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Ascertaining the Influence of Records Management Policies on Service
Delivery of Selected Government Parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya



Ascertaining the Influence of Records Management Policies on Service Delivery of Selected Government Parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya

 ¹*Susan Karwitha Muthamia, ²Dr. Geoffrey S. Serede, Ph.D., ³Josephat Odinga

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: susankarwitha74@gmail.com

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Abstract

Purpose: To determine the influence of records management policies on service delivery of selected government parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Methodology: The study used mixed method research approach and descriptive research design. This study's target population comprised of 9 government parastatals located in Mombasa County. The study used simple random sampling method to obtain 3 parastatals which were Kenya Coconut Development Authority [KCDA], Kenya Maritime Authority [KMA], and Kenya Ports Authority [KPA]. The study used simple random sampling method to obtain 269 operations staff who answered open-ended questionnaires. This study conducted a pre-test study at Kenya Ferry Services Limited whose respondent were 27 operations staff randomly selected and distributed in all departments. Reliability and validity were also measured. The study analyzed descriptive statistics which comprised of frequencies, percentages and mean. The findings were presented through tables, figures and narratives.

Findings: The study established that as a result of training staff on records management, time efficiency had been enhanced which reduced the complains made by the citizen seeking the services. Additionally, parastatals had put effort to not only develop policies but also implement them in manual and digital work settings. Some of the purposes of these policies needed staff to be oriented to enable easy comprehension.

Notably, government parastatals had not yet put enough effort towards ensuring that changes in policies were notified to the staff. This left the staff to make personal initiatives on how and where to get the records management policy manuals. As a result, there were increased cases of loss of records especially when changes in policies affect the database. Therefore, these findings will be relevant in ensuring that training and development in regards to records management and policies is scaled to a even more higher level. This is to ensure that clients get the best while at the same time the staff are there to issue high standard services.

The study recommends that the management should employ strict measures such as assigning the task of distribution of policy manuals to staff in departments. This could be done through sending emails to staff notifying them on policy change. Additionally, the management should

maximize on use of social media platforms such as departmental WhatsApp groups to facilitate easier dissemination of information to the staff.

Unique contribution to theory, policy and practice: Records management has a significant influence on delivery of selected government parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya. That is, records management influences service delivery through provision of information that would enable decision making and gave a chance to the public to ask questions on unsatisfied records policies. There is need to ensure that the decision-making process is enhanced through the use of quality records to avoid poor decisions that have high-cost attribute to the commercial parastatal.

Keywords: *Records Management Policies, Service Delivery, Selected Government Parastatals, Mombasa County, Kenya*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Records within an organization are key phenomena that could either see its tremendous growth or downfall. Organizations keep diverse records based on their operations (Franks, 2018). Records provide evidence on the existence of an organization and could also be used as supporting documentation for financing purposes. Additionally, records provide a foundation for important decision making (Peltier, 2016). Keeping correct records policies and maintaining them, is a very significant venture. When properly maintained, time is saved when retrieving them for use hence enhancement of service delivery. The quality offered on service delivery has been a major strive in organizations. This is because matching various needs of customers with the solutions stipulated by the policies is a hard task.

Globally, the problems facing service delivery of record management policies in diverse organizations in nations such as America's capital New York, include slow pace of incorporating technology hence sticking to tradition record management systems. In Canada there have been low number of staff and poor satisfaction of client's needs. In Ohio there have been corruption cases when staff are delivering their mandate (Homeland Security, 2020). In European nation such as Britain, there has been high number of mistakes such as when retrieving records. In Scotland, there are unqualified staff who have been hired illegally.

Regionally, in nations such as in Nigeria and Ghana, there has been poor working motivation to the staff and lack of clear knowledge on the customer's records needs (Africa News, 2019; Mosweu & Rakemane, 2019). In South Africa and Botswana, there has been poor communication across the organization and lack of policies put in place to ensure change management is efficiently done in terms of records (Burns et al., 2019). In East African nations such as Rwanda, there have been problems like government political manipulations (Komba et al., 2017). Additionally, Kamatula and Kemoni (2018) indicated that religious inclinations in Tanzania have made it a hard task for effective service delivery. Poor working conditions

making it hard for the staff to delivery services amicably in Uganda (Luyombya & Ndagire, 2020).

