

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



Records Management in Government Ministries in Swaziland

BY

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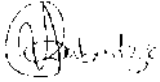
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted for a Masters degree at the University of Zululand, is my own work, with proper citation and referencing where necessary and has not been formally submitted to any other university for the award of a degree.



.....
Vusi W. Tsabedze

Submitted May 2011

DEDICATION

To my wife, and my daughter Kuhle

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have been able to complete this academic journey at the University of Zululand without a number of individuals who supported me along the way.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Stephen Mutula & Dr. Daisy Jacobs, who believed in me and made sure that I enrolled for this degree. I consider myself lucky to have worked with them during my studies. Their guidance and support, have helped me grow.

I am indebted to my friend / colleague Khosi Ndlanagamandla for his encouragement during the entire course of this study.

Special thanks to my colleagues at the Institute of Development Management (IDM) in Swaziland - Limakaso Mosese, Howard Mabuza and Larry Soku- who assisted with pre-testing the research questionnaires.



ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate records management practices in government ministries in the Kingdom of Swaziland. The study sought to determine how records are generated, used and disposed of in the government ministries; the types of records that are generated within the Swaziland government; how the records are organized and retrieved; the training needs of the Swaziland government's registry staff; the attitude of staff towards records management practices; the level of staff awareness sound records management practices; the suitability of records storage facilities; and the challenges of e-records management in the government of Swaziland.

A mixed method research paradigm consisting of a survey and observation was used to carry out the study. The target population consisted of action officers and records officers (registry staff) from government ministries in Swaziland. 92 action officers and 29 registry staff were involved in the study. 31 of the action officers were from top management, 31 from middle management, and 30 from lower level management.

The results revealed that government ministries in Swaziland do not practice sound records management in line with the Swaziland National Archives Act (No. 5 of 1971). There was no uniformity with respect to filing methods and the manner in which records were destroyed or deleted. There were no control measures for ensuring the care and safe custody of records. Electronic records management policy, filing procedure manuals and a disaster recovery plan did not exist at the time of writing. The lack of records management practices directly and indirectly affects the information flow within the ministries.

It is expected that the findings of this study will inform policy on records management in the government of Swaziland; facilitate effective records management in the government; create awareness about sound records management; help inform a records management training plan; and help establish integrity and transparency in the functioning of government.

The study recommends that research should be extended to parastatal organisations in Swaziland to ensure that the management of records, both in the government and the public sector, is

harmonized to enhance service delivery, accountability and transparency in the management of the country's public affairs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Contextual Setting

An effective records management system is a structural arrangement that allows the tracking of the lifecycle of records in an organization. A records management system enables the organization to know when a record was created, what function it serves, how long it is considered useful by the agency that created it, what the parameters for maintaining it are and for how long, and what legal authority oversees its lifecycle and termination (RM Manual, 2003). The management and preservation of records in an organization helps it achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

1.2 Background of the study

In institutions all over the world, preservation of records is regarded as an activity that is the exclusive responsibility of the conservation unit of an archival institution. It is always an uphill task trying to convince records managers in the public sector and those in the business sector that the quality of the management of documents at the early stages of their life and indeed throughout their lifecycle ultimately influences their longevity. Cameroon (2001) argues that the most cost-effective and efficient way of securing records for future archives is to ensure that they are captured on materials that are as durable as possible.

After a survey of preservation policies and strategies in the British Archives and Record Offices, Eden and Feather (as cited in Akussah, 2002:11) arrived at the conclusion that preservation is a cord that runs through all the activities of an archives or records office. As mentioned earlier, preservation is perceived by many as belonging to the domain of the conservator in the archival institution and not the records manager in the registry or records centre. This perception, Luset and Drench (2002) argue, is negative and does not give the records of today the chance to graduate into the archives and for that matter heritage of tomorrow. Cameron (2001) insists that to secure records for the future, they must not only be created on durable materials, but also stored in favorable conditions.

The purpose of a records management system is to ensure that records are created, used, maintained, and disposed of in an orderly and controlled manner. According to Sebina (2001), without proper records management initiatives, organizations in general and ministries in particular are likely to face problems of high paper proliferation in their offices and experience retrieval difficulties. According to Chirwa (1993), records held by various government departments are created for many different reasons during the conduct of various official functions allocated to various government departments. However, without a proper records management policy to streamline the creation of records, it has not been easy to understand the procedures followed during the creation, utilization and maintenance of records in Zambia. Government ministries create records to fulfill their operational needs and attain their desired goals, but they do not seem to plan the quantity and quality of the records they would like to see created.

In Swaziland, there are 17 Ministries, including the:

- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Public Service & Information
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Works & Transport
- Ministry of Sports & Culture
- Ministry Natural Resources.

The rest of the ministries are presented in Figure1 below.

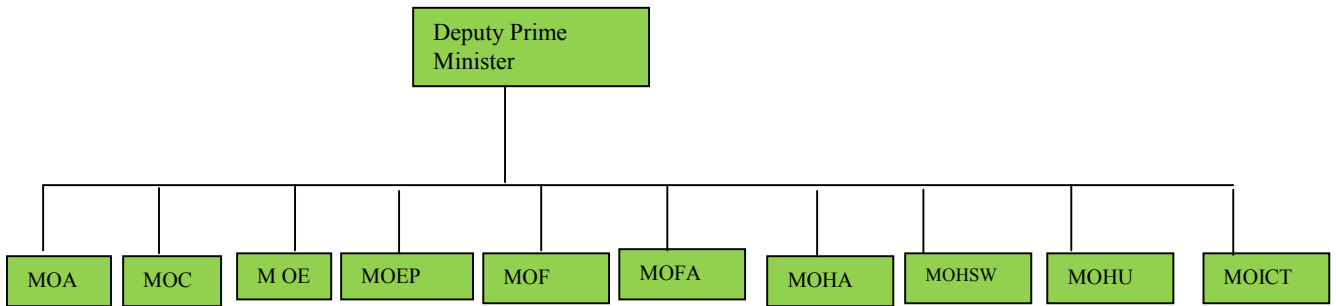


Figure 1: Illustration of Swaziland’s government’s organizational structure

Legend:

- MOA= Ministry of Agriculture MOF= Ministry of Finance MOHSW= Ministry of Health & Social Welfare
- MOC= Ministry of Commerce MOFA= Ministry of Foreign Affairs MOHU= Ministry of Housing & Urban Development
- MOE= Ministry of Education MOHA= Ministry of Home Affairs MOICT= Ministry of Information Comm. Technology
- MOEP= Ministry of Economic Planning

Some of the ministries have decentralized their activities by establishing regional branches in the region while others are yet to do so. Each ministry has several departments and registries which are managed by personnel who are not sufficiently trained in records management (Lukhele, 2008). Most of them have O’ level certificates (high school certificates).

1.3.1 The functions of government ministries in Swaziland

The government of Swaziland is headed by the Prime Minister as shown in Figure 1 and the Prime Minister’s main function is to keep the Head of State (King) informed and advised on government operations in order to provide good governance and sound leadership. The Prime Minister is assisted by the Deputy Prime Minister. Portfolio responsibilities dedicated to the Deputy Prime Minister include: co-ordination of the Decentralization Programme; social welfare; disaster management and mitigation; gender co-ordination issues; co-ordination of children issues; and co-ordination and chairing of national social dialogue (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The main functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are to establish and maintain international relations, trade, and cooperation between the Kingdom of Swaziland and international communities. The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for providing services pertaining to immigration, passports, citizenship and refugees; mainstreaming gender into all areas of national development; and promoting sporting, recreational, youth and cultural activities.

The Ministry of Public Service contributes towards national development by ensuring that the public service is the right size, responsive, and meritorious; providing a framework for the development of a quality national human resource base; supporting the growth and development of a focused, vigilant and responsible information and media sector; and participating effectively on behalf of Swaziland in regional and global forums. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for maintaining harmonious industrial relations, a decent and safe working environment, and monitoring fair conditions of work; the compensation of insured workmen; the regulation of localization; the regulation of industrial and vocational training; and the elimination of all forms of discrimination at the workplace, in order to accomplish industrial peace and a fertile climate for investment (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Economic planning promotes sound macro-economic management that creates an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth and the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for promoting macroeconomic stability in Swaziland by formulating and implementing fiscal and financial policies that optimize economic growth and improve the welfare of its citizens.

The Ministry of Commerce and Trade is responsible for the overall socio-economic development of Swaziland and for the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life of the Swazi people by creating a conducive climate for local and foreign investment and the development of industry and trade; promoting harmonious industrial relations; monitoring the efficient utilization of human resources; and ensuring that Swaziland remains an effective global economic player (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Agriculture ensures household food security and increased sustainable agricultural productivity through the diversification and enhancement of commercial agricultural activities and the formation of appropriate technologies and efficient extension services while ensuring stakeholder participation and sustainable development and the management of natural resources in Swaziland.

The Ministry of Education and Training provides relevant and affordable education and training opportunities for the entire populace of the Kingdom of Swaziland in order to develop all positive aspects of life for self-reliance, social and economic development, and global competitiveness (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is responsible for the improvement of the health and social welfare status of the people of Swaziland by providing preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services that are of high quality, relevant, accessible, affordable, equitable and socially acceptable.

The Ministry of Information and Communication provides an efficient national information, communication and technology delivery framework for Swazi citizens, the public and private sectors, through converged services and applications in order to: promote government policies and programmes; preserve public records for posterity; and encourage knowledge through universal access to information and well-developed, efficient, and affordable communication facilities (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs facilitates the administration of Justice through the various court structures (Judiciary), the provision of legal services to Government, registration and protection of intellectual property rights, real rights, companies and associations, prevention of corruption, management of elections, administration of deceased and insolvent estates, the liquidation of companies and rehabilitation of offenders.

The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs facilitates the administration of Justice through the various court structures (judiciary), the provision of legal services to the government, registration and protection of intellectual property rights real

rights, companies, associations, etc.; prevention of corruption; management of elections; administration of deceased and insolvent estates; the liquidation of companies; and the rehabilitation of offenders.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy's mission is to ensure the optimal development, use and management of the country's natural resources (water, minerals, energy, land) in a sustainable manner, with minimal damage to the environment. Furthermore, it provides efficient services on surveying, mapping, and the valuation of resources for the social and economic development of Swaziland (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs ensures sustainable and equitable development through the promotion of sound environmental principles, conservation of the national heritage in order for the country to be conducive to Swazis and attractive to international visitors, and to ensure efficient and effective custody of all recorded information.

The Ministry of Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs promotes the development of sports, arts and culture, and youth through popular participation and the creation of an enabling environment for a coordinated and structured framework to address socio-economic challenges by 2022 (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009).

The Ministry of Public Works ensures the provision and maintenance of sustainable public infrastructure, an efficient, effective and seamless transport system and network, regulation for a vibrant construction and transport industry, management of public service accommodation, and the provision of meteorological services. Lastly the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development facilitates the delivery of housing and urban services through appropriate physical planning, strengthening the institutional capacity of urban local authorities, and the protection of life and property from the risk and impact of fire and other emergency situations.

1.4 Records management infrastructure in government ministries in Swaziland

Records management in the government ministries in Swaziland is undertaken within the framework of the Swaziland National Archives Act. Swaziland National Archives was established by Archives Act no.5 in 1971. Its mission is to enable Swazi citizens to fully participate in their country's social, political and economic life through the equitable development, preservation and protection of Swazi cultural heritage. The Swaziland National Archives has a mandate for records management in government and public sector organizations. This mandate includes:

- Managing public records and ensuring their preservation as historical records
- Advising public offices on proper records management practices.

Government ministries in Swaziland receive advisory services on the storage and preservation of their archival materials from Swaziland National Archives as stipulated by the Act. The Act empowers the director of Swaziland National Archives to examine and advice on the care, preservation, custody and control of any public records. The Act further empowers the director, at his or her discretion, to approve any institution, whether private or otherwise, as a place wherein may be deposited, housed or preserved, either permanently or temporarily, any public archives or records that have been declared public records.

1.5 Statement of the problem

There have been many instances where individuals (government employees, researchers, journalists, students, etc.) in search of a particular document known or perceived to be in the custody of one of the government's agencies found that document impossible to find (Times of Swaziland, 2003). In the words of Dlamini (2008), "Information that is known to exist becomes hard to retrieve." Often this translates to time wasting on the part of the document seeker and a general low regard for registry personnel and their custodial qualifications.

Without proper records management systems, governments cannot be held accountable for their decisions. Corruption cannot be easily detected or questioned and service delivery is hampered. Sound records management systems enhance

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transparency, accountability and integrity in government. Without such a system in place, it is difficult if not impossible to hold a government accountable. Public records are key to accountability and good governance because they reflect the government's functions, activities and procedures and the administrative processes that generate them, as well as the facts, acts, and transactions affiliated to them. Records can effectively play the above role if they are appropriately managed and accessible when required (Ngulube, 2003). According to Wamukoya and Mutula (2005), poor records management is bound to result in information gaps that lead to incomplete public records and the loss of documentary heritage.

Makhura (2005) observes that records management services preserve the corporate memory of an organization. They document an organization's accountability, preserve the evidence of an organization's activities, enable timely access to current administrative information, and ensure that records of archival value are marked for preservation at the time of creation and not inadvertently destroyed.

In the context of Swaziland, there is no document or record of any study on records management in any government ministry. This study aimed to contribute new insights and knowledge on records management in Swaziland.

1.6 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate records management practices in government ministries in Swaziland in order to make appropriate recommendations that would enhance the effective and efficient management of records in the country.

1.7 Objectives of the study

Based on the aim of the study, the following specific objectives were developed:

- (a) To determine how records are generated, used and disposed of
- (b) To assess the types of records generated within government ministries
- (c) To find out how records are organized and retrieved
- (d) To examine the training needs of the government's records management staff
- (e) To establish the level of awareness about sound records management practices
- (f) To assess the suitability of records storage facilities

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1.8 Research questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were asked:

- (a) How are records generated, used and disposed of?
- (b) What types of record are generated within the government ministries?
- (c) How are records organized and retrieved?
- (d) What are the training needs of registry staff?
- (e) What is the level of staff awareness about sound records management practices?
- (f) How suitable are the records storage facilities?

1.9 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will inform policy on records management in the government of Swaziland. The outcome will also facilitate effective records management and help to create awareness about sound records management and inform a records management training plan. It is also hoped that the outcome will inspire other researchers to take an interest in the topic, especially in Swaziland where such studies have not been carried out.

1.10 Scope and limitations of the study

This study focused on records management in government ministries in Swaziland. For this research, 15 ministries were selected from 17 existing ministries. Limited time and other resources did not necessitate sampling all the ministries. The respondents from these ministries consisted of action officers and registry staff (see definition of terms). Geographically, the study was carried out in Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland.

1.11 Dissemination of information

The findings from the research will be disseminated:

- Through seminars and workshops
- Through copies of the dissertation in libraries
- In peer reviewed journals

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1.12 Definition of terms

The usefulness of the study is contingent on the clarity of the key terms that it employs. Firestone (as cited in Ngulube, 2003:6) explains that defining terms also adds precision to a scientific study. In fact, the power of words comes from “the combination of meaning in a specific setting. Scientific language ostensibly strips this multiplicity of meaning from words in the interest of precision (Firestone, 1987). Below follows an alphabetical list of the key terms used in the study.

Action officers: refer to people who are working in the ministry administration.

Electronic records: refer to information that is generated electronically and stored using computer technology.

Ministry: refers to a specialized organization responsible for a sector of government.

Preservation: means the totality of processes and operations involved in the stabilization and protection of documents against damage or deterioration and in the treatment of damaged or deteriorated documents (Armstrong, 2003).

Records: are documents, books, papers, photographs, sound recordings or other material, irrespective of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business (R.M Manual, 2003).

Records management: is the professional discipline that refers to the control, creation, maintenance and disposal of information in the form of record (Botswana National Archives and Records Section, 1996).

Registry: is the place where files and other records are processed, kept and retrieved. It is the control centre of all information coming into and leaving the ministry (Registry Handbook, 1993).

Registry staff: refers to anyone who plays a supervisory or administrative role over any government records for a country office, unit, or agency.

1.13 Structure of the thesis

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter Two reviews literature in order to ascertain what has been researched and reported on records management.

Chapter Three is devoted to the research methodology. A detailed description / explanation of the research design and methods, target population, research instruments, sampling, data collection procedures, and problems experienced during the study is provided.

Chapter Four consists of the data presentation and analysis. Data is presented using tables, graphs, figures and descriptions.

Chapter Five discusses the key findings of the study.

Chapter Six presents the conclusion and recommendations

Appendices

References

1.14 Ethical Issues

The researcher considered ethical issues. Consent was obtained from the Ministries concerned as well as the individual participants. The researcher also informed the Ministries well about the study, and operated within the parameters agreed with the Ministries. However, the researcher heeded the caution by Hoyle et al., (2002) that giving too much information about the study to the respondents may lead to bias in the responses. They also advised against coercing respondents into participating in the research.

1.15 Summary

This chapter contextualized and conceptualized the research problem on records management in government ministries in Swaziland. The chapter laid the foundation for the rest of the thesis by defining the research.

