

## The Challenges in Implementing Proper Recordkeeping Practices at Public Universities

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### Abstract

This paper highlighted Five (5) challenges in implementing recordkeeping practices at public universities. Currently, the issues of improper recordkeeping practices are frequently mentioned by the scholars. As continuously mentioned, the proper investigation on the current practices of recordkeeping needs to be conducted adequately. The investigation commenced by exploring and analyzing the literatures from the previous research and case study. Through the analysis, several literatures have been identified which shows that the issues of recordkeeping are critically highlighted in the most public universities. In ensuring the process of analyzing those literatures are conducted academically, the method of systematic review technique is applied. As a result, there are Five (5) challenges of the implementation of recordkeeping practices at public universities are identified. There are lack of policy, skill, knowledge, fund, and awareness. In each of the challenges, there are Thirteen (13) items found which includes creation, access, appraisal, storage, education, training, experience, records management, hiring professional, sustainability, framework, method, and preservation. Based on these major findings, challenges of implementing the recordkeeping practices at public universities are adequately identified. In fact, it can facilitate the public institution to strategizing the process of applying proper recordkeeping practices at their institutions in the future.

**Keyword:** Recordkeeping, Practices, Public Universities, Challenges, Issues

### Introduction

Nowadays, *Information* is the main concerned that highly required by most of the information society. As the information used by the information society, there a lot of activities involves in handling and managing the information. These include the process information as resources, asset, and evidence for any business transaction activities. However, the issues of manipulation, misuse and mishandling the information are slightly occurred within

information society communities. This is where mutual understanding towards the actual meaning of information needs to be properly spell out.

According to Soylu & Kurbanoglu (2017), information is defined as the type of information resolving the problems encountered in daily life. Meanwhile, Anyira et al (2018) stated that information is defined as processed or meaningful data about the world we work within, which in any observation may be considered data and once processed and made meaningful to a recipient it is then defined to be information. Then, according to Ghamri et al (2020), information is recorded, it will stay the same and should not change and should be traceable. Through this explanation, the information is important to the society which can be used to solve daily issues, act as meaningful item and need to be properly recorded for the purpose of future use.

As the information required to be properly recorded, the main aspect that need to be considered is nurturing the root word of “record”. According to Taiwo (2019), records are defined as any paper, books, photographs, magnetic tapes, machine readable materials, microfilm, or other materials which document official actions, decisions, policies, or procedures taken by an individual or organization. Meanwhile, according to Findlay (2018), records are defined as ‘information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of Investigating the Implementation of Recordkeeping Practices among Public Universities in Malaysia business. This followed by Li & Fan (2018) which stated that records are evidence of government business activities, and its effectiveness and proper management can help government with its accountability and transparency, thus, to build a trustworthy government.

As the records act as evidence on any business transaction activities, the proper management of records need to become the main priorities for any organization. There is a case where the public university as a public institution is required to manage the records properly in achieving efficiency, accountability, transparency as well as providing the evidence of day-to-day business transactions activities. In fact, these records help in the formulation of policies, decision making, and continuity in administration (Ifenaike & Olatokun, 2021). In other cases, Paul & Daniel (2019) stated that there is the case where the records are not kept properly, and schools lack good internal accounting control measures as in previous times the heads of schools have lost their position because of mismanagement of records. A study conducted by Birhanu et al (2021) shows that the researchers reported lacking skills in preparing and managing budgets, and the institutions lacked structures to support them in these tasks. Inefficient financial management and poor recordkeeping practices within research institutions have undermined the finance and procurement processes for research.

Moreover, the study conducted by Tamrat (2021) shows that there are five (5) institutions were not able to identify the cause of students’ attrition due to poor record systems. In other situation, Miombe & Kisimbii (2018) stated that in terms of increasing and improving the university service delivery, the issues of no full implementation of documented procedures by the staff, poor record keeping and documentation and even regular audits that are aimed at taking note of the existing gaps for redress are also not being carried out as well. The study conducted by Adewole et al (2019) shows the study results where the poor record keeping

and retrieval system among institutions and lack of understanding of key terminologies and concepts are the major challenges of Research & Development (R&D) activities in country.

