

Assessment of Record Management Practices among Administrative Staff of Jimma University

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Abstract

Records management (RM) seeks to efficiently and systematically control the lifecycle of records that are routinely generated as a result of activities and transactions. Most of the universities are continuously deploying integrated RM as a means of improving the decision making as well as service delivery quality and recognized as the core of the university activities. This research is an attempt to fill this gap by using Jimma University (JU) administrative staff as study-survey institution. The study has reviewed the literature and used the purposive sampling for administrative staff (122) of JU comprising middle level staff members, senior staff and junior staff. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection with interview and observation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The major findings revealed that the administrative documents are stored in both manual and electronic forms, which leads to quick decision making, saving office space and promotes good corporate governance. Further found that there are insufficient resources in terms of professionally trained records managers, training-starved administrative staff and office space. Therefore, it is recommended to use the electronic record management with fully trained manpower.

Keywords: Record Management; Administrative Staff; Jimma University; Jimma.

Introduction

Jimma University is one of the higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. It is semi-autonomous and maintains both electronic and manual record management (RM) system because it receives a portion of its funding from the state, students' fees and stakeholders. The University generates large volumes of physical and electronic data and documents on daily basis. Quible (1996) said that 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 for future use. International Organization for Standardization (ISO-15489, 2001) explained RM 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 information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. 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. Rule of law, management of state resources, probity, accountability, foreign relations and the protection

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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 Sprehe (2002), important information of an organization can be lost forever if records are not kept properly especially when a member who is holding a key position in an organization dies, retires, resigns, travels abroad, transfer to different department, branch, or campus (tertiary education). Therefore this research has been carried to find out the RM system maintained by the administrative staffs of Jimma University (JU).

Statement of the Problem

Records are a vital asset in ensuring that the institution is governed effectively and efficiently and is accountable to its staff, students and the community that it serves. Records support decision-making, organize documents, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation. Searching for a document or record that cannot be easily retrieved is one problem that affects many organizations and also consumes time for searching that particular document. There is a serious problem of technophobia in most offices especially among the older employees. For this reason inadequate skills in information technology may create performance gap between older and younger employee. This may be due to generation gaps between the new and old professionals which led analogue information managers to perceive computers as a threat to their status as experts. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) stated that, poor RM is guaranteed to result in information gaps that lead to inadequate records and the loss of document heritage. On the other hand, proper RM plays a vital role in making sure that records are kept in a favorable environment and can be retrieved easily and anytime. Without proper RM, it is very difficult to account for any decision taken. Fraud and dishonesty cannot be easily spotted and be dealt with accordingly if there is no recorded proof. The researcher wants to study how records are managed both physical and electronic format by administrative staff of JU. The questions like what kinds of records, benefits and challenges faced for RM are motivated to do this research with the following research questions:

1. What kinds of records are kept by the Jimma University?
2. What are the records management practices at the university?

3. How do benefit is derived from proper record management?
4. What are the challenges associated with record management?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the RM practices among the administrative staff of Jimma University. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To determine what types of records are kept in the records management system.
- To assess the records management practices at the university.
- To identify the benefits derived from proper records management.
- To identify the challenges associated with records management at the university.

Scope and Significance of the Study

This study is limited to RM practices among the administrative staff of Jimma University. The study is done for the records that are generated only by the administrative staff of JU into the units, sections, departments and faculties. The study will be very significant to different stakeholders and also will help RM of JU to sensitize the administrative staff on the importance of effective RM practices in the university. It will benefit the management of JU and also help students and the general public to know the importance of proper RM. Moreover, if the recommendations will be implemented, it will be lead to the improvement of RM practices and also serve as a catalyst for the modification and formulation of RM strategies and policies in the JU.

Literature Review

A record is defined either in terms of the physical tangible format in which it appears, or in terms of the information it contains. It must be noted that records differ in format or size, and have different contents. The term record comes from the Latin word "recorder", which means to recall, or to remember, or bring back to mind, and this is exactly what records do (Pember and Cowan, 2010). Cox (2001) also explained records as an extension of human memory, purposefully created to record information, document transactions, communicate thoughts, substantiate claims, advance explanations,

offer justifications and provide lasting evidence events. Records can be defined as “documented information, in any form, created or received and maintained by an organization or person in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity”. Kallus (1991) further defines a record as written or oral evidence that has been collected and kept for use in making decisions. The most common records (such as forms, correspondence, reports and books) are written, printed or typed on paper. Oral records capture the human voice on tape, and are stored on cassettes or on other magnetic media. Records are important and it is difficult to imagine life without them, particularly in the running of an organization (Penn et al., 1994).

