
Records Management Practices in Uganda's Public Pension Office

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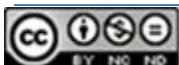
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the records management practices in Uganda's public pension office. The study's objectives were: to find out the categories of records managed in Uganda's public pension office; to examine the records management practices in Uganda's public pension office; to find out the challenges faced in the management of records in Uganda's public pension office, and to propose strategies to improve the management of records in Uganda's public pension office. The study adopted a mixed methods research design. It was conducted at the Ministry of Public Service, specifically in the Compensation Department and Department of Records and Information Management. The study population was composed of thirty (30) staff working in the two departments, who were all adopted as the sample size, given the small population. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, self-administered questionnaires and a document review. The findings revealed that personnel records were mostly kept and that the records management practices followed were guided by the Basic Registry Procedures Manual, a manual specifically developed for registries at the Ministry of Public Service. Despite having a records manual in place, some staff had poor attitudes towards records management due to poor remuneration while others had no/limited training in records management. Other challenges faced included inadequate equipment, non-streamlined records management practices and a lack of a Centre for benchmarking its practices as stipulated by the National Records and Information Management Policy framework. It is expected that the findings revealed by this study will inform policymakers, the government of Uganda and the Ministry of Public Service on the key issues to solve in a bid to strengthen records management in the public pension office to enhance the process of pension processing which is usually delayed by the lack of records.

Keywords: Pension office, public service, records management, Uganda
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Introduction

Records management practices play a crucial role in the overall management of records since all institutions create or generate records at some point in time. Given that records contribute to



accountability, transparency and support institutions in decision-making, the way they are treated is vital (Molepo & Cloete, 2017). This calls for proper records management practices to facilitate the efficient management of records in institutions. Uganda's government has taken deliberate efforts to improve records management within the public pension office through the Ministry of Public Service. As such, the Ministry of Public Service has developed Registry Procedures Manual 2000 and facilitated the enactment of the National Records and Archives Management Act 2001 and the National Records and Archives Management Policy 2020 to guide records management practices within the public pension office. However, despite these advancements, it was reported that the public pension office had challenges in locating files resulting in untimely pension processing (Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit Report, 2016; Office of the Auditor General, 2010). This prompted the need to assess the records management practices at the public pension office.

Furthermore, effective records management practices contribute to proper decision-making and timely delivery of services in public pension offices (Hagen, 2021). Some of the records kept by public pension offices include personnel records, verification forms, notices for retirement, pension payment orders, files for pensioners, payment vouchers and payment receipts (World Bank Group, 2018). The records management practices influence the way the above records and others are managed. Records management practices include the way records are classified, stored, tracked, indexed and retained or disposed of (Malake & Phiri, 2020). Without following proper records management practices public pension registries face challenges such as missing files, inaccurate records, delays in records retrieval and space shortages, all of which hamper service delivery (Molepo & Cloete, 2017). Therefore, for public pension offices such as Uganda's public pension office, adhering to efficient records management practices is important.

The Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) is the government ministry in charge of providing strategic and managerial leadership on all human resource matters in Uganda's public service (Galukande-Kiganda et al., 2022). Its mandate is to develop, manage and administer human resource policies, management systems, procedures, and structures for public service (MoPS, 2022). The key services offered by the ministry include policy setting and implementation, management of remuneration (pension and salaries), and training which is conducted by the Civil Service College, Uganda (MoPS, 2022). The ministry has different departments for executing its work which include but are not limited to the Department of Human Resource Management, the Department of Records and Information Management, the Department of Performance Management, and the Department of Compensation. Given that this study focused on examining the records management practices in the public pension office, two departments were considered for the study. These were the Department of Records and Information Management and the Department of Compensation.

The department of records and information management serves as the supervising authority for all records and information management activities at the MoPS. According to the MoPS (2022), the Department of Records and Information Management is authorised to "establish and promote efficient, economic and effective records and information management systems in the Public Service; and oversee the preservation of the documented heritage for Uganda's posterity". These two functions serve as its overall objectives as well.

