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# TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING A RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN ZIMBABWE

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of a proposed records management policy at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). Driven by the need for compliance with a records management policy in order to achieve efficient and effective records management for accountability, transparency and good governance in all business operations at NUST, the study sought to establish why NUST has not yet implemented a proposed records management policy 25 years after the university was established. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches data were collected using interviews, document analysis and questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to select 13 respondents for the questionnaire and seven participants for the interviews. The findings indicate that implementation of the proposed records management policy is dependent on the initiation of the University Registrar and recruitment of a university archivist and records manager who will spearhead the policy implementation. The study, therefore, recommends that the Registrar, through the NUST human resource section, should initiate the implementation process by recruiting and appointing the University Archivist, and the establishment of a University Records Centre. The study also recommends the publicizing of the proposed records management policy on the NUST website and providing each department with a copy so they comply and adhere to the policy for effective and efficient management of university records; establishment of a university records management committee that will facilitate and present records management plans and budgets to the top university management; promote awareness through extensive training of all staff handling records at NUST by holding records management workshops and short courses.*

**Keywords:** NUST, records management policy, University Archivist/Records Manager, Registrar

## Introduction and background to the study

Organizations like universities generate and receive records in all formats on a daily basis which have to be managed throughout their lifecycle as they document evidence of transactions and activities transpiring at universities. Efficient and effective management of these records can be achieved through adherence to a university records management policy. The need for proper administration of these records cannot be overemphasised. “In the context of a public university, the importance of good records management includes: facilitating the achievement the university’s mandate; enhancing efficiency of the university; maintaining a reliable institutional memory; promoting trust; responding to an audit culture; enhancing university competitiveness; supporting the university’s fiduciary duty; demonstrating transparency and accountability; and fighting corruption” (Phiri 2015: ii)

A records management policy is a vital component of any records management programme. It provides the framework within which such a programme operates and affirms an organization’s commitment to ensure that authentic, accurate, reliable, and usable records are created, captured, and managed to a standard of best practice and to meet the organization’s business and legislative requirements (ISO 15489, 2001). The NUST records management policy will be an effective means of communicating to NUST staff their recordkeeping responsibilities and is itself a record of an organization’s attempt to meet requirements for accountability and good governance.

The records management policy does not exist in a vacuum but is part of the organization’s overall policy framework. It demonstrates to employees and stakeholders that managing records is important to the organization, provides a statement of intentions that underpins a records management programme, serves as a mandate for the activities of the records manager as well as provides a framework for supporting documents such as procedures, business rules, disposal schedules just to mention but a few (National Archives Guide 2010).

The records management policy guides records management so as to enhance information accessibility, improve business thereby meeting accountability obligations while ensuring the protection of rights and interests of the organization, staff, clients and the community (State Records Authority of New South Wales 2009). In addition, good records management based on a records management policy allows a university to satisfy the needs of corporate accountability, statutory obligations and audit requirements (University of London 2002).

Analysis of the University of Queensland, University of Edinburgh, University of Melbourne, University of South Africa (UNISA), University of London, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), University of Nairobi as well as the proposed records management policies of Chuka University in Kenya and NUST reveals that the policies include similar elements although some may include extra or more elements. These elements include the purpose and objectives of the policy, policy statement, definition of terms, scope, legal frameworks on which the policies are based including related policies and legislation, responsibilities, records management procedural guidelines for creation, use, filing, retrieval, access, preservation, retention, disposal, security and media or file formats of the records being managed. Other elements in the policies include: training, policy monitoring and review, version history, references and approval. The policies are crafted in a standardized and systematic manner.

## **National University of Science and Technology**

It has been 25 years since the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) has been in existence. NUST, located, in the City of Bulawayo, was established by an act of parliament, the National University of Science and Technology Act of 1990. It opened its doors to 270 pioneer students in April 1991. The total numbers of people involved on a full-time basis with what was going on at NUST were 270 Students, 28 Academic staff, 41 Administrators and 11 support staff (NUST 2011). NUST has since grown immensely and now has seven Faculties namely: Commerce, Applied Sciences, Medicine, Communication and Information Science, Built Environment, Industrial Technology as well as Science and Technology Education. The institution has 23 administrative departments and 43 academic departments with many yet to be introduced. In 2016 Academic staff grew to 432, Non Academic staff to 706 and students enrolled totalled 9007.

