

**EFFECTS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT ON THE EFFICIENCY OF THE
PROCUREMENT FUNCTION: CASE OF COAST GENERAL HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of records management on the efficiency of procurement function at in an organization. Basing on the following objectives; to establish how proper record keeping influence procurement functions , to analyze the effects of ease of records retrieval of records on efficiency of procurement function , to establish how records help in liaison with internal and external stakeholders in procurement and to determine the best way to manage records and achieve procurement efficiency. The study adopted a descriptive research design to analyze the effects of ease of records retrieval of records on efficiency of purchasing function. The findings revealed that poor record management practices affected procurement efficiency in organizations to a great extent. The study therefore recommends that the firms adequate controls should be put in place by introduction of electronic data management software for managing records in liaison with these both internal and external stakeholders should be connected to the electronic data software for transparency and efficiency.

Key Words: *records management, procurement, Coast General Hospital*

Introduction

As of 2005, records management has increased interest among corporations due to new compliance regulations and statutes. While Governments, legal, health care and other private sector entities have a strong historical record management discipline, the general purchase record keeping at Coast general Hospital has been wanting. According to Lysons (1996), he says that most financial misappropriation in purchasing are related to poor record keeping practices as it happened in Morgan Stanley. Privacy and data protection have become issues of interest for

record managers whose role is to aid in protection of organizations records. The need to ensure that certain information about individuals is not retained has brought greater focus to record retention schedules and record destructions. The most significant issue is implementing the required changes to individual and corporate culture to derive the benefits to internal and external shareholders. It is important that the organization make profits through proper maintenance of records, creation of employment and generation of revenue. It has been argued that effective management of the purchasing function leads to more improvement in organizational efficiency. Record management systems are not always the core functions of businesses and organizations, yet these systems are crucial to the proper running of a company. Poor records management has very negative effects, both legally and for the well-being of the organization.

Procurement functions decisions are made with reference to company records. This means that without the proper documents, an organization risks making unfounded decisions resulting in losses, corruption and mismanagement. These results in spending too much time in locating misplaced files and can easily overwhelm an organization's capacity. Information overload will bring an organization to a standstill. Also Poor purchasing records management exposes you to legal consequences, due to non-compliance with tax regulations on records management.

However in the recent past, most organizations financial performance has been declining due to poor record keeping by procurement officers. Also documents belonging to suppliers disappear in the hands of the procurement officers even before payment is done. This can be attributed to lack or poor maintenance of records between the purchasing functions and other departments. The effects of poor purchasing records has been perceived by the government as demoralizing since it involves use of resources which cannot be accounted for. This study therefore, seeks to establish the effects of purchasing records on the efficiency of the purchasing functions.

General objective

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of procurement records on the efficiency of the procurement functions.

Specific objectives

1. To establish how proper record keeping influence purchasing functions at Coast General Hospital.
2. To analyze the effects of easy records retrieval on efficiency of purchasing function at Coast General Hospital.
3. To establish how records help in liaison with internal and external stakeholders in purchasing functions.
4. To determine the best way to manage records in purchasing functions.

Literature review

Classification theory

According to Anthony, J.H. (2002), any management activities, the ultimate goal aside, the basic requirements of the basic purposes or objects are to be managed to make ordering, file management, basic purpose is to make the ordering of the file, including file entity management and ordering. Information management would be a huge number of content files in the form of complex and diverse ways of ordering the specific lot, but the most basic way is classified, that is, "the general conduct of the archives division, division, divided into several levels, in part or in categories of different sizes, types, categories, and then these different parts, categories, types of the implementation of separate management." This is essentially all the management activities of human society are raising activities as well as the basic method. "Because so, "put general point, all the file management theory can be regarded as of 'significant' differences and disputes. From this, I will file classification as the foundation for building a database of file theory, which directly affects the direction of building a database file. Theorists in the file of logic and history of the Classification of Marxism generally accepted ideas. According to the general characteristics of the file and the basis for classification, according to a strict division of formal logic to the classification of thoughts, such as in accordance with the retention, security classification, etc. division.

