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Records management in an ISO certified environment: a case study of Botho University in Botswana

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Abstract

Records are information assets of great value to organisations as they document decisions and activities of business. Organisations, therefore, have a duty to make sure that they put in place a systematic administrative programme for managing these records. The information contained in records has been seen as a key business resource for universities and their competitiveness; therefore, it is vital that university records should be managed. This study evaluated records management at Botho University, an ISO-certified university. The main objective of the study was to find out which records management practices were in place at Botho University as an ISO 9001-2008 certified institution. The population of the study comprised 23 respondents including deans, heads or managers of departments and departmental representatives who interact with records on a daily basis. The study was guided by ISO 9001-2008, section 4.2.4. Data for the study were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and personal observations. The key findings of the study were that Botho University is not fully compliant with all the provisions of ISO 9001-2008 under which it was certified. The findings further showed that the university had an inadequate records management policy that did not cover all records issues, lacked adequate facilities for the storage and protection of records, lacked a records retention and disposition schedule and lacked dedicated staff to manage records. The findings also revealed that Botho University operated a hybrid system where some records were created electronically while some were physical copies. Based on these findings, the study recommends that in order for Botho University to be fully compliant with the provisions of ISO 9001-2008, it must revise its records management policy to enhance it to make it adequate, improve its records storage facilities and develop a records retention and disposition schedule.

Keywords: records, records management, ISO 9001-2008, records policy, Botho University

Introduction

Various organisations have been certified by the ISO 9000 family of quality standards in order to provide quality services and good customer satisfaction (International Organization for Standardization (IOS), 2018). Universities are not an exception to this and are among organisations that have taken the quality route (certification) in order to ascertain quality records management. ISO has different standards that have clauses that relate to records management. Stephens (1996) indicates that section 4.16 of ISO 9001 requires organisations

to "establish and maintain procedures for identification, collection, indexing, filing, storage, maintenance and disposition of quality records", while section 17.1 of ISO 9004 requires of organisations the establishment and maintenance of a means for identification, collection, indexing, filing, storage, maintenance, retrieval, and disposition of quality documentation records. Section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 requires organisations to "establish a documented procedure to define the controls needed for the identification, storage, protection, retrieval, retention, and disposition of records."

Hammar (2015) indicates that ISO 9001-2015 requires organisations to provide adequate protection, applicable distribution, access, retrieval, use, storage, preservation, control of changes, retention, and disposition for all documented information. On the other hand, IOS (2018) explains that ISO 15489 is the first global standard for records management that was introduced in 2001. The standard establishes the core concepts and principles for the creation, capturing and management of records. ISO 15489 applies to records in all types of businesses and technological environments, regardless of form or structure.

Records management in universities

According to Musembe (2016), every year, there is a steady increase in the volumes of paper and electronic records in academic institutions. She explains that this increase is experienced in high percentages of living institutions that are uncertain about how these records could be best managed. It is therefore vital that records should be managed effectively as the information contained in them is seen as a key business resource for universities, which aids in the competitiveness of the institution. Khumalo and Chigariro (2017) assert that universities generate immense quantities of records from various faculties, which require meticulous records management systems to carefully manage them.

Records management occupies a strategic position in the management of universities. Abdhulrahman (2015) argues that record keeping is central to the administration of universities because it documents the planning and implementation of an appropriate course of service and allows proper monitoring of work. Major and Omenu (2016) posit that the essence of records management in higher educational institutions is to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and proper economy of records generated, created, or received by the school administration.