Records pertaining to the institution, its staff members and students as well as other parties contractually bound by NUST have been generated since the University's inception. Moyo (2013) is of the view that any archival and record keeping forms chronicle that history and have accurately written the NUST institutional memory in indelible ink and stored it cast in stone. These records have administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, informational as well as historical value hence must be preserved for posterity as archival records. Preservation or retention of these records cannot be successfully undertaken without a document such as a Records Management policy guiding all actions taken on these records.

NUST is mandated by the NUST Act (1990) in section 4 subsection 2 to hold examinations and to confer degrees, including honorary degrees, diplomas, certificates and other awards, upon persons who have followed courses of study approved by the Senate and additionally, or alternatively, have satisfied such other requirements as may be determined by the Senate. The university is also mandated to promote research with emphasis on scientific, technological, industrial and developmental projects, with particular reference to the developmental needs of Zimbabwe. All these activities directly and indirectly generate essential records of enduring value in need of competent recordkeeping guided by a sound records management policy which is the key to attainment of the NUST vision and mission. Daum's (2007) stance is that because all employees create, maintain, and use electronic and paper-based records, the policy does apply to each employee. The university's mission is to be a world-class centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development and its mission is to contribute positively towards the advancement of humanity through the provision of knowledge based solutions to scientific, technological, economic and social challenges (NUST 2011).

As parastatal established under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, NUST generates public records. These records will in the future find their way to the national archives as mandated. Therefore, there is a need for an institutional records management policy to work alongside the National Archives of Zimbabwe Act (1986) in fostering effective records management. Such frameworks will enable quick, accurate and reliable access to records, ensuring the timely destruction of redundant information and the identification and protection of vital and historically significant records (University of Edinburg 2015). It will also enable NUST not only to function on a day to day basis, but to also meet regulatory and legal requirements, reduce operating costs, minimize litigation risks and prevent possible losses in brand equity associated with non-compliance (University of Edinburg 2015).

Records are any piece of recorded information that is produced, received or kept by the university as part of its business processes and which provides evidence of a specific activity (The University of Manchester 2010). Guidance to managing records can be done through the application of records management policy which is implemented as a procedure or protocol meant to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It is mandatory and establishes a strategic direction (Mokhtar and Yusof 2009) for instance in terms of records management at NUST to achieve informed and timely decision-making. Therefore, a records management policy like other policies is established to provide a direct link and consistency between the university's vision and its day-to-day operations. The records management policy provides the framework within which an organization conducts records management practices and further promotes transparency and accountability. University internal management processes are also improved by the greater internal availability of information that will accrue by the recognition of records management as a designated corporate function (University of Edinburg 2015).

Other purposes served by the records management policy are to allow records managers and archivists amongst other employees to clearly understand their roles and team responsibilities within predefined limits thus saving time and resources. The records management policy also enables everyone dealing with records in a university setup to understand records management without using a trial and error approach as key points will be visible in the policy (Welling 2016). The records management policy is not supposed to be an idle documented framework but has to be implemented and this implementation, according to O'Toole (2000) is what develops between an intention of an organization to do something and its ultimate impact following action. Implementation is said to commence once goals and objectives have been established by policy decisions and funds committed (Van horn and Van meter 1974). Policy implementation therefore involves organizational systems and processes as well as actions of members of the organization. The study was driven by the need for compliance with an operational records management policy in order to achieve efficient and effective records management in order to realize accountability, transparency and good governance in all business operations at NUST.

Egwunyenga (2009) examined the associated problems of record keeping among universities in the South West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria and concluded that lack of record keeping policy was among the assorted records problems. At NUST the records management problems identified are largely attributed to the delays in the implementation of the proposed records management policy let alone its existence. In 1997 an ad-hoc committee was set up in the university to discuss the possibility of a university records management policy that was to be incorporated into the NUST Act owing to lack of standardised filing systems, poor indexing of records and accumulation of too many ephemeral records amongst other problems. To date those records management problems have still not been addressed. The problem also manifests itself in an economic and political angle as there may be factors hindering the parties that drafted and those with the authority to implement the proposed records management policies from coming together and taking a stand point on what action to take. In a study conducted by Akor and Udensi (2014) at Federal University of Technology, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai in Nigeria it was concluded that records management is not receiving the attention it deserves in these universities.

