

Assessment of the management of student affairs records

Assessment of the management

Case of the University of Mpumalanga in South Africa

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess records management components, such as record scheduled, records appraisal, destroyed/disposed, retained, training of staff on the management of the student affairs records (SARs), provided access, the challenges associated with efficient management of SARs and strategies for effective management of SARs, to determine the extent the Student Affairs Department (SAD) complies with the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) records management policy.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper uses qualitative methodology of a triangulation of data collection and this included interviews, document analysis and observation.

Findings – The literature review, as well as the interview, revealed that findings on the UMP records management policy are multi-layered. A number of participants mentioned lack of records centre, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access to information as a challenge to the management of SARs.

Research limitations/implications – The research was only limited to the UMP, Student Affairs Division, with a population of 15 staff members even though the findings can be applied to all the universities in South Africa.

Practical implications – SAD has a unique contribution to make to ensure that records created within their division are managed in terms of the UMP records management policy by ensuring that components such as records storage retention and appraisal of records management training and managing access to information are adhered to.

Social implications – Failure to comply with the UMP records management policy by the Student Affairs Division will contribute to the loss of institutional memories, non-compliance with legislations such as Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000, National Archives and Records Services Act 46 of 1996 and the Protection of Personal Information Act No 4. Of 2013.

Originality/value – The research appears to be the first of its kind, to the best of the authors' knowledge, to assess SARs at the UMP, South Africa.

Keywords Archives, Records management policy, Records storage, Retention schedule, Students affairs records, University of Mpumalanga

Paper type Research paper

Introduction and the historical background of the University of Mpumalanga

The non-availability of a university in Mpumalanga led to the establishment of a new university. Satellite universities, such as the University of South Africa, Tshwane University of Pretoria, were the only ones offering post-matric qualifications.

In 1991, the University Education Committee was tasked to identify an area for the establishment of the new university. The Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA), an agricultural college established in 1990, was seen as the most appropriate location



(UMP, 2013). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) appointed a ministerial task team to investigate into the feasibility of establishing a university. The task team consulted with the relevant stakeholders in that regard. Mpumalanga Province became a key partner and intellectual input and practical support.

In 2010, Honourable D. Mabuza, the then Premier of Mpumalanga Province, announced the establishment of the university. The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) together with Sol Plaatje University, South Africa's two post-apartheid universities, was expected to play a role in the development and transformation of the society (Lowvelder Newspaper, 2017). As the Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training, Dr B.E. Nzimande in his keynote address at the launch of the UMP on 31st October 2013, said, "Universities are socially engaged institutions that are embedded in the cultural, economic lie and build environments in which they find themselves".

Furthermore, the Mpumalanga Province established a political task team led by the Member of Executive Council for Education and the Technical Provincial Committee to ensure support towards the establishment of the UMP (DARDLA, 2012).

The Records and Archives Department was established in 2015. The university archivist was appointed in 2016. The purpose of the establishment of the Records and Archives Department was to preserve institutional memory of the university. Beyond this background of goals and university objectives, the university archives pursue the project amid an increasing attention to collaborate with the Student Affairs Department (SAD) to ensure the collection of the student affairs records (SARs). Archives are seen as a means of documenting the outcomes of research and creative efforts of students, staff and faculty and of addressing the need for storing and accessing records of the university (Miner and Kahl, 2012). The Records and Archives Department aims to improve access to archival collections. The university archivist and records manager's first task was to appraise students' records related to previous LCA. Appraisal was done to ensure that the records with archival value are identified, arranged and described. The focus was on processing student's files so that they would be available for use by the researchers. The second part of the archivists was to develop a records management policy. SARs were regarded as the institutional memory with value to the university. Furthermore, the Records Management Advisory Committee was formed to advise the university on the issue of records and archives management.

The UMP management established SAD with 15 staff members to enhance student growth and development, to improve the quality of student experience by creating an effective and progressive student leadership. SAD creates records such as societies, events, sports, students' accommodation, culture, and community engagements. These records constitute memory and history of student life. The UMP management makes an effort to manage the SARs by creating and establishing the Records and Archives Management Department, and by appointing archivists to advise the university on issues of archives and records management policy, including SARs.

The concept of the SARs, as defined by Wagner and Smith (2012), refers to SARs as clubs, performances, sports teams and student life; material reflecting residential life, student publications and student social life. With this definition in mind, one may observe that there are various records created by various student organisations at the UMP.