Most university records are managed through faculties and departments. Chaeles Sturt University, Office of Governance and Corporate Affairs (2016) explains that the Human Resources Department retains and manages all staff records while Student Administration is responsible for all records relating to students. According to Abdhulrahman (2015:48), records created and maintained in universities include: correspondence, accounting documents, personnel files, pay roll, minutes of meetings, students' registration, admissions and examination records, inventory of facilities, budgetary information, list of courses offered, time tables for lectures, speeches, legal documents, deeds, financial records, letters of appointments, confirmations, admissions, sick leave, queries and so forth. Abdhulrahman (2015) came to the conclusion that accurate and timely availability and use of any of the above records reduce common problems of management in universities. A study by Major and Omenu (2016) revealed that inadequate or poor records management programmes in higher educational institutions result in an observable decrease in institutional efficiency and an increase in operating costs. Ngulube and Chinyemba (2005) also state that institutions where paper work is poorly managed or non-existent struggle to retrieve their records and

information and suffer from a duplication of paper work they already have. These authors also add that proper records management can help universities to manage their information efficiently, fulfil their mandate, protect them from litigation, preserve their corporate memory and foster accountability and good governance. A clumsy and haphazard approach to records management will destroy the reputation of the university (Khumalo & Chigariro, 2017).

ISO 9001-2008 Quality Management Systems – Requirements

The 9001-2008 is called the Quality Management Systems – Requirements. It is a fourth edition of the quality management standard ISO 9001 (www.iso.org, 2018) and a revision of ISO 9001-2000. ISO 9001-2008 has also been revised and replaced by ISO 9001-2015. According to Vusa (2016:13), “ISO 9001:2008 standard comprises of a set of requirements that an organization needs to satisfy in order to get certified.” The standard consists of eight major parts or clauses. The first three clauses are general clauses that cover the scope of the organisation such as the organisation’s location, processes and products, the normative references and the terms and definitions as used by the standard. The remaining clauses are technical clauses that include the quality management system, the management responsibility, management of resources, product realisation, measurement analysis and continual improvement.

Section 4.16 of ISO 9001-2008 standard, specifically includes the following records management components: records creation, records retention development, vital records security, filing system management, records centre management, development of organising schemes, indexing and knowledge of how and when to dispose of quality records. These are all critical to the management of records in a quality setup. Section 4.2.4 of the revised version ISO 9001-2008 records control explains each of the principles of records management required by the standard.

- (a) **Identification** – What minimum information must be added to every record for identification? Identification codes for each document (control number)
- (b) **Storage** – How hard copy and electronic records are stored to protect them.
- (c) **Protection** – What methods must be used to preserve records from loss or deterioration? For hard copy records, you may want to include where files are kept, in what types of storage containers and any environmental concerns (moisture, temperature, etc.). For electronic records, be sure to include how the data are backed up regularly.
- (d) **Retrieval** – Describe how records are indexed or otherwise organised to facilitate easy access.
- (e) **Retention Time** – Specify minimum and/or maximum retention requirements for each type of record. Be sure to establish a schedule to review your records according to your requirements.
- (f) **Disposition** – Determine how you will dispose of records when scheduled. For confidential records, be sure you are explicit about how you intend to destroy the records.

This study sought to evaluate records management practices at Botho University, which is an ISO-certified institution. The section that follows provides the background information relating to Botho University where this study was undertaken.

Contextual setting: Botho University

Botho University was established in 1997 as a technical college operating under the name NIIT. The institution offered certificate and diploma courses that were computing related only. Over the years, the institution started offering courses in other fields until March 2013 when Botho College became a university. As a university, the institution now provides a diverse range of programmes through six faculties, namely the Faculty of Business and Accounting, Faculty of Computing, Faculty of Health and Education, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (Botho University, 2018). Botho University offers qualifications ranging from certificate to master's degree level with plans in place to offer doctoral programmes in the near future. The institution operates branches in Francistown and Maseru (Lesotho) with its main campus in Gaborone near the Game city shopping complex. Botho also plans to have its footprint in Namibia and Swaziland. In its Botswana campuses, the institution has over 6 000 students and almost 500 members of staff and growing.