## Statement of the problem

The proposed records management policy of NUST crafted in 2014 including an earlier proposal in 1997 has not been implemented to date. NUST has not had a records management policy since its establishment, when the generation of records documenting activities and transactions by both academic and non-academic departments at NUST began. The absence of a records management policy therefore results in poor records management (Egwunyenga 2009) which leads to difficulties in accounting for any decisions taken in the university. Records therefore are a vital asset in ensuring that the institution is governed effectively and efficiently hence the need for frameworks such as records management policies to guide their management. This study sought to establish why NUST has not yet implemented a proposed records management policy 25 years after its establishment. The study specifically sought to provide answers to the following three questions:

- a) Does the senior management at NUST appreciate the value of records management?
- b) Who is responsible for implementing the proposed records management policy?
- c) Why has the NUST records management policy not been implemented to date?

## Methodology

Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, data were collected through interviews, observation and document analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select 18 questionnaire respondents and seven interview participants. The questionnaire respondents comprised of six Senior Assistant Registrars and 12 heads of Sections under the Registrar's and Bursar's departments. Purposive sampling was used to select questionnaire respondents on the basis of them being heads of departments whose responsibility is to interpret the requirements of the proposed records management policy to their subordinates for records management practices to be conducted within a set framework. They represented the richest and widest possible range of information (Saunders et al 2012) on records management in their departments. The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher uses their skills and capabilities to find appropriate individuals to contribute to the achievement of research objectives (Patton 2015) though it may result in a very high level of subjectivity and bias by the researcher (Creswell 2013).

The seven interview participants consisted of the Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC), Registrar, Bursar, Dean of the Faculty of Communication and information Science (FCIS), Chairperson of the Department of Records and Archives Management, Deputy Registrar (Academic) as well as the Senior Assistant Registrar (Human Resource Academic). These informants were purposively chosen because of their perceived role in implementing university policies. All the interview participants' designations played an essential role in gathering valuable insights in relation to the implementation of the proposed records management policy. As part of literature review copies of record management policies from Chuka University, North West University, University of South Africa, University of Witswatersrand and the NUST proposed records management policies were studied.

## Discussion and findings

### *Respondent profile*

Respondents were asked to identify departments/sections under which they operated from, job positions held, responsibilities and records that they generate and receive on a daily basis. The results

presented in Table 1, are unswerving from Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu's (2007), Chris' (2006), Kemoni and Wamukoya's (2000), Osakwe's (2009), Rebore's (2005), Coetzer's (2012) and Popoola's (2003) results of records maintained by universities and other higher learning institutions in Africa.

**Table I:** Respondents' departments, positions, responsibilities and records generated/ received

| Department/ Section            | Position/ Job                             | Responsibilities   | Records Generated/Received   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Human Resource                 | Senior Assistant Registrar (Non-academic) | Recruitment, employment relations, reward management and benefits administration, servicing committees   | Personnel files<br>Minutes<br>Reports  |
| Human Resource                 | Senior Assistant Registrar (Academic)     | Recruitment and selection, industrial relations, servicing of committees, general administration, employee welfare management  | Employee records, separation records, sick leave records, staff disciplinary records, injuries on duty records, termination and resignation records, recruitment contracts |
| Admissions and Student records | Senior Administrative Assistant           | Preparing final transcripts, capturing application forms, supervising secretaries and SRC elections, servicing Senate, committee on academic ceremony (COAC) and ICTS meetings | Completed application forms (rejected, accepted and withdrawn), transcripts and certificates of students (graduating and graduated) student data (personal academic files) |
| Examinations                   | Administrative Assistant                  | Generation of examination timetable, corresponding with external examiners, organizing transport during examinations, administrative duties                                    | Examination results, Correspondence with external examiners, Examination question papers, Budgets for the section, Correspondence in connection with the timetable         |
| Student Affairs                | Dean of Students                          | Facilitating students' wellness through provision of health care and counseling (spiritual, social, intellectual, occupational, personal and group), sport and recreation      | Inter and intra departmental Correspondence<br>Personnel records<br>Student activity records   |
| Central Services               | Senior Assistant Registrar                | Organizing teaching, exam, meeting and function venues, drafting of master teaching time table, mail services, catering services, reprographic services                        | Mail<br>Waybills<br>Staff records<br>Financial records   |
| Campus Security                | Security Officer                          | Safe guarding life and property, crime investigation and detection, controlling traffic, directing visitors to relevant offices  | Crime registers<br>Completed declaration forms<br>Dockets, traffic returns records, occurrence books, lost and found property books  |

