#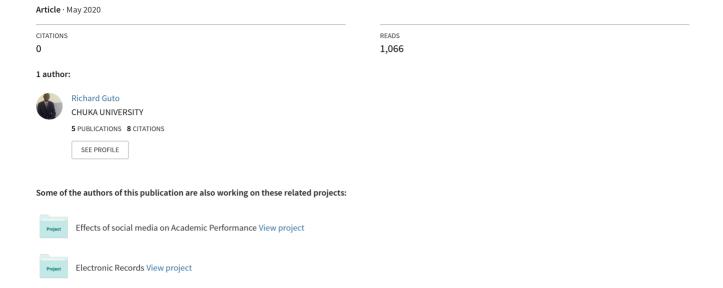 Information and Communication Technology Usage in Record Management Practices in Prevention of Corruption in Public Universities in Kenya

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**Information and Communication Technology Usage in Record Management Practices in Prevention of Corruption in Public Universities in Kenya**

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**Abstract**

Record management is one of the key success factors in any organization; poorly managed records have a devastating consequence such as delayed service delivery, corruption and dishonesty. Therefore, this study assessed the usage of Information Communication Technology in record management practices in prevention of corruption in the University of Eldoret. The study adopted a case study design and the target population was 64 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select deans of schools and heads of department and then census method was applied to the remaining administrative staff. Data was collected through questionnaires given to all members of staff in each department except the head of department, observation schedule and interview schedule was used for the heads of departments and Deans of schools, documentary evidences was also used. Qualitative data from interview schedule and observation checklist was analyzed thematically and reported in narrative form while the data from questionnaires was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables and percentages. The finding of this study indicated that the usage of ICT in record management practices will help in preventing corruption since automated record management process provides evidence and track each action. The study recommends that, the university institution should invest heavily in the use of technology on record management in terms of creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records.

**Key words:** Record Management, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Corruption, Public Universities, Kenya

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By

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## 1. Introduction

Institutions create records to support and provide evidence of their daily business activities; records act as a mirror towards transparency and accountability in making decision within which it is the growth of a country both nationally and internationally (IRMT, 2003; Kemon,2007). The World Bank (2006) states that records are significant for effective functioning of both private and public entities; records also keep the decision and activities of the government and other organization and serve as model against which they can quantify their expectations in due time. In the absences of records, there can be no regulation and no accountability (IRMT, 2003; World Bank, 2006).

Records are key elements for the effective and efficient service delivery in both public and private organization, this is mostly attributed with the fact that records provides evidence of all the actions, decisions and activities of the organization therefore providing the road map upon which future decision are based (World Bank,2000).Shepherd (2006) pointed out that in developed countries such as United Kingdom, United States and Canada have clear record management policies, established systems which enhances accountability in each actions.

Council on higher education (2002) in south Africa pointed out that higher education information system was inadequate and pointed out that proper records management practices could help universities to manage their information effectively, fulfill their mandate, protect them from litigation, keep their image and cultivate transparency and accountability. According to Fust and Graf (2002), Proper record management is the requirement for any government entity to provide better public services, to fill its role of accountability towards its people and economic development in general. Venter (2004) asserts that the manner in which records are kept in most parts of South Africa was in a mess making it difficult to conduct any kind of audit exercise thus creating loopholes for corruption. Musonye (2011) argues that most of the judiciary systems are corrupt as a result of poor record keeping or misplaced records; it is evident that, lack of a computerized filing system creates loopholes for corrupt clerks to play around with record management systems.

In Uganda, the lawyers pleaded with the government of the day to invest in record management and upgrade registries that operated on paper based records to reduce corruption in public sector; the authors further argued that many land documents in Kampala land registry were in a disarray condition which caused disappearance of land vital information hence encouraging unwanted practices (Olupot, 2003).