Botho University's strategic focus and desire are to provide quality education at international standards. The institution has developed partnerships with well-known international institutions such as University of Venda in South Africa, Ohio University, Black Hills State University and Wayne State University in the USA, and Indian School of Mines and Manipal University in India. In order to remain relevant, become a player in the international market and retain international partnerships, Botho University completed an application to become ISO certified, and on 18 June 2013, it attained ISO certification under the ISO 9001-2008 standard (Daily News, 2013).

Statement of the problem

Section 4.2.4 of the ISO 9001-2008 demands that organisations should have documented procedures on the identification, storage, protection, retrieval, retention, and disposition of records. It is expected that when an organisation certifies under any international standard, the organisation would uphold the practices that are stipulated by that certification. Davoren (2018) states that in order for an organisation to maintain its ISO status, it must continuously monitor its activities and document its operations so that it can maintain proper records. The author further laments that ISO auditors periodically review the organisation's records for accuracy and to ensure that the organisation is eligible to maintain its ISO certification. Preliminary observations by the researchers indicated that Botho University lacked records retention and disposition schedules and records were rarely appraised to determine their disposition, which situation has resulted in large quantities of records being retained by the institution. This study, therefore, sought to find out which records management practices were in place at Botho University with the aim of recommending solutions for the enhancement of record keeping in line with section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 certification.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the records management practices at Botho University, as specified by ISO 9001-2008, section 4.2.4. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate the records keeping policies and procedures that guide records management at Botho University.

- Investigate the identification of records held at Botho University.
- Determine the records security and protection measures in place at Botho University.
- Establish how records are organised at Botho University for easy access and retrieval of records.
- determine records retention and disposition practices at Botho University.
- Make recommendations aimed at enhancing records management practices in line with ISO 9001-2008 records requirements.

Conceptual framework

This study adopted ISO 9001-2008 as a benchmark. Section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 on records control specifies the conditions necessary for effective records management in a quality setup (ISO certified environment). The section demands that organisations certified under ISO 9001-2008 should have documented procedures on the identification, storage, protection, retrieval, retention and disposition of records (Botswana Bureau of Standards, 2009). The section further indicates that records must remain legible, readily, identifiable, and retrievable. ISO 9001-2008 provides a holistic approach to records management and addresses the management practices at different stages. The study chose this standard as the framework as it addresses all the requirements for record control requirements stipulated by an ISO-certified environment. The framework has been used previously when evaluating the implementation of quality management systems and when evaluating service delivery in organisations that are certified under the standard.

Methodology

The population for this study comprised respondents drawn from Botho University's main campus in Gaborone. The University consists of a staff complement of 128 employees. Of the 128 employees, a total of 23 respondents were purposely chosen to make up the sample that was used to gather the data for the study. Purposive sampling was used for this study as the researchers needed respondents who were in a good position to give relevant and reliable data to help understand the phenomenon. The 23 respondents consisted of deans, heads or managers of departments and department representatives who interact with records on a daily bases. The data collection techniques that were used for this study included interviews, questionnaires, and personal observations. For this study, content analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews.

Presentation of findings

The following section is dedicated to the presentation of the study findings.

Availability of a policy or documents guiding records management

The first objective of the study sought to find out if Botho University had a records management policy governing the management of both paper and electronic records. The findings indicated varied responses, as recorded below. The interviews revealed contradictory responses as some of the respondents stated that there was a campus- wide policy, while others said there was no records management policy in place. One respondent said that:

the policy was covered in the Quality Management Policy BOBS ISO 9001: 2008

while another respondent argued that

Botho does not have a policy but however there is a document numbering guideline which helps the classification of documents.

Respondents from the IQAD office revealed that a records management policy was made available in the online portal. A respondent from MIS said that there was no policy but there was a guideline available on the institution's portal that was used for the development and referencing of organisational documents. Some respondents indicated that they were not sure while some used the words "do not know." Personal observations by the researchers indicated that there was a campus-wide records management policy. However, this policy was not adequate for managing records in the University as it did not address all areas and constructs set out by the ISO 9001-2008 standard. The policy only covered records retention and security of records and was silent on identification, disposal, access and retrieval of records. From interviews with the respondents, the researchers came to the conclusion that most of the officers were not aware of the availability of the records management policy.

