

The Effects of Filing System on Work Performance in the Kumba City Council

Massa Ernest Massa, PhD

PhD in Educational Administration, Head of Department Administrative Techniques
HTTTC Kumba of the University of Buea

ABSTRACT: This study examined the filing system and its effects on work performance in Kumba City Council. The descriptive survey design was adopted following the quantitative research approach. The sample size was 25 workers of Kumba City Council selected through purposive random sampling from 6 departments in the Council. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire made up of 35 closed-ended items each. The data were analysed with the aid of the SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics were computed using frequencies and percentages presented in frequency tables. Decisions on descriptive statistics were based on the aggregation of the majority of responses. Inferential statistics were computed using the Chi-Square test for influence and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients (R) for the relationship between variables. The results revealed that there exists no conventional filing system in Kumba City Council and the types of filing equipment available and used in the Council are include file jackets, wooden shelves, metallic cupboards, computers and perforators; an indication that there is poor filing system with less equipment available. The result further revealed that filing system has a significant positive relationship with worker performance should improve the manual filing system implementing horizontal and vertical filing systems where appropriate. The manual filing system should be reinforced with an electronic document management system to serve as a fast and secured system for file backup.

Keywords: Filing, Filing System, Work Performance

Introduction

Filing is as important to the organisation as blood is to the body. This is mainly because of its support for human memory in decision making and the provision of evidence for organisational transactions. Information is the backbone of every organisation. It is, therefore, essential to a company's health. However, it is easily taken for granted until its importance is missing. Records and information management (RIM) exists to prevent that from happening, but when filing systems are overdue for a time-up, critical data is most vulnerable. A poor filing system is a problem which might easily elude an organisation unless internal operations have already begun to unravel it. The consequences of missing records and duplicate data are severe enough to impact business performance, and there are legal and financial implications as well as security concerns (Amoaka, 2016). Filing system has a conceptual and historical background.

Concerning legal Reviews relating to filing and archives in Cameroon, since December 2000, the programs of the government have concentrated on the urgency of organizing the collective memory of their country. For this reason, the National Assembly voted for the establishment of law on archives: the law N°2000/010, 19th December 2000. In November 2001, the Cameroonian government also signed its enforcement decree N° 2001/958/PM, 1st November 2001. Even if this quite recent legislation does not yet enable us to have a global vision of business archives in Cameroon, thanks to the obligations that these new laws have imposed, we are encouraged to notice some new attempts.

In the conceptual background, Denyer (1994), defines filing as the process of arranging and storing records so that they can be located when need be. A file is, therefore, a collection of letters, memoranda and other papers relating to the same matter usually kept in a particular folder. Terry (1984), on his part, defines the filing system as the method of keeping papers in an accepted file according to the pre-determined system so that they can be easily as well as quickly found.

According to the U.S. General Services Administration (1991), government decisions are primarily based on recorded information, which makes records essential. They support immediate administrative, legal, and fiscal needs, and ensure accountability and continuity of operation. Records preserve the rights and interests of both the Government and the public. They also enable the public to monitor the Government's actions. Recordkeeping is far more complex today than in the past. Technological advances in data capture, storage, and dissemination provide countless ways for meeting information requirements. Agencies must choose the best way for each particular application. These choices are made systematically during the phases of the system development life cycle.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed in several instances that people spend hours around Council premises just to retrieve a vital document like birth certificate due to disorder in the filing system. It takes a lot of time for a single decision to be

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reached by the Council which affects performance generally. Those who are in charge of filing display a lot of poor mastery of filing principles which led to time wastage in retrieving their files. These challenges ignite the interest to investigate the effects of the filing system on work performance in Kumba City Council.

Objectives of the study

General Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine the filing system and its effects on work performance in Kumba City Council.

Specific Objectives

1. Examine the relationship between filing system and Work Performance in the Kumba City Council.
2. Evaluate the effect of the filing system on work performance in the Kumba City Council.

Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between filing system and work performance in Kumba City Council.

HO₂: There is no significant effect of the filing system on work performance at Kumba City Council.

Operational Definitions

Filing System: In the context of this study, a filing system refers to all the interrelated procedures, equipment and systematic events involved in the processing and arrangement of documents in their respective cabinets for easy retrieval.

Record: A record is a document produced or received by a person or organization in the course of business and retained by that person or organization.

Records Management: In the context of this study, records management is the professional management of information in the physical form the time records are received or created through their Practices, distribution and placement in a storage and retrieval practices until either eventual elimination or identification for permanent retention in the archives.

Work performance: In this context, work performance refers to the ability of an employee to satisfactory services using limited resources within the shortest possible time.

Conceptual Review

Filing is arranging records according to a simple, logical system placing records in a storage container in the correct sequence and retrieving the records so that they can be used (Parker, 2015). File management ensures that records relating to a specific activity or subject are securely and consistently maintained together in one file. This enables effective decision making and also ensures that the sequence of actions can be reconstructed, that is what happened, when, who did it, why.

Landau (1970) considers that “correspondence must be filed accurately so that it can be referred to quickly. Went ahead to say that document filed incorrectly can be the cause of a delay in a business organization and even the cancellation of a valuable order. Only when the filing system is efficient can the office function properly, as a delay in locating a paper will have the effect of interfering with and delaying the other sections of the business”.

Methods of filing

Filing methods deal with the way materials are stored or preserved in a file (Amoako, 2016). It has to do with, how the materials are arranged, classified and numbered to ease reference. Some filing methods include Alphabetical, Numerical, Chronological, Geographical, Subject, Alphanumerical, Decimal and Terminal Digit filing method. Any of these methods can be adapted to an organisation depending on their type of activity. The Kumba City Council (K.C.C) practices the numerical and decimal filing methods.

Filing Systems

Suh (2014) defines a filing system as a manner in which files/folders are arranged in the filing cabinet and the way equipment is placed in the filing room. He further stated that there are 4 main types of filing systems: Horizontal, Vertical, Standing and Rotary. Terry (1956) stated that the filing system is a method of keeping papers in an accepted file according to the pre-determined system so that they can be easily accessed and retrieved.

According to Harrison et al (1979), “a large part of the efficiency of an office/organization depends not only on the existence of a reliable filing system but also on the competency of staff in the act of system filing and indexing”. Proper file management enables us to lay our hands on the information we need at the right moment, when we need it so that it

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can be used for further analysis, report writing, or perhaps for creating a presentation, this gives the secretary more credibility (Krogh, 2013). Thornes (1988) holds that different approaches of filing system often result in differences in performance. Cox John (1969) explains that one of the reasons why organisations fail to attain their objectives is carelessness and negligence on the part of the workers in the preservation of classified documents, and inconsistency in managing files. A wrongly used system of filing in a particular organization will not yield the expected results. Sparck (1987) suggested the following filing system:

Horizontal Filing System: This is a system where files are placed flat, one on top of the other with the backs of the files facing the user or operator.

Vertical Filing System: It is a system of filing where documents are filed one behind the other with their backs at the bottom of the cabinet to enable them to stand firm.

Suspended Filing System: It refers to a system of filing where files(hammock) with hooks at the edges or suspension pockets are suspended on special cabinets constructed with horizontal metal rails used for holding light documents.

Rotary Filing System: This is a system where documents or files are placed on equipment which rotates either round a vertical or horizontal axis. The filing clerk simply rotates the equipment in a stationary position to locate the document or file needed.

Staff alone is permitted to have access to files.