The universities are to manage records in compliance with the national archives legislations, regulations and standards (IRMT, 2009). The importance of policy framework in the successful processing, storing and preserving of records cannot be overemphasized. Universities are to develop guidelines on the records creation, acquisition of records, records classification, appraisal of records, records scheduling, destruction of records, training of

records staff, transferring and storing records, electronic records management and access management. The SAR management is subjected to and best supported by record-keeping approaches that are articulated in the continuum theory (Yusof and Chell, 2000). The successful university archives and records management (ARM) programme initiatives require the establishment of infrastructure to manage SARs from the creation until the disposal (Okello-Obura, 2011; Sigauke *et al.* (2016). Archives and records management programmes involve compliance with the legislations, developing records management policy, procedures, systems and structures. The university records management programme's best practices are to be assessed based on the above mentioned criteria.

Student affairs record assessment within a South African University context

According to Gable (2013), assessment of archives and records management programme provides an opportunity to determine how organisational records management practices measure against the maturity level. Assessments are useful for the organisation's records management policy to assess records management practices and inform new ways of thinking about record storage, retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access (Voce, 2015). The assessment scores as high, medium and low provide a way for those at all levels of the organisation to understand how the organisation is doing with regard to records management (Voce, 2015). This assessment was used for SAD at the UMP.

The new dispensation characterised by the new democratically elected government in 1994, required work to be done to address issues on all fronts – political, economic, social, educational and cultural fronts (Netshakhuma, 2019). There are 26 public universities in South Africa.

The study conducted by Katuu (2016) shows that there was a low-level of maturity in terms of record storage, appraisal and training of records management and managing access to information. The failure to capture SARs in South African universities has been attributed to lack of clear policies and procedures (Wamukoya and Mutula, 2005). In South Africa, universities operate in compliance with the Higher Education Act No. 107 of 1997 and their internal regulatory structure. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) and Muchaonyerwa and Khayundi (2014) alluded to the fact that SAR management is key to fulfilling the requirements of the Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 2000 and Protection of Personnel Information Act No. 4 of 2013. Universities have the right to access student records in line with the above-mentioned regulations. According to Kyobe (2009), there is non-compliance with legislatures. SARs are to be managed in terms of records management policy (Chachage and Ngulube, 2006).

In my personal observation at the UMP's Department of Student Affairs, there are limited storage facilities for managing current and non-current records. Facilities such as filing cabinets and shelves have records on top of them with some clogging up prime office space with no plan for their storage and maintenance. The problem is that no review and evaluation of all the student records have been undertaken. This means that there is limited control of the SAR. SAD is finding it hard to get employees to comply with the record management policy.

Problem statement

Research observed poor implementation of the policy guidelines/provisions for records management of the university in the management of SARs. According to Wagner and Smith (2012), Samuel (1992); Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), Mnjama and Pendo (2014); Mnjama *et al.* (2016), Segaetsho and Mnjama (2012); Millar (1997), Ambira and Kemoni (2011); and

Erima and Wamukoya (2012), universities experience challenges of managing SARs such as suitable record storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access to information.

The researcher noticed the lack of implementation of university records management policy to manage and implement SARs because such records are viewed as unimportant or outside the collection scope of archivists. This is acknowledged by Carter (2006) who alluded that university archivists and records managers are to ensure that appropriate records storage, records retention, appraisal of records, training, and access to information are in place. As a result, few research studies were conducted on SARs in South Africa. It is imperative to ascertain the extent of implementation of the policy guidelines/provisions for records management of the university in the management of SARs.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess records management components, such as records storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access to information, to determine the extent to which SAD complies with the UMP records management policy. The records storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access are essential components of the UMP records management policy. Records management assessment is an evaluation of a specific records management component affecting records management processes, procedures and policies.

In this study, assessments were conducted through on-site meetings. Assessment measured the division of student affairs in compliance with the UMP records management policy approved by the University Council in 2016. The University takes cognizance of the following factors:

- The inactive records are to be preserved in the records centre.
- The records retention and appraisal of records is to be conducted on a continuous basis.
- The training needs of records management staff throughout university.
- The records and archives material should be accessible to the users.

These are essential for providing stepping stones to a higher level of functioning of the division.

Research objectives

The principles of management that formed the variable for the assessment of SARs includes – records schedule, records appraisal, records destruction, records disposal and records retention/archiving. In light of the above statement of the problem, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent has the Student Affairs Department scheduled their records?
- RQ2. To what extent has the Student Affairs Department appraised the student affairs records?
- RQ3. To what extent has the Student Affairs Department destroyed/disposed of the student affairs records?

