



## A Model for Effective Management of Students Records in the Academic Registrars' Offices in Kenyan Universities

Metto Elizabeth<sup>1</sup>  
Benson N. Kinuthia, PhD<sup>3</sup>  
Prof. Miriam Mwitwa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (jepkorireliza@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (bagenim@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (kinuthiabn@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*The delivery of records management services in businesses is significantly influenced by records management models. However, many colleges do not take into account the implementation models while designing records management programs. To provide a model that universities can utilize to execute records management, this study examined the records management methods used by the universities in Kenya. Data was gathered via a questionnaire. The findings show that the model that can be proposed to ensure effective management of student records in the academic registrar's office in Kenyan universities should take cognizance of the differences between public and private universities. In old and new universities, there is no need for standardization of creation and classification of records, storing records, and disposal of records. Conversely, there was no need for the creation and classification of records, storing records, adoption of information technology, challenges faced in the management of student records, and disposal of records in old and new universities. However, with the adoption of information technology, challenges faced in the management of student records and retrieval and communication of records should be harmonized between both private and public universities as well as old and new universities. Exchange of best practices in these areas should also be undertaken in these areas. In the areas where there is no need for standardization, the universities should look outside the university ecosystem for improvements since the practices they were undertaking were similar in their category i.e. public/private and old/new. Once these areas are addressed, the effective management of students' records in the universities would be realized.*

**Keywords:** Model for Effective Management; Students Records; Academic Registrars' Offices; Kenyan Universities

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of technology has made the registrar's office a technology hub and partner to IT (Babu & Ma, 2018). This requires the personnel responsible for record-keeping in the office to be armed with appropriate skills and knowledge to effectively implement best practices in students' record management policy (Wangui, 2018). This however could still be a challenge given that there is no single international comprehensive education and training model to cater to the various groups of record keepers (Serdyukov, 2017). In support, Crystal (2017) demonstrated the diversity that existed in the African continent both the variety of institutions as well as the types of qualifications offered in archives and records management. The lack of a standardized education and training model for record keepers jeopardizes the management of records in both government and non-governmental organizations not only in developing countries but also in developed ones.

Records management is based on administrative and legal necessity and is connected to the workflow (Rotich, Mathangani, & Nzioka, 2017). This is particularly important for academic institutions because it is required that certain students' records be preserved for years and others for infinite periods. An academic organization can only ensure its success by maintaining secure and well-organized student records.

According to Gilliland (2018), records management is the area of management tasked with the systematic oversight of the production, upkeep, utilization, and destruction of documents. While agreeing with the authors, Gilliland & Mckemmish (2018) go on to say that records management is the discipline of using tried-and-true strategies and procedures to govern information sources that come from within an organization as a result of its operations. As a result, records management comprises accurate recording, sufficient filing and storage methods, retrieval, and retention/disposal plans for records.

Student academic records kept by the registrar's office are those of students that have been admitted and are yet to report, the continuing students, and the alumni. These records require confidentiality and integrity and should be availed only to authorized persons including students, parents/guardians, and senior administrative officials within the institution as well as to outside parties such as accreditation commissions and government agencies (Danver, 2016).



Disorganization in the management of student records in the academic registrar's office can be a great challenge to a university given the expectations of the digital age of accuracy, speed, and accessibility of service which continues to increase dramatically making students of today's demand for instantaneous service both in person and online (Matthew, 2019). Aside, we are living in a period characterized by rampant corruption in all public sectors, and universities are not an exemption. Some of these institutions have even issued fake academic degrees (Wanzala, 2017). Mosweu and Rakemane (2020) opine that corruption is a result of poor records management. Proper management of records, therefore, stands as a major step toward sealing loopholes leading to this terrible monster that can devour a society (Katekwe & Mutsagondo, 2018).

To guarantee efficiency and effectiveness and to enable organizations including universities to survive in the accountability period in which we live, records must be actively managed throughout their life cycle. This is only possible if senior management fully supports and engages junior staff at all organizational levels in the management of records, which requires strong legal and policy frameworks (Muthoni, 2018). To establish accountability and ownership, the management at the highest level of the company should collaborate with users (employees) when developing the management policy, for instance (Kamau, 2017). Otherwise, consumers might not perceive the need to adhere to a policy that was created without taking into account their requirements and interests.