The chapter presented the objectives and specific research questions that the study set out to answer. The parameters of the study were also discussed in terms of the study's scope, both geographically and through its subject coverage, followed by the limitations of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews what other researchers have written on the subject of records management. Literature consisted of journals, research publications and books, with a focus on research done by researchers in other countries in Africa, especially Southern Africa, on records management in government ministries.

According to Punch (2000), it is axiomatic that: “All social research has relevant literature, and no research takes place in a vacuum.” Jankowicz (2000) confirms that: “Knowledge doesn’t exist in a vacuum, and your work only has value in relation to other people. Your work and findings will be significant only to the extent that they’re the same as, or different from, other people’s work and findings.”

Busha and Harter (1980) view a literature review as “an in-depth analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information sources to gain insight and understanding of the problem under investigation”. Neuman (2000) explains that a literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from and build on what others have done. An integrative review presents the current state of knowledge and pulls together disparate research reports in a rapidly developing area of knowledge.

The review of the literature in this chapter is structured around the following models and themes as they relate to the objectives of the study:

- (a) The lifecycle of records
- (b) Records continuum
- (c) ISO 15489
- (d) Review of related studies
- (e) State of records management practice in Swaziland

2.2 The records life cycle

When the lifecycle concept was developed in the United States, people began to realize that there was something that could be done to control the creation of records (Penn, 1994:12). If properly done, the maintenance, use and disposal of recorded information would be much less of a problem. The model posits that recorded information has a 'life' similar to that of a biological organism in that it is born (creation phase), lives (maintenance and use phase), and dies (disposal phase). Figure 2 illustrates the various phases. Each of the phases has various elements associated with it and functional activities are performed within each element.

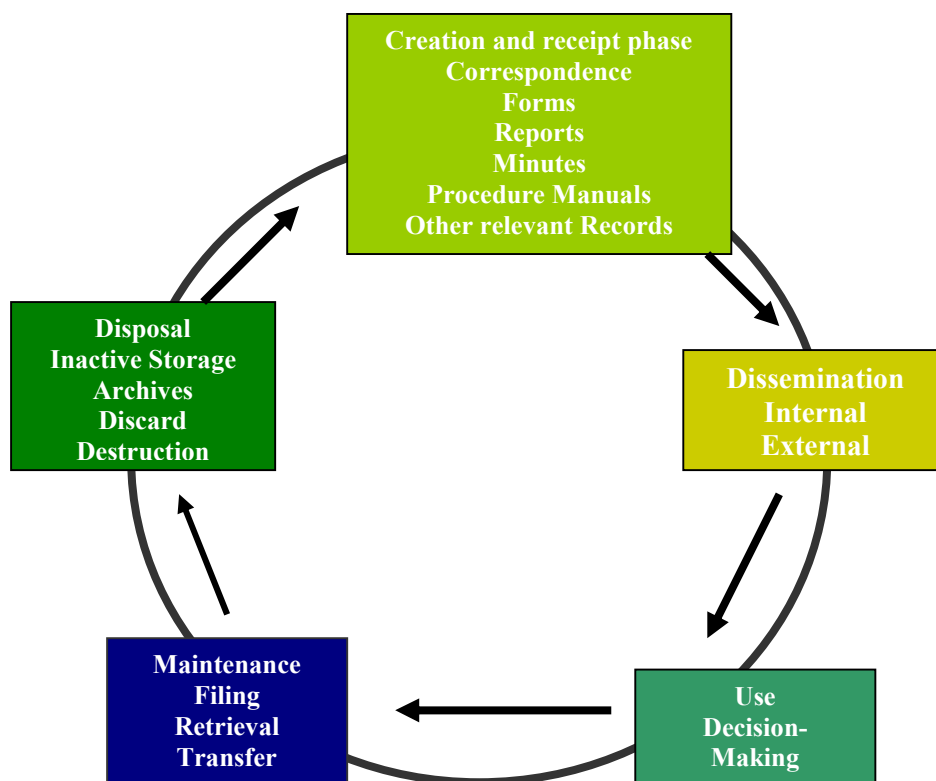


Figure: 2 Records life cycle (Source: RM Handbook, 1998)

(a) Creation and receipt phase

There are various ways in which a record is created. An individual writes a letter or memorandum to a business associate; a form is sent to a job applicant who must complete it and return it to the organization that has the vacant position; an existing record is placed on a copying machine and, in a matter of seconds, one becomes two; and so on and so forth. There are, of course, different levels of effort involved in

creating these records. It does not take a lot of time or intelligence to duplicate a record on a copy machine (RM Handbook, 1998).

(b) Maintenance and use

For proper maintenance, all questions regarding information storage and retrieval systems must be answered. As already stated, they should be answered before the records are created because the answerers will determine the way in which information is captured.

This phase requires that records be managed both in the file folder, and the record series levels. File management usually comes into play when the record moves out of the work station into a more central department location that can be easily accessed by a number of users. An efficient departmental filing system can be designed using an organizational standard but tailored to the reference needs of the department. As records become less active, their treatment evolves from the use of specific file folders, to their maintenance as record series. This does not mean that individual files are no longer accessed and retrieved, only that the series as a whole takes on more importance in supporting business needs.

Just because a record ceases to be fully active does not mean that it should cease to exist. Its existence may be required by statute or regulation, or it may be desirable for historical reference purposes. Nor does it mean that the record, and the larger record series, should be accessioned by the archives immediately, for it may, after a given period of time, lose all value.

(c) Disposal

The disposal phase is the phase in which records that are no longer of value to an organization are destroyed or transferred to the archives for their secondary roles of value (Northwest Territories, 2002:2). Records reach their inactive phase when their primary value to the organization lapses. The National Archives of Canada (2003:1) indicates that this is the stage when records have reached the end of their lifecycles. As determined by the national archivist, one of three pathways for each record must be followed by the organization:

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- Destruction
- Alienation
- Transfer of archival records to the archives

This phase is critical importance for the proper and economical maintenance of office records. Many records can be legally destroyed at the end of their active lifecycle. Others become semi-active and should be retired to a records storage area or reformatted for more convenient storage. Microfilming and digital imaging are the most common form of reformatting.

The disposal of an inactive record will depend on the value of the information that it contains. The value of information is measured sometimes in minutes and sometimes in centuries. The information in a memorandum from the company's managing director regarding the annual staff party, for example, may be needed only until the party is over. The information in a letter from the same individual discussing the corporate strategy for avoiding a takeover may be deemed historically significant and kept permanently. If information is considered to be of a permanent nature, it must be captured in a form that is reproducible and in a manner that ensures permanence. Thus, disposal should be considered during both the active and semi active phases. For example, if information is known to be archival at the time it is created, it can be captured on 100 percent rag bond paper, maintained and used appropriately, and archived at a predetermined time. However, if information is not considered to be archival at a later date, it could be recaptured at that later time in a different form, such as microfilm, and processed to archival standards to ensure permanence.

In terms of transferring electronic records to national archives, the organization that is transferring the records is required to include certain documentation (metadata) accompanying computer files. Technical documentation of the records, sufficient to support their use for secondary analysis, must accompany the tape. Furthermore, the national archives also needs specific information on how the tape was written, identification and definition of all data sets transferred, records layouts specifying relative positions, lengths and definitions of all data elements, and codebooks for all unique codes used in the records (National Archives of South Africa, 2000:27).

According to Diamond (1995:17), once the records have been transferred to the archives, they need to be processed, conserved and made accessible as sources of information or evidence. They can be used to refresh the memory of employees about the history of their organization. Management consults such records to establish facts, make decisions, and learn about the past operation of the organization.

Thus, at the one end is the creation of the record and its active management and use; in the middle, its semi-active phase; and at the other, its final disposal. The first two phases place the function of records management firmly in the category of business activity per se, and the last one into the category popularly referred to as archival.

2.3 The records continuum

The Records Continuum Research Group at Monash University is responsible for pioneering concepts and research that has re-invented modern recordkeeping. The records continuum model helps us understand the nature and scope of recordkeeping in our organisations and in our society. It presents an overview of a seamless and dynamic recordkeeping regime that transcends time and space to capture and manage records for as long as they are required to satisfy business, regulatory, social and cultural requirements (Mckemmish, 1997). The continuum model was motivated by the concern for the lack of strategy for active and early intervention by archivists in the records management process, especially in the electronic era. The most basic difference between the continuum model and the lifecycle approach is that it addresses the whole enterprise of recordkeeping; it complements the records lifecycle model.

Upward (1998) observes that the continuum model is a departure from the traditional approach taken by archival institutions, but recognizes that in the electronic age, physical custody is no longer an essential element of preservation strategy. The choice of using the continuum or lifecycle model is a matter of policy for different organisations. However, those who prefer the lifecycle model may cite its comprehensiveness while those who use the continuum model argue for its simplicity. It also depends on where the emphasis on records management is placed by respective organizations.

Records continuum thinking and practice focuses on logical records and their relationships with other records and their contexts of creation and use. Thus the continuum is a map of a dynamic, virtual place - a place of “logical, or virtual or multiple realities” - and it always has been, even in the paper world.

Because the continuum is holistic yet multidimensional, it can be refracted or separated into its constituent layers like a band of light. Figure 3 has four vectors or axes: recordkeeping, authority, transactionality, and evidential. All interact to achieve a continuous, dynamic whole that transcends the four dimensions (Mckemmigh, 1997).

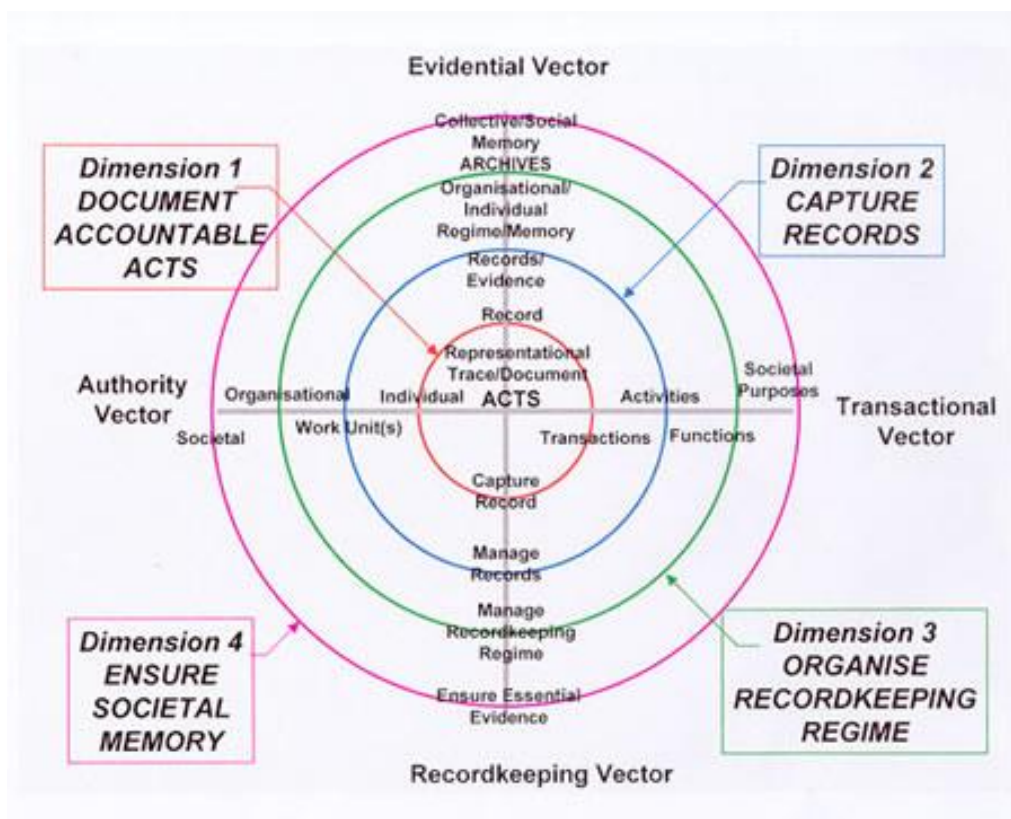


Figure 3 - Records continuum diagram

The Records Continuum model presents an overview of the recordkeeping dynamic that transcends time and space. Adapted from the Records Continuum diagram originally developed by Frank Upward, Senior Lecturer at Monash University.

Mckemmigh, (1997) observed that records are both current and historical from the moment of their creation. By definition, they are 'frozen' in time, fixed in a documentary form and linked to their context of creation. They are thus time and space bound, perpetually connected to events in the past. Yet they are also

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dismembered, carried forward through time and space, and re-presented in the contexts of their use.

(a) The **fourth dimension is concerned with:**

- Identifying or inventing social and cultural mandates for essential evidence to function as collective memory
- Establishing recordkeeping regimes that can carry records beyond the life of an organization or person developing knowledge bases and classification schemes that represent the broadest structural and functional contexts of recordkeeping
- Putting in place storage and migration strategies that carry records beyond the life of an organization or a person developing access strategies that manage access across jurisdictions (Mckemmigh, 1997)

(b) **The third dimension is concerned with:**

- Identifying personal and corporate requirements for essential evidence to function as personal / corporate memory
- Establishing recordkeeping regimes in the personal or corporate domain
- Developing organizational knowledge bases and classification schemes that represent the personal and corporate contexts of recordkeeping
- Putting in place storage and migration strategies that carry records through the life of an organization or a person
- Developing access strategies that manage access according to the rules of a particular personal or corporate domain (Mckemmigh, 1997)

(c) **In the second dimension,** recordkeeping processes and systems are implemented in accordance with the design requirements, standards and best practice models set up in the third and fourth dimensions. Implemented processes and systems include:

- Capturing records at specified points in business processes (when predetermined 'boundaries' are crossed)
- Capturing and maintaining the metadata required to assure their quality as records of business and social activity (i.e. metadata that places them in relation to other records and links them to their context of activity), and to manage their usability (completeness, accuracy and reliability) and accessibility over time

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- Delivering records for use over time according to relevant access permissions and user views
- Storing and securing records over time (Mckemmigh, 1997)

(d) In the first dimension, acts, communications and decisions are documented.

Document creation and control processes are implemented which:

- Capture content
- Capture structure (documentary form)
- Order and place documents in their immediate context of action and facilitate their retrieval
- Store documents and cater for their security (Mckemmish, 1997)

2.4 ISO 15489

ISO 15489 was published in March 2002, as the main standard on records management. The standard represents recognized international best practice guidelines on records management.

2.4.1 The structure of the standard

The standard is divided into two parts:

- AS ISO 15489.1-2002, Records Management- Part 1: General; and
- AS ISO 15489.2-2002, Records Management- Part 2: Guidelines.

Part 1 is the actual standard. It provides a framework for records management in the form of a high-level statement of principles and policy. Part 2 is a supplementary technical report that provides additional detail and guidance to help organisations implement Part 1.

The standard provides a descriptive benchmark that organizations can use to assess their records management systems and practices. Both parts of the standard are designed to help organizations create, capture and manage full and accurate records to meet their business needs and legal requirements, as well as to satisfy other stakeholder expectations. Both parts apply to records in any format or media, created or received by any public or private organization in the course of its business.

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2.4.2 Key components of ISO 15489

(a) AS ISO 15489.1

Part 1 of the standard provides an organizational framework for records management, and specifically outlines:

- The benefits of records management
- The need to identify the regulatory environment in which the organization operates; the importance of assigning responsibilities for records management

It details the fundamental principles of a records management program, including the design of records management systems, commonly referred to as Developing and Implementing a Recordkeeping System (DIRKS). It also includes information on processes, controls, staff training requirements, and monitoring and auditing operations.

(b) AS ISO 15489.2

Part 2 is an informative technical report that provides practical guidance to help organizations implement the framework set out in Part 1. It includes:

- Additional guidance on records management policies and the responsibilities to be defined and assigned
- Further explanation of the DIRKS methodology outlined in Part 1
- Additional guidance on the development of records processes and controls to manage records through the use of tools such as thesauruses and disposal authorities

Part 2 also provides additional guidance about monitoring and auditing records systems to ensure that organisations meet their legal and accountability requirements. Further guidance on training programs ensures that the functions and benefits of managing records are widely understood in an organization.

2.5 Electronic records management in an organization

Electronic records are records created in electronic format. Currently, most information is created ‘digitally’ and stored on personal computers and network drives, reaching terabyte storage levels and beyond. It is vital that organizations understand that information and records are assets of the organization, not the individual, and therefore need to be managed actively and properly. The incorporation of Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS) and practices provide structure, consistency, security, and control over these records (Mnjama, 2003).

The past century has revolutionized the way in which information is generated and stored (Beastall, 1998:89). Organizations have started to operate in an environment where an increasing majority of records are created and disseminated in electronic format. Much of this information constitutes the records of those organizations, i.e. outputs of the business process (McLeod, Hare & Webster, 1998:23).

In trying to emphasize the need for managing an organization’s records, De Wet and Du Toit (2000:85) conclude that successful organizations recognize the value of managing their internal records efficiently and effectively. Those organizations understand that, to assure their future, records should receive the same level of attention and commitment as any other corporate resource. Gross (2002:2) explains that managing records is a vital part of any business operation.

One of the significant results of the revolutionary global shift away from print to electronic media has been increasing quantities of records being created, communicated and maintained in digital and optical format (Shepherd, 1994). A survey by the UN in 1988 and 1991 showed a dramatic 10- fold increase in electronic mail (e-mail) communication among organizations that had the technology (Barry, 1993). The United States government had also estimated that about three-quarters of its transitions would be handled electronically by the year 2000 (Shepherd, 1994).

