

Managing Human Resource Records for Accountability at Garissa County Government, Kenya

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Abstract

Accountability within management of human resource records is to a large extent, reliant on the availability of human resource records. Human resource records management issues have been addressed in a number of ways, including the creation of a policy and a complex manner of file tracking system. However, despite these efforts, keeping human resource records remains

a concern. The aim of this research was to establish whether management of human resource records in Garissa County Government (GCG) supports accountability. The study objective was to determine the need for the management of human resource records to accountability in Garissa County Government (GCG). The study was informed by the records continuum theory. The target population comprised 88 respondents from human resource departments and offices of Garissa County Government. The study adopted census survey since the target population was small. Descriptive surveys and structured questionnaire were used to obtain the data. The study's findings showed that human resource records support accountability and good governance as this enables GCG to fulfill its mandate that is good governance and accountability. The study recommends proper management of human resource records to improve accountability in Kenyan private enterprises.

Keywords: Human Resource Records, Accountability, Kenya.

Introduction

Records management, according to Saffady (2021), is dealing with the methodical examination, as well as information control stored, which encompasses any information generated, acquired, maintained, or utilised by an organisation in the course of its operations and activities. Records that are maintained, structured, and closely watched by management will enable efficient and effective updates to organisations, according to Mojapelo and Ngoepe (2021).

However, a number of institutional obstacles prevents the necessary adoption of cutting-edge, information-centric solutions to revolutionise records administration. According to Mosweu and Rakemane (2020), the keeping of records for human resources is a requirement for the development of good governance.

A mechanism for providing documented proof on which governments may be held accountable is the management of human resource records. To avoid being held liable for any misleading claims, it is crucial that government institutions remain transparent. According to Lowry and Wamukoya (2016), records are a significant source of information, almost the only trustworthy as well as lawfully verifiable source of data that may be utilised to support public-sector decisions, actions, and transactions. Records support knowledge management, accountability, better governance, policymaking, the development and execution of successful services and programmes as well as the safeguarding of human rights and liberties.

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) ISO 15489 (2016), a records management standard, in 2016 after identifying the necessity for the administration of human resource data stated that management of records across all media and formats is governed by this standard. It offers the ideas and guidelines that provide the foundation for advocating acceptable standards for managing records, including metadata for records and metadata for records systems (ISO 15489, 2016).

By establishing and safeguarding human resource records as trustworthy evidence, other important goals of human resource records management include supporting corporate responsibility and facilitating accurate audits. Human resource records may affect a person's ability to work, social status, career opportunities, training eligibility as well as access to benefits, such as pensions, insurance, and medical contribution systems, according to Roper and Millar (1999).

Human resource records, which comprise deaths and births records, enrollment records, including those pertaining to social security and pensions, are crucial for an individual's safeguarding, based on the World Bank (2009). Similar to other administrative records, the government utilises these documents to show its human that it is accountable. In the 1940s, nations including the United States and

the United Kingdom (UK) launched records management programmes to address problems like a lack of regulations and laws, decluttering, a shortage of competent human resources, and inadequate protection and preservation of public documents. They think that effective record management can lead to such progress

Records and archives assist the activities of human, and both public and private agencies. Ngoepe and Ngulube (2013) noted that senior management in the public and private sectors do not see administration of human resource records as a critical part of any successful company, despite the fact that many public offices take steps for excellent records management.

OUT (2011) noted that the responsibility of managing a list of human resources and protecting the evidence of governmental operations are not often well understood. A county's human resources are among its most valuable and sometimes most expensive assets; since they are valuable, they must be used to their fullest potential. By ensuring that information is accessible for accountability and to preserve both state and individual rights, management of human resource records may significantly contribute to a county's accountability. Payroll systems and human resource management systems are intertwined, therefore improvements to human resource records will have a favorable influence on the county's entire budget. In many nations, including Kenya, managing human resource data has proven difficult. For example, in Kenya, the State Department of Public Administration (MSPS) has over time developed a number of technology efforts to help it carry out its duty. The creation of the Integrated Payroll and Human resource Database (IPPD) to aid in human resource management was a significant one of these.

In spite all the efforts Kenya has made, county governments still suffer as a result of poor maintenance of various human resource documents, including fragmented and unprocessed records for human resources, poor storage facilities, inadequate staff and human resource records such as payroll, pensions, national insurance systems not considered important, yet, they are very vital to government's operations. The administration of records has become increasingly worse in underdeveloped nations over time.