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>RQ4. To what extent has the Student Affairs Department retained the student affairs records?</p> <p>RQ5. To what extent has the Student Affairs Department trained their staff for the management of their records?</p> <p>RQ6. To what extent had the Student Affairs Department provided access (finding aid) to information in the student affairs records?</p> <p>RQ7. What are the challenges associated with efficient management of the student affairs records?</p> <p>RQ8. What are the strategies for effective management of the student affairs records?</p> | <p>Assessment of the management</p> |
|---|---|

Theoretical framework

The research objectives were addressed through the records continuum theory (RCT). According to Yusuf and Chell (2005), the term continuum was introduced as early as 1950, by Ian Maclean. This is because the RCT covers all the record-keeping functions from capture, identify, organise, accessibility, transfer and disposal to storage. This theory is continuum with regard to the management of SARs (Yusuf and Chell, 2005). A records management programme is concerned with the records through the continuum process (IRMT, 1999). There should be continuous SAR management. The continuous management of records can be realised through the development of a retention schedule to determine historical, cultural and scientific records. According to Kalusopa (2011), capturing and retaining accurate records is the way to preserve evidence for future planning and activity review.

The basic tenets of the theory as stipulated by Flynn (2001) include the following:

- A unified and homogenous systems for the management of records in any format throughout their lifetime.
- A sense of provenance, organisational and social context in which records are created and maintained.
- An engagement with the establishment and design of recordkeeping system, as early as the pre-creation stage.
- The concept of service to records users, both internal and external to the creating organization, throughout the lifetime of those records.
- Sharing of responsibility and co-operation for records and records keeping systems.
- The synchronic existence of a record/accumulation of records in the more than one dimension of record or accumulation of records through one discrete and segmented life cycle stage after another.

The present study considered the RCT because the theory addresses important aspects for continuation of management of SAR. The RCT addresses issues that would assist the university in developing plans and strategies with which to improve the SAR management. For instance, the RCT observes that universities must adhere to the standards and functional requirements to ensure that the universities create, capture, organize, store, search, retrieve and preserve the SAR and protect their integrity and trustworthiness. These were among the key issues that the current study was researching on. Therefor, RCT served as a guidance for the researcher to assess various aspects on SAR management. Records management programmes are comprehensively designed using the RCT to reduce records

management programmes problems such as appropriate record storage, lack of access to information, determination of appropriate retention schedule and increase efficiency. The theory is significant to SAR because it widens the possibilities of interpretations of records and record-keeping systems offered by the life cycle model, it emphasises that SAD is created and maintained for their uses, as a result of business and administrative functions and processes.

Research approach

This study used a qualitative research approach to answer the research questions. The study adopted a case study design. The decision to use the qualitative approach was based on the research questions and the nature of the data that the researcher needed to collect and analyse. A case study is suitable when the research being conducted in an in-depth study. Because the sample was small, the researcher managed to interview all the participants of the study. All the target population was interviewed.

Population

The study population consisted of 15 student affairs staff that was selected using purposive sampling techniques. A small but relevant sample was selected to provide an information-rich qualitative context to answer the research questions and meet the objectives as accurately as possible. The small number was justified by the fact that University's Department of Student Affairs is not fully established as the university is still new. The study was drawn from the two campuses – Siyabuswa Campus and Mbombela Main Campus. The respondents included administrative manager and officers from the student affairs offices (Table I).

Data collection

The collection of data was conducted through interviews, observations and documentary analysis, such as the UMP records management policy, which were integrated to gain more depth and insight about SARs. The researcher considered triangulation (interviews, documentary and observations) to increase the credibility and validity of the results. The interviews were focussed, open and brief, but it allowed exploration of the participants' experiences through the generation of other questions. Interview was structured with 15 participants who were purposefully selected. Interviews were conducted at times agreed between the researcher and the participants during the year of 2017.

Literature review

The literature was reviewed based on the following records management policy components – records storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access

Table I.
Study population and sample

| Participant | Population | (%) of participation during interviews sessions |
|-----------------------|------------|---|
| Managers | 6 (40%) | 100 |
| Senior Admin Officers | 07 (47%) | 100 |
| Secretaries | 02 (13) | 100 |
| Total | 15 (100%) | 100 |