Contrary to the above expectation, in some organizations, top administration and record managers and their teams have not always worked together. An example is a report by Katekwe and Mutsagondo (2017) which indicated that the top management in public departments in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe did not prioritize records management activities and neither did they involve records users in decision making. Shehu (2017) suggests that for effective records management in an organization, the records management policy should be endorsed by senior management and be made readily available to staff at all levels of the organization.

Shehu (2017) asserts that an effective records management framework should include information-related laws, policies, and programs, records management standards and practices, and the qualified personnel required to develop and administer the systems. The roles and duties of persons involved in the records management program should also be specified. According to Osebe et al. (2018), a university's records management policy should specify how records and information are created, used, maintained, protected, preserved, and disposed of.

University-based research has revealed difficulties with record management. As an illustration, consider a study Maluleka, Nkwe, and Ngoepe (2018) conducted in South Africa to determine the degree to which academics and students at a renowned university managed electronic documents in accordance with best practices and legal requirements. The study found that little is still known about how academics and students in South Africa manage electronic documents and follow laws governing electronic communication.

Another study done by Khumalo and Chigariro (2017) revealed that The National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe still has a long way to go with respect to day-to-day records management. No formal records management system that deals with either paper-based or electronic documents like emails were found, with the exception of the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which is an Enterprise Management System. Even though the university employs individuals to serve as records officers, it didn't appear to have any formal policies or competent records management practitioners.

According to Rotich, Mathangani, and Nzioka (2017), there are undeniable benefits to the quick developments in current information and communication technology, but there are also enormous obstacles. The reliability of electronic information is a major concern. This poses a number of issues, including the ability to reliably verify the provenance of electronic messages, the infrastructure required for safe transmission of electronic information, and the viability of ensuring that a message's contents were not changed during transmission.

Malake and Phiri (2020) reveal that there was no defined system of record keeping for complete and easy channeling so that records are always readily available on demand among Zambian institutions. Some respondents in this study were concerned that it could sometimes take up to a month to prepare a student's transcript. Further, the study revealed that in many cases, records were lost. The study identified the problems experienced in record keeping in Zambian universities as storage, retrieval, loss of files, illegal removal of pages from records, illegal alteration of records, unqualified and unfit persons manning records, installation of outdated computers, inadequate computer repairers and public access to records, etc. Other problems pointed out by the study were; threats of viruses eating up student records and loss of files through fires set by dubious workers.

### **1.1 Statement Problem**

Effective record management in the universities is essential to good governance and effective administration. It serves as the foundation for developing policies, allocating resources, and ensuring the provision of services. The establishment of an orderly system, allows an organization to successfully and efficiently carry out its functions by making information easy to access and facilitating the efficient flow of information. So, according to Mosweu &



Rakemane (2020), a better records management program built on organizational-wide techniques can deter corruption and advance openness.

This means that to guide the right administration of documents and prevent unethical behaviour, effective records management systems are essential (Masenya, 2020). In order to improve records management for better service delivery, information and communication technologies, such as electronic records management programs, have been widely adopted (Liah & Balulwami, 2018). Despite the fact that records management models are readily available and offer considerable potential for the efficient management of recorded information, fraud, resource mismanagement, and blatant corruption are nevertheless widespread worldwide problems. As a result, it is necessary to investigate a new model for managing records in organizational departments. If effectively implemented, the model should make it easier to handle records in an agile and effective manner, which is essential for efficient university operations and accountability.

## 1.2 Research Questions

What is the best model that can be proposed to ensure effective management of student records in the academic registrar's office in Kenyan universities?

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The records life cycle model and the records continuum model, both developed by Philip Coolidge Brooks and Emmett J. Leahy of the US National Archives in the late 1930s, served as the foundation for this study. The life cycle model's proponents think that managing records is a linear process. They contend that a record has a similar life cycle to that of a living thing: it is made, it is maintained, it is used, and then it dies and is either destroyed or archived (Van-Bussel, 2017).

