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QUESTION   :

An Investigation into the Management of Records at Records Centers: A comparative analysis of National Archives of Zambia Lusaka Annex Records Centers and University of Zambia School of Education Records Center.

ABSTRACT

The mere fact that records preserve and showcase the historical contents that is necessary in upholding the integrity of the nation means that the records must be kept in good condition while at the records center so that by the time they become archives they are not distorted in anyway. The management of records at record centers plays a huge role in ensuring the safe custody of the information contents of the records so that they can be used for reference purposes for as long as the records are needed by their creating agencies. This study was an investigation into the management of records at records Centers: A comparative analysis of Lusaka city Annex records Center and The University of Zambia School of Education records center. This was made possible due to the participation of six (6) records center staff, three from each record center. Data was collected from the participants using structured interviews. The findings reviewed that; the management of records at the two records centers varied to a large extent in terms of policies and infrastructure. Furthermore, the findings indicated that both facilities are not purposely built records centers. Objectives where established so as to identify; the type of records managed in records centers, the record management challenges at these records centers and lastly, to identify the legislative policies governing records at both centers. Henceforth, this study used a purposive sampling technique as this enabled the researcher to use their own judgment when picking participants of the population who are to take part in the study; qualitative data was collected through interviews and observations. The data collected was analyzed using content management system.

key words; *records center, records* .

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to our parents and guardians who gave us moral support and all group members who put in their time and resources that lead to the completion of this research.

DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this piece of work was a result of our own research and has not been presented to anyone or any other institution. All sources which have been used in this report have been fully acknowledged by means of complete references.

ACKNOWLEGEMENT

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ACRONYMS

NAZ   …………………………. National Archives of Zambia

UNZA……………………………. The University of Zambia

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

Chapter one gives an overall introduction to the study, it gives an insight into the background of the state of Records in records centers through comparing and contrasting between two records centers which are University of Zambia School of Education and National Archives of Zambia City Annex Records centers. The chapter clearly outlines the background of the study, the background of the institutions, it explains what a records center is by outlining what role the records center plays in ensuring the efficient management of records at the University of Zambia School of Education records center and Lusaka City Annex National Archives of Zambia records center. It goes further and brings to light the problem which we are trying to solve by outlining the state in which the records at the records center are currently in and how the records center infrastructure affects the state of records contained at the aforementioned records centers.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The major responsibility of a records center is to provide the safe custody of records in their semi current state. International Records Management Trust (IRMT) (1999) observed that the state of records centers where records from various ministries and public sector offices where housed were full and faced a lot of challenges such as problems of lightening at the Lusaka Record Centers, lack of air conditioning and fire extinguishers to water leakages and rusting of shelves. Many businesses depend on the appropriate creation and maintenance or records in order for them to carry out their day-to-day transactions. The physical structure of a Records center plays a vital role in ensuring that when the records of an institution become semi-current, they are managed effectively without having any distortion which may in turn lead to the loss of the information in them and mishandling. The records center house records that are used infrequently in an organization and as they are retained as they await appraisal (Wema, 2003).

The International Records Management Trust (1999) describes a records center as any building or part of a building which is either adopted or designed for the purpose of offering a low-cost storage for the maintenance and communication of semi current records which are awaiting their

final disposal. While The National Archives of Namibia, (2012) denotes a records center to be an "intermediate depot", this is a true factor as records centers are the storing accommodations that are found in the life cycle of a record. The records center is an intermediate depot as it provides a link between the creating offices and the national archives.

Different types of records centers exist and these are namely; in-house records centers, public record centers and a commercial records center. Commercial records centers are tasked to store the records pertaining to any organization at an agreeable fee, in Zambia there are only a few of such, contrary to this an in- house records center is responsible for the storage and safe custody of the records which belong to their parent organization for instance the University of Zambia, School of Education records center is an in- house institutional records center as it only serves the School of Education. In a similar case the Lusaka city Annex records center is responsible for the management of all government records in Lusaka city as it is a provincial public records center. Countries of African origin such as; Malawi, South-Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia have a mutual practice of situating regional records centers amongst themselves (Tela, 1993).

In as much as a records center provides for the safe custody of semi current records that does not in any way imply that any organization which deposits its records at the records center have the privilege of having records that are totally free from damage or loss and are automatically saved, this is as reported based on a state of affairs in Malawi where regardless of having a national records centers voluminous amounts of records waste away just within their creating institutions due to the negligence and ignorance of the people assigned to manage these records, this shows that in order for the semi-current records to be in safe condition upon arrival to the records center they must be taken care of in their current state (Chirwa, 2003).

The information that is contained in a record center is a great asset to an organization as the information contained in the records may be vital for references during researches in organizations and its helps to achieve the organizations objectives. In order for any organization to successfully accomplish its objectives it needs to refer to semi- current records from time to time. Records in their semi current state are infrequently used and they are mostly packed away in boxes which without proper care, these boxes may be destroyed as they become too dirty and dusty and when it is time to refer to these records an organization may not be able to access them

as they have been destroyed prematurely and an organization may fail to carry out a specific task because of lack of the needed records as a result the organizational goals may not be achieved. However, when semi current records are kept in a records center, particular care is given to them and they are retained for as long as necessary as such whenever an organization needs to access these records, they are always readily available. The way in which records in the record centers are managed is governed by the legislative policies which have been put in place, an example of a policy which regulates management of records in record centers is a Retention and Disposition schedule, this gives an outline of the types of records that are to be kept and for how long they should be kept and where they should be kept (Gold, 1995).