Records Management

Institutions create records to support the activities that they carry out. However, if these records are not managed properly, they will not provide the necessary support and information might be lost causing problems for the institution. To provide an efficient and effective administration that ensures that the business runs as smoothly as possible, there should be proper management of records. RM is the application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organization’s business (Zawiyah and Robert, 1999). Again, International Organization for Standardization (ISO- 15489) (2001) explained 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 information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. It is also the discipline of applying well-established techniques and procedures to control of those sources of information, which arises internally within an organization as a result of its own activities (Newton, 1989). Unuigbe (1990) discussed RM as the quality, quantity and cost of records and encompassing the procedures, systems, operations, space, equipment and staff required for managing the records. Asiwaju (1985) recognized that RM is a dynamic science of handling recorded information for immediate and future use efficiently and economically. Furthermore, Pali (2009) pointed out that RM is the systematic control of all records, either in media format or printed materials from their creation until its final disposition; including the development

and application of standards to the creation, use, storage, retrieval, disposal and archival preservation of recorded information. In summary, an effective RM program will ensure that records are available for use when needed, that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, that redundant records are destroyed and that records ultimately contribute towards sustaining service delivery.

Records Management Practices

The service provided by records management is vital to any institution, and to every information-using employee in it. Its primary function is to facilitate the free flow of records through an institution, to ensure that information is rapidly available where and when it is needed. To carry out this function needs an efficient, effective records management programmer. By helping the users to do their jobs better and more easily, the records manager serves the institution (Beastall, 1998). Constant Okello Obura, (2012) stressed the significant roles played by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in economic development and the crucial values attached to efficient and effective records and information management in decision making, and the fact that little seems to be done to improve on the management of records and information among the SMES in Uganda. It investigated the management of records and information among the SMEs in Tororo district in Uganda. The paper adopted a quantitative approach in which a structured questionnaire was used for data collection and supplemented with a telephone interview. Snowball sampling strategy was applied in identifying the respondents. A total of 61 SMEs could be identified. Off this 61, 42 (69%) participated in the study and analyzed data using the Excel program. The findings indicated that the SMEs have many issues and challenges related to records and information management. He concluded that a concerted effort should be made and proposed that SMEs managers be trained on key skills for records and information management.

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 (people, money and estate). RM systems and procedures should facilitate compliance with university policies. Specific business functions and activities within universities may be subject to specific legislation or to professional best practice or relevant ethical guidelines. Again, heads of

institutions, schools, other units and business functions within the university have overall responsibility for the management of records generated by their activities thus ensuring that records controlled within their units are managed in a way which meet aims of the University's RM policies. Day-to-day responsibility will be delegated to a Records Manager, who will report to the Registrar. The Records Manager will have a coordinating and enabling role and will advise on policy and best practice. In addition, Shepherd and Yeo (2003), when assessing the need to create and capture records, suggested that it is essential to consider the requirements of the organizations or particular business units that need records to provide evidence and information for operational use, the requirements of the organizations, particular business units or external stakeholders that need evidence to ensure accountability, the cost of creating, capturing and maintaining the records that organizations require and the risk to them if they do not have these records.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO-15489, 2001) is of the view that a policy for creating records is also necessary. It should stipulate the requirements for capturing, registering, classifying, retaining, storing, tracking, accessing and disposing of records. The timely and accurate retrieval of records depends largely on how well they are organized and classified. As a result, records classification systems should reflect the business activities of the organizations. They also pointed out that classification schemes are based on an analysis of functions processes and activities and document the structure of a RM system and the relationship between records and the activities that generate them. Again, they emphasized that it is necessary to use techniques to support decisions about retention and to destroy (Kemoni 2007).