The idea that it is feasible to separate the life of a record into distinct stages forms the basis of the record's life cycle model (Matlala, Mpubane & Maphoto, 2020). By categorizing records into three phases—active or current, semi-active or semi-current, and inactive or non-current—Penn (1983) elaborated on this. In a university, records are born, preserved, and used (active or current records) for the administration of the office's daily tasks. They (the records) support decision-making and the performance of the administrative duties of the university. At this stage, student files are regularly updated in accordance with the student's academic activities.

Semi-active or semi-current records are records not often in use and occasional reference is made to them. After graduation, students' records in the registrar's office are seldom consulted. Such records occupy valuable spaces in the offices and should be transferred or kept in the records centre. However, such records should remain within reach for quick reference in case of any queries/demands from any of the stakeholders. While the records in this category should still be kept, it is efficient and effective to keep them aside from those in the active phase which are sought from time to time.

Records are further divided into active and non-active categories. These are documents that are not necessary for the university's ongoing operations. They should be destroyed because they are no longer needed (and are dead) (buried). Some of the inactive or out-of-date records, however, have enduring importance since they provide details about the operations and functions of the university. In the event of a disaster or other emergency that affects the institution's activities, they are crucial to the restoration and continuous operations of the university as well as to its growth and development. Because of this, extreme care should be taken in separating the data that should not be destroyed from those that have eternal worth.

The life circle model is important since it allows the office to be kept free of inactive documents, therefore, creating sufficient room for storage of current documents. It also makes it easy and quick to retrieve important administrative, financial and legal information. This helps also in identifying and preserving those of archival value.

This perspective was suitable for paper records since they could be created or received, stored, and used for reference until the time when they were not needed and they were then assessed for permanent storage in an archive because of their historical importance or for destruction. However, this does not suit electronic records which are currently overtaking paper records in importance because of their numerous advantages (Wangui, 2018). The management of electronic records is subject to and best supported by recordkeeping approaches that are articulated in records continuum models (Van-Bussel, 2017.). The continuum has four recurring actions that are repeated by the creating institution. These actions according to Sigauke, Nengomasha, and Chabikwa (2016) are; Identification of records that take place across the custodial domain of managing the records, intellectual control of records, provision of access to records, and the physical control of records.

Critiques of the records life cycle model including Atherton (1985) and Upward (nd) were against the demarcations that the model made between the different phases of the life of a record. To them the life of a record is



continuous, starting from the time it is generated to the time it is disposed to the archive for posterity or destroyed. Of the life-cycle approach to records management, Karabinos (2018) emphatically disapproves saying, "I believe the split between records management and archival phases of the life cycle is no longer acceptable". To affirm this, McKemish (2017), concludes that records management ought to be a consistent and coherent regime of the creation of records through to the preservation and use of records in the archives.

The supporters of the continuum theory do accept that, though the life-cycle concept has been useful in promoting a sense of order, a systematic approach, and overall management of recorded information, the strict adherence to its principles undermines any trend toward greater cooperation and coordination of archivists and records managers. According to them, it ignores the many ways in which records management and archives operations are interrelated and even intertwined.

The continuum theory's application encompasses the creation of records through transactions and processes, their visual capture, the organizing of corporate and individual memory for future generations, and the pluralization of collective memory (Muthoni, 2018). In other words, the life of a student's record continues from the time of admission when it is created to the time it is the archive. The roles of the record keeper and archivist are not demarcated but complementary. The continuum approach helps in addressing the accelerating complexity of change, novelty, and plurality that has been occasioned by technology. The integrated, process-centered approach has increasingly served as a better solution in the present world of complex recordkeeping and archiving (Weller, 2017).

According to Myburgh (2005), the continuum theory is a paradigm change in philosophy that fundamentally connects the duties of the archivist and records management. It acknowledges the connections between these roles. The concept of the continuum refers to how such records should be managed and the chain of accountability rather than the life span or lack thereof of a record (Weller, J. (2017), which according to Dodge (1997) has neither a fixed "time" nor "place"). The continuum approach is concerned with records that are moments or a thousand years old. Its framework can provide common understandings, consistent standards, unified best practice criteria, interdisciplinary approaches, and collaborations in the recordkeeping and archiving process for both the paper and the digital worlds.