According to Chirwa (1999) there are some impressions about the safety of the National Archives records center in Zambia, these impressions of the records center have contributed largely to the lack of records transfers by creating agencies to the records center. The International Records Management Trust (1999) further argues that in situations where there is mistrust of security by the public with regards to the records kept at an archival center all clients and potential clients will relent in taking their records there as their confidence will be completely lost. A records center must provide a safe environment for records; records that are stored in fragile media should be able to last as long as needed because of this protection they are given at the record center. The Records center should provide safe custody of the information by providing effective security that prevents theft from occurring, the Records center should be so secure to an extent that no unauthorized person can be able to access the records contained in it, therefore, ensuring confidential records are protected. It also provides physical security which ensures the protection of physical records from natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and fires. The Records center ensures that records can be easily located, accessed and retrieved when needed by providing a systematic and orderly arrangement and control of records. Temperature and humidity should be monitored; it should fall between 18-20 degrees Celsius and 40-55 per cent relative humidity. There shouldn't be any windows in the storage areas this is so as to protect the records from natural light which can be harmful to them. The walls of the records center should be constructed with everlasting materials so as to lessen on the damage that can be caused if a fire was to break out. Cleanliness is a must as it protects the records center from encroaching insects and rodents which can destroy records. Regular inspection should be done and no one should be allowed to eat or drink from the records center (Taylor, 2000).

Record centers are important to any country's legacy as they hold information that speaks to the existence of the organization as they decide to appraise them to see if the records are worthy of permanent preservation, This then means that the physical and intellectual state in which these records centers are in affect the trust and the decisions of deposing agencies as to whether their records will be managed effectively or not (IRMT, 1999).

1.1.1 ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1.2 UNZA School of Education Records Center

The School of Education is the biggest school at the University of Zambia and it was opened in 1966 and has a wide range of programs in its current thirteen (13) departments. Some of the departments include; Library and Information Science, Adult Education, History department, department of Education and the Literature and Languages department. Thus, accumulating a lot of students' records. These records that have been accumulated have to be managed in order to ensure that they are easily accessible and retrieved when they need to be used. The school of Education has a Student's Registry on the third floor of the school's main building in room 315B where students' current records are kept and managed. It also has a Records Center which is on the Ground Floor near the Bridge Building facing the graduation square. This is where none and semi current records are kept. The Record center is a small room which was not initially intended for the purpose it holds today. It holds students records such as clearance forms, acceptance letters, appeal letters and letters of resumption in each student file. These student files are kept in physical state they are not digitized yet. These records are important as they help the school and students to provide proof of having attended the school during a particular period and during any queries, they might encounter in the future such as borrowing of library materials. The record center is managed by records clerks found in room 315B on the third floor of the main school of Education building.

1.1.3 NAZ City Annex Record Center

The origins of the National Archives can be traced back to as early as 1935. This was the period when the Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) archives were inaugurated.

NAZ has records centers in nine (9) provinces of Zambia out of ten excluding the Muchinga province. The records center in Lusaka which is under NAZ is at City Annex building. The record center is located in the old Bank of Zambia Building. In 1969, the first Archives Act referred to as the National Archives Act Chapter 268 of the Laws of Zambia was enacted. This replaced the previous Federal Archival Legislation. The Act was and is intended to provide for the safe custody, control, preservation and disposal of public archives as well as semi-current records in Zambia. The formulation of the NAZ Act was as a result of the Public Records Act of 1958 of the United Kingdom, the Public Records Act aimed at preventing the destruction of records without consent this was done through creating an archival authority to give or deny such approval. The NAZ Act identified public records to be any government records which were in the care of the government or have been transmitted to the National Archives. The NAZ act accredited the management of semi- current records not only from government sectors but from private sectors too and institutions. Various records are kept at this records center and among them include staff files which are kept for 30 years from their latest date of creation and there are policy files which are kept for 20 years in the records center (Stiles, 1970). However, based on a study conducted in Malawi by Chirwa in 1993 titled 'Malawi' approach to Records management' showed that despite having records centers to house semi current records, records were still being mismanagement as the centers had no effective records management programs. The study carried out a comparative study to show how records are managed at the two institutions and established whether they have effective records management put in place to ensure that records are well managed in their semi current state.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The general picture is that the state of record centers aid in the struggles to manage semi current records in these record centers. Bennett and Mannix (2002:1) observed that organizations where records are poorly managed, business operations are crippled and the rights of citizens, employees and the wider community may be compromised. Records centers play a vital role in ensuring that semi current records have a repository where they can be kept as they are still being used. The records centers can house records depending on the policy of the institution; the policy indicates how long they have to keep these records as they wait for their ultimate disposal. It facilitates the keeping of all records regardless of format to help prevent the premature destruction of records due to the lack of office space. The records centers also help to ensure that

records are subjected to strict procedures of elimination to those records that are to be destroyed after reaching their retention period after appraisal and transferring those of permanent or enduring value to an archival institution, as they are halfway houses between creators and archives. The state of the records center shows the value that is placed on the records kept in the center (IRMT, 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate into the management of records centers by comparing the Lusaka Annex and the University of Zambia School of Education records centers in order to understand what affects the state of records centers, the mismanagement of records transferred there awaiting appraisal and transfer to an archival center as well as understand whether there is an effective records management program.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To investigate into the management of records in records centers an analysis of Lusaka Annex and UNZA School of Education record centers.

1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To identify the type of records managed in records center.

To identify the Record management challenges at these records centers.

To identify the legislative policies governing records at both centers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 GENERAL QUESTION

What is the state of records at Lusaka Annex and UNZA School of Education record centers?

This paper intended to ask the following questions:

1.4.2 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

What types of records are managed at each records center?

What are the records management challenges faced at each institution?

What are the legislative policies that govern records at both centers?