Contingency theory

Lutans (2011) suggested that: Organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environmental circumstances; there is no one best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with. Management must be concerned, above all else, with achieving alignments and good fits. Different types or species of organizations are needed in different types of environments. According to these models, the effectiveness of a decision procedure depends upon a number of aspects of the situation: the importance of the decision quality and acceptance; the amount of relevant information possessed by the leader and subordinates; the likelihood that subordinates will accept an autocratic decision or cooperate in trying to make a good decision if allowed to participate; the amount of disagreement among subordinates with respect to their preferred alternatives (Morgan, 2007). Contingency theory asserts that when managers make a decision, they must take into account all aspects of the current situation and act on those aspects that are key to the situation at hand. Basically, it's the approach that "it depends." For example, the continuing effort to identify the best leadership or management style might now conclude that the best style depends on the situation. If one is leading troops in the Persian Gulf, an autocratic style is probably best (of course, many might argue here, too). If one is leading a hospital or university, a more participative and facilitative leadership style is probably best (Lutans, 2011).

Systems theory

Systems theory has had a significant effect on records management and understanding of records in organizations. Systems share feedback among each of these four aspects of the systems. (Rudolf, 2011). Let's look at an organization where inputs would include resources such as raw materials, money, technologies and people. These inputs go through a process where they're planned, organized, motivated and controlled, ultimately to meet the organization's goals. Outputs would be products or services to a market. Outcomes would be enhanced quality of life or productivity for customers/clients, productivity. Systems theory may seem quite basic. Yet, decades of management training and practices in the workplace have not followed this theory. Only recently, with tremendous changes facing organizations and how they operate, have educators and managers come to face this new way of looking at things. This interpretation has brought about a significant change (or paradigm shift) in the way management studies and approaches organizations. Information maintained in purchasing information record is used as a default in documents such as purchase orders. Purchasing record should contain precise information about vender and materials that the purchasing department has already procured from that vender (Lysons, 2006).

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualizes on the efficiency of the procurement function, the dependent variable, which is measured in terms of proper record keeping, easy retrieval of records and liaison with internal and external stake holders; the independent variables, have an effect on the procurement function. Record keeping is measured though adequacy and reliability, while Records retrieval is measured through aspects like timeliness. The researcher also conceptualizes that Liaison with both internal and external stakeholders has an effect on the effectiveness and reliability of procurement.

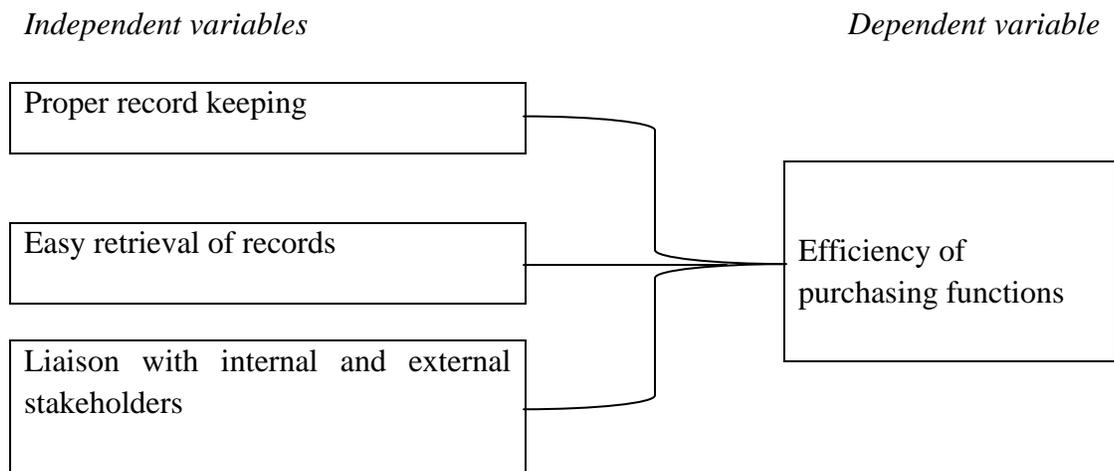


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Proper record keeping

According to Lysons (2006), keeping accurate and up-to-date records is vital to the success of any business. The business must realize that records kept will be one of the most important management tools it possesses and, therefore, it should be allocated due importance. Many business owners invest a lot of time and effort into the running of their business and yet fail to realize the importance of maintaining good documentation. The business owner is looking for the maximum return from their investment and the maintaining of good records is part of that equation.

