



RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF SCHOOL-BASED PERSONNEL: BASIS FOR RECORDS DIGITALIZATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the extent of records management practices of school heads and hopefully will develop a records digitalization program. This study employed the non-experimental descriptive survey research design in investigating the research problem. It is descriptive because the data are presented in quantitative descriptions on the "Records Management Practices of School-based Personnel: Basis for Records Digitalization Program. According to Good (2005), this method of research shows merely description of tasks presenting the conditions regarding the nature of the group of persons or class of events that involved procedure of analysis, classification, and measurement. It involves varied information regarding the current or present condition (Deauna, 2005). This study was conducted in cluster five schools School, Division of Davao City. The respondents in this study are the school managers and school advisers refer to in this study as school-based personnel currently employed as permanent employees in Cluster 5 secondary schools Division of Davao City in School Year 2025-2026. As permanent item holder school head and class advisers, they are Plantilla employees of the Department of Education. On the other hand, the number of respondents in in this study is 136 computed through Slovins formula from the population of 205. Simple random sampling procedure was used using the Slovins formula in identifying the number of the respondents.

KEYWORDS- *Records Management Practices, School-based Personnel, Records Digitalization*

INTRODUCTION

Records management is the supervision and administration of digital or paper records, regardless of format. Records management activities include the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records. In this context, a record is content that documents a business transaction. Records are documents, such as contracts, memos, paper files, electronic files, reports, emails, videos, instant message logs and databases. Paper records are stored in physical boxes or file cabinets on premises or at a storage facility.

The goal of records management is to help an organization keep the necessary documentation accessible for both business operations and compliance audits. This is to mitigate problem in records management and establish a system that makes data accessible anytime. Spreadsheets are often used to track where records are stored. Alternatively, software is available that uses both a taxonomy and a records retention schedule. Such software is marketed as enterprise information management (EIM) applications that can help an organization address information governance, which is the formal management of both records and other content. Records management is a key component of an information governance plan (David, 2021).

There are organizations where records are not properly managed. As a result, they find difficulty in retrieving pertinent records of employees which most of the time affects the operations of the organization. Proper record keeping lets organizations easily access past documents and track their progress over time. Historical records provide insights into how business operations have been conducted in the past as well. This helps businesses stay organized and make decisions based on historical data rather than relying on guesswork or intuition when planning for future strategies (Choksy, 2023).

Records management prevents the loss of documents due to improper storage practices; this includes both physical destruction of paper-based files as well as digital records breaches, such as hacking attempts that could lead to confidential information being exposed online without authorization (Tarantino, 2022).

Current records management methodologies and practices suffer from an inadequate understanding of the 'human activity systems' where records managers operate as 'mediators' between a number of complex and interacting factors. Although the records management and archival literature recognizes that managing the active life of the records is fundamental to their survival as meaningful evidence of activities, the context where the records are made, captured, used, and selectively retained is not explored in depth (Tarantino, 2022).

Effective recordkeeping systems gives organizations greater control over who has access to particular types of data. They can limit certain employee access based on job roles and responsibilities while simultaneously enforcing security protocols across multiple departments. A records management program simplifies the process of



identifying, locating and capturing paper and electronic documents that are related to specific topics, incidents or events. It makes it easier to retrieve specific documents covered by a legal action, such as a subpoena. It also assists in complying with regulatory and client requirements for content access and management (Dearstyne, 2022).

When records management is seen to have direct relation to accountability and transparency, improve the quality of public service delivery and able to help organizations to equip themselves easily in acquiring quality certification, many organizations not only in the developed countries, begin to adopt the programmed. From the profession aspect, though it has been acknowledged as professional but many are unaware of its importance whilst as an academic discipline, there are confusions as this discipline moves from practical to theory. This is in contrast to other academic discipline which works on the theoretical framework before embarking on the practical aspect. As a profession, this field can be divided into two functions. First, records management deals with daily operation or transaction, and second, records management is for managing national heritage for research and historical purposes. The latter become the main interest of the archive institution (International Council on Archives, 2020).

In the absence of clear documentation, it becomes hard to trace the lifecycle of records, understand their context, and establish accountability. This lack of visibility can lead to inadvertent data loss, unauthorized access, and difficulties in demonstrating compliance with regulatory requirements. Implementing the best records management software becomes imperative in mitigating this risk. Such software provides a centralized platform for systematic documentation, ensuring that every aspect of records from creation to disposal is well-documented and easily accessible (Dearstyne, 2022).

Insufficient storage capacity not only hinders the efficient organization and retrieval of records but can also lead to ad-hoc storage solutions, such as over-reliance on external drives or disparate cloud services, raising security and accessibility concerns. Implementing records management best practices is crucial in addressing this poor record keeping method. By adopting systematic approaches to categorizing, archiving, and disposing of records, organizations can optimize their storage space effectively. In addition, leveraging advanced records management technologies enables organizations to implement compression techniques, data deduplication, and intelligent storage mechanism, further maximizing the utilization of available space while ensuring the security and accessibility of critical records (Choksy, 2023).