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1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study brought to the knowledge fraternity methods of the management of records in record centers as records are deposited in them. The study also led to solutions that show how the state of record centers can be improved to facilitate the management of records that are deposited in them. Likewise, the study outlined the challenges faced by depositing agencies and how to improve the physical state of records that await appraisal and ultimate disposal and preservation. The International Records Management Trust (1999) outlined that the state of records centers is important as it ensures the environmental, custodial and security access of records.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out at National Archives of Zambia City Annex and UNZA School of Education record centers.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The challenges we faced were lack of honesty on the interviewees' part who decided to hide the state in which certain records are in. As a research group we also faced the challenge of data collection because we were in different places due to Covid-19 pandemic. The solutions from this study only considered two institutions; therefore, they may not be useful to other record centers.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research was aware of ethical and moral issues; that are informed consent, gaining access and research obligation. The study ensured that we sought permission of members of staff at the record centers before conducting any interviews and observations of the record center in order to get the information required for the research. It was also aware of moral backgrounds of the participants. According to Bells (1993), "No research can demand access to an institution, organization or to the materials as permission to carry out an investigation must always be sought at an early stage." Therefore, it will also be aware of moral backgrounds of the participants.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.9.1 Record center

A Record center is a building or part of a building that is designed or adopted for the purpose of the low-cost storage, communication and maintenance of semi current records which are awaiting their definitive destruction or transfer to an archival repository (Cox, 2001).

1.9.2 Record

According to Olive (1995), a record is any document regardless of form or medium, created, received, maintained and used by an individual or organization, public or private in the pursuance of legal obligation or in the transaction of a business of which it forms a part or provides evidence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a review of literature related to the study. According to Neumann (2000: 447), the purpose of a literature review is to "provide a theoretical background to the study, as well as to learn from what others have done and written about a topic being researched on." This Chapter reviewed literature on records centers and records from published books, journals and reliable websites. The research aimed at investigating the management of records in records centers through analyzing two records centers and that is the literature this chapter focused on. The chapter bases literature on the following themes; the types of records managed in records centers, the records management challenges and the legislative policies governing records.

2.1 Types of records managed in records centers

According to the International Records Management Trust IRMT (1999), "a record is any document regardless of form or medium, created, received, maintained and used by an individual or organization, (public or private) in the pursuance of legal obligation or in the transaction of a business of which it forms a part or provides evidence." State records are further defined as any record that is made or received and kept by any person in the course of exercise of official functions either in a public office or for any purpose of a public office as evidence of transactions carried out in or for that office (Akor and Udensi, 2013). Dollar (2000) posits records as all recorded information in any form that is created, received and maintained by an organization or an individual in the operation of a business and kept in an extensively accessible form as evidence of an activity which took place. Records are created and received in various forms and media; paper is among the various media of a record. Paper records include correspondence, minutes of a meeting and registers. International Records Management Trust (1999) went on to note further that these records are also created in media such as microfilm, microfiche, photographs, audio recordings and videotape and recordings. All these provide evidence of transactions and must be kept in a safe and secure manner.

Records are created every time the organization makes a business transaction, the records generated at transaction level acts as evidence. For records to clearly provide evidence they must be accurate, authentic, complete, accountable, static and reliable. This means that at whichever stage they find themselves in the records life cycle they should maintain these characteristics (IRMT, 1999).

Just like human beings who are born, live and die, records also undergo a life cycle in which they are created used and disposed. The records life cycle is an important part of any record as it shows the stage which the record is at. The records life cycle concept illustrates the life span of any record in any format, whether it is paper based or electronic, as expressed in the five phases of creation, distribution, use, maintenance and final disposition. It is the core concept in the field of records management (Marutha, 2011; Read and Ginn, 2007). Penn (1983) argued that the records life cycle comprises of the creation, maintenance, use and finally the disposition of records. Different phases of the records life cycle requires that records have appropriate storage for instance records offices for current records, records centers for semi-current records and archival centers for the non-current records.

Semi-current records being those records that are not usually used in the conduct of current business in an organization but are mostly used for reference purposes and it is a requirement that they are kept away from active records in a low-cost storage facility called a records center (Iron Mountain, 2012). According to Cox (2001), a Record center is a "building or part of a building that is designed or adopted for the purpose of the low-cost storage, communication and maintenance of semi current records which are awaiting their definitive destruction or transfer to an archival repository." Papoola, (2000) defined semi-active records as "a category of records in between active and inactive records." Unlike active records, semi-current records are records that are used infrequently in an organization and these are what are kept in a records center. A records center is also referred to as the secondary storage facility as it houses records at semi-current stage in the life cycle of records.

Smith (2007: 5) contends that "records centers are a safest setting for the storage of information assets." This is so because a records center always set up disaster prevention Program. Smith further added that the functions of a records center encompass the reception of semi-current records regardless of format from their respective creating agencies (in a situation where the

records center is centrally located in a city) or from their various departments (in a situation where the records center is located at the creating agency). The other function is to provide a reference service which offers services such as retrieving of records upon request. The third function is to utilize disposal schedules from time to time this involves the destruction of records as outlined in the records retention and disposition schedule and transferring records of permanent value to an archival facility.

Records that are of legal worth are managed in records centers; these records give evidence of the legal activities which are beneficial to organization and the country at large. Cox, (2001) added that legal records include those records which shows the property rights of an individual, organization or government, these records are in form of land, agreements, licenses, leases and probate. Iron Mountain, (2012) states that legal records include any type of records relating to citizenship rights which shows important statistics including the birth death and marriage documents. Veteran's records which encompass the legal rights of employment and payroll are part of legal records.

Another type of records managed in records centers is the fiscal records. Papoola, (2000) contends that fiscal records are those records that give financial information about an organization. The varieties of records that fall under financial records include budgets, vouchers and accounting records. Personnel records being those records that are concentrated on the staff or personnel of the organization are managed in the records center once they become semi-current. Personnel records include salaries of employee, work history, name and all other vital information about an individual employee (Penn, 1983).