Life Cycle of Records

The life of a record goes through phases starting from when it is created or received by the institution, through to its usage, maintenance and finally disposal. It is a basis on which a RM system is made, that organizations need to follow at each phase of the record's life-cycle. If institutional bodies do not control records through the earlier stages of their life-cycle, records that have low administrative value are kept too long and those of archival value cannot be identified and safeguarded (National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, 2007). The activities of

RM programs are developed upon life cycle, which has several phases that explain the stages or status of records thus from creation through use and maintenance to ultimate disposal (Erlandsson, 1997). It continues as records are stored for an additional period of infrequent or dormant use in off-site records centers, and ends when their operational use ends entirely, or when they are 'selected' as archaically valuable and transferred to an archive, or declared non-archival and destroyed. The life-cycle of records reflects the opinion that all records, irrespective of form and purpose, pass through certain well-defined phases (Newton, 1989). Gill (1993), emphasizes that the record's life cycle means a movement of records in logical steps from the creation, through its use, storage, and retention in active files, to its transfer to inactive files, storage, and finally disposal. Brooks (1996) ascertains that before a record is created, the professional background and level of knowledge of the creators plays a significant role. Only records with enduring value are permitted to undergo the complete life cycle process. Finally, Porter-Roth (2006) pointed out the following as the basic stages in a records life cycle; capturing, managing, storing, delivery and disposition stages.

Benefits of Proper Records Management

Sanderson and Ward (2003) stressed the importance of RM as increasingly being recognized in organizations and the responsibility of records managers to ensure that they gain the attention of decision-makers in their organizations. Palmer (2000) stressed the role of a RM system is that it acts as a control system that reinforces other control systems such as internal and external auditing. The records themselves can serve to detect fraud and recover the loss. Hare and McLeod (1979) views, organizations keep records for information retrieval, evidence of organization's activities, compliance with regulations. Cowling (2003) further identified four main reasons motivating organizations to preserve records permanently as: administrative value, financial value, legal value and information value. In summary, it may be appropriate to indicate that records exist in order to remind institutions of their previous activities. Hounsome (2001) discussed the use of RM for decision making, financial accountability, performance measurement, strategic planning and research, the records are used. Sanderson and

Ward (2003) further explored as avoiding the cost of litigation or failure to comply with regulatory bodies, preventing the loss of intellectual property or loss of corporate learning/corporate memory, preventing loss of information from disasters or theft and ensuring business continuity, maximizing the efficiency of operation and usage of information, responding in a timely and effective way to requirements of customers, protecting executives and their organizations from loss of reputation and credibility with the general public and customers by demonstrating good practice and providing accountability for their actions. According to Sprehe (2002), records ensure that an organization can; conduct its business in an orderly, efficient, and accountable manner, deliver services consistently and equitably, document its policies, decisions, and outcomes to stakeholders and regulators, meet its legislative and regulatory requirements, including audits, protect itself in litigation, function in a financially and ethically accountable manner, protect corporate interests as well as the rights of employees, clients, and other stakeholders, provide continuity of operations in an emergency or disaster, and maintain its corporate and institutional memory. Records can be used to ensure accountability, to make people and businesses account for their actions and obligations and when there is a need to prove that organizations have complied with legal or regulatory requirements or recognized best practice (Thomassen, 2001). In summary, an effective RM program will ensure that records are available for use when needed, privacy and confidentiality maintained, redundant records destroyed and that records ultimately contribute towards sustaining service delivery.

Challenges Associated with Records Management

Brendan (2012) observed the challenges associated with RM as weak legislative and organizational infrastructures. Studies by Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000), Iwhiwhu (2005), and Egwunyenga (2009) confirmed that African record keepers lack the basic skills and competences for handling records and archives in the public sector. There is a serious problem of technophobia in most offices in Africa especially among the older employees. Due to inadequate skills in information technology, many traditional librarians, records managers, and archivists are very conservative and have phobia for computers. Ojedokun (2008) noted that older librarians are "too reluctant to jettison