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| Department/ Section                | Position/ Job        | Responsibilities   | Records Generated/Received  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Salaries and Benefits              | Accounting Assistant | Payroll administration<br>Running the payroll  | Payroll<br>Hardcopy records from Human Resource and any other department  |
| Student Accounts                   | Accounting Assistant | Issuing of invoices<br>Maintenance of accurate student records<br>Debt collecting  | Student fees/ financial statements<br>Generated invoices<br>Student admission and deferment letters (received), journals of account reversals |
| Payments                           | Data Capturer        | Capturing cash deposits, invoices, quotations, journals and purchase vouchers  | Deposit slips, Receipts, Invoices, Purchase vouchers  |
| Purchasing                         | Buyer                | Purchasing university equipment, stores receipt, issues and stores keeping, generating journal vouchers, stock taking and balancing Order processing   | Payment vouchers, Invoices, Journals, Purchase orders, Quotations, Receipts, Tender records   |
| Budgetary                          | Accountant           | Budgetary control and management<br>Accounting   | Financial reports<br>Results Based Management records   |
| Risk and Asset Management          | Accounting Assistant | Compiling and maintaining the asset register, Calculating monthly insurance contributions, recording assets, investment management, assessing valuations   | Goods received notes<br>Payment vouchers<br>Invoices  |
| Registrar's Office                 | Personal Assistant   | Preparing for Council and Executive committee of Council meetings, managing the Registrar's office (appointments, securing all documents in the Registrar's office)  | Committee meeting files, Policies and Regulations, Copies of appointment letters, General correspondence, Completed payment vouchers          |
| Records and Archives Management    | Senior Secretary     | Filing, servicing students and staff<br>Attending to incoming and outgoing calls and mail  | Operational records<br>Electronic records<br>Operational records  |
| Deputy Registrar Academic's office | Secretary            | Typing minutes and preparing agendas for the academic board and senate meeting, receiving correspondence, receiving and screening visitors for the Deputy Registrar, attending to telephone, email and enquiries on any office related matters | Minutes<br>General correspondence   |



| Department/ Section | Position/ Job        | Responsibilities | Records Generated/Received                                    |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|---|
| Bursar's            | Accounting Assistant | Debtor's control | Cash advance acquittals, Journals, Completed payment vouchers |

Source: Field Data

The first objective was to establish whether senior management (deans of faculties, vice chancellor, pro vice chancellor, bursar, librarian and registrar) appreciates the importance of records management in the university (NUST). Table 2 presents a summary of the interview findings.

**Table 2:** Senior management appreciation of records management

| Interviewee         | Response   |
|---------------------|--|
| Acting PVC          | "Yes, we do, no doubt there is the department of Records and Archives which is a blessing to the university. The question is, are all offices which should be making use of the department of Records and Archives using it?"  |
| Registrar           | "Yes, very much because records produced on a daily basis are very important for any management system and as a university with the department of Records and Archives Management, we should perform better than any other organization in terms of records management."   |
| Bursar              | "Yes, I appreciate it though as much as you do, I need access to information for decision making because it is critical to me."  |
| Chairperson (RAM)   | "Yes and No. Yes in the sense that management appreciates records management because council meetings deal with recorded information as reference points for strategic planning. No because there is no appreciation of records management as a profession, they take it as an activity that can be done by anyone which is why they are not employing qualified personnel." |
| Deputy Registrar    | "Only started appreciating records management after the National Archives personnel told us we are not keeping NUST records but state records."  |
| SAR – (HR-Academic) | "We do although we are not knowledgeable on records management"  |