Records storage

Records storage is concerned with storage of records that are no longer constantly referred to but are occasionally needed for business. The records are referred to as inactive records (Chinyemba and Ngulube, (2005). Inactive records are records for which the active and semi-active retention periods have lapsed and are no longer required to carry out the functions of a university (Gathoni, 2017). Inactive records are not needed for the day-to-day operation of the department (Iwhiwu, 2005). Storage of inactive records is a vital aspect of records management policy (Iwhiwu, 2005). The study conducted by Chinyemba and Ngulube, (2005) found lack of guidelines to manage inactive records in the South African universities. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) suggest that keeping inactive records together poses storage and retrieval problems. This is alluded to by the study conducted by Phiri (2016) who indicated that most of South African universities and Malawian universities have the tendency to store some university records in personal computers that compromises the security of the records. Phiri (2016) emphasised that computers were not guaranteed in terms of security and could easily be stolen or damaged in the homes of the staff members. Secondly, poor storage of the record and documents exposed them to multitudes of threats, including insects, rain and moisture, extreme heat and unauthorised access. The finding of this research showed that expensive office space was wasted on storing records that could be moved to a less expensive space such as an archives repository. The mechanisms to manage records were inadequate to provide environment in which records management objectives will be met. The research conducted by Coetzer and Roux (2013) at the University of Zululand found that the university lacked a records management policy to deal with the component of records management policy, such as records storage to ensure that SARs are stored and protected. Hence, it is through proper records storage that one can guarantee survival of records of enduring value, access, use and reuse (Mkuriwa, 2015). SARs were not being filed or retained according to the formal records management principles. Inadequate storage has the capability to delay speed in decision-making, as records retrieval would take long and could increase the deterioration of records and thus affect their access and use (Kemoni, 2007).

The study conducted by Wema (2003) at the University of Dar es Salaam found that lack of storage to keep inactive records from the SAR department led to the loss of institutional memory. The study recommends the university to establish a records centre whose main purpose will be to store inactive records. By so doing, these records will be easily retrieved for occasional use or be kept there pending their ultimate destruction or transfer to archival storage.

The research conducted by Matangira *et al.* (2013) found that even though there is a records centre and to keep non-active records, some departments preferred not to transfer their inactive records. The SAR department acknowledged that they never transferred any records to the records centre or they were not aware of the existence of an archives repository because they felt comfortable to access records from their offices instead of going all the way to the university archives repository to request for records.

The study conducted by Nwaomah (2017) found an inadequate storage facility to store inactive records at a Faith-Based University. Inadequate storage facilities slowdown the retrieval of SARs and exposure to sensitive records to those who should not have access. The study by Nwaomah (2017) acknowledged that SARs created or received by the students are considered as vital records. These vital records contain information that is essential to the university mission – critical operations. The study recommended the university administration to provide additional storage facilities records centre archives outside the registry office for the storage of inactive records. This will help to decongest the current

storage room in the registry and serve as backup in case of emergency or disaster. The study by [Khumalo and Chigariro \(2017\)](#) indicated that records cannot be left in offices whose mandate is not records management as there might not be proper control measures to secure records from theft and loss.

The file plan ensures effective management and retrieval of records. This statement is acknowledged by [Phiri \(2016\)](#) who indicated that file plan ensures coherent and consistent arrangement of records and subsequently form the basis for effective retrieval, retention and disposition of the records. The file plan is also essential in assigning security status to users, including restricting access to some classes of records as a legal requirement.

Records management training

To assess records management training of the higher education in Nigeria, a study by [Akor and Udensi \(2014\)](#) revealed that the project had been plagued by ineffectiveness in records management practices. Although the findings showed that records management contributed to effective administration at the university, the study recommended provision of training to ensure that their SAD would be able to undertake the full responsibility of the post.

The study conducted by [Freda \(2014\)](#) found that universities' officials are not trained on the records management policy elements, such as records storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access to information.

The study conducted by [Mukred et al. \(2016\)](#) recommended that training of the staff will help to eliminate any risk associated that may compromise the implementation of records management policy. Moreover, insufficient training results in the probability of implementation of records management policy. [Kulcu \(2009\)](#) said that the educational backgrounds of staff that manages records management programme should be improved by means of orientation and other training activities.

The study conducted by [Mampe and Kalusopa \(2012\)](#) found that inadequate training in records management policies for managers was a challenge in most of the Southern African states. Similarly, a study by [Manyabula \(2009\)](#) found that most of the records management personnel were undertrained in records management. Most of the personnel handling records management issues are not trained on records management principles, such as records storage, records retention and appraisal of records, records management training and managing access. The study conducted by [Erima and Wamukoya \(2012\)](#) found lack of records management training as a threat to the development of records management programmes. [Erima and Wamukoya \(2012\)](#) recommended records management staff training. They stressed that continuous training should be organised for the staff to enable them to upgrade their knowledge on records management. [Erima and Wamukoya \(2012\)](#) further recommended a need for an enterprise-wide records management educational programme to sensitise all staff on records management.

