

CHALLENGES RECORDS MANAGERS FACE IN ADHERING TO ETHICAL PRACTICES IN TANZANIA'S GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

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PURPOSE

THE overall objective of this study was to investigate challenges records managers face in adhering to ethical practices in information services provision in Tanzania's government ministries. Specifically, the study examined the awareness of ethical challenges, causes of the challenges and mechanism for enforcing records managers adherence to ethical practices. The study adopted the Deontological theory and educators' conceptual model to undertake the study.

Design/Research Methodology: *To achieve the set objectives, the study used a mixed-methods for research design to collect requisite data, which allowed it to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The study population consisted of records managers, information and/or registry users and human resources officers. The quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS), whereas qualitative data were subjected to content analysis.*

The Findings: *The findings of the study established a number of ethical challenges records managers face in information services provision. Some of the challenges are lack of code of ethics for records managers, unauthorised access to records, inadequate of integrity, and lack of impartiality. In addition, the study has also presented strategies or mechanisms that can be used to enforce records managers' adherence to ethical practices. The mechanisms are based on two main areas namely the need for further training and introduction of code of ethics for records managers.*

Research Limitations: *The accuracy of the data presentation and analysis is dependent upon the accuracy of the data reported by selected respondents in the selected Government Ministries.*

Practical Implications: *Based on the research findings the study concludes that information ethics is a critical factor not only for fostering quality decision-making, planning and making informed choices but also for getting rid of records management malpractices currently dogging the public sector. Moreover, timely access to code of ethics among professionals contributes to work ethically. As general code of ethics for public servants in Tanzania's public service has some shortcomings, it is recommended that a viable code of ethics be introduced to plug loopholes in addition to increasing the education for records managers to foster ethical practices in records management practices.*

Originality/Value: *It is evidently proved through literature review that this study is the first to address ethical practices of records managers in Tanzania. It offers a beneficial source of information to the professionals in Tanzania.*

Key Words: *Records Management, Ethical Practices and Challenges Records Managers Face.*

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Introduction and Background

Records management has grown over the years as a discipline in library and information science. The involvement of field has also been embraced by many other disciplines. Despite the field of records management having a relatively short history, it has been progressive and has been recognised in the United States for nearly 20 years (Froehlich, 2004). Capurro (2006) asserts that ethics in the information sector focuses on confidentiality, information bias, and quality control. Hauptman (1998) focuses on ethical challenges in librarianship such as censorship, privacy, access to information, balance in collection development, copyright, fair use, code of conduct and the problem of patrons. Ethical conduct and practice is a prerequisite to being called a professional. Sabina et al. (2005), on their part, observe that records managers ought to be persons worthy of public trust, experts who mediate between readers and information and/or registry users.

On the whole, records managers as information professionals play a critical role in fighting corruption, protecting the rights of citizens, and ensuring that transparency, accountability and good governance prevail. However, African governments generally face major challenges when it comes to records management. Ndenje (2010) observed that the management of public sector records is critical because records help to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the public service; and yet, records management practices in Tanzania's government ministries are not well-managed, let alone given the priority they deserve. Cases of record-keeping violations have been reported in the mass media, often under circumstances involving improper political pressure and corruption (Tweve, 2008). These cases result from ethical lapses of one kind or another or which pose ethical problems for records managers. Chachage (2006) pointed out that the challenges records managers face in Tanzania are associated with lack of specific budgets, trained personnel and appropriate records management policies.

Chachage (2006), Tweve (2008) and Ndenje (2010) observe that records management in Tanzania is an established profession and yet little efforts have been made to improve its services in the public sector. The authors also underscore the fact that records managers in Tanzania require not only knowledge and skills but also ethics to perform their duties effectively. Even in other developing countries such as Zimbabwe, lack of professionalism and ethical practices in records management remains a problem that is not well-recognised (Ngulube, 2000).

On the whole, records management in Tanzania has received little attention, particularly in scholarly discourse. Indeed, not much has been published so far on how information professionals, particularly records managers, comply with ethical requirements. In fact, ethics and a code for information professionals in Tanzania have yet to be established as for other professionals in the country. Loss of files by misplacement or gross negligence and destruction of documents because of irresponsibility and lack of accountability remain a common practice, which persists in courts of law and different public offices (Tweve, 2008). Said (2013) in *Mwananchi* reported that the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development had terminated the services of two Lands officials in Morogoro for taking files out of the Registry without complying with laid-down procedures and regulations. There are many similar cases, which have been reported in the mass media. However, researchers have yet to take keen interest in this area of ethics in records management and its implications for the management of public records.

Singh (2014) pointed that there is reasonable research evidence on the relationship between parameters such as ethics, education, moral values, accounting standards and those relating to financial fraud, lapses on the part of auditors, lack of adequate punishment, delayed punishment, and greed for more money.

