

# Staff Knowledge on Records Management in the Local Governments of Ghana: A Case Study

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*Good records management should be seen as a benefit and not a burden. This paper explores the practices, benefits, and challenges of records management from forty-five staff of the Offinso Municipal Assembly (OMA), Ghana. The study used the survey method and data were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The result revealed that a majority (84%) of the staff knew of the existence of policies and procedures on records management, there was a positive strong association between work experience and records management systems, quick decision making was a key element of the benefits of records management and lack of information technology infrastructure was a challenge to effective records management. The paper suggests that OMA must intensify the need to communicate the importance of the policies and procedures of records management for its compliance. In maximizing the benefits of records management, OMA must take advantage of technology to support their records management. Management support, deployment of resources, and adequate training of staff on records management could be the solution to reduce the challenges of records management at OMA.*

**Keywords:** records keeping, records management, local government, public sector, Ghana

**JEL Classification:** C80, H70, M10

## 1. Introduction

Decision-making based on the right information might prolong the survival of an organization with the right approach to execute the outcome of that decision-making process. Saffady (2021) stated that records management is concerned with the systematic analysis and control of recorded information, which includes any information created, received, maintain, or used by an organization under its mission, operations, and activities. Mojapelo and Ngoepe (2021) affirm that records ensure effective and efficient updates to organizations if properly managed, organized, and monitored. Dootson *et. al.*, (2021) noted that records management in the public sector is integral for delivering public good. However, several institutional challenges inhibit the required implementation of innovative and information-centric tools to transform records management. Mosweu and Rakemane (2020) were of the view that for the promotion of good governance to take place there must be the need for proper records management. Lowry and Wamukoya (2016)

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acknowledged that records represent major sources of information and are almost the only reliable and legally verifiable source of data that can serve as evidence of decisions, actions, and transactions in an organization.

Read and Ginn (2007) suggested that organizations must have up-to-date information to make management decisions. Reliable and trustworthy information must be based on the existence of proper records. Records are documents that contain information about the actions, decisions, and operations that have occurred in an organization as asserted by Brunskill and Demb (2012). World Bank (2010) advocated that records management practice is key support for efficient and effective organizational operations. Records represent a major source of information, and are almost the only reliable and legally verifiable data source and can serve as evidence of decisions, actions, and transactions in the public service as opined by Lowry and Wamukoya (2016).

McLeod, Sue, and Hardiman (2011) acknowledged that success criteria for effective records include close cooperation among staff members, the business process involved and the information technology applied. Similarly, Harris (2009) advised that a discussion by staff members as a community can facilitate a social learning process and provide context to the information of the records for knowledge elicitation. Wang, Chaudhry and Khoo (2008) stressed that staff being members of an organization and users of records must be involved in the management of records. Oliver and Foscarini (2014) opined that the understanding of an organization's culture by its staff can be a springboard upon which it could facilitate the promotion of sound recordkeeping practices. Daum (2007) advised that for employees to avoid ad-hoc methods of record-keeping to that of adhering to the organization's programs, policies and procedures there is the need for management support through effective communication and training on records management.

Cheng (2018), effective records management makes organizations accountable to their stakeholders. Brunskill and Demb (2012), were of the view that a company's overall data management processes could be improved through proper records management. Wright (2013) claims records management practices are inseparable from an organization's culture as it affects the efficacy of records management by end-users. Dikopoulou and Mihiotis (2012) indicated that good governance is based on the effective management of records in any organized society. Norris (2002) affirmed that effective management of records programs must have in place systems either manual or automated that can locate and retrieve records in a reliable and timely fashion to meet the needs of users. The author further stressed that if a user cannot locate a document, then it might as well not exist.

Weisinger (2011), the need for organizations to have a record management system that can manage its physical and electronic documents and records from their creation, use, storage, and maintenance to eventual destruction or permanent preservation while retaining the integrity, authenticity, and accessibility of organizational records. Lowry and Wamukoya (2016) stressed that there are three important domains associated with record-keeping namely the business domain, the accountability domain, and the cultural domain. Weisinger (2011) opined whenever a record is filed, there must be a policy to define its lifespan, thus the record must have a lifecycle. Brunskill and Demb (2012) insisted that the legislative requirements of a business and the nature of the business organization carried out by the organization will influence its retention of records.