The study also sought to find out when the policy was formulated, to which varied answers were obtained. One respondent said that the policy was formulated in 2016, while another said in 2007. Other respondents indicated they were not sure when the policy was formulated. The open-ended questionnaire revealed little for this question as many respondents left the question unanswered. From the few that answered the question, one said since ISO certification and another one said since the inception of Botho University.

It was revealed that the officers were not aware of the records management policy and, therefore, did not know when it was formulated. It was further observed that officers did not know where to access the policy when asked to produce it for the purposes of checking the date. These findings were consistent with the findings of Nanighe and Felix (2016) which revealed that higher institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, lacked well thought out and comprehensive policies and procedures for records management. This finding was similar to those of a study by Netshakhuma (2020) on the assessment of the appraisal of records: case of the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Venda where nine out of 24 (37.5) participants lacked awareness of the archives and records management policy.

Authority and responsibility for managing records

The study also sought to find out if the records management policy had clearly defined the roles of the various officers in managing records and other documentation. Hence, respondents were asked to state the roles and responsibilities of the records officers. The findings of the study indicated that even though there was no records management policy defining the roles, there were other "process maps" available through the quality policy that indicated the roles of officers when handling records. One respondent said it was "the responsibility of the IQAD officer to manage records", another indicated that officers were designated for filing while another respondents said "yes" to the availability of roles and responsibilities, but could not substantiate further for proof.

Personal observations by the researchers revealed that the policy was silent on the roles of the different officers handling records in the institution. It was also noted that even the process maps that were being mentioned as having stipulated the roles and responsibilities were process maps for many other activities and tasks in the workplace but they were not specific to records management activities. The student records guidelines that were relied on only stated that the records should be accessed by authorised personnel. The guidelines did not

indicate who the authorised personnel were or any other roles and responsibilities for any other officers or staff members.

Managing records in departments

The study was further interested in establishing if there was a specified officer responsible for the management and security of records in each department. The findings revealed that each office/department had its own way of managing records and did not rely on a set standard or common practice. Some respondents from HR and MIS departments indicated that they had a “designated clerk” for filing while respondents from other departments indicated that there was no specific officer responsible for managing records. On the other hand, some respondents were of the view that the management of records was the responsibility of the department managers and heads of departments (HODs).

Personal observations by the researchers revealed that only the MIS department had a designated records/filing clerk managing student records. However, the filing clerk had no training in records management and had been promoted from a cleaner position. All the other departments had no specified personnel responsible for the management of records. The responsibility of managing records was left to individual employees in the various departments. As for the electronic records, a system administrator was responsible for the management of all records in the database and only he had rights to all the files available on the database, while other users/officers had limited rights and access to all records based on their seniority and the nature of their work.

Identification of records

It is important for all records to be uniquely identified by format numbers. The identification of records helps with the efficient retrieval and filing of records; therefore, section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 requires that measures be put in place for the identification of organisational records. The standard requires that minimum information must be added to every record, regardless of type or format for identification purposes. Furthermore, the standard requires that there should be identification codes for each document or control number and that measures be put in place for the identification of organisational records.

The findings of the study revealed that Botho University uses different methods for identification. During the interviews, one respondent said that:

The University had in place a record control number placed at the bottom of each record created in the institution.

Another respondent said there were labels on file spines, document classification, file numbers and colour codes. A respondent from the IQAD department explained that there is a document numbering system that indicates whether the document is a form, a policy or something else. One respondent from the questionnaire indicated that they make sure to number every document. Personal observation conducted by the researchers indicated that there was a uniform record identification scheme/system for all departments. A record control number was located in the bottom corner of each document. The records also had a title, year and file numbers, which were distinguished using colour codes. It was also observed that student records held by the Management Information Systems Department were the most well-arranged and well-numbered records for easy identification. The department used the year of admission and student number to identify the records.