Administrative records are those records which refer to the origination, activity, development and achievement of an organization (Smith, 2004). Robek (1995) argued that administrative records can be categorized into two and these are policy records and operational records. Policy records are basically those records which narrate organizations plans, the methods they used to ensure the accomplishment of those plans and the rules by which the organization is governed by. Operational records on the other hand are those which are vital in in the implementation of administrative policies. Marutha (2011) contends that operational records show the usefulness of a record in the manner in which an organization carries out its business.

An assessment on the performance of public record centers in facilitating proper records management practices in public offices in Kenya asserted that every record center is tasked with the mandate care for records at their second and third stage in the records life cycle, these stages are referred to as semi-current and non- current stages. The current and non-current stage of the records center are arrived upon when the records value are reduced and are not considered on a frequent basis as such the records are moved away from active places such as offices or registries to less actives places such as a records center (Records and National Archives Division President office, Public Service Management, 2011).

2.2 Records Center Management Challenges

Hoyle and Sebina carried out a case study in 2007 on Fostering Trust and Transparency in Governance by investigating and Addressing the Requirements for Building Integrity in Public Sector Information systems in the ICT Environment in Zambia. The authors interviewed different people from various departments such as Ministry of Finance, Office of the Auditor general, Ministry of Home Affairs (National Archives) and The University of Zambia lecturers in Records and Archives Management. During this case study it was discovered that large number of files created for the public servants at various locations created the question of whether separate confidential and salary files were really required, the need to update manuals and guidelines needed to be updated, particularly as the service moved toward an electronic working environment, the delays in filing and the difficulties in retrieving files at the ministry level, the range of numbering systems in use which contributed to retrieval difficulties; the out of date indexes linking names to numbers which added to these difficulties as well as the lack of clarity about which was the master file. It was also discovered that the major challenges with records centers is inadequate space to keep the records that are being transferred from office registries as well as the knowledge on the environmental hazards of a records centers.

Saffady (2004) described the conditions, such as heat, exposure to light, and high humidity, as those that can accelerate the degradation of records. These environmental conditions worsen in situations where someone without records education and knowledge might fall short as they cannot recognize these conditions and how to mitigate them. Most of the records center challenges arise as a result of failure by the creating agencies in their active registries to properly care for records in their current state before taking them to the records centers, as a result the

records center end up having records that are partially destroyed. Chirwa (2003) reported on the situation in Malawi, where despite having a national records center "a large percentage of records perish within the creating agency's premises out of neglect or ignorance". An effective records management program of an organization should have provision for records management facilities for inactive records. Mutare (2009) noticed that many public sectors have the pattern of stockpiling records in cardboard boxes and lowering them to the floors of their office corridors and basements without proper shelving. Such practices lead to records being destroyed prematurely and part of their contents being lost.

Some of the challenges faced by most records centers is the lack of resources to purchases proper shelving materials as argued by Dewah and Mnjama (2013) that insufficient resources and funding in records centers is one of the key elements which affects the proper care and maintenance of records in records centers as lack of proper equipment to store records may lead to only a few records being kept at the records center and it also leads to records not being stored in places that will ensure that they are kept as long as necessary. Okwu (1995) as quoted by Mnjama (2003) said that, in Nigeria, like Kenya many circulars were sent by the colonial secretary for British colonies as early as 1914 for Nigeria and 1929 for Kenya enquiring after the state of records and their preservation but little was done by way of initiating serious records management work. This resulted into a great loss in records and possible archives due to negligence. In 1956, the Kenya colonial government took the initiative to establish an archive service by establishing archive rules and regulations (Archive Circular No. one 1956). The circular provided for accommodation for semi and dormant records in the basement of the then new Central Government Offices currently known as Jogoo House where government ministries and departments would take their closed files for review in Jogoo House, which is a basement. This is according to a study on investigating Public Records Centers in Kenya in order to find out the constraints they might be facing in carrying out their mandate of helping public office registries practice proper records management conducted by Kamau Harriet (2013). The author noticed that the challenges in public sector records include lack of knowledge on the purpose and existence of record centers. They further noted that having states concentrating on National archives and little on the intermediate storage facilities which are crucial for well organized and maintained records. A similar situation was noted by Hoyle and Sebina (2007) during their case study conducted in Zambia, where they noted that the National Archives was responsible for the

control and custody of the public archives, including records of the Government, state corporations, missions, and individuals. The head office in Lusaka, and there were record centers in the provinces. Officers at the Archives maintained that the organization was concerned with government records at all stages of their existence. However, little effort was given to the records centers. The record center they observed was Lusaka records center which they described as insufficient as there were three staff working in challenging conditions, which included problems of lighting in the basement, the lack of air conditioning and fire extinguishers and water leaking into the storage areas.

Insufficient staff at records centers also possess as a great challenge in records centers, Dewah and Mnjama (2013) further noted that in a records center where there was one records management officer tasked with the capability and authority to accession, process, preserve and dispose of all records that were due for disposal or destruction, it turned out that the officer was overwhelmed by the tasks as such various restrictions had to be put in place in order to aid the officer in the execution of their tasks. "In order to provide high-quality service, the records center should be adequately staffed. Adequate staffing means that there should be enough people to do the work efficiently. But the service should always be cost effective; there should not be too many staff. Further, each staff member should be given a set of tasks and responsibilities he or she is reasonably capable of carrying out" (Neuman, 2000).

2.3 Legislative Policies that govern records centers
Mittal (1971:4) opinions that legislation implies the "laying down of instructions to given people who are tasked with the responsibility of administering a government so as to rightfully give out the necessary function needed in government." Legislation makes available the powers, the obligations and limitations of an institution. According to the National Archives of Australia (2014) the purpose of the policy is to provide guidance and direction on the creation, generation and management of information and records and to clarify staff responsibilities. Hoyle and Sebina, (2007) mentioned that a Records Management Policy provided a framework within which the records and archives of the United Republic of Tanzania were managed in accordance with statutory requirements and international standards.