The life cycle model's partition of the task between archivists and records managers was rejected by the continuum model. According to the continuum model, archivists must first make sure that the present records are accurately made and maintained if they are to have historical records to preserve. The approach emphasizes that record managers should have equal social duties in determining what is recorded and kept for the future because records eventually wind up in archives.

Records continuum management is not simply the addition of the two distinct responsibilities of records management and archives, which may have insurmountable disparities. Instead, it consists of a number of hazy phases. Instead, record keeping combines the skills of both professions, managing the development, storage, and eventual destruction of documents. The continuum theory promotes interaction between the two professions at pivotal times along the continuum, particularly at record generation and when the record is no longer active.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted in carrying out the study. The study targeted 49 chartered private and public universities in Kenya. The researcher classified the universities into private and public, and further, into two sets; those in the western region and eastern region of Kenya. The researcher then purposively chose in each region the youngest and the oldest public universities and similarly private universities. For this study data were collected using three different tools; semi-structured interview schedules, a focused group discussion guide, and questionnaires. The interviewees included; the academic Deans, HODs, and registrars. The focused group discussion was held with student representatives. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the academic deans, HODs, student representatives, and staff in the registrar's office. The questionnaires contained both closed and open-ended questions. The researcher sought to analyze documents including academic bulletins, letters and communication notes, and committee (academic standards, senate, etc.) minutes. The researcher issued 155 questionnaires to academic registers' office staff and 177 representatives of congress. At the same time, 53 deans of students, 53 HODs, and 8 academic registrars were sampled for interviews while 56 members of students' executive were sampled for FGDs. Among these, 53 (79.2%) deans, 46 (86.8%) HODs, 7 (87.5%) academic registrars, 142 (91.6%) academic registrar's office staff, 53(94.6%) executive students and 159 (89.8%) representatives of congress responded to the study. The overall response rate was 92.2%, which was deemed sufficient for analysis. Data for the research were analyzed in line with the research questions and hypothesis that guided the study. Data analyzed were presented using frequency tables, percentages, Mean scores ( $\bar{x}$ ), and Standard Deviation for research questions. The interview discussion was summarized and organized based on the purposes of the study. Inferential statistics was employed to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.



## IV. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Difference in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrars' Offices between Private and Public Universities

Wilcoxon W and Mann-Whitney U non-parametric tests were used to examine if there were any statistically significant differences in the management of student records in the academic registrar's office between private and public universities in Kenya. The findings were presented

**Table 1 Differences in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrar's Offices between Private and Public Universities According to Representatives of Congress**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>			
	Creation and Classification of Records	Storing Records	Retrieval and Communication of Records
Mann-Whitney U	2574.000	2128.500	2263.500
Wilcoxon W	7827.000	7381.500	3916.500
Z	-1.326	-3.528	-2.376
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.000	.018

a. Grouping Variable: Kind of university

At a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon W tests according to representatives of congress show that there were no statistically significant differences in the creation and classification of records between private and public universities ( $p=0.185$ ). However, there were statistically significant differences in storing records ( $p=0.000$ ) and retrieval and communication of records ( $p=0.018$ ). These findings are in line with the study by Adegboro (2020) that observed that there were differences in records management in government and private Nigerian universities.

**Table 2 Differences in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrar's Offices between Private and Public Universities According to Staff in Academic Registrar's Office**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>						
	Creation and Classification of Records	Storing Records	Retrieval and Communication of Records	Disposal of Records	Use of Information Technology	Challenges Faced in the Management of Student Records
Mann-Whitney U	1864.500	2326.000	2110.000	1973.500	1992.500	2011.500
Wilcoxon W	5692.500	3866.000	5938.000	5801.500	5820.500	5839.500
Z	-2.233	-.287	-1.194	-1.772	-1.689	-1.603
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.774	.232	.076	.091	.109

a. Grouping Variable: Kind of University

At a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), the findings show that there were statistically significant differences in the creation and classification of records between private and public universities ( $p=0.026$ ). However, there were no statistically significant differences in storing records ( $p=0.774$ ); retrieval and communication of records ( $p=0.232$ ); disposal of records ( $p=0.076$ ); use of information technology ( $p=0.091$ ), and challenges faced in the management of student records between private and public universities ( $p=0.109$ ). These findings are in line with the study by Adegboro (2020) that observed that there were differences in the record management in government and private Nigerian universities and that private universities were better in records management than government universities.

