



MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC RECORDS FOR BEST PRACTICE AT KCA UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the process of managing students' academic records for best practice and proposed measures of its improvement at the KCA University in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to: investigate the processes of capturing/creating and managing of records; establish factors that affect the management of students' records; assess the challenges in managing students' records and propose measures for best practice in managing students' academic records at KCA University. This study used a descriptive research design. It applied both qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection through interviews and questionnaires respectively. Out of a population of 113, a sample of 103 respondents were selected. The study population included administrative staff, records managers, and student leaders. Qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis, tabulation and summary. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and presented as descriptive statistics using graphs, tables and pie charts. The study findings indicated that the processes of creation and capturing included the sorting out records by type, correct filling and storage. Also, that the factors which necessitated records management included provision of evidence, risk management, and institutional management. Some of the challenges encountered in management of students' records included inefficient records storage facilities, misplaced records, spoilt records and inadequate records management staff. The study concluded that best practice in records management requires consistent and coherent processes from creation through to the preservation. The study recommended a need for a higher capacity storage facility to enable proper filing and employment of trained personnel to enhance records management. With reference to the theoretical framework for this study, records are used for transactional, evidentiary, and memory purposes, thus a unified approach to archiving / recordkeeping should be adopted, regardless of retention periods. In conclusion, management of students' academic records is vital for best practice and overall smooth running of the KCA University.*

**Key words:** Records, Management, Best Practice, Creation, Evidence, Risk Management, Retrieval, Reference

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## INTRODUCTION

All organizations and institutions produce large amounts of information every other day. This in effect creates a given volume of records that are both in paper and electronic form. With this, the organizations and institutions need to effectively manage the records so that they are both accountable to their publics and so that they can also develop sustainability to ensure business continuity (Cheng, 2017). Cheng continues to say that records management is a discipline that governs both the process and controls that are used to create and manage records of an organization for proper operation. He also states that records management brings about the control of the volumes or records produced through the use of disposal schedules so that there is a determining factor of when and how different records should be retained.

KCA University is a premier business University whose main campus is situated in Ruaraka along the Thika superhighway. The KCA-U has four Campuses namely; Ruaraka, Kisumu, Kitengela, and Nairobi CBD. The University has also Technical Colleges in Buruburu and Amagoro as learning centers. The university has two faculties and two schools responsible for discharging duties for the smooth running of the university namely; Faculty of Education and Arts and Faculty of Computing and Information Management. The schools are: School of Graduate Studies and Research and School of Professional Programs.

KCA University is a fully accredited university with a charter which was awarded on 1st March 2013. The University programs are recognized for further education and employability in Kenya, the regions, and the world. These programs include Graduate, Undergraduate, Diploma, Certificate, and Professional courses. The University is moving with the changing world and has incorporated information technology in records management.

This is being embraced by the various departments within the University. With this, it means that most of the records are created, used, maintained and disposed of electronically. Such records include the academic records for the students. There are various departments that are charged with the responsibility of managing the students' academic records.

Both paper-based records and electronic records are very important in any institution. This is because in case the electronic records are not accessible, then the physical can be used the business continuity achieved without causing delays. In this regard, all records must be well managed by carefully controlling and organizing the records so that those that are no longer needed can be effectively disposed of. It is therefore important to ensure that all records are well managed in order to act as vital tools in decision-making activities in any given university.

Records management process comprises of identifying records, classifying records, and storing records, as well as coordinating internal and external access until the level of disposition (Council, 2004). Managing and maintaining students' records aids in reference when required by checking the student's progress in the past moments by preserving students' exam scripts, coursework marks and all other academic records.

Best record keeping is very important when it comes to the success and continuity in any teaching/learning institution system. This is regardless of the size of the institution and whether the institution is public or private (UNESCO, 2005). Records management practices have proven effective over the years (Duffy, 2000). It is important to note that many organizations investigate records with a secondary mind compared to core operations. It could prove less important to change business practices after serving well for some time however, records management and knowledge add a dimension to their purpose (Kersey, 2003). This shows the need

for a continuous practice to balance records management practices.