However, while the literature provides ample evidence of the increasing use of new electronic media and records in public sector organizations, it provides little by way of systemic approaches to handling the electronic records from an archives and

records management perspective. According to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (1990) of the United States, managing information in electronic form to ensure its availability for future use by a broad spectrum of users, including records creators, historians, social scientists, genealogists, journalists, lawyers and private citizens, is the most significant and difficult challenge currently confronting the archival community.

(a) Advantages of electronic records management

The first software products for records management started to appear in the early 1980s. In general, these products were designed to make the job of records management easier, and were primarily concerned with tracking paper records. Today the capabilities of records management systems have expanded to handle electronic records (Spratt, 2000:2).

According to (De Wet and Du Toit, 2000:79), an electronic records management system could lead to the following improvements to the benefit of the entire organization:

- Each record that exists will be securely stored in the system's database
- All end-users throughout the organization will be able to access records simultaneously
- The routing mechanism with which records can be directed for processing by specific people will enable structured information flow to ensure that each record receives appropriate attention
- The indexing mechanism will facilitate effective storage and efficient retrieval

Most organizations are increasingly replacing their paper files with electronic records as a strategy to save space. Thousands of records originally in paper format are scanned and converted into computer files for storage in CD-ROMs, taking up only a small part of the space previously required by filing cabinets and boxes (Stuenkel, 2000:51). The use of electronic mail and Intranets for internal and external communication has saved a huge amount of space by reducing the number of paper records (Benson, 1998:88).

Most organizations have invested in electronic records management systems with the idea of reducing demand for more space from records managers. It is up to the

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organizations themselves to encourage their employees to make use of technology in creating and saving records. The strategy clearly doesn't work if records are created and received electronically but end-users print and file them for future reference. Soon the very same employees will complain about filing cabinets and office space.

The biggest advantage of electronic records management is the ability to share and reuse information sources, i.e. records (Spratt, 2000:8). Through e-mail, a large number of end-users may access and re-use the same records simultaneously or individually. They don't have to wait for one another to retrieve the same record (Benson, 1998:88).

Furthermore, through electronic records management systems, organisations save money on postage, storage, shredding and waste disposal (Phillips, 1998:65). Unlike a paper record, it requires only one employee to send one record to all members of staff. Human resource costs are also reduced drastically.

According to (Gross, 2002:1), it not only costs businesses more money to purchase additional filing cabinets, file folders and additional off-site storage, but businesses also lose efficiency and staff time when papers cannot be located and retrieved as quickly as they are needed.

Government ministries need to share information. With more than half of the information in an organization created electronically, there is a requirement to share it electronically. The benefit of electronic records management is based on the improved retrieval of information (Makhura, 2005:51).

According to Gross (2002:2), if records were converted into electronic format, it would be possible to retrieve any and all records from a laptop anywhere in the world. For example, sales representatives and executives may wish to access important records while away from the office. If the electronic records management system is web-enabled, corporate users can access records from any location at any time as indicated above.

An organization may also share access to certain documents with users outside the organization, such as customers, suppliers or service providers. Using a web-linked

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records management system makes it practical for large organizations to engage all members of staff in information sharing (Spratt, 2000:10). For legal organizations, electronic records management offers the strategic advantage of providing quick access to specific pleadings, exhibits and other papers in seconds (Gross, 2002:2).

(b) Disadvantages of electronic records management

According to Spratt (2000:11), preserving electronic records for long periods of time, or even forever, raises a different set of issues from preserving paper records. Digital media such as floppy disks, hard disks, magnetic tape and CD-ROMS are generally not as stable as traditional media and, as a rule, deteriorate at a much faster rate than paper and microfilm. This simply means that within a short period of time, often only a decade, digital records can become unusable because the medium on which they are stored might become unreadable.

The proliferation of computers has created a number of problems for the law. Many legal rules assume the existence of signed and original paper records. The law of evidence traditionally relied on paper records. As more and more activities are carried out by electronic means, it becomes increasingly important that evidence of these activities be available to demonstrate the legal rights that flow through them (Spratt, 2000:6).

Electronic resources, regardless of whether they are created initially through digitization or are 'born' digital, are threatened by technological obsolescence and physical deterioration (Spratt, 2000:11). Unlike paper documents which can be read directly by the human eye, a digital record requires the intervention of machines. Without the relevant hardware, the medium on which electronic records are stored cannot be read. Even with the right hardware, records will not be readily available in a human-readable form without the software program that originally created that record. Changing technology has created new problems and responsibilities for information safekeepers. Technological obsolescence occurs when technological changes cause technology to be outdated. Newer versions of software and hardware usually render older versions obsolete. As a result information, which relies on obsolete technologies, becomes inaccessible. Currently, it seems that the lifetime of digital storage media generally exceeds the life of the technology that supports it.

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Technological advances make it highly unlikely that today's digital storage media such as hard drives, CDs and DVDs would be easily accessible in a decade, let alone in 50 or 100 years (National Library of Australia). We need to devise strategies for the preservation of digital records and archives. As Brindley (2000) pointed out, "we can no longer rely on benign neglect" as preservation option in this world of digital preservation.

2.5.1 Electronic records management policies

MacDonald (1998:6) expressed his concern about the lack of policy, legislation, systems, standards and practices for ensuring the protection and proper management of electronic records. A great deal has been written about concerns about the management of electronic records in Australia, Canada, Europe, the United Kingdom and United States, but at present, much of this work remains theoretical.

Policies, guidelines and procedures for electronic records management are still being developed. Most of the work that has been done was spearheaded by a small group of records professionals with little input from the IT community (Johare, 2001:106). It therefore implies that there is a need for a closer relationship between records management and the IT community in addressing issues of common concern with respect to electronic records management.

Lack of organizational and legal frameworks on electronic records negatively affect their value in terms of management (access) and preservation (Johare, 2001:106). The materials that now need to be managed and controlled extend beyond the traditional paper-based records into web pages and multimedia records. Voice recognition systems are almost at the same level as word processing was in the early 1980s. Managing such records is crucially important when, for example, tracing the pattern of how a decision was arrived at (Beastall, 1998:89).

In order to manage electronic records effectively in an increasingly technological environment, records managers will need to have a basic understanding of several areas of IT, including networking principles, operating systems, database systems, imaging systems, workflow, e-mail systems, Internet and intranets, etc. Given the pace at which technology is developing, continuing records management education

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will become a lifelong endeavor (Spratt, 2000:11). In recognition of the manner in which electronic mail is generated daily in an organization, the section below attempts to address the best possible management techniques of e-mail as an example of electronic records.

2.5.2 Management of electronic mail as records

The introduction of various computerization projects in organizations resulted in large numbers of records being created electronically. Although the introduction of modern information and communication technologies is a welcome development, the underlying issues relating to the management of electronic records have still not been addressed (Mnjama, 2003:97).

Like any other record in any medium, electronic mail should be managed according to basic rules and guidelines. According to Sutcliffe (2003:51) as cited in (Makhura, 2005:51), if electronic mail is not captured as soon as it is generated, then it may never be captured. Furthermore, once information is published on the web, it becomes a record, and creates liability for the organization that published it if it has gone through a formal review and approval process.

Strategies for managing and preserving electronic messages as records differ depending on the specific environment in the organization. There are two basic options for managing records created and received in the form of electronic mail:

- Print messages and file them in paper-based filing systems
- Transfer electronic mail into an electronic records management classification system

Like any other tool, electronic records have both advantages that may benefit the organization and disadvantages that may be dangerous to the organization. The disadvantages of managing electronic records are made even worse by lack of trained records personnel (Mnjama, 2003:7).

2.6 The training needs of records management staff

The availability of suitable and effective training for records management in developing countries is limited (Rhys-Lewis cited in Ngulube, 2003). A survey in Namibia (Töttemer & Stander cited in Ngulube, 2003) concluded that, “The archivist profession is the most underdeveloped as far as training possibilities are concerned.” Records management is a special field that can only be handled by experienced professionals. Studies shows that in most African countries, individuals appointed to the position of records management officers are not fully trained records managers and are therefore not able to professionally handle all records management problems. According to Mwiyeriwa (1985), the provision of trained manpower “is the one thing which will make or break African archivology”.

Most African countries have paid little attention to the training of records managers (Mnjama, 1996). Similar observations were made by a UNESCO survey carried out by Mazikana in 1988 (Mazikana, 1992:16). An even less amount of attention is given to the training and education of archival preservationists and conservationists. An overview of archives and records management education and training in Anglophone Africa revealed that of the 27 institutions that were studied, only seven, that is 25.9 %, had a specific module dedicated to the preservation and conservation of records and archives (Ngulube, 2001). Perhaps this partly explains why there is a dire lack of specialists trained in preservation and conservation in Southern Africa SA (Khayundi, 1995:33; Mbaye, 1995:43). Because preservation is a significant component of every archivist’s job, archival training is necessary to place greater emphasis on general preservation principles.

2.7 Records storage and facilities

According to Thurston (1996), records management in Africa is increasingly influenced by two global developments: public service reform initiatives and computerization. National archival organizations, which have statutory responsibility for records management in the public sector, have been severely under resourced for many years, but now have new opportunities to develop much higher profiles. The situation presents a range of new challenges, and not all are in agreement on the best way forward. Despite this, professionals and educators across the continent are re–

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evaluating their role and many are taking a holistic view that encompasses the needs of users at all stages of the record's lifecycle. This attitude is earning the respect of senior public officials who are increasingly recognizing records management as an important aspect of public reform.

It is generally acknowledged in the recordkeeping community that there is inadequate support in both the public and private sectors for quality records and archives management, not just in developing countries but worldwide. There is a general lack of recognition of the importance of records as evidence, and senior officials often tend not to recognize the need for the value of effective records management programmes (Millar, 2004).

According to Adjei (1993), records management is still in its infancy on the continent. Information is never properly stored: it is difficult to retrieve when needed and is usually lost within a very short period of time. The methods of keeping and storing information are crude and rudimentary and basically consist of keeping large volumes of paper files. As mentioned earlier, the poor management of records in Africa is also caused by inadequately trained personnel to manage records in the appropriate manner. There is also a lack of commitment on the part of governments and institutions to ensure the proper management of records.

(a) Funding for records management programmes

The records of government bodies are normally disposed of by transfer to the various national archives centers. In Third World countries, archivists often operate under extremely difficult conditions. At times, the budget for the national archives is virtually nonexistent. This is made worse by few trained archivists and other personnel and weak official support. The archivists themselves have also played the most damaging role by mismanaging the limited personnel resources and misappropriating the scarce finances (Musembi, 1983). This is one of the most important causes of archival underdevelopment in Third World countries. On the other hand, Mwiyeru (1982) claims that: "No amount of financial support can solve the problem. And no amount of technical assistance from UNESCO or overseas countries can change the situation. The archivists of Third world countries are responsible for creating some of these problems."

(b) Conditions of records in the registries and storerooms

According to Ritzenthaler (1993), the state or the rate of deterioration of documents, particularly paper documents, is dependent on the chemical stability of the materials making up the document and external influences such as the environment, storage conditions and handling procedures. Abuse and mismanagement as well as disasters can also cause untold damage to documents.

A study carried out by Akussah (2001) in Ghana, with a sample that consisted of 69 registries, probed into the state of damage of records in the registries and found that of the 44 responding registries, 61.4 % reported observing damages resulting from the normal use of documents, while 29.5 % reported no observations. Findings also revealed that most of these damages related to the mishandling of records and intensive use of the documents by officers who did not appreciate the value of the documents beyond the information they needed for work.

(c) Storage environment

“To be able to secure the archives of the future from today’s records, records need to be stored in proper conditions. Failure to do this could result in the loss of vital or valuable documents in the registry or the records centre before they even qualify to become archives” (Cameron, 1991). Akussah (2002) claims that records need to be stored under controlled environmental conditions. Factors such as temperature, relative humidity, light, intensity and illumination, and other forms of atmospheric pollution, need to be kept at acceptable levels. High levels and fluctuations should be curbed if not eliminated completely.

The study also find out if registries were monitoring temperatures and found that of the 44 registries, only 18.2 % monitored temperature by taking periodic readings, and 6.8 % monitored relative humidity. This was a pathetic result given the geographical location of Ghana and the corresponding climatic and weather conditions experienced. The implication of this is that public records in the registries were constantly exposed to the vagaries of the climates, such as high and fluctuating temperatures and relative humidity, excessive light intensity and illumination, and to some extent polluted air.

(d) Preservation

Materials in most archival institutions in Africa are steadily deteriorating and some have already deteriorated beyond repair due to their format, frequent handling and use, climatic and environmental conditions, and lack of care due to lack of financial resources. A survey of the archival situation in Africa carried out on behalf of the ICA and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reflected the same state of affairs (Mazikana, 1992). The situation is growing worse despite the existence in Africa of a new crop of records with a “dynamic new solution” (Thurston, 1996). In fact, the preservation of archives has been characterized as a crisis area in South Africa National Archives (Oliver, 1999). It is evident that some of paper-based materials are deteriorating due to excessive handling by users and archives staff alike.

Fragile and brittle government materials can be saved if some form of intervention is instituted. One option is to adopt reformatting strategies that follow internationally recognized standards. On the other hand, records offices can withdraw the materials from circulation and safely lock them away in vaults. The potential of exercising the latter option is very high in many records offices in Africa (ICA, 1996).

Ojo-Igbinoba (1993), in a study on the practice of conservation of library materials in sub-Saharan Africa, concluded that there was a general lack of technical expertise; librarians were generally not informed about the preservation and repair of library materials. This applies as well to the registry personnel in the Ministry in Ghana, judging from the responses obtained from the survey conducted by Akussah (2001) in relation to preservation awareness and training. It turned out that 77.3 % of the registries had personnel that had some training in preservation. The rest had no training at all.

2.8 The level of awareness about sound records management practices

According to Sanderson and Ward (2003:1), the importance of records management is increasingly being recognized in organizations worldwide. It is therefore the responsibility of records managers to ensure that they gain the attention of decision-makers in their organizations. Gaining attention is all about convincing management of the role of records management as an enabling unit in an organization.

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Employees require information in order to carry out their official duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively in a transparent manner. Records represent major sources of information and are almost the only reliable and legally verifiable source of data that can serve as evidence of decisions, actions and transactions in an organization (Wamukoya, 2000:24). According to Northwest Territories (2002:1), the role of records management is to ensure that members of staff involved in different operations have the information they need when necessary.

Records also act as raw materials for research in various disciplines, including scientific research, which is an important ingredient of socioeconomic development. Furthermore, records can be used as an information resource for strategic planning purposes. The service provided by records management is therefore of vital importance to employees and end users and for organizational success. As outlined earlier, the primary function of records management is to facilitate the free flow of records throughout the entire organization. Most importantly, it remains the function of records management to ensure that an organization's records are safe for future reference (DeWet and Du Toit, 2000:75).

According to Palmer (2000:65), the role of a records management system is that it acts as a control system that reinforces other control systems, such as internal and external auditing. The records themselves can serve to detect fraud and recover the loss. Corruption functions in an environment that provides people with opportunities to commit fraud, and the proper upkeep of records can provide investigators with a trail to track the root of corruption once fraud is detected. However, for records to be useful in this capacity, they must be accessible.

Hare and McLeod (1997:8) found that organizations kept records for the following reasons:

- Information retrieval
- Evidence of an organization's activities
- Compliance with regulations

Generally, four main reasons that should motivate organizations to preserve records permanently are for their:

- Administrative value
- Financial value
- Legal value
- Information value

i) Administrative value of the record

In the conduct of their business activities, organizations and individuals often need to consult records to view their previous activities and decisions, for example to provide background information, establish the existence of a precedent, or to substantiate or refute a claim or allegation. Records in this case are of utmost importance as part of an organization's administrative function (Makhura, 2005:18).

In the most cases, these records are useful for the conduct of current administrative business. The following questions must be asked when assessing records for their administrative value to a department or organization (if the answer is "yes" to all, the records no longer hold administrative value):

- (a) Has the record ceased to contribute to the administrative performance of the function which it supported?
- (b) Has the original purpose of the record been fulfilled?
- (c) Is the record being kept (retained) for convenience or because it has been customary to keep it?
- (d) Has the transition with each record been completed?
- (e) Has the record been kept merely to guard against administrative blame?
- (f) Is the record being kept elsewhere, i.e. is it duplicated?

ii) Financial value of the record

According to Makhura (2005:18), organizations need long-term documentary evidence of the way in which funds were obtained, allocated, controlled and expended (budget). This includes budget records, which provide evidence of how income and expenditure were planned, and various accounting records documenting financial

transactions. Therefore proper records management play a vital role in ensuring such value is attained at organizational level.

iii) Legal value of the record

Legal records provide evidence of contractual obligations, duties and privileges agreed upon by governments, organizations or individuals. They provide a record of matters such as property titles, charitable status and other legal and civil rights. They may be preserved as evidence of the decisions of governments, courts and other bodies, or as the source of the authority for actions taken by organizations or individuals (Makhura, 2005:18).

iv) Information value of the record

Information value is the ability of a record to aid in the reconstruction of past activities of the organization in order to provide information for current and future planning or to provide data upon which new activities may be based, e.g. policies, minutes, reports, etc. According to Makhura (2005:18), archives and records management departments are generally recognized as the primary source of materials for information and research into the history of society. They form a unique and indispensable record for researchers such as historians, scientists, geographers, sociologists, statisticians, etc.