the old practices for new one". Successful application of information handling technologies in the management of electronic records in developing countries requires an ability to overcome staff and personal resistance. Ezeani (2010) observed that younger librarians are faster in capturing the use of ICTs than the older. Lawal (2007) attributed the challenges associated with RM in most of the organizations to corruption or inadequate finance. According to him, corrupt leaders in Africa do not provide adequate funds, facilities and infrastructure for proper and efficient electronic RM. Instead, corrupt bureaucrats intentionally distort public policies, public records, and decision-making apparatuses and sometimes go to a length to transfer experienced records managers in a bid to create opportunities for embezzlement. Bribery and corruption contributed to ninety percent (90%) of the underdevelopment of Africa and their ineffective RM in institutions. Otuama (2010) mentioned the following as the problems associated with records management in most organizations; Absence of an archival institution, the problem of oral traditions, inadequate skills and high staff turn-over, inadequate funding, poor housing and equipment, absence of an archival law, high levels of illiteracy, Poor transport and communication network.

Methodology

The researcher used survey research. The purpose of a records survey is to identify all the records series created by an office or unit and the extent and nature of their use. The researcher designed and used structured questionnaires (in Annexure) by taking into account of the objectives. Both primary and secondary sources of data are also used in this study.

Population and data collection

The researcher planned to use the population on all the administrative staff of Jimma University. However, due to limitation of time, the researcher could not study the whole population and selected randomly (135) consists of middle staff members, senior staff and junior staff within the JU. The researcher used questionnaires, interviews, observations and analyzed the collected data using SPSS version 20.0.

Data Analysis and Findings

Out of 135 questionnaires distributed to both male and female administrative staff of the JU, only

122 (90.37%) questionnaires were received. It was important to find out from the respondents their age, gender, marital status and educational background as they would affect their participation in the study, because individual responses or perceptions on some issues may vary. Accordingly, the collected data is presented below:

Response Rate and Analysis

From the Table 1, Out of 122 (100%) respondents, 76 (62.3%) were male and 46 (37.7%) were female. This indicates that less number of females was participating in this study. It is found that 12 (9.8%) of the respondents were in the age group of below 25 years, 72 (59.1%) were in the range of 26-35 years, 21 (17.2%) in 36-45 years and the rest 17 (13.9%) above the age of 46 years old. From this, the researcher concluded that most of the respondents are in the age group of 26-35. It is also found that the level of education in which 61(50%) respondents were of University level qualified, which is the highest contributors in this research, 36(29.5%) were with secondary level, 20(16.4%) were tertiary level and only 5(4.1%) were with other qualifications.

Table 1: Different types of data of the respondents

	Category	Numbers	Percentage
1	Category of staff (Level)		
	Senior level	85	69.7%
	Middle level	22	18%
2	Years of Service (range)		
	1-5 years	41	33.6%
	6-10 years	46	37.7%
	11-15 year	25	20.5%
	16 years and above	10	8.2%
	Total	122	100%

It was requested in the questionnaire regarding the total service (in years) and their level in the department. The collected data is given in Table 2:

The Table 2 depicts that 85(69.7%) of the respondents were senior level staff members, 22 (18%) were middle level and 15 (12.3%) at junior level staff. It shows that majority were senior staff who play active role in the University administration for record management.

The maximum of 46 (37.7%) respondents have worked for 6-10 years range, 41 (33.6%) served in between 1-5 years and 10 (8.2%) have spent over 16 years in the institution. It indicates that 81 respondents have experience (more than 5 years)

Table 2: Staff Level and No. of years of service

	Category	Numbers	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	76	62.29%
	Female	46	37.71%
2	Age interval		
	25 years and below	12	9.8%
	26-35 years	72	59.1%
	36-45 years	21	17.2%
	46 years and above	17	13.9%
3	Educational Status		
	Secondary level	36	29.5%
	University	61	50.0%
	Tertiary	20	16.4%
	Other	5	4.1%
	Total	122	100%

in proper RM; they become more conversant with the best practices and tenets of the work and subsequently develop best attitudes towards high performance.