On the other hand, the department of compensation is mandated to "provide policy direction, supervision and technical support for the efficient and prudential management of the wage bill, payroll, pension and gratuity in the Public Service" (Kyohairwe, 2015). It is responsible for paying out retirement benefits and managing pension records at the MoPS. The pension

registry, which lies under this department, is the one responsible for the management of pension records. Its records management activities are guided and influenced by the Department of Records and Information Management. For effective management of pension records, efficient records management practices are needed, therefore, both the Department of Records and Information Management and the Department of Compensation which houses the pension registry plays an important role in the way pension records are managed in the pension registry at the MoPS.

Records are a vital organisational asset that aid in ensuring that government institutions and ministries run effectively and efficiently, and are accountable to their staff, and the community that they serve. An organisation with a solid foundation of proven successful records management practices will be able to: preserve the right information for the appropriate period of time, comply with legal requirements quickly and affordably, regulate and manage records management storage and destruction, and preserve important information for business continuity (Alegbeleye & Chilaka, 2019). However, due to numerous complaints that beneficiaries file over service delivery; the functioning of Uganda's public pension office has been plagued by inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Beneficiaries typically complain about delayed feedback regarding their benefits. Delayed feedback is explained by the loss and misplacement of records accompanied by slow retrieval of the required records from custody hence the delay in the processing of public pensions (Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit Report, 2016; Office of the Auditor General, 2010).

The objectives of this study were:

- i) To find out the categories of records managed in Uganda's public pension office;
- ii) To examine the records management practices in Uganda's public pension office;
- iii) To find out the challenges faced in the management of records in Uganda's public pension office; and
- iv) To propose strategies to improve the management of records in Uganda's public pension office.

Literature Review

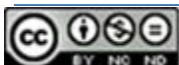
Records can be referred to as anything that contains information that was generated or acquired during the course of business and may be used as proof of a business transaction. Several academics define a record in different ways; according to shepherd (2006), a record is a written account of an event that has certain components of activity, typically undertaken by a person or workgroup throughout the course of their business and leading to a definite result.

Types of records kept in pension registries

Hagen (2021) emphasized the importance of records for the efficient management of pension funds. Their input into the decision-making process is one of the main reasons. The forms of pension records that are stored in pension registries were examined in this section. The World Bank group (2018) provided a process for pension administration and pension processing that was followed for this study to identify the kinds of documents retained by pension registries. The World Bank group (2018) further divides the pension process into three phases: pre-retirement, during retirement, and post-retirement.

Pre-retirement

Before retiring, qualified individuals have to submit the necessary paperwork to join the public pension fund. Frequently, the details included applicant-related demographic data (Hagen, 2021).



Authorized persons had an administrative responsibility to confirm the information presented and provide the necessary documentation to the responsible action officials (World Bank Group, 2018). The pension registration now includes the applicants who were successful (World Bank Group, 2018). By utilizing this insight, it was inferred that at this point, records pertaining to personnel and administrative matters, such as verification forms, and successful and unsuccessful application submissions, are established and maintained in the pension register.

During Retirement

When workers retired, they gave notice to their pension plan, which examined their records and determined the amount of pension they would receive (World Bank Group, 2018). To handle pension funds for the retiree, a pension payment order and cover letter were sent to the concerned accounts officer (World Bank Group, 2018). This claim led to the conclusion that the records produced were administrative records, such as notices of retirement, a cover letter, and pension payment instructions.

Post-retirement

At this point, the pension file for the retiree was put up for payment, and the pensioner was required to show up in person with identification (World Bank, 2018). The World Bank Group (2018) said that detailed data, including the pensioner's biographical information, information about their appointments and years of admissible service, and information about their advancements and promotions, was used to prepare pension applications. The payment was given to the pensioner after identification and file verification (World Bank, 2018). This was the "real payout," as defined by Farrell and Shoag (2015) when receipts were produced and the pension register was amended to reflect the closing of the pension account. This suggested that the pensioner's file, a type of administrative document, was among the records created.