In assessing information value the following questions must be asked, and if the answer is “yes”, then the records will still have research, evidential, historical or archival value and must be preserved:

- (a) Does the record play an important information and administrative role?
- (b) Does the record show the policy decisions taken by the organization?
- (c) Does the record reveal the economic, political, research, scientific, social and statistical matter that the organization dealt with during its operations?

It may be appropriate to reiterate that records exist in order to remind organizations of their previous activities. Hounscome (2001:1) noted that while records management may seem boring to many, it is hard to under-estimate the role played by records

management in organizations. Records are the corporate memory of the organization, evidence of what was done and why it was done. They provide information for different organizational purposes, such as:

- Decision-making
- Financial accountability
- Performance measurement
- Strategic planning
- Research

Sanderson and Ward (2003:2) further explored the role of records management in an organization as follows:

- Avoiding the cost of litigation or failure to comply with regulatory bodies.
- Preventing the loss of intellectual property or loss of corporate learning/ corporate memory.
- Preventing loss of information from disasters or theft and ensuring business continuity.
- Maximizing the efficiency of operation and use of information.
- Responding in a timely and effective way to the requirements of customers.
- Protecting executives and their organizations from loss of reputation and credibility with the general public, customers, etc., by demonstrating good practice and providing accountability for their actions.

Records need to be recognized as a vital and reusable asset, a source of content, context and knowledge (Sutcliffe, 2003:53). Records management should be seen as an enabling / support function towards knowledge management. The argument should be that without records, an organization would lose a wealth of knowledge produced by its employees during daily operations.

2.9 The records management functions in an organization

Records management is a logical and practical approach to the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records, and therefore of the information that those records contain. With a viable records management program in place, an organization can control the quality of the information that it creates; maintain that information in a manner that effectively services its needs; and efficiently dispose of the information when it is no longer valuable.

According to Penn (1998), a complete records management program encompasses a multitude of disciplines, including forms, reports, correspondence, directives, mail, file copies, retention schedules, vital records protection, archival preservation, and ultimate disposal. Each discipline has its own particular principles, practices methods, and techniques for accomplishing the necessary end results, and certain technological tools that may be employed in achieving the results more efficiently and economically.

Wamukoya (2000:25) divides the role of records management in an organization into three:

- Business domain
- Accountability domain
- Cultural domain

(a) Business domain

For organisations to function properly and effectively, they depend on accurate and reliable records management. According to Northwest Territories (2002:1), an organization creates and keeps records so that it can keep track of what its members have done and what was decided.

The business domain requires that records must be produced and maintained to support the essential activities of an organization in the following manner:

- Serving as the basis through which decisions are taken to ensure consistency and reliability
- Providing evidence of the organization's daily operations

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- Ensuring competitive performance

Although business transactions are increasingly being conducted electronically (requiring electronic records management techniques) both within and between organisations, records should still be kept to support and fully document all business, legal, fiscal, social and historical transactions (Pember, 1998:64). Technological advancement should not destroy the legacy of recordkeeping, but rather develop the speed at which records are created, kept and managed.

(b) Accountability domain

Palmer (2000:63), as cited in (Makhura, 2005:21), views accountability as a particularly crucial governance element, and refers to holding officials of organizations responsible for their actions. Without records, there can be no accountability and no rule of law. A good records management system is essential to support financial management, accountability and transparency (Palmer, 2000:61).

As a reliable tool of evidence, records ensure that the organization has met its defined financial, legal, social or moral obligations. In all accountability forums, records are consulted as proof of activity by senior managers, auditors or by anyone inquiring into a decision, process or the performance of an organization or an individual. Organizations should therefore maintain accuracy and reliability in their record management systems. Failure to manage records properly has been a contributory factor to corruption in many organizations. Members of the public also rely on records to criticize, question and hold officials of the organization accountable. Therefore records should be accessible to them.

According to the University of the State of New York (1994:8), accurate, reliable, and trustworthy records are the cornerstones of effective programmes for auditing and accountability. Palmer (2000), as cited in Makhura (2005:21), indicates that authentic and reliable records provide a link between the authorization assigned to a particular person and the date of the activity. They can serve as evidence of abuse, misuse and non-compliance with financial instructions and other laws and regulations. Consequently, records management provides a preventative, credible restraint against corruption and fraud. Therefore records serve as a preventative tool.

According to Cowling (2003:1), evidence of past actions is the basis of all forms of accountability. For records to retain their value as evidence, they need to be preserved and managed. Management needs to cover the whole lifecycle of the records produced, irrespective of format.

(c) Cultural domain

This domain believes that records should be preserved and made available to members of society for posterity and historical research. Since records document organizational history over time, and therefore provide the basis for writing organizational history for the benefit of new members. Valuable records are therefore kept permanently for future reference. Records, if well managed, have the potential to provide the most meaningful source of information by which employees could present themselves as honest, well-meaning and accountable.

Wamukoya's theory on the importance of records management may be summarized with reference to Northwest Territories (2002:1), whose approach to the role of records management in an organization is as follows:

- Provide corporate memory
- Help to formulate policy
- Help in making appropriate decision
- Help to archive greater effectiveness, economy, and efficiency
- Help in productivity & consistency
- They reduce risks associated with missing evidence
- They document activities and achievement

Adequate records management enables an organization to make good decisions, deliver quality services, and provide evidence of its business. It is further essential for the provision of access to information.

2.9.1 Causes of poor records management practices

According to the State of Montana's Montana Historical Society (2002:32), and Hounsome (2001:2), there are many causes of poor records management practices in an organization:

- Lack of records management policies and procedures. Are they adequate? Are they philosophically consistent across the organization?
- Lack of qualified staff such as records managers and archivists. Will the experience and qualifications of the existing staff be suitable for managing a records management programme?
- Records management costs that are not immediately apparent. Cost may only become significant over a period of time and thus not attract management's attention.
- Limited resources to implement a system according to requirements (legislation). Is the number of staff and other resources adequate? Is the records retention and disposal schedule in place? Has this been approved by legal services?

2.10 Challenges of records management in Africa

According to Gwinn (1987), in many developing countries, most materials are still being produced on acid-based wood pulp paper. There has been a conspiracy of silence on the quality of paper used for records management. It is evident from the national technical standards on paper that many countries in the developing world have not taken significant steps to improve the quality of paper production, especially for works of permanent value, and to require the use of acid-free paper through government legislation. Procedures to chemically stabilize acidic paper to extend its life are also nonexistent. Although treatments to stabilize the documents are available, the costs are prohibitive and funds to address this problem seem to be limited.

De-acidification, for example, only arrests further deterioration but does not strengthen paper. Akussah (2002) found that ministries in Ghana were using acidic paper for the creation of records. Not surprisingly, only an insignificant number of registries knew the source of the paper being used to create their records. This shows that there were no standards for the quality of paper as is the case in America, Britain and India.

One of the major issues that came to the fore from research conducted by Akussah (2002) was the lack of records management awareness among the staff and users of public records in the registries of government ministries. The main reasons for this

were inadequate professional training of staff, and the lack of continuous records management education in the form of seminars, workshops and the like. Akussah (1991) identified inadequate awareness of preservation issues on the part of both information professionals and users of records, as militating against the effective records management in Ghana. He recommended the education of information professionals and patrons of libraries and archives, and emphasized the need to raise awareness of document preservation in Ghana.

The lack of training and awareness were also isolated by Amehame–Addo (1993) as one of the key factors contributing to the rate of deterioration in the National Archives of Ghana. He recommended staff education at all levels, including in house training, seminars, workshops and formal training. He also recommended intensive orientation programmes for the clientele of the archives to raise their awareness of how to care for and handle documents.

There is no doubt that any country that is plagued with deficiencies in preservation training and awareness may not be able to discharge its responsibility towards safeguarding its documentary heritage. This view was forcefully stressed by Piggott (1987) when he wrote, “A concern for conservation (preservation) is a central to the true responsibilities of the archivist. To ignore the matter is to be professionally negligent. There can be no compromise on this point, and not even a shortage of resources can excuse a lack of concern for conservation.”

Records Management professionals in Swaziland like all other professionals in other countries are concerned about the following:

- The low profile of and limited support for records professionals as key players in information and records management, particularly in the electronic age
- The absence of legislation and policies for the management of information technologies and electronic records
- The lack of standards and systems for the management and preservation of information technology products and electronic records
- The lack of adequate training and human resource development

- The need for increased funding and more appropriate budgeting of funds for records and archives work, not just for technology-oriented approaches to records creation and management (Millar, 2004)

Carlos (1998) claims that if people are not trained on how to keep track of information, it will be very difficult for that society to make a transition to electronic government. This adds to the new challenges that the information era is introducing to developing countries in the public sector. These challenges are magnified by other types of constraints: the influence of the regulatory environment; the availability of laws with respect to electronic signatures; the proper treatment of intellectual property rights and how you can integrate this at the level of a modern knowledge management system; and also the most basic aspects of having people trained and able to keep track of records in a way that supports accountability and transparency. In a study conducted by Sebina in Botswana (2001), it was found that officers appointed to the position of records management were not fully trained records managers. Therefore, they were not prepared to professionally handle all the records management problems faced by the company under investigation.

A research investigation by Moyo and Ngulube (2000) established that many countries in sub-Saharan Africa did not have archival preservation policies and plans. This is indicative of the fact that institutions on the continent have not seriously committed themselves to prolonging the life of information in their archival documents. According to Conway (2000), digitization requires a deep and longstanding institutional commitment to traditional preservation in order for it to work. The fact that many archival institutions in sub-Saharan Africa do not have clearly articulated preservation programmes raises a lot of concerns about their ability to implement emerging digitization procedures when they do not have any grounded experience in traditional preservation techniques. Archival institutions should pull their act together before thinking about digitization.

2.11 State of records management practice in Swaziland

Swaziland National Archives (SNA) is the main specialist archival institution responsible for managing public records and for ensuring that the most important are

preserved as historical records. Archives are a resource that contributes to people's understanding of themselves and their identity as a nation and society.

SNA receives non-current records that are to be kept permanently. These records are mainly created by Swaziland's government ministries and departments. Such documents can be used as evidence in cases where there are disputes. The documents are properly preserved because they serve as a memory for the government. SNA was under the Ministry of Tourism & Environment before being moved to the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology in January 2009. According to Dlamini (1999), SNA was not allocated an adequate annual budget. As a result it could not meet most of its plans.

Although Swaziland National Archives had a limited budget, it was able to achieve the following:

- Sensitize registry staff from the ministries about records management
- Equip registries with facilities
- Publish many records management manuals and distribute them to various ministries

2.12 Summary of the literature review

It is widely acknowledged in the recordkeeping community that there is inadequate support in both the public and private sectors for quality records and archives management, not just in developing countries but worldwide. There is a general lack of recognition of the importance of records as evidence, and senior officials often tend not to recognize the value of effective records management programmes. Records management is still in its infancy in Africa. Information is never properly stored: it is difficult to retrieve when needed and is usually lost within a very short period of time. The literature review also showed that there are challenges to sound records management in Swaziland that include lack of expertise in records management due to inadequate education facilities and technological obsolescence. Hopefully, this study will make a contribution to sound records management in the government of Swaziland by creating awareness about the best practices in records management.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the records management practices within the government ministries in Swaziland. This chapter presents the methodology that was used to carry out the study. The population of the study consisted of 17 ministries in Swaziland. This chapter discusses the techniques used in data collection, the sampling procedure and data analysis.

Methodology, as stated by Miller & Brewer (2003:192), connotes a set of rules and procedures to guide research and against which the study's claims can be evaluated. Research methodologies revolve around two major approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Newman, 2003:542). A quantitative study measures a phenomenon using numbers in conjunction with statistical procedures to process data and summarize results (Creswell, 1994; Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 1998).

On the other hand, qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and is concerned with viewing experiences from the perspective of those involved and understanding why individuals react or behave as they do (Creswell, 1994; Glazier & Powell, 1992). Methodology is merely a framework in which the data is placed so that its meaning may be deciphered (Leedy, 1991:104). Qualitative and quantitative researchers use systematic methods to gather high-quality data.

According to Leedy (1997:9), research methodology assists in controlling the study, dictating the acquisition of data to address the research question, arranging data into logical relationships to enable analysis, and the drawing of conclusions that can contribute to the expansion of knowledge. Both approaches were used by the researcher to complement each other and to obtain in depth analyses.

According to Glesne & Peshkin (as cited in Ngulube, 2003:196), the purpose of qualitative research is to conceptualize and interpret results using induction to derive possible explanations based on observed phenomena. On the other hand, the

quantitative approach generalizes and predicts findings based on the use of formal instruments such as questionnaires.

3.2 Research design

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:63), research design can first be understood as the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. In this sense, it is a programme that is used by the researcher to guide him or her while collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts. Very often this process is described as research management or planning. A second and more specific definition of research design ties in directly to the testing of a hypothesis. The selection of the research process and methodology is therefore determined by the researcher's choice between quantitative and qualitative approaches, or both methods combined (De Vos, Schurink and Strydom, 1998:15). In a nutshell, research design refers to the research plan or simply how research is planned and executed.

There are various types of research designs, ranging from case studies to surveys, content analyses, empirical designs, phenomenology, etc. The most commonly used research designs for both qualitative and quantitative research are case studies, surveys, and content analyses. Surveys are methods of data collection where information is gathered through interviews or questionnaires. Surveys allow researchers to gain information quickly and require relative little effort in gathering large amounts of data (Edwards and Talbot, 1994:29).

This study used surveys in the form of questionnaires. Surveys are perceived to be excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes in a large population. They are mainly used in studies that have individual people as units of analysis. Questionnaires are an instrument specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful from the data they generate (Babbie, 2003:251-255).

3.3 Population

According to Neuman, (2003:546), 'target population' is the name for the large general group of many cases from which a sample is drawn and which is specified in concrete terms. Bless and Higson –Smith (2000:84) and Rowley (2002:19) refer to a population as a set of objects that may be animate or inanimate. For example, a set of records, institutions or people could constitute a study population. Israel (as cited in

Ngulube, 2003:201) explains that depending on the size of the population and purpose of the study, a researcher can study the whole universe or a subset of the population, which is referred to as sample. Due to limited time and money, most researchers do not often study the entire body of relevant facts about the whole population under investigation. Therefore, the findings and conclusions in most research are based on information gathered from a limited number of people from whom generalizations can be made about the entire population. As already stated, the Swaziland government consists of 17 ministries. The number of staff members (action officers, registry staff and non office bearers) across all the ministries amounted to 2600 as of 2009. From the 2600 staff members, only 1225 were directly working with pen and paper, computers, or working in the ministries administration, i.e. action officers and registry staff (Swaziland Establishment Register, 2009). The target population therefore consisted of government ministries, and within the ministries, records managers, action officers and registry staff.

3.4 Sampling

A sample is a subset from the accessible population being studied (Neuman, 2003: 211). There are several approaches to determining the sample size. These include using a census for small populations, imitating a sample size of similar studies, using published tables, and applying formula to calculate a sample size. Each strategy is discussed below.

(a) Using a census for small populations

One approach is to use the entire population as the sample. Although cost considerations make this impossible for large populations, a census is attractive for small populations (i.e. 200 or less). A census eliminates sampling errors and provides data on all the individuals in the population. In addition, some factors, such as the questionnaire design or developing the sampling frame, are "fixed", i.e. they will be the same for samples of 50 or 200. Finally, virtually the entire population would have to be sampled in small populations to achieve a desirable level of precision (Israel, 1992).

(b) Using a sample size of a similar study

Another approach is to use the same sample size as used in previous studies. Without reviewing the procedures employed in these studies, you may run the risk of repeating errors that were made in determining the sample size for another study. However, a review of the literature in your discipline can provide guidance about the ‘typical’ sample sizes used (Israel, 1992).

(c) Using published tables

A third way to determine sample size is to rely on published tables that provide the sample size for a given set of criteria. Tables present sample sizes that would be necessary for given combinations of precision, confidence levels, and variability.

(d) Using formulas to calculate a sample size

Although tables can be a useful guide in determining the sample size, you may need to calculate the necessary sample size from a different combination of levels of precision, confidence, and variability. The fourth approach to determining sample size is the application of a formula (Israel, 1992).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = desired sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error

e = ± 10 %

90 % Confidence level

(i) Sampling of government ministries

$$\frac{n = N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{n = 17}{1 + 17(0.10)^2}$$

$$= 14.5 \text{ Ministries}$$

$$= \underline{\underline{15 \text{ government ministries}}}$$

(ii) Sampling of registry staff

$$\frac{n = N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{n = 40}{1 + 40(0.10)^2}$$

$$= 29 \text{ registry staff}$$

(iii) Sampling of action officers

$$\frac{n = N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{n = 1185}{1 + 1185(0.10)^2}$$

$$= 92 \text{ action officers}$$

The action officers and registry staff were randomly selected based on their operational level positions in the ministries' organizational structures. In total, 92 action officers and 29 registry staff represented the target population. The distribution of the action officers was as follows: 31 members of staff were drawn from top management, 31 from middle management, and 30 from lower level management.