Based on the several issues highlighted above, the requirement of applying proper recordkeeping practices at public universities require further investigation and justification. This is because the most activities that involved in accessing the records at public universities contributes to the issues driven. Therefore, the details of each issue are adequately presented and explained in the next section.

### **Literature Review**

In this section, there are several challenges in implementing the recordkeeping practices have been identified.

#### *Lack of Policy*

A policy is defined as a general guide for action and decision-making, which facilitates the achievement of goals in any area (Mubinovna & Nutfulloevna, 2020). In ensuring the recordkeeping practices can achieved its goals, it is important to apply recordkeeping policy in any organizations. However, the issues on lack of policy applied in organizations are remain unsolved and widely discussed by scholars. As stated by Ghasia et al (2017), the lack of policy for business records management has resulted many challenges in business such as for Small Medium Enterprise (SME) organizations. Meanwhile, according to Mosweu & Simon (2018) which cited from Keakopa (2013) observed that the literature on records management in Botswana showed a growing concern on lack of policies and procedures which were essential in implementing records management strategies. On the other hand, Netshakhuma (2020) presented the review of literature showed that the majority of institution in Nigeria showed lack of policies to determine appraisal of records. As the appraisal records is part of the recordkeeping component and important to the institutions, the absence of it could generate a lot of issues especially in terms of appraising the institution's records. This is also supported by Chikomba et al (2021), where the lack of policies, guidelines and standards have affected records management practices such as creation, access, appraisal, and storage. Through these justifications, the issues of lack of policy applied on the recordkeeping practices are properly explained. This is also shows that part of the challenges in applying the recordkeeping practices in public institution could be caused by this policy issue.

#### *Lack of Skill*

Instead of policy, having good skills are also important in ensuring the recordkeeping practices can be implemented properly. Generally, skills can be defined as an ability or proficiency at a task that is normally acquired through education, training and/or experience (Jagger, 2017). Through this definition, it is shows that the skills are important for any types of activities including the process in handling the recordkeeping activities. Unfortunately, there are a lot of issues of lack of skill are highlighted by scholars until today. The study conducted by Wambui & Mercy (2017) found that organizations are faced with a challenge of lack of skill and knowledge on electronic procurement in the implementation of electronic procurement. Meanwhile, Chhabra et al (2018) stated that a large population in developing countries remain deprived of these services due to lack of skills, training, and infrastructure. In terms of academic institutions, Wallang & Tambi (2020) presented some of the challenges that are associated with educators include a lack of skills in test construction and test administration,

attitudes towards continuous assessment, and recordkeeping. As for the electronic records, Abiola & Ugwoke (2021) which cited from Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011) lament that lack of skill and infrastructure to manage electronic records in organizations make access to information difficult. Through these entire explanation on the current issues of skills, it is believed that the lack of skill becomes one of the elements that contributes to the challenges on implementing the proper recordkeeping practices in public universities.

#### *Lack of Knowledge*

The skills and practices of proper recordkeeping shows a significant relationship between them. However, without proper knowledge on recordkeeping execution and activities, the entire process of recordkeeping could be incomplete. This can be found through several issues that occurred in many organizations. According to Baba & KarfaBizi (2021) stated that part of the indicators given by poor financial record keeping were given by Onalapo & Adegbite (2014) whose study found out that poor financial recordkeeping manifests through lack of knowledge. On top of that, in the business environment, Yoweri (2018) presenting the finding of the study which shows that the owners or managers of Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) had positive attitude to words *Recordkeeping* but lack of knowledge of Recordkeeping made them to make more errors and fraud. Then, this followed by Gelaye (2020) which cited from Muchira (2012), stated that the recordkeeping and growth of micro and small enterprises of Thika municipality in Kenya founds that the Micro and Small Enterprise (MSEs) faced various challenges including the lack of knowledge on the importance of keeping the records by some of the entrepreneurs. As discussed, this is shown that the lack of knowledge could become part of the challenges in implementing proper recordkeeping in public universities as well.