Statement of the Problem

The majority of scholars comment that a good record management system needs to have certain characteristics (Lipchak, 2002). These characteristics include determining information needs, creating and acquiring information, distributing and sharing records and information, evaluating and using information to solve problems and documenting activities and actions. Other characteristics are determining responsibility for managing and protecting records, identifying, organising, storing and disposing records, providing sufficient staff, training and other resources and evaluating the

performance of the records system (Kemoni, 2007). Generally, the issue of ethical practices has not been considered as one of important elements in records management. For example, an organisation can have sufficient staff but who are not working ethically.

On the whole, unethical professional conduct in the records management sector or simply non-adherence to records management remains a source of grave concern in Tanzania's public sector. Some of the problems resulting from such practices include lack of democracy, increased corruption, lack of integrity, respect and trust (Kemoni, 2007). Therefore, there was a need to investigate the state and attendant problems associated with (un)ethical practices of records managers in Tanzania's government ministries.

Review of Related Literature

During the 1990s, in many countries, particularly in developing countries in Africa, offices and corridors were piled high with closed files and filing cabinets were crammed with files that had ceased to be active (Kemoni, 2007). Classification systems were breaking down and unsatisfactory systems existed for managing the creation, use and storage of these records. This dire situation had adverse consequences not only for officers who depended on the files to define and implement policy but also for the Records Managers in their bid to work ethically and professionally. Findings regarding the poor state of record-keeping in many developing countries are consistent with the observations made by Mnjama (2004).

Kemoni (2007) points out that in many countries, particularly in developing countries, the public sector record-keeping systems were not just weak, but also had collapsed and did not function at all (IRMT, 1999). This total collapse had been particularly evident in countries that had once been part of the European-dominated colonial regimes. The International Records Management Trust [IRMT] (1999) observes that, following independence in these countries, this situation deteriorated progressively, as part of a general decline in public administration. People employed in the registries had limited training or experience with records management work. As a result, file classification and indexing systems originally designed to meet the records management requirements of the colonial period became unwieldy and ultimately unmanageable. Over the last several decades, there had been a significant deterioration in the management of official records in developing countries, which compromised issues of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, the protection of human rights, provision of service to citizens, poverty reduction strategies and the rule of law (IRMT 1999). Inevitably, ethical malpractices in this field were a nagging problem that demanded urgent measures.

Poor management of records as a resource was evident in many African and Central American countries (Mnjama, 2003). Based on some of the records management projects in which the author participated and which were funded by the IRMT and the WB, among other donors, in Kenya and Botswana and from visits to Tanzania, Ghana, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Guyana and Belize, Mnjama (2004) concluded that the management of records was plagued by many problems. These problems included poor layout of, and untidiness in, the records storage area, regular loss of files and information, lack of file indexes and registers and lack of control of file movements. Other problems were lack of retention and disposal schedules, poor supervision of records staff and lack of knowledge of the importance of information. But the issue of ethical practices in records management as one of problems faced by records managers was not considered.

Examining the practice of records management in the public sector in Zimbabwe and the extent to which records management in Zimbabwe could be regarded as a profession, Ngulube (2000), and Kemoni (2007) found that records were mishandled and abused, suggesting a lack of ethics. Records managers did not have training in records management and lacked a code of conduct. The findings prompted Ngulube (2000) to conclude that records management had yet to be professionalised in Zimbabwe. Thus, the author called for the development and adoption of a records management code of ethics. A decade later since the call, the situation in Zimbabwe had not changed much. In Tanzania, things are not much better: records managers face the same dilemma.

Discussing the record management situation in Ghana's public sector, Akussah (1996), and Kemoni

(2007) traces the root cause of the problem of records management in the West African country to the lack of a comprehensive policy regarding an integrated holistic approach to the management of the whole cycle of records. On the other hand, Akotia (2003) believes that the revision of archival legislation had assisted to enhance records management practices in Ghana's public sector. In fact, the new law acknowledges the life-cycle as the framework for records control. Systems and procedures had been put in place to provide a sound, systematic records management programme. And yet, issues related to ethical practices among records management were not covered adequately.

Kemoni (2007) and Ombati (1999) note that the state of records management in Kenya was generally poor. In this regard, Mnjama (2003) decries the inadequate state of record-keeping in Kenya, stating that the factors contributing to the current state of recordkeeping included failure by senior management to establish acceptable records management goals and practices, as well as the non-implementation of various recommendations dealing with improvement of records management in Kenya's public sector including compliance or adherence to ethical practices. The inadequate state of record-keeping in Kenya and its impact on public service delivery might be similar to the situation existing in Tanzania. This situation creates a need for conducting an in-depth investigation on the issues by academicians, administrators and researchers.