Records management in the Philippines is guided by Republic Act No. 9470, also known as the National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007. This legislation mandates all government agencies, including educational institutions, to systematically create, maintain, and dispose of public records in accordance with national archival standards. The law emphasizes the importance of preserving the nation's documentary heritage as a means of promoting transparency, accountability, and the efficient delivery of public services. Beyond its legal requirements, effective records management serves as a vital component of good governance—supporting accurate decision-making, safeguarding institutional memory, and upholding the public's right to access information (Patimo, 2021).

Within the public school system, records management practices are indispensable for maintaining organizational integrity and operational efficiency. These practices involve the proper handling of records throughout their lifecycle—spanning creation, classification, storage, retrieval, and final disposition, whether in physical or digital format. However, several studies have pointed to persistent challenges in the Philippine educational context, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to technology, and the absence of standardized procedures across schools (Bautista, 2020; Reyes, 2022). As highlighted by Santos (2023), effective records management is crucial not only for regulatory compliance but also for supporting evidence-based decision-making, protecting learner rights, and ensuring the continuity and credibility of educational institutions. Addressing these issues is essential in strengthening the management capacity of schools and reinforcing trust in the public education system.

In the context of the Department of Education (DepEd), records management is further reinforced through specific orders and guidelines. For instance, DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2017, which institutionalizes records management in all DepEd offices, aligns with the provisions of RA 9470 by mandating the establishment of Records Management Improvement Committees and the adoption of standardized procedures for handling, storing, and disposing of records. This ensures that DepEd's vast documentation—from student records to administrative files—is managed efficiently and securely, thereby supporting educational continuity and compliance with national archival standards (Patimo, 2021). The synergy between RA 9470 and DepEd's internal policies exemplifies the government's commitment to safeguarding public records and promoting a culture of accountability within the education sector.

In the Division of Davao City, particularly in Cluster 5 secondary schools, records management has emerged as a recurring challenge. School records are often kept without systematic tracking, making retrieval difficult during audits, reporting, or urgent decision-making. As a records management practitioner and advocate working in a State University and College (SUC), the researcher has encountered and addressed similar issues at the tertiary level. Witnessing the importance of proper systems in supporting academic operations, the researcher was moved to explore how such principles can be applied in the basic education sector. This study was born out of a passion to address the prevailing gaps in school-level records management. The researcher is particularly challenged and motivated by the persistent neglect in records handling in the secondary level—prompting the pursuit of this research as a response to the problem and as a contribution to sustainable administrative reform.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Creation is the first phase in a record's lifecycle. It involves the receipt of a record and classification of it as a record in an organization's records management system. Ensure that you create records correctly, which means including the right information and using the proper format. It means the recording of information on paper, printed forms, punched cards, tape, disk, or any information transmitting media. "Records creation" includes preparation of forms, reports, state publications, and correspondence (Caravaca, 2021).

"Records disposition authorization" means the official document utilized by an agency head to request authority for the disposition of records. The public records commission shall determine and order the proper disposition of state records through the approval of records disposition authorizations (Hashim, 2020).

A records creation strategy helps to ensure that records meet the appropriate standards of quality, but it is also essential that they are captured into a secure and effective records management system so that these qualities will remain intact over time. When a record is being created, it should be in the best format possible for your organization, thereby ensuring the accuracy, validity, reliability, and relevance of the record. Here are some examples of how records are being created: After a record is created or collected, it goes through a distribution and usage phase (Megill, 2020).

Much organizational activity leads naturally to the creation of records, but few organizations seek to record everything that they do. Written communications generate records, but most spoken communications leave no record unless a written note is made, and manual and physical tasks can also pass unrecorded. However, new ways of working and new technologies often make it simpler to create records where none were created in the past (Mohamad et.al., 2023).

With the growth of e-mail, many messages that might once have been verbal are now written; digital telephony and voicemail have made it easier to capture evidence of telephone communications when records are required. The first part of this chapter examines organizational needs for the creation of records, and discusses the intellectual and practical aspects of managing records at the point of their creation or receipt (Fruin, 2021).

The characteristics that records need (authenticity, integrity, usability and reliability) have been discussed in Chapter 1. Records that have these qualities provide a full and accurate representation of the processes and activities that give rise to them. They serve the purposes of business users, lawyers, auditors and regulators. They underwrite the organization's requirements for accountability and transparency as well as providing for its business needs and corporate memory (Pearce-Moses, 2023).