The study conducted by [Chinyemba and Ngulube \(2005\)](#) recommended the introduction of records management training as a way of raising awareness on the importance of records management programmes. A general lack of awareness and appreciation of records management responsibilities and importance was also found at the University of Namibia ([Matangira et al. \(2013\)](#)).

The study conducted by [Nwaomah \(2017\)](#) found that lack of records management training was an issue that needs to be attended. The study recommended the university administration to allocate financial resources to the human resource development in the area of records management. The recommendation also includes seminars and workshops on

records management to ensure that staff is aware of the importance of records management programmes in university.

The study conducted by [Makwae et al. \(2016\)](#) found that records management functions are changing with increase in business, regulatory community and technological demands and new standards to be met. [Makwae et al. \(2016\)](#) recommend institutional managers to be equipped with skills and knowledge to drive effective records management programmes of the university. This implies that managers are to be trained on the new techniques to manage records ([Ngoepe and Ngulube, 2014](#)).

The study conducted by High and Smith (2016) found that the universities are to realise the importance of training to improve record keeping practices, as it would help to reduce the confusion of staff when trying to apply retention policy and records scheduling, and it would streamline some transfer office procedures and reduce burdens on office staff. [Wagner and Smith \(2012\)](#) further indicated that training will provide best practices for security measures and long-term storage methods, which were deficiencies revealed during the pilot project. The training will assist employees to understand limitation on access to information, the storage needs of active and inactive records and protecting records from environmental hazards.

According to [Swain \(2005\)](#), some employees' lack of understanding about the importance of SAR and its role at the university are challenging and important issues for the researcher to address. The review of literature found a low training on ARM programme within Southern African institutions ([Matangira, 2016](#)). After the establishment of a records management programme, there is a need for the champions, such as a Vice Chancellor, to market the records management programme for its publicity.

The practical situation today is that there are few or no universities in South Africa where archivists and records managers have acquired all the skills and competencies in the SAR management. The SAR management may not succeed if established records management programmes are not supported by qualified and experienced records and archives personnel ([Asogwa, 2012](#)).

Records retention and appraisal of records

Appraisal is the process of establishing the value of records, qualifying that value and determining the length of time for which it needs to be preserved ([Vellino and Alberts, 2016](#)). Records must be retained for various minimum periods, as specified in the university records management policy, after which they may be destroyed or where appropriate transferred to university archives ([Makwae et al., 2016](#)). The [UMP records management policy \(2016\)](#) on the records retention and appraisal of records stated that "all department are responsible to determine the value as neither historical, cultural nor social significance of records through appraisal process". While such a policy clearly states that the onus of corporate responsibility for managing the SAR lies with all employees, staff lacks both the practical tools and the comprehensive strategies with which to identify which SARs are to be retain ([Vellino and Alberts, 2016](#)). Records retention periods are built upon records classes, which are aggregations of records created by the various activities of an organisation, and which are organised in alignment with the carrying out processes of the activities of an organisation, when organised in alignment with the carrying out processes of the activities, they deliver optimised results ([Xie, 2016](#)).

An effective records management system should be able to assist in making and implementing decisions on records retention and disposal guidelines ([Mampe and Kalusopa, 2012](#)). Effective disposal of records is vital for efficient records management. In

organizations, disposition ensures that organisations manage records necessary for the conduct of current business (Gathoni, 2017).

The research conducted by Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal found that the absence of records retention schedules suggested that some of the records that were no longer needed by the universities were still kept by the university administration. There was an implication that the university might have been losing valuable evidence and valuable memory, as records disposition had not been developed systematically. The research conducted by Matangira *et al.* (2013) found that there is lack of guidelines regarding the retention and destruction of records. This study by Matangira *et al.* (2013) recommend universities to develop retention schedule of records to effectively dispose records to keep records with historical, cultural and scientific significance.

The study conducted by Nwaomah (2017) found that lack of records retention and disposition schedule may have a link with the inadequate storage facility. This means that departments cannot institute records retention and appraisal of records without a proper storage facility.

The study conducted by Makwae *et al.* (2016) found that the university lacked retention schedule to determine records with historical, cultural and scientific significance. Thereafter, the researcher recommended the management of university to take effective decisions to develop the university records retention schedule to enhance classification of the records. The retention schedule was missing important records series at the project conducted at the University of Kansas, such as contract, maintenance records and other essential records, to enable for the operation of the university. To fill this gap, the university embarked on a pilot project to commence at the University of Kansas in the USA, requiring to revise the records retention policy and schedule (Wagner and Smith (2012)). The revised retention and disposal schedule will include proper use of the records transfer form. This tool would help transferring offices to understand that they are essentially creating a container.

