

**THE MANAGEMENT OF PENSION RECORDS AT
BOTSWANA PUBLIC OFFICERS PENSION FUND:
IMPLICATIONS ON ACCESS TO PENSION FUND.**

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INTRODUCTION

- Every organisation creates personnel records which document personal details of employees such as; first appointment, transfer and promotions, retiring benefits, salaries, taxes paid, and contributions to pension funds (IRMT, 1999).
- Amina (2011) observes that personnel records often pose one of the greatest challenges because of their bulk, longevity and sensitivity as they are mostly poorly organized and under utilised.

INTRODUCTION CONT.....

- Keeping records in good order is required for the proper delivery of every pension arrangement as it also makes business sense to do so regardless of the type of arrangement.
- The quality of record keeping has a huge impact on all aspects of administration of pension schemes. The providers, members, administrators, trustees, actuaries, auditors, advisers and employees all have an interest in the schemes records (The Pension Regulator, 2010).

INTRODUCTION CONT.....

- Despite attempts to improve the management of public sector records worldwide, problems persist in the way pension records are managed.
- Takayama (2009) indicates that there were serious pension record-keeping problems in Japan resulting in the failure by the government to integrate 50 million pension records into a unified pension numbering system. As a result, about 69,000 pension salaries records were suspected to be fraudulent.
- Poor records management keeping may lead to poor data and thus the pension administrator may be unable to provide up-to-date member data when required. Paying the correct benefits can be difficult, and in extreme cases, it may be impossible to unwind errors if they are uncovered too late.

INTRODUCTION CONT.....

- Failure to keep adequate basic records could also be characterised as a failure to maintain adequate internal controls (The Pensions Regulator, 2010).
- Most government institutions in Africa have chaotic records and information management systems such as misfiling and flying papers which gaps in personnel files. It also frustratingly takes too long for records staff to retrieve files and administrators are forced to take decisions on an ad hoc basis.
- Citizens suffer from inadequate services and long delays, and their rights are not protected (World Bank, 2000).
- This is apparent in the public sector where many clients complaint that they are not paid on time or their particulars are not kept properly and sometimes lost.

INTRODUCTION CONT.....

- In many countries, government payroll systems have been inflated with 'ghost workers' or 'non-existent employees' who draw a salary belonging to someone else.
- This has impact also in issuing pension payments for retired public servants.
- Botswana too has had her share of problems with timely payment of pensions (Sunday Standard, 2008).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- According to Cain (1996), personnel files are one of the largest categories of records created by any organisation and they contain information that is important to the pension management process.
- Evidence from Tanzania and Uganda shows that Pension Funds in these countries have faced some records management problems which have resulted in delays in paying pensions.
- It has also surfaced in newspaper reports in Botswana that delays were at times realized in the paying of pension benefits by BPOPF

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM CONT.....

- In fact, during a preliminary investigation leading to this study, one of the respondents at BPOPF indicated that records management could be a contributing factor to long processing of pension benefits.
- This study seeks to find out how pension records are being managed by the Fund, in an attempt to curb irregularities with payments to retirees.
- Any improper management of these records could lead to serious problems as was noted by Takayama (2009) who indicated that the Japanese government suffered a national scandal in 2007 as a result of improper pension records management

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out policies and procedures governing the management of pension records at BPOPF.
- To evaluate records management processes used by BPOPF in the management of pension records.
- To assess as whether management of records adequately staffed and the records management qualifications that they possess.
- To determine the level of security at BPOPF.
- To find out whether there are any problems that hinder effective records management at BPOPF.

METHODOLOGY

- ✘ This study used in-depth interview Personal observations
- ✘ 16 respondents were selected and 14 of the 16 were interviewed yielding a response rate of (87.5%).
- ✘ The remaining two officers could not be interviewed because they were tied up with other official responsibilities.
- ✘ Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and notes were taken during the interview sessions.
- ✘ All the questions that were covered in the interview guide and personal observations were content analysed and presented in themes.

THEORETIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

- The theoretical foundation of this study is on the Records Life Cycle Model and Continuum Model.
- The record life cycle model was used as a guide to understand the creation of records, development of file and mail management tools, file classification, retention and disposal schedule for BPOPF. Through this the researcher was able to measure the current pension records management practices at BPOPF and to determine how they aided the pension processes.
- The Continuum model was adopted as it was applied during the creation because the records creators provides necessary details of authenticity, provenance of the document.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS

- The findings showed that 2 (14.3%) participants said that there was a records management policy in place and the policy was requested but not provided as this was confirmed by 12 (85.7%) participants who revealed that there was no records management policy.
- Participants were asked to state whether BPOPF had a records management manual. A response of 9 (64%) indicated that BPOPF was operating without documented guidelines or procedure manual on how to execute their responsibilities.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCESSES USED IN MANAGING RECORDS

- The findings of the study revealed that 9 (64%) participants tried to create records that documented all business activities in an adequate manner and they captured them in a record- classification system. They also indicated that they had instructions specifying the number of copies to be made after creation of correspondences.
- The study found out that 7 (50%) participants did not have list of activities for which records were to be created and did not take the time to create and capture complete and accurate records in a records classification system of the organization

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The findings of the study showed that records management was not included in the fund strategic plan. To confirm this, personal observations showed that strategic plan 2012/2013 did not include records management.
- A significant number of 10 (71.4%) respondents indicated that a functional file classification scheme approved in 2008 by senior management was in use while 4 (28.6%) respondents stated that the organization did not have a comprehensive file classification scheme.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- A follow up question was asked to outline disposal activities regularly undertaken and all participants 14 (100%) did not answer, hence the investigator concluded that there was no retention and disposal schedule at BPOPF. This was also confirmed by personal observations.
- Personal observations showed that file management tools were not used effectively, and only a few tools such as minute sheet and file movement cards were partially used in the organization while others were not in use at all as shown.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

THE ADEQUACY OF STAFF AND QUALIFICATIONS IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- The findings revealed that records management personnel were properly capacitated in terms of the adequacy of staff and qualifications. Personal observations indicated that the skills that they possessed were inadequate as they failed to set up an effective records management function at BPOPF including raising awareness among non- records staff.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

STORAGE AND SECURITY OF RECORDS

- A response of 11 (79%) indicated that they stored their records in the RMU and 3 (21%) revealed that they kept records in their offices so that they were only accessible to them, and indicated that they did not have sufficient space to store those records.
- This was confirmed by the personal observation that officers were not using RMU for storage purposes otherwise they would not experience the problem of insufficient records storage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study recommends the development of records management policy which will provide authority for the development and implementation of a records management programme that will ensure the creation and maintenance of authentic, reliable, complete and useable records capable of supporting business functions and activities for as long as they are needed .
- This study also recommends the formation of a records management committee comprising of heads of divisions. BPOPF should speed up the process of developing records retention and disposal schedule to ensure timely disposal of records of no value, file classification scheme and procedure manual so as to be able to control and manage all records and prevent unauthorized removal and destruction of records.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In addition, the study recommends the creation of an in-house records centre for all semi-current and non-current records. This will create adequate space for current records and facilitate retrieval of records.
- In-house records Centre will save costs of storing records in commercial records centres.
- The study recommends that records management personnel be taken for further studies.
- However, the training should consider qualities that would allow practical skills needed in meeting the growing challenges of managing records in the ever changing environment of technological development.

THE END

THANK YOU