care of the business of the organization. This is a particularly challenging goal in the 21st century. A university community generates and processes information on an unprecedented scale. Trying to manage this information in an effective and cost-efficient manner can be an overwhelming task (Beastall, 2008). Rule of law, management of state resources, probity, accountability, foreign relations and the protection of entitlements and rights of citizens are very critical to every good government. However, without records, all these would be meaningless (Dzandu, 2009).

According to Azman (2009) information plays a very vital role in the economic development of organizations which is essential for any corporate body to function effectively. Information is every organization's most basic and essential asset, and in common with any other business asset, recorded information requires effective management. Institutions produce increasingly large amounts of information and consequently greater volumes of records, in both paper and electronic forms. It is essential that information is captured, managed and preserved in an organized system that maintains its integrity and authenticity as well as fulfilling legal and financial requirements. According to Shepherd (2006), organizations use records to support accountability, when they need to prove that they have met their obligations or complied with the best practice or established policies. An unmanaged record system makes the performance of duties more difficult, costs organizations all resources (e.g. time, money etc.) and makes them vulnerable to security breaches, prosecution and embarrassment. Records provide a reliable, legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and actions. They document compliance or non-compliance with laws, rules, and procedures. Governments can no longer justify taking action with little or no reference to past performance or future goals. Nor can they justify parallel or duplicate services when they can combine services and reduce costs. Client service, quality performance of tasks, and measurable outcomes are increasingly important responsibilities, and these aspirations all depend on accessible and usable records (Atulomulah, 2009).

Yet, in many countries around the world, record keeping systems are unable to cope with the growing mass of unmanaged records. This is particularly true in countries with limited financial or administrative resources or where records and archives managers lack training or professional development opportunities. Administrators find it ever more difficult to retrieve the information they need to formulate, implement, and monitor policy and to manage key personnel and financial resources. This situation impedes the capacity to carry out economic and administrative reform programs aimed at achieving efficiency, accountability, and enhanced services to citizens (Xolile, 2012). In many developed countries such as United States, Britain and Germany, the use of effective record management practices has played an important role in enhancing delivery of quality public services and maintenance of high level of accountability and transparency in use of public resources. Other countries such as China, Japan and Singapore, record management has played a major role in promotion of economic development and elimination of many cases of malpractices in use of government resources. Many higher education institutions have managed to achieve a competitive advantage in the global education market as result of the use of effective record management among many other factors (Chang, 2009).

Malaysia today is one of the countries that has achieved a great measure of economic prosperity and has become a model of economic progress and development for developing countries. It was realized as early as in the 1960's that Records Management in Ministries and Departments should be improved upon to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services, ensure probity and accountability as well as eradicate or minimize corruption. That was done hence, the results that Malaysia is reaping today. The situation in Singapore today supports the recognition that Records constitute a great strategic resource and must be managed effectively (Akotia, 2003). There is a link between effective records management and enhanced public service delivery. Records management is a key component of any public sector reform programme, the efficiency of which includes enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service (Thurston 2006). Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) emphasized the link between record keeping and attainment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) objectives, by pointing out that good record keeping practices are the key to enhanced public service delivery and attainment of NEPAD's objectives. However, many institutions in Africa are yet to implement effective record management practices and this has promoted the level of malpractices and misappropriation of government resources. According to Muge (2007) the quality of education in many Africa Institutions can be improved when records are properly maintained since they assist in future curriculum development activities.

In sub-Saharan Africa, studies dealing with recordkeeping and good governance concluded that governments are unable to implement effective public sector reforms due to various record management challenges which includes; not having information to develop and support reform policies and processes; not knowing what information is needed to undertake various government functions; not being able to rely on available information, and not using available information in decision-making process (USAID 2007). Egerton and Kabarak Universities like other higher educational

institutions in Kenya are semi-autonomous. This is because they receive a portion of its funding from the government, students' fees and stakeholders. As a result of these activities, the University generates large volumes of physical and electronic data and documents on a daily basis. Undoubtedly, these documents and data are of high importance and as such need to be strictly preserved. Universities are legally bound to retain and preserve documents as a record of their activities and proceedings (Mwaura, 2007). It is in this view that the researcher felt it is relevant to explore the effects of records management in enhancing service delivery in universities in Kenya with reference to Egerton and Kabarak Universities in Nakuru County, Kenya as a case study.

2. Methodology

The research was undertaken in Egerton and Kabarak Universities in Kenya. Egerton University is a public funded university situated at Njoro, 25 kilometres from Nakuru town on the Nakuru – Njoro – Mau - Narok road, 183 kilometres from Nairobi City of Kenya. Kabarak University is a private University situated 20 kilometres from Nakuru town on the Nakuru –Eldama – Ravine road, 179 kilometres from Nairobi City, Kenya. The population for this study consisted of 25,000 students and 1620 employees of the two universities (Egerton and Kabarak university human resource statistics, 2014). The population of Egerton workers who were involved in the study was 1215 while Kabarak workers who will be involved were 405. The study specifically targeted records service providers who were records management staff, records beneficiaries, in the faculties who comprised of heads of departments, directors of the faculties, deans and students in different departments since they are in a position to make decisions on when and how information is passed from one department to another. According to Egerton and Kabarak universities staff profile (2014), there are 300 staff that were directly involved in the handling of records and formed the target population for this study. The number of respondents who were involved in the study was 180 from Egerton and 120 from Kabarak Universities respectively. The study also sampled 250000 students who were the records users from both universities. The sample was picked depending on the number of students and employees at different university as shown in the table 1.

