

Records Management Practices and Service Delivery in Ntungamo District in Western Uganda

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Abstract: *This empirical research study assessed the association between Records Management practices and Service Delivery in Ntungamo District in western Uganda. The research study utilised a cross sectional and descriptive research design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 338 respondents were carefully chosen from 2890 people using table developed by Morgan & Krejcie (1970). Facts were gathered using questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed by means of frequencies, percentages, Pearson linear correlation coefficient (PLCC) for quantitative data and thematic analysis was used for organising qualitative evidence. The study discoveries established a significant association between Records Management practices and Service Delivery in Ntungamo District in Western Uganda. The study resolved that Records Management practices are important for service delivery because they deal with issues to do with evidence based administration which has a bearing to good governance in schools in Ntungamo District in Uganda. From the study outcomes, the scholar recommended that secondary school administrators should put systems in place to manage records scientifically for empirical based management science. This can help in the delivery of services since school managers may have proof of whatever they do in terms of accountability. The government of Uganda through Ministry of Education and Sports should enhance the budget meant to improve on the development of secondary schools in Ntungamo district in Western Uganda, East Africa.*

Keywords: Records Management Practices, Service Delivery, Education, Uganda.

1. Introduction

In Britain, the government and private business kept records in whatever form they felt appropriate without the benefit of retention schedules, disposition guidelines or other formal information life-cycle procedures (Durosaro, 2022). The government, however, recognized that some controls needed to be implemented to manage the massive volume of the British Government files being created. In 1934 the National Archives were established with the primary task of identifying records that should be retained as opposed to those that might be eligible for disposal. Earlier on, it became quite clear that the British government needed a better, more efficient, more uniform way of creating, sorting and destroying its records. And so, the concept of records management was born. In 1950s to 1960s, as the economy of most developed countries continued to grow during the subsequent years, specialized records management facilities began to emerge (Eresimadu & Nduka, 2020).

During the 1970s in Japan, two new developments led to the expansion of the records management industry. First, computers were introduced to businesses with word processing soft wares; documents could be produced in large quantities. Secondly, new legislation required businesses to start retaining records for certain time periods (Bock, 2022). These two factors, increased the rate of documents production and the need for document retention drove the desire for even greater levels of records management. At first, records management firms began to make use of electronic file storage. In 1980s two more new technological breakthroughs in records management and storage were introduced. First, bar code scanners were introduced. With these scanners, barcodes could be attached to files and boxes for identification later on. These improved the management control and security aspect of records management. The second new technology was the Compact Disks (CD) which were capable of storing thousands of documents in a very small space (Yusof, 2023).

In the 1990s in Italy, Computer Technology advanced again and led to greater efficiency gains for the records management practiced. With the advent of digital scanners, paper documents could be read and converted automatically into electronic files (Jones, 2017). The primary function of records management is to facilitate the free flow of records through an organization, to ensure that information is available rapidly where and when it is needed. To carry out this function needs an efficient, effective records management program. By helping the users to do their jobs better and more easily, the records manager serves the company. Given that an organization's records are unique to it, they need to be managed explicitly, just as the organization would manage its other resources, like people, money and estates.

In China, any organization established, public or private needs to document its activities and this can only be done by creating a records management system. Records contain information relating to organization's activities captured in production during the organization's course of administration. Records display and confirm the decision taken, the actions carried out and the results of such actions, they support policy formation and management decision making, it protects the interest of the organization, the right of the employers, clients' citizens and help the organization to conduct its business and deliver its services in consistent and equitable ways (Penn & Langemo, 2018).

In Africa, records management practices is crucial to all organizations. Unless records are managed efficiently, it is not possible to conduct business, to account for what has happened in the past or to make decisions about the future. Records are a vital corporate asset and are required to provide evidence of action and decisions. Without proper information, a decision maker is never certain about the outcome of her/his decision (Kennedy et al, 2021). And since records management is the concern, information must flow throughout the organization in such a way that it can be tapped where it is needed. This can be possible in the presence of a good records management practice.

However, in Uganda, the contribution of records management in administration of secondary schools especially in Mitooma District is an area of growing concern and is being given the attention it deserves for better service delivery. This is due to the fact that most secondary schools in rural communities in Uganda have embraced the revolution in information management systems by adoption of electronic records management practices or employment of qualified staff in records management in various organizations (Ngulube, 2016).

2. Methods and Materials

Data Capturing

Realities used for the research undertaking were acquired using both primary and secondary grounds of data. Primary data was reached at by use of questionnaires and interviews to effervescent persons related to the study. Secondary data was attained by the use of documentary valuations. The study employed a cross sectional, descriptive research design including qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Amin (2005) stated that descriptive research design is generally applied to designate a phenomenon and its data physiognomies. The researcher selected a total of 338 participants (sample size) using the table developed by Morgan & Krejcie (1970) to take part in the research schoolwork.

Sampling methods

The social expert involved stratified random sampling and purposive sampling modus operandi in the study. The study populace used the target population including groups like District education officials, Teachers, students, Parents, and Board of Governors.