Records management practices in pension registries

Records are essential organisational assets that help to guarantee effective and efficient service delivery in pension registries therefore it is important to manage these records. Managing these records requires a number of records management practices which are discussed below:

Classification of records

Classification is defined as the process of identifying and arranging records in categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system. In this context, classifying records can be looked at as an activity that involves arranging records systematically. Classification is defined in ISO 15489-1:2016 as the "systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system" (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2016). Classification is an essential tool in records management. It is used to provide links between records that originate from the same activity or from related activities; to determine where a record should be placed in a larger aggregation of records; to assist users in retrieving and interpreting records; and to assign and control retention periods, access rights and security markings (Henttonen & Kettunen, 2011).

Therefore, poor classification of records affects the way records are managed and affects service delivery because it affects the records retrieval process resulting in delays in retrieving records.

Indexing of records

According to (Jain & Mnjama, 2017) indexing is the process of determining the name, subject, or other captions under which the documents are filed and an index is a guide to accessing records. The main purpose of an index is to facilitate the location of required files and papers. Indexing helps the staff to find out whether a particular file exists for a party or subject and its place in the container. It also facilitates cross-referencing where records are classified in numerical order or subject wise therefore indexing is a necessary records management practice in organisations. Pension registries are thus expected to utilize an indexing system that is appropriate and fits into their work environment.

Records Filing

Records filing is crucial to all organisations. Unless records are filed efficiently, it is impossible to conduct current business, to account for all organisational happenings both in the past and future and management finds it hard to make the right decisions (Crockett, 2016). Records are mostly required to provide evidence, assist in decision-making, and are used for referential purposes. Filing is an essential practice that involves arranging records according to a simple, logical system, placing records in a storage container in the correct sequence and retrieving the records so that they can be used. File management ensures that records relating to a specific activity or subject are securely and consistently maintained together in one file. This enables effective decision-making and also ensures that the sequence of actions can be reconstructed, that is what happened, when, who did it, and why.

Records storage

Records storage entails keeping or storing records for later use. The way records are stored depends on their nature (Malake & Phiri, 2020). Paper records are stored in boxes, files, shelves, or cabinets while digital or electronic records are stored on digital media (Aramide *et al.*, 2020). A functional records storage system is one that provides for proper safety of both paper and electronic records. Therefore, institutions are expected to determine the most appropriate storage media based on the nature of the records they possess. For example, file folders could be used to store payment vouchers in hard copies but they cannot be used to store memory cards. Additionally, records ought to be stored in a way that ensures their safety and fosters easy retrieval of information (Touray, 2021). Paper records also have to be properly stored to conserve space and protect them from dust, dirt, water, or any other feature in the external environment that may affect them. Similarly, electronic records are prone to cyber-attacks and loss of information, therefore, they should be backed up and stored with strong security mechanisms (Kamau, 2020). Taharudin and Izhar (2018) observed that storing records was not just about storing them but ensuring that the content of the records is protected, appropriate storage standards are followed, records are safe and the environmental conditions are favorable. Additionally, it was noted that not all paper records can be stored in the same way and the same goes for the electronic record (Taharudin & Izhar, 2018). Therefore, pension registries have to ensure that all records are stored in the right way based on their distinctiveness.

Records Security

Security issues in most public organisations like ministries should follow traditional norms. Safety measures such as locking cabinets, employing security personnel, cameras, Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs), alarm systems, fire warnings, and protection systems are mostly taken for the physical security of records. On the other hand, electronic security measures such as firewalls, passwords, encryption, security copies, and access rights for each user category are some of the tools used for securing electronic records' integrity, accuracy, and trustworthiness. In most cases, vital records are filed in a secure location that is locked to safeguard against loss, tampering, or use by unauthorized personnel. Therefore, pension registries have to ensure that all records are safe and secure from both physical danger and unauthorized access and alteration.