Every effort was taken to ensure that the sample covered all the management levels at the ministries in order to ensure that the figures would not be biased with respect to

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records management issues from a specific ministry. These measures were taken in order to provide accurate information.

15 government ministries were selected purposively because they have the highest impact on socio-economic development, are the largest ministries in Swaziland and therefore generate large amounts of records, and are central in the core business of government as well as in records management. It was hoped that the findings from the investigation would apply to all the government ministries. The ministries that were chosen are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Government ministries and staff included in the study

Ministry	Records Staff	Action officers
1.Commerce & Trade	2	6
2.Education & Training	2	6
3.Foreign Affairs	2	6
4.Health & Social Welfare	2	7
5.Housing and Urban Development	2	6
6.Labour & Social Security	2	6
7.Public Service & Information	2	6
8.Sports Culture and Youth Affairs	2	6
9.Agriculture	2	7
10.Economic Planning	2	6
11.Justice & Constitutional Affairs	2	6
12.Natural Resource & Energy	2	6
13.Information & Communication	2	6
14.Finance	2	6
15.Housing	1	6
	(N=29)	(N=92)

3.5 Data collection tools

Data collection tools or instruments are the various methods and applications used to collect evidence / data in the field of research. These tools help the researcher obtain primary or secondary data.

Below are the tools used and why they were the most appropriate for the selected population.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Mouton (2001:100) observes that the questionnaire is probably the single most common research tool used in the social sciences. This is because of its main advantages, which are:

- Simple,
- Versatile, and a
- cost-effective method of data collection.

There are also some disadvantages of using questionnaires in research. Questionnaires have been criticized as research tools because of the problem of response bias. Response bias refers to when participants fail to answer the questions correctly or truthfully. This may be motivated by the respondents' deliberate attempts to present a good image of themselves, also referred to as "faking good" (Miller & Brewer, 2003:256). Alternatively, participants may simply not know the answer to the question through lack of knowledge or because the question is posed in an ambiguous manner. The language and terminology can also be a barrier to the understanding of the questionnaire by the participants.

Therefore, questions were designed to reflect the aims and objectives of the study as shown in Appendixes C & D. The questionnaire consisted of open- and close-ended questions and multiple-choice questions that required respondents to choose from already listed possible answers. Questions were generally constructed with either fixed alternative items, e.g. the participant had to respond by indicating [Yes] or [No] or choose from a Likert scale in terms of items to characterize its features and performance, e.g. a score of 1 for 'never', 2 for 'less than once a month', 3 for 'monthly', 4 for 'weekly', and 5 for 'daily'.

The distribution of questionnaires was divided into two. The first questionnaire was distributed to the action officers. The questionnaire for the action offers was intended to understand the functions of the various departments of the government ministries;

the nature of the records each department creates, receives and uses; the frequency of the use of records; the type of information that is shared in the department; and to understand the perceptions of the services rendered by the registries and secretaries.

The second questionnaire was distributed to the registry staff. The researcher intended to identify the types of records kept; procedures for opening and closing files and file titling; storage, retrieval and disposal procedures; and other matters affecting the operations of the registries.

During this exercise, the researcher was always available in case of problems that required clarification. Furthermore, the researcher explained the necessary procedures of the survey clearly to the relevant people and at the same time ensured their commitment to the exercise (see Appendices B, C & D). A period of two weeks was allowed for responses to the questionnaires before they were collected.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation has been characterized by Adler & Adler (2000:389) as the “fundamental base of all research methods” in the social and behavioural sciences. Schwandt (1997:106) defines observation in qualitative research as “direct first-hand eye-witness accounts of everyday social action” that answers the question, “What is going on?” Observation was conducted from Monday (24 August 2009) to Friday (28 August 2009). The observation of the ministries was intended to gather data on procedures, storage conditions and equipment used by these ministries (see Appendix E, Observation Guide).

3.6 Piloting

To ensure validity and reliability, questions were piloted on a small group of consultants from the Institute of Development Management (n=5) before being distributed to the main sample. This was done to test whether any of the questions were ambiguous and interpreted differently by different respondents. Based on the pre-test, it was concluded that the questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Confidentiality was also guaranteed because questionnaires were returned anonymously.

3.7 The reliability and validity of the instrument

An assessment of the data hinges upon determining the reliability and validity of the research instruments used. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 106) caution researchers against threats to validity and reliability which can never be eliminated completely. The authors suggest what can be done during design, data gathering, data analysis and data reporting, to try and minimise the threats.

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability is described by Babbie and Mouton (2003: 119) as a matter of whether a particular technique applied repeatedly to the same object would yield the same results each time, that is, provides consistent or precise data. The data collection methods that were used in this study (questionnaires and observation) have been applied in similar studies (see Chapter 2), where they proved to be reliable. In this study, care was taken to ensure reliability by means of pre-testing instruments and by using methodological triangulation.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity includes the selection of an appropriate methodology suitable to answer the research questions, selection of appropriate instruments for collecting the data and an appropriate sample (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman 1993: 43). In an attempt to achieve validity in this study, the instruments used to collect the data had an adequate coverage of the research questions guiding the study. Pre-testing of the questionnaire (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 244) was done as mentioned in section 3.6.

3.8 Data analysis and presentation

According to Neuman (2003:156), data analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text. 'Content' refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or messages that can be communicated. After the collection of the data, the researcher developed a coding sheet for representing variables with figures, for example officers: **registry** = 1 and **action** = 2. Responses to the open-ended questions were scanned to determine common words and phrases were used by the respondents. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 12.0 for Windows, was used to present and analyze the data. Although there are many academically and

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commercially available software packages for the analysis and presentation of data, like Microsoft Excel®, EPI- info® and SAS® (Statistical Analysis System), SPSS® was selected because it is the most widely used statistical software in the global academic community (Arksey & Knight, 1999:156; Foster, 1998:22; Moore, 2000:136; Slater, 1990:82) and, according to Brace, Kemp and Snelgar (2000:12), it is a very powerful statistical program. SPSS® facilitated the sorting of data and computing of frequencies, sums, means, percentages, standard deviations and exploring similarities and differences among the variables.

Tables, pie charts, percentages and graphs were used to present the responses of the respondents.

3.9 Research Ethics

There are several ethical issues that must be considered when designing research. These include privacy and confidentiality, as well as informed consent.

A researcher must explain how privacy and confidentiality issues will be addressed. Codes of ethics insist on the protection of participants' identities and those of research locations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 139). Creswell (2003, p. 185) advises on the masking of names of people, place and activities to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

The present study adhered to ethical issues, for example, to avoid plagiarism, all sources used in the study were acknowledged and a general picture of data collected was presented at the analysis stage, to ensure confidentiality and privacy of respondents. No particular set of data was attributed to any ministry, senior ministerial officer or registry personnel. A research permit was obtained from the ministries surveyed. Consent was sought from respondents before administering questionnaires on registry personnel and senior ministerial officers. The aim and significance of the study was explained to respondents who made up the study population sample, in order to obtain their consent. Respondents were assured that information collected was to be treated confidentially and used purely for research work.

3.10 Summary

This chapter outlined the methods and techniques that were used to investigate the records management practices in government ministries in Swaziland. The research process was informed by the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms through survey research design. Reasons for the selection of each instrument for data collection were explained, and principles such as validity, reliability and the ethical standards that informed the research process, were presented. The units of analysis and the methods used for data collection and analysis were also discussed in this chapter. The results of the investigation are presented and interpreted in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (3) outlined the research methodology of this study. This chapter focuses on the data analysis and presentation of the results.

The purpose of this study was to investigate records management within government ministries in Swaziland. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- How are records generated, used and disposed of?
- What types of records are generated?
- How are records organized and retrieved?
- What are the training needs of registry staff?
- What is the level of staff awareness about sound records management practices?
- How suitable are the records storage facilities?

4.2 Response rate

According to Nachmias (1996:226), the response rate is calculated as the percentage of respondents in a sample who returned completed questionnaires. In this study, 92 questionnaires were hand-delivered to action officers and another 29 questionnaires to registry staff. Most of the action officers 90 (98 %) and all (100 %) registry staff returned their questionnaires.

4.3 Presentation of the findings of the survey

This section aims to present the findings of the survey with respect to records management in government ministries in Swaziland.

4.3.1 Types of records created by the ministries

The survey sought to find out the types of records created by the action officers and registry staff in the process of carrying out their functions. This question was administered to both action officers and registry staff in order to identify the nature of the records created. Most of the respondents 93 (78 %) were creating nolicv and

manual and personnel records. The 30 respondents (25 %) were creating financial records (see Table 2).

Table 2 **Types of records created [N= 119]**

Type of Record	Percentage
Minutes	75 %
Reports	78 %
Policies and Manuals	76 %
Circulars and memos	75%
Financial	25%
Personnel records	78%

4.3.2 Place of storage of records

Action officers were asked where they kept the records that were created. Most of the action officers 73 (81.1 %) were keeping the records in their offices, while 47 (52.2 %) were keeping the records in registries, and 22 (24.4 %) were keeping records in the storeroom.

The findings also reveal that most of the action officers preferred to keep their records in their office cabinets. Perhaps this is because they found it much easier and faster to access them in their offices. The action officers frequently transferred records to the registries when they no longer used them, effectively using the registry as a storeroom, when in fact a registry is: “The place where files and other records are processed, kept and retrieved. It is the control centre of all information coming into and leaving the organization. It provides information when it is needed, where it is needed, at the time it is needed and to people who need it” (Registry Handbook, 1993).

The responses were also indicative of a lot of duplication of records in the offices. The appraisal of records was found to be a particularly problematic area. No procedures were in place to assist in the appraisal of records. Officers removed records from their offices when there was no space available to store them. The storerooms functioned more as a dumping ground for records. No procedures were followed when records were deposited into the storerooms. It was observed that in the

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storerooms, records were competing for space with other materials such as old computers, chairs, vacuum cleaners, fans and heaters. Files in these storerooms were neither well arranged nor documented, causing problems when action officers wanted to retrieve records. Most of the time, records in the storerooms were forgotten and remembered only when there was a need to extract information from them.

The study also sought to check whether action officers were using the registries to keep their records. The findings revealed that 82 (69 %) of the action officers were not using the registries for keeping records. The reasons given by the registry staff was that most of the action officers kept their current records in their offices and only transferred records that they were not using to the registries. The action officers noted that they were not using the registries because files got lost in the registries; consequently, it was safer to keep current records in their offices and take those that they did not need to the registries.

4.3.3 Information sharing challenges within ministries

The survey sought to find out if there were challenges in sharing information within the ministries. The results of the study reveal that 75 (63.3 %) were having problems in sharing information within the ministries because not all of them were using the same classification scheme when classifying their records, and others were not using any classification scheme at all. As a result, documents could not be retrieved easily. There was also a lot of duplication of records in different offices.

Upon observation, it would seem that although central registries were available in these ministries, they were not used properly by action officers. Sharing information was a problem because there was no proper documentation of the files in the offices. Only 11 (9 %) respondents also revealed that sometimes decisions could not be made because of missing files.

4.3.4 Classification scheme

Respondents were asked if their records were arranged according to a classification scheme. The survey revealed that only 56 (47%) were using their ministry's classification scheme. Furthermore, those who were not using the classification scheme kept their records in their offices where they claimed to remember each and every file, but they did not know how to use the classification scheme. This created

problems of accessing information contained in records, especially when action officers were away and had to deal with records upon their return. The records were transferred to the registries when they were not used frequently, leaving the registry staff to classify those documents. Action officers mentioned that they were never trained on how to use the classification scheme, and those who were using it were not using it properly.

Lack of knowledge of the existing classification scheme and the inability to use it also resulted in the improper referencing of mail. The survey's findings showed that only 48 (40 %) action officers referenced their correspondence. Procedures that act as a benchmark for the maintenance and use of files were non-existent. Incoming mail that was processed and ready for action was attached to the respective files prior to submission to the action officers. Replies to these in many instances never found their way into files, meaning that files had an incomplete account of what transpired. Information that was known to exist was also not easily retrievable.

4.3.5 Types of paper used to create records

Registry staff were asked to state the types of paper used to create records. The results show that 29 (100 %) were using acidic paper to create records.

The purchase of paper was done by officers who were unaware of the types of paper and their implications for long-term preservation. It became clear that paper used for the creation of records had no indications of PH values (the degree of acidity or alkalinity of the paper).

The indiscriminate purchasing of paper to create records has negative implications on the long-term preservation of records as a national heritage. There were no standards with respect to document creation, care and handling in the government ministries in Swaziland.

4.3.6 Methods of holding files together for their use and storage

The research investigated how files were held together for their use and storage. It is conventional to use fasteners in offices to hold together records that constitute files in protectors to facilitate their use and storage. Fasteners are usually selected depending on the climatic environment and the retention period of the file. Files meant for

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'permanent' retention need to be held together with fasteners to reduce the deterioration of the file (Akussah, 2000:159). The results revealed that 24 (83 %) staff members used plastic clips, and another 17 (59 %) used metal clips.

Observation of the records revealed that most of the documents with the metal clips were showing indications of rust and stain. Most of these were not removed until a record was transferred to the National Archives of Swaziland. It should be noted that there was no defined criteria used by the ministries in choosing the fasteners. The purchases were done by officers who were unaware of any implications of choosing those fasteners for the long-term preservation of records. The staff were using adhesive tape to repair permanent records which deteriorated over time, and the adhesive became brown and darkened the paper to which it was attached. This was suggestive of the absence of guidelines and standards of compliance for records officers in the registries of government ministries in Swaziland.

4.3.7 Electronic records management policy

The officers were asked whether they generated electronic records in the process of carrying out their functions. Most of the action officers 76 (84.4 %) generated records in an electronic format. They were then questioned about the existence of a policy governing the storage and retention of e-mails.

Most of the respondents indicated that a policy governing e-mail storage and retention did not exist (40; 45 %) or were not aware of whether it existed (36; 40 %).

Only 14 (15 %) of the respondents were aware of the existence of an e-mail policy. Therefore, only 15 % of the respondents possibly managed their e-mails according to the ministries' policies.

The findings on this item are further reflected in Figure 4.

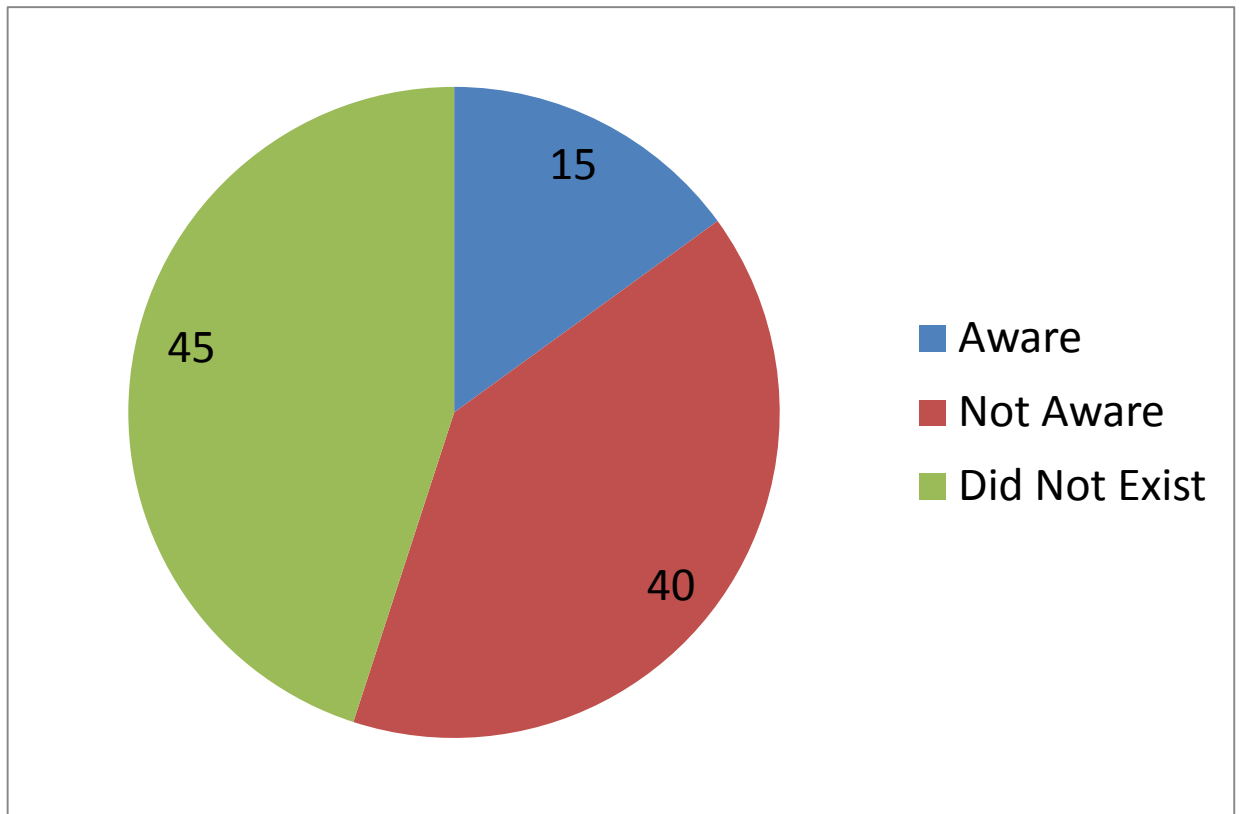


Figure 4: Awareness about existence of an e-records policy

According to Johare (2001:106), the lack of organizational and legal frameworks for electronic records undermines their value in terms of management (access) and preservation. Both the State of Montana (2002:32) and Hounsome (2001:2) indicate that the lack of records management policies and procedures are the main causes of poor records management.

