

Records Management Standards and Service Delivery in Kenyan TVET Institution: case study of Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of inadequate records management standards on service delivery in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, with a focus on Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College. Guided by objectives that examined existing practices, the effects of poor records management standards, and operational efficiency, the research adopted a descriptive design with a sample of 302 participants. Data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using SPSS version 25. Findings revealed that 61% of staff relied on manual filing systems, while 79% used ineffective or highly ineffective data management methods. Additionally, 73% of students accessed their academic results through physical records, and 90% reported delays in obtaining financial and academic records. Despite 74% of staff acknowledging increased automation, 96% confirmed that poor record management adversely affected service delivery. The study concludes that deficient systems significantly hinder efficiency and responsiveness within the institution. It recommends that the college adopt comprehensive digital record management systems to streamline processes, minimize data loss, and enhance timely service delivery.

Keywords: *Records management, Service delivery, Technical colleges, Data systems, Automation*

1.0 Introduction

Records management is a structured system that governs the entire lifecycle of records to ensure accountability, efficiency, and effective service delivery (Saffady, 2021). In technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, diverse records—student, financial, administrative, and academic—require proper preservation and management. The International Standard ISO 15489 underscores structured control in record creation, use, and disposal, highlighting its role in providing reliable evidence and supporting decision-making (ISO, 2016).

Despite technological advances, many institutions face records management challenges. Nearly 60% of institutions underperformed due to retrieval delays, while Abong and Luyombya (2024) observed that All-Saints University, Lango, struggled with poor storage, vulnerability to damage, and low staff capacity. Lack of automation and limited skills consistently compromise performance. Conversely, digital systems have proven to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and accountability. For example, in the aviation industry, electronic systems reduced duplication and costs while improving quality assurance by 50% (Backes et al., 2017). Similarly, Mubiana (2024) reported that Lusaka City Council's paper-based records hindered service delivery, stressing the need for policies, digitalization, and capacity building.

Research emphasises that ISO 15489 provides a robust framework for accountability and accessibility (Isoka & Namande, 2022). Studies confirm that electronic systems improve service delivery by reducing inefficiencies (Chigada & Ngulube, 2020). However, challenges persist in Africa, where weak infrastructure, inadequate policies, and poor technical expertise remain

barriers (Ramaphoko & Makgahlela, 2023; Wamukoya & Mutula, 2017). The success of electronic records systems depends on infrastructure, training, and managerial support, as shown in Tanzania (Issa & Wamukoya, 2018) and Ethiopia (Berihun et al., 2020).

In Kenya, although legal frameworks for records management exist, compliance remains constrained by resource limitations, creating a clear policy–practice gap. This study conceptualizes records management standards in terms of policy compliance, staff competencies, and ICT adoption, while service delivery is defined through efficiency, timeliness, accuracy, and accessibility of services. Anchored in a systems-oriented framework, the study posits that effective records management standards enhance service delivery by improving information flow, reducing delays, and minimising errors. Empirical evidence indicates that staff skills, ICT adoption, and policy implementation significantly influence performance (Owino & Namande, 2022), yet many institutions remain reliant on paper-based systems (Gathoni & Ngulube, 2020). In the TVET context, gaps in infrastructure, training, and technology adoption persist. At Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College, inefficiencies in record handling delay enrollment, certification, and retrieval processes, justifying the need to examine this relationship.

Research Problem

Despite the importance of records management for accountability and compliance, TVET institutions lack standardised systems, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and security risks. At Kipipiri College, inconsistent practices highlight the urgency for interventions aligned with ISO 15489 to enhance efficiency and sustainable growth.

Research Objective

- i. To find out what record management practices exist currently within Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College.
- ii. To examine the effects of records management practices on service delivery at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College.
- iii. To assess the operational efficiency of records management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College.
- iv. To evaluate the challenges of records management in Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College.
- v. To establish the records automation level and whether it is impacting service delivery at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College.