Records retention and disposal scheduling

Retaining or discarding records is one of the records management decisions institutions have to make. Ssekitto (2019) observed that disposing of records was important for effectively managing records. The study noted that institutions were required to have retention and disposal schedules based on their records management guidelines (Ssekitto, 2019). In that regard, if the records management guidelines provide for retaining records for a specific period of time, say five years, pension registries are expected to comply with that provision.

Auditing of the Existing Recordkeeping Program

It is important for an institution to review or audit its existing recordkeeping program to determine if it is efficient or not because poor recordkeeping practices limit the effectiveness of service delivery (Touray, 2021). Continuously auditing the existing recordkeeping programs provides a pathway for institutions to enhance their ability to assess their records management practices as they strive towards meeting the needs of relevant stakeholders (Azzolini *et al.*, 2019). Pension registries are thus expected to systematically review or audit their existing recordkeeping programs as per the recommended guidelines and implement corrective actions where faults, inconsistencies, or gaps are recognized.

Theoretical Framework

The Records Life Cycle Model perceives records as an analogy of a biological organism, which is born, lives, and dies, and a record, which is created, maintained, and used for as long as it has continuing value and is then disposed of either by destruction or by archival. The features of the records life cycle model imply that the model is more applicable and suitable for organisations dealing with the management of paper records. The life cycle model has been shown by researchers not to be suitable for organisations or studies investigating the management of electronic records. The perceived weaknesses of the records life cycle model led to the development of the records continuum model.

The records continuum model originated in Canada but was developed and adopted in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s by Australian archival theorist, Frank Upward. In the continuum model, records are seen as a continuous process, from creation to disposition, without a clear-cut demarcation in transition from one record phase to the other. Evan, McKemmish and Roland

(2017) asserts that the records continuum model brings together records managers and archivists under an integrated recordkeeping framework with the same goal: to guarantee the reliability, authenticity, and completeness of records. These theories guide the records management practices for both paper-based records and electronic records in pension registries.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. This approach was appropriate as some data were collected quantitatively, and other data qualitatively. The area of study was the Ministry of Public Service, primarily focusing on the departments of compensation and records and information management. Population in this study is the staff at the institution that serves as the pension unit in the Ministry of Public Service. The study population consisted of thirty (30) staff from the two departments, who were all adopted as the into the study. As such a census method was adopted. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, self-administered questionnaires, and a document review. To analyse the quantitative data, the data was first pre-coded with the list of responses being assigned a numerical value and then recorded in Microsoft Excel where percentages were used as a measurement scale to show the frequency of given answers. The findings were presented in tabular form and the relationships between key variables were explored to understand how they affected each other. For the qualitative data analysis, the findings were used to corroborate or validate the findings obtained from the quantitative data. These findings were incorporated in the results section supporting the results from the quantitative data through words and verbatim. In some instances, photographic evidence was provided. The findings obtained are presented below in line with the research objectives.

Findings

The findings obtained from the field study are presented below:

Response rate

The study sought to conduct 5 interviews and 25 questionnaires with all the 30 people that constituted its study population. Table 1 shows the response rate obtained in the field study.

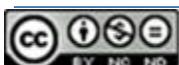
Table 1: Response rate

Data Collection Method	Sample size	No. of participants	Percentage responses (%)
Interviews	5	5	17.9
Questionnaires	25	23	76.7
Total	30	28	94.6

Source: primary data (2022)

As illustrated in Table 1, 5 interviews were conducted with directors and managers from the Department of Compensation and the Department of Records and Information Management. Twenty-five questionnaires were also issued to staff from the two departments of which only 23 were returned. Therefore, the response rate was 94.6%.

Demographic information



The researcher obtained demographic information concerning the gender and work experience of the study participants. This information was deemed pertinent to the study since it would provide insight into the background of the study participants and minimize any form of bias. The findings are presented in the table below:

Table 2: Demographic information

Gender	Males	14
	Females	14
Work experience	0-5 years	8
	5-10 years	15
	10 years and above	5

Source: Primary data (2022)

As illustrated in table 2, there was an equal proportion of males and females with work experience ranging from 0-10 years and above. The study participants were thus found to be knowledgeable in the records management practices at the public pension office. Since all the study participants had worked for a while in their respective roles, it was concluded that they had a reasonable degree of understanding of records management practices in their registries. The findings from the field study are presented below.