Students' unusual issues indiscipline, misbehaving, raised in most schools, tertiary colleges and universities have not been prevented or handled well whenever they occur especially where a clear monitored and intensively evaluated records are missing. In regard to this, argument on the need to bring records management to a clear ground remains relevant (Agency, 2020). In support to the statement, management of students' academic records is a practice worth to be emphasized in institutions for higher learning to shape the academics.

According to National Archives and Records Administration most developing countries (Kenya included) have reported crisis in records management for best practices especially in very important institutions like universities, government offices due to poor systems of management.

Records creation, maintenance and use were fairly done however it identified significant problems in both records scheduling and disposition. Further, it was noted that many students' academic records as well as most federal electronic records were unscheduled. In addition to the unscheduled records, several significant records had been improperly scheduled. (Zhang, 2016)

From an institutional context, there are huge amount of both tacit and explicit knowledge that can be gathered from variety of internal and external sources to the institution. Kersey (2003) echoes those best practices in records management should have sources and descriptions. First, best practices should be those proven successful results which should be obtained and recorded for a future reference in another situation which becomes the focal point regarded as part of the institutional memory.

Secondly, they should be of cooperate memory which involves official documents, references manuals, procedures, policies, the knowledge, the

experiences, expertise, strategies, methodologies and past of the association. Thirdly, it should be communities of practices where a group of people coming together to practice in discussing common interest topics either in formal or informal way. This should include outside information knowledge that can be gathered from outside such as from suppliers, competitors, customers, and government policies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Records management in universities serves in many ways as a professional requirement and as an exercise defining the present and future progress of an institution. Any mismanagement of records has its consequences and often results to a negative image. For instance, there are instances when students' academic records such as exam marks, or credit transfer letters go missing (Kemoni, et al., 2007). Students' academic records should be properly managed to avoid unscheduled discarding.

Another issue is that poor records management affects proper and effective institutional management (Gama, 2010). The concern for lack of consistence in creating records that accurately document the core activities can lead to difficulties in comprehending the type of records created. Lack of proper ways of managing records in a manner that facilitates timely and accurate retrieval results to poor records management.

Unnecessary exposure of documents to elements such as dust, fire, or water often due to lack of secure storage can result to damages or loss of such records. Absence of clearly stated authorization protocol on records management may lead to situations where there is lack of accountability whenever a problem occurs in the record system. Often, the records management process presents challenges and dire consequences to many institutions of higher learning. Due to such experienced challenges, curbing the reoccurrence is important through understanding the entire records management process. In this regard therefore, this study sought to investigate the best practice on

management of students' academic records at KCA University in Kenya. This study investigated best practice on management of students' academic records at KCA University in Kenya and propose its requirements.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To establish the students' academic records management process for a best practice at KCA University.
- To determine factors necessary for management of students' academic records for a best practice at KCA University.
- To assess the challenges faced in managing students' academic records for best practice at KCA University.
- To propose requirements for best practice in managing students' academic records for best practice at KCA University.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Global focus on the records management for best practice**

Best practices in records management are unexceptional in institutions of higher learning. According to Dagienė and Krapavickaitė (2016), a study conducted at Royal Roads University indicated that records management process faces gigantic issues like workload being the heaviest especially in the 23 institutions that were used as a sample. The Enterprise Content Management Group (ECMG) in collaboration with association of International Information Management the Association of International Information Management (AIIM), considered the expounding of the records management process and content within organization after a series of series of confusion and loss of important information that could not be retrieved for use (Williams, 2002).

In Malaysia, research findings showed that business closure in organization and institutions did occur due to absence of clear records management system where survivalists rely on records management system in improving competency,

decision-making, defence mechanism, efficiency, effectiveness to save time, space and optimum access ("Laws and Major Regulations Related to Records Management", 2019). Academic records management is viewed from a valuable one of the key aspects in ensuring validity and reliability in matters of reference and accuracy in the continuation of the academic spheres.

#### **Regional focus on records management for best practice**

Records created and received in the institutions in Africa increases their significance. They however risk losing documentary heritage if records are not well managed. For instance, the African Theological University (ATU) in Ghana is one of the African premier and leading ecumenical Theological University with exemplary academic records management systems.

A great anxiety is noted about the connection between records management use and the sustainability development plans. The study conducted in Mozambique concluded that the efficiency in public administration relied widely on the effective record management (Chibambo, 2003).