Respondents were asked to state the types of records that are kept in the RM system that they use at the JU. Out of 122 respondents, 43 (35.2%) respondents are maintaining the Estate and Infrastructure records, Financial account records, Employee records by 15 (12.3%), buying and storing details by 10 (8.2%), human resource management by 18 (14.8%) and students administration by 25 (20.1%). It shows that the university maintains different type of records which are shown below in Figure 1:

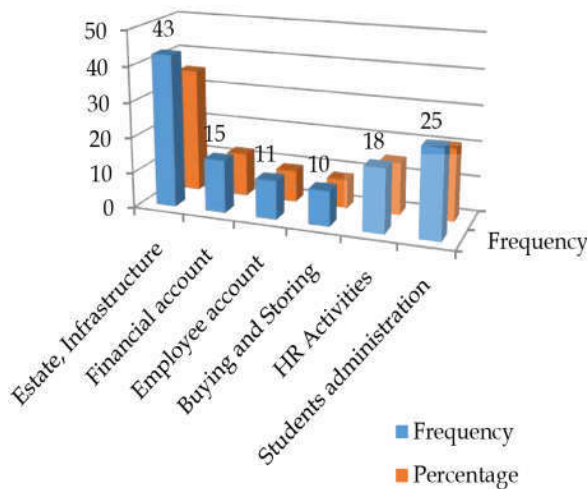


Fig. 1: Types of records maintained

It was requested about the storage method of records. 14 (11.48%) respondents replied that they store it manually, 12 (9.84%) said that they are storing in electronic format and 96 (78.69%) replied that they are storing records in both the formats. The same is given below in Fig 2:

The frequency of filing reported daily by 80 (65.57%) respondents, weekly 35 (28.69%) and by monthly 7 (5.74%) respondents. It is shown in Fig 3 below:

The Figs (2 & 3) show that JU stores maximum in manual and electronic format and they maintain the records on daily basis. Also respondents said that de-centralized record management system is followed in the University. The records are secured in various units /sections/departments/faculties,

hence one unit/department cannot have access to another department records without permission.

The record life cycle has 4 stages from creation, use, maintenance and disposal, which is agreed with the assertion made by Erlandsson (1997) that the activities of RM programs. He said that it has several phases that explain the stages or status of records, from creation, through use and maintenance to ultimate disposal. The questions related to RM policies and procedures, retention, file plan, disaster program, training, audit and adequacy of data privacy was asked with the respondents with SA-Strongly agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-strongly disagree in JU. The answers received are shown below in Table 3:

From the Table 3, it is found that 36 (29.5%) respondents strongly agree that JU has policies and procedures for creating and storing records, 23 (18.9%) agree, 20 (16.4%) neutral, 30 (24.5%) disagree and 13 (10.6%) strongly disagree to this statement. This shows that the administrative staff was not sure whether JU has RM policies and procedures which facilitate for records management.

For the record retention schedule & time period, 22 (18%) respondents strongly agree, 37 (30.3%) agree, 35 (28.6%) neutral, 20 (16.4%) disagree while 8 (6.5%) strongly disagree. This implies that the University has documented records retention schedule that record categories and expected retention time periods. For the organizational file plan, 3 (2.5%) respondents