Categories of records managed in the public pension office

Participants were asked to tick the categories of records managed in the public pension office from a list provided in the questionnaires. Most of the participants ticked personnel records. These were followed by correspondences and reports. Other records kept included financial records, fiscal records, administrative records, legal records, historical records, research records and electronic records. From the interviews, it was established that the study participants ticked the records they associated with their job roles/positions daily. From the Pension Registry Report 2021 of the public pension office, it was noted that the public pension office managed records that belonged to traditional civil servants (medical personnel, finance and administration, economists, local government staff, police and prisons officers and East African Community employees exclusive those from the railway's department); teaching service (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions staff) and Armed Forces (Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) and Ex Gratia. The report also highlighted that the records that were usually obtained from these people and stored in the pension registry included their bio data information (date of birth, educational background, marital status), work details (registration, appointments, postings, confirmation, promotions) and death certificates for the deceased. Table 3 shows the categories of records managed in the public pension with percentages reflecting the number of ticks they received from the study participants who answered the questionnaire.

Table 3: Categories of Records Managed in the Public Pension Office

Categories of records	Percentage
Personnel records	46%
Correspondences	38%
Maps	8%
Memoranda	15%
Papers	23%
Photographs	15%
Reports	38%
Writings	15%
Email	8%
Documentary materials	8%

Source: Primary data (2022)

Records management practices at the public pension office

The study established that the study participants mostly engaged in monitoring and auditing records, complying with policies and procedures, recordkeeping systems, storing records, accessing records, tracking records, capturing records, retaining and disposing of records, filing records, creating records, protecting records, and indexing and accessioning records, in that order of priority. Some of the activities undertaken by the study participants to complement the records management practices including completing the inventory of all records, locating storage areas for records, developing a records retention and disposal schedule, and determining which records one needed to have, among others. All the study participants agreed that the records management practices at the public pension office were appropriate, however, most (83%) showed dissatisfaction with the way records were managed. They thus believed that the records management practices at the public pension office needed to be improved.

Challenges faced in the management of records at the public pension office

There were a number of limitations hindering the management of records within the public pension office. These constraints included inadequate training, limited technology, limited funding, and poor attitudes towards proper records management exhibited by some records staff, lack of clear communication on records management practices, and ignorance about legal and regulatory frameworks on records management by some staff. In addition, 80% of the staff felt neglected and shared that records management was not given the priority it deserves and 80% of the staff felt frustrated by records staff, most especially during records retrieval and dispatch where they cited delays due to failing to locate files. The Pension Registry Report 2021 reported that the public pension office lacked enough space for storage, faced network issues that frustrated staff during the scanning and uploading of files, faced power instability, and had only two scanners whereby it was only one that could scan complete files while the other scanned only soft paper material. The study participants believed that most of the challenges were organisational and thus needed to be addressed by the ministry. Below is a comment from one of the interviewees:

The registry is underfunded, the staff are underfunded and we lack support from the senior management team. Some records staff deliberately violate records management procedures as

well and share inside information which they are not supposed to. Discrimination should also be abolished.