Mokhatar and Yusof (2009) highlighted one issue that can be proved vital and this is the existence of policies, "sometimes the most important thing in the implementation of a new plan

is the existing of good policies." According to Kennedy and Schauder (1998:29) a records management policy is "the official charter for performing all records management functions." They further pointed out that a records management policy should be clear and should outline records management functions in relation to the organizations records keeping requirements. As a standard for best practices in records management the International Standard Organization (2001) Section six specified that organizations should "establish document, maintain and promulgate policies, procedures" to guarantee that "its business need for evidence and accountability and information about activities is met." The International Standard Organization (2001) section five stipulated that a records management policy and procedures of an organization should demonstrate the application of the regulatory environment to their business processes. On the other hand, Kennedy and Schauder (1998:527) stated that the policies provides information on "who, what when where and how the records management systems operates."

One vital policy which governs records center activities is known as a Retention and Disposal Schedule, this refers to the document that sets the length of time which organizational records are to be retained and disposed (IRMT 1999). Iron Mountain (2012:4) detailed a well-designed and well-executed records retention schedule to be "to increase efficiency and reduce risks in an organization." According to Marutha (2011) the decision pertaining to which records need to be kept permanently and which ones should be retained for a specified period is highly dependent on the record value and policies guarding that record. IRMT (1999) contends that the records retention and disposal schedule indicate the retention periods, the disposal date as well as the disposal action. IRMT further briefed us that a retention period is the length of time which is brought about as a result of legislation, regulation or administrative procedure and disposal date refers to the specified date on which disposal actions which are stipulated in a disposal schedule should be commenced. Disposal implicates sending records from the records center to either an archival facility or destroying them. Whereas destruction is the complete disposal of records which have been qualified to be of no further value, the type of destruction methods that may be used are incineration, maceration, pulping and shredding. The level of service offered by the record centers should be based on established policies and procedures.

These policies apply to all the records at any stage of the records life cycle. According to Mountain (2015) compliance with policies and procedures, a firm's record management process

should incorporate policies and procedures addressing all the records management program components as specified by the legal and operational requirements. He also argued that an effective records management program depends on an organization's ability to attain information for litigation response, business support, or compliance purposes. The policies also involve accountability and compliance. In this practice, Mountain (2015) argued that a records management program will not be successful if employees do not abide by the program and its regulations. Auditing and organization-wide accountability include critical elements for compliance.

Further, Saskatchewan (2015) also documents the best practices for records management, his report argued that effective records storage and retrieval hinges on effectual records management and policies. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (2015) continues to note that even though some of these policies may vary from one organization to another, they are best practices that may help in the efficient records management. Saskatchewan (2015) in his study stated that the policies and procedures should also be updated and reviewed on a regular basis and should be based on the firm's records management policy and the approved retention schedules. The (Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, 2015). Another practice entails establishing classification procedures, version controls, and naming conventions for the documents in all formats to ascertain that the organization applies them consistently. Other practices include closing inventory files when the year ends.

However, an incorporation of these best practices can help in mitigating risks involved in a records management program in the two centers. In another article, Mountain (2015) argued that best practices and policies are essential in records management because it enables firms to progressively and proactively manage all media, data, and information. They further noted that as the dynamism of laws and their severity of punishment continue to increase in various countries, it becomes vital for all organizations to implement the best policies for effective records management as a strategy of demonstrating good faith intentions to adhere to the best practices in an accurate and consistent manner (Mountain, 2015). Therefore, it is important to ensure that the two records centers meet all legal requirements, prove the best records management, through consistency in implementation, and review, audit, and improve the records management program in a continuous manner. Record management policies in terms of

managing semi current records in the life cycle will guide how records in records centers should be managed. Records center records emerge from current records and these records are guided by Acts, in the case Zambia the Center is guided by the National archives Act chapter 175 of the laws of Zambia which determines how long the records will be kept in the records center (IRMT,1999). Bwalya (2010) stated that many governments (federal or state) in many countries have enacted Records Acts with clauses that speak and compel organizations to establish records management programs as a way to ensure compliance with the Record Laws of the country and set a foundation for better records management practices. He added an example of the State of New South Wales in Australia which has a state Records Act of 1998 was used as it compels public Institutions including Universities to establish and maintain a records management program to aid the management of student's records and promote good record keeping in the institutions and country.

SUMMARY

Records centers are vital in ensuring that records in their semi- current state are managed effectively. The types of records kept in the records center will determine the purpose of the record center and what role it plays in the records management program. The chapter has also showed the importance of having policies to govern how records should be managed and kept as well as how long using a records retention and disposition schedule. It went further to show the challenges that affect records these include physical challenges such as space and lack of policies as some of the challenges being faced in record centers.

3.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the methodology which was used in the study to carry out the research. The research methodology assisted in controlling the study, dictating the acquisition of data to address the research questions, arranging data into logical relationships to enable analysis and the drawing of conclusions that can contribute to the expansion of knowledge (Leedy, 1997). According to Akakandelwa (2000), methodology is a system of explicit rules and processes of which research is centered on and against which statements for knowledge are evaluated. The chapter describes the research design, population and sample, research instruments for data and analysis of data which will be used to realize the objectives.

3.1 Research Design

According to Kerlinger (1986) a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions, issues or problems and includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data. This research will adopt a case study approach, which will help to provide a well and detailed evaluation of the states of records and record centers. According to Coetzer (2012:65) qualitative research does not describe data using statistics, but by using words, sound, images or visuals or objects to make a detailed report of the feelings, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behavior of the respondents. This research was structured in a way that it used only qualitative research methods which helped in capturing the respondent's feelings and views.