The above findings are in line with recommendations made by Jewell (2014) who recommended that quality identification of records should include the record type name/description, record type part number (when applicable), originator name, date and status of the item.

Types of records created

In order to determine the types of records created and maintained at Botho University, respondents were asked to state the format of records that were created and kept. The findings revealed that there were both physical/paper records and electronic records in all the departments. One respondent said that there were “*system-based records and paper records*”. Another respondent reported they kept hard copies and soft copies. An officer from the finance department stated that

records are kept in GP system, GLPI system and physical records in cabinets and shelves.

One respondent said the records are held on the university’s website.

Personal observations by the researchers confirmed that different departments created and retained both electronic and paper-based records. Observations also indicated that some departments were mostly dependent on electronic records over hard copy records while some used only hard copy records. The study established that current records created and maintained at the BU are stored in offices, cabinets and storage units that are lockable.

Section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 requires that measures be put in place for describing how records are indexed or otherwise organised to facilitate easy access and retrieval.

Organisation of records

The study also sought to find out how records were organised at Botho University to facilitate retrieval. In order to collect data for this aspect, respondents were asked to explain how records were organised for easy access and retrieval, to which varied answers were obtained. Some respondents said they used labels, customer/student names for files, arranged based on classification number. Another respondent stated that they organised their records according to departmental activities and functions, or year and programme. From the questionnaires, one respondent indicated that electronic records were organised by database index.

Personal observations by the researchers revealed that the different departments had their own unique way of arranging their records. Student records managed by the MIS department were well organised and arranged and could easily be accessed and retrieved. The files were neatly labelled and arranged chronologically according to student number and year. Other department files were filed with titles or names on the spines, but there was no real arrangement, and neither were they arranged according to any discernible order.

The findings also indicated that electronic records were arranged according to department in an institution-wide portal. Within the department files, a search bar was available at the top right of the portal where a record title could be typed for retrieval.

Retrieval period

Another aspect the study sought to determine was the retrieval time for records held within the institution when needed to inform business transactions and processes. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate on average how long it took to retrieve a record when required.

For electronic records, one respondent said that,

It depends on the availability of good bandwidth otherwise very fast.

Another respondent said,

Instant, as we are searching within the portal.

Most respondents stated that “less than 5 minutes” while some indicated that it was “a matter of a few minutes.” The most time given by a respondent was within 10 minutes.

For physical records, the response was different. One respondent said that depending on the type of record being requested, it could take a day to retrieve an old record. He explained that old records were stored in an offsite warehouse, away from the institution. Another respondent indicated that it took long due to the state of the records that have been taken to the offsite records store.

Records storage

Section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001-2008 requires measures be put in place for the storage of semi-current and non-current organisational records. Based on this, the study also sought to find out if the institution had any facilities for the storage of semi-current records and non-current records. Interviews carried out with members of the different departments indicated that many of the respondents were of the view that there were storage facilities available for both semi-current and non-current records. One respondent said that

They had storerooms where they kept records that are not accessed everyday.

Another respondent stated

We have an archives section and a section for current files.

Only a few indicated that they did not have facilities available for semi-current and non-current records. Those with this view said that

We have no space for storing non-current records.

Another said

We even lack the right cabinets for the storage of our current records.

Personal observations indicated that the institution lacked facilities for the storage of non-current records. The storage unit or storeroom referred to by those with the opinion that the institution had facilities was a warehouse where broken tables, chairs, old computers, lecture material, unused white boards, sports equipment and records/files were stored. The warehouse was located away from the institution and was dusty, never cleaned and items in it were not well arranged, but rather tangled and thrown all over the room, with broken furniture and other unserviceable items.

The findings further indicated that the BU used passwords to protect electronic records from unauthorised access. The researchers observed that most departments had user authentication credentials and assigned roles and rights based on responsibility. Participants also revealed that an anti-virus called Kaspersky was used on all electronic systems. This finding was similar to those of a study by Kalusopa and Mampe (2012) in which it was revealed that users at the Ministry of Health and the Botswana headquarters were provided with usernames and passwords to use for logging into the computer for e-records security.