The institution can have records management policy as in the case of the study conducted at the selected universities, because it is a prerequisite for the university to develop records management policy with some weaknesses. The study conducted by Annie *et al.* (2018) showed that weaknesses of records management policy in the University of Zambia, namely, Rusangu University, Cavendish University, National Institute for Public Administration and Evelyn Hone College do not specify on the guidelines of the retention and disposal of records.

Managing access

The university records can only be useful if they are accessible to internal and external stakeholders (Chinyemba and Ngulube, 2005). Access implied that organisation are to develop tool such as file plans to comply with access requirements of classifying records (Chinyemba and Ngulube, 2005). The research conducted by Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) found that even though there are available internal controls to manage all forms of records, the records created within the University are not accessible by most of the stakeholders. The research conducted by Coetzer and Roux (2013) found that access control of records was not done in compliance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000.

The study conducted at the University of Namibia by Matangira *et al.* (2013) found a lack of standard filing system to manage records to file and access information. Most of the organisation filing systems are not adhering to the records management standards with regard to records retention schedule and disposal of records. The study conducted by Wagner and Smith (2012) during their pilot project on records management found that to improve records management guidance was to recognise the need to make information

easily accessible through online platforms; however, the study never indicated at what point records will be made accessible to the users. The establishment of archives provides access to the university records as well as evidence of student life culture (Miner and Kahl, 2012).

Data analysis

Data analysis was done according to categories. These categories were located within the research questions of the study. In this way, the research questions served as major categories and thematic organising principles. Data were also analysed through the UMP records management policy analysis.

Findings

This section deals with the interpretation of the findings. The participants (Pop) were requested to rank high extent (HE), medium extent (ME) and low extent (LE). HE means compliance with the records management component, ME means partially compliant, LE means for low compliance to answer the research question (Table II).

Four participants answered ME, while the majority of participants (13) answered LE that records are scheduled (Table III).

The majority of participants (14) answered LE while only 2 answered ME on appraisal of records. The majority of participants (14) said the appraisal of records was conducted at the discretion of the officers concerned with the administration of the office. This finding is contrary to the UMP records management policy statement regarding records retention periods, methods of disposing of records, transfer of records to records centres, types of the equipment use to file records (Table IV).

The majority of participants (11) answered LE, while only 4 answered ME on destroyed and disposal of records. This finding implies non-compliance with the UMP records management policy (Table V).

The majority of participants, (12 [80 per cent]), answered HE while only 3 (20 per cent) participants answered ME on retaining SARs. This finding implies that majority of participants retained records, which means that there was no systematic disposal of records in the division (Table VI).

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|----------|----------|
| Managers | | 02 (13%) | 04 (27%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | | 07 (47%) |
| Secretaries | | | 02 (13%) |
| Total | | 02 (13%) | 13 (87%) |

Table II.
To what extent has
SAD scheduled their
records?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|---------|----------|
| Managers | | | 06 (40%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | | 07 (47%) |
| Secretaries | | 01 (7%) | 01 (7%) |
| Total | | 01 (7%) | 14 (93%) |

Table III.
To what extent has
SAD appraised
student affairs
records?

All participants answered LE on lack of training which led to shortage of skills in handling institutional records; this has also been acknowledged by MacNeil and Eastwood (2017). This is also acknowledged by Yeo and Ander (2008) who indicated that the low profile of records management programmes within the Department of Student Affairs and its consequent impact on the recruitment of records managers are not issues that can be left to the staff of the Department of Student Affairs. It became clear from the participants that training programmes in records management are to be conducted. The majority of participants 15 (100 per cent) answered LE lack of training. This finding implies that staff lacks skills in handling institutional records (Table VII).

The highest number, (09 [60 per cent]), answered ME while 06 (40 per cent) participants answered LE. However, when a researcher made an observation of the level of retrieval *vis-à-vis* the total holdings in the records management, the researcher found that there was

Table IV.

To what extent has SAD destroyed/dispose of student affairs records?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|---------|----------|
| Managers | | 2 (13%) | 4 (27%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | 2 (13%) | 5 (33%) |
| Secretaries | | | 2 (13%) |
| Total | | 4(27%) | 11 (73%) |

Table V.

To what extent has SAD retained student affairs records?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----|
| Managers | 05 (33%) | 01 (7%) | |
| Senior Admin Officers | 05 (33%) | 02 (13%) | |
| Secretaries | 02 (13%) | | |
| Total | 12 (80%) | 03 (20%) | |

Table VI.