Literature Review

Comparative evidence across sectors underscores the critical role of effective records management in institutional performance. In South Africa, Luthuli and Kalusopa (2017) found that manual medical records promoted patient satisfaction but posed scalability issues, a challenge mirrored in education. Similar shortcomings were reported in Ghana and Uganda, where poor storage, weak security, and inadequate training limited reliability (Mohammed et al., 2018; Luyombya & Ndagire, 2020). Abong and Luyombya (2024) further highlighted storage deficits and skills gaps in Ugandan universities, advocating for professionalisation. Beyond Africa, Dikopoulou and Mihiotis (2012) emphasised the link between records management, governance, and accountability, stressing leadership commitment and specialised training. These findings align with Onwuekwe and Suleiman (2022), who demonstrated that Nigeria's electoral commission benefited from online storage and disposal

policies. Similarly, Masuka (2019) showed that contract governance improved outcomes in education projects.

“The study concludes that ineffective records management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College undermines service delivery”

In higher education, effective records management guided by ISO 15489 (2016) supports accountability, decision-making, and transparency (Isoka & Namande, 2022). Nonetheless, many TVET colleges still rely on manual systems and lack standardisation (Chigada & Ngulube, 2020; Thegu et al., 2021). In Kenya, implementation gaps persist despite legal frameworks such as the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act (2016). Case studies reinforce these challenges. Harvey (2022) found that Malawian universities faced structural and sustainability barriers in adopting e-records, while Mohammed et al. (2018) reported poor storage and weak training at Sunyani Technical University. At KCA University, infrastructure and staff capacity were inadequate (Thegu et al., 2021). Nevertheless, digital records demonstrate potential: Magwilu (2018) showed efficiency gains in Kenya's County Pension Fund despite high maintenance costs.

The relationship between records management and service delivery is well established. In Uganda, records creation improved private universities' services (Mureebe & Lwanga, 2023), while electronic platforms enhanced Nigeria's electoral body performance (Onwuekwe &

Suleiman, 2022). Similar benefits were observed in health (Adegboyega & Musa, 2019) and pensions (Owino & Namande, 2022). Conversely, poor systems undermined performance in Kenya (Maina, 2022) and Zambia (Mubiana, 2024). Records practices accounted for 65.1% of organisational effectiveness in South-West Nigeria, though ICT gaps remained (Dada & Ogunwemimo, 2024). Contract governance also influenced outcomes in education and devolved systems (Masuka, 2019; Musyoka et al., 2023). Operational efficiency hinges on effective recordkeeping. In Canada, delays in retrieval created inefficiency (Xie, 2013), while Nigerian higher education linked records to employee effectiveness (Agu et al., 2022). Digital systems improve accuracy and security (Aramide et al., 2020; Backes et al., 2017), though many institutions still depend on manual systems (Mubiana, 2024).

Persistent challenges include weak policies, limited ICT, poor usability, and inadequate training (Verkijika & De Wet, 2018; Uwazie et al., 2015; Nkebukwa, 2019). Success depends on institutional readiness, staff capacity, and policy support (Wamukoya & Mutula, 2017; Malekani, 2023). Despite these barriers, automation increasingly enhances service delivery across education, health, aviation, and business (Owusu, 2024; Berihun et al., 2020; Aramide et al., 2020). Yet, progress requires infrastructure, funding, and professional development, especially in developing countries.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess records management standards at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College in Nyandarua County, Kenya. The institution was

chosen for its accessibility, establishment, and suitability as a benchmark for record-based service delivery systems in similar colleges. The research examined two variables: records management standards (independent) and service delivery (dependent). Records management was evaluated through record creation, classification, retention and disposal, and access control, while service delivery focused on accountability, transparency, efficiency, and decision-making.