Records keeping practice in Botswana was observed being marginal in nature, with only few organizations making efforts in designing management policies and procedures for managing the records. Besides the steps taken, most of efforts are still disjointed hence not covering the comprehensive records life-cycle as required (Ngoepe & Keakopa, 2011). Molepo & Cloete, (2017) give a brief reflection on the records keeping in the oldest days where memories were unwritten and no one could claim that record keeping preceded writing. In conjunction records were kept on leaves, tree bark, stones, clay, and rocks (Motsi, 2004).

#### **Local focus on the records management for best practice**

Just like other countries in the region and on the globe, records management is a key practice

regarded by many organizations and institutions. Millar (2004), argued that among the African countries, Kenya is among the countries that valued the record keeping of all sorts and of all functions that kept the country on the development rate. Institutions of higher learning are built on the past records of performance, records of progress and characteristics.

Records contain the content of information and thus records management also includes information management. Furthermore, according to Kenya archives (2010), records are viewed from an angle of information that is obtained through creating, being received and preserved for further reference and evidence by a given organization or individual with the aim of administering authorised responsibility in the deal of business.

Foscarni (2009), states that institutions may classify records as non-essential, useful, important, and vital;

**Non-essential records:** Refers to the records that are not worth keeping such as bulk mail; routine telephone messages, bulletin board announcement, e-mail and Fax messages after action taken. These are records that are supposed to be destroyed to enable or create a space to be used by those that are very important. (Foscarni, 2009). **Useful Records:** They are records that require short-term storage that can be stored up to a range of three years. They are helpful in the transaction of business and can be replaced at a small fee or cost. They are normally active files of business letters, memos; reports and bank statements. (Foscarini, 2009).

**Important Records:** Such records require long-term storage approximately seven – ten years. They contain relevant information supposed to be revisited and replaced in case of a loss. Dealing with such records require critical care that can avoid compromising the secrets of an institution. For instance, financial data, sales data, credit data, credit histories and statistical records. (Foscarni, 2009).

**Vital Records:** Vital records deserve a permanent storage and are indispensable for continuation of the institution and are necessary for creating legal and financial status of the organization. Such records include business ownership records, customer profiles and students' transcripts. According to Read and Ginn (2010) once such records are stored, it stays forever. They are indispensable for continuation of the institution and necessary for creating legal and financial status of the organization. They include records such as: business ownership records; customer profiles and students' transcripts. Read and Ginn (2010), state that once a record is stored, it may not be stored forever.

#### **Factors necessary for management of students' academic records**

On the factors necessary for management of students' academic records, it is worth noting that records define organization image. This is in the event that their transactions are lost causing consequences through losing evidence, proof of conducts litigating (Yunus and Arifin, 2010).

**Reference purpose:** Management of students' academic records is dictated by the rise in the need for valid and credible references besides the normal use in the smooth running of events in the institutions. Hughes, et al (2009), observes that there is lack of congruence between strategic records management, in the academic sphere used by practitioners. In the academia relationship there is a lack of congruence between strategic records management in the academic's sphere and that used by practitioners. It is noticed that models of collaborative research and its dissemination is lacking in most of the institutions. With rightful move in records creation, there is a facilitation of factors behind it (Blandford, 2013).

**Definition purpose:** Sangway (2000) argues that a well-managed organization should necessarily make network between business and resource requirements explicit. For such to happen, there is need for the sequence of activities in understanding

the purpose of the organization through establishing its general aims, supported by the specific objectives, planning the best way to carry these objectives forward with consideration to other parties involved that are likely to be affected, acquiring the financial, personnel and other resources that include information required to implement plans.

**Innovation, structural and technological changes:** Sanderson (2001) stated that the management and leverage of tacit knowledge has become a key strategic issue for many organizations created by a need to innovate structural and technological changes, made in response to the dynamic external market. Therefore, capturing knowledge means recording knowledge and such creates a need for the application of records management.

#### **Processes the students' records go through from creation to disposition/archival**

Records have a life cycle from creation through into the period of active currency, then into middle-aged closed files that are still referred to occasionally and finally either confidential disposal or archival preservation (Aclinza, 2010). The process that is referred to as the life-cycle of records implies the span at which as expressed in phases of creation, distribution, use, maintenance and final disposition. The phases often overlap for instance, when the letter is produced, an email written, a form completed or a pamphlet printed, a record is created. Read and Ginn (2010), observe that records are commonly used in decision making, for documentation or reference, in answering inquiries, or in satisfying legal requirements. Read and Ginn (2010) further state that when a decision is made to keep records for later use, it should imply storage, and protection for future retrieval.