Public authorities are better off in governance when they put in place measures to allow the citizens to have access to a public record as suggested by Shepherd, Stevenson and Flinn (2010). Shepherd (2006) was of the view that the wider community has expectations of transparency in public service, the protection of rights, and the maintenance of sources for collective memory. Parrish and Courtney (2007) suggested that local governments must provide public access to records such as court proceedings, deeds, birth, and death records.

### **1.1. Purpose of the Study**

Local governments in Ghana play a very important role in the administration and development at the local level hence disclosure on public records request have to be a priority. Records management is a subject that has become more interesting over the last decade. It has always been an asset for efficient and effective business and may seem strange that this highly significant driver of business efficiency has received so little attention over the years in the developing countries and particularly in Ghana. Record keeping is a fundamental and core activity of public sector management. Lowry and Wamukoya (2016) maintained that without records there can be no accountability and no rule of law. Shepherd (2006) opined that organizations use records in the conduct of their businesses to enable decisions to be made and take actions. Moreover, the authors stressed

that organizations also use records to support accountability, when they need to prove that they have met their obligations or complied with best practices or established policies.

Shepherd, Stevenson and Flinn (2009) were of the view that in most local authorities their records management are unreliable and not consistent. Both public and private sector organizations have been affected by scandals based on failures and embarrassing situations which have involved, and in some instances been the result of mismanagement of records as affirmed by McLeod, Sue and Susan (2007). Adu (2020) noted that corruption has been easier for government agencies due to inefficiencies in records management. Njue, Kyalo and Muchina (2021) in a study established that records management affected the tendering process as revealed that the tendering process in the public sector is statistically significantly affected by records management. Mismanagement of records had led to less time spent on productive tasks due to longer time searching for a piece of information and some come along with financial implications due to loss of records in lawsuits. Ohio County Archivists and Managers Association (2017) echoed that poor recordkeeping attracts corruption and makes governance difficult.

Records management problems exist due to a lack of a solid records management strategy and the tools to implement it. There are several studies on the management of records in the public sector of Ghana such as Akussah and Asamoah (2015) the purpose of the paper was to survey and evaluate the management of public sector records in Ghana to make constructive recommendations to ensure efficiency in public administration. Fiankor and Akussah (2012) conducted a study on information use and policy decision-making by district assembly members in Ghana. The study revealed through the solicitations of questionnaire administration that policymakers in the assembly system of Ghana had little access to relevant and reliable information when making decisions about policies, programs, and policy implementation. Bakare, Abioye and Issa (2016) in the Nigerian context studied assessment records management practices in the selected local government's councils in the Ogun State. The study sampled two hundred and eight personnel and concluded that the council's records were in chaos; and recommended the need for a formulation of coherent records management policy, adequate budgetary provisions, and financing.

This study is different from the previous studies in that there is no published study on staff knowledge on records management in the local governments of Ghana at the Municipal Assembly level. This is confirmed upon a thorough search using Google Scholar, RePEc, Econs Papers, and other restrictive reputable databases through abstracts on records management. Thus, there is a research and knowledge gap here that needs attention. This study has the potential to fill the gap by studying the records management practices of Offinso Municipal Assembly (OMA), an association between gender, work experience and records management systems, benefits, and challenges of records management.

## **2. Study Setting and Methodology**

### **2.1 Study Setting**

Local government is provided for by the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993, and it is enshrined in the constitution of Ghana. Local elections are held every four years. The assemblies play major and several roles in the education in public health. Responsibility for social welfare is shared between central and local governments (ILGS and FBS, 2016). The study purposively selected the Offinso Municipal Assembly out of the forty-three (43) Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies in the Ashanti Region. The Offinso Municipality has a population of 76,895. Male constitute 48.2 percent and females represent 51.8 percent. About seventy-two percent of the population is rural (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014).