In order to manage electronic records effectively in an increasingly technological environment, record managers need a basic understanding of a number of areas of information technology. Therefore another question aimed to establish the level of computer literacy in the ministries. The majority of the respondents (35; 39 %) rated themselves as good, 28 % rated themselves as poor, 12 (15 %) rated themselves as excellent, and 14 (18 %) rated themselves as average (see Figure 5). This implies that basic computer literacy at the ministries was good.

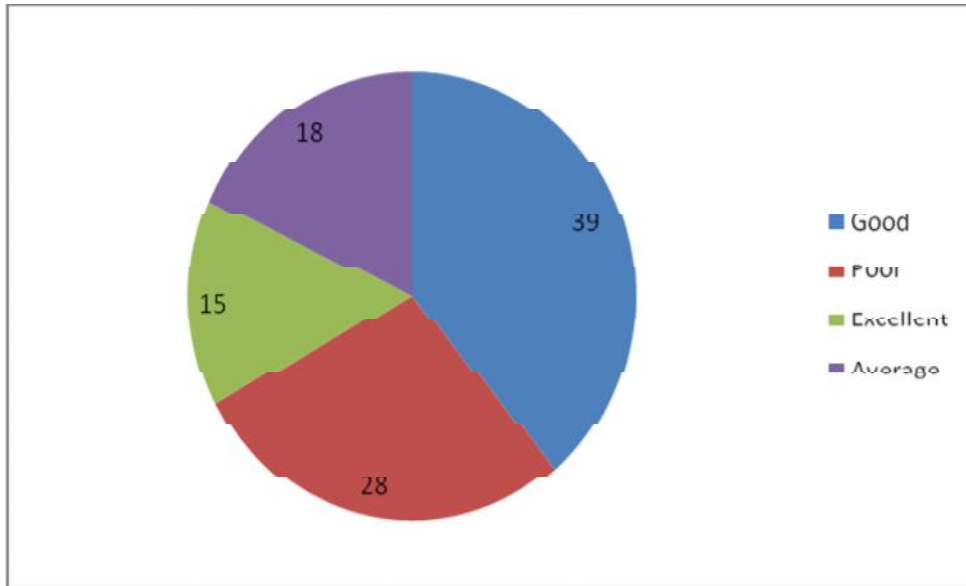


Figure 5: Level of computer literacy

4.3.7.1 Maintenance of electronic records

The Ministry of Education was the only ministry with a database to maintain its records. Most of the respondents (39; 43.3 %) maintained their electronic records on a memory stick, 7 (7.8 %) on a hard drive, and 14 (15.6 %) said that they did not create electronic records (see Table 3).

Table 3: **Management of electronic records [N=90]**

Responses from Action officers		Frequency	Percent
	Database	30	33.3
	Memory stick	39	43.3
	Hard drive	7	7.8
	We don't manage	14	15.6
	Total	90	100.0

It was observed that each office that created electronic records had its own way of maintaining, retrieving, and storing electronic records. In some offices, memory sticks were found lying on top of tables without protective lids to minimize their exposure to dust. There was also no documentation of records in electronic form, which made them inaccessible to other officers.

It was also established that although about 72 (80 %) of the respondents had access to e-mail, they did not manage their e-mails properly.

Table 4 shows the response rates with respect to the sending and receiving of e-mail by the respondents. It appears that irrespective of the lack of policy governing e-mail storage and retention, a large percentage of respondents (54; 60 %) preferred to store their documents for future reference. The only worrying factor was the retention schedule and the filing method that was used.

Table 4: Response rate with regard to the sending and receiving of E-mail

Receiving & sending of e-mail	Percentage
Sending e-mails	80 %
Receiving e-mails	80 %
Forwarding e-mails to colleagues	78 %
Receiving attached documents through e-mails	75 %
Storing of attached documents in memory sticks	60 %
Using folders	65 %
Pruning of stored e-mails	58 %

Having established that 80 % of the respondents received e-mail and 72 (80 %) sent information through e-mail, a question was asked about the frequency in which e-records were received and disseminated. The majority of the respondents 68 (75 %) indicated that they received information about ministries electronically on a daily basis, compared to 48 (53 %) respondents who disseminated information about their departments electronically on a daily basis.

Figures 6 and 7 respectively show the response rates with respect to the retrieval and dissemination of records electronically.

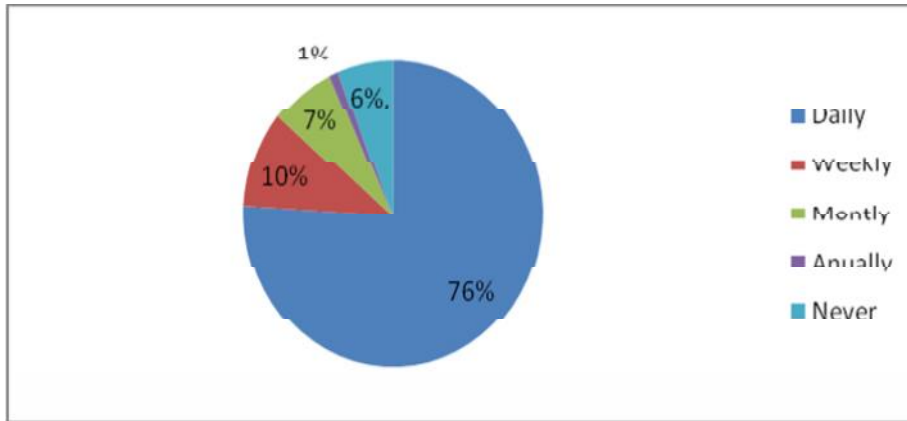


Figure 6: Electronic accessing of records

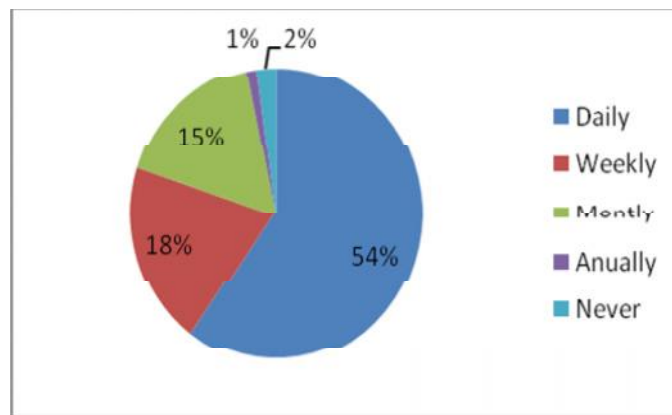


Figure 7: Electronic dissemination of records

To add to the above, two separate questions were asked about the format in which records were received and disseminated electronically. The results in Table 5 show that reports (70; 77.9 %) and memos (70; 78 %) were regularly received electronically, unlike invoices (16; 18.3 %).

Table 5: Records received electronically (N=92)

Type of record	Percentage
Minutes	75 %
Reports	77.9 %
Policies and Manuals	76 %
Circulars	77.9 %
Invoices	18.3 %
Memo	78 %

Table 6 shows the findings with respect to the electronic dissemination of records in various departments. As reflected in Table 6, electronic tools seemed to play a great role in the dissemination of memos (67; 74 %) and minutes (66; 73 %) compared to policies and manuals (55; 61 %).

Table 6: Records disseminated electronically (N=92)

Type of record	Percentage
Minutes	73 %
Reports	71 %
Policies and Manuals	61 %
Circulars	60 %
Memo	74 %

4.3.8 Semi- current records

The survey also sought to elicit how closed files were handled in the registries prior to their transfer to the archives. Table 7 shows that 18 (62 %) of the registry staff stored their closed files on the floor and in the cupboard, while 11 (38 %) stored their closed files in storerooms. The findings also revealed a shortage of registry space to keep non-current records and cupboards prior to archiving. Appraisal of records was a problem as no procedures were followed to assist in this exercise. The researcher also checked the condition of the records in the registries and found that most damage to the records was caused by mishandling and the intensive use of documents. Other

factors that caused damage to these registry documents were insects and bad paper. This explained the deterioration of documents that ended up in Swaziland National Archives.

Table 7: How are closed files handled in the registries prior to the transfer to records Centre? [N=29]

Responses from Registry Staff	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Floor and cupboard	18	62 %	62 %
storeroom	11	38 %	100 %
Total	29	100 %	

4.3.9 Disposal procedures

The respondents were asked what legal requirements governed when records should be destroyed and what records should be permanently preserved. It was found that although there was a legal basis for records' destruction, most of the registry staff were not aware of them (20; 70 %). Such legal requirements include the stipulation in Act no. 5 and the retention schedule. However, those who were aware of this legal requirement did not apply it.

The researcher observed that registries stored closed files on top of their cabinets, and these were to be destroyed or sent to archives. Most of these records needed to be audited. The study also investigated how often records were transferred to the archives. Table 8 reveals that 8 (28 %) respondents transferred records after 3 years, and 21 (72 %) transferred records after 5 years. Further follow up through observation revealed that the records that took a long a time to be transferred to archives were records like financial statements, payment vouchers, and scholarship records of students who had finished school ten years previously in the case of the Ministry of Education.

Table 8: Frequency of records transfer to Swaziland's National Archives [N=29]

Responses from Registry Staff		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	3 years	8	28.0	28.0
	5 years	21	72.0	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	

4.3.10 Building and equipment challenges

The survey sought to reveal the challenges faced with respect to the buildings that were housing records and the related equipment to facilitate the management of records. Registry staff indicated that shortage of space was the greatest obstacle to effective records management. Table 9 shows that the majority of the registry staff (18; 62 %) had problems with the registry buildings. The survey also tried to find out if the buildings were originally designed for registry purposes. The majority (21; 72 %) answered in the affirmative, but limited space remained the main problem.

Table 9: Problems with the building [N= 29]

Responses from Registry staff	Frequency	Percent	Problems with the building	Cumulative Percent
No	11	38.0	No problems	40.0
Yes	18	62.0	Registry is too small	100.0
Total	29	100.0		

4.3.11 Air conditioners / fire detectors and security

The study sought to find out whether registries had air conditioners and fire detectors. The findings were that none of the registries had air conditioning facilities and fire detectors to monitor and control climate factors in the registries. None of the registries

was monitoring temperature because of lack of equipment. There were also no security facilities such as security counters to monitor access to the registries.

4.3.12 Training

The study sought to determine the qualifications of the registry staff. The results shown in Figure 8 reveal that officers appointed to the position of records management were not fully trained records managers. The majority of the respondents (17; 60 %) had a O' level certificates, while 6 (20 %) had junior certificates and 6 (20 %) certificates from records management workshops.

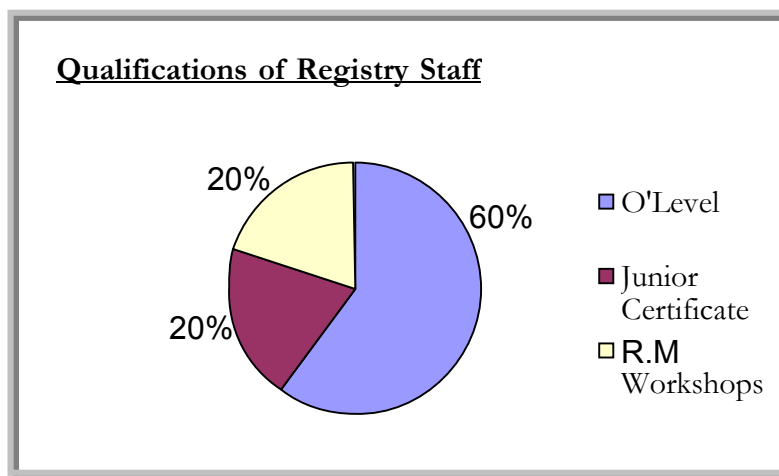


Figure 8: Qualifications of Registry Staff

The respondents were then asked how often they attended records management workshops. 18 (62 %) indicated once a year while the rest did not attend such workshops (see Table 10).

Frequency of workshops attendance [N=29]

Table 10:

Responses from Registry staff		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	once a year	18	62.0	62.0
	not at all	11	38.0	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	

The researcher wished to know the extent to which the workshops they attended were helpful. Table 11 shows that 19 (65.5 %) of the registry staff gained knowledge from short courses compared to 10 (34.5 %) who lacked the knowledge of those who attended. Of the 29 respondents with some training, none had formal training.

Table 11: **The extent to which the workshops were helpful [N=29]**

Responses from Registry staff		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Sometimes helpful	10	34.48	34.48
	most of the time helpful	5	17.24	51.72
	always	4	13.79	65.51
	not helpful	10	34.48	100.0
	Total	29	100.0	

4.4 Summary of the findings

Chapter four presented and interpreted the data collected with respect to records management in government ministries in Swaziland. Using an inductive approach as suggested by MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:480), all the data collected from the survey or through observation was presented and carefully analyzed. In some cases, the results were presented in the form of tables and graphs with interpretations.

From the findings, it is clear that there are challenges to sound records management in Swaziland, including the lack of expertise in records management and technological obsolescence, which directly and indirectly affect information flow and records retrieval within the ministries. Since the registry staff did not receive training on the existing filing system, there was no consistency with respect to filing systems and methods in the ministries. About half of the records were also destroyed or deleted illegally.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate records management practices in government ministries in Swaziland. The study specifically sought to address the following objectives:

- (a) To determine how records are generated, used and disposed of
- (b) To assess the types of records being generated
- (c) To determine how records are organized and retrieved
- (d) To assess the training needs of records management staff
- (e) To establish the level of awareness about sound records management practices
- (g) To assess the suitability of the records storage facilities used

5.2 Types of records created by the ministries

The creation of records in the ministries didn't appear to follow any particular convention, such as a standardized format and/or referencing. An organization with a proper records management programme would implement, as part of program correspondence management, forms management, report management, directive management and copies management in order to ensure standardized formats in the creation of records. Some of the records created by the action officers did not have reference numbers. Some of the files did not even have file titles. Those that had file titles had broad ones that also covered all records on related issues. The files were undocumented.

Record creation or receipt is one of the main phases of a record's lifecycle (NARA, 2004). Records creation is an aspect of recordkeeping and is primarily concerned with the development and implementation of an effective recordkeeping system to enable the organization to undertake the required range of activities specified in the records management policy (Blake, 2005). According to Kemoni (2007), records creation elements include: an adequate system to document the activities of each business unit; ensuring that the records of each business unit are sufficiently complete and accurate

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to facilitate auditing; protecting the rights of the organization and any person affected by its actions; and arranging records in a system to enable the organization to obtain maximum benefit from the quick and easy retrieval of information. According to Millar (1997:14), under the records continuum model, the records management action of creation or receipt falls under the first action of records care, namely identification and acquisition.

5.3 Places of storage of records

The storage premises for current records should be clean and tidy and should prevent damage to records. The equipment used should provide storage that prevents unauthorized access and meets fire safety standards and regulations, but that also allows maximum access to the information, commensurate with its frequency of use (Blake 2005). Action officers were asked where they kept the records that were created. Most of the action officers were keeping records in their offices and some in the storerooms. The findings also revealed that most of the action officers preferred to keep their records in their office cabinets. Perhaps this is because they found it much easier and faster to access them in their offices. The action officers frequently transferred records to the registries when they no longer used them, effectively using the registry as a storeroom when in fact a registry is: “The place where files and other records are processed, kept and retrieved. It is the control centre of all information coming into and leaving the organization. It provides information when it is needed, where it is needed, at the time it is needed and to people who need it” (Registry Handbook, 1993).

A study by Makhura and Du Toit (2005:221) at South African National Parks (SANParks) also established that most respondents used cabinets to store records in their offices. They also transferred records to registries when they were no longer using them frequently.

The study found that there was a lot of duplication of records in these offices. These findings concur with a study by Akussah (2002) which sought to establish the care and handling of records in government ministries and departments in Ghana. It

established that registries used a variety of storage equipment such as wooden shelves, wooden cabinets, metal shelves and steel drawer cabinets.

The prevailing inadequate record storage conditions is contrary to the requirements of ISO 15489-1 (2001:18), which states that appropriate storage conditions should ensure that records were protected, accessible and managed in a cost effective manner.

The findings suggest that there is a need for improvement in records storage in government ministries in Swaziland. According to Kemoni (2007), the storage of records should involve all the storage systems, processes, facilities and devices used in the storage of records.

Inadequate storage of current, semi-current and non-current records in the near future would negatively compromise public service delivery and hamper the attainment of the MDGs. It would affect the speed of retrieving current files because they would be stacked on shelves and on the floor with semi-current and non-current records. Mixing current, semi-current and non-current files on the shelves increases the likelihood of file wear and tear and the loss of file folios. Inadequate records storage also compromises the security of records, leading to their loss, theft and alteration, thus making them unavailable when required by action officers. Inadequate records storage equipment increases the deterioration of records and this would affect the health and safety of registry staff, for example, if the records were dusty. Registry staff would therefore benefit greatly from the stipulations provided by ISO 15489-1 (2001:18).