#### *Lack of Fund*

The implementation of recordkeeping practices in the public universities require an adequate funding to be allocated for the entire recordkeeping activities. Having inadequate funding, it could lead to the issues of failure in executing the proper recordkeeping in public universities. According to Arua et al (2017), there is an issues where low priority given to records management activities and inadequate funds allocation for records management which has led to the recordkeeping has been neglected for many years. As an impact to this issue, Campus (2019) stated that inadequate funding and poor-quality assurance owing to various training limitations could be adduced to poor strategic management skills of the principals who have not dutifully planned strategically to put things in place. Meanwhile, based on doctoral thesis written by Tusiime (2019), through an interview with the records officer, management of financial records is faced with limited funds to facilitate the activity for example purchasing supplies like recycle bins, shredders, allowances for staff, hiring professionals to perform the different records management activities. Then, as stated by Innocent (2020), the cost of records management is a foreseen challenge and inadequate funds in the office contributes to some challenges faced by the employees in attaining a sustainable development goal. As being justified, the lack of fund or inadequate funding is very important aspect that need to be focused especially on the completion of proper recordkeeping practices implementation in public universities.

### *Lack of Awareness*

In the aspect of awareness, recordkeeping practices is also requiring awareness approach to be applied in the organizations. This includes applying basic concept of awareness including the cause and effect of awareness as regards to recordkeeping practices. This can be seen through the management of financial records and other type of records as well. Based on the study conducted by Naheed et al (2019), the overall results described that there is lack of awareness among the people that without education and record keeping and financial control it is not possible to create new ideas and to run planned business system. In terms of medical records, Ghosh et al (2018) stated that in the matters of record-keeping, most of the practitioners were not aware of time framework, method, and need for preserving treatment records post-treatment. Subsequently, according to Guto & Jumba (2021) which cited from Kemoni (2017) shows that one of the challenges of public records keeping system is lack of awareness among record professionals and government authorities. Through the explanation from the scholars, this has shown that the aspect of awareness is very important element that need to be focused. This is to ensure that the proper recordkeeping practices can completely being implemented specifically for the recordkeeping activities in the public universities.

### **Methodology**

The process of capturing and exploring the entire information that relate to the aspect of recordkeeping require dedicated method of literature review to be applied. There are several types of literature review method and techniques that have been used by the researchers. These include the content analysis, meta-analysis, scoping review, and systematic review techniques. However, as for this study, the systematic review technique is selected. This is because, the systematic review technique is commonly known as an established technique for developing a systematic finding of literatures. According to Hussain et al (2017), a systematic review is a type of literature review that collects and critically analyses multiple research studies or papers. Then, Almeida et al (2020) stated that the systematic review is strongly related to the knowledge of associated literature, which can help us to understand the question. In fact, Mosteanu et al (2020) justified the systematic review is an effective tool that encourages a thorough understanding of the key features related to the specific field. Overall, the systematic review is the most relevant technique used in gathering literatures as to provide the initial findings of this study.

### **Result**

As a result of the findings, there are several challenges have been discussed that could reflect the implementation of proper recordkeeping practices at public universities. This has been completely illustrated in the figure below.