### **2.2 Methodology**

A cross-sectional study was conducted among a sample of forty-five (45) staff from the Offinso Municipal Assembly as respondents of the study. Our sample was purposive in the sense that it was drawn from the various departments and sections. Moreover, the staff who participated had exposure and experience in records management. To generate a sample that cut across the institution led to the composition of the sample as four staffs were drawn respectively from Budget Unit, Planning Unit and Internal Audit while five staffs each from the Revenues Unit, Accounts Department, Records Unit, Human Resource Unit, Works Department and Procurement Unit and three staffs from the Environmental Department. The determination of

sample size was non-statistical, it was based on the availability of a staff that has a fair knowledge of the issues under discussion and most importantly volunteer to be part of the study.

A self-administered questionnaire was used for the study. The Records Officer of the Offinso Municipal Assembly validated the questionnaire after going through the content before it was rolled out. The questionnaire was pre-tested on some of the staff of the assembly. The questionnaire was in four sections: the first section focused on the demographic characteristics of the staff (age, gender, working experience, and staff status); the second section sought to find out staff knowledge on records management practices; the third section on benefits of records management practices; and the fourth section on challenges of records management in the Assembly. The questionnaire had both closed and opened ended questions with a 5-Likert type of questions designed to measure the responses from the participants of the study. Cronbach's alphas for the 4 demographics, 11 records management practices, 9 benefits of records management, and 9 challenges of records management were .86,.97,.98 and.99 respectively which were found to be highly reliable. The study was conducted between January and May of 2019.

### 2.3 Analytical Framework

Frequency and percentages were employed to analyze the data of the staff's demographic characteristics on their perspective on records management at OMA. Cross tabulation using contingency table analysis was used to assess the association between gender and records management system and storage of office documents; work experience and records management system and storage of office documents as shown in Tables 2 and 3. An extension to the 2x2 contingency table was Pearson's Chi-square test of independence. The total ( $X^2$ ) value for all cells provides the basis for a measure of overall association. All the expected counts were greater than five (5) together with independent observations. This confirms that the values used meet the assumptions for using ( $X^2$ ) statistics to analyze the data.

The Cramer's V was employed in the results of this study. The Cramer's V is a form of correlation and is interpreted the same. A value of zero indicates little or no association while 1 indicates a perfect association or relationship. In both tests, p-value < 0.001 was considered significant.

The hypotheses of the study were constructed as follows:

Ho<sub>1</sub> = Gender has an association with the records management system

Ho<sub>2</sub> = Gender has an association with the storage of office documents

Ho<sub>3</sub> = Work experience has an association with the records management system

Ho<sub>4</sub> = Work experience has an association with the storage of office documents

The study will reject the null hypothesis when the ( $X^2$ ) statistic is larger than the critical value and vice versa. One-Sample ( $t$ ) analysis was used on the staff's view on the benefits of records management. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and (two-tailed) alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) of the one-sample  $T$ -test is expressed as:

$$H_0: \mu = 0, \quad [Not\ benefiting\ from\ records\ management]$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq 0, \quad [Benefits\ of\ records\ management]$$

The decision rule involves comparing the hypothesized population mean (i.e. the test value) and expected mean (test statistic). The result is considered statistically significant if the  $p$ -value is less than chosen alpha level. The null hypothesis must be rejected. The test statistic for One-Sample ( $t$ ) Test is denoted ( $t$ ), which is calculated using the following formula:

$$t = \frac{x - \mu}{s_x} \quad (1)$$

Where:

$$s_x = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \quad (2)$$

Where:

$\mu$  = proposed constant for the population mean

$x$  = sample mean

$n$  = sample size (i.e., number of observations)