Structured questionnaire and interviews

The questionnaire is a research tool containing inter-related questions organized by the researcher about the research dilemma under study based on the targets of the research study. Items were fixed and written for the providers to answer with options as echoed on the likert scale type interrogations.

This technique was liked because it covers a wide physical galaxy in data gathering; it accumulates a lot of information within a short period of interval and offers greater comfort regarding concealment.

Nonetheless, the questionnaire included some challenges of attrition. There were few replicas that were not reverted, though this was resolved by allocating a lot of duplicates than the required number of the sample size for the schoolwork.

Interview plan is a tool of data congregation which has something to do with face to face communication with participants. The academic posed queries which the respondents responded vocally. It was substantial in getting the story behind the participants' envelopment even through facial terminologies. This tool was preferred because the evidence and data attained was vibrant to the study. The goal of a qualitative interview programme was to comprehend the respondents subjective belief of their universe; unfolding the sense of their realm, revealing their lived standard of living prior to scientific elucidations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019).

Validity and reliability of research instruments

Validity of the carefully planned survey questionnaire was assured by using content validity Index. Arising from the testing of the validity of the tools, the researcher obtained content validity index (CVI) of 0.79 which was well directly above 0.75 signifying that the instrument was valid to bring together statistics for the research study (Amin, 2005). On the other hand, the validity of the interviews was gotten by talking to key members to prove the answered substances (Gibbs, 2007).

Reliability of the Prescribed Questionnaire was calculated by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula while observing the variables that had an alpha coefficient of digit greater than 0.70. Since the reliability calculation acquired by the investigator produced 0.78 alpha value, it concluded that the research instrument was reliable to yield data necessary for the scientific study. Besides, the reliability of the interviews was grasped at by resorting on peer review maneuvers (Gibbs, 2007).

Data analysis

Inquiry Statistical tools which were betrothed to scrutinize facts for this research study comprised; descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies, percentages, and inferential analyses like Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient for assessing quantitative statistics. In general, Qualitative data were analyzed by logically organizing data into functional themes or sub- themes for easy Elucidation in a storyline mode (Gibbs, 2007).

3. Results

Summary Characteristics of the contributors

This segment presents survey data on related information of the participants. Statistics on background information of the respondents is as offered in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Background Features

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender of the Participants	Male	241	71.2
	Female	97	28.8
	Total	338	100.0
Age groups	Below 30 Years	59	17.3
	30-40 Years	175	51.9
	41-50 Years	88	26.0
	Above 50 Years	16	4.8
	Total	338	100.0
Education levels	Diploma	101	29.8
	Bachelor's Degree	163	48.1
	Post Graduate Qualifications	74	22.1
	Total	338	100.0
Working experience	Less than 5 years	62	18.3
	6 -10 years	111	32.7
	10 and above years	165	49.0
	Total	338	100.0
Sector	Administrative staff	46	13.5
	Finance	36	10.6
	Works	46	13.5
	Planning Unit	13	3.8
	Internal Audit	13	2.9
	Sub Counties staff	184	55.8
	Total	338	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The outcomes in Table 1 on gender of the participants showed that the prototypical percentage (71.2%) were males and the females were 28.8%. This inferred that the majority respondents in the local government were males. Although the males were the majority, the responses for both genders were got thus the views were representative of both gender collections. The results on age showed that typical percentage (51.9%) was of those in the age cluster of 30 but below 40 years followed by 26.0% in the age cluster of 40 but below 50 years, followed by 17.3% who were below 30 years and the remaining 4.8% were those above 50 years. The results showed that the respondents that partook in the study were drawn from diverse categories of age assemblages. Hence, this provided chance of balanced sentiments about the study problem. Data on education levels of the respondents indicated that the classical percentage (48.1%) of the respondents was of those who had bachelors' degrees followed by 29.8% with diplomas. Those with postgraduate credentials were 22.1%. The findings suggest that all the respondents were qualified specialists with expertise in English. Thus, they could fill the self-administered questionnaire with correctness hence their responses to the study items were reliable.

The consequences on working experience show that the exemplary percentage (49.0%) was those who had worked for the local government for 10 and above years. These were trailed by 32.7% who had been working with the local government for 6 -10 years and the remaining 18.3 had been working with the local government for less than 5 years. The outcomes indicated that most of the respondents had been in local government for a long time, that is 6 and above years. The consequences were therefore important for the study because having persons who had a long time of service meant that they could easily give suitable information about the study problem due to their experience with the operations of the district. With respect to the divisions of the respondents, the results indicated that the classical percentage (55.8%) were staff from sub -counties, 13.5% administrative staff, another 13.5% from the works department, 10.6% from the finance department, 3.8% from the planning unit and 2.9% from the internal audit unit. The results suggested that staff from diverse sections of Ntungamo district were involved in the study. Consequently, the respondents were hoped to provide reliable data about the study problem because the responses reflected views of diverse workforce.