Professional Ethics for Records Managers

A professional ethics for a particular field addresses the moral responsibilities of a member of a profession for field practice (Quinn, 2011). These responsibilities are based in part on the particular role the professional plays; they are also based on the defining aspects of a given professionalism: knowledge, trust, authority, and autonomy. These professional ethics provide guidance on ethical issues confronting a given profession. For records management, the climate of ethical crisis presents challenges and opportunities (Cox et al., 2006). It presents challenges because the types of unethical acts perpetrated by organisations usually implicate information and records in some way.

Thus, Records Managers (*ibid.*) often get implicated in improper destruction, disclosure, alteration or withholding of records. Also, Records Managers face the risk that they might be caught up in the wrong doing if they do not have a clear understanding of how to manage information and records ethically. In the face of these challenges and opportunities, the time is right for the records profession to develop a distinctive ethics to deal with the emerging problems in information management. In fact, records management as profession should have professional ethics, particularly a code of conduct. Professional ethics for records managers will share many issues with other areas of business and professional ethics, but will place the perspectives of records at its centre.

Why is it important for records managers to have their own professional ethics? Davis (1996) responds to the question by indicating that, there are number of reasons justifying the development of a professional ethics for records managers. To begin with, records professionals play a distinctive role in advancing the ethical management of organisations by providing authentic records of its activity. Second, having a professional ethics is one of the standards of competence and building a community. On the other hand, records professionals need to manage the ethical challenges they face in their roles; they need to know how not to violate someone's right to privacy or someone else's right to information. They also need to know when they have a conflict of interest and be ethically competent.

Challenges in Adherence to Ethical Practices in Records Management

Organisations are confronted by many records management problems and issues. In many ways, the growth of electronic rather than paper-based information has exacerbated these issues over the last decade or two. Common records management problems include large number of disparate records management systems, little integration or co-ordination between the available information systems, direct competition between records management systems and work habits. Other vexing problems include lack of a clear strategic direction for the overall technology environment, limited and irregular adoption of the existing information systems by staff, poor quality of information, lack of consistency, duplication, and out-of-date information, little recognition and support of records management by senior management.

Other challenges include limited resources for deploying, managing or improving information systems, difficulties in changing working practices and processes of staff and internal politics impacting on the ability to co-ordinate activities enterprise-wide (Hauptman, 1998). Ocholla (2009) identifies some of the challenges inherent in enforcing records management (RM) in Africa as lack of expertise, poor understanding or appreciation of information ethics in general, lack of space in information studies curricula and unsatisfactory professional practices.

Mnjama (2004) notes that lack of training for the majority of records managers arises because many African countries have paid little attention to the training of archivists and records managers. Along similar lines, Wamukoya (2000) points out that in many African government ministries and departments, systems operate with central registry and by registry supervisors with little knowledge and competencies. In this set-up, there are no senior officers records management sectors at the ministerial level. Furthermore, Mnjama (2003) notes that the failure of senior management to establish records management goals and practices encourage records managers not to work ethically and professionally. Generally, lack of education among records managers hampers service delivery at work places. The available literature have not discussed in depth the challenges records managers face when it comes to adherence to ethical practices. Chapter six of this study covers these challenges. Quinn (2011) notes that ethical conduct or professional decision-making is a prerequisite for any profession. Also, Kemoni (2007) insists that the records management sector must have its own professional ethics to foster competence, authenticity of records, as well as avoiding having a conflict of interest. And yet, the reality for records managers in most government ministries is different as they lack enough education and specific professional code of conduct. Carr (2000) points out the importance of ethics in governing the conduct of a member of a profession, which are glaringly missing for records managers in Tanzania.

Research Gap

The literature review has shown that information professionalism is a universal preoccupation. Records management studies conducted in Tanzania (Chachage, 2006; Ndibalema, 2001; Ndenje, 2010) have primarily focused on records and accountability, transparency, budgeting and training. The professional conduct dimension of records management, particularly in the public sector or government ministries, remains largely neglected. Indeed, even though the problems associated with malpractices among Records Managers in the public sector have been a subject of media reports and could be linked to unethical conduct and unprofessionalism, little attention has been paid to the ethical dimension of records management in Tanzania. This was the gap this study set out to fill.

Research Methodology

Introduction

This study investigated the ethics in the practices of Records Managers in Tanzania's government ministries. Specifically, the study was concerned with investigating how the code of conduct applied to records managers and how they adhered to ethical practices in addition to exploring the challenges records managers face in their attempt to adhere to ethical practices. In this regard, this chapter presents, describes and, where necessary, justifies the methodology employed in the study to realise the research objectives. It provides an account of how the methodology was operationalised—what was done, sequences, methods and instruments. Specifically, it describes the study area, research design, study population, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis methods, quality control issues, as well as the scope of the study.