According to Mann (2011), after a record is stored and a need arise for reference from the records, a requisition is made to retrieve, to find out the information or remove from the shelf or system. When the retrieved record is no longer in use, it is

restored and re-used for the latter reference through ensuring good security.

The next phase is called maintenance. It involves activities such as updating or discarding obsolete records. It includes both physical and electronic records. For example, electronic records are usually stored in an organization's server. Such records are maintained daily, weekly or monthly.

On the electronic records, it takes a variety of forms including the text-based documents, those that are database, spreadsheet, web pages, drawings and even diagrams plus maps and electronic mails. In records management, all formats must be considered and appropriately addressed in a very comprehensive strategy to be able to handle challenges rising from each file; for instance, saving, preserving and accessing entire database. Depending on the type of file it is, it will usually have metadata associated with it (Robinson, 2008). Important electronic can also be maintained as physical records by producing hard copies of same and storing them (Sangway, 2000).

In the record management, the last phase in the information cycle is the disposition as echoed by Read and Ginn (2010). This occurs when a pre-determined period of time for each record is elapsed. Records therefore can be kept and be transferred to storage sites either within the firm or external records storage facilities. Following the retention schedule, records may be disposed of by destruction or transfer to a permanent storage place as the implication in such a scenario means storage in archives to facilitate preservations based on their continuous demand and the attached value.

This process which records go through is important in a university setting especially in managing student academic records. The various phases discussed here are important in records management. Importantly, one must note that records management involves filing as one of the components. Many interrelated parts must work together for the effective records management

program to be effective. It is important to know the meaning and importance of each phase in the entire record life cycle (Read & Ginn, 2010).

#### Challenges in managing Students' Records

Students' records are often manual and electronic. This has implications on management of both types of records. Various challenges accompany these forms of records. According to Robinson (2008), devices used in preserving these records are not reliable for long term.

- First, devices such as a CD can be scratched or damaged in one way or the other leaving the information irretrievable or if retrieved, it cannot be read or have distorted meaning. This has been witnessed in most institutions where record storage has been a challenge.
- Second, there is degradability. Some of the devices used have a limited time of service, an extension is never guaranteed. For instance, the CD has a definite period depending with its care and management.
- Third, there is obsolescence. Obsolescence refers to a situation where records become old and useless and the operating system become obsolete for a future reliability. To restore them, there is need to renew them or convert them to newer technology formats. All or either of these options in renewing the information is costly.
- Fourth, lack of multiplicity for manual records. It refers to the situation where a record is found in one centre where it was created and stored. This manual record lacks variety, unless it is physically transferred or copied to another centre.
- Fifth, time consuming. The entire process of getting records done is long. It involves manual creating process, sorting and capturing and storage. It is time consuming to go through all processes involved in accomplishing such a task.
- Sixth, accessibility of hardcopy files. Hard copy files can only exist in a single location at a time and thus only one person can access that

information at any given time. When there is only one version of information, managing the hard copy document brings about a physical challenge, (Gregg, 2013).

#### Records management based on paper or manual

Manual or paper based refers to handwritten or printed records, meaning they are both paper based. Examples include items such as handwritten notes, correspondence, printed reports, procedures or maps. Universities are supposed to create complete and accurate records of all the events and decisions taken based on given records management standards. After a record is created or received, it is upon the user to ensure that it is filed and documented correctly for easy tracking and further use by the organization, (Azman, 2009).

#### Electronic records management

Mnjama, and Wamukoya (2007), asserted that without proper planning and adoption of consistent methods, e-records created may be short-lived as their retrieval in the future is uncertain. Electronic records management in institutions of higher learning is a long overdue practice that should be considered in all phases of the institution.