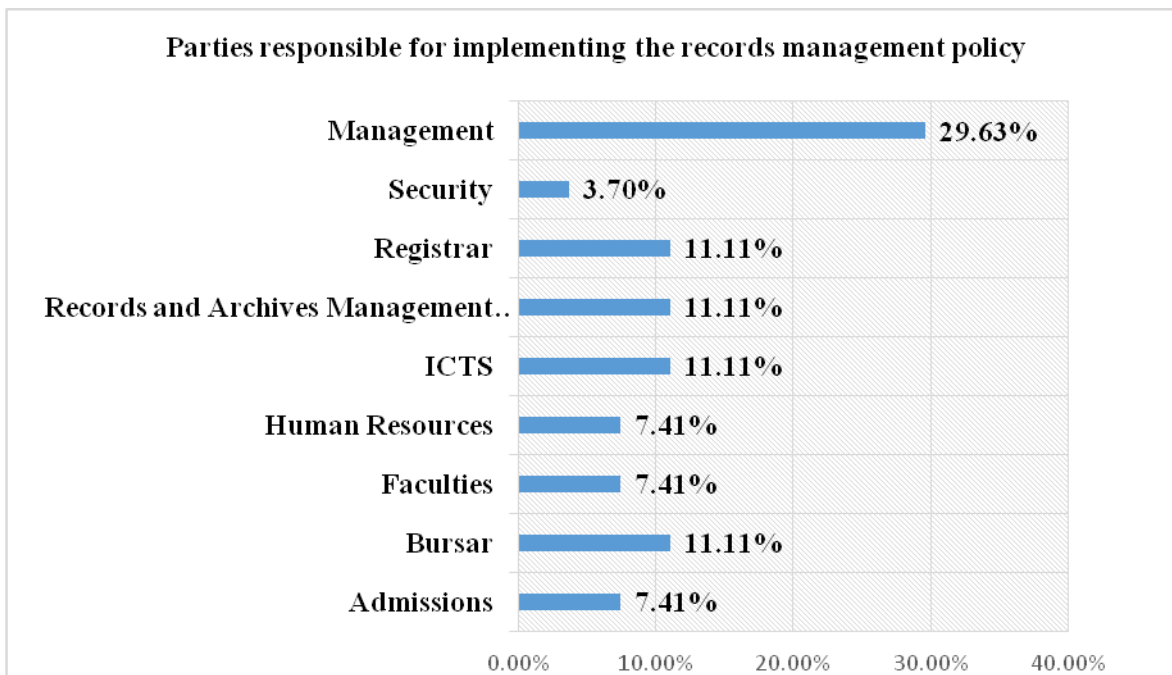
Source: Field Data

Results in Table 2 reveal that management at NUST appreciates records management which according to Smith (2007:206) will "keep records and information management firmly on the governance agenda". The findings in Table 2 are in contrast with Rebore's (2005) and Iwhiwhu's (2005) findings that senior management in Nigerian Universities have a negative attitude towards records management and they recommend that university management, administrators and personnel handling the records should develop a positive attitude towards records and implement records management programs in Nigerian universities.

#### *Implementation of the proposed Records Management Policy*

Objective number two sought to identify the parties responsible for the implementation of the proposed NUST records management policy. From the questionnaire the 18 respondents were free to include multiple answers. The majority, (8:29.63%) respondents considered the university management as responsible for the proposed records management policy implementation. This is consistent with Cerna's (2013) claim that at government organizations, senior management is responsible for policy implementation as distinct from making policy. However, three (11.11%) considered the Registrar, three (11.11%) Bursar, three (11.11%) ICTS, three (11.11%) the department of Records and Archives Management as the ones with the authority to implement the policy. Similarly, two (7.41%) suggested Human Resource, two (7.41%) chose Admissions and two (7.41%) chose Faculties as the parties in charge of the implementation of the proposed records

management policy. Only one (3.7%) respondent thought Campus Security was in control of the proposed records management policy implementation. Results are presented in Figure 1



**Figure 1:** Parties responsible for the implementation of the proposed records management policy

Interviewees were asked where the perceived power to implement university policies lies and each of them identified the Registrar. This seems consistent with southern Africa universities as Phiri (2015) established that at Witwatersrand and University of Johannesburg the overall responsibility for this policy was vested in the University Registrar. A copy of the North-West University (NWU) Records Management Policy that was written in 2013 revealed that the Institutional Registrar is the accountable executive manager for the records management policy. Table 3 summarised the findings of the current study.

**Table 3:** Where the perceived power to implement university policies lies

| Interviewee                 | Opinion   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Acting PVC                  | “The Registrar is the custodian of policy and regulations”                              |
| Bursar                      | “Overall, it is the Registrar under the oversight of the Vice Chancellor to follow up.” |
| Chairperson (RAM)           | “Registrar”   |
| Deputy Registrar (Academic) | “Registrar”   |
| SAR (HR Academic)           | “The Registrar is the final administrative officer”                                     |

Source: Field Data

Interview data reveals that individuals in senior management positions were responsible for the success in the implementation of the policy. Smith (2007) insists that support from senior management (those responsible for corporate strategy and policy) is vital if resources are to be forthcoming.