According to Ngulube (2000), describing and justifying the methods used in a particular study ascertain the validity and reliability of the findings and makes the study replicable.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods research design as it made use of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research in a complementary fashion. The use of mixed research approaches

helped to bring together the strengths of both approaches to corroborate and validate the data collected. The deployment of the combined research methods approach allows for multi-methods, convergence approach, triangulation, complementary purpose, and it can help to neutralise or cancel out biases inherent in the use of a single research method (Creswell, 2003).

Mixed-methods designs can be differentiated by the level of data mixing, time orientation and emphasis of the approaches employed. The level of data mixing refers to whether quantitative and qualitative data are partially or fully mixed; time orientation is concerned with whether the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research study occur concurrently or sequentially; and the emphasis of the approach pertains to whether both quantitative or qualitative phase of the study have equal status or whether one has a dominant status (Kothari, 2003). This study employed a partially mixed concurrent dominant status design, in which quantitative and qualitative approaches were carried out simultaneously, but with the quantitative research having a dominant status (Kothari 2003).

Findings

Introduction

This chapter aimed at exploring the challenges Records Managers face in their mundane attempt to adhere to ethical practices in Tanzania's government ministries. The chapter is divided into different sections: (i), assess the awareness of the ethical challenges the records managers faced in their information service delivery, (ii) identification of ethical challenges, (iii) propose strategies or mechanism to be adopted to enforce records managers' adherence to ethical practices and (iv) discussion of the findings.

Awareness of Ethical Challenges Records Managers Face

Respondents were asked to either affirm or decline whether records managers face any ethical challenges in their information service delivery. The answers of both the records managers and information and/or registry users are presented in Table No 1.

Table No. 1: Awareness of Ethical Challenges Records Managers Face

Responses	Information users		Information and/or registry users	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	66.7	173	69.2
No	5	33.3	77	30.8
Total	15	100.0	250	100.0

Source: *Field Data (2015)*.

Data in the Table No. 1 suggest the following observations:- First it seems that all the records managers and many information and/or registry users are aware that the records managers face ethical challenges in their information services delivery. Second, there are different factors which cause records managers to face ethical challenges in information services delivery. Informally one of the Records manager commented that:

.... ethics issues in the field of records management are not well taught in the colleges and at workplaces and there are no seminars or workshops on ethical issues. As a result, records officers had to rely on their experiences and imitation from experienced records officers. (Head, registry section at Ministry of labour and employment 27th May 2013).

Similarly, all human resources officers during interview sessions agreed that records managers faced ethical challenges. They elaborated that ethics in this field of records management in Tanzania had not been well-addressed by academicians and records managers themselves. For example, they referred to several cases of reports linking records managers to lacking ethical practices. This is an

era which the government and academicians need to collaborate on so that ethics and professionalism should be inculcated in the professionals joining the profession. Notably, the available code of ethics failed to cover explicitly issues of ethics in records management in government service. Although there are records management laws to guide them, ethical issues in records management are not well addressed in the rather general code of ethics.

Challenges Records Managers Face in Adherence to ethical Practices

The literature review chapter has highlighted several challenges which information professionals and, in particular, records manager face in information service provision. In this regard, the respondents were asked to identify the challenges records managers face in their attempt to adhere to ethical practices in their information service delivery. The following subsections presents details, views or responses from both categories of respondents namely records managers and registry users.

Records Managers' Views on Ethical Challenges

Records managers were asked to identify challenges they face in attempt to adhere to ethical practices in information services provisions in Tanzania's government ministries. The research findings are presented in following table:

Table No. 2: Records Managers' Views on Ethical Challenges

Ethical Challenge	Not sure		Moderate		High		Very high	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lack of privacy	0	0.0	2	13.3	5	33.3	8	53.3
Improper Information accessibility	0	0.0	1	6.7	6	40.0	8	53.3
Lack of currency of information	0	0.0	4	26.7	6	40.0	5	33.3
Insufficiency of reliability	1	6.7	2	13.3	6	40.0	6	40.0
Lack of safety	0	0.0	2	13.3	5	33.4	8	53.3
Inadequate of integrity	1	6.7	3	20.0	3	20.0	8	53.3
Lack of information accuracy	0	0.0	5	33.3	5	33.3	5	33.3
Lack of surveillance	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	6	40.0
Lack of impartiality	0	0.0	1	6.7	6	40.0	8	53.3
Lack of transparency	0	0.0	1	6.7	5	33.3	9	60.0
Lack of code of ethics	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	20.0	12	80.0
Lack of security to records	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	6	40.0
Mishandling of records	0	0.0	5	33.3	10	66.7	0	0.0
Unauthorised disclosure	0	0.0	3	20.0	4	26.7	8	53.3
Unauthorised destruction	0	0.0	3	20.0	5	33.3	7	46.7
Unauthorised access to records	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	20.0	12	80.0
Mutilation of records	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	6	40.0
Using records to intimidate others	0	0.0	5	33.3	5	33.3	5	33.3