Management of records in Kenya is a big challenge and concern for the administration of justice where the number of pending cases had reached an alarming level. Gicheru (2007) estimated the number of pending cases in Kenya court was at one million as at March 31st, 2007. Many of these cases were pending due to frequent adjournment as a result of missing case files or failure to retrieve the files in time therefore justice is delayed hence denied. According to Igwoku (2008), record keeping occupies key position in the efficient and effective management of the universities system; it is the central in the administration of institution of higher learning because it documents all the appropriate courses of services allowing proper monitoring of work. In most institution such

as universities, paper continues to be viewed as the material for records in administrative documentation (Igwoku, 2008).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2010) in Kenya blames poor accounting records in schools for the rise in corruption; the study argued that public schools which are government entities failed to keep good records of how money allocated to reading has been spend paving way for malt practice. (IRMT, 2003) emphasizes that poor record keeping systems is an obstacle for the institutional and regulatory reform. Ibiam (2004) noted that many years of neglect of records keeping had done more damage to the education sector. Corruption is an illegal use of public authority resulting in private gain for the agents involved in the acts. When persons endorse the authority of their organizations/institutions and use that power for their own beneficial gain, they have committed organizational/institutional corruption. Individual benefit may also entail broader corporate gain such as higher organizational profitability or longer-term survival of the firm or what seems to be a corporate crime for the gain of an organization; this might spill over into significant individual gain (Aguilera& Vadera, 2008).

Corruption has become the most significant economic, political and social problem in the world and the need to fighting it has become apparent. Education is a unique sector as prevention of corruption plays central role in it, if society does not believe that the education system is proper and effective, it's said that its academic system is in peril. Academic integrity is the only way of cultivating professional and actual leaders who have the ability to lead the nation to growth and progress, these potential leaders should be aware of corruption in education, in order to prevent its appearance and development in the future (Heyneman, 2003).

According to Kerr as cited in (Mjama, 2002), all universities are mandated to perform three main functions: The storage of knowledge already acquired, dissemination of knowledge and research. Records are major information tools that are very useful in achieving goals of administrative functions of the university thus they must be carefully managed. The presence of record management policies and procedures in the institution facilitates proper running of the organization in its activities.

Information and communication technology are available tool for reducing corruption by enhancing transparency and accountability. For example electronic government assists in increasing transparency of decision making process by ensuring information is accessible to the public or citizens, documents government minutes, budgets and all expenditure statement (World Bank, 2000).Automation of all process significantly reduces opportunities by undoing human agents at data collection and service delivery points and focusing more in the use of electronic records.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Development of technology in this era of globalization and information society opens up new opportunity that offers significant benefit to lives of people both in developing and developed countries (world Bank, 2012).The use of Information and Communication Technology is crucial to effective record management as opposed to manual system that can be easily tempered by individual for his or her own benefit. It is expected that such development in improved record management is significant to ensure transparency in the way the government institutions conducts its business and hence help to deal with corruption practices among its workers.

While corruption aspect in higher education is not a new incident, its unprecedented dimension, the growing challenge of extenuating and preventing it in many academic systems as well as its international facets are rather new. This prompts many un answered questions: Can corruption be exported and /or imported with the rise of mobility among students and faculty and

the internationalization of education institution? Are universities prepared to deal with actors from endemically society? What best practices are particularly effective in increasing academic honesty? This paper therefore assessed the usage of information and Communication Technology in records management practices in prevention of corruption in public universities in Kenya.

## 1.3 Study Objective
The objective of the study was to assess the usage of Information and communication Technology in record management practices in preventing corruption in the University of Eldoret.

### 1.3.1 Research Question
How does Information and Communication Technology usage in record management practices prevent corruption in the University of Eldoret?

## 2 Literature Review

## 2.1 Record Management Concept
Record Management is an administrative activity that controls records within an institution. This is made up of policies and procedures which ensure that reliable and fixed evidence of actions is kept (ISO 15489-1:2001). Kanzi (2012) argues that records management is an area of general administrative based on the principle that records require management like any other resources in any organization. IRMT (1999) emphasizes that record management as the area of general administrative management concerned with obtaining efficiency in the creation, preservation, utilization destruction or transfer of records to the archives throughout their life cycle. National Archives of South Africa (2011) asserts that record management as a process ensures the proper creation, maintenance, use; destruction or transfer of records to an archive to achieve efficiency and transparency. Record management is therefore an important tool in efficient administration that eliminates loopholes for corruption.