### 4.2 Difference in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrars' Offices between New and Old Universities According to Representatives of Congress

The study sought to find out if there was any statistically significant difference in the management of student records in the academic registrar's office between old and new universities. The findings are presented in the following section.



**Table 3 Differences in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrar's Offices between Old and New Universities According to Representatives of Congress**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>			
	Creation and Classification of Records	Storing Records	Retrieval and Communication of Records
Mann-Whitney U	2695.500	2713.500	3006.000
Wilcoxon W	5110.500	5128.500	7101.000
Z	-1.578	-1.716	-.354
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	.086	.724

a. Grouping Variable: Age of university

According to representatives of congress, there were no statistically significant differences between the management of records in old and new universities for all variables as follows: creation and classification of records ( $p < 0.115$ ); storing records ( $p < 0.086$ ), and; retrieval and communication of records ( $p < 0.724$ ).

**Table 4 Differences in the Management of Student Records in Academic Registrar's Offices between Old and New Universities According to Staff in Academic Registrars' Offices**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>					
Creation and Classification of Records	Storing Records	Retrieval and Communication of Records	Disposal of Records	Use of Information Technology	Challenges Faced in the Management of Student Records
1661.500	660.000	1796.500	1977.500	1040.000	1130.500
6512.500	1650.000	6647.500	6828.500	5891.000	5981.500
-2.203	-6.810	-1.601	-.795	-4.965	-4.544
.028	.000	.109	.426	.000	.000

a. Grouping Variable: Age of University

The findings from staff in the registrar's officers show that there were indeed statistically significant differences in the creation and classification of records ( $p = 0.028$ ); storing records ( $p = 0.000$ ); use of information technology ( $p = 0.000$ ) and challenges faced in the management of student records ( $p = 0.000$ ) between private and public universities. However, there were no statistically significant differences between retrieval and communication of records ( $p = 0.109$ ) and Disposal of Records ( $p = 0.426$ ). The findings show that the members of staff were of the opinion that there were differences in the way records were managed in the universities in line with the studies by Adegbore (2020).

#### 4.3 Challenges Facing the Academic Registrar's Office in Kenyan Universities

The academic registrar's office employees in their university were asked to rate how much they agreed with several statements that reflected the difficulties encountered in managing student records. The findings were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5 Challenges Facing the Academic Registrar's Office in Kenyan Universities**

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. The registrar's office has adequate staff capacity to handle student records	142	3.10	0.88
2. Staff in the academic registrar's office are trained in records management	142	2.85	0.77
3. I was given an orientation on my duties at the beginning of my tenure in the registrar's office	142	3.03	0.79
4. Staff in the academic registrar's office are provided with on-job-training to enhance skills in students record management	142	2.91	0.75
5. There is a policy guideline that guides records management in the registrar's office	142	2.03	0.86
6. Staff in the academic registrar's office are involved in developing policies that guide the management of student records in the academic registrar's office	142	1.32	1.00
7. I have a clear job description (duties are spelt out) that guides me in my job at the academic registrar's office	142	3.22	0.88
8. There are sufficient resources (computers, printers, cabinets, files, folders, etc.) in place to manage students' information.	142	1.57	0.85
9. There is an archive in our university	142	1.83	0.88