The table below shows the challenges faced by the public pension office with corresponding percentages reflecting the number of ticks they received from the study participants who answered the questionnaire:

Table 4: Challenges faced by the public pension office

Few training opportunities for the records management personnel	77%
Lack of records management committees	69%
No budget line for the registries	69%
Failure to consider the health and safety conditions of the registry employees	62%
Poor remuneration of records staff	62%
Inadequate storage facilities	62%
Inadequate funding	54%
Lack of a management plan	46%
Lack of support from senior management	38%
Use of registry as dumping section	31%
Inadequate staffing	31%
Neglect of registries by the Ministry	23%
Lack of skilled employees	8%

Source: Primary data (2022)

Strategies to improve records management at the public pension office

The study participants recommended establishing rules and standards to guide the recordkeeping activities, creating procedures for implementation of records management, evaluating and reviewing records management practices, coordinating and directing organisation-wide records management activities and solving problems that arose from records management. Other strategies proposed included increasing training opportunities for records staff, fully digitising records management, issuing out circulars compelling ministries, departments and agencies to comply to records management practices, increasing funding to the pension registry, proper planning and setting of clear goals, sensitizing records staff, improving staffing levels, recruiting trained staff, standardizing records management systems across all departments and automating the records management process. From the review of the Pension Registry Report 2021, it was reported that currently, the pension registry was undertaking the following actions to improve records management:

- Digitizing records. Most pension files were now uploaded on EDRMS and as of 2020, 11,500 records had so far been scanned and uploaded on EDRMS.
- Responding to daily requests of files by the Action officers.
- Taking necessary action about queries raised by the Inspector General of Government (IGG) and Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and other auditors by availing them with the necessary records.
- Training staff on the use of EDRMS.
- Supporting retrieval and photocopying of respective files.

In the report, it was further proposed that the registry would continue scanning files, giving priority to pensioners' validation forms; file scanned files according to their specific votes; and continuously support votes whenever need arises. Below is a comment from one of the

interviewees on what should be done to improve records management practices within the public pension office:

The whole system needs to be automated and the registry needs more funding. Registry staff also need to be continuously trained and sensitized and the systems have to be renewed as well as fully implementing EDRMS.

Discussion

The records managed at the public pension office were not any different from those reviewed in the literature. It was ascertained by the World Bank (2018) that pension registries mostly hold personnel records. Malake and Phiri (2020) note that the activities an institution or office engages in dictate the nature of the records they will keep, and that is true for the public pension office. In line with the records management practices, the public pension office has a records manual that governs records management within the pension registry. This is complemented by the National Records and Archives Act 2001, the Uganda Standing Orders, Access to Information Act 2005, the Retention and Disposal Schedules 2007, the Records Centre Procedures Manual 2014, the File Classification Manual 2000, the Records and Information Manual for Districts and Municipal Councils 1999, the Penal Code Act Cap 120 of the Laws of Uganda, and the Evidence Act. Despite the presence of a strong regulatory framework, most records management practices were not adhered to and staff felt neglected and frustrated due to a number of challenges faced. These challenges included inadequate training, limited funding, poor attitudes toward records management, and limited technology. Earlier studies have reported that poor records management practices result in the loss of records, missing records, and misplacement of records (Nyamwamu, 2018; Mohammed et al., 2018). It is also noted that poor records management practices expose records to unauthorised access, result in storage problems and jeopardize the quality of records (Touray, 2021; Ssekitto, 2019; Luyombya & Ndagire, 2020). Therefore, the barriers to effective records management practices in the public pension office pose a potential threat to the records managed and where associated with delays in locating pension files. Staff recommended increasing training opportunities, funding, and support for records management as some of the ways of improving how records are managed within the public pension office. Touray (2021) observes that if records management practices are not strengthened, organisations are prone to having records storage and retrieval problems. This would be catastrophic to the public pension office as it would hinder it from efficiently delivering its services.

From the assessment conducted based on the National Records and Information Management Policy framework, the public pension office scored highly on having procedures such as a records retention and disposal schedule, a disaster management and recovery plan, procedures for managing electronic records, and general procedures that govern records management at the registry as stipulated in the Basic Registry Procedures manual. The public pension office also has a standard registry whose role is well-defined and whose policies are governed by relevant government legislation and international standards. On the other hand, the public pension office has some technology, however, it is insufficient. For example, as seen from the findings, there are only two scanners. While training of records staff is also conducted, in reality, it is either not enough or not effective because training and sensitisation kept being mentioned as core issues to resolve. There are also electronic systems such as the EDRMS which have not yet been rolled out to all MDAs and LGs and some staff members are hesitant to use electronic records. These were