Source: Field Data (2015)

Data in Table No. 2 suggest the following observations. First, only three (3) records managers were not sure whether records managers face challenges in attempt to adhere to ethical practices in their services provision. This might be caused by low level of education or they have not knowing ethical challenges. Second, the ministries surveyed should make sure that records managers are given training or seminars on the need to address ethical challenges at their work. Third, it is generally observed that lack of code of ethics for records managers might lead to unauthorised access to records in the ministries surveyed.

Registry Users’ Views on Ethical Challenges

Registry users were asked to identify challenges that records managers face in attempt to adhere to ethical practices in information services provisions in Tanzania’s government ministries. The research findings are presented in following table:

Table No. 3: Registry Users’ Views on Ethical Challenges

Ethical Challenge	Not sure		Moderate		High		Very high	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lack of privacy	49	19.6	59	23.6	63	25.2	79	31.6
Improper Information accessibility	10	4.0	32	12.8	102	40.8	106	42.4
Lack of currency of information	40	16.0	53	21.2	67	26.8	90	36.0
Insufficiency of reliability	60	24.0	62	24.8	78	31.2	50	20.0
Lack of safety	49	19.6	54	21.6	71	28.4	78	30.4
Inadequate of integrity	10	4.0	44	17.6	62	24.8	144	54.6
Lack of information accuracy	14	5.6	19	7.6	123	49.2	94	37.6
Lack of surveillance	35	14.0	59	23.8	86	34.4	70	28.0
Lack of impartiality	21	8.4	39	15.6	74	29.6	116	46.4
Lack of transparency	15	6.0	44	17.6	62	24.8	129	51.6
Lack of code of ethics	23	9.2	22	8.8	62	24.8	143	57.2
Lack of security to records	35	14.0	59	23.6	70	28.0	86	34.4
Mishandling of records	39	15.6	43	17.2	80	32.0	88	45.2
Unauthorised disclosure	29	11.6	52	20.8	70	28.0	99	39.6
Unauthorised destruction	44	17.6	48	19.2	50	20.0	108	43.2
Unauthorised access to records	53	21.2	60	24.0	62	24.8	75	30.0
Mutilation of records	54	21.6	55	22.0	64	25.6	77	30.8
Using records to intimidate others	47	18.8	65	26.0	68	27.2	70	28.0

Source: Field Data (2015). Multiple choices were allowed.

Data in Table No. 3 suggest the following observations as the main findings of the challenges records managers face in adhering to ethical practices: lack of code of ethics, unauthorised access to records, inadequate of integrity, lack of impartiality and lack of transparency.

Mechanism for Enforcing Records Managers Adherence to Ethical Practices

The study sought to establish whether records managers have enough training and, if not, the type of training required to enhance professionalism. The findings are presented in the sub sequence sections.

Records Managers’ views on types of training needed

Records managers were asked to point out types of training that is required to be provided or acquired by them. Data is presented in Table 4.

Table No. 4: Records Managers’ Views on Types of Training

Types of Training Required	None		Prefer		More Preferred		Most Preferred	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
In service training	0	0.0	1	6.7	3	20.0	11	73.3
Workshops and seminar	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	40.0	9	60.0
Diploma training	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	86.7	2	13.3
Bachelor’s degree training	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	13.3	13	86.7
Master’s degree training	0	0.0	2	13.3	13	86.7	0	0.0
PhD training	12	80.0	3	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Publications, printed training manual	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	20.0	12	80.0

Source: Field Data (2015).

Registry Users’ Views on Types of Training Needed

Respondents were asked to identify and rank types of training that records managers needed to enhance their professionalism and adhere to ethical practice in their day-to-day activities. A summary of training suggested by information users and/or registry users is presented in Table No. 5.

Table No. 5: Registry Users’ Views on Types of Training Needed

Types of Training Required	None		Prefer		More Preferred		Most Preferred	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
In service training	17	6.8	18	7.2	66	26.4	149	59.6
Workshops and seminar	18	7.2	32	12.8	97	38.8	103	41.2
Diploma training	44	17.6	46	18.4	52	20.8	108	43.2
Bachelor degree training	21	8.4	28	11.2	71	28.4	130	52.0
Masters degree training	101	40.4	116	46.4	20	8.0	13	5.2
PhD training	119	47.6	102	40.8	20	8.0	9	3.6
Publications, printed training manual	40	16.0	57	22.8	64	25.6	89	35.6

Source: Field Data (2015).