The respondents agreed that the registrar's office had adequate staff capacity to handle student records ( $M=3.10$ ) and that staff in the academic registrar's office were trained in records management ( $M=2.85$ ). The respondents went on to agree that they were given an orientation on their duties at the beginning of their tenure in the registrar's office ( $M=3.03$ ). They also agreed that the staff in the academic registrar's office were provided with on-job training to enhance skills in students' record management ( $M=2.91$ ). However, they disagreed that there was a policy guideline that guided records management in the registrar's office ( $M=2.03$ ). The staff agreed that they had a clear job description (duties are clearly spelt out) that guided them in their job at the academic registrar's office ( $M=3.22$ ). However, they strongly disagreed that staff in the academic registrar's office were involved in developing policies that guided the management of student records in the academic registrar's office ( $M=1.32$ ). This is a pointer to the presence of weak policies (Mwangi, 2017) and their domestication among staff in the registrars' offices. They also disagreed that there were sufficient resources (computers, printers, cabinets, files, folders, etc.) in place to manage students' information ( $M=1.57$ ) which corroborates the study by Adegboro (2020). Lastly, they disagreed that there was an archive in their university ( $M=1.83$ ). This agrees with the study by Weller (2017) who points out that archives are either lacking or inadequate to meet legal and administrative requirements.

The staff in the registrar's office were asked to mention the challenges they encountered in the academic registrar's offices in Kenyan universities. Various officials in the registrar's office responded to the question. They included administration assistants, clerks/assistant clerks, secretaries, registry officers/assistant registry officers, and data clerks. The findings show that the major challenges encountered were information breakdown from the registry. This made it hard for information to be retrieved promptly when needed. There were also problems with credit control which affected students. In other cases, some departments were non-conforming. This affected the registry's ability to adhere to the stipulated deadlines and guidelines. Complaints from students could thus arise due to delays. Another challenge was the lack of consultation and information sharing among registry staff. This led to delays and inability to work in a synchronized manner among members of staff. The ambiguity of data was another challenge. It made it impossible for data to be transmitted and shared promptly since the time was needed to clean it. There were also challenges related to upgrading tools to enhance improvement. These findings are in line with extant literature that identifies computers (Adegboro, 2020), training (Macaw & Margie, 2017), and delays in making replacements of broken items and machines as major challenges facing students' record management.

The representatives of congress were asked to indicate the challenges facing the academic registrar's office in Kenyan universities. Students holding various positions responded to the question. These included faculty of commerce chairperson, members, Secretaries of the academic committee, academic directors, presidents, vice-chairman, female special needs secretaries, male representatives, vice persons, speakers/deputy speakers, welfare officers, sports and entertainment directors, and sports directors among others. They highlighted the various challenges faced by students in their university that emanated from student academic records management in the academic registrar's office. These included issues with missing marks, issues of late registration, Some units not being available in the portal hence one is required to fill a form, a strong Wi-Fi connection lacking, the poor rapport between the registry and the faculty heads, some heads of the department not submitting their mark sheets, sometimes the



portals being unavailable/inaccessible due to a weak ICT infrastructure in some universities. This is in line with a study by Afriyie et al. (2020) that shows that many institutions are faced with a lack of enough ICT resources. Further, some students did not show up during records updating which made it hard for students' records to be up-to-date. Some students also deliberately failed to present necessary required documents for record-keeping.

There were also issues regarding students not being given the results achieved, late results, and fees recorded in the portal. Also, results in the portal could be hacked which necessitated the institution of more security. Other challenges included the system not being updated regularly, untimely retrieval of students records, lack of modern record-keeping methods, documents being handled by unauthorized persons, failure in the system (Afriyie et al., 2020), loss of sensitive documents, portal changing anytime hence loss of students records, poor network and access to the internet and a lot of missing marks in the system among others.

The academic deans, HODs, and academic registrars were asked to indicate the challenges they faced. In this regard, most of them said that there were numerous challenges. To begin with, some members of staff on permanent employment were often transferred by the administration to other departments. Staff on contract always moved away if their contracts were not renewed. This always left the Registrar's office with relatively new personnel. As a result, it remained largely untenable to ensure smooth operation of the offices. Records management had also not been appreciated as an important arm of the administration. It was not receiving the attention it should receive. Though there were many solutions and ideas, funding was the problem which is in line with the study by Mthembu & Ocholla (2019). Also, the courts of law and other investigative bodies require hard copies and not soft copies; this made it hard to completely move to electronic management of records. Additionally, the storage of records was (active files) done in different locations. This, therefore, made it difficult for the Registrar's office to monitor the management of records. Additionally, some registrars' offices were operating on a "skeleton of staff, instead of the required officers. In one instance, one of the offices had only 4 officers instead of the required 17. This underlines the gravity of the challenge of understaffing in the registrars' offices as pointed out by Mwangi (2017).