The target population comprised 335 respondents, including 22 academic staff, 13 administrative staff, and 300 students, all selected due to their direct involvement in or interaction with records management processes within the institution. Academic and administrative staff were targeted because they create, manage, and utilise institutional records, while students were included as primary recipients of services influenced by records management practices. A representative sample of 201 was derived using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, consisting of 169 students and 32 staff. A two-stage sampling approach was employed, with purposive sampling for key administrators (e.g., principal, registrar, and departmental heads) and random sampling for staff and students. Data were collected using structured questionnaires.

A pilot study at Kinangop Technical and Vocational College refined the instrument, ensuring validity and reliability through pre-testing and test-retest methods. Ethical approval was obtained from Kenyatta University. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with qualitative responses examined through content analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Response Rate

During data collection, a total of 201 questionnaires were administered, out of which 192 were duly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 96%. This figure reflects only the questionnaires that were fully and validly completed.

Record Management Practices within Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

This study investigated records management practices at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College, examining manual, hybrid, and digital filing systems and their influence on service delivery. Findings showed that 61% of staff relied on manual filing, 30% used hybrid approaches, and only 9% adopted fully digital methods, reflecting limited digital integration. This aligns with Harvey (2022), who noted the slow adoption of digital systems in educational institutions despite their advantages. The effectiveness of current practices was rated poorly, with 79% of staff describing them as ineffective or very

ineffective, primarily due to reliance on manual systems. Student feedback supported this view, as 73% reported accessing academic records through physical files. Similar inefficiencies have been linked to inadequate training (Musyoka et al., 2023) and poor record handling in universities (Abong & Luyombya, 2024). Ngulube (2012) further emphasised that weak documentation systems cause retrieval delays and errors, reflecting the challenges observed at Kipipiri.

Although 74% of staff reported high levels of automation and 26% moderate levels, manual practices still dominated daily operations. This gap between tool availability and practical use mirrors Owino and Namande’s (2022) argument that policies, ICT applications, and training improve service delivery. Likewise, Aramide et al. (2020) highlighted the efficiency, security, and accessibility of electronic systems. The study concludes that enhancing digital adoption through training, policy reinforcement, and resource allocation is essential for improved record management.

Table 1

Levels of Automation of Records at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

Level of Records Automation	Frequency	Percentage
Moderate Level of Records Automation (9-14)	6	26%
High Level of Records Automation	17	74%
Total	23	100%

Effects of Records Management Practices on Service Delivery at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

This study investigated the impact of records management practices on service delivery at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College, where manual filing systems dominate. Respondents evaluated compliance and risk management, decision making, accountability and transparency,

and cost efficiency on a five-point scale, categorised into low (4–11) and high (12–20) effect levels. Results showed that 96% perceived poor records management as having a high effect, while 4% rated it low. Staff highlighted inefficiencies in compliance, decision-making, accountability, and cost control due to manual systems. Similarly, 90% of students reported delays in accessing academic and financial records. These findings underscore the need for

digital systems, consistent with Dikopoulou and Mihiotis (2012), who stress records management’s role in governance and trust.

Table 2

Effects of Record Management Practices on Service Delivery in Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

Level of Effects on Service Delivery	Frequency	Percentage
Low Effects on Service Delivery (4-11)	1	4%
High Effects level on Service Delivery (12- 20)	22	96%
Total	23	100%

Findings revealed recurrent delays in students’ access to academic records, with the most cited causes being staff unavailability (14%), network issues (12%), verification delays (11%), and missing approvals (10%). Other factors included system downtime, power outages, workload, and documentation errors, reflecting inefficiencies in record management largely tied to manual filing

practices. These findings align with Ngulube (2012), who linked poor documentation to delays and inaccuracy, and Backes et al. (2017), who emphasised the efficiency of digital systems. Similarly, Opara (2022) highlighted digital recordkeeping as enhancing accuracy, accountability, and governance, underscoring the need for electronic records adoption.