A records creation strategy helps to ensure that records meet the appropriate standards of quality, but it is also essential that they are captured into a secure and effective records management system so that these qualities will remain intact over time. The second part of this chapter considers principles and procedures for identifying what needs to be captured and for managing the systematic capture of records in paper and digital form (Robek, 2021).

Some writers assert that a record should be created and captured for every organizational activity, or at least for every transaction involving more than one party. Others suggest that some processes or some steps within a process may not need to generate records, and that the role of records management is to identify how far each process should be recorded. In practice this depends on the needs of the organization. Highly regulated industries and organizations whose work is publicly sensitive may need to ensure that every telephone call and every verbal transaction is documented, but in most organizations, this is neither necessary nor practical (Reed, 2021).

Records are "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business." Examples include final reports, emails confirming an action or decision, spreadsheets showing budget decisions, photographs or maps of field missions, which need to be kept as evidence. Records management is an important part of any organization's operations. It is the process of organizing and managing records throughout their life cycle, from creation to destruction. The goal of records management is to ensure that records are organized, protected, and available for use in an effective and efficient manner (Schellenberg, 2023).

Records management is the practice of organizing, maintaining, preserving records and records creation for a specific purpose or period of time. It involves the collection, storage, and classification of records, as well as their proper disposal when no longer needed. Records management ensures that records are organized and stored properly and that there is a system in place to ensure that records are retrieved and used efficiently. Records management can be used to ensure that the accuracy of data is not compromised by errors or omissions during their creation or storage, as well as after their creation or storage (Stewart and Melesco, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the extent of records management practices of school heads and hopefully will develop a records digitalization program. Specifically, it answers the following sub-problems:

1. What is the level of records management practices of school-based personnel in terms of:
 - 1.1 Records Creation,



- 1.2 Records Inventory,
- 1.3 Records Destruction and
- 2.4 Records preservation?
2. Is there a significant difference on the records management practices of school-based personnel when analyzed according to type of school?
 - 2.1 Urban
 - 2.2 Rural
3. Based on the findings drawn out from this study what records digitalization program can be designed and proposed?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the non-experimental descriptive survey research design in investigating the research problem. It is descriptive because the data are presented in quantitative descriptions on the “Records Management Practices of School-based Personnel: Basis for Records Digitalization Program. According to Good (2005), this method of research shows merely description of tasks presenting the conditions regarding the nature of the group of persons or class of events that involved procedure of analysis, classification, and measurement. It involves varied information regarding the current or present condition (Deauna, 2005).

Research Respondents

This study was conducted in Cluster 5 secondary schools under the Division of Davao City. The respondents were composed of school-based personnel, specifically school heads and class advisers, who are referred to as the key informants in this study. These individuals are permanent plantilla employees of the Department of Education, and were officially designated and actively serving in their respective schools during School Year 2025–2026.

A total of 136 respondents participated in the study, determined using Slovin’s formula from a total population of 205 school-based personnel across nine public secondary schools in Cluster 5. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal representation and minimize selection bias. The selected respondents provided valuable insights into the actual implementation of records management practices within their respective institutions.

Research Instrument

This study will utilize the downloaded questionnaire adopted from “The Information and Records Management Society (IRMS)”, the proponent of this checklist, which items and indicators are focused on the records management practices of school-based personnel. The respondents will give their responses on the items in the checklist. The checklist will undergo pilot testing in a school that is not part of the research local to measure its validity and reliability. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

To organize and analyze the data, the following statistical tool will be utilized:

Average Weighted Mean. Mean, commonly referred to as the average, is the critical measure of central tendency in statistics, providing insight into the overall performance of a group. It represents the midpoint of a set of values, calculated by summing all values and dividing by the number of observations (Bland, 2006)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter displays the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn out by the researcher after the analysis and interpretation of the findings had been made.

This study aimed to determine the extent of records management practices of school heads and hopefully will develop a records digitalization program. This study employed the non-experimental descriptive survey research design in investigating the research problem. It is descriptive because the data are presented in quantitative descriptions on the “Records Management Practices of School-based Personnel: Basis for Records Digitalization Program. According to Good (2005), this method of research shows merely description of tasks presenting the conditions regarding the nature of the group of persons or class of events that involved procedure of analysis, classification, and measurement. It involves varied information regarding the current or present condition (Deauna, 2005).

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Conclusions

Based on the collective findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:



The level of records management practices of school-based personnel in Cluster 5 secondary schools of the Division of Davao City is consistently rated as very high across all four key domains: Records Creation, Records Inventory, Records Preservation, and Records Destruction. This indicates a strong commitment among school-based personnel to perform records-related tasks accurately, systematically, and in accordance with established standards. These results demonstrate that personnel are not only aware of the importance of proper documentation but are also actively engaged in maintaining effective records systems within their respective institutions.