Data in Table No. 5 suggest the following observations. Several types of training and education needed can be deduced to enhance professionalism among records managers such as:- Bachelor’s degree training, publications and printed training manual, in-service training and workshops and seminars to mention just a few.

General Mechanisms for Enhancing Ethical Practices

The respondents were asked to rank the proposed strategies itemised in the questionnaire in accordance with their preferences and practicability in enhancing records managers’ prospect of working ethically and professionally in information service delivery. The following subsequence subsections present the views from both respondents.

Records Managers’ Views on Mechanisms for Enhancing Ethical Practices

The records managers were asked to identify and rank the proposed mechanisms to be adopted as mentioned in the research instruments. Findings are presented in Table No. 6.

Table No. 6: Records Managers Views on Mechanisms for Adhering to Ethical Practices

Recommended Mechanisms	None		Prefer		More Preferred		Most Preferred	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Introduction of code of ethics for records managers	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	100.0
Training on ethics to all records managers	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	100.0
Formulation of appropriate information policy	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	6.7	14	93.3
Introduction of ethics courses in colleges	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	20.0	12	80.0
Upgrading upwardly the education level of records managers	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	40.0	9	60.0
Establishing an Ethics Committee	0	0.0	3	20.0	3	20.0	9	60.0
Meting out punishment on unethical officers	0	0.0	3	20.0	3	20.0	9	60.0
Increasing number of evaluations	2	13.3	2	13.3	4	26.7	7	46.7
Allocation of enough funds to registry	1	6.7	4	26.7	4	26.7	6	40.0
Raising salaries for Records Managers	2	13.3	3	20.0	9	60.0	1	6.7

Source: Field Data (2015).

Registry users’ views on mechanisms for enhancing ethical practices

Information users and/or registry users as the main stakeholders of records in the surveyed ministries were asked to provide their views on mechanism to be adopted. Table No. 7 has a summary of the proposed mechanism for enhancing ethical practices among records managers.

Data in Table No. 7 illustrates different mechanism and the extent of preference to be adopted by records managers to enhance ethical practices. The main findings suggest the following observations:- introduction of a code of ethics for records managers, formulation of an appropriate information policy for records managers, training on ethics for all records managers, introduction of ethics courses at the college level and establishment of an Ethics Committee.

Table No. 7: Registry Users' Views on Mechanism for Enhancing Ethical Practices

Recommended Mechanisms	None		Prefer		More Preferred		Most Preferred	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Formulation of appropriate information policy	26	10.4	25	10.0	76	30.4	123	49.2
Introduction of a code of ethics for records managers	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	5.3	237	94.7
Training on ethics for all Records Managers	18	7.2	52	20.8	86	34.4	94	37.6
Allocation of enough funds to registry	17	6.8	57	22.8	80	32.0	96	38.4
Establishment of an Ethics Committee	30	12.0	45	18.0	83	33.2	92	36.8
Increasing number of evaluations	66	26.4	73	29.2	68	27.2	43	17.2
Meting out punishment on unethical managers	34	13.6	42	16.8	74	29.6	100	40.0
Raising salaries for Records Managers	25	10.0	25	10.0	93	37.2	107	42.8
Upgrading upwards education levels of records managers	44	17.6	49	19.6	58	23.2	99	39.6
Introduction of ethics courses in colleges	21	8.4	41	16.4	85	34.0	103	41.2

Source: Field Data (2015).

Discussion of the Findings

Pertaining to the third objective of the study, this part discusses the main findings under the following subheads:

Ethical Challenges Records Managers Face

Notwithstanding the diverse range of challenges records managers/officers face, based on the data presented in the findings above in this chapter, discussions can be made on main challenges the records managers face while working in the government ministries under review as follows:

Lack of Code of Ethics: One of the key findings of the current study is that records managers face lack of code of ethics specially designed for records officers/managers as one of the major challenges they have to contend with. Indeed, many of the records managers and information and/or registry users pointed out that lack of a code of ethics constituted one of the challenges the records managers faced in adhering to ethical practices. Generally, professionals at workplaces are guided by the code of ethics and other regulations in their day-to-day activities. On the other hand, human resource officers opined during interviews that records managers needed detailed procedures and policies on how to handle records in the ministries. Apart from policies and procedures, the human resource officers also insisted that there was a need for the records managers to have their own code of ethics as information or records are at the core of any important development process or decision-making process to facilitate any developmental issues. Lawton et al., (2013) asserts that critical judgement needs to be supplemented by guidelines and code of ethics, which naturally

provide practical guidance based upon general principles. Therefore, the code of ethics is imperative in encouraging good behaviour based on integrity approaches.