## 2.2 Information and Communication Technology usage in Records Management practices in Prevention of Corruption
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) performs many roles in records management: It provides ease of access, retrieval and storage of records while maintaining records authenticity, integrity and security and thus the content, context and structure of an electronic record does not occupy the same physical space similar to physical records (Yusof & Chell, 1999). Corruption in organizations is possible because staff have access to valued resource which include provision of a service, legal permission to undertake some activity or information of value and to those who will pay for it (Heeks, 1999).Application of Information and communication Technology can deny access to the resource or to relevant decision-making processes, may remove corruption if the processes are automated.

Information and communication technologies are increasingly seen by government, activist and civil society as important tools to promote transparency and accountability as well as to identify and prevent corruption. There is a broad consensus that Information and Communication Technology have the potential to make a significant contribution to prevent corruption by promoting the flow of information between organizations and citizens. Technology can support transparency and accountability (Chene,2011). There are several ways in which ICTs can prompt

positive change by encouraging free flow of information between public officials, cutting out intermediates and reducing red tape and bureaucracy (Zinnbauer, 2012).

Automation of process in any sector has been recommended significantly to reduce opportunities for corruption by doing away with human agents at data collection and service delivery points. When human beings engage in Electronic banking there is no office for any malpractice like bribery (Bhatnagar, 2003). Also, ant-corruption software tools can tract how events happened in electronic systems that gives signals not only in illegal doings but that have taken place but also proactively detects suspicious behavior before any crime has been committed. This may serve as a real deterred as well as monitoring tool. Such system can to some extent assist in tracking anomalies in operation, in observing systematic features of clients giving information on errors or misuse and in social media analysis.

The Information and Communication Technology industry over the past decades has led to remarkable changes and progress in social and economic development in the world and has opened up bigger opportunities for faster growth and change. Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2003; 2005) have identified the drivers of corruption as: Monopoly of power, discretion and lack of accountability and transparency. The use of ICTs in institution can foster the anticorruption struggle against self-serving assets done by the workers (Tolero, 2005), more so ICTs may potentially play an important role in preventing some types of grand corruption (Prahalad, 2005).

The potential importance of utilizing ICT in organization goes beyond efficiency and effectiveness. Information and Communication Technology is believed to reduce corruption if embraced in record management by prompting good governance and strengthening reform-oriented actors, this can be achieved by enhancing external relationships with clients and customers internally in effectively controlling all activities in the organization (Dong & Tae, 2007). The introduction of ICT in record management practices can prevent corruption by improving the implementation of policies and procedures on the usage of records to increase transparency.

According to (Welzhing, Yuzhong & Bowang, 2011), China's efforts in using ICT to fight corruption promotion was classified as the information communication theory application, which shows the process of information flow in an organized sequences of information generation, delivery, analysis and reaction. They are making institution information public, collecting the line public opinions, analyzing high risks of corruption points and making possible forecast and sharing the corrupt information with interrelated bodies.

Tusubiram (2005) indicated that any modern institution of higher learning uses Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. Such institutions use ICT facilities especially in record management practices in all stages which results in more efficient communications and reduction of frauds in academic setting especially exams (Sibangani,2006). Recording data electronically, storing it centrally and sharing it with authorized persons have a big impact on the management of education institutions; it increases efficiency and accountability to institutional resources. In management of student affairs, there are various types of information systems that can be available in making informed decisions at all levels and improving efficiency of operations such as information systems, collaborative information system and electronic messaging systems which go a long way in fighting corruption practices. Chaurasia (2003) feels that ICT offers a number of benefits: It allows greater accessibility, wider teach instant communication and dissemination of information, record keeping and sharing of information. These aspects have the power to change the way public administrative is conducted and the association between the organization and citizens. The new possibilities offered by providing ICTs to public management present a powerful tool to fight corruption.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This article adopted a case research design because the researcher wanted to understand the problem of the study in great depth. The choice of the case study was largely informed by the need to develop a rich narrative and reveal the usage of Information and Communication Technology in records management practices and corruption prevention in Kenyan public universities based on an in-depth real time and retrospective analysis which is made possible by a case study.