For the business to achieve its success and profit, it is necessary for the scores to be kept, as it were. Keeping records is really like score keeping - if you went to a football game where no one kept the score, you would have to ask "what was the point of that whole exercise?" By keeping the score you are able to work out who is winning and whether you are winning at all. Many people do not know the "current score" of their own business because they have failed to realize the importance of keeping good and adequate records (Lysons, 2006).

Any record keeping system should be accurate, reliable, easy to follow, consistent as to the basis used and be very simple. Good record keeping is vital in regards to meeting the financial commitments of the business and providing information on which decisions for the future of the business can be based. While the business maintains records to monitor and record its normal business activities, it is also necessary because of obligations under the taxation laws (Baily, 1985).

According to Lysons (2006), keeping clear and accurate records will contribute to the success of your business in the following ways: Assists you in preparing your financial statements quickly and accurately, Provides information to enable the control of cash in the business, Provides management information to base business decisions on, Contributes promptly to assessing the financial situation of the business at any time, Saves a lot of time and effort, Keeps a good track of the costs of staff and their performance, Measures the business performance against the projections that were originally set down in the business plan, Highlights quickly areas where problems could arise and enable remedies to be put in place, Fulfills the obligations as to taxation law, Assists you in calculating how much tax you have to pay, Assists in providing information required by your bankers, Helps in detecting thefts within the business itself, Provides valuable information and details for the future sale of your business where that is required and increases the chances of the business operating and achieving success.

Easy retrieval of records

According to Dobler (1982), the user desire is for immediate availability of all materials. Stores and spares which may be required under any circumstance, worth to risk whatsoever failure. Therefore, it is important to put in place a good record system that can help the whole process of recording by ensuring that the process is fast and reliable with reduction of stock outs to the

minimum. This is only possible if the other system put in place is efficient and can handle the process effectively.

He adds when records are well managed, their retrieval becomes easier. Records management programs must manage organizational information so that it is timely, accurate, complete, cost-effective, accessible and useable. Better information, at the right time, makes better business. Records management programs are not generally an organization's primary business, and even though RM programs don't usually generate income, the following are the most important reasons to set up a good records management program in your office anyway.

According to Dobler (1982), ease of records retrieval results into the following advantages:

1. Provide every efficient "High-speed" retrieval
2. Simplicity: The network model is conceptually simple and easy to design.
3. Ability to handle more relationship types: The network model can handle the one-to-many and many-to-many relationships.
4. Ease of data access: In the network database terminology, a relationship is a set. Each set comprises of two types of records.- an owner record and a member record, In a network model an application can access an owner record and all the member records within a set.
5. Data Integrity: In a network model, no member can exist without an owner. A user must therefore first define the owner record and then the member record. This ensures the integrity.
6. Data Independence: The network model draws a clear line of demarcation between programs and the complex physical storage details. The application programs work independently of the data. Any changes made in the data characteristics do not affect the application program.

Liaison with internal and external stakeholders

According to Saffady (2005),controlling inventories requires much more than controlling individual supply transaction which, while essential feature of any inventory control system will not in itself ensure the availability of the right amount of stock in the right place and at the right time. Effective controls by use of electronic systems begin with the development of plans against which the actual performance can be compared. Management of records is important being that the issue of stock is crucial to any organization.

According to Baily and Jonnes (1998), retailers and wholesalers see records as the central feature of their business. What they sell from their records is what they buy and they aim to sell from recorded stock rather than from future deliveries which have not yet arrived. Goods should always be available whenever they are needed if sales are going to be made by the organization.