Interviewees were also asked if they could identify any other parties responsible for facilitating the implementation of the proposed records management policy. Findings in Table 4 emerged.

**Table 4:** Other parties responsible for facilitating the implementation of the proposed records management policy

| Interviewee                 | Other parties responsible for facilitating the implementation  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Acting PVC                  | “The Archivist is the vehicle for driving the policy”  |
| Registrar                   | “The final and actual implementation lies in the hands of the Archivist and Records Manager.”  |
| Bursar                      | “ICTS, Records and Archives and the Bursar”  |
| Chairperson (RAM)           | Vice Chancellor who is currently acting but it is tricky for someone in acting capacity to make decisions which have high implications hence he may be hesitant to implement the policy” |
| Deputy Registrar (Academic) | “The Registrar can delegate power to implement to the Records Manager, he can also appoint Senior Assistant Registrars who are an extension of the Registrar’s office.”                  |
| SAR (HR Academic)           | “The Records and Archives department”  |

Source: Field Data

These findings are in line with what is spelt out in the Chuka University proposed records management policy (2014) that the Records Manager shall oversee the implementation of the proposed records management policy. The Records Manager is to be assisted by the Records Management Implementation Committee that will coordinate the implementation and review the policy from time to time as required (Chuka University 2014).

*Factors stalling the implementation of the proposed records management policy*

The study sought to establish why the proposed records management policy at NUST had not been implemented to date. According to the Acting PVC, “*there was no need for the policy to be implemented when the university was between one and five years old because there was nothing to archive. After 10 years to date there has been an accumulation of volumes of materials worth archiving, rooms are bursting with information that does not need to be disposed of but archived because it is valuable and forms part and parcel of NUST hence the need for a policy now.*” This therefore implies that a records management policy is meant to guide the maintenance of current, semi-current, non-current as well as archival records. The Chairperson of RAM cited “*financial implications for instance in remunerating staff to man the Archives post,*” as well as “*antagonism in terms of the post the Archivist should hold in the university,*” as the reasons why the proposed records management has not been implemented to date. However, the Deputy Registrar (Academic) mentioned that “*some aspects of the policy have been implemented.*” He further pointed out that “*there are structures for operation and full implementation of the policy has not been done owing to lack of human resources in the form of a records manager and archivist who haven’t been employed yet are supposed to spearhead the implementation.*” Moreover, he said, “*there is no infrastructure in terms of space for the storage of records,*” which is why the policy has not been implemented. The Bursar cited “*the lack of a system,*” as the reason why the proposed records management policy has not been implemented to date. Views from the Registrar

were that *“there is no Archivist or Records manager in whose hands the actual implementation of the proposed records management policy lies because the government froze posts and the university does not have the capacity to remunerate either of them.”* He also cited *“stages through which policies go,”* as the reasons why the proposed management policy has not been implemented to date. He gave an example that at NUST *“policies are formulated and run through various university committees such as the Senate for consideration and recommendations then are taken to the lawyers which is a very long process.”* When further probed if there are any other policies in draft form and yet to be implemented the Registrar said *“yes, two of them, the Disability policy and Disaster preparedness policy,”* which he said *“had to be approved by the Senate then taken to the university lawyers for consideration so they do not expose the university to litigation.”*

From the questionnaire the 18 respondents were asked to identify the factors stalling the proposed records management policy implementation. Respondents were allowed to select as many factors from a list provided. The majority (8:25%) respondents thought the absence of financial resources delays the implementation of the proposed records management policy. Six (18.75%) respondents considered material resources, six (18.75%) human resource and six (18.75%) informational resources as the factors stalling the implementation of the proposed records management policy. Similarly, three (9.38%) believed lack of will by university management and three (9.38%) the absence of a positive organizational climate had a negative impact on the implementation on the proposed records management policy. The findings are as indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Factors stalling implementation of the proposed records management policy

| Factors delaying/hindering records policy implementation | Results    |
|--|------------|
| Material (infrastructure)                                | 6 (18.75%) |
| Human resource (Records Manager, Archivist)              | 6 (18.75%) |
| Lack of will by university management                    | 3 (9.38%)  |
| Financial  | 8 (25%)    |
| Positive organizational climate                          | 3 (9.38%)  |
| Informational resources                                  | 6 (18.75%) |

The results are unswerving from California State University’s (2002) findings that in some universities, if the records management policy precedes the Institutional Repository, Records Centre or Archive there can be a delay in policy implementation which could result in lost momentum.