Table 3

Duration and reasons for Delay in students’ access to Academic records

Duration and Reason for Delays	Frequency	Percent
Delayed by two days due to high workload.	16	9.5
Delayed by two days due to network issues.	21	12.4
Delayed by two days due to system downtime.	16	9.5
Delayed one day due to late submission processing	16	9.5
Delayed two days due to a power outage.	16	9.5
Took one day because of verification delays.	18	10.7
Took one day because of wrong documentation.	16	9.5
Waited a few hours due to missing approvals.	17	10
Waited half a day because of server maintenance.	15	8.9
Waited one day because of staff unavailability.	23	13.6
Total	169	100.0

The study investigated records management efficiency at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College, highlighting its role in quality service delivery. Findings showed reliance on manual filing systems, with staff assessing records management on accuracy, retrieval ease, storage security, policy clarity, and decision-making support. Using a five-point Likert scale, results were categorised into low (4–7), moderate (8–11), and high (12–16) efficiency levels. Overall, 61%

of respondents rated the system as moderately efficient, while 39% rated it highly efficient, reflecting gradual improvements linked to automation. These findings resonate with Gathoni and Ngulube (2020), who reported infrastructure challenges in rural Kenyan TVETs, limiting digital adoption. Dada and Ogunwemimo (2024) confirmed records management’s positive effect on organisational effectiveness, while Xie (2013) noted inefficiencies in Canadian institutions due

to retrieval delays. Opara (2022) further emphasised digital systems’ benefits in reducing data loss. Correlation analysis revealed a weak,

insignificant positive relationship between automation and efficiency ($r = .193, p > 0.05$).

Table 4

Correlations

		Levels of Operational Efficiency	Levels of Automation
Levels of Operational Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.193
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.378
	N	23	23
Levels of Automation	Pearson Correlation	.193	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.378	
	N	23	23

Challenges in Records Management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

The study examined challenges in records management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College, where reliance on manual filing remains predominant and digital adoption is limited. Findings revealed that inadequate training (88%), insufficient resources (86%), poor record-keeping systems (96%), lack of standardisation (87%), and data security issues (61%) were the major institutional challenges reported by staff. Poor record-keeping systems emerged as the most critical, significantly undermining service delivery and efficiency. This was largely attributed to persistent dependence on manual systems, limited integration of digital platforms, and the absence of standardised practices. The results align with earlier studies by Gelashvili

(2020) and Abacı & Medeni (2022), who observed that ineffective training hampers the implementation of both paper-based and electronic records systems. Similarly, Dada and Ogunwemimo (2024) reported persistent barriers such as weak systems integration, lack of policies, and restricted access to electronic storage. From the students’ perspective, 84% cited lost records as the primary challenge, reinforcing the staff findings. These outcomes parallel Ngulube (2012), who highlighted that poor documentation systems hinder timely access to information, and Mohammed et al., (2018), who reported similar challenges in technical colleges, including poor practices, inadequate security, and limited personnel capacity.

Table 5

Challenges Faced in Record Management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College

Challenge Faced by Students	Very Significant	Significant	Neutral	Slightly Insignificant	Not Significant
Inadequate Training	44%	44%	4%	4%	4%
Insufficient Resources	56%	30%	9%	4%	0%
Poor Record-Keeping Systems	52%	44%	0%	4%	0%
Lack of Standardisation	4%	83%	13%	0%	0%
Data Security Issues	9%	52%	39%	0%	0%

4.0 Conclusions

The study concludes that ineffective records management at Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College undermines service delivery. Findings show widespread dissatisfaction among students due to reliance on manual filing systems, which cause frequent record loss and delays in accessing academic and financial information. Although partial automation exists, digital adoption remains minimal, largely due to inadequate staff training. Consequently, poor utilisation of digital records management continues to hinder efficient and effective service delivery.

5.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that Kipipiri Technical and Vocational College adopt digital record management systems, establish structured assessment and feedback mechanisms, and provide continuous staff training to enhance digital adoption. These measures aim to improve efficiency, minimise data loss, and strengthen service delivery. Further research is suggested to examine additional determinants of service delivery and explore individual staff factors influencing the adoption of digital record management practices.

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