Records Management and Service Delivery in Ntungamo District

This element of the study presents findings of the objective of the schoolwork that sought to examine the contribution of Records Management Practices on Service Delivery in Ntungamo District. The outcomes on items were as presented in Table 2 beneath.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Influence of Records Management on Service Delivery.

Influence of Records Management on Service Delivery	F/%	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean
Helps secondary school managers to be effective	F %	42 12.5	85 25.0	104 30.8	101 29.8	6 1.9	2.84
Supports school administrators to be efficient	F %	6 1.9	143 42.3	46 13.5	137 40.4	6 1.9	2.98
Promotes better accountability in secondary schools	F %	26 7.7	136 40.4	36 10.6	140 41.3	- -	2.86
Raises chances of success in monitoring and evaluation	F %	20 5.8	97 28.8	68 20.2	130 38.5	23 6.7	3.12
Encourages development in society among stakeholders	F %	20 5.8	123 36.5	66 19.2	123 36.5	6 1.9	2.92

Primary data, 2023

The results in Table 2 on whether records management practices help secondary school managers to be effective, cumulatively the larger percentage (37.5%) of the respondents disagreed, 30.8% were undecided while 31.7% agreed. The mean = 2.84 was just below 3 which on the five-point Likert scale used to measure the items corresponded to undecided. The results being just below code 3 that is undecided which is the average meant that the respondents indicated to a lesser extent that records management practices have a direct bearing on effectiveness of schools. With respect to whether records management practices support school administrators to be efficient, cumulatively the larger percentage (44.2%) of the respondents disagreed, 3.5% were undecided while 42.3% agreed. The mean = 2.98 was just below 3 which corresponded with undecided. The results being just below 3 meant that to a lesser extent that records management practices aid administrators to avoid wastage of resources in schools.

Concerning whether records management practices proper accountability in schools, cumulatively the larger percentage (48.1%) of the respondents disagreed, 10.6% were undecided while 41.3% agreed. The mean = 2.86 was just below 3 which corresponded with undecided. The results being just below 3 meant that to a lesser extent that records management practices can always lead to proactive accountability for growth in education. As regards whether, records management practices raises chances of success in monitoring and evaluation, cumulatively the larger percentage (45.2%) agreed while 20.2% were undecided and 34.6% disagreed. The mean = 3.12 was close 3 which corresponded with undecided. Undecided being the average, the results suggested that fairly, records management practices raise chances of success in monitoring and evaluation for quality services in education.

With respect to whether records management practices encourage development in society among stakeholders, cumulatively the larger percentage (42.3%) of the respondents disagreed, 19.2% were undecided while 38.4% agreed. The mean = 2.92 was just below 3 which corresponded with undecided. The results being just below 3 meant that to a lesser extent, records management practices encourages development in society among stakeholders in relation to better service delivery.

Qualitatively, the respondents through interviews gave their views in relation Contribution of records management practices on service delivery. One respondent stated:

“Influence of Records Management Practices on Service Delivery in Ntungamo district can be clearly seen on how schools have developed in terms of infrastructure already put in place.”

This suggested that school managers have always practiced better accountability which has encouraged efficient use of resources for the best living standards of all stakeholders in education.

Table 3: Correlation between Records Management and Service Delivery in Ntungamo district

		Records management	Service delivery
Records management	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	338	338
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	338	338

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data (2023)

The study established that records management practices significantly ($p=0.000<0.05$) influenced the service delivery in Ntungamo District in Uganda. Also, there was a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.541$) between records management practices and service delivery in Ntungamo district. In this context, records management practices improved the delivery of services in Ntungamo district; because it upgraded the level of accountability in schools in Ntungamo district. This implied that the set null hypothesis was rejected implying that there is a significant correlation between Records Management Practices and Service Delivery.

4. Discussion

The discoveries specified that the association between records management practices and service delivery in Ntungamo district in Uganda was statistically noteworthy. This inferred that the records management practices really affects service delivery in Ntungamo district in Uganda. This result was in consonance with the study directed by Adeboyeje & Afolabi (2022) on Records Keeping and classroom management in Nigeria, who found out that the teachers who kept records well were effective and efficient at work. Nevertheless, this outcome was not in accordance with a widespread inquiry study conducted by Azman & Ezeocha (2019) on Educational Administration in Mauritania who found out that records management practices did not have any bearing to development in education due personality of individual educators. Some school managers are naturally selfish and unproductive, a reason why some schools may not grow and develop.

5. Conclusion

Records management practices are important for service delivery in education sector because it encourages better accountability and transparency in educational operations (Gill, 2019). If educational records are well kept, they can help engender scenarios of growth and development in schools across the globe. The school managers may use the records comparatively to improve the general performance in education.

6. Study Implications

The Bureaucrats from Public Service Commission should endeavour to recruit competent and knowledgeable departmental managers to oversee the implementation of educational policies for the development of the nation. This can be done through publicity both in local and national media in order to draw a pool of applicants from which public service commission can choose the Head teachers to man well the schools. The Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda should put in place proactive policies that relate to Records Management Practices for proper accountability in schools, a scenario that can allow development to blossom in education in Uganda.

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