3.2 Total Population

The research target was drawn from the University of Zambia School of Education records center and National Archives of Zambia Lusaka city annex records center. It comprised of record center staff of which each of the institution had three records center staff. A research population

is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that form the basis of a scientific inquiry (Explorable, 2020).

3.3 Sample

Sampling is defined as the process of taking any portion of a population to act as a representative of the total population (strydomy et, 2005). . Thus, the sample was a total of six (6) records management personnel, three (3) from each Institution.

3.4 Research Instruments

The research used structured and unstructured Interviews, this was done in order to obtain in-depth information from the respondents who participated in the interviews, and these interviews were conducted through face-to-face interactions to enable the respondents to answer freely without external influences. Observations were also used by looking at the state of the physical records in the record centers and the physical state of the records centers themselves. In this method information was pursued through the investigators having to directly observe the state of records at the records center without asking from any respondent.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data that was collected from the interviews and the observations was analyzed using Content analysis software. This enabled us to measure qualitative data.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study faced a number of limitations in that the sample size that was used as well as the instruments were usually suited for large sample sizes and the chapter focused on a small sample. The study also had a challenge in how the interviews were to be conducted especially that the Covid-19 pandemic positivity cases were skyrocketing with more restrictions being given each time.

SUMMARY

Chapter three of this proposal gave us a picture of what the research design would be, the sample size, sampling methods and research instrument that was used. The chapter assisted in controlling the study, dictating the acquisition of data to address the research questions, arranging data into logical relationships to enable analysis and the drawing of conclusions that contributed to the expansion of knowledge after data was analyzed. The research managed to

show the gap that existed between the management a national records center that receives funding form the government and a university records center which is funded by the school considering the fact that semi current records all have the same destination which is the National archives there is need for them to be managed in a standardized manner.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Under this chapter the findings of the research are presented. The researchers conducted Face to face interviews with three Archivists from The National Archives of Zambia City Annex records center and three records clerks from the University of Zambia School of Education records center. The Presentation of the findings is guided by the specific objectives and themes of the research.

4.1 Types of records managed in records centers

The responses that were given by the provincial Archivist from the National Archives of Zambia City Annex Records center on the types of records that are kept and housed by the records center showed that the record center gathers all government agencies and ministry records which include; Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, Zambia National Service (ZNS) as well as Zambia Air Force (ZAF), thereby it is a provincial records center and it is managed by three members of staff. The records in the records center are all paper based, additionally, the records are stored in standard boxes called NA17 which are kept on shelving bays. Furthermore, the records are kept according to groups. The specific records that are received from these ministries range from case files and personnel records to policies and procedures manuals. The Archivist further explained that these records have to be appraised to determine which of the records should continue to be kept in the records center. The Archivist also pointed out that the depositing government ministries and agencies have to be aware of the types of records that are to be deposited into the records center and what kind of boxes to use. The Archivist echoed that;

"We have records from all government agencies like ZAF, Ministry of foreign affairs, everything we have them here at our records center."

She further echoed on some specific types of records that are kept at the records center.

"We keep records such as policy files we don't destroy those, loose minutes those we destroy and we keep accounting files and destroy them after 7 years, staff files we don't Destroy we keep them permanently in case one comes back after 40 years saying there was a ka payment. So, we keep those."

Her colleague further added that:

"We store different records for the organizations... There minutes, there are personal files, there what can I say, organizational files, we have different types and we classify them as they come… These records are all in paper series"

The other archivist further echoed that:

"We have records such as staff files, organizational files which are all in paper format. And we keep them in series and in boxes which we avail to creating agencies."

While at the University of Zambia School of Education records center, three records clerks were interviewed, two are males and one female and these were their responses on the types of records they keep and what format these records are kept in. The records center keeps a selected type of records belonging to students at the School of Education only. The departments which deposit records in the records center include the department of Library and Information Science and the Adult Education Department. Similar to the city annex records center it is also managed by three members of staff and they are kept in cupboards. However, Records are kept in form of items.

The first records clerk to be interviewed gave us the following response regarding the type of records kept;

"…like when a student is admitted into the university, they come with the acceptance letter and we'd also request that they give us their NRC. Secondly Students correspondence, let's say a student has a funeral they'll fill a form showing that they will be out of school, other records that we have are let's say a student is withdrawing from school we keep that in the students' individual file. Basically, those are records we keep."

He further added:

"… These records are kept in students' files in hard copy."

This was the response from second interviewee at the school of education records center. Further information was given by the other respondents who had this to say;

" Here we deal with student records, there are blue forms that are given to students and in the process a record is generated, when students come they bring in admission letters and to those admission letters they attach their grade twelve results, NRC, payment history, bill muster and that's where the creation stage starts from and from there a record for a student is created, but there are times when they don't submit those but they will come a time and the end of the year when they bring in those clearances"

The third interviewee added that;

"All our records are paper based, can't say they are electronic based, we are going into the direction of the electronic base but it is taking too long, but we are working in that direction."

4.2 Legislative Policies Governing Records Center

Legislation plays an important role in the way in which records are managed in any stage of the records life cycle, legislation indicates how long they have to be kept and what measures should be used. Thus, in response to the legislative policies governing records centers, the Archivist at City Annex mentioned that the records that are kept there and the state in which they are kept in are mandated by National Archives Act Chapter 175 of the laws of Zambia.

She explained that:

"…whatever we do at our records center we get our mandate from, we have got a law under National Archives, its Cap 175 of the laws of Zambia and that gives us guidance to the custody, disposal and retention of records at our records center. So, we don't go beyond that law so whatever we do is in line with the law."

The second and third archivist reechoed that:

"We are all under cap 175 of the laws of Zambia, which governs all the operations of all the nine records centers, it's from there that we derive our mandate."