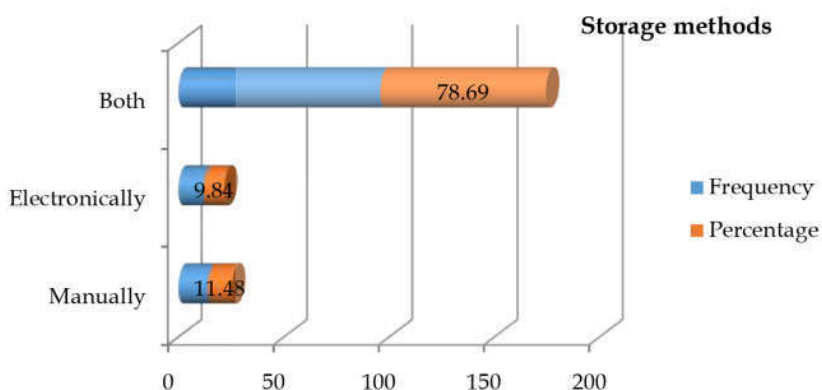


Fig. 2: Storage Method of records

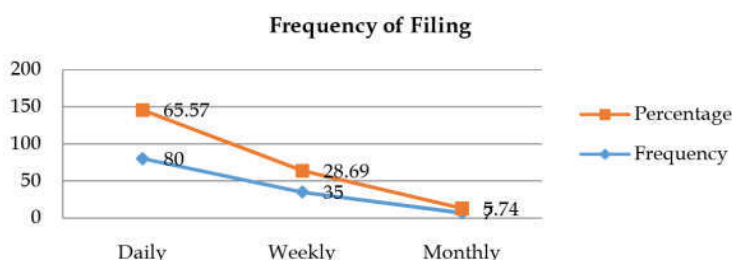


Fig. 3: Frequency of filing

Table 3: RM Level acceptance by the respondents

S. No.	Statements for	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	JU has policies & procedures for RM creation & storing	36(29.5%)	23(18.9%)	20(16.4%)	30(24.5%)	13(10.6%)
2	Record retention schedule & time period	22(18%)	37(30.3%)	35(28.6%)	20(16.4%)	8(6.5%)
3	Organizational file plan at functional unit level	3(2.5%)	28(22.9%)	26(21.3%)	52(42.6%)	13(10.6%)
4	Univ has vital record program for backup (disaster)	38(31.1%)	12(9.8%)	18(14.7%)	36(29.5%)	18(14.7%)
5	University organizes training every year	18(14.6%)	30(24.6%)	42(34.4%)	17(13.9%)	15(12.3%)
6	Periodic audit & assessment	30(24.6%)	17(13.9%)	28(22.9%)	28(22.9%)	19(15.6%)
7	Adequacy of data privacy and security of records	32(26.2%)	35(28.7%)	12(9.8%)	25(20.5%)	18(14.6%)

strongly agree, 28 (22.9%) agree, 26 (21.3%) neutral 52 (42.6%) disagree while 13 (10.6%) strongly disagree. The results shows that the institution do not have file plan that guide officials on the allocation of file reference number for easy filing and retrieval.

For vital record program and backup, 38 (31.1%) respondents strongly agree, 12 (9.8%) agree, 18 (14.7%) neutral, 36 (29.5%) disagree while 18 (14.7%) strongly disagree. This implies that majority of the respondents were in support for vital records program that serves as a back-up. Generally records management must be guided by some level of confidentially, proper maintenance, security, preservation of the content and context.

In regard to training program, 18 (14.6%) respondents strongly agree, 30 (24.6%) agree, 42 (34.4%) neutral, 17 (13.9%) disagree while 15 (12.3%) strongly disagree. It indicates that the administrative staff of JU is not aware of the annual training program organized to ensure that quality of records are to be kept. This conflict with the university's records management policy framework has made provision for staff training in RM annually, which improves knowledge with the necessary skills to carry out their functions properly.

For the periodic audit and assessment, 30 (24.6%) respondents strongly agree, 17 (13.9%) agree, 28 (22.9%) neutral, 28 (22.9%) disagree while 19(15.6%) strongly disagree. The result of the data indicates that most records management staff are not aware whether RM procedures is audited for clarity from time to time. For the adequacy of data privacy, 32 (26.2%) respondents strongly agree, 35 (28.7%) agree, 12 (9.8%) neutral, 25 (20.5%) disagree and 18 (14.6%) strongly disagree. This confirms to the assertion that there is adequacy of data privacy and security of records at JU.

It was requested about the decision about proper RM decisions on several aspects, which is given below in Table 4.

From Table 4, 63 (51.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that proper records management leads to quick decision making, 35 (28.7%) agree,

16 (13.1%) neutral and 8 (6.5%) strongly disagree to the assertion. It indicates that quick decision making help the University to fast track service delivery and promote its image and perhaps most importantly enables the institution to do their jobs. In regard to saving office space, 30 (24.6%) respondents strongly agree, 65 (53.3%) agree, 26 (21.3%) neutral and 1 (0.01%) strongly disagree to the assertion. The result shows that proper records management saves office space. This is in accordance with Shepherd and Yao (2003) assertion that RM, in theory and practice emphasize that it is necessary to use appraisal technique to support decisions about retention as which records can be destroyed at an early stage and which are to be kept for longer term or indefinite retention.