$s$  = sample standard deviation

$s_x$  = estimated standard error of the mean

Kendall's coefficient of concordance ( $W$ ) analysis was used to rank the items identified on records management practices and challenges on records management. In deriving  $W$ , let  $T$ ; represent the sum of ranks for each records management practice and challenge on records management being ranked. The variance of the sum of ranks is given by:

$$Var_T = \frac{\sum T^2 - (\sum T)^2/n}{n} \quad (3)$$

Where  $Var$  denotes variance and  $n$  denotes the number of each records management practice and challenges on records management. The maximum variance of  $T$  is given by

$$m^2 (n^2 - 1)/12 \quad (4)$$

Where  $m$  is the number of staff. The formula for Kendall's coefficient of concordance  $W$  is given by

$$W = \frac{(\sum T - (\sum T)^2/n)/n}{m^2 * (n^2 - 1)/12} \quad (5)$$

By simplifying equation 5 above, the result in the computational formula for  $W$  as

$$W = \frac{12[\sum T^2 - (\sum T)^2/n]}{mn^2(n^2 - 1)} \quad (6)$$

The records management practices and challenges on records management had  $(W) = 0.895$  and  $(W) = 0.370$  respectively. The degree of agreement of the rankings by the staff was measured with  $(W)$  which ranges from 0 to 1. The score of  $(W)$  explains the degree of concordance among the staff, hence the higher the  $(W)$  the better the degree of concordance.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Demographic Information of the Staff

The sampled characteristics considered age, gender, working experience and category of staff status. The female representation was 33% as compared to 67% of the males. This indicates that more males participated in the study than females. This is not surprising as the nature of the job and tasks performed by the OMA needs a balance between the male and female staff.

The staffs who were above thirty years old accounted for 72%, followed by the age range of 21-25 years and 26-30 years had a representation of 13% respectively while the least age group of 16-20 years had 2%. Age as a variable is an important indication of the maturity of the staff and possibly can be tied to the staff's number of years on the job. In terms of working experience, 31% of the staffs have worked between 1-6 years while 69% of the staffs had more than 6 years. This information depicts the rich working experience of the staff which has the potential to better productivity in the operations of the Assembly.

The study sought to find out the status of the participating staff to draw inferences on their positions and their roles on the job to assess their knowledge on records management. The category of staff status revealed 78% of the staff as Senior staff while 22% accounted for the Junior staff. This implies that the majority of the sampled staff are at the senior level of management which presupposes that their feedback on the questionnaires will be an adequate appraisal of the current situation on records management at OMA.

#### 3.2 Records Management Practices of OMA

The study identified eleven constructs on records management practices of OMA as shown in Table 1. The staff was asked to rank these constructs. The F tests for the degree of agreement or concordance ( $W$ ) between the rankings on the records management practices revealed that 89.5% of the staff agree to the themes which is a very good indication of a greater consensus using Kendall's coefficient of concordance

The discussion is on the three highest mean score ranks and the three least mean score ranks. As observed from Table 1, the highest mean score rank was 8.72 (84%) confirming the existence of policies and procedures for creating and storing records at OMA. It is positive from an organization's perspective that its staff are aware of the policies of records management. As users of information and records, this knowledge will guide them to comply with the procedure on which records must be retained or discarded. This result supports the views of Mosweu and Rakemane (2020) suggesting that public servants require information to discharge operational duties. Daum (2007) advises that effective communication on records management policies and procedures helps staff to perform their mandate well. Eighty-three percent of the sampled staff were of the view that OMA ensures data privacy and is committed to security-related issues on records management. This had a mean score of 8.51 which was ranked second. Effective records management must have a way to protect personal data and institutional data as a good business practice. The result aligns with the assertion from Cheng (2018) that organizations must be accountable to their stakeholder through records management. The third highest mean rank construct was easy retrieval of records which had a score of 8.43 representing 82% of the sampled staff. This observation confirmed the assertion of Norris (2002) affirming the need for a system to be put in place for users to locate and retrieve records in a reliable and timely fashion to meet the needs of users. Easy retrieval of records is critical for effective management of records keeping as a driver to organizational productivity through decision making.