This goes on to explain the National Archives Act chapter 175 of the laws of Zambia which was first enacted on the 14th of November, 1969 was established to 'provide for the preservation, custody, control and disposal of public archives, including public records of Zambia as well as provide for matters connected with the foregoing.' The records center's collections is also mandated by The Printed Publications Act Chapter 161 of the Laws of Zambia which was first enacted on 1st March, 1964 and speaks into the 'registration of newspapers, printing and publications of books and the preservation of printed works published in Zambia.'

The University of Zambia School of Education records center on the other hand does not have well written and stipulated laws to speak on the management and custody of records at the registry and records center. However, they have a system that is used to show how long they maintain student's records within the School of Education.

One of the interviewees explained that:

"I would lie according to my knowledge, even as UNZA as a whole we have no documentation, this is when they are doing that, I hear there is a committee, they have put up a committee to come up with even a records retention and disposal schedule… when we want to destroy any form of documentation such as exam scripts, we have to seek permission, but for documents such as students records those are of continuing value we keep."

Another interviewee from the same department had the following to say regarding the policies and any legislature governing the records center;

"There are no policies yet… so since there isn't we still try to move up and see what in-house measures we can use… if we have to move records, that directive has to come from the Deans office, with the help of... there is records department in the university, the department for records, their job was to come up with those things you are asking, the policies, the retention and disposal schedule… the policies around records in the university are not there and it's a big challenge."

The last interviewee added to the sentiments as he mentioned;

"… we don't have policies yet but we have a system that works and with the help of the team put up we are heading there, so yes and no to your question about the policies or system we use."

This shows and explains the challenges that record centers experience based on lack of legislature to guide how they have to be kept, used and managed at any given instances. IRMT (1999) adds that, "policies are documents of intent and legislation is important in any records management fraternity or department."

4.3 Records Center Management Challenges

Records centers are tasked to keep semi-current records which different individuals or organizations can consult and use infrequently. The amount of paperwork that is received in these records centers can be overwhelming. And this outlines some of the challenges that record centers face and are likely to face.

The respondents from the National Archives of Zambia records center had the following to say; the first interviewee explained that:

"We do not have much challenges in terms of security as records are in the basement and we fumigate the place every quarter to prevent rodents, so we do buy that chemical every quarter. So you wont find any rodents or ants down stairs and in terms of water, we've got enough measures… the chemical is very safe"

However, she added that:

"...that has been a challenge, as most staff in these government department especially registries, as we deal with registry staff are not qualified. So, you find that most of them don't even have the knowledge about records management or records keeping, sometimes you'll find that records are not well transmitted or recorded so when we go there, we now have to start teaching them on how to do records keeping."

The second archivist added that:

"The biggest challenge we face are termites in the records centers however, the records center is prayed twice every year and we have fire extinguishers in case of any fire."

The third added that:

"Most of our equipment are outdated, we do not have fire extinguishers, the place where the record center is and where our offices are is a bit far and it's not easy to go there all the time."

The University of Zambia School of education records center management staff had the following to say regarding the challenges they face in the management of records at the records center:

The first records clerk articulated the following:

"In terms of disasters we have measures like we have routine checkups to check if there are leakages and all but fire is not possible even if we have electrical faults…we do not have enough space, so we are looking into the soft part."

The second records clerk added that:

"Security in the registry we have lockable cabinets that are secure enough when we come to security. However, in the center or archives we found those wooden shelves, the way they designed them, which isn't ideal, you know what wood can do, even a small spark of electricity can burn down that place and it will be ashes. We try we would recommend in that records center as wood is prone to termites, and also water is a danger to those records there. We don't have fire extinguishers there, so wed recommend even two."

He further added that:

"That place was not designed for a records center, it has been improvised, there is a sink there, which shouldn't be there were not supposed to be washing hands there or eating there. Even cats sometimes they come there so were using what is available. Rains as this building is old so rain and maybe fire is a challenge but we have a backup plan as those documents are also maintained by secretaries."

The third records clerk added that

"Funding is a challenge as the channel of communication is long… we do not have fire extinguishers as the records center wasn't initially meant to keep records, there is even a leaking sink there you know."

This shows that the record center faces a lot of challenges ranging from the physical state it is in, the policies governing it and the types of records kept. The research brought that out so that it may be easy to mitigate these challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by presenting a discussion of the findings analyzed in the previous chapter. Thereafter, a conclusion and recommendations will sum up the research in order to help address the challenges faced while managing records in record centers. The main themes of this research were; types of records managed, legislative policies governing the records center and challenges faced by the records centers.

5.1 TYPES OF RECORDS

Results showed that both the National Archives of Zambia records center and the University of Zambia School of Education records center keep their records in paper formats. In contrast, it was seen that the national Archives of Zambia records center keeps a variety of government records including organizational files as well as ministries staff files while the records center at the School of Education keeps only student's records to be specific students' confirmation slips and acceptance letters which are also kept by other departments. This shows that there is a lot of duplication that happens at the School of Education management systems in that the same records kept in the records center are also kept in individual departments.

5.2 LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE RECORDS CENTER

Legislation is important in any institution as offers guidance on how the institution is to be operated. From the results conducted we can see that the National archives Record Center is guided by an Act of Parliament which is National Archives of Zambia act Chapter 175 of the Laws of Zambia which gives the record centers their mandates regarding the custody, control, preservation and the disposal of all public records. While the University of Zambia School of Education records center has no laid down laws and regulations that speak on the management of records, every rule regarding the control of records is only guided by lecturers in the department of Library and Information Science who consist of a committee. Additionally, the go ahead is only given by the Dean of the school. The records center staffs rely heavily on the Dean and registrars to give guidelines as no documentation has been established yet.