It has been a long-standing goal of Kenya to achieve the so-called “ugatuji” devolved system of government. The “dream” form of government (now known as “County Governments”) was made a reality with the publication of Kenya’s 2010 Constitution (CoK 2010) on August 27, 2010. The establishment of county governments is particularly addressed in Devolved Government is covered in CoK 2010’s Chapter Eleven (Cap 11)., with Garissa serving as one of them. The different elements of devolved or county administration, including democratic values and the separation of powers, are spelled out in Cap. 11 of CoK 2010. In order to successfully rule and provide services, county governments will be provided with solid sources of funding, while not over two-thirds of every county’s elected officials representative bodies may belong to the same gender.

The current county government’s administrative headquarters is in Garissa town, and it is made up of the county assembly and county executives, who have the authority to pass laws and carry them out through the executive branch. Garissa County, like other counties, was established in accordance with the 2011 Urban Areas and Cities Act (which abolished Local Government Act Chapter 265 and handed power of Cities and Municipalities to county governments), the Intergovernmental Relations Act of 2012 (which shifted control of Municipal corporations to county governments), (which regulated intergovernmental relations), the County Government Act of 2012 and Transformation to County Governments Act of 2012). Garissa County Government uses human resource records to do its daily transactions and operations. Paper-based records are popular in the county government with a limited number of electronic records. The county government has eleven (11) departments whose records are managed by Human Resource Management Officers (HRRMOs) Human Resource Record Management Assistants (HRRMAs), Human Resource Record Management Clerks (HRRMCs), and personnel from the registry. The documents are maintained and stored in the central registry while others are maintained in their respective departments. The survey’s main goal was to find out whether management of human resource records supports accountability in Garissa County Government.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the important role of human resource records in society, there are no national policies and legal framework on the keeping of records for human resources and retention schedules in some countries. The maintenance of human resource records and the requirement for them for accountability do not have complete policy and legal frameworks. According to ISO (2016), to support accountability, counties must establish and maintain, reliable, and utilisable human resource records, and safeguard those records’ integrity for as long as considered necessary. This holds true for both paper-based and electronic documents. Human resource records must be preserved for a considerable amount of time, frequently after a worker has left the company to safeguard the liberties and desires of those who remain of both the employer as well as the employee. Human resource records containing information about specific persons are particularly important, as they must be properly protected against unauthorised access, since they are sensitive and confidential (State of New South Wales, 2003).; The ROK-MOH, 2016). Even though there have been several attempts to solve the issues with keeping human resource data, such as the development of a guideline for handling these records and a sophisticated technique of file tracking, the difficulties with doing this persist. It is upon this background that this study sought to determine the need for the management of human resource records in promoting accountability at Garissa County Government.

Objectives of the Study

This study’s main objectives of this study were to find out the need for human resource records management at GCG, as well as to explore the attitudes and behaviours of GCG workers about the County’s role of managing its human resource data.

Literature Review

Human resource records management in Kenya starts with the Ministry of State for Public Service (MSPS), which is in charge of overseeing organisational structures and human resources in the Public Service. Over time, the Ministry has implemented a number of technical efforts to help it

carry out its duty. The creation of the Integrated Payroll and Human Resource Database (IPPD) to aid in HR administration was a significant one of these. The IPPD was primarily created to manage the civil service's payroll, which at the time was plagued by duplications and other inefficiencies brought on by manual payroll administration.

By significantly enhancing payroll administration, IPPD was able to reduce duplication in the records of human resources to some extent. Given the foregoing, MSPS started work on designing and creating a GHRIS (The Government Human Resource Information System) that meets all of the government's HR-related demands. Other systems already in place including IFMIS (Integrated Financial Management Information System), G-PAY (Google Pay), and IPPD are anticipated to connect with this system. Both HR practitioners in MDAs (Ministries Departments and Agencies) and individual workers may access the GHRIS to examine and amend their human resource data. The system will also be used by the following organisations for a variety of decision-making tasks: Recruitment and selection are handled by the Public Service Commission; financing for human resources is handled by the Ministry of Finance; and management, development, and monitoring of human resources are handled by the Ministry of State for Public Service. To access the system's many features, each user will be given a unique set of rights and privileges. (MSPS, 2011).