Faculty	Egerton	Kabarak
Science	45	30
Education	45	30
Engineering	30	25
Arts	40	25
Commerce	20	10
Total	180	120

Table 1: Target Population for Staff

Source: (Egerton and Kabarak Universities Staff Profile, 2017)

The selection of the sample from different University is due to different in proportion as shown in table 2 below

Faculty	Egerton	Kabarak
Science	5000	1250
Education	5000	1250
Engineering	3334	1042
Arts	4444	1042
Commerce	2221	414
Total	20000	5000

Table 2: Target Population for Student

Source: (Egerton & Kabarak Universities HRM Records, 2017)

A sample was drawn from a total population of 180 employees from Egerton University and 120 employees from Kabarak University. The study then employed stratified random sampling technique to select 30% of the population as the study respondents. According to Kathuri and Pals (1993), and Kothari (2004), 30% of the population is an adequate sample size for the study, and assist in gathering data that represents the study population. This led to a sample size of 60 and 40 employees respectively. These are the people who handle the records within the five faculties. A sample of 200 students was taken to evaluate the efficiency of record management. This is according to Creswell (2007), who argues that when cases are studied a small number is used such as 4 to 10. The sample size relates to question and the type of qualitative approach used such as case study approach. Purposive sampling was preferred by the researcher because it provides reliable and in-depth information on the research topic under study. The other respondents in the study were proportionately selected from the two sampling frames using simple random sampling technique. This technique was most appropriate for this study because a random sample representative did not have any biasness. It also ensured that each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample

Faculty	Egerton	University	Kabarak
Science	15		10
Education	15		10
Engineering	10		8
Arts	13		8
Commerce	7		4
Total	60		40

Table 3 Sample Size for Employees

Source: (Egerton & Kabarak Universities HRM Records, 2017)

Determination of the sample size for the students was based on the formula given by Kothari, (2004) as shown below: -

$$n = \frac{(Z^2 PQ)}{\varepsilon^2}$$

Where: n is the sample size, Z is confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$), P is the proportion of the population of interest. Variable Q is the weighting variable and is computed as $1 - P$, and ε is an acceptable error (precision). The total population of student in Kabarak is 5000, while that Egerton is 20000. This implies that the proportion of the of student at Kabarak is

$p = \frac{1}{5}$ while $q = \frac{4}{5}$, setting the acceptance error to be 0.111, then the sample for student from Kabarak is be given as;

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.2 \times 0.8}{0.111^2}$$

$$n = 50$$

The proportion of the student at Egerton is $p = \frac{4}{5}$, while, $q = \frac{1}{5}$ setting the acceptance error to be 0.0427 we obtain the

sample size is be given as;

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.8 \times 0.2}{0.0784^2}$$

$$n = 100$$

Faculty	Egerton	Kabarak
Science	25	13
Education	25	12
Engineering	18	10
Arts	22	10
Commerce	10	5
Total	100	50

Table 4: Sample Size for Students

Source: (Egerton & Kabarak Universities HRM Records, 2017)

The sample population for the study was therefore 250 (150 students and 100 workers) from the two universities

Faculty	Egerton	Kabarak	Total
Science	40	23	63
Education	40	22	62
Engineering	28	18	46
Arts	35	18	53
Commerce	17	9	26
Total	160	90	250

Table 5: Total Combined Sample Size for the Study

Source: (Egerton & Kabarak Universities HRM Records, 2017)

All tests of significance were computed at a significance level Of 5%. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to aid in data analysis, whereby data Presentation was in the form tabulated summaries and percentages.

3. Challenges of Records Management

According to study by Iwhiwhu (2005), the preservation of records in higher learning institutions involves a variety of challenges which include and not limited to policy questions, institutional roles and relationships, legal issues, intellectual property rights, and metadata. The question of preserving or archiving digital information is not a new one and has been explored at a variety of levels over the last five decades. Developments in IT in the last two decades, including the development of the internet and particularly the World Wide Web, have created problems and opportunities for records management. The biggest challenge facing majority of organizations in issues of records management, is that irrespective of problems and opportunities, the knowledge contained in records must be captured into the organization's competitive advantage (Beastall, 1998). There exist significant complexities/difficulties surrounding information, location, access and retrieval, but they are also not aware of the solutions that are required.