Unauthorised Access to Records: Data from the study show that many of the records managers and a few information and/or registry users reported that documents or records in the ministries under review were at times accessed by unauthorised persons. Human resource officers, on their part, when they were asked about how they controlled individual officers to prevent them from carrying either confidential or even open files home, they answered that officials were aware that doing so was against established procedures and regulations but there was no hard and fast rule on how the erring individual can be penalised or punished for such misdeeds. In this regard, Tweve (2008) notes that files appear to have developed legs as they are misplaced from their shelves for which no one was able to hold the culprits accountable. Indeed, in many cases files are not seen for number of days in different offices, thus making it difficult to trace them. Another possible contributory factor was found to stem from the records managers or officers lacking the respect they deserve as they were not treated to be as important as other professionals in a given ministry. Apart from disrespect the records managers faced, Anangisye (2006) calls upon the professionals to respect the law. By acting in accordance with the law, guidelines, procedures, respecting the constitution and the supremacy of law, the records managers would not only make their profession noble but also create conditions for commanding respect from both their peers in and their superiors in their respective ministries.

Inadequacy of Integrity: According to Parkinson (2001), records managers/officers need to safeguard the integrity of their profession by reinforcing desirable behaviour and embracing appropriate change. The current study, on the other hand, noted that more than half of the records managers and information and/or registry users believed that the records managers had to contend with inadequate integrity among themselves. It was noted that records managers lacked integrity because of the nature of their job contributed by several factors such as limited educational and professional credentials and poor infrastructure, including lack of an enabling office space. Moreover, records managers are regarded as lower cadre in many sectors despite the records or information they handle being so central in the operations of the organisations they work for. It was, therefore, not surprising that the human resource officers agreed that records managers lacked integrity at workplaces because there was no strong support from senior officials to reinforce the importance of the records management sector for all and sundry. It should be remembered that many government offices mainly recruited Form Four failures to work as temporary staff in records management and later employed them on fulltime basis as records management officers. The current study concurs with Carr (2000), who argues for the promotion of ethics at the workplace to give employees a sense of worth, integrity and trust. Similarly, the ICA (2005) opines that records managers' adherence to ethical practices tends to translate into issues of authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability. It appears this is the reality that prompted Musembi (2004) to conclude that records managers fail to adhere to ethical practices because of lack of support from senior management to recognise that records are vital for fostering accountability, integrity and efficiency in addition to promoting effective decision-making in any sector.

Lack of Impartiality: The current study noted that the majority of the records managers and a substantial number of the information and/or registry users reported that records managers lacked impartiality in their information service delivery. In many cases, they also lacked steadfastness in their decisions. In fact, they needed assistance in making decision for any officer in the ministry. As they are not attached to any department in the ministry they are obliged to serve all people institutional wide. In this regard, human resource officers pointed out that the records managers, who were supposed to be impartial in their work, ended up being partial because of the nature of their job, limited educational background and trying working environment. On the ground, it is a common practice to find registry users or information seekers to provide a gift to records officers as an inducement to get their files on time. This practice affects the impartiality and integrity of the

records managers. Lawton *et al.* (2013) highlighted that there is a grey area regarding the point at which a gift becomes a bribe, hence the use of *takrima* in Kiswahili which may not necessarily be a bribe but *could* be one. They further noted that impartiality of a professional entails offering impartial advice based on facts, without fear or favour to different groups of stakeholders including ministers and clients. Also there is need or requirement of a professional to adhere to non-discriminatory practices. It is therefore, imperative for professional records managers to comply with ethical practices because ethical behaviour is at the heart effective whether in the public or private sector.

Lack of Transparency: The National Archives of Australia (2004) opines that a good record keeping is essential to the core business of any organisation and the government in fostering accountability and enhancing transparency. In fact, the majority of the records managers and about half of the information and/or registry users identified transparency as a challenge that the records managers face. Indeed, records managers in many cases confused the meaning of confidential, secret and open document. There are some cases where records managers unnecessarily treated all the files and documents as confidential or secret to employees, and hence ended up being stumbling blocks to information access. In this regard, they need to be educated on their role of disseminating information in their respective ministries to cater for particular interests of their clientele. After all, the registry is a central part of any organisation which collects information from all angles, with the records managers mandated to feed people with valuable information depending on their needs and what the organisation allows them access to. In this regard, human resources officers agreed that sometimes they sent messages to the heads of registry for circulation to employees but only few people ended up being informed. Furthermore, the availability of a code of ethics for records managers could help to enforce ethical practices so that they become part of the norm rather than departure.