Makwae and Nyarige (2017) citing Akporhonor and Iwhiwhu, (2007) notes that human resource records also called employee files might be described as "record that contain initial application forms, results of physical examination, interviewers' notations, test scores, periodical appraisals, transfer and promotions, disciplinary actions, releases and retiring wages, salaries, taxes paid, contributions and similar items". Additionally, they claim that a worker's file may also contain part or all of the following data: complete name, address, phone number, age, sex, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, union membership, and so forth. The State of New South Wales (2003) lists the following as examples of frequently used human resource records: Each employee's human resource records, sometimes referred to as personal or employee records (organised by name or position number) non-

employee-specific human resource records, such as procedure or policy records, that are arranged by activity or subject. Database systems with certain human resource components were incorporated into human resource database systems, either as generic packages or specifically created for the organisation.

Modern thinking on development strategy places a premium on better human resource management. One of the things preventing Sub-Saharan Africa from seeing sustained economic growth is inadequate governmental administration, according to a World Bank report from 1989 that Cain and Thurston (1997) mention. The study demanded improved management of human resource records, including staff testing, competitive entrance examinations, frequent assessments, merit-based promotions, selected pay structure improvements, and accurate human resource records (Cain and Thurston, 1997). County governments benefit from accurate human resource data by improving the effectiveness of hiring, training, and promotion. Additionally, they can offer the raw data needed to track concerns with equal opportunity and the legal obligations imposed on all county governments. A county government can identify any chances for skill improvement to meet criteria by managing records of individual skills and competencies. Because human resource records deal with human, the accuracy and security of the records is in everybody's best interests. This information will help to improve working connections. The information that is retained and why it will be known by employees and their representatives. It must advocate for equitable and consistent treatment.

According to IRMT (2000) human resource records are made and utilised every day in government to transmit information, validate decisions, establish rights and duties, and document activities. County governments and corporations simply could not function without human resource records. County governments use human resource records for a variety of reasons, including: providing information on earlier acts or choices, validating employee work, pensions, leave, and health benefits, examining or verifying rules and processes, and verifying citizens' rights, such as benefits or property ownership. Although the majority of human resource records do not need to be retained indefinitely, a small but important number need. These records of a

county government's human resources are those that are kept in public archives. Members of the public, academic and professional researchers from a broad range of disciplines, journalists, donor and lending institutions, others desiring to interact with their country's original cultural and traditional origins, and anybody who has a problem that can be resolved by consulting records are typical archival clients in national and other organisations (IRMT, 2000).

Research Methodology

Social survey research was used in this study because it was necessary to comprehensively analyse the need for human resource records management at GCG, as well as the attitudes, behaviours, and experiences of GCG workers. A questionnaire was created and given to sampled respondents inside GCG. The study targeted 88 participants. Garissa County Government is in the former North Eastern Province of Kenya. Its capital town is in Garissa. The study focused on Garissa County Government which is one of the 47 county

governments in Kenya. The county government of Garissa was chosen since time and resources allocated for the study would make it impossible to travel across the 47 counties.

The institution's registration system consists of the Central registry and the secret registry. Garissa County Government has eleven departments, each with its own sub-registry, such as the human resource department and the treasury, which compiles and maintains current county financial records. The County central registry's main records are land records, which are structured in blocks that form a map of the entire County. The executive arm of the County government staff's personnel files is created and maintained by the human resource department registry. The strategic plans for the Garissa County Government estimates that there are around 3,200 personnel files. In general, all of the county's records are a wonderful source of information for everyday operations and considerably assist in decision-making.

The population under investigation included 88 respondents, who were distributed in the staff registry and departments. Since the study's intended audience was rather small, a census survey was used.

Table 1.: Target Population

Respondent	Target Population
Human resource Management Officers (HRMOs)	11
Human resource record Management Assistant (HRRMAs)	11
Human resource records management Clerks (HRRMCs)	11
Registry Staff	55
TOTAL	88

Source: Researcher (2022)

Results

Need for Human Resource Records Management at GCG

Garissa County Government maintains its human resource records for the purposes of accountability and good governance as this enables it to fulfill its mandate, that is good governance and accountability. Not all the respondents completed the questionnaire, as 73 respondents completed the questionnaire. Most of the respondents 57 (78%) of the respondents

revealed that human resource records management is not considered as important, meaning the top management does not support it financially, while 16 (22%) agreed that human resource records management is considered important, implying that it is supported by top management. The results also revealed that as much as the GCG does not regard human resource records as one of the important resources, the county cannot function without them, as 100 % of the respondents revealed that the county valued and relied on human resource records for its operations.