Table 1. Coefficient of Concordance ( $W^a$ ), mean and standard deviation on records management practices

Records management practices	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean Rank	Ranking
Storage of office documents	2.44	.725	3.72	7 <sup>th</sup>
Frequency of filing office documents	1.42	.812	2.26	9 <sup>th</sup>
Records management system	1.58	.690	2.49	8 <sup>th</sup>
Records management control	1.07	.252	1.76	10 <sup>th</sup>
Policies and procedures for creating and storing records	4.20	.726	8.72	1 <sup>st</sup>
There is a records retention period	3.82	.860	7.42	6 <sup>th</sup>
Easy retrieval of records	4.11	.714	8.43	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Periodical training programs on records management for staff	3.84	1.065	7.42	6 <sup>th</sup>
Check compliance on procedures of records management	3.93	.889	7.77	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ensures data privacy and security issues	4.13	.815	8.51	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Availability of backup for incidental/accidents	3.87	1.014	7.50	5 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Author's computation, 2020

The lowest mean score rank of 1.76 had 59% representation of the staff studied, the staff disagrees that OMA does not have control in the management of records. This shows that there is an agreement that there is some form of control in the management of office documents. The study suggests that there must exist an established measure of control in terms of issuance and retrieval of documents as evidence of an activity taking place.

The mean score of 2.26 (75%) was the second least rank of the eleven constructs under the records management practices of OMA which is indicated in Table 1. The construct is on the frequency of filing office documents. This is an indication that the staff disagrees that management has not come out with procedures on the frequency of filing OMA office documents. This shows that there is an agreement that there is some form of instructions on how and when office documents must and should be filed. The study adds that the filing system must be arranged simply and systematically so that staff can find information easily and quickly.

The third least mean rank which is on records management system had a score of 2.49 (83%) which affirms the existence of a records management system hence the huge disagreement on the construct. Weisinger (2011) was of the view that whenever a record is filed, there must be a policy on its lifespan. Brunskill and Demb (2012) insisted due to legislative requirements of a business, having a records management system is imperative to the survival of its operations. The result of this construct is in line with the author's suggestions.

### 3.3 Records Management System and Storage of Documents

This section reports on the result using cross-tabulation, chi-square test of independence and Cramer's V using gender of staff with records management and storage of office documents as indicated in Tables 2. Similarly, the work experience of staff with records management and storage of office documents as indicated in Tables 3.

#### 3.3.1 Gender and Records Management System

The first hypothesis stated that gender has an association with records management systems. As indicated in Table 2a, the records management system whether centralized or decentralized was significant.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of gender against records management system.

<b>Table 2a. Cross-tabulation of gender against records management system</b>									
Gender	Male	Centralized	Decentralized	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p-value	Cramer's V	Critical value
	Count	24	6	30	25.714	1	0.001	.756	10.83
	E.C.	16	14	-					
	Female	Centralized	Decentralized	Total					
	Count	0	15	15					
	E.C.	8	7	-					
	Total count	24	21	45					
	% of Total	53.3	46.7	100					
<b>Table 2b. Cross-tabulation of gender against the storage of office documents</b>									
Gender	Male	Electronic	Manual	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p-value	Cramer's V	Critical value
	Count	19	11	30	16.442	1	0.001	.604	10.83
	E.C.	12.7	17.3	-					
	Female	Electronic	Manual	Total					
	Count	0	15	15					
	E.C.	6.3	8.7	-					
	Total count	19	26	45					
	% of Total	42.2	57.8	100					

Note: E.C. = expected count. Source: Author's Computation, 2020

Roughly half of the sample population is male, within the records management system a whopping 80% of the male staff confirmed that they know the records management system is centralized. It could be said that female staffs are underrepresented in the knowledge and awareness of centralized records management. The vice versa holds for the female presentation under the decentralized records management system. There is a significant relationship between gender and records management system,  $X^2(1, N=45) = 25.714$ ,  $p < .001$ . Since ( $X^2$ ) value of 25.714 is greater than the critical value of 10.83 at .001 level, we reject the null hypothesis that gender has an association with a records management system. The Cramer's  $V = .756$  indicates a very high positive significant relationship between gender and records management system.

There is no specific literature on gender and record management systems but their knowledge of the record management system is critical to their work. The awareness level by the staff on the records management systems was encouraging suggesting knowing what to do appropriately with the system at any point in time. This result is different from the study by Bakare, Abioye and Issa (2016) concluded that records management in the Ogun State in the Nigerian context were in chaos; and recommended the need for a formulation of coherent records management policy, adequate budgetary provisions, and financing.