Locally in Kenya, service delivery has undergone office politics interference; lack of planning on records management procedures and policies; lack of training of staff of records management policies; system failures delaying records management activities such as storing of records; tribalism when administering service to clients leading to biasness (Nafula, 2018). Service delivery problems have affected how record management is done hence need to be keenly addressed from policy point of view. The ideal records management practice should ensure that security and privacy are priority; turn manual records to digital one; record, trail and keep an eye on documents; develop and implement a records management strategy; conduct annual audit of the records; make all physical records digital.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The standard operating procedures on services in government parastatals include providing stored records correctly and in a short turn-around time. A good records management policy should therefore have the fundamental usefulness that empowers it to complete and uphold the different records management cycles like collection, organization and cataloguing of records to enhance their recovery, circulation, use, removal or storage (Kimia, 2019).

Nevertheless, there has been poor methods of handling of records whereby there have been interference and loss of records which had delayed service delivery in parastatals in Kenya (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2020). The parastatals have been unable to deliver the required services since the records are not easily traceable and there lacks a clear policy framework to guide on the same hence leading to loss of time when rendering service.

The difficulties in information retrieval have hampered administrative decision making; delays in business operations due to lack of proper retrieval skills by the staff; and poor communication to users of information in departments (Mokandu, 2020). Persistence of this problem has caused the parastatals to struggle with attainment of set objectives.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To determine the influence of records management policies on service delivery of selected government parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

In what way do records management policies influence service delivery of selected government parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Records Continuum Theory [RCT] which was developed by Upward (1996), emphasized on development of records management systems and processes in creation, maintenance, preservation, and retrieval of records. According to RCT, a record should undergo four courses of action which include records identification, records intellectual control, record access provision and physical control of records. The four actions explained further indicate that for an institution or an individual to successfully manage records they should first acknowledge which records they are dealing with. The nature of records is highly pegged on the basic purpose of the record.

Records Continuum Theory was used in this study in the manner that as records undergo the process of creation, maintenance, preservation, and retrieval, they are always empowered by policies and certainly face various challenges. In each stage of records management, there is a policy at play and a challenge to encounter. In the creation stage, there are policies that guide what type of record should be created, how, when, and who should create the record. In the midst of these processes, there is definitely a challenge of finances, skills and planning.

In the maintenance and preservation stage, there are policies that guide what infrastructure should be used, procedures, who should be responsible and alternatives to be used to maintain and preserve more records. The challenges related to loss of data, insufficient infrastructure, and skilled personnel to undertake the process. As demonstrated, for records continuum theory to stand, there must be policies to offer guidelines how to undergo the processes and also the challenges encountered. Without appreciating the need to understand the challenges, the records management systems in bound to stagnate or eventually fail. However, once there is an appreciation that challenges exist in the records management system, it will take a short term to develop solutions to counter the challenges assuring success of records management process.

2.2 Empirical Review

Gesmundo et al. (2022) investigated how the Laguna State Polytechnic University-San Pablo City Campus administrative staff's professional performance was influenced by the strategies put in place on records management. Working with 59 administrative staff who answered questionnaires structured in form of google forms, the study, Gesmundo et al. (2022) found out for record management strategies to effectively work, strong policies needed to be put into place. These policies would guide recording, tracking, monitoring, disposal and retrieval of documents without fail. However, Gesmundo et al. (2022) did not conduct a pre-test of the study to ascertain reliability of the research instruments.

In United Kingdom, The Disability Trust [TDT] (2018) documented on an example of records management policy that was supposed to be used by all departments in the institution. The policy document provided various procedures to be followed in records management. The process included following all legal requirements, capturing correct data and ensuring on its quality.

Additionally, the record should provide control, track, security and storage processes. There were more procedures on access and disposal of the records.

Agu et al. (2022) was interested in finding out how performance of Renaissance University Ugbawka, Enugu State, Nigeria was linked to appropriate records management. Survey research design was adopted by this study. The study sampled 58 full-time academic staff of which 47 agreed to take part in the study. Agu et al. (2022) established that the staff gets more results if they worked in line with records policies. Notably, Agu et al. (2022) did not collect data from non-academic staff such as staff in administration who directly dealt with records management practices in their day-to-day operations.