Work Performance

Work performance is described as an on-going and action-oriented process through the use of objective, norms, assessment, and feedback (Ababneh 2008). Organisations measure performance because it generates accountability, offers feedback on activities and results in more efficient planning, budgeting and assessment (Ammons 2001). The performance as mentioned by Hunger and Wheelen (2007) is an end product of operation, and an organisational performance accumulates end outcomes from all the job procedures and operations of the organisation. Performance is a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed Review of planned goals, standard and competency requirements. Performance Organizational Performance Information System is much more than appraising individuals. It contributes to the achievement of culture change and it is integrated with other key HR activities, especially human capital management, talent management, learning and development and reward management. More specifically performance management is concerned with (AlGharaibeh&Malkawi, 2013):

- i. Aligning individual objectives to organisational objectives and encouraging individuals to uphold corporate core values;
- ii. Enabling expectations to be defined and agreed in terms of role responsibilities and accountabilities (expected to do), skills (expected to have) and behaviours (expected to be);
- iii. Providing opportunities for individuals to identify their own goals and develop their skills and competencies;
- iv. Motivating people by providing them with recognition and the opportunity to use and develop their skills and abilities.

Managers measure and regulate organisational performance as it leads to better leadership evaluation, enhancing the capacity to deliver client value, improving organisational knowledge measures, and measuring organisational performance affects the reputation of an organisation. When evaluating the organisation's efficiency, past management choices that influenced investment, activities and funding are evaluated to determine whether all resources are available. Were used efficiently, whether the company's profitability met or surpassed expectations, and whether it made prudent funding choices (Shaukat et al., 2008).

Theoretical Review

In this section, the researcher reviewed relevant theories related to this work. These theories are reviewed to situate the work within its philosophical context. Theories reviewed include the archival theory and system theory.

Archival Theory (L Duranti - (1993

This theory was developed by L Duranti - The theory underpines the need for .in the Archival Book of Knowledge 1993 The purpose for archival is for evidence and reference whenever need ..nature of documents to preserve in archives the .be in organisations

The document registered the act and provided the means to attest it and the rights and obligations associated with it. However, in tune with the spread of literacy and with the growth of the institutions of public governance and conduct of private affairs, the central repository of enduring public memory and public faith gave way to regulated record-keeping practices in administrations of all kinds. Each fund of archival documents then stands as residue and evidence of the transaction of affairs and provides the means to account for them.

The archival theory explains the importance of storing documents for future reference. The purpose of the archivist is preserving information. This theory correlated to filing systems and information retrieval in that when documents are filed we equally preserve them for future use. Thus, the filing system serves as a preservation of information for future use. Understanding of both the function giving rise to the documents and their structure becomes vital to the development of filing systems and information retrieval in organisations.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study was survey design. Survey design was chosen for this study because it was suitable for describing the practices that prevail, beliefs, characteristics of a group, points of view or attitudes. The filing system practised in Kumba City Council can be related in the case to practices that prevail at the City Council and the attitudes of employees on filing.

Population of the Study

The population of this study was made up of all employees of Kumba City Council 25 persons were sampled. It was composed of men, women, young, old, very educated, less educated, experienced and less experienced people.

Sampling technique

The purposive random sampling technique was selected for this study. This sampling technique assumes that with good judgment and acceptable approach, the researcher can credibly and intentionally include in his sample elements which are judged to possess the characteristics of the population under investigation. This sampling technique was chosen because it will allow the researcher to purposefully select only elements which possess the necessary characteristics to be sampled.

Sample size

The sample size constituted 25 workers of Kumba City Council who were purposefully selected from the mayors/deputies, directorate of finance, general secretariat, civil status, private secretariat and personnel department. The sample population is distributed as follows:

Table 1: Sample Population

| Unit | Number |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Mayors/Deputies | 2 |
| Directorate of Finance | 8 |
| General Secretariat | 6 |
| Civil Status | 5 |
| Private Secretariat | 2 |
| Personnel Departments | 2 |
| TOTAL | 25 |

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

The instrument of Data Collection

Data for this study came from primary source. Primary data was generated through the use of structured questionnaire.