5.4 Classification scheme

According to Kemoni (2007:299), a sound records management programme for both paper and electronic records requires the presence of a records classification scheme. Classification enables records to be grouped together by functions and activities and to be managed as an aggregation, sharing specific characteristics such as managing control over the assignment of who would access particular sets of information (Reed, 2005:112). According to Millar (1997:14), one of the four actions of records care

under the records continuum model is intellectual control, which refers to the classification of records within a logical system.

The findings of the study showed that 56 (47 %) of the respondents were using classification schemes. Although the majority of the employees were using a classification scheme, they were not trained on how to use the classification system. There was also lack of awareness of the existence of the classification system amongst the staff. Many of those who were aware of its existence did not know how to use it. Classification is essential as it helps capture records in a system, thus allowing appropriate linking, grouping, naming, security protection, user permission, retrieval and disposal, and identifying vital records (ISO 15489-1, 2001:13).

A study by Kemoni (1998:59) established that one of the problems faced by records creators on a recurring basis was the lack of comprehensive and efficient file classification systems. Ombati (1999:35) observed that the KNADS had yet to influence public offices to use appropriate file classification schemes.

Likewise, a study by Leach and Verbeek (1999) which reviewed filing and document management systems in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Land Affairs, South Africa, called for redesigning the filing system as part of the implementation of an efficient records and documents management system. In Namibia, Nengomasha (2003:68) observed that the state of records management in the Namibian public sector left a lot to be desired.

5.5 Records management policy

According to Ngulube and Tafor (2006:58), weak institutional capacity and the absence of comprehensive records management policies have been cited as the main causes of archival as well as records management underdevelopment in Africa. The objective of the policy should be the creation and management of authentic, reliable and usable records capable of supporting business functions and activities for as long as they are needed (ISO 15489-1, 2001:5).

The findings of the present study were that 76 (85%) respondents did not have a records management policy in the ministries surveyed. A formally agreed records management policy would be essential for developing strategies on how records would be managed in a public authority (Blake, 2005). The records management policy should establish how records could be created, captured, maintained and disposed off in accordance with the legal, regulatory and business needs of the public authority (Kemoni, 2007). The policy must define the responsibilities of the personnel who manage records or carry out recordkeeping activities.

According to Kuchio (2002:9), a well co-ordinated records management policy is essential in the public sector in order to ensure that current, semi-current and non-current records are properly managed. Responsibility for the implementation of records management policy in the ministries should not be limited to registry personnel. It is important to also include other key players such as the senior personnel who are responsible for resource allocation and policy formulation, and other staff who use and handle records on a daily basis.

ISO 15489-1 (2001: 5) stipulated that a records management policy should be adopted and endorsed at the highest level and promulgated throughout the organization and responsibility assigned for compliance. The policy should be developed from an analysis of business activities and should be reviewed regularly to reflect current business interests.

According to Kemoni (2007:286), the absence of records management policies in the ministries has negative implications for public service delivery, as it makes it difficult to put in place efficient records management systems that support decision-making. The absence of up-to-date and accurate information potentially affects the role of public administrators in providing services, for example in implementing laws or making and influencing policy by advising the politicians formally responsible for making the law (Oluwu, 2002:1-2). In support of accountability, recordkeepers and accountability advocates seem to agree that good records systems must exist (Hurley, 2005:224).

5.6 Types of paper used to create records

The ministries were observed to be using acidic paper to create their records. They acquired papers for records creation from local stationery shops without worrying about their quality. The purchases were done by officers who were unaware of the types of paper and their implications for long-term preservation. It became clear that the paper being used for the creation of the records had no indications of pH (the pH value of paper is the degree of acidity or alkalinity of the paper). Most of the paper used to produce documents in Africa has been of poor quality - the poor quality of paper was characterized as one of the major problems facing Namibia and South Africa in the 1990s (Avafia, 1993:3; Moodley, 1993:4).

Records should be created using alkaline or acid free permanent paper. According to Browning (1970:31) and Smith (1969:154), the permanence of the paper used for records has been a subject of concern for more than 200 years. Permanent paper can retain its original character without alteration over many decades. Permanence is not synonymous with durability. According to the American Paper and Pulp Association (1965:36), durability is the property of resisting deterioration by use, whereas permanence refers to the degree to which paper retains its original quality during storage. Durability depends on the choice of fibres, the manufacturing process, and the chemicals used to enhance resistance to damage during handling. On the other hand, permanence is determined by the composition of the paper and by external conditions to which it is subjected during storage and use (Ngulube, 2003).

The use of acid-free paper by the ministries in Swaziland could guarantee the permanence of materials for centuries. It would reduce remedial preservation measures like restoration and conservation, which are discussed in the next section.

5.7 How files were held together for use and storage

Fasteners are usually selected depending on the climatic environment and the retention period of the file, but this is not the case in Swaziland. Some of documents with metal clips were showing indications of rust and stain and these were not removed until the record was transferred to National Archives of Swaziland. There were no criteria used by the ministries in their selection of fasteners. It should be

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noted that the registry staff were using adhesive tape to repair permanent records which deteriorates over time. the adhesive also browns and darkens the paper to which it is attached. This again points to the absence of guidelines and standards to be followed by records officers in the registries of the ministries.

5.8 Electronic records

Each office that created electronic records had its own way of maintaining, retrieving, and storing electronic records. In some offices, memory sticks were found lying on top of tables without protective lids and storage boxes to minimize their exposure to dust. There was no documentation of records in electronic form, which made them inaccessible to other officers.

5.9 Semi-current records

There was a problem identified in the transfer of records to the registries as space and cupboards were not enough to keep non-current records prior to archives. The appraisal of records was also identified as a problem because no procedures were followed to assist the process. The researcher also checked the condition of records in the registries. Most of the damage to records was caused by mishandling and the intensive use of documents. Other factors that caused damage to records in these registries' documents were insects and bad paper. This explained the deterioration of documents that end up in the Swaziland National Archives, which would have been prevented had steps been taken to lessen the vagaries of the environment.

5.10 Building and equipment

The storage environment can have a significant effect on the long-term preservation of records and the information they contain (Read, 1994). Consequently, a number of experts in Africa believe that preservation efforts should lay more emphasis on proper storage of documentary materials than on expensive reformatting and de-acidification projects (Alegbeleye, 1999). The proper storage of recorded material depends on the right state of the building and equipment.

Registry staff indicated that shortage of space was the greatest obstacle to effective records management in Swaziland. All the registry buildings were regularly

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maintained by the Ministry of Public Works. The survey also tried to find out if buildings were originally designed for registry purposes. When registry staff were asked this question the majority (70 %) answered in the affirmative, but stated that because of the accumulation of records, the registries grew smaller.

According to the National Archives of the Netherlands et al. (2001:77), buildings have been characterized as “the first line of defence against a severe climate and various disasters”. Thus, architecture is essential to the preservation of records and archives (Mackenzie, 1995:129; Mazikana, 1997:145). However, many archival institutions in Africa are housed in buildings that are inadequate (Mazikana, 1997:145). For instance, Botswana’s major preservation problem stems from the lack of suitable buildings to house information resources (Kufa, 1997:159). In developing countries, there are no national standards for archival buildings (The National Archives of the Netherlands et al., 2001:80).

5.11 Air conditioners / fire detectors and security

The maintenance of proper temperature and relative humidity (RH) in archives and records’ storage areas is of critical importance in the preservation of documentary materials because inappropriate temperature and RH contribute significantly to their deterioration (Ngulube, 2003). Although there are no agreed standards for temperature and RH in storage areas, there is consensus within the preservation community that lower temperatures and a lower relative humidity greatly extend the life expectancy of documentary materials (Adcock, n.d; Patkus, 1998:73). The wrong environment can doom archival collections to a very short life span. Therefore, control of temperature and RH levels should be the cornerstone of any responsible preservation programme (Shahani, Hengemihle & Weberg, 1995:61; Williams 2000:32).

Due to a lack of air conditioning facilities, none of the registries were monitoring temperature.

5.12 Disposal procedure

There is a retention schedule in the ministries, but it was not being applied because most of the registry employees were not aware of them. However, even those who were aware of this legal requirement did not apply it. Closed files that were supposed to be destroyed or sent to archives were stored on top of cabinets in the registries. Most of these records needed to be audited. Due to delays in auditing, offices kept records longer than their retention period dictates, even if there was no room for them.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research findings and proposes recommendations for records management in government ministries in Swaziland. The aim of this study was to investigate records management practices in government Ministries in the Kingdom of Swaziland. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- (a) To determine how records are generated, used and disposed of
- (b) To assess the types of records generated
- (c) To find out how records are organized and retrieved
- (d) To examine the training needs of records management staff
- (e) To establish the level of awareness of sound records management practices.
- (f) To assess the suitability of the records storage facilities used
- (g) To explain the challenges of records management within the government in Swaziland

6.2 Conclusion

This section summarizes the key findings for each section as categorized in the questionnaire and survey checklist used to gather data.

6.2.1 Types of records created by the ministries

The study revealed that the creation of records in the ministries was done without following any conventions, such as standardized formats and referencing. Some of the records created by action officers did not have any reference numbers. Some of the files did not even have file titles. Those that had file titles had broad ones that covered all related issues.

6.2.2 Where the records are kept by action officers

Most of the action officers preferred to keep their records in their office cabinets. They felt comfortable because it was much easier and faster to retrieve records from their offices. They transferred records to the registries when they no longer used them

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frequently. There was a lot of duplication of records in these offices. The appraisal of records was identified as a problem. No procedures were in place to assist in the appraisal of records. Officers removed records from their offices when there was no space available to store them. The storerooms were more of a dumping ground for records. There were no procedures that were followed when records were deposited into these storerooms. In the storerooms, records were competing for space with other materials such as old computers, chairs, vacuum cleaners, fans and heaters. Most of the time, records that were in the storerooms were forgotten and remembered only when there was a need to refer to them.

6.2.3 Classification scheme

While there was a classification system that was used by the ministries, many lacked awareness of the existence of this classification system. Of those who were aware of its existence, most did not know how to use it. They had never been trained on how to use the classification system.

6.2.4 Types of paper used to create records by action officers

The ministries were found to be using acidic paper to create their records. They acquired paper for records creation from local stationery shops without any regard for their quality. The purchases were done by officers who were unaware of the types of paper and their implications for long-term preservation. The papers used for the creation of the records had no indications of PH. There were no standards regarding documents creation, care and handling in the ministries at the time of writing.

6.2.5 How files were held together for use and storage

Fasteners are usually selected depending on the climatic environment and the retention period of the file, but this is not the case in Swaziland. Some of the documents with metal clips were showing indications of rust and stain and these were not removed until the record was transferred to the National Archives of Swaziland. There were no criteria used by the ministries in choosing the fasteners. Registries' staff were using adhesive tape to repair permanent records which deteriorates over time, and the adhesive browns and darkens the paper to which it is attached. This

again points to the absence of guidelines and standards to be complied with by records officers in the registries of the ministries.

6.2.6 Information sharing within ministries

Sharing information was a problem in these ministries because there was no proper documentation of the files that were in the offices. Officers relied heavily on the knowledge of the people who created and maintained the records in the offices. This creates a lot of problems when those individuals move away for one reason or other.

6.2.7 Electronic records

Each office that created electronic records had its own way of maintaining, retrieving, and storing electronic records. In some offices, memory sticks were found lying on top of tables without protective lids and storage boxes to minimize their exposure to dust. There was no documentation of records in electronic format, which makes them inaccessible to other officers.

6.2.8 Training

Records management is a specialized field that can only be handled by experienced professionals. The study shows that those appointed to the position of records management officers were not fully trained records managers and were not prepared to professionally handle all the records management problems faced by the ministries. The majority of the registry officers had an O' level certificate; none had formal training or at least a diploma in records management.

6.2.9 Semi-current records

There wasn't enough space and cupboards to keep non-current records prior to archives. Appraisal of records was a problem as no procedures were followed. The researcher also checked the condition of the records in the registries. Most of the damage to the records was caused by mishandling and the intensive use of documents. Other factors that caused damage to these registry documents were insects and bad paper. This explained the deterioration of the documents that end up in the Swaziland National Archives, which could be prevented if preservation was sustained from the creation stage of the records.

6.2.10 Building and equipment

Registry staff indicated that shortage of space was the greatest obstacle to effective records management. All the registry buildings were regularly maintained by the Ministry of Public Works if there was a need, for example a power failure, broken windows, dirty walls, cracks, etc. The survey also tried to find out if the buildings were originally designed for registry purposes. When registry staff were asked this question, the majority (70%) answered in the affirmative, but because of the accumulation of records, the registries become smaller.

6.2.11 Air-conditioners/ fire detectors and security

Due to the lack of air conditioning facilities and fire detectors, none of the registries were monitoring temperature. None of the registries had security facilities, such as a security counter to monitor access into the registries.

6.2.12 Disposal procedure

While there was a retention schedule in the ministries, it was not being applied because most of the registry staff was not aware of them. It should be noted that even those who were aware of this legal requirements did not apply it. The registries stored closed files which were supposed to be destroyed or sent to archives on top of cabinets. Most of these records needed to be audited. An example is the Ministry of Education's scholarship records for students who had finished schools ten years prior, and financial statements that required auditing. Due to delays in auditing, offices kept records longer than their retention period dictates, even if there was no room for them.

It is evident from the study that an effective records management program should guide the management of records throughout their lifecycle. This means knowing when a record is created, what function it serves, how long it is considered useful by the ministries that created it, what the parameters are for maintaining it and for how long, and what legal authority monitors its lifecycle and disposal when necessary (R.M. Manual, 2003).

6.3 Recommendations

In this study, recommendations are based on findings from the survey results, compliance with relevant national legislative requirements, i.e. the Swaziland National Archives and Records Service Act (No.5) of 1971, and the International Standards Organization's (ISO) management practices.

The recommendations that follow would help mitigate the problems identified.

6.3.1 Types of records created

The study revealed that the creation of records in the ministries was done without following any conventions such as standardized formats of referencing. It is recommended that the ministries should implement forms management, directive management, correspondence management, and copies management as part of the records management programme.

6.3.1.1 Reports Management

This is the process of improving the preparation of reports. The objectives of report management programmes are to: (a) Monitor reports production and distribution, (b) Identify and monitor the production and distribution of reports, (c) Identify and monitor costs of reports, (d) Purge unnecessary reports, and (e) Consolidate, simplify and standardize reports.

6.3.1.2 Forms Management

This is a records management function designed to achieve the efficient collection and distribution of information through the use of forms. The overall objective of a forms management programme is to reduce labour, material and storage costs.

6.3.1.3 Directives Management

Directives management is about developing written guidance for policies and procedures to be followed in carrying out assigned responsibilities in an organization. Policy and procedure statements or directives require careful management. The primary objectives of directives management are to communicate to employees through: (a) Controlling the growth of directives, (b) Writing in understandable terms

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(c) Reaching the right people on time, (d) Revising and updating effectively and thoroughly, and (e) Keeping down the cost of directives.

6.3.1.4 Correspondence Management

This is the application of management techniques to correspondence practices that result in increased efficiency, improved quality, and reduced costs.

6.3.1.5 Copies Management

Copies management is about controlling copying, duplicating, and printing practices. It puts in place procedures and devices to ensure the effective, economical and timely reproduction of necessary copies (Appiah, 1986).

6.3.2 Classification scheme

The study's findings were that although there is a classification scheme which should be used by the ministries, most of the action officers were not using it because they did not know how to use it. Staff should be trained on how to use the classification system to facilitate the referencing of correspondence, filing and retrieval of current records, and to avoid the duplication of records in the ministries. The study also found that there was no consistency with respect to filing. It is recommended that individual filing systems and methods should be discouraged in favor of a centralized filing system and method. Wakumoya (1999:11) observes that lack of consistency in the filing system and method results in backlogs of records accumulated and congested in repository centres. Records are dumped randomly and rudimentary tools are used to retrieve them so that they can be easily accessible to users.

6.3.3 Type of paper used to create records by action officers

Ministries acquired paper and folders from the local stationary shops for records creation without considering the quality of the paper. The purchases were done by officers who were not aware of the type and qualities of paper and their implications for long-term preservation. Ministries should create records using alkaline (acid-free) paper. The ministries' records have to be stored or housed in acid-free folders and boxes. Over time, acid in 'regular' folders and boxes destroys the records they store.

6.3.4 How files are held together for use and storage

Some of the officers were using metal clips which were showing some indication of rust and stain. Most of these were not removed until a record was transferred to the National Archives of Swaziland. It was noted that there were no criteria used by the ministries in choosing those fasteners. The study also reveals that the registries staff was using adhesive tape to repair the ministries' records. Adhesive tape deteriorates over time, and the adhesive browns and darkens the paper to which it is attached. Thus archival repair tape has to be used to repair records. The ministries should also use only rust-proof or plastic paper clips with their records to avoid rust and stains given the humid climate condition of Swaziland.