Adom-Nyankey and Andoh (2021) explored on how record management strategies implemented at the human resource department were performing in a Ghana's university. The study collected data from 228 respondents. Adom-Nyankey and Andoh (2021) found out that human resource department held various records such as personal files of the staff. Nevertheless, the study complains that the department did not have human resource record policy in place in the corporate portfolio.

Kamau (2020) examined practices related to records management and how they influenced delivery of service in the office of director of prosecutions in Kenya. Among the objectives propelled in the study included guidelines put into place to manage records. Kamau (2020) found out that when there were clear guidelines such as policies on how to manage, dispose and privacy guidelines on records, the operations of service delivery became efficient. Kamau (2020) did not analyze any records at the office of director of prosecutions but only relied on questionnaire to come to the conclusion.

Mwanyungu (2019) conducted a study on how service delivery in the Teachers Service Commission [TSC] in Kenya was enhanced by records management practices. Mwanyungu (2019) employed mixed methodology to conduct the study on a sample of 100 respondents. The study found out that there were inadequate policies that covered specific elements on how to conduct survey of records, appraisal, classification, indexing and elimination of records. This led to inadequacy on their operations causing backlog of outdated records within the TSC. Additionally, the TSC employees had not undergone specific training related to new trends in records management and what policies other government institutions were applying in their operations. Therefore, since this study was conducted at TSC which is a government institution, there is need to extend the study on other institutions.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed method research approach and descriptive research design. This study's target population comprised of 9 government parastatals located in Mombasa County. The study used simple random sampling method to obtain 3 parastatals which were Kenya Coconut

Development Authority [KCDA], Kenya Maritime Authority [KMA], and Kenya Ports Authority [KPA]. The study used simple random sampling method to obtain 269 operations staff who answered open-ended questionnaires. This study conducted a pre-test study at Kenya Ferry Services Limited whose respondent were 27 operations staff randomly selected and distributed in all departments. Reliability and validity were also measured. The study analyzed descriptive statistics which comprised of frequencies, percentages and mean. The findings were presented through tables, figures and narratives.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Response Rate

The study had sampled twenty-six managers and two hundred and sixty-nine operations staff. The responses are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: *Response Rate*

Respondents	Sampled	Target	Sampled	Response	Percentage
Operations staff	KCDA	123	38	29	85%
	KMA	156	47	40	
	KPA	615	184	159	
	Total Operations staff	894	269	228	85%

Table 1 reveals that 19(73%) managers were interviewed and 228(85%) of operations staff returned filled-in questionnaires. This translated to 247(84%) response rate which was a threshold recommended by Wu et al. (2022), who advised that excellence is attained when the response is 80% and above.

4.2 Reliability Test Results

This study conducted a pre-test study at Kenya Ferry Services Limited [KFSL] whereby 27 operations staff randomly selected as provided in Table 2.

Table 2: *Reliability Results*

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Questionnaires	.933	27

Table 2 reveals that the interviews had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.874 while questionnaires had 0.933. According to Taber (2018), when the results were 0.7 and above, they were deemed to be reliable. Therefore, this was interpreted as the research instruments used by the study were reliable to actually address the concern of interference and loss of records which had delayed service delivery in parastatals.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Service Delivery

The respondents were to answer questions regarding service delivery. The questionnaire is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics of Service Delivery*

Statements N=228	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Less time is taken when sorting a problem	7(3%)	25(11%)	0(0%)	46(20%)	150(66%)	4.38
There have been less complains particularly when the staff have been trained on records management	0(0%)	15(7%)	3(1%)	26(11%)	184(81%)	4.66
Increased number of clients as well as retained old ones due to digitalization of records	3(1%)	27(12%)	0(0%)	43(19%)	155(68%)	4.41
Improved efficiency when delivering service	110 (48%)	42(18%)	63(28%)	11(5%)	2(1%)	2.75

There are adequate skilled staff to engage in operations	117 (51%)	20(9%)	88(1%)	0(0%)	3(1%)	2.18
There are frequent trainings to staff on service delivery	16 (7%)	52(23%)	4(2%)	115(50%)	41(18%)	3.50

Table 3 reveals that 184(81%) strongly agreed and 26(11%) agreed on a mean of 4.66 that, there had been less complains particularly when the staff were trained on records management which improved service delivery. However, 110(48%) strongly disagreed on a mean of 2.75 that, time efficiency when delivering service had improved which promoted confidence to the public. Additionally, 117(51%) strongly disagreed on a mean of 2.18 that, there were adequate skilled staff to engage in operations that promoted quality service delivery.