Records help us to liaise with internal and external stakeholders in the following ways:

1. **To Reduce Operating Costs:** According to Dearstyne (2008), recordkeeping requires administrative dollars for filing equipment, space in offices, and staffing to maintain an organized filing system (or to search for lost records when there is no organized system).
2. **To Improve Efficiency and Productivity:** According to Dionne (2009), time spent searching for missing or misfiled records are non-productive. A good records management program can help any organization upgrade its recordkeeping systems so that information retrieval is enhanced, with corresponding improvements in office efficiency and productivity. A well designed and operated filing system with an effective index can facilitate retrieval and deliver information to users as quickly as they need it.
3. **To Assimilate New Records Management Technologies:** According to Mcleod (2005), a good records management program provides an organization with the capability to assimilate new technologies and take advantage of their many benefits. Investments in new computer systems don't solve filing problems unless current manual recordkeeping systems are analyzed (and occasionally, overhauled) before automation is applied.
4. **To Ensure Regulatory Compliance:** According to Lysons (2006), in terms of recordkeeping requirements, the United States is the most heavily regulated country in the world. These laws can create major compliance problems for businesses and government agencies since they can be difficult to locate, interpret and apply. The only way an organization can be reasonably sure that it is in full compliance with laws and regulations is by operating a good records management program which takes responsibility for regulatory compliance, while working closely with the Office of General Counsel. Failure to comply with laws and regulations could result in severe fines, penalties or other legal consequences.
5. **To Minimize Litigation Risks:** According to Bailey (1995), business organizations implement records management programs in order to reduce the risks associated with litigation and potential penalties. This can be equally true in Government agencies. A consistently applied records management program can reduce the liabilities associated with document disposal by providing for their systematic, routine disposal in the normal course of business.
6. **To Safeguard Vital Information:** According to Dobler (2004), every organization, public or private, needs a comprehensive program for protecting its vital records and information from catastrophe or disaster, because every organization is vulnerable to loss. Operated as part of the overall records management program, vital records programs preserve the integrity and confidentiality of the most important records and safeguard the vital information assets according to a "Plan" to protect the records.
7. **To Support Better Management Decision Making:** According to Burton (1983), in today's business environment, the manager that has the relevant data first often wins, either by making the decision ahead of the competition, or by making a better, more informed decision. A records management program can help ensure that managers and executives have the information they need when they need it. By implementing an

enterprise-wide file organization, including indexing and retrieval capability, managers can obtain and assemble pertinent information quickly for current decisions and future business planning purposes.

8. **To Preserve the Corporate Memory:** According to Saffady (2004), an organization's files contain its institutional memory, an irreplaceable asset that is often overlooked. Every business day, you create the records which could become background data for future management decisions and planning. These records document the activities of the Agency which future scholars may use to research the workings of the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1990's.
9. **To Foster Professionalism in Running the Business:** According to Dearstyne (2008), a business office with files askew stacked on top of file cabinets and in boxes everywhere, creates a poor working environment. The perceptions of customers and the public, and "image" and "morale" of the staff, though hard to quantify in cost-benefit terms, may be among the best reasons to establish a good records management program.

Empirical literature / Critical review

According to Dobler (2004), who did a study on assessing effectiveness of inventory control methods increasing efficiency in the beverage industry? His objectives were identifying the method of inventory control in use, determining effectiveness of the inventory control methods employed by the company, establishing the problem encountered by the company in relation to inventory control methods in order to increase the efficiency of the company.

According to Lysons (2006), he found that they frequently fund their favorite brand that's lacking in the vendor outlets which leads them to stock outs and shortages in the processing plant. He concluded that the processing experienced acute shortage of products; in that the company had no clear policy on the stock management for restocking was within and small orders were expensive and there was poor relationship with vendors. He recommended that a clear policy on stock control to be implemented.