Records protection

Maseh (2016) posits that records are particularly vulnerable to environmental conditions and as such it is important that the records are stored in regulated environments. Hence, this study sought to establish the environmental conditions where records were stored. ISO 9001-2008

requires that measures be put in place for the protection of organisational records. Hence, this study sought to find out which security and protection measures were put in place by Botho University to secure available records. The study findings indicated that the university records were held in offices that had no facilities or equipment for monitoring environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, and lighting. One respondent (Technical Department) stated that there were “*none at all*” when responding to the question. Another respondent said that,

There is no special security in place, but the office is always locked when officers are not in the office.

Interviews with the deans of faculties indicated that records were stored in lockable cabinets and storage units.

Personal observations by the researchers indicated that some departments had no security and protection measures in place, while others had put in place security measures that included lockable file cabinets, controlled access to HR records and CCTV outside the assessments filing room (Student Records). With regard to electronic records, the researchers observed that most departments had user authentication credentials and assigned roles and rights were given based on responsibility. An anti-virus program called Kaspersky was used on all electronic systems. Further observations indicated that the university records were held in offices where temperature and lighting monitoring and fire or flood protection were not in place to ensure complete security of the institutions records. This finding was similar to that of Rafoneke (2018) in which it was reported that the National University of Lesotho lacked air conditioners, humidifiers and dehumidifiers, resulting in temperature and humidity not being controlled.

The study also sought to find out how Botho University classified documents according to their degree of importance. Hence, respondents were asked to indicate if their departments had records classified and stored as top secret, secret or confidential. Interviews conducted with respondents revealed that most of the respondents were of the view that they had records and files stored as confidential, while some indicated that they did not. Those who were of the view that there were records stored as confidential could not substantiate the types of records that were classified as secret or confidential, how these records were managed in the university or where they were stored. One respondent said no to the question and further explained by saying,

We do not have any classification of such nature.

Observations by the researchers indicated that only two departments in the institution had records that were stored as confidential records. These were the HR department keeping personnel/employee files saved as confidential in a secure locked location and the MIS department keeping student files/records as confidential records in a locked filing room with locked filing cabinets. The rooms where files from both departments were kept could be accessed only through an access card available only to authorised personnel. Despite having indicated to the researchers that there were some confidential and secret files during the interviews, other departments failed to direct or show proof to the researchers that they indeed had confidential or secret records.

Retrieval of records

An effective records management programme is one that allows for easy access and retrieval of records. Records need to be retrieved in a timely manner in order to inform business decisions and to enable business activities to run effectively and efficiently. Kalusopa and

Ngulube (2012) posit that timely and accurate retrieval of organisational records depends largely on how well organised and classified the records are. ISO 9001-2008 requires that measures be put in place for describing how records are indexed or otherwise organised to facilitate easy access and retrieval.

The findings of the study revealed that different departments at Botho University arranged their records based on a classification number and according to year. Others arranged their records using file titles or names on the spines, while student records were arranged chronologically according to student number and year of admission. The naming of files and classification at BUs was also done according to function and activities in the deferent departments. This finding indicated that the BU had a classification system in place and the findings were similar to those of Otu (2016) who indicated that Koforidua Polytechnic had a classification system in place that used a coding system consisting of letters of the alphabet and numbers called an alphanumeric classification system.

Disposition of records

ISO 9001-2008 requires that measures be put in place for the disposal of organisational records. Hence, this study sought to find out what specific disposal procedures for records that no longer support the business of the organisation existed in the university. The study findings revealed that the BU lacked records retention and disposal schedules that stipulated methods of disposal and retention periods for all records. Retention schedules are key components in the management of records as they ensure that unnecessary records are not kept and costs incurred in this regard. Consequently, the absence of retention schedules may lead to losing valuable records and keeping those that have less value. The retention and disposition of some of the records at Botho University were highlighted in the process maps for the different departments but there was no single document that could be said to adhere to the retention and disposal schedule or policy. Furthermore, in cases where the process maps indicated the retention periods of different records, they were unfortunately silent on how the records are to be disposed of.