5.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY RECORD CENTERS

The National Archives of Zambia records center is faced with the challenge of having to ensure that depositing agencies understand records management in order to follow instructions required for them to safely deposit records in the record centers. The records center is in a structure which has a high risk of flooding as there are open pits in the records center which are filled up with water especially when it rains. The University of Zambia school of Education records center on the other hand faces a lot of challenges which are mainly caused by lack of policies. The center was not initially built or designed to be a records center, so it faces a lot of challenges from having wooden shelves prone to fire and termites as the place does not get fumigated to prevent infestations. The record center also has a leaking sink within the records center which can cause flooding in the records center as well as windows which let in moist from the rains.

5.4 OBSERVATIONS

Record centers are very important as they house important records. The following are some of the observations that the researchers made. Observations of the record centers at both City Annex and the University of Zambia School of Education indicated that there is poor lighting as the bulbs and fluorescent tubes put in place are no longer working. Thus, making other places inaccessible without the aid of a flashlight. The school of education Record center has a leaking sink which is a hazard to the records in the center as water can lead to the premature destruction of records

It was also observed that both record centers are following a system of arrangement and filing which is working well for both centers. Furthermore, creating agencies that make deposits to the City Annex records center do not comply with the rule of depositing records in standard boxes which fit in the shelves, as a result oversized boxes are placed on the floors and left neglected with no easy way of being located and retrieved. Whereas, the University of Zambia Records center has poor shelving and uses file folders to that can easily tear to store records. It has wooden shelves that are old and can easily be damaged.

It was observed that City Annex records center has enough space to accommodate more records even in the next ten years from now whereas, the school of education would have completely run out of space by then.

Another follow up observation showed that both record centers are rarely cleaned making them very dirty and dusty. Both record centers are not very safe. The City Annex record center has a small gate which anyone can easily open as there is no security to guard it and the records personnel are in another office rarely observing the entrance while the School of Education Records center only has the Grill door closing while the door to the records center has no keys for it to be locked.

CONCLUSION

From the findings discussed, it can be stated that both the institutions face challenges which reflect in the way records are being managed by both institutions. The research further discovered that both centers face similar challenges although at different rates. It is also safe to say that the School of Education records center has a lot of challenges as compared to the City Annex record center; this is due to the lack of policies to govern how the records center should be run and managed. The School of Education has a lot of work to do. This goes to show that policies and procedures are important as they clearly outline the management systems of records in any records institution, be it a registry, records center or archives. The study has also outlined the common challenges such as storage space, lack of proper lighting, leakages, lack of fire extinguishers as well those unique to each records center such as policies and lack of training on records management by the depositing agencies. The research has also helped bring challenges such as lack of funding to purchase more storage equipment. It has also uncovered a need to have professionals to handle records due to the important informational value they contain which will be useful even forty (40) years from now.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for the University Of Zambia School Of Education to establish legislative policies such as the records retention and disposition schedule that will speak into the management of records as well as improve the physical state of the record center.

2. Records that are kept at the records center should be unique; there shouldn't be duplicates in the creating departments.

3. There is need to digitize records in order to save on space that is occupied by paper records as well as ensure that records are free from natural hazards in both record centers.

4. Both record centers need to put up proper disaster and preparedness plans to ensure that records are adequately protected, for starters they should put in place fire extinguishers

5. The School of Education record center needs to ensure that the sink and lighting is improved in the record center to prevent damages to the records.

6. The National Archives City Annex records center should put up more security as the door leading to the basement can be easily accessed by unauthorized people who may be a danger to the records kept their.

7. There is need to improve the physical state of records in both records centers to prevent premature destruction of these records.

8. City annex records center should eliminate the most likely risk of flooding through sealing/covering the pits which have water in them

9. Both records centers should work towards having a purposely built records center

10. City annex records center should put up proper lighting in the record center

11. Both records centers should adhere to the "no eating in the records center" rule.

12. Both record centers should invest a lot in the security of the records centers.

13. Lusaka city Annex should put in place a law that sees to it that organizations that deposit records in boxes other than the standard box(NA17) should be charged.

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APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RECORD CENTER STAFF

Types of records and records centers

Background of the institution

1. What kind of record center do you operate?

2. What kind of records do you keep?

3. What is the current number of staff managing the record center?

4. which departments/ agencies make their deposits to the records center

5. In what formats are the records kept?

6. What records equipment are used? eg cupboards, boxes, shelves

7. What form are records kept? As series, groups or items?

8. How are series kept (are they in bundles or boxes)

Policies

1. Do you have legislative policies governing the record center?

2. What are the legislative policies governing your record center?

3. How do you know when records are now in their semi current state?

4. Do you have a retention and disposition schedule?

(If Yes who is responsible for drafting and revising it?)

5. What type of records retention and disposal does the records center use?

6. What guidelines do you use to give retention periods?

7. Do you have a disaster and preparedness plan?

8. What other rules and regulations do you follow?

9. What security measures have been put in place to ensure the safe custody of records?

10. What methods of destruction do you use for those records that are due for destruction?

Challenges

1. What state are the records in when they are transferred to the record center?

2. What preservation and conservation methods are used to ensure records are not prematurely destroyed?

3.. Are there records that have been stored longer than they are supposed to? If so why?

4. Is there enough storage to accommodate the records received?

5. How safe is the record center from disasters such as ants, rodents and floods?

6. How qualified are the staff to manage records?

7. Does the records center receive adequate funding from its mother body?

8.Whats the most likely risk factor that can destroy records at the records center (water, fire, theft) and what measures have you taken so as to prevent this from happening

Appendix Two

OBSERVATIONS

1. Cleanliness and orderliness

2. Lighting and air conditioning

3. Storage and filing space

4. Records arrangements

5. Hazards management

6. Security

5. Staff knowledge on Records Management

6. Lack of funding for most projects at both record centers.