According to the study undertaken by Burton (1983), the following were found to contribute to safety and security of materials in the stores: His findings were 32.8% respondents stated displacement in documentation process, 27.7% revealed the expensive items in the stores was the major factor that influence stores security and safety system 14.5% revealed that corruption among the personnel in charge of different sections of the stores, 12.6% stated that non-involvement of the security personnel while issuing and receiving stock was also the contributing factor that influences stores security and safety systems. He concluded that the company needed to put proper security and safety measures to minimize chances of stock losses and proper records also need to be kept to avoid pilferage while handling goods or working. His recommendation showed that was for the company could avoid huge financial losses due to insecurity and lack of following safety procedures the store department should consider ensure

security sections are regularly inspected. The employers should be provided with protective garments, gates and fences for security purpose.

According to Biruri (2007), who dealt on the evaluation of the impacts of Information technology effectiveness on procurement operation in a Government Parastatals. His objectives were analyzing traditional procurement operation, investigating the reasons why information technology was introduced and challenges faced when implementing information technology and also to give recommendation, his findings were that the activities were carried out manually and also to replace traditional operation due to its inefficiency. Challenges faced included financial problems, resistance from staff and availability of infrastructure.

His recommendation were that the organization needed to do more in Information Technology section needed training of staff and to upgrade systems. He concluded that traditional operation methods used were slow and Information Technology which was fast and effective if implemented the findings were appreciated by the staff of procurement department appreciated the introduction of Information Technology

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the researcher used descriptive research design to get the description of effects of purchasing records management on efficiency of purchasing function in coast General hospital. This design involves describing of the characteristics of particular pronominal by seeking to ensure question like what, when and therefore the research was consider it to be the most appropriate method to determine the effects of purchasing records management on efficiency of procurement function.

Target Population

According to Kumar (2005), target population is “totality of cases of people, organizations, or institutions which pose certain common characteristics that are relevant to the study.” The target population of the study was the procurement unit at the Coast General Hospital. The study was conducted among 30 employees of procurement department in the hospital. The employees were sampled for the study given that they are the Authority to Incur Expenditure; and thus were in a strategic position to provide information sought in this study. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher used stratified random sampling technique because it enabled generalization of a large population with a margin of error that is statically determinable and also gave the employees equal opportunity to participate. Therefore the researcher considered a sample of 30 employees.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were used in the study. The questionnaires were hand delivered and collected after a few days. The types of questions used were both open and closed and closed ended. Closed ended questions were used to ensure that the given answers are relevant. The researcher phrased the questions clearly in order to make clear dimensions along which respondents were able to analyze. In open ended questions, space was provided for relevant explanation to be provided by the respondents to offer them freedom to express their feelings. This method was considered effective to the study in that it created confidentiality. The presence of the researcher was not needed as the questionnaires were self administered. A pilot study was conducted using questionnaires to be administered to the respondents. Those questions that were not clear or are ambiguous were revised so as to collect the desired information.

Data processing and Analysis

The Questionnaires from the respondents were edited to ensure completeness, accuracy and consistency. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics which includes tables, bar graphs, percentage and charts. According to the response that was given analysis was done to investigate on the effects of basic records, manual systems, electronic systems and managing physical records on efficiency of purchasing function.

Research Findings and Discussions

General information was gathered based on the gender, designation of respondents and their length of service in the institutions and the level of education. Findings indicated that 56% of respondents were male whereas 44% were female. This shows that most of the people working in this institution are male response margin is slightly higher than that of their female counterparts. Findings showed that fewer employees are in the age bracket of 36 – 45. This is the prime age of human beings hence the most productive, with a close range in age bracket 18 – 25 years. It was evident that most of the respondents were Operational staff at 45%. The top level management had lesser respondents and only 2 respondents were available each from the posts of operations manager and relationship officer, Middle level and general workers were 4 from each category. There were no respondents who had worked in the institution for less than 2 years. It indicates that most of them, 83%, have worked for more than 6 years while 17% have worked between 2 to 5 years. 50% of the respondents had Degree and above, 32% had Diploma, 10% had Certificate and 8% had other qualifications. It was revealed that majority of employees were Degree level holders and above whereas the minority had other qualification in different fields. 92% of the respondents agreed that purchasing records are used in purchasing functions while 8% did not agree. Findings indicated that out of the 100% response, 68% of respondent believe purchasing records had an excellent usage as reference and 25% believed to have a good contribution, 5% believe it had a fair contribution only 2% of respondents had a negative view of