Findings

This paper examined the filing system and its effects on work performance in Kumba City Council. It specifically sought to identify the filing system and equipment used in the Kumba City Council; examine the relationship between filing system and Work Performance in the Kumba City Council and evaluate the effect of filing system on work performance in the Kumba City Council. The results of the findings were according to the objectives of the study were as follows:

Table 2: Summary of findings by objective

| SN | Objective | Results |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | To examine the relationship between filing system and Work Performance in the K.C.C | From the above, it was found that work performance depends on the factors of the filing system including the challenges of the filing system, improvements of the filing system and effectiveness of the filing system. It was also found that filing system has a relationship with work performance in K.C.C. |
| 2 | To evaluate the effect of the filing system on work performance in the K.C.C. | It was found that in the current filing system in K.C.C, searching and retrieving documents is difficult, to add new documents is difficult as and the workers confirm that the filing system in their office has not helped to improve their performance. From there, it can be stated that there is a significant effect of filing system on work performance in the K.C.C. |

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

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The objective results were further justified by a test of the hypothesis. The results of the hypotheses can be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Summary of findings by hypotheses

| Hypothesis | Results |
|-----------------|--|
| HO ₁ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HO₁ was rejected with 95% confidence It was found that there is a weak significant positive relationship between filing system and work performance in Kumba City Council. Pearson's R=.478 P-value=.016 < α=0.05 |
| HO ₂ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HO₂ was rejected with 95% confidence The results showed that there is a significant effect of the filing system on work performance at Kumba City Council. X²cal=19.485 < Critical value =7.815 with df=3 P-value =.000 < α =0.05 Pearson's R=.585, P-value =.002 < α =0.05 Weak, significant positive relation between variables. |

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

From the general perspective, the results of the findings revealed that there exists no conventional filing system in Kumba City Council and the types of filing equipment available and used in the Council are include file jackets, wooden shelves, metallic cupboards, computers and perforators; an indication that there is poor filing system with less equipment available. The result further revealed that filing system has a significant positive relationship with worker performance as well as it has a significant positive effect on the work performance of Kumba City Council.

Discussion

This paper aimed to examine the filing system and its effects on work performance in Kumba City Council. It specifically sought to identify the filing system and equipment used in the Kumba City Council; examine the relationship between filing system and Work Performance in the Kumba City Council and evaluate the effect of filing system on work performance in the Kumba City Council. The results generally revealed that there exists no conventional filing system in Kumba City Council and the types of filing equipment available and used in the Council are include file jackets, wooden shelves, metallic cupboards, computers and perforators; an indication that there is poor filing system with less equipment available. The result further revealed that filing system has a significant positive relationship with worker performance as well as it has a significant positive effect on the work performance of Kumba City Council.

Conclusions

Based on the results of findings in objective one, it can be concluded that there exists no conventional filing system in Kumba City Council and the types of filing equipment available and used in the Council include file jackets, wooden shelves, metallic cupboards, computers and perforators; an indication that there is poor filing system with less equipment available.

From the results of objective one, it is concluded that work performance depends on the factors of the filing system including challenges of the filing system, improvements of the filing system and effectiveness of the filing system. It is also concluded that there is a weak significant positive relationship between filing system and work performance in Kumba City Council.

Based on the results of the second objective of the study, it is concluded that the current filing system in Kumba City Council suffers from difficulties in searching and retrieving documents, adding new documents and that it has a negative effect on work performance. It is further concluded that there is a significant effect of the filing system on work performance at Kumba City Council. Generally, from the results of the findings, it is concluded the filing system has a significant effect on work performance. It is further concluded that an improvement in the filing system will lead to an improvement in general work performance.

Recommendations

To the Kumba City Council, it is recommended that the Council should improve the manual filing system implementing horizontal and vertical filing systems where appropriate. The manual filing system should be reinforced with an electronic document management system to serve as a fast and secured system for file backup. Training programmes should be organised for employees to improve their filing skills. To the employees of Kumba City Council,

they should embrace the modern filing systems which can improve their performance in the filing. They should be willing to accept modern technology which can improve work performance in Kumba City Council.

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