#### 3.3.2 Gender and Storage of Office Documents

The second hypothesis stated that gender has an association with the storage of office documents. As indicated in Table 2b, the storage of office documents whether electronic or manual was significant. The representation of the male was 63.3% in the appreciation of the electronic storage of records whereas in terms of awareness of the manual recording of official documents the female had a 100% representation. There is a significant relationship between gender and storage of office documents,  $X^2(1, N=45) = 16.442$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Since ( $X^2$ ) value of 16.442 is greater than the critical value of 10.83 at.001 level, we reject the null hypothesis that gender has an association with the storage of office documents. The Cramer's  $V = .604$  indicates a positive significant relationship between gender and storage of office documents. Parrish and Courtney (2007) refer to document management as all the activities that can be done with documents with the intent of furthering some organizational purpose. Norris (2002) affirmed that one sure sign that an organization has an effective records management program in place is that it stores and maintains its records securely and efficiently. The concerns of the authors were practiced in the case study where office documents storage was done in the manual and electronic versions.

### 3.3.3 Work Experience and Records Management System

The third hypothesis stated that working experience has an association with records management systems. As indicated in Table 3a, work experience and knowledge of records management systems were significant. 100% of the male staff with working experience of 1-6 years were aware of the centralized system but this is a little over half of the total sample. Staff with working experiences over 6 years accounted for 67.7% are of the view that the records management system is decentralized which has a representation of 46.7% of the total sample.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of work experience against records management system and

3a Cross-tabulation of work experience against records management system									
EXP	1-6years	Centralized	Decentralized	Total	$X^2$	df	p-value	Cramer's V	Critical value
	Count	14	0	14	17.782	1	0.001	.629	10.83
	E.C.	7.5	6.5	-					
	> 6years	Centralized	Decentralized	Total					
	Count	10	21	31					
	E.C.	16.5	14.5	-					
	Total count	24	21	45					
	% of Total	53.3	46.7	100					
3b Cross-tabulation of work experience against the storage of office documents									
EXP	1-6years	Electronic	Manual	Total	$X^2$	df	p-value	Cramer's V	Critical value
	Count	14	0	14	27.810	1	0.001	.786	10.83
	E.C.	5.9	8.1	-					
	> 6years	Electronic	Manual	Total					
	Count	5	26	31					
	E.C.	13.1	17.9	-					
	Total count	19	26	45					
	% of Total	42.2	57.8	100					

Note: E.C. = expected count. EXP = experience, Source: Author's Computation, 2020

Since  $X^2(1, N=45) = 17.78$ ,  $p < .001$  is greater than the critical value of 10.83 at.001 level, we reject the null hypothesis that works experience has an association with the records management systems. The Cramer's  $V = .629$  indicates a positive significant relationship between work experience and the records management system. People make a place hence the staffs are the organization as their knowledge, commitments, and experiences on the job make organizational policies and programs work. The demographic characteristics of the sampled staff revealed that 69% of them have over 6years of working experience while 31% had 1-6years. The number of years of working experience if anything to go by can lead to better records management due to day-to-day activities on the job in terms of records creation, storage and retention. This will make complying with the organizational policies and programs easier. The result is a confirmation of the views of several authors such as McLeod, Sue and Hardiman (2011), close cooperation among staff members on records management. Wang, Chaudhry and Khoo (2008), staff being members of an organization and users of records must be involved in the management of records.



### 3.3.4 Work Experience and Storage of Office Documents

The fourth hypothesis stated that working experience has an insignificant/association with the storage of office documents. As indicated in Table 3b, the working experience was significant in the storage of office documents. There is a significant relationship between work experience and storage of office documents,  $X^2(1, N=45) = 27.810$ ,  $p < .001$ . Since ( $X^2$ ) value of 27.810 is greater than the critical value of 10.83 at .001 level, we reject the null hypothesis that working experience has an insignificant/association with the storage of office documents. The Cramer's  $V = .786$  indicates a high positive significant relationship between work experience and storage of office documents. The result aligns with Oliver and Foscarini (2014) indicating that the understanding of an organization's culture by its staff could facilitate the promotion of sound recordkeeping practices. Daum (2007) advises that employees must avoid ad-hoc methods of record-keeping to that of adhering to the organization's programs, policies, and procedures. Harris (2009) stated the need for a discussion by staff members as a community to provide a context for the information of the records for knowledge elicitation.