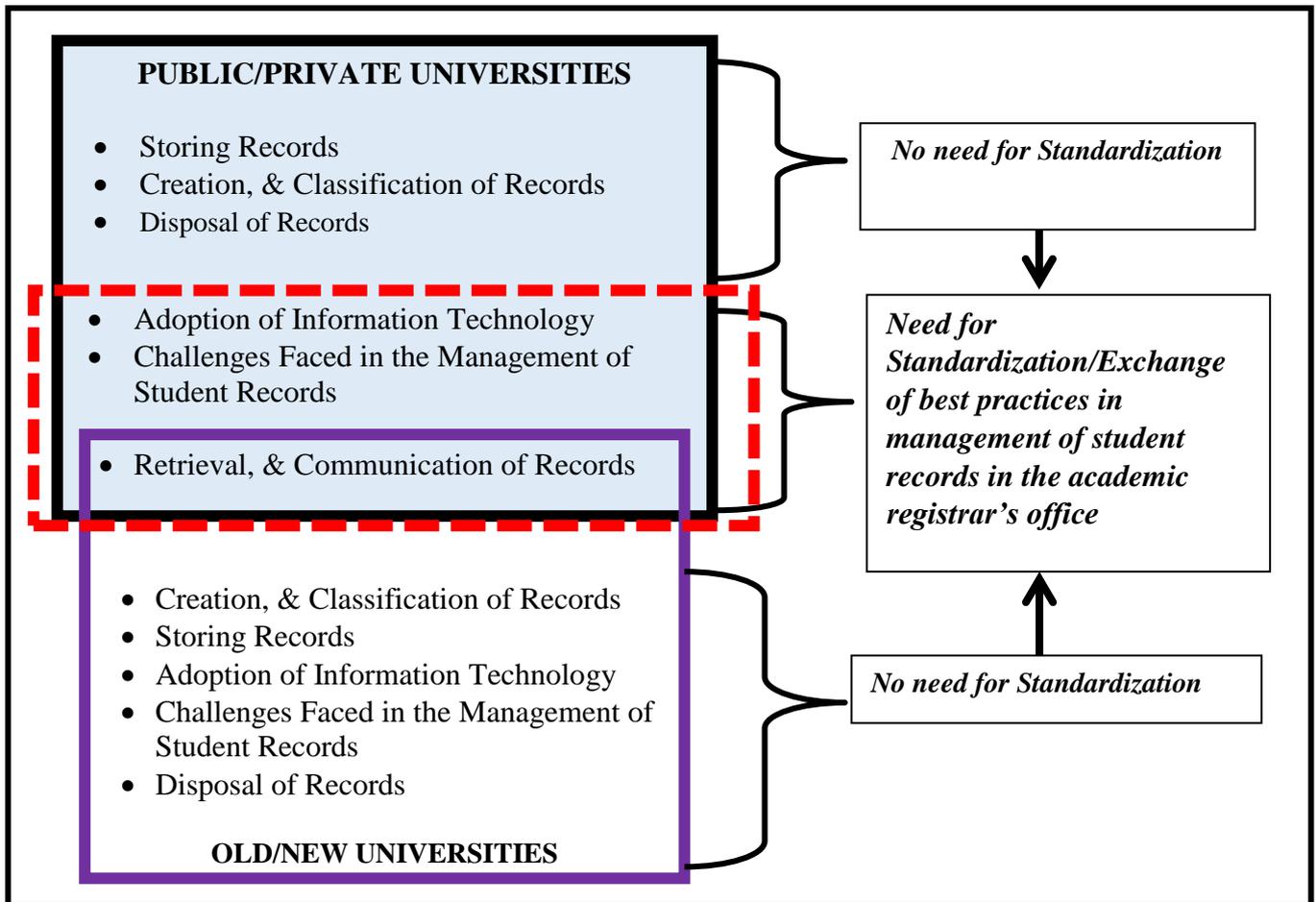
The students' executive officials were asked to indicate some of the challenges experienced by the academic register at their university. The findings show that tangible challenges were facing the registrars' offices. These included a lack of current record management infrastructure as well as poor or unstable use of ICT-based solutions (Afriyie et al., 2020). Some of the staff in the registrar's offices were not well trained, especially in the use of emergent technologies (Mutsagondo & Ngulube, 2019). Elaborate and outdated record management systems meant that students' records were often lost. In other cases, responding to students' queries took a lot of time due to understaffing. Lack of sufficient financing as posited by Touray (2021) also meant that upgrading record storage equipment in the registrar's offices remained an elusive goal.