From the interviews, the Acting PVC indicated that the factor delaying or hindering the implementation of the proposed records management policy was lack of funds because the Records Manager and Archivist to implement the proposed records management policy can only be employed when funds are now available since the university operates on salary grants from the government. The Registrar mentioned that *“there is no Archivist, Records manager and infrastructure.”* Similarly, the Deputy Registrar (Academic) indicated the *“absence of a records manager,”* while the Bursar pointed out that the *“control function of management is missing,”* as the factors stalling the implementation. The Chairperson of RAM in solidarity with the Acting PVC cited *“cost implications”* and he went on to add *“lack of senior management appreciation,”* as the factors delaying the implementation of the proposed records management policy. However, the SAR (HR Academic) revealed *“general lack of awareness”* as the factors hindering the implementation of the proposed records management policy.

To probe the investigation further, interviewees were asked whether NUST has the capacity to effect implementation of the proposed records management policy. The Acting PVC pointed out that *“the*

*Bursary should budget for policy implementation and the employment of two people (the Archivist and Records Manager) because only when the funds are available the policy can be implemented.*” Echoing the same sentiment was the Deputy Registrar who declared *“the university has no capacity to effect implementation of the policy owing to the absence of qualified personnel and space.”* In response to the Acting PVC’s view, the Bursar argued that *“NUST has the capacity to implement the policy because financially it is not costly to implement policy and apart from that there is human capital with the knowledge on records management for instance the entire department of Records and Archives Management.”* When questioned whether he has at any point budgeted for the implementation of the proposed records management policy, the Bursar remarked that:

*the university uses a results based management system (RBM) which begins at unit or departmental level whereby departments are supposed to draw up proposals, summarize and present them to the Bursar who collects them and presents their requirement summaries to the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee.*

He added that since assumption of the post of Bursar in 2010 he does not recall receipt of any recommendations or requirements for the implementation of the proposed records management policy.”

The Bursar referred the researchers to the now Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Information Science who was Chairperson of the department of Records and Archives Management when the proposed records management policy was formulated. When questioned if the department of RAM submitted any proposals to the Bursar regarding policy implementation, the Dean declared: *“I only formulated the proposed records management policy as per instruction from the Senate but I cannot comment further, the Registrar can furnish you with all the information about the policy.”* The dean’s comments are consistent with Phiri’s (2015) findings that Witwatersrand and University of Johannesburg records management policies were approved by top executive management teams.

The Registrar reiterated that *“the proposed records management policy was approved by Senate in 2014,”* it started in 1997 when a committee was set up to make recommendations on where records had to be kept and what had to be kept.” He added that:

*the committee dissolved upon formulation of the department of Records and Archives Management which provided recommendations on how long particular records should be kept, how they should be disposed, what should be kept and where they should be kept which all formed the basis of the proposed records management policy.”* He cleared the air by asserting that *“the implementation of the policy lies in the hands of the Archivist who has not been recruited owing to the frozen posts by government hence the implementation of the proposed policy is not definite.*

The Registrar pointed out that *“waiting for the Archivist to be appointed means the policy will take long to be implemented.”*

When respondents were asked if they could add any other comments regarding the implementation of the proposed records management policy, the recurring comment was that there is need for fostering awareness about the proposed records management policy and its impact on records management. Others commented that there is a dire need for the policy to be implemented as well as a documented records management manual. The majority of respondents remarked that it’s high time NUST adopted and implemented the proposed records management policy for applicability to the whole university. Similarly they expressed an urgent need for the recruitment of a Records Manager and University Archivist with expertise in records management. Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) opine that organizational members can commit to implementing an organizational change because they value the change and want to, because they have little choice and they have to or because they feel obliged and they ought to. Commitment based on 'want to' motives reflects the