To what extent has SAD trained their staff for the management of their records?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|----|-----------|
| Managers | | | 06 (40%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | | 07 (47%) |
| Secretaries | | | 02 (13%) |
| Total | | | 15 (100%) |

Table VII.

To what extent had SAD provided access (finding aid) to information in SARS?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|----------|----------|
| Managers | | 4 (27%) | 02 (13%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | 05 (33%) | 02 (13%) |
| Secretaries | | | 02 (13%) |
| Total | | 09 (60%) | 06 (40%) |

limitation in the number of records accessed by various users. My observation found that offices filing cabinets, drawers and cupboards were lockable to control unauthorised access. The staff used passwords to control access to its electronic records. However, to retrieve information, SAD used different measures. It made a policy statement that “All records must be arranged in accordance with the approved UMP File Plan” (UMP Records Management Policy, 2016) (Table VIII).

The highest number of participants, (11 [73 per cent]), acknowledged that there are challenges such as appraisal, retention of records and disposal of records with regard to efficient management of SARs. The lowest number, (4 [27 per cent]), stated that there are few challenges experienced by the universities with regard to records and archives management.

The majority of participants, (11 [73 per cent]), answered ME, while low participants 04 answered 04 (27 per cent). This finding implies that there are major challenges such as stakeholder relations, training and document management with regard to efficient management of SARs.

A total of 8 participants (53 per cent) answered ME, while 07 participants (47 per cent) answered LE on the strategies for effective management of SARs. From all these, it could be inferred that the participants were not familiar with strategies for effective management of SARs (Table IX).

Discussion

This section deals with the interpretation and discussion of the research findings based on the research questions.

Records scheduling

Scheduling records is elements of a records management programme. The proper management of records entails establishing physical and intellectual scheduling over records that are entering the records system (Chinyemba and Ngulube, 2005). Records schedules can be useful if records were created in a manner that enable accessible (Mnjama, 2003). File plans ensure the coherent and consistent arrangements of records and

Table VIII.
What are the
challenges associated
with efficient
management of
SARs?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|----------|----------|
| Managers | | 06 (40%) | |
| Senior Admin Officers | | 05 (33%) | 02 (13%) |
| Secretaries | | | 02 (13%) |
| Total | | 11 (73%) | 04 (27%) |

Table IX.
What are the
strategies for
effective
management of
SARs?

| Pop | HE | ME | LE |
|-----------------------|----|----------|----------|
| Managers | | 03 (20%) | 03 (20%) |
| Senior Admin Officers | | 05 (33%) | 02 (13%) |
| Secretaries | | | 02 (13%) |
| Total | | 08 (53%) | 07 (47%) |

subsequently form the basis for retrieval, retention and disposition of records (Phiri and Tough, 2018).

Appraisal of records

Active and inactive records were not separated in the office space. This posed challenges on disposing records that will lead to records with historical, cultural scientific significance not fully identified. Similar findings came in the study by the National Archives of Namibia Nengomasha and Nyanga (2012) which found that absence of retention schedules hinders records appraisal, resulting in congestion and space shortage and haphazard destruction of records.

Destroyed and disposed records

The researcher found that SAD failed to dispose records by failing to identify records of historical and cultural significance. This finding increased risks of security breaches, unauthorised alteration or deletion of the records and loss of valuable SARs records. This finding concurs with Popoola (2007) who found that Nigerian University administrators are concerned about the lack of systematic disposal of records which leads to loss of vital records and the slow speed at which the needed records are retrieved from their storage by the records management personnel.

It is, however, of interest to note that the researcher was not able to locate a records disposition list at the SAR department. A records retention and disposal programme is crucial to the management of the records of the organization (Chinyemba and Ngulube, 2005). This statement concurs that many organizations have disintegrated or folded up because of careless disposal of their records.

Retained records

The researcher found that records are retained by SAD without any distinction of records with historical and cultural significance. It was also found that there was lack of uniformity in the filing methods in managing records. This finding is contrary to the study conducted by Yusuf and Chell (2005) who found that organisations are required to retain part of records for certain period of time. This is alluded to Zalewska (2015) who found that SAD needs to retain, develop, collect, secure and share information in line with organisational policy or legislation.