use sage of purchasing records. Out of the 18 respondents 14 of them admitted that that department embraces electronic records at all levels while 4 of respondents disagreed with the statement. From the respondents 52% agree electronic records had a larger influence, 44% said they had a bigger influence, 2% said they had less influence and 2% said they had no any influence. A high percentage (70%) of the respondents agrees the electronic records effects on purchasing functions while a total of 30% of respondent did not agree. Out of the total respondents 8% practice manual record keeping at all levels while 92% practiced electronic record keeping. From the findings 14% of the employees have served less than 2 years, 28% had served for between 2 and 5 years, while 58% had retained their jobs for over 6 years.

Summary of Findings

The analyses of the findings clearly indicate that purchasing records management programs must manage organizational information so that it is timely, accurate, complete, cost-effective, accessible and useable. Better information, at the right time, makes better business. Purchasing records management programs are not generally an organization's primary business, and even though Record management programs don't usually generate income, the following are the most important reasons to set up a good records management program in your office anyway.

Despite decades of using various non-paper storage media, the amount of paper in our offices continues to escalate. An effective records management program addresses both creation control (limits the generation of records or copies not required to operate the business) and records retention (a system for destroying useless records or retiring inactive records), thus stabilizing the growth of records in all formats. Record keeping requires administrative dollars for filing equipment, space in offices, and staffing to maintain an organized filing system (or to search for lost records when there is no organized system).

Time spent searching for missing or misfiled records are non-productive. A good records management program can help any organization upgrade its recordkeeping systems so that information retrieval is enhanced, with corresponding improvements in office efficiency and productivity. A well designed and operated filing system with an effective index can facilitate retrieval and deliver information to users as quickly as they need it.

A good records management program provides an organization with the capability to assimilate new technologies and take advantage of their many benefits. Investments in new computer systems don't solve filing problems unless current manual recordkeeping systems are analyzed (and occasionally, overhauled) before automation is applied.

The only way an organization can be reasonably sure that it is in full compliance with laws and regulations is by operating a good records management program which takes responsibility for regulatory compliance, while working closely with the Office of General Counsel. Failure to

comply with laws and regulations could result in severe fines, penalties or other legal consequences.

Business organizations implement records management programs in order to reduce the risks associated with litigation and potential penalties. This can be equally true in Government agencies. A consistently applied records management program can reduce the liabilities associated with document disposal by providing for their systematic, routine disposal in the normal course of business.

Conclusions

The limited literature available on sustainable purchasing records is often weighted towards environmental aspects of sustainable purchasing functions, as the social aspects of sustainable purchasing records are not yet as well developed. Every organization, public or private, needs a comprehensive program for protecting its vital records and information from catastrophe or disaster, because every organization is vulnerable to loss. Operated as part of the overall records management program, vital records programs preserve the integrity and confidentiality of the most important records and safeguard the vital information assets according to a "Plan" to protect the records.

In today's business environment, the manager that has the relevant data first often wins, either by making the decision ahead of the competition, or by making a better, more informed decision. A records management program can help ensure that managers and executives have the information they need when they need it. By implementing an enterprise-wide file organization, including indexing and retrieval capability, managers can obtain and assemble pertinent information quickly for current decisions and future business planning purposes.

Recommendations

Basing on the conclusion drawn from the major findings, the researcher suggested that further studies should be carried out on the effects of purchasing records and their effects on purchasing functions. Further research should also be conducted to analyze the effects of easy records retrieval on efficiency of purchasing function at Coast General Hospital, the researcher recommended that the hospital should introduce electronic data management software for managing its records. This is because records stored electronically are easily retrievable whenever needed. To establish how records help in liaison with internal and external stakeholders in purchasing functions. The researcher recommend that both internal and external stakeholders should be connected to the electronic data software for easier liaison with each other thus efficiency of purchasing functions.

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