### 3.4 Benefits of Records Management

This section examined the staff views on the benefits of records management to OMA using the One-Sample t-test. A one-sample t-test was run to compare the nine constructs under the benefits of records management as indicated in Table 4. There is a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.001$ ) between the sample mean and the population mean of zero (0) as the test value. The critical t-value is 1.68 for a two-tailed test, alpha of 0.05 and degrees of freedom of 44. The calculated t values are between 25 and 36 as indicated under column five under the t-value of the nine constructs. The absolute values of the calculated t-value are greater than the critical value of 1.68, so the study rejects the null hypothesis of no difference and concludes a statistically significant difference.

Out of the nine constructs under the benefits of records management, six of them had between a mean score of 4.40 and 4.04 with a corresponding representation of 88% and 81%, as observed from Table 4 namely decision-making, data protection, addressing clients' concerns on time, meeting regulatory compliance, data retrieval and time-saving. The other three constructs had between them a mean score of 3.98 and 3.96 accounting for 79% and 78%.

Table 4. One-Sample Test on benefits of records management

Test Value = 0						
Construct	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Quick decision making	45	4.40	.837	35.278	44	0.001
Space-saving	45	3.96	.812	32.881	44	0.001
Simple retrieval and collection	45	4.16	.928	30.032	44	0.001
Reduction of storage	45	3.98	.866	30.822	44	0.001
Ensure regulatory compliance	45	4.18	.777	36.059	44	0.001
Saves employees time	45	4.04	.928	29.229	44	0.001
Maintain institutional memory	45	3.98	1.055	25.291	44	0.001
Helps address clients' issues on time	45	4.20	.842	33.458	44	0.001
Protection of data	45	4.33	.826	35.204	44	0.001

Source: Author's Computation, 2020

The finding is consistent with prior studies including Lowry and Wamukoya (2016) where it was asserted that public servants require information to discharge their official duties and responsibilities efficiently, effectively, and transparently. Moreover, Read and Ginn (2007) advised that organizations must have up-to-date information to make management decisions. Cheng (2018), effective records management makes organizations accountable to their stakeholders. The study is of the view that records management and information retrieval are critical to decision making. This is so as it provides the evidence of operational activities on time and the protection of sensitive information to meet regulatory compliance.

### 3.5 Challenges of Records Management

The section assesses the staffs' perspective on the challenges of records management at OMA with the aid of Kendall's coefficient of concordance for the mean ranking. The study identified nine challenges of records management at OMA as indicated in Table 5. The discussion is on the three highest mean score ranks and the three least mean ranks.

The staff indicated their opinions as to the score on a five-Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree but the ranking was done using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance of ( $W^a = 37\%$ ) implies that 37% agreed to the overall ranking with the firm belief that indeed the challenges cut across among the staffs. The overall result in Table 5 gives a mixed reaction to the challenges on records management of OMA. The Coefficient of Concordance ( $W^a = 37\%$ ) is an indication that less than half of the staff agreed on the ranking concerning records management challenges. This can be inferred as partial education and sensitizing on records management to their staffs.

Table 5. Coefficient of Concordance ( $W$ ) on challenges of records management

Themes	Mean Rank	Ranking
Improper records management	4.69	6 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of proper security for records	4.66	7 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of professional trained records managers	4.53	8 <sup>th</sup>
Inadequate resources to facilitate proper records	5.22	5 <sup>th</sup>
Insufficient space for records management	5.34	4 <sup>th</sup>
Confidentiality of records is threatened	5.92	3 <sup>rd</sup>
The negative attitude of staff towards records	2.40	9 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of backup facilities for ICT	6.14	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate storage equipment	6.09	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Coefficient of concordance ( $W^a$ )	0.378	0.370 (37%)

Source: Author's computation, 2020. N=45

The second column of Table 5 indicates the mean score rank of the nine constructs. The three highest mean scores on challenges of records management were 6.14, 6.09 and 5.92 respectively for lack of backup facilities for ICT, inadequate storage equipment such as a big server, and confidentiality of records ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. This observation supports the views of Shepherd, Stevenson and Flinn (2009) and Adu (2020) with the assertion that mismanagement of records has led to corrupt practices, lack of accountability, scandals, and poor governance structures.