According to Wamukoya (2000), some of the challenges in management of electronic records include the following. First is absence of organizational plans for managing electronic records. Second is the low awareness of the function of or the importance of records management organizational efficiency and accountability. Third is a lack of good interconnection in handling paper work as well as electronic records. Fourth is the absence of legislation, policies and procedures to give guidance on management of paper and electronic records. Fifth is the absence of clear budgets allocated for records management. Sixth is the lack of security and confidentiality controls. All these should be considered in proper records management of students' academic records. They are of paramount importance to curb challenges encountered as far



as handling students' academic records is concerned (Chambers, 2015), just to mention a few.

Katuu (2000), in an article on information development highlights two ways of looking electronic records management. It involves the digitization of the paper records within the premise of an archives also known as automation. Another way is the management of records that are already in electronic form but are outside the premises of the institution. Katuu further highlights the need and the benefits of handling records electronically in an institution of higher learning as reduced time of retrieval as compared to the traditional eye-on-paper scrolling through the hard copy finding aid. Much time is spent searching and retrieving a document from a manual storage facility as compared to electronic storage.

The management has multiple access points of the information with the aid of increased number of ways one can use to approach the record. Most of the hard copy records that are fragile are preserved. This encourages and enables the long use without destruction thus remaining safe in the institution's custody under an ideal environmental condition. Finally, the enhancement or improved management on the digitized copies of the hard copies that have been significantly made better allowing much clearer image of an otherwise deteriorating document.

#### **Requirements for best practice for management of students' academic records**

According to Norris (2002), proper retention and disposition of records is key to an effective records management program. Retention of records ensures presence when needed for litigation, audits, day-day business purposes but for the unneeded do not happen or take up costly storage space. Failure to have proper management of records means that records management managers will face tremendous challenges in managing student's records. Records disposition needs to be properly handled such that destroying records does not affect those which might be needed in future to

provide evidence of information that might be required.

Norris (2002) further states that a well-managed and retained program comprise of;

- Records that are archived and identified in the cycle.
- Records that are retained, adopted and used to carry out normal activities.
- The office retention schedule developed and used
- Systematically disposed of records.
- The retained and disposed electronic records
- Strategies are in place that electronic records continue to be accessible following technology changes.
- Documents that are routinely disposed.

A data warehouse is important in managing electronic students' academic records. Various information databases are often combined, and directed into a data warehouse. This is done by assembling various records from different departments. This means that management team can retrieve and assemble the electronic records from several departments for decision making. Therefore, it can be useful to have a data warehouse at KCA University so that students' important information is collected and stored there for further action. With the records there, then the University is assured of easy retrieval of information when required.

There are records that need to be marshalled and others that will be kept for future use. This is because technology changes every other day. There is essentiality in ensuring that as electronic media changes, the software programs acquired are with compatibility to that of older versions. This is because formulated in an obsolete or discontinued software program may not be accessible thus hindering efficiency in carrying out the duties required effectively. This is to ensure that users keep enjoying the information as earlier by managing to retrieve it as usual even with change of technology. Media compatibility refers to how well

the media and the equipment needed to access information stored on the media work together (Musembe, 2016).

It is vital to get information on whether KCA University has taken this into consideration as to how records are stored such that no information is lost when migrating data to a new software. This classifies records that are to be retained and those that are not to be lost. Importance in records management at KCA-U such as students' transcripts and copies of certificates which will act as evidence in case need arises.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study applied a mixed methods research design which comprise of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study employed a mixed study design known as Explanatory Sequential mixed Method Design. This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches where qualitative data and results clarified and reined the quantitative explanation regarding the records management for best practice. On the qualitative approach, the researcher obtained the data through interviews, while the quantitative approach entailed the use of a questionnaire. This research was undertaken at KCA University at Ruaraka main campus. The study population comprised of student leaders, administrative staff, teaching and staff. The population was drawn from the: Senior Administrative staff, Registry staff, Faculty and Departmental Secretaries, Finance staff, Heads of faculty sections, Examinations Section staff and Students' leaders.

The researcher found purposive sampling a reliable and suitable sampling technique in identifying and selecting of information-rich cases for most effective use of limited resources. Purposive sampling targeted the respondents who had relevant information. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, which included the use of a questionnaire (quantitative data collection) and interviews

(qualitative data collection). Data analysis focused on both quantitative and qualitative data collected.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **The Process of creating students' academic documents for good practice at KCA**

The findings indicated that major records created and managed were the following with percentages; university creating high percentage of important records 42 or (53.8%) followed by useful records with 18 or (23.1%) then the vital records 14 or (17.3%) while the least records created by the university were the non-essential; not worth keeping 4 or (5.1%). From the above obtained data, records management is a practice done in the university as evidenced by the responses. This attested that there is a unanimous process of records creation in most of the institutions. However, the varying percentages implied the varying commitment attached to each type of record.