### 3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Stratified sampling technique was used to classify academic staff and administrative staff in to strata's; seven schools and seven administration departments. Thereafter purposive sampling was used to select the Deans from various schools and Heads of department among the administrative staff. Purposive sampling was preferred by the researcher as it provides reliable and in-depth information on a research topic under study. The researcher then used census method in the selection of respondents in the remaining administration departments; this was aimed at getting a more relevant and valuable information because all employees had the same opportunity to participate and enhances feeling of security surrounding the accuracy of the result.

**Table 3.1 Target Population**

| Academic Staff | | Administrative Staff | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deans of Schools** | **Study size** | **Departments** | **Study size** |
| Agriculture and Biotechnology | 1 | Financial | 23 |
| Business and Management Science | 1 | Procurement and logistic | 10 |
| Education | 1 | Central registry | 5 |
| Engineering | 1 | Admission | 7 |
| Environmental studies | 1 | Examination | 4 |
| Natural Resource Management | 1 | Human resource | 4 |
| Science | 1 | Student registry | 4 |
| Sub – total | 7 | Sub total | 57 |
| **Total Target Population :7+57= 64** | | | |

Source: Field data by Guto, R. (2016)

## 3.3 Data collection method

Primary and secondary data methods were employed. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, observation schedule and Interviews whereas secondary data was extracted from documentary evidence and other publication on Information and Communication Technology and record management practices. Out 50 questionnaires administered, 44 of them were dully filled and used; a pilot study was done at Kisii University to evaluate the validity and reliability of the study instruments.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically with the dominant themes being captured and presented through narrative and direct quotes. The quantitative data was analyzed by use of statistical package for social sciences (S.P.S.S) computer software program version 20.0 and tabulated descriptively inform of frequency tables proportion (percentages) mode or frequency distribution and measures of central tendencies such as means.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### a)    Extent Use of ICT in Record Management Practices

**Table 4.1 Extent Use of ICT in Record Management practices**

|  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Basic level for data entry | 15 | 34.10 | 34.10 |
| Intermediate level for data processing and storage | 18 | 40.90 | 75.00 |
| Advanced level for data management and information retrieval | 11 | 25.00 | 100 |
|  | 44 | 100 |  |

Source: Field data by Guto, R. (2016)

The findings from table 4.1 above showed that: 40.90 % of the respondents affirmed that ICT is used at intermediate level for data processing and storage, 34.10 % viewed it at a basic level for data entry while 25 % saw ICT being used at advanced level of data management and information retrieval. This shows that the extent of ICT use in the organization is complete from data entry, data, processing, storage, data management and information retrieval, however, the different users are able to discern differently because of their level of access and use.

b)      **Knowledge of Electronic Record Management among University of Eldoret Employees**

**Table 4.2: Knowledge of Electronic Record Management among employees**

|  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very poor | 2 | 4.40 | 4.40 |
| Poor | 4 | 9.10 | 13.50 |
| Good | 30 | 68.30 | 81.80 |
| Very good | 8 | 18.20 | 100.0 |
| Total | 44 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field data by Guto, R. (2016)

From table 4.2, 86.50 % of the respondents affirmed that their knowledge of electronic record management was good if not excellent with a minority comprising of 13.50 % viewing their understanding of electronic records management being inadequate. This indicates that majority of the respondents have good understanding of electronic record management hence they are in a better position to understand any type of records created and used in any working institution especially electronic records.

c) **How ICT in Record   Management Practices Aids in Prevention of Corruption**

**Table 4.3. How ICT in Record Management Practices Aids in Prevention of Corruption**

|  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maintaining records authenticity and originality | 10 | 22.20 | 22.20 |
| Ease of access, retrieval and storage of records | 14 | 29.60 | 51.80 |
| Enhances transparency and accountability of records | 8 | 18.50 | 70.30 |
| Provides evidence of records and acts a reference point | 8 | 18.50 | 88.80 |
| Maintenance on record integrity and security of records | 4 | 12.20 | 100 |
| **Total** | **44** | **100.0** | |

Source: Field data by Guto, R. (2016

The responses from table 4.3 above showed that**,** 29.60 %t of the respondents affirmed that ICT use aids in ease of access, retrieval and storage of records, 22.20 % maintained that ICT can authenticate and originate records, while 18.50 % said that ICT enhances transparency and accountability in record keeping or ICT provides evidence of records with a further, 18.50 % argued that ICT provide evidence of records and acts as reference point while 12.20 % said that ICT ensures record integrity and security. The statistics indicate the various ways in which ICT aids in preventing corruption with the most important part being authenticity, integrity and security of records.