In Table 4, that 31 (25.4%) of the respondents strongly agree that proper RM promote good governance, 73 (59.8%) agree, 12 (9.8%) neutral and 6 (4.9%) strongly disagree to the statement. The result indicates that proper RM promotes good governance, as well as it demonstrates accountability, transparency and corporate governance and is the source of information for the employees. It also shows that, 78 (63.9%) respondents strongly agree as the proper RM saves employees' time. 30 (24.6%) agree, 8 (6.5%) neutral, 6 (4.9%) strongly disagree. This shows that majority of them were in support of the assertion. From the same Table 4, 46 (37.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that proper RM maintain corporate and institutional memory, 65 (53.3%) agree, 7 (5.7%) neutral and 4 (3.3%) strongly disagree. The result shows that most of them agree that proper RM could maintain corporate and institutional memory of the organization. Also 55 (45.1%) respondents strongly agree that proper RM helps meet customer demand, 52 (42.6%) agree, 7 (5.7%) neutral and 8 (6.6%) strongly disagree to the statement. This indicates that proper records management helps the institution to meet customers demand.

It was also requested in the questionnaire that improper RM is a challenge in retrieving office documents for which most of the respondents strongly agreed. It shows that poor RM is a great challenge in retrieving office documents. Improper security for records affects the RM practices in JU.

Table 4: Proper record management decisions

S. No.	Statements for	SA	A	N	SD
1	Leads to quick decision making	63(51.6%)	35(28.7%)	16(13.1%)	8(6.5%)
2	Saves office space	30(24.6%)	65(53.3%)	26(21.3%)	1(0.01%)
3	Promote good governance	31(25.4%)	73(59.8%)	12(9.8%)	6(4.9%)
4	Saves employee time	78(63.9%)	30(24.6%)	8(6.5%)	6(4.9%)
5	Maintain corporate & institutional memory	46(37.7%)	65(53.3%)	7(5.7%)	4(3.3%)
6	Helps to meet the customers demand	55(45.1%)	52(42.6%)	7(5.7%)	8(6.6%)

Also lack of professionally trained record managers contribute to the problems of RM. They also stressed that there is a need for adequate resources to facilitate proper RM. It was indicated by most of the respondents that insufficient space for RM at the University is also as a challenge.

Summary of Findings

The benefits of RM system are that a process (work) is done more easily (less effort required), quickly and with better quality, afterwards; and it can be understood and monitored. From the research it is found that Jimma University does have a RM system, which keeps different types of records, including: employee admission, registration, employee accounts, employee records, staff details, payroll, financial accounts, buying and store details, money transfers, human resource management service in both electronic and print form. When one form of the records is lost, the institution can rely on the other form for the record. The different records are linked to a central database, for example from the employee account one can access all the information about the employee, including the employees financial status, whether he stays on campus or off campus, etc. The staff records display all the information about the staff - their demographic details, staff numbers, accounts, payroll, etc. These records are very important and beneficial to the university and such records need to be safeguarded at all times.

The research also revealed that decentralized system of RM is being practiced. It is found that the University records pass through four phases from creation, through use and maintenance to ultimate disposal of the records life cycle and has policies and procedures for creating and storing records in both paper and electronic forms. However, the awareness of these policies and procedures is very low. It has a documented records retention schedules and expected retention time periods for the records. Besides, the finding indicated that the RM staff is not given RM training to ensure for maintain the quality of RM. It was also realized that the University has adequate policy framework on data privacy and security for its records. The research confirmed that the respondents file their office documents on daily basis, which shows the importance the administrative staff attached to records of the University. The study revealed that proper RM leads to quick decision making and saves office space as well. In addition, the finding indicated that proper RM promotes good corporate

governance and helps maintain corporate and institutional memory. The challenge associated with proper RM is inadequate professionally trained records managers and insufficient resources like office space.

Interview and observation result

From the interview, it is indicated that majority of respondents don't know how the risks are monitored and managed in the day to day operation of the staff activities. In addition, the staff workers don't assess effectiveness of RM program in a scheduled way and no knowledge on how the record is disposed. It is observed that the record is managed in both electronic and print forms. In addition, the cabinet in which record is stored is the oldest one and the room is insufficient to store the record that means insufficient space for storage of records.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The study found that RM is a field that needs to be run by experienced professionals who will know what has to be done. It is therefore necessary for the University to train their RM staff to have a qualification in records management. Workshops and seminars should be organized by the University to train staff on records management.