6.3.5 Electronic records in the ministries are stored on PCs

Most of the electronic records were stored on the hard drives in the ministries. Given the pace at which technology is changing, the storing of electronic records should be future driven, not now-oriented. The ministries should therefore consider encouraging employees to store recorded information on an approved EDRMS. Such a system would protect the organization from the possible loss of valuable records in an unpredictable situation. Plans for migrating records from one form of software or hardware to another as a means of ensuring continued access to and authenticity of records should be enough to handle a crisis. Failure to deviate from the PC approach to the shared workstation approach would result in a daily loss of valuable records owing to either systems failure or obsolete hardware and software. For example, it is very easy for a PC to be attacked by a virus. Thus ministries need to endorse a records management policy to cover electronic records. Such a policy would address the existing problems inherent in the management of administrative and personnel records before their computerization. It would also address some of the management aspects of electronic records, such as their creation, maintenance, access and use, security, appraisal, preservation and disposal.

6.3.6 Training

Records management is a specialized field that can only be handled by experienced professionals. Therefore it is recommended that ministries should train the records management officers at least to a diploma level or recruit well trained records

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personnel in public institutions, as they will have a better appreciation and knowledge of preservation issues. Officers should also be introduced to an approved filing system and method. As indicated by Ngulube (2004:7), organizations should avoid the leapfrog approach with respect to training. Relevant training should be offered before employees are expected to use the system.

6.3.7 Semi- current records: appraisal and disposal

Although there are some legal requirements with respect to which records should be destroyed and when they should be destroyed as well as records that should be permanently preserved, most of the respondents were not aware of these, and those who were aware, lacked the knowledge to put the guidelines into effect. Failure to appraise and dispose of semi-current records can lead to congested registries and storerooms. The ministries should develop a systematic approach to managing records from their creation to their ultimate disposal (Ngulube, 2004:2). The appraisal of records is central to formulating retention and disposal schedules. Records should be allocated schedules for their retention and disposal. According to Mnjama (2004:6), many organizations either fail to destroy records that are no longer needed to support day-to-day business operations, or they are forced to take disposal decisions on an ad hoc basis without observing any specific disposal criteria. Records, irrespective of formats, cannot be kept forever because of the cost of storage and maintenance over time. Owing to the increasing volume of records stored in the archive repository, retrieval becomes slower and more cumbersome (Ngulube, 2004:9).

6.3.8 Records storage

Without proper records management initiatives, ministries are facing high paper proliferation in their offices and experiencing retrieval difficulties and the duplication of records. Procedures have to be developed to facilitate the smooth operation of the registries and storerooms which have been turned into a dumping site for action officers. Since office space was limited in some offices, records have to be housed in the ministries' registries by registry staff, where they can be retrieved quickly when needed by everybody. Information sharing in a situation like this will be easier because there will be proper documentation of the files that are available in these

registries. The location and retrieval of files would also be much easier, and the duplication of records would be reduced.

Action officers have to be discouraged from keeping records in their offices; all records should be kept and maintained by trained records officers, either in the registry for current records, storerooms for semi-current records and the records center for non-current records.

Ideally, retention schedules should specify when records' series have to be sent to the ministries registries. The terms "active" and "inactive" for records indicate how frequently users reference a records series. As records get older, they usually are needed less often.

6.3.8.1 Criteria that should be considered by records officers before sending records to the records storeroom include:

- Records series that are referred to more than once a month per file drawer (or 2 cubic feet) are generally considered active, and are kept in active office space.
- Records series that are referred to less than one search per file drawer per month generally can be sent to the registry.
- To check the reference rate of a group of records, a small piece of paper has to be placed on each file drawer for a few months. Tally marks have to be made on the sheet each time a file is pulled from that drawer (R.M. Manual, 2003).

6.3.9 Security and preservation

The study revealed that none of the registries had air-conditioning facilities and fire detectors to monitor and control deteriorative factors in the registries. It also revealed that there were no security facilities for the records in the ministries. Records need to be stored in safe and monitored environments, as failure to do so could result in the loss of vital or valuable documents in the registries. Factors such as temperature, relative humidity, light intensity and illumination, and atmospheric pollution need to be kept at acceptable levels. High levels and fluctuations should be curbed if not eliminated completely.

The appalling environmental conditions at the registries need to be addressed. Records should be kept within certain temperature and relative humidity limits.

Those recommended for paper records are:

- Temperature 13 °C to 18 °C
- Relative humidity 45 % to 65 %

For electronic records the recommendations are:

- Temperature 18 °C to 24 °C
- Relative humidity 45 % to 55 % (R.M Manual, 2003)

The attitude towards public records management as a ‘costly luxury’ must be changed. Ministries need to purchase the facilities that would monitor the above.

6.3.10 Appraisal

The study revealed that the records that took a long time to be transferred to archives were records such as financial statements, payment vouchers and scholarships records. It was noted that due to delays in appraisal, offices kept records longer than their retention period dictates, even if there was no room for them. The Ministry of Finance therefore needs to speed up the process and appraise in time.

6.3.11 Policies, procedures and standards

Swaziland National Archives should develop and implement a good records management policy and set up standards and guidelines to be adhered to by government ministries. Swaziland National Archives should also be given the responsibility to ensure compliance. This would encourage uniformity within the ministries as far as the implementation of policies is concerned.

While policies should address access as well as the type of recorded information that should be retained as public records, procedure manuals should support the existing policies by outlining step-by-step procedures for managing and maintaining public records. The DRP should in turn address the safety and recovery of public records. According to Mnjama (2004:8), the DRP is needed to protect records that are vital to the continuing operation of the organization in a time of crisis. Thus the policy should

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clearly indicate that while documents received via e-mail are regarded as public records, not all e-mails constitute records. In support of this recommendation, Ngulube (2004:6) has indicated that organisations have a fragmented approach to electronic records; they do not have a clear understanding of the nature of electronic records and the electronic information to be captured as records in order to document the business processes. DRP is an example of a sound preservation plan.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Further research should be extended to parastatal organizations in Swaziland to ensure that the management of records, both in government and the public sector, is harmonized to enhance service delivery, accountability and transparency in the management of the country's public affairs.

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APPENDIX A
RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT
MINISTRIES IN SWAZILAND

Covering letter for pretesting the questionnaires

Dear Colleague

I am a student at the University of Zululand doing my Masters in Information Studies. I am seeking your assistance in my research project. The main aim of this study is to investigate records management practices in government ministries in the Kingdom of Swaziland. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire as a data collection tool, I am conducting a pretest on the questionnaire I am intending to use for the study. The target population is action officers and registry staff from different ministries. Your comments and contributions will be most welcome. Over and above your comments and observations, can you also please scrutinize the questionnaire using the checklist that is provided below:

1. Are there any typographical errors? Yes No
2. If your answer is “Yes”, please indicate them in the questionnaire.
3. Are there any misspelt words? Yes No
- 4.) If your answer is “Yes”, please indicate them in the questionnaire.
5. Do the item numbers make sense? Yes No
6. If your answer is “No”, please provide some suggestions below:
.....
7. Is the font type size big enough to be easily read? Yes No
8. If your answer is “No”, please provide some suggestions below:
.....
.....
9. Is the vocabulary appropriate for the respondents? Yes No

10. If your answer is “No”, please provide some suggestions below:

.....
.....

11. Is the survey too long? Yes No

12. If your answer is “Yes”, please provide some suggestions below:

.....
.....

13. Is the style of the items too monotonous? Yes No

14. Are the skip patterns too difficult to follow? Yes No

15. If your answer is “Yes”, please provide some suggestions below:

.....
.....

16. Does the survey format flow well? Yes No

17. If your answer is “No”, please provide some suggestions below:

.....
.....

18. Are the items appropriate for the respondents? Yes No

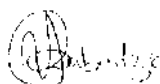
19. If your answer is “No”, please provide some suggestions below:

.....

Please return the completed questionnaire to me at the Institute of Development Management (IDM), Swaziland. Cell: 76029484 or e-mail: vtsabedze_idm@swazi.net by 3 August 2009.

Thanks in advance for your time in taking part in the pretest of my questionnaire.

Yours faithfully



Vusi Tsabedze

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APPENDIX B

Letter of request addressed to the heads of the different ministries who formed part of the sample

Institute of Development
Management
Department of Business & Inf.
Systems
P.O. Box 1534
Mbabane
Swaziland
3 August 2009

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I kindly ask you to allow me to administer questionnaires and conduct observations in your Ministry in August as part of my research. I am a Masters student at the University of Zululand. As part of my course, I am required to produce a thesis, and this involves conducting an investigation. My thesis is entitled: **Records Management in government ministries in Swaziland.**

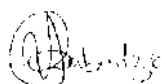
The aim of this study is to investigate records management practices in government ministries in the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The study is done under the supervision of Professor Stephen Mutula from the University of Botswana, Department of Library and Information Science.

The success of this study relies on the information that would be gathered. Please be assured that the information gathered will be used strictly for the purposes of the study and confidentiality is ensured.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Faithfully



Vusi Tsabedze

Cell:76029484

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APPENDIX C
RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT
MINISTRIES IN SWAZILAND
QUESTIONNAIRE

[Action Officers]

Kindly complete the following short questionnaire regarding the value of records management in your ministry.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. It remains anonymous. The questionnaire should not take you more than 10 minutes to complete. Completed questionnaires will be physically collected by the researcher within five days. For any enquiries relating to this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (Vusi Tsabedze) at 76029484.

1. What is your job title?

.....
.....

2. In which Ministry are you working?

.....

Mark (X) if the option is relevant to you

3. How many full years have you been working in this Ministry?

0 or less than a year	
1 - 2 years	
3 - 4 years	
5 - 10 years	
More than 10 years	

4. What does your work involve?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. In the process of carrying out your functions, what records do you produce?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What kinds of records do you receive and use from other departments?

.....
.....
.....

7. What type of information does this office share with other departments and organizations?

.....
.....
.....

8. What problems do you encounter in sharing information with other departments and organizations?

.....
.....
.....

9. Do you have any centralized place where you can get access to records?

YES

NO

10. Where do you keep your records?

In the office

In the registry

If other, please specify.....



11. How accessible is the storage area for each of the following types of documents?

	Easily accessible	Relatively easily accessible	Difficult to access
Electronic documents			
Manual documents			

12. Do you have a storeroom in which you store records?

YES

NO

13. What kinds of records are stored in the storeroom?

.....
.....

14. How easy is it to retrieve records from the storeroom?

Very easy

Easy

Very difficult

Difficult

If it is (very difficult or difficult) what are the problems?

.....
.....

15. Do you have access to e-mail?

Yes

No

16. What do you use it for?

.....
.....
.....

17. When you send / receive mail correspondence, do you reference the correspondence?

YES

NO

18. Does your department / division have a formal filing system?

YES

NO

I Don't Know

19. Do you have a personal filing system?

YES

NO

20. If yes, please answer the following questions. If no, proceed to question 21.

Did you receive any training relating to the filing system currently used in your department / division for documentation in each of the following formats?

	Yes	No
Electronic format		
Manual format		

21. Does your department / division have a filing procedures manual?

YES

NO

I Don't Know

22. Do you also generate electronic records?

YES

NO

If yes, which electronic records do you generate?

.....
.....
.....

23. Do you have access to each of the following?

	Yes	No
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Do you have a system in place for sharing electronic records?

YES

NO

25. How do you store your electronic records for future reference?

.....
.....
.....

26. Is there any existing policy in your department / division governing e-mail storage and retention?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

27. Please answer the following questions relating to the management of electronic mail (e-mail).

	Yes	NO
Do you receive e-mail?		
Do you send e-mail?		
Do you forward e-mail to colleagues?		
Do you use folders to organize your e-mail?		
Do you receive attached documents via e-mail?		
Do you store documents attached in e-mail on a diskette / memory stick?		
Do you prune your stored e-mail?		

28. How frequently do you receive information about the ministry in each of the following formats?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never
Electronically (Soft copy)					
Manually (Hard copy)					

29. How frequently do you disseminate information about your department / division in each of the following formats?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never
Electronically (Soft copy)					
Manually (Hard copy)					

30. In which of the following formats do you receive each of the following documents about ministry? (Mark all applicable)

	Electronically	Manually
Minutes		
Reports		
Policies and manuals		
Circulars		
Invoices		
Memos		

31. In which of the following formats do you disseminate each of the following documents about your department?

	Electronically	Manually
Minutes		
Reports		
Policies and manuals		
Circulars		
Invoices		
Memos		

32. For how long do you keep each of the following types of documents?

	Less than a year	1 - 2 years	2 - 4 years	More than 4 years
Minutes				
Reports				
Invoices				
Policies and Manuals				

33. In your own opinion, how valuable is your department registry in terms of its usefulness or redundancy?

.....

34. Was there ever a time when decision- making had to be postponed because relevant files could not be located?

YES

NO

35. If yes in 34, how often does this happen?

.....

36. Are there occasions when wrong decisions have been made because previous records could not be found?

YES

NO

Thank you very much for your time

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APPENDIX D

RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN SWAZILAND QUESTIONNAIRE

[Registry Staff]

Kindly complete the following short questionnaire regarding the value of records management in your ministry.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. It remains anonymous. The questionnaire should not take you more than 10 minutes to complete. Completed questionnaires will be physically collected by the researcher within five days. For any enquiries relating to this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (Vusi Tsabedze) at 76029484

1. What is your job title?

.....
.....
.....

2. In which ministry are you working?

.....

Mark (X) the option relevant to you

3. How many full years have you been working in this ministry?

0 or less than a year	
1 - 2 years	
3 - 4 years	
5 - 10 years	
More than 10 years	

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4. What does your work involve?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. What is your records management qualification?

.....
.....

Current Records

6. What types of records do different departments in this ministry create?

.....
.....
.....

7. What type / kind of paper do you use to create records?

.....
.....

8. Where do you keep your records?

.....
.....

9. What kind of clips (fasteners) are used to hold together records?

.....
.....

10. What criteria do you use in choosing those fasteners?

.....
.....

11. What classification scheme are you using in this ministry?

.....
.....
.....

12. Do the officers make good use of this registry?

YES

NO

If No, why?

.....
.....
.....

13. Do you have any other records that are stored in the storeroom?

YES
NO

14. What kinds of records are in the storeroom?

.....
.....

15. Is it easy to retrieve records that are at the storeroom?

YES
NO

If No, what are the problems?

.....
.....

Semi current records

16. How are closed files handled in this registry prior to their transfer to the records center / archives?

.....
.....
.....

17. Regarding the disposal of closed files, what ethics / legal requirements are you required to adhere to, if there are any?

.....
.....
.....

18. How often do you transfer records to the records centre / archives?

.....
.....
.....

19. Is the transfer governed by a retention schedule?

YES
NO

20. How easy is it to access records that have been sent to the records centre / archives?

.....
.....

Building and Equipment

21. Was this building originally designed for the registry?

YES

NO

22. Do you have any problems with the building?

YES

NO

If yes, what are the problems?

.....
.....
.....

23. Is the registry well accessible within the ministry, such as it is being centrally located?

YES

NO

24. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the registry building?

.....
.....

25. How often is the building maintained?

Once a year

Twice a year

Other specify.....

26. Do you have air – conditioner facilities in this registry?

YES

NO

27. If you have one, how old is it?

1-5 Years

6- 10 Years

More than ten years

I don't know

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28. How often is the air - conditioner maintained?

Once a year

Twice a year

Other specify.....

29. What is the average temperature in you registry:

.....
.....
.....

30. Do you monitor temperature levels in your registry frequently?

YES

NO

31. Do you have fire detectors in this registry?

YES

NO

32. Is the floor space enough for the records generated by the departments?

YES

NO

Training

33. How often do you attend workshops related to your job?

Once a year

Twice a year

Not at all

If other, please specify.....

34. When last did you attend such a work- shop?

.....
.....

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35. To what extent are the workshops helpful?

Sometimes

Most of the time

Always

Not helpful

Thank you very much for your time

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APPENDIX E

RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN SWAZILAND SURVEY CHECKLIST

Records management tools used to manage records

- File movement card
- Action ladder
- Incoming mail register
- Outgoing Mail register
- Registry handbook
- Retention schedules

Storage equipment

Equipment to hold the records:

- Wooden shelves
- Metal shelves
- Steel drawer cabinets
- Wooden cabinets

Storeroom

- What is sent to the storeroom?
- Conditions of the storeroom
- Are there any records sent to the storeroom?

Registry Layout

- Security counter

Condition of the records

Causes of damage to records:

- Insects
- Fire
- Water
- Dust
- Bad quality paper

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OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

- Building and equipment - maintenance
- Storage equipment - types of documents stored, office layout, floor space, security, storage, generally cleanliness
- Document management and care - handling and care of records
- Current records - types of papers they are using, its PH values, how files are held together for use and storage, use of fasteners, the criteria they are using to select fasteners, climate / temperature considerations
- Semi current records -how closed files are handled in the registries prior to their transfer to the records centre
- Storage environment - environmental conditions, factors such as temperature, relative humidity, light intensity and illumination, and atmospheric pollution
- Condition of records - physical form and physical state, e.g. files, maps, microfilm (are they torn, distorted, etc.)
- Classification system in use
- Disposal instructions - e.g. value attached to the records created, guidelines on what records are to be destroyed and when or why
- Types of records created - identifying the nature of the record as well as the filing system in use