In order to understand how Botho University manages the records disposition process, respondents were asked to detail the actual process or procedure of disposing of records in their departments. The question solicited varied answers and responses. Some respondents stated that records disposal took place after five years while some stated that it took place after seven years from the date of creation. One respondent said records were disposed of every two years. Most respondents indicated that records were disposed of by shredding while one of the respondents said,

Records are taken to a dumping site and burnt.

One respondent said that,

Hard copy records are shredded after some years.

Some of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of any disposal methods while another said, “*There was none*”. As for electronic records, respondents (Blended Learning Department) indicated that all the records were deleted by the system administrator but they could not give the retention periods of the records.

Respondents were further asked to state who was responsible for the disposal of records. The study findings revealed that any officer could create a record but only the Deans of Faculties were responsible for the disposal of records. Some of the respondents from the interviews

indicated that the IQAD department was responsible for the disposal of records, while others said it was the responsibility of the managers. One respondent who worked mostly with electronic data indicated that their system had well-defined privileges for each document in the database, which allowed for an officer to create a document and save it or delete it permanently from the system.

Observations by the researchers revealed that every employee was responsible for the creation of records, but most officers were not certain of the officer responsible for the disposal of records. It was also noted that the records management policy at Botho University was silent on the disposal of records, as it had nothing written regarding disposal.

This finding was similar to that of Kalusopa (2016) whose study “Extent of the integration of information communication and technology (ICT) systems in the management of records in labour organisations in Botswana” noted that there were no clear rules and procedures that authorise retention and disposition of data held in their systems. These findings were also similar to those of Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) who reported the lack of adequate retention and disposition policies for managing records at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the above findings, the study concludes that records management practices at Botho University are not meeting all the requirements of section 4.2.4 of ISO 9001:2008. The University has a weak records management policy that is inadequate in covering all the salient areas of records management and those recommended by ISO 9001:2008. Different departments manage their records according to their own guidance as there is no documented procedure on the management of records. It was also established that the university lacks a records retention and disposition schedule and had no facilities or equipment for protecting records against environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, and lighting.

With regard to the challenges that the University was experiencing in seeking to remain complainant to ISO 9001-2008 requirement, the findings have shown that these include the lack of trained personnel in records management which brought about the lack of awareness for records policies and the consequent failure to enforce the available records management policy. BU also lacks a centralized Records Management Unit where records could be managed and controlled better. However, despite the challenges there are some lessons learnt. The study findings indicated that Botho University student records under the custody of M.I.S department were well arranged chronologically and stored in appropriate and secure movable cabinets. Access to the records was through an access card which was only accessible to a select few staff members. Access to electronic records was also through the use of passwords.

Based on the findings and the challenges presented above, the study made the following recommendations which, when implemented, will enable Botho University to be fully compliant with ISO 9001-2008, Records keeping requirements. This study recommended that in order to be fully compliant with ISO 9001-2008, should utilise ARMA International’s Information Governance Maturity Model to audit its records keeping practices from time to time.

(a) Legislation, policy and procedures

The study established that Botho University had a weak and inadequate records management policy. The study, therefore, recommends that Botho University should formulate and implement a records management policy that covers all the salient concerns of a records management programme. The policy should cover the purpose of the policy, the roles and responsibilities at different levels, records management procedures, record keeping systems and consequences of not abiding by the policy. By implementing a comprehensive records management policy, Botho University would be in a position to comply with the first principle of ARMA International's Information Governance Maturity Model. The principle suggests that an organisation should appoint a senior executive or person of comparable authority to oversee the records programme and delegate relevant members of staff. Through this principle, organisations are expected to adopt legislation, policies and procedures to guide personnel and make sure the programme can be audited. Some of these legislation and policies could include compliance with ISO 15489 records management standards and a retention and disposition schedule.