The interpretation of findings is that generally the number of complains based on the services and products offered had significantly reduced. However, it was rather unsettling that there were traces of time inefficiencies mainly caused by lack of clear policies on who should do what and when. Further, there were gaps lingering on availability and retention of well-trained staff. Therefore, the service delivery particularly on records management was negatively affected due to a lot of time wasted in trying to trace records by unskilled staff. Comparatively, Franks (2018) advised that the ability of a staff to know how, where and when to look for a record is mainly affected by their training and experience skills. If that is low, it results to busy bodies having less impactful role in the assigned tasks.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Records Management Policies

The respondents were to answer questions regarding records management policies. The questionnaire is provided in Table 4

Table 4: *Descriptive Statistics of Records Management Policies*

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
N=228						

There are policies implemented to be followed to ensure quality delivery of service	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	25(11%)	203(89%)	4.89
There is periodic review on records management policies	0(0%)	15(7%)	3(1%)	26(11%)	184(81%)	4.66
New staff are normally oriented through records management policies	3(1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	18(8%)	207(91%)	4.87
There are manuals on records management policies in every department	108 (47%)	43(19%)	3(1%)	11(5%)	63(28%)	2.92
There are adherence measures implemented on records management	0(0%)	45(20%)	0(0%)	117(51%)	66(29%)	3.89
Records management policies have an influence on service delivery	0(0%)	22(10%)	3(1%)	114(50%)	89(39%)	4.18

Table 4 reveals that 203(89%) strongly agreed and 25(11%) agreed on a mean of 4.89 that, there were policies implemented in records management that were followed to ensure quality delivery of service in both manual and digital environments. Additionally, 207(91%) strongly agreed and 18(8%) agreed on a mean of 4.87 that, new staff were normally oriented through records management policies to understand what was expected of them when delivering services to the public. However, 108(47%) strongly disagreed on a mean of 2.92 that, there were manuals on

records management policies in every department for every staff to be updated on policies in place.

The interpretation of findings is that public institutions had developed and implemented records management policies such that both old and new staff were well informed as far as the job expectations were concerned. Nevertheless, the availability of these policies was not provided adequately in respective departments. This left the staff to make personal initiatives on how and where to get the records management policy manuals. The same sentiments were also shared by Mwangi et al. (2017) who pointed that one of the key hinderance of records management in Laikipia county was related to unavailability of policy manuals to update the staff on diverse policies. The available manuals were related to County Acts as stipulated by the parliament.

5.2 Conclusion

The study established that as a result of training staff on records management, time efficiency had been enhanced which reduced the complains made by the citizen seeking the services. Additionally, parastatals had put effort to not only develop policies but also implement them in manual and digital work settings. Some of the purposes of these policies needed staff to be oriented to enable easy comprehension. Notably, government parastatals had not yet put enough effort towards ensuring that changes in polices were notified to the staff. This left the staff to make personal initiatives on how and where to get the records management policy manuals. As a result, there were increased cases of loss of records especially when changes in policies affect the database. Therefore, these findings will be relevant in ensuring that training and development in regards to records management and policies is scaled to an even more higher level. This is to ensure that clients get the best while the staff are there to issue high standard services.

5.3 Recommendations and Contributions of the Study

The study recommends that the management should employ strict measures such as assigning the task of distribution of policy manuals to staff in departments. This could be done through sending emails to staff notifying them on policy change. Additionally, the management should maximize on use of social media platforms such as departmental WhatsApp groups to facilitate easier dissemination of information to the staff.

The contribution of the study's findings is that records management has a significant influence on delivery of selected government parastatals in Mombasa County, Kenya. That is, records management influences service delivery through provision of information that would enable decision making and gave a chance to the public to ask questions on unsatisfied records policies. There is need to ensure that the decision-making process is enhanced through the use of quality records to avoid poor decisions that have high-cost attribute to the commercial parastatal.

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