Mechanism for Enforcing Records Managers' Adherence to Ethical Practices

The main problem identified in this study is lack of a code of ethics specifically designed for the records and the rather low level of education among the records managers in Tanzania's public service. Initially, the respondents were asked whether they thought there was a need to have strategies in place to enforce records managers' adherence to ethical practices. The strategy recommendations were of two types: the type of education recommended for records managers and the general strategies that records managers could adopt to improve adherence to ethical practices.

The Need for Training: The study findings show that many information and/or registry users and records managers agreed that records managers need to have further training to boost not only their professionalism but also their adherence to ethical practices. Also, the human resources offices agreed that further training for many employees was paramount not only for the records managers but also other employees in the government. The general consensus was that the world was changing rapidly particularly in the field of information technology and hence there was urgent need to have workers able to cope with the situation and ethical issues. The new thrust is now evident in the Tanzania government's adoption of the e-government. Ndenje (2010) underscore the need for records managers to be equipped with enough education so as to work efficiently, effectiveness and integrity. Other scholars support the idea of improving education to records managers are Lyaruu (2005), Mazikana (1996), Ngulube (2000), and Manyambula (2009).

Introduction of a Code of Ethics for Records Managers: The data already presented and analysed shows that all the records managers and many information and/or registry users recommended that there was a need to introduce a code of ethics for records managers. In other words, there was consensus between the information providers and the information users on the importance of having a professional code of ethics in place for the records managers rather than the general code of ethics applicable to all civil servants. As a way of reinforcing this value, all the heads of registry at different times during data collection enquired from the researcher about the

procedures regarding introducing a code of ethics for records managers which could help them manage records professionally. It is in this regard that they hinted at requesting the Department of Records and Archives Administration, which falls under the President's Office in charge of Public Service and Management to intervene in the matter and introduce a specific code of ethics for records managers. This orientation stems from their realisation and readiness to embrace ethical practice in records management.

Similarly, all the human resource officers in the ministries surveyed reported that there was a need to introduce a code of ethics for records managers to make sure records were managed properly. These informants likened information to other resources such as finances and assets that organisations cherish. In other words, there was added value to improving records management in the ministries and ensuring that records managers operate ethically. The code of ethics would come in handy in terms of defining what is unethical and what is allowable in records management. In this regard, Lawton *et al.*, (2013) offer useful insights; they do not only assert that the code of ethics recognises new categories of inappropriate, unethical and illegal behaviour but also raise three key questions that all codes of ethics need to address: What type of offence is it? What sanctions should be imposed? Who is to impose those sanctions? These are the fundamental questions which the majority of offices in government ministries in Tanzania fail to address, when it comes to record managers. In fact, they need to be appended to the code of ethics for it to be functional enough to deliver the desired outcome.

Formulation of Information Policy: Generally, records management is a branch of the information profession, thus the formulation of any viable information policy in Tanzania should cover the specific needs of these professionals as it would help records managers manage records properly, ethically and effectively. In this regard, the majority of the records managers and about half of the information and/or registry users noted the need to have an information policy in place. In fact, the establishment of the code of ethics can be easily done if the information policy in place states categorically that information professional in library and records management introduce a code of ethics to guide their professionalism. This mandatory requirement would compel professionals in the records management sub-sector of the information industry to introduce such a code of ethics.

Training on Ethics for All Records Managers: On this aspect, all the records managers involved in this study and few of the information and/or registry users warmed up to the idea of training on ethics provided to all records managers. It was noted that those who are at work places should be given short courses on ethics in this field. The implication is that those at work can benefit from short-term courses whether they eventually embark on long-term training or not. On the other hand, the colleges and universities training records managers at the local level should make training in ethics a core part to ensure pre-service trainees were well endowed in this area.

Introduction of Ethics Courses at Colleges: Similarly, the introduction of ethics courses in all curricular in all institutions can be a basis for enhancing professionalized environment that respects ethical practices. The majority of the records managers and a significant number of the information and/or registry users indicated the need to have ethics courses at the colleges with records management programmes. Human resources officers also suggested that there was a need for all colleges offering records management courses to emphasise ethics in their programmes. Doing so would ensure their programmes in records management helps to churn out professionals at home with providing ethics-based professional services in records management.

Establishment of Ethics Committee: Many of the records managers and few of the information and/or registry users voiced for the establishment of an Ethics Committee for records management at each ministry. The goal was to ensure records managers established a team to oversee issues of ethics at work places to monitor unethical conduct properly in records management instead of

being done by outsiders not well-versed in records management. This idea would also make records managers realise that those who knew what they were supposed to do professionally and ethically were keenly watching their performance and professional conduct. Such a body could further promote professionalism and ethical practices amongst records managers in public offices.

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Julius Tunsaje Tweve

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