Furthermore, all University officials should be works hopped on the RM Policy and the Procedure and should be posted on University's website for easy access. Also, there should be a schedule to control and manage all institutions records and prevent unauthorized removal and destruction of records.

The management of records must be recognized as being one of the key and vital functions that contribute towards the realization of the organizational goals. The study identified several issues which could be a subject of further investigation by records management researchers. Studies may be conducted to establish RM practices in the private sector, e.g. banking, insurance and non-governmental organizations, agricultural sector and health service sector. Such a study would provide useful comparative data on RM practices in the public and private sectors.

Conclusion

From the study, it can be deduced different types of record is kept in the university record office that records are inextricable entwined with increased

transparency, accountability and good governance. It also became apparent that fraud cannot be proven, meaningful audits cannot be carried out and government actions are not open to review when records are not well managed. Records provide verifiable evidence of fraud and can lead investigators to the root cause of corruption. Sound records management is therefore at the center of increased accountability and good governance, it is one of the best weapons in fighting corruption, and it plays a vital role in the advancement of human rights and contributes towards ensuring sound financial management. Records should therefore be managed in the same manner that the other organizational resources, such as finance and staff, are managed. Furthermore, the discussion has revealed that sound records management is not a choice, but compulsory as it is regulated by Universities. Advocating the management of records as an organizational and societal benefit is therefore not an activity to be taken for granted. Ignorance on records management can have adverse effects to the University's performance and can drain financial resources, and that will ultimately affect service delivery.

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Appendix - A

QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: Assessment of Records Management practices among the Administrative Staff of Jimma University

I am a student of JU from the department of information science, conducting the above research for the completion of BSc (Infn Science) course. This questionnaire is designed to collect information on the above topic for academic purposes and will be very grateful if you could spare some time and answer the questions below. The information provided will be treated as confidential. Please tick or write out your response to the following questions.

Demographic Information *(Please tick where appropriate)*

1. Age: 25 years and below 26-35 years
36-45 years 46 and above
2. Gender: Male Female
3. What is your highest educational qualification?
Basic Secondary University Tertiary Others (Specify)
4. How many years have you worked with in administrative staff of the University?
1 - 5 years 6 - 10 years 11 - 15years 16 and above
5. What category of staff do you belong?
Senior member Middle level staff junior staff other please specify

Section C: Benefits derived from effective Records Management

Please respond to the following statements on the scale provided “**Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), not sure (3), Disagree (4), strongly disagree (5).** Tick the boxes that most closely fit your opinion.

Benefits derived from record management practices	SA(1)	A(2)	N(3)	D(4)	SD(5)
Quick decision making leads to the benefit of proper records management					
Space saving is the benefit administrative staff of the University derive from records management					
Reduction of storage is one of the importance of effective records management					
Promoting good governance contribute to the benefit of proper records management					
Effective records management saves employees' time					
Proper records management maintain corporate and institutional memory					
Records management help to meet customers' demand					

Section D: Problems or challenges associated with Records Management Tick the boxes that most closely match your opinion.

Problems / Challenges	SA ()	A ()	N ()	D ()	SD ()
Improper records management is challenge in retrieving office documents.					
Lack of proper security for records affects the records management practices at the University.					
Lack of professionally trained records managers contribute to problems of records management.					
Inadequate resources to facilitate proper records management practices is a problem					
Insufficient space for records management at the University is also challenge.					

Appendix B

Interview Checklist

Interview questions designed to collect information for the research.

1. How are risks monitored and managed in the day to day operation of the staff business?
2. Do you regularly assess the effectiveness of your records management program?
3. Are disposal activities regularly undertaken?

Appendix C

Observation Checklist

Check list in which the researcher observed in the area of JU record office center in order to collect data for the assessment RM practice among administrative staff of JU.

1. The researcher will check how records are being managed.
 2. The researcher will visit the business units and look in filing cabinets.
 3. The researcher will observe the Monitor system logs and records entries.
 4. The researcher will observe staff doing record keeping tasks.
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