Additionally, the study reveals a significant difference in records management practices when analyzed according to the type of school (urban vs. rural), with urban schools exhibiting higher levels of implementation. This finding highlights disparities in access to infrastructure, resources, and digital tools, suggesting the need for targeted interventions to support schools in rural areas.

These findings align with the principles of two key theoretical frameworks. First, the Information Lifecycle Theory underscores that records move through distinct stages—from creation to eventual disposal—and that effective management throughout this cycle ensures accuracy, accountability, and efficiency. The integration of digital technologies enhances this lifecycle by improving the processes of record creation, storage, retrieval, and final disposition. Second, the Digital Continuity Theory supports the idea that digital records must remain usable, secure, and authentic over time, regardless of changes in technology. Ensuring this continuity requires the use of secure storage systems, proper metadata, and strategies for updating or migrating digital formats.

Overall, the study affirms that while records management practices are well established in these schools, there remains a strong rationale for the implementation of a standardized digital records system. Such a system will further strengthen compliance with national policies (particularly RA 9470), promote equity in records management across urban and rural schools, and enhance the overall transparency and efficiency of public education administration.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to support the advancement of effective and sustainable records management practices in public secondary schools:

For the Department of Education (DepEd). It is recommended that DepEd prioritize the institutionalization of a standardized digital records management system across all educational institutions. A centralized and secure platform will improve efficiency, enhance data accuracy, reduce reliance on paper-based systems, and ensure compliance with Republic Act No. 9470. Collaboration with technology providers and educational experts is essential to develop user-friendly, school-appropriate platforms. To ensure equitable implementation, resources must also be allocated to strengthen digital infrastructure and internet connectivity, especially in underserved and rural schools. Furthermore, DepEd should provide capacity-building programs for teachers, administrators, and Records Officers to ensure smooth transition and responsible handling of digital records. By doing so, the agency not only strengthens compliance with national mandates but also supports a more transparent and responsive education system.

For School Heads and Administrators. School Heads and Administrators are encouraged to spearhead the adoption of digital records systems within their institutions. Implementing reliable, easy-to-use digital platforms will streamline administrative processes, improve record accuracy, and safeguard institutional memory. School heads should invest in training programs for teachers and personnel to ensure that the shift to digital systems is both inclusive and effective. They are also advised to work closely with DepEd and technology experts to ensure that institutional practices align with national policies and information security standards. Strengthening local infrastructure and promoting a culture of digital innovation will position schools for long-term administrative excellence.

For Teachers and Class Advisers. Teachers and class advisers are key actors in implementing effective records management. They are encouraged to utilize digital tools for learner documentation, grading, and reporting to reduce manual errors and enhance data accessibility. Active participation in training programs will help them develop skills in managing electronic records securely. Teachers may also advocate for improvements in digital systems and contribute to policy feedback, ensuring that tools remain relevant to classroom needs. Through proper usage and collaboration, teachers can help create a more organized, accurate, and student-centered academic environment.

As stewards of institutional documentation, Records Officers or Custodians may lead in the systematic implementation of digital practices aligned with archival standards and RA 9470. They are encouraged to develop and maintain records retention schedules, ensure compliance with data protection policies, and participate in ongoing professional development. Their role is vital in ensuring that both legacy (paper-based) and digital records are managed efficiently, securely, and consistently throughout their lifecycle.

For State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). SUCs—particularly those offering programs in education, public administration, or information systems—are encouraged to integrate digital records management training into their curricula. This will help prepare future educators and administrators with the competencies needed to manage institutional records effectively. SUCs can also engage in research, policy advocacy, and pilot projects that support



the digital transformation of public schools. By doing so, they can serve as partners in advancing the professionalization of school records management practices.

For Future Researchers. Future studies may investigate the long-term effectiveness, challenges, and best practices in digital records management systems in public schools. Topics such as data privacy, system usability, technological infrastructure, and stakeholder readiness can be explored further. Researchers may also evaluate the impact of digital records systems on school performance, learner outcomes, and compliance with national standards. These investigations will contribute to the development of more adaptive, secure, and accessible records management systems in the Philippine education sector.

In summary, the findings of this study underscore the urgent need to strengthen records management practices in public secondary schools, particularly through the adoption of digital systems. The consistently high levels of practice observed among school-based personnel affirm their readiness to embrace more efficient and secure technologies, yet disparities between urban and rural schools highlight the need for targeted support. As such, a coordinated and inclusive approach is essential—one that empowers teachers, class advisers, school heads, and records custodians through appropriate training, resources, and infrastructure. The Department of Education plays a pivotal role in institutionalizing these reforms by establishing standardized digital systems and ensuring compliance with RA 9470, while State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) can contribute through curriculum development, research, and capacity-building initiatives. Ultimately, by responding to the needs of these key stakeholders and addressing systemic barriers, the proposed Records Digitalization Program offers a path toward a more transparent, responsive, and future-ready educational system.

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