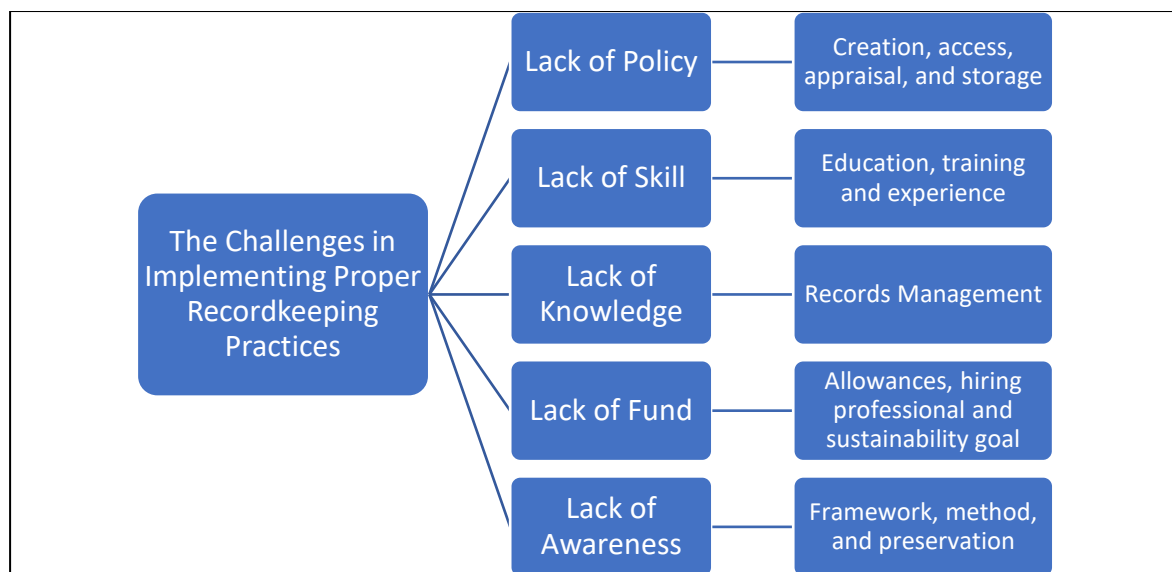


Figure 1: The Challenges in Implementing Proper Recordkeeping Practices

Based on the figure 1, there are Five (5) challenges in implementing proper recordkeeping practices at public universities. These include the “lack of policy,” “lack of skill,” “lack of knowledge,” “lack of fund” and “lack of awareness”. In each of the challenges, there are sub item of challenges have been adequately identified. As for the “lack of policy”, the sub item that fall under this category are lack of policy in terms of “creation”, “access”, “appraisal” and “storage”. Then, under the “lack of skill” the sub items are “education”, “training” and “experience”. As for the “lack of knowledge”, the findings shows that the sub item is focusing on the aspect of “records management”. Meanwhile, the “lack of fund” presented the sub items of “allowances”, “hiring professional” and “sustainability of goal”. This is concluded by the fifth of challenges which is the “lack of awareness”. As for the sub items of this challenges, it more focusing on the aspect of records “framework”, “method” and “preservation” matters. Through these justifications, the 5 challenges in implementing proper recordkeeping practices in public universities are completely presented.

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### Conclusion

The issues of improper recordkeeping practices have become the common issues of many organizations. These includes the organization that involved in business, banking, and education sector. As for the business entity, the issues that occurred in Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) regarding their lack of knowledge on recordkeeping have involved them making some error and fraud. Meanwhile, as for the banking sector, the issues of failure in providing the proper financial report also occurred due to the aspect of incorrect financial report produced, insufficient fund prepared, and financial record are also not properly managed. Subsequently, as for the education sector, the issues of improper recordkeeping practices are currently faced by many institutions including the public universities. This is where the issues of recordkeeping practices at public universities have become the focus of this study.

The issues of implementing proper recordkeeping practices in the public universities are the most important aspect that need to be resolved. These are due to the several issues that are continuously discussed by scholars in literatures. As presented in the figure 1, the challenges in terms of lack of policy, skill, knowledge, fund, and awareness have shown the cruciality of the issues. This is also shows that the entire activities in implementing proper recordkeeping practices at public universities required a proper planning in solving the issues driven. Part of the planning is to provide a solution on the entire challenges that have been identified. This includes proposing a dedicated mechanism to solve the entire issues that relates to recordkeeping practices. Then, performing further investigation on other challenges of recordkeeping practices are also required to be conducted. Based on the recommended solution and challenges presented, it would believe that proper recordkeeping practices can completely implemented in the public universities.

Overall, the proper recordkeeping practices could generate a proper evidence of business transaction activities. This is not only for business sector, but it is also affected the education sector. Triggered by these issues, this study is conducted to ensure that the records used in public universities could be mapped with the actual process of records transactions. Through this mapping, the records could be used as evidence on any legal obligation that relates with the aspect of integrity, authenticity and trustworthiness. This is also can protect the public universities for having the issues of losing the vital records while handling the records in the institutions. Therefore, with the development of the model that presented in this paper, it could help the public universities and other type of organizations as well which act as guideline for their entire business transaction activities. Thus, this can generate the proper benchmark to other institution regarding the implementation of proper recordkeeping practices applied by public universities.

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