The findings on the usage of ICT in record management practices on prevention of corruption revealed that about 77.8% of the respondent agreed that corruption can be prevented if public universities adopts ICT in terms of managing their records and record management activities and practices, this is because, information communication technology ensures authenticity and integrity of records. Particularly three of the deans noted this and said:

> ICT provides track of records on how action was done; in fact, it is easier to detect if a dishonesty practice has been committed. Information communication technology enhances transparency and accountability since it traces how actions were being done thus provides evidence.

This sentiment was also supported by five members of heads of departments who were interviewed, they argued that:

> ICT in record management practices will assist in preventing corruption by improving on the data authenticity while monitoring record use and at the same time ensure their integrity.

This indicates that by integrating ICT in record management activities would significantly prevent corrupt practises by improving on the ways and means through which the records are stored, used and accessed. It was clear from the findings that institutions should put more resources on improving ICT infrastructure which include automation, relevant ICT equipment and resources from the observation by the researcher, at least each department had a computer and this showed that most of the documents created were in electronic format which was a step towards embracing electronic record management. This sentiment has been echoed by, among others, Okello- Obura (2013) who affirmed that effective records and information management (RIM) is a tool that can be used to prevent corruption in records management which occurs when information adopts electronic form of record management which intersperses between record keeping and information management.

Ngoepe (2008) also adds that electronic forms or records help any organisation to improve on its record keeping systems in order to enhance information accessibility and retrieval with equivalent improvements in office efficiency and productivity, while a well-designed and operated filing system with an effective index facilitate retrieval and dissemination of information to users as quickly as possible. However, depending on the skills and ICT competence, corruption can be eliminated through the adoption of computerised systems.

The introduction of Information and Communication Technology has a significant effect of preventing corruption and computerised information systems is designed to restrain some of their activities. These systems will not quench the underlying motivation for additional income because

this arises from a wider context. The way a computerised information system is designed can extensively determine the impacts of corruption. This design, in turn, depends on management design decisions that shape the ultimate impacts. However, there are other wider systems components that play a role, for instance the motivation to act corruptly. Managers, and others charged with preventing corruption, must also have the knowledge and skills, inspiration, power, and ways to spot and take action against corrupt activities. In part, this too depends on wider structures, strategies, and culture (Heeks, 1999).

The use of electronic record keeping can accrue an organization some benefits which include: the ability to alleviate the considerable risks allied with inadequate records management practices, accountability and transparency, good governance, and public and private sector efficiency; conformity with statutory requirements; ability to provide wide access to records, records and information resources contained within multiple databases; capability to administer electronic documents and records as inviolate and trustworthy and credible evidence, knowledge of fundamental records management practices and how they relate to freedom of information and information privacy principles and increased productivity and individual accountability (Kemoni, 2008).

From the above discussion its evident that corruption can be prevented to a large extent if our public universities adopts Information Communication Technology in record management practices from the time records are being created up to the time records are disposed of to provide clear evidence for each action

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in record management practices in university of Eldoret has been incorporated to some extent and electronic record management was partially being used. The staff acknowledged that the use of ICT in record management plays an important role in prevention of corruption and affirmed that technology improves the efficiency with which records are captured, stored used and retrieved hence significant improvement in record keeping in an organization.

Looking at the problem of the study, ICT usage in record management practices have proved to be an efficient tool that can be used to help in preventing corruption. It is necessary for the organization /institution to invest heavily on technology so as to assist in monitoring how records are being created, maintained, used and disposed of. Effective record management system needs to be implemented to ensure all actions taken can be monitored and retrieved. The system must enable quicker or timely retrieval of records. All record management activities throughout the organization must be automated: By automating all processes, the organization will close down all avenues from which employees or interested parties can make illegal gain or practise corruption.

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