highest level of commitment to implement organizational change. Implementing complex organizational changes therefore involves collective action by many people, each of whom contributes something to the implementation effort. Since implementation is often a team sport, problems such as stifled progress, stalled implementation or non-implementation arise when some feel committed to implementation but others do not hence the application of this theory to understand the records management policy implementation at NUST.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The article is based on the study that aimed at investigating the implementation of a records management policy at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). It sought to address the following research questions: does the senior management at NUST appreciate the value of records management? Who is responsible for implementing the proposed records management policy? Why has the NUST records management policy not been implemented to date? Results indicate that senior management appreciates the value of records management for the attainment of accountability, transparency and good governance at NUST because they make use of records as reference points in decision making for instance in council meetings. The fact that there is the department of Records and Archives Management which senior management consults whenever they encounter records management issues is a clear sign there is appreciation for records management and the values in records. The other finding was that senior management represented by the Registrar is responsible for the implementation of the policy. The researchers noted that the proposed records management policy can be successfully implemented if staff at NUST is united to achieve the common goal of implementing the proposed records management policy. The Registrar is to work together with the Bursar who will release funds for the implementation of the proposed records management policy as well as the department of Records and Archives Management that is supposed to promote awareness in relation to records management and the proposed records management policy. The final and actual implementation of the records management policy has been delegated to the University Archivist and Records Manager who are supposed to spearhead it because they have the expertise and are professionals in the areas of records management. However, the recruitment of a University Archivist and Records Manager has not been done because the government of Zimbabwe has stopped recruitment of new staff owing to lack of funds. This further delays the implementation because NUST operates on salary grants from the government and as such does not have the capacity to appoint and remunerate the University Archivist and Records Manager unless there are surplus funds from the university's income. This implied therefore that successful implementation of the proposed records management policy requires the coming together of different parties who each have a distinct role to play in its implementation.

In as much as results indicate that senior management at NUST appreciates the value of records and records management in their management system for decision making, the study recommends that the University Archivist assume a principal office at NUST. This is beneficial in the sense that it will foster appreciation of Records and Archives management as a profession just as librarianship is. The university archivist will also ensure all records management plans and budgets are presented at the top as priorities for consideration. In addition, the study recommends the creation of a Records Management Committee at NUST to facilitate all decisions and activities on records management. According to Chuka University (2014), the University Records Management Committee also coordinates the University Records Management Program and is charged with promulgating university-wide guidelines and procedures for implementation of the program, including development and maintenance of university-wide retention schedules. The University of California

(2015) endorses that the Records Management Committee will also provide: guidance on topics including but not limited to standards, technical requirements, and regulatory issues; periodic reports and advice to senior university management on records matters.

Owing to the absence of a University Archivist and Records Manager with expertise in records management and to whom the authority to implement the proposed records management policy has been delegated by the Registrar, the study makes two key recommendations. Firstly, the Registrar should exercise his control function of management to its full capacity. He should do this by initiating the publicizing the proposed records management policy on the NUST website for university wide adoption and usage since it has been approved by the Senate and has gone through the University lawyers. Upon appointment, the Records Manager and University Archivist will then assume control as has been delegated to ensure the proposed record management policy is implemented. Secondly, the study proposes adoption of a records procedures manual in the meantime to guide records practices before the proposed records management policy is implemented. NUST as an institution training Records Managers and Archivists should perform better than other organizations in management of records and should not be allowed to operate without a records management policy.

Findings reveal that lack of financial resources is the greatest barrier to the implementation of the proposed records management policy. Without funds, the infrastructure for instance the University Archive or Records Centre cannot be established, Records manager and University Archivist cannot be appointed and remunerated hence the proposed records management policy cannot be implemented. The study therefore recommends inviting direct foreign investment by countries such as the United States of America so that the buildings at NUST where the proposed University Archives or Records Centre is said to be encompassed are constructed and completed. This will address records storage space inadequacies. Moreover, the study proposes that NUST appoint a Records Manager and Archivist on short term contractual basis that it has the capacity to remunerate from its own coffers with no need of salary grants from the government. This can be done by engaging post graduate Records and Archives Management interns to who they will just give incentives and allowances which is pretty affordable instead of the usual salary accompanied by pensions and retirement benefits.

The study has investigated why the proposed NUST records management policy has not been implemented to date. Future studies should follow up on compliance with the proposed records management policy once implemented in order to achieve sound management of records at NUST.

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