The three least mean scores on challenges of records management were 2.40, 4.53 and 4.66 respectively for the negative attitude of staffs towards records management, lack of professionally trained record managers, and lack of proper security of records ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Notwithstanding the staff rating the three least constructs as not too concerned as a major issue for records management at OMA, several authors believed that it plays an important role in the effective management of records.

McLeod, Sue and Hardiman (2011) and Wang, Chaudhry and Khoo (2008) opined that staff's involvement and cooperation with information technology applied ensures efficiencies of records management. Daum (2007) advised that there is a need for management support through effective communication and training on records management while Oliver and Foscarini (2014) indicated that the understanding of an organization's culture by its staff could facilitate the promotion of sound recordkeeping practices.

### 4. Conclusions

The success of most organizations is on their utilization of their assets to achieve their intended purposes. Information as a resource of an organization is not productive unless in a form of record irrespective of the form or type. Recorded information is a strategic asset. It makes direct, significant, and indispensable contributions to an organization's objectives, efficiency, and effectiveness. Records are organizational assets that need to be managed. Records are a basic tool of governance as it provides information for planning and decision-making which form the foundation for an organization's accountability.

The purpose of this paper was to examine staff knowledge on records management in the local governments of Ghana. The results on records management practices of OMA showed that staff's knowledge on the existence of policies and procedures for creating and storage of records at OMA was ranked first. This was followed by data privacy and security and; easy retrieval of records. These findings confirm with the literature, see among Cheng, (2018), Daum, (2007), and Norris (2002). The result indicated that the strength of the relationship between gender and records management (.756) was stronger than that of gender and storage office documents (.604). The result is not consistent with Bakare, Abioye, and Issa (2016). Working experience and storage of office documents had a stronger relationship (.786) better than (.629) between working experience and records management. This finding is consistent with the literature such as Oliver and Foscarini (2014) and Harris (2009). It can be concluded that on-the-job experience has effects on records management and storage of office documents.

The benefits of records management have quick decision making, data protection, and addressing client's issues were the three highest mean ranked as an agreement among the staff. This result supports the concerns of Read and Ginn (2007) and Cheng (2018). It can be concluded that records are critical to the operations of the assembly. It is of essence to state that the public will be expecting their local governments to maintain reliable and accurate documents as evidence of their decisions and actions. The three top challenges of records management were lack of backup facilities, inadequate storage equipment and confidentiality. This observation supports the views of Shepherd, Stevenson and Flinn (2009).

The paper suggests that OMA must intensify the need to communicate the importance of the policies and procedures of records management for its compliance. In maximizing the benefits of records management, OMA must take advantage of technology to support their records management. Management support, deployment of resources, and adequate training of staff on records management could be the solution to reduce the challenges of records management at OMA.

At the workplace, everyone relies on information to help them to work effectively and to build knowledge for themselves and their organization. This study contribution adds to and affirms the opinion of Shepherd (2006) that "although often taken for granted and under-resourced, records are key organizational assets which need to be protected and exploited so that they play their full part in ensuring the continuation of a democratic, transparent and accountable organization". The benefits of effective management of records are to the advantage of individual users, organizations, and society as a whole.

The limitation of the study was not getting the opportunity to interview key Senior Staff on the challenges of records management at the local level be it internal or external to the business of the Assembly. The scope can be enlarged in terms of participants, studying more than one Municipal Assembly and other indicators influencing effective management of records. This study offers future research that could consider a qualitative study by interviewing Executives of the Municipal Assemblies on their views on records management and resource allocation for its implementations and sustainability.

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