Findings were supported by the reviewed literature Seymour (2016) who articulated on the various records creating methods includes such records as handwritten, typewritten, audio and video recording, computer generated that comprise of mails and database. It was the researchers view based on the percentage that the important records are the most created records in the university. As implied above, there is a clear indication of great commitment attached to records management for best practice in the University, however the reason for the lower and varying performance of the rest implies the need for further improvement to attain the required best practice.

#### **Factors necessary for management of students' academic records for best practice at KCA University**

The factors necessary for management of students' academic records are as follows:

The first factor is for evidence purpose. Providing evidence on what took place and was recorded especially such as exam results and graduation can

be retrieved for clarification wherever necessary. Furthermore, those students that loose certificates and request for replacement, are easily assisted even decades later when such records are available. This implies that an institution considers a long-term transactions or operations thus a need to manage records for substantial reasons.

The second factor is on risk management purpose. The risk management purpose is meant to avoid potential and unnecessary penalties that result from any eventuality within a given period. Important records under this section included the graduation ceremony, stating the number of students who graduated, courses and fields that were. Risk management purpose therefore serves in informing the business decision-making process. In relation to the research objectives and reviewed literature, management aspect has been cited as key in sustaining the institution. Risks in an institution is dealt well with by ensuring best practice in records management thus the findings have a conquering approach in support to the literature reviewed.

The third factor was for the smooth running in the university. It is important for the institution to keep records of admitted number of students, those who manage to go through the system and the plan to determine the anticipated number to enrol next. Student's welfare is part of the concern for instance health matters among other special cases that can be monitored avoids conflicts, misunderstanding and false accusation. In real sense, I as the researcher, interviewees were right since most institutions have poor records management to tell the past, present and inspire the futures. This is a vital part in any institution to observe for the best practice and sustainability of the institution.

The fourth factor was on the ease access to information/records. If the records are well managed, retrieval in case of urgent need will be ease. For instance, areas where records have been specified renders retrieval process easy thus smooth running and transactions in the university.

The findings were however limited to the internal purpose raising evidence, risk management purpose, smooth management in the university and ease access b to information. There is a non-alignment between the reviewed literature and the findings in terms of the scope as a result of the narrowed or specific objectives of the study of the respective institution as opposed to the broader view of what records can do beyond an institution. This too contributes to lack of similarity and congruence.

### **Challenges faced in the creation and management of student's academic records**

Findings on the challenges in records creation and management were highlighted issues of process data which had the highest frequency of 44. Issues were reported arising in the processing of data after capturing. It is a common problem where respondents were raising the need of reinforcing the personnel to be keen in sorting, arranging and storing records accordingly. Findings aligned with a reviewed literature Musembe (2016) who emphasised on institutions going beyond normal record keeping to overcome challenges recurring in the management as a result of insufficient personnel to work in a specified area. As a reseacher, management issues have resuted to ghost students and lack of accountability due to missing sufficient documented and managed records.

Insufficient storage was the second challenge with 24 as echoed by the interviewee. The responses showed that lack of clean records, lack of proper and easy access to the records are contributed by lack of enough storage facilities. Literature proposes a proper plan of any organization or institution in terms of space and personnel to ensure that policies are followed (Wamukoya, 2000). The reresearcher found this argument appealing for the confidence attached to profesional work.

Lack of infrastructuree was pointed out both in the interview session and the questionnaires. It came as the third challenge with 10. Mentioning

inefficient storage facilities, respondents clearly emphasized that most records are torn, dirty and scattered because of lack of good and efficient storage facilities. In relation to the reviewed literature, the findings align the argument raised. In researcher's opinion, efficient infrastructures serve for quality records management. Institutions have no option if they have to manage the records well.

The last challenge was inadequate personnel. It was a major hindrance in ensuring that the created records are well taken care, well arranged, filled, stored in a safe place for progressive future references. This serves as a solution towards recurring misplacement of records in institutions, spoilage in the process of handling.