Locally, in its efforts to improve its records management practices, the University of Botswana recently formulated a records management policy covering the following areas: scope of the policy, responsibilities, records management committee, records creation and capture, organisation of records, storage and handling, access to records, retention and disposal of records, the university archives and key relevant documents.

Security and protection

The study revealed that Botho University lacked facilities for ensuring the safety, protection, and security of records. The university specifically lacked facilities or equipment for monitoring environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, and lighting. The study therefore recommends that the university should put measures in place that will guarantee the protection of records from loss or damage from adverse conditions. These measures include installing humidifiers to control humidity, air conditioners to control temperature, appropriate lighting to reduce ultraviolet light reaching records, CCTV and restricting access to records storage areas by unauthorised personnel. This would assist in the protection of the university's records and result in compliance with the fourth principle of ARMA International's Information Maturity Model which states that the records programme of an organisation should be constructed to ensure a reasonable level of protection for information and records that are private, confidential, privileged, secret, classified and confidential and essential for business continuity.

Retention and disposition

The study revealed that Botho University lacked a records retention and disposition schedule. It was established that the lack of a retention and disposition schedule meant that when records met their retention periods or when they are no longer needed to support the business of the organisation, they are taken to an offsite warehouse where they are stored with old furniture. Therefore, the study recommends that Botho University should develop and implement a records retention and disposal schedule for all their records. It is further recommended that Botho University adopt ARMA International's Information Governance Maturity Model for managing its records. The development and implementation of the retention and disposition would assist Botho University to comply with the 7th and 8th principle of the ARMA International's Information Governance Maturity Model. The 7th principle demands that an organisation should maintain its records and information for an appropriate time taking into account its legal, regulatory, fiscal, operational and historical

requirements. On the other hand, the 8th principle requires that organisations should maintain secure and appropriate disposal of records and information that are no longer required to be maintained by applicable laws and organisational policies.

Creation of centralised records management unit

The finding of the study revealed that Botho University lacked a records management unit. The study, therefore, recommends that Botho University should establish a centralised records management unit that would be able to assist with the proper management of university records and provide assurance of their security and protection. The unit would have custody of institutional records, maintain authority over them and facilitate the movement of files and their tracking. The establishment of a centralised records management unit would ensure that Botho University is compliant with the 3rd principle of ARMA International's Information Governance Maturity Model. The principle states that an information governance programme must be constructed so the information generated by or managed for the organisation has a reasonable and suitable guarantee of authenticity and reliability. The study further recommends that the records management unit to be established should also be charged with the responsibility of managing the institution's legacy records (those records that are worthy of permanent retention). Such records may include student academic records, personnel records, employee records, equipment and building maintenance records, financial records, university vehicles to mention but a few.

Staff training

Maseh (2016) asserts that education and training are important as they impart skills and give confidence to personnel and highlights that the lack of training is a major challenge in the management of records. The study established that Botho University had promoted a cleaner with no prior records management training to a records manager position. The cleaner (now records manager) has been with the institution for many years managing records, but still had no training in records management. The study therefore recommends that Botho University should employ a well-qualified records manager and provide records management training to the current officer promoted from the cleaner position. The staff charged with managing records should be sent to training workshops and seminars to hone their skills and to equip them with knowledge on the new and evolving techniques of managing records. Botho University could send its employees to institutions such as the University of Botswana and the Institute of Development Management which offer records management courses on a full-time and part-time basis.

In conclusion, the study has shown that whereas, academic institution may seek certification as ISO compliant institutions, there is need for close monitoring and regular audits to ensure that academic institutions certified as ISO 9001-2015 are compliant with all the ISO requirements including records and document requirements. Failure to do so, is bound to result in these institutions being certified while their records and information management practices still remains problematic.

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