found as key issues that needed immediate attention, however, there are those that were more pressing as well as the registry scored very poorly on these. Records management practices differed based on the position or role of the staff or their department and thus they were not harmonized or streamlined within the entire institution. This is disastrous given that in case of job rotations, staff have to outlearn what they know and relearn what they do not practically know which creates room for error and shoddy work. There was also no known regional centre of excellence for benchmarking purposes and therefore, the public pension office could not be appraised in comparison with another. In addition, records and information need assessment meetings were not held periodically as stipulated by the policy and lastly, there was no continuous professional development framework for records staff. These indicators showed that there was still room for improvement in the public pension office as there were some issues it needed to address to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study aimed at assessing the records management practices in the public pension office at the Ministry of Public Service. The study established the categories of records managed in the pension registry, which consisted of mostly personnel records. These included personal information about the pensioners, their marital status, current job postings, and work experience, among other information. Other administrative and financial records were also kept. Furthermore, the records management practices followed were seen to be those recommended by the Basic Registry Procedures manual. The manual laid out the duties of each records officer in managing records based on their position. In general, the manual was the overall framework that governed how records were created, used, maintained, stored, preserved, conserved, or disposed of. In addition, limitations to effective records management were identified. Some of these challenges were organisation-based such as insufficient funding, lack of management support, and limited storage facilities while others were personal. Some staff willingly did not adhere to the recommended records management practices because they were not motivated by their pay, others had no/limited training in records management and others had other grievances that limited them from adhering to records management practices. When asked about strategies to improve adherence to records management practices, staff recommended automation of the whole system, training, and sensitisation and increased funding, most especially.

The study also assessed the records management practices based on the National Records and Information Management Policy framework and concluded that the pension registry was not performing very poorly. It had procedures for records management, it had a standard registry which also had a basic registry procedures manual, was in the process of digitizing its records, and had installed EDRMS to encourage electronic records management. However, its performance was being hindered by the limited training it gave to its staff, lack of enough equipment, non-streamlined records management practices, lack of a centre for benchmarking its practices, and the fact that it did not hold records and information needs assessment meetings as frequently as required. Therefore, in line with the research problem which was mainly focused on delays in pension processing due to a lack of records, these could be some of the hindrances that may be leading to that. However, if they are resolved and addressed as well, service delivery will greatly improve at the pension registry.

The study described not only the actual things done in records management practices that were ineffective but also the motivations of the research and administrative staff as to why they

behave as they do. The research succeeded in giving ministries an account of why things happen daily that hinder records management efficient practices. This gave management at the ministry an insight into what needs to be achieved to make records management practices a greater priority in pension activities.

Recommendations

In line with the findings found in this study, the researcher recommends:

- The Ministry of Public Service should reassess its role in the records management function within the public pension office and its support to the registries to be in a position to support the registries better. When staff does not feel supported or if they feel their work is not appreciated, it de-motivates them and affects their performance.
- The management of the Ministry of Public Service and the registries should reinforce fair and ethical practices in records management to limit unfair access to information. Discrimination was raised as an issue that should not be there in the first place because it affects how aggrieved parties perceive the entire situation even if it could only be one tomato that is rotten.
- Records staff from the public pension office need continuous training and sensitisation to remind them of their duties and to encourage them to work even better. This will motivate them to comply with records management procedures.
- The Ministry of Public Service should conduct staff and pensioners' training in records management. This is important because if pensioners do not know the records needed, it gives the available staff an extra role of educating them which may be a heavy burden since they are already understaffed.
- The Ministry of Public Service should increase funding to the registry and resolve its storage issue because records do not keep decreasing but keep increasing due to the nature of the pension registry work. Therefore, the storage challenge is a very pressing issue.
- Lastly, more staff should be hired to decrease the workload on the existing staff and these staff should be competent enough in records management to minimize the likelihood of transferring resources from one line to educate them.

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