Misplacing records. The number of staffs versus the amount of work in the records department should be therefore proportionate. The argument is valid as supported by literature reviewed of Seymour (2016) adding that "an institution should consider and prioritize enough human resources in the records management to avoid compromising the work ethics". The researcher's view supports the professional approach to managing the records considering that the institution is defined and carried forward by the records.

#### **Requirements for best practice in records management**

On the measures to improve the records creation and management, the findings, literature review and the theoretical framework were linked for concurrence. The literature focused on various information databases that are combined and directed into a data house. This is by assembling various records from different areas into design that can be used by for example, management of an institution to make decisions. In reference to literature, this implies that management team will retrieve and assemble the electronic records from several department and come up with decision on how to run the institution (Shepherd, 2012).

In relation to the theoretical framework "*Records Continuum Model by Upward Frank, (1990)*, the

continuum bases the records management process on principles. The very principles are linked to the findings to draw measures in improving the records management. The author considers management as a consistent and coherent regime of management process from creation of records through the preservation and use of records as archived. Records management process at KCA is not exceptional. The consistence and coherence in the process ensures accessibility and availability of records at any given time that they are needed.

The framework is addressed using principles and dimensions. From the findings, there is need to reinforce storage facilities for good arrangement of the records. This is echoed in the framework, organizing dimension which regards recordkeeping as a management function. The dimension involves elements needed to ensure that the record is available over time.

There is need for trained personnel in the records management since this is a critical resource for evidence that can add value on the institution image other than watering it. In relation to the theoretical framework, records are used for the transactional, for the evidence and for the memory purposes and should at all cost be handled through unified are used for transactional, evidentiary, and memory purposes, and should be handled by a unified approach to archiving/recordkeeping, regardless of retention periods. This can be realized when the process is handled by professionals to keep the information safe, available and accessible. Records as logical rather than physical entities whether in electronic or paper form deserves a well-organized storage as pointed out from the responses to objective four on the measures to improve the management.

Since the management is a continuous process, responses depict the need for reinforcing the personnel to meet the work load in the records department. There are similar views on improving the records creation and management in the continuum to enhance the continuation of records

creation and keeping with the help of enough personnel in the department.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study examined the process of records management guided by the set objectives in reference to KCA University as a case study. The objectives focused on were the creation, the necessity and challenges involved. In the research data collected and analysed, records management is vital and calls for improved mechanisms to cope up with challenges. The study was guided by a theoretical records of continuum model which eliminates variances between archivists and records management. This is done by introducing unique functions to cover both records management and records management an archival to ensure best practice in the institution. The records continuum model therefore was relevant to this study and applicable to the best practice of records management. It was therefore paramount for an institution to have a best practice in records keeping as a pillar that defines the status of the institution.

This study made the following recommendations based on the data collected and analysed and interpreted for best practice:

- The institutions of higher learning should create adequate storage facilities that can accommodate all records to avoid ambush from the high in-flow of records from students' academic related activities. Based on objective three, the challenges experienced in records management was associated with lack of adequate storage facilities.
- The institutions of higher learning should increase the trained staff who work in the records department. Adequate Tech savvy staff will work well to ensure proper records management for best practice.

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- The institutions of higher learning should consider the backup mechanism in an alternate manner, where the electronic records are captured, there should be a manual back-up for a balanced and assured safety of the records. This recommendation is based on objective four that sought to understand measures to improve the management of academic records management. This should be applied similarly to the records management process where filing or retrieval for use should be both manual and electronic to ensure maximum availability and accessibility. This is a mechanism that can be transferred from one personnel to another without a struggle of intensive orientation.
- The institutions of higher learning should come up with a records authentication and authorization protocol to reinforce accountability whenever a problem occurs in the record system for best practice. The above recommendations are all based on the data on challenges in objective three and the measures to improve the records management practice under objective four.

From the research done and analysed data, there is a clear implication of academic records missing proper management in institutions of higher learning thus the need to reinforce the management process to deal with challenges associated with improper way of keeping records. Departments dealing with records should not relax and assume that records are safe but keep checking and enhancing management systems.

**Further proposed areas for research include the following;**

- The authenticity of records storage management system in public offices
- The methods to curb losses caused by fire tragedies in parastatals

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