According to Azman (2009) information plays a very vital role in the economic development of the organizations which is essential for any corporate body to function effectively. Information is every organization's most basic and essential asset, and in common with any other business asset, recorded information requires effective management. Institutions produce increasingly large amounts of information and consequently greater volumes of records, in both paper and electronic forms. It is essential that information is captured, managed and preserved in an organized system that maintains its integrity and authenticity as well as fulfilling legal and financial requirements

The hallmark of a good records management program is the establishment of retention requirements based upon an analysis of the records' legal, fiscal, administrative, and historical requirements and values. In the absence of such requirements, many organizations either destroy records that should be retained or retain everything, thereby taking a legal risk or assuming unnecessary operating costs (Kemoni &Wamukoya, 2000). Records management's involvement in identifying vital records and in preparing a carefully designed disaster recovery plan can help an organization reduce its vulnerability. The destruction of important records can cost an organization millions of dollars and threaten the organization's ability to function, thus jeopardizing its existence (Ngulube, 2001).

A significant percentage of the cost of information is in records creation. Records management, forms management, and reports management can help reduce the proliferation of unnecessary reports, documents, and copies, and at the same time improve the effectiveness of those reports and documents that do need to be created (Mnjama, 2003). According to Katundu (2001), records managers play a vital role in the identification and protection of historical records. Often, they are responsible for preserving and making available records having archival value. Records management programs should include procedures for identifying and ensuring the care of universities documentary heritage.

4. Results

The objective of the study was to investigate challenges of records management practices on service delivery and propose the ways and means of their handling at Egerton and Kabarak University. The study results were as follows

Challenges Facing Records Management Practices	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate Funds/ funding	115	46
Inadequacy of Equipment/Materials	45	18
Unfavorable Economic Policies	15	6
Unfavorable Climate	10	4
Inadequate Manpower	30	12
Lack of Preservation and conservation policy	20	8
Quality of Paper and Ink	15	6

*Table 6: Challenges Facing Records Management Practices Service Delivery
Source: Field Data (2017)*

Table 6 above shows , the findings of the study depicted that majority of the respondents 115 (46%) indicated that they faced a challenge of funding, 45 (18%) of the respondents indicated inadequacy of equipment/materials, 15 (6%) of the respondents indicated unfavorable economic policies, 10 (4%) of the respondents indicated unfavorable climatic condition, 30 (12%) of the respondents indicated a challenge of manpower, In addition, 20 (8%) of the respondents indicated the challenge of preservation and conservation policy. Furthermore, 15 (6%) of the respondents indicated the challenge of quality of paper and ink. These findings were in line with findings by Khalid (2009) where he found out that most learning institutions in Kenya fails to undertake records management effectively due to challenges such as inadequate financing, inadequacy of equipment's, inadequate manpower and other infrastructure. From the findings of the study, it is an indication that learning institutions under study failed to undertake records management practices effectively due to challenges such as inadequate financing, equipment's, manpower and infrastructure.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My university is adequately prepared in the management of digital records	20%	40%	10%	20%	10%
My university is adequately prepared in the security of records both paper and digital.	10%	28%	15%	42%	5%
My university is supportive in the funding for continued management of records	18%	42%	10%	20%	10%
My university is supportive in the training for staff on records management	12%	48%	5%	30%	5%

Table 7: Challenges Facing Records Management Practices

Source: Field Data (2016)

On the extent to which respondents agreed with various statements on the challenges facing records management practices, The findings of the study in Table 7 showed that majority 100 respondents (40% of the respondents) disagreed, 50 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed, 50 respondents (20%) agreed, 25 respondents (10%) were neutral while 25 respondents (10%) strongly agreed that the universities under study were adequately prepared in the management of digital records; 105 respondents (42% of the respondents) agreed, 70 respondents (28%) disagreed, 38 respondents (15%) were neutral, 25 respondents (10%) strongly agreed that the universities under study were adequately prepared in the security of records both paper and digital. Further, 105 (42% of the respondents) disagreed, 50 respondents (20% agreed), 45 respondents (18%) disagreed, 25 respondents (10%) were neutral and 25 respondents (10%) strongly agreed that the universities under were supportive in the funding for continued management of records.

The question that guided the objective was; what were the challenges those were facing record management practices at Egerton and Kabarak Universities? The findings from the study revealed their challenges with majority 46% of the respondents indicating that they faced a challenge of inadequate financing, whereas 18% indicated inadequacy of equipment/materials, while another 6% indicated unfavorable economic policies, and 12% indicated inadequate manpower and other infrastructure. Such kind of challenges imply that as much as the institutions would embrace record management practices the challenges would be addressed to ensure effectiveness of the practices. Inadequate records equipment's and materials, unfavorable economic policies, unfavorable climate, inadequate manpower, infrastructure, lack of preservation and conservation policy, lack of quality filing materials were also cited as challenges of records management. These findings concurred with the findings by Khalid (2009) that most learning institutions in Kenya fail to undertake records management effectively due to challenges such as inadequate financing, inadequacy of equipment's, inadequate manpower and other infrastructure.

The study further established that both universities experienced various record management challenges and this impacted negatively on service delivery activities. Notwithstanding the situation, both universities conducted their record management practices and ensured that the departments therein were functional. Some major challenges that were cited included; inadequate financing, inadequate records management equipment's and materials, unfavorable economic policies, unfavorable climate, inadequate manpower and other infrastructure, lack of preservation and conservation policy and lack of quality filing materials. Such kind of finding could possibly console other institutions that they are not alone in facing various challenges in their endeavor to manage their records.

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