Records management training

In answering the question on training, all the participants agreed that the few or non-existent training in records management posed a challenge on records management and its concepts are given low priority and not featured in the strategic planning. Therefore, the UMP must ensure that proper training for all involved in the SARs is carried out and must be prepared to invest both time and money to embrace good records management practices. This statement is alluded to by the UMP records management policy which states that "records management training and awareness is to be offered to all staff responsible for the records management". Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) concur that the university lacks personnel to provide consistent continual training for its staff. There is a need to create awareness of the importance of records management in the universities (Atulomah, 2013).

Some of the participants link poor management of SARs with staff that is not properly trained to handle SARs. This finding concurs with Coetzer and Roux (2013) who recommended training and workshops in records management. Staff was not

trained on the importance of managing SAR. Furthermore, the educational level of staff, especially in SAD, was one of the most pressing problems for the records system at the UMP.

The existing SAD staff was not trained specifically on records management issues. Hence, staff training is a crucial process for a successful records management programme (Pereira, 2018). An establishment of an ongoing programme of records training to equip SAD staff member is essential. It is also acknowledged by MacNeil and Eastwood (2017) who indicated the staff that manages records lacks appropriate qualifications and skills.

Providing access

It was found that most of the records are stored in the office, where records are not classified according to the file plan that poses a challenge to retrieve and access information. The implications of this are that files might lose records thereby destroying the integrity of the records. The UMP records management policy acknowledged the need to effectively manage the university's recorded information in the world of risk. It asserted that the university would face the following risks if it could not manage its documents, records and archives well such as not being able to meet its obligation in terms of the law, such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000, that requires the institution to meet the information requests within stipulated times. It is evident that while provision for internal access to records was not satisfactory, provisions for external access were also poor for the university. These finding implies that the university was ill-prepared to deal with external access requirements. Administrators require complete and accessible records so that they have the information available to them to deliver services to staff and students, manage resources and carry out their work, and auditors and other regulators need access to the information in records to ensure that resources have been used fairly and honestly, that programme and procedures have been carried out and that standards have been met (Atulomah, 2011).

It was found that most of the records were not accessible because of lack of effective tools such as finding aid to retrieve information. The finding is similar to that of Pereira (2018) who found that lack of findings aids and poor physical conditions reflected negatively on retrieval of records. Similarly, Nengomasha and Nyanga (2012) found poor management of retrieval of records in Namibia. According to Williams (2006), any organisation that is involved in the provision of access to records and archives needs to operate within a framework of standards.

Challenges association with efficient records management

It is essential for the department to use a storeroom for physical records and furthermore, filing systems needs to be organized so that the records can be protected against loss and damage. The fact that the university management plays an essential role to support records and archives management is important for the progress and development of records management programme. This finding is alluded to by Coetzer and Roux (2013) who found that at the University of Zululand, there is a challenge of lack of records management at university level mostly at administration, faculty and departmental level where no formal records management practice is in place.

Rapid technological changes pose challenges to the management of SARs and the increase dependence of university on technology. Preserving records on an electronic environment posed a challenge on the long-term access and display of digital entities. This finding is alluded by Yusuf and Chell (2005) who found that managers are to be

concerned on the long-term management of the records to preserve them with enduring value. According to [Nsibirwa et al. \(2014\)](#), there is lack of standard hardware and software, the fast pace of technological obsolescence. The degree of change that the digital age has brought is impacting on all of our paradigms ([Ceeney, 2008](#), p. 68).

The department also faced a challenge of managing both paper and electronic records in an integrated manner. This is alluded by [Yusuf and Chell \(2005\)](#) who advised organisations to adopt the continuum theory to integrate record keeping and archiving processes. [Day \(2006\)](#) alluded that the fundamental problem of most of the organisation is the stability of the media that digital information is stored on.

Strategies for efficient management of student affairs records

The records management strategies are to link with the ones of universities at large.

Building a public-private partnership is essential in the design and management of student affairs records. Communication should be a priority at the universities to ensure that all stakeholders understand the importance of SAR. According to [Yusuf and Chell \(2005\)](#), the records management programme must be known to everyone in the Department of Student Affairs by means of awareness.

Recommendation

- The development of internal processes, such as findings aids, protocol, registers to manage SAD records.
- The establishment of records centre with the university will ensure management of the active and inactive records within the university.
- The university records manager should develop records management training programme to equip SAD staff on management and preservation of records.
- SAD should build internal relations with the records management departments to enhance identification and transfer of records of archival and historical significance.

Conclusion

This paper highlighted the ineffective management of inactive records at SAD. The result of this study leads to the conclusion that SAD need to take into consideration the records scheduling, appraisal, disposal, retained records, training, providing access. All the challenges associated with the management of records are to be linked to the universities' strategic objectives.

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