The respondents were asked to give their suggestions on how records management could be improved in the registrar's office in their universities. One of the ways suggested was clear policies on record management explaining the "who, where, when and what" of record management. This could enhance easy tracking and retrieval of records in time. There was also a need to avail adequate financing for record management processes starting from record creation, storage, communication, and retrieval as well as disposal. This is in line with the study by Touray (2021) who underlines the importance of financing in record management.

The right equipment such as cabinets, safes, locks, fire-extinguishers, trolleys, etc. should be procured. Also, the university should develop and constantly upgrade recommended record management systems with extensive server capabilities to meet the needs of all students and other users. Members of staff should also be periodically trained (Mutsagondo & Ngulube, 2019) to strengthen their capacity to handle the changing demands of record management as most of it migrates online.

#### **4.4 A Model to Ensure Effective Management of Students Records in the Academic Registrars' Offices in Kenyan Universities**

Based on the study findings, the following model is proposed as presented in Figure 1. First and foremost, challenges faced by the academic registrar's offices in Kenyan universities in their quest to execute their responsibility of managing student academic records have resulted in poor adoption of technology, ineffective security of records, and ineffective communication of student academic information to stakeholders. This study is of the view that if universities, will fight the challenges in the registrar's office with the support of their administrations by developing policy guidelines based on professional principles of records management, then the registry will create and keep accurate student records and will also be able to effectively dispose of documents based on professional selection guidelines. It is a necessity that constant evaluation is often done at all levels to ensure the smooth running of the system while identifying weaknesses and strengths, new technologies in the field that could further improve the management of student academic records, and considering implementation of the findings. The whole process will remain a circle with no end.



**Figure 1 Model to Ensure Effective Management of Students' Records**

The findings show that the model that can be proposed to ensure effective management of student records in the academic registrar's office in Kenyan universities should take cognizance of the differences between public and private universities. In old and new universities, there is no need for standardization of creation and classification of records, storing records, and disposal of records. Conversely, there was no need for the creation and classification of records, storing records, adoption of information technology, challenges faced in the management of student records, and disposal of records in old and new universities.

However, with the adoption of information technology, challenges faced in the management of student records and retrieval and communication of records should be harmonized between both private and public universities as well as old and new universities. Exchange of best practices in these areas should also be undertaken in these areas. In the areas where there is no need for standardization, the universities should look outside the university ecosystem for improvements since the practices they were undertaking were similar in their category i.e. public/private and old/new. Once these areas are addressed, the effective management of students' records in the universities would be realized. The model aligns with the records' life cycle and the records continuum theoretical foundations that help simplify the complicated reality of record management so that it is easier for us to comprehend (Van-Bussel, 2017; Hoffman, 2019). As such, the linear and non-linear interactions of the various study variables in old and new and public and private universities are shown in a simplified schema.



## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the information gathered examined, and best practices assessed, this study made the following recommendations:

- The model proposes that universities will fight the challenges in the registrar's office with the support of their administrations by developing policy guidelines (s) based on professional principles of records management, and constant evaluation at all levels to ensure the smooth running of the system while identifying weaknesses and strengths, and adoption of new technologies that could further improve the management of student academic records.
- Challenges faced in the management of student records and retrieval and communication of records should be harmonized between both private and public universities as well as old and new universities. Exchange of best practices in these areas should also be undertaken in these areas.
- When an issue arises in the record system for best practice, the institutions of higher learning should develop a records authentication and authorization process to strengthen accountability.
- Once these areas are addressed, the effective management of students' records in the universities would be realized.

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