The following Garissa County government agencies and departments that deal with human resources made up the study's sample population, as revealed in Table 1.

Garissa County Government's human resource records enabled it to perform its operations such as: providing reliable details regarding the decisions and acts of its employees and to show that the government officials behaved properly and this will lead to accountability and good governance, as well as achieving its goals. When a person is hired by the County, an employees' records file is created bearing crucial information about them, thus it is important to put them properly in the correct file. Garissa County government has 11 distinct departments. The county registry is tasked with creating a human resources file for each and every employee in order to efficiently manage all the County Government employees. Much of the information relevant to a county employee is held in human resource files.

All the County human resource records are

stored in both a central and confidential registry. According to the Register Department of the Garissa County government's (2018) data, the county has a total of three thousand two hundred (3200) human resource records. The registration system is mostly manual because most records were kept on paper. The county generates and maintains human resource data to assist managers in gathering critical information about their employees, maintains an up-to-date record of leaves and transfers, and assists the county in the creation of various training and development programs. Human resource records also provide statistics on turnover rates, absenteeism, and other human resource issues, assist county administrators in making pay modifications, allowances, and other salary-related perks and serve as a dependable source of information for scholars doing human resource.

The Importance of Human Resource Records as one of the Important Resource to GCG

The study sought to ascertain why human resource

Table 2: Reasons for Regarding Human Resource Records as one of the Important Resource to GCG

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Efficient and orderly flow of information	73	100
County memory provides a point of reference	73	100
Formulating policies, future plans	73	100
Making informed decisions	73	100
County cannot function without human resource records	73	100
Fast tracking service delivery due to readily available information	73	100
Accurate and up to date information ensures accountability to the public	73	100
Total	73	100

records are thought to be one of the crucial resources that would allow GCG to be responsible in working out its mandate successfully. The results are shown in Table 2.

The findings in Table 2 above revealed that all the respondents regarded human resource records as one of the important resources, as shown in the Table. GCG, as a county, cannot function without human resource records, and, that is why none of the respondents indicated otherwise, as they unanimously agreed that the county valued and relied on human resource records for its operations. This means that the GCG cannot do without human resource records.

Discussions

The study found that every county government employs personnel and maintains human resource records, and that the aim of managing these data is to accomplish county government goals and objectives. As a result, it was determined that the core of the county government's management mandate to guarantee that human resource records are managed is adhered to, since they are crucial to the county government's accountability and good governance is, the concept management of human resource records in support of accountability in devolved governments.

The study found that, to a great extent, the county government keeps track of human resource data because it is essential to good governance, accountability, and the health of the county government in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of the county governments' accountability, which will improve the county government's ability to compete in the provision of services. The findings signify the importance of managing human resource records to accountability in devolved governments, since human resources are the county governments' most valuable resource and this will enhance accountability in the county government leading to good governance and delivery of services that meets the client's expectation.

The Garissa County Government is able to perform its duties thanks to its human resource records, which include providing trustworthy information about the decisions and actions of its employees and demonstrating that the public

servants have acted appropriately, encouraging accountability and good governance and enabling the achievement of the county governments' goals. According to Cain and Thurston (1997), modern development policy thought revolves around enhanced human resource records management. Accurate management of human resource records helps county governments in increasing the efficiency of recruitment, training and development, and promotion. They also provide the raw data to monitor equal opportunities issues and the legal requirements placed on all county governments.

Because human resource records deal with human, it is in everyone's best interest for the records to be accurate and secure. Understanding this will help to improve workplace relationships and accountability. Systems for managing human resource records have strong connections to other government systems, particularly those that deal with budget, payroll, and pension administration. The proof and permission to pay salary and benefits to employees are found in human resource records. Therefore, there is need to have accurate and reliable human resource records to provide information for accountability issues. From above the study found that, management of human resource records has a positive significant to the county government's accountability.

Three thousand two hundred human resource records are present in the county, according to figures from 2018 held by the register department GCG. This has to do with the overall personnel count for the county government. The registration system is primarily run manually because the majority of records are on paper. According to the respondents, the county keeps and generates records of its human resources for the following reasons: It aids in providing management with important information on the employees, Keep a current record of transfers and departures, among other things. aids in the creation of different training and development programmes for the county, the county is able to collect information on employee turnover, absenteeism, and other human resource-related issues. It offers a trustworthy source of data for the researchers looking into human resource records and aids county administrators in making wage modifications, allowances, and other advantages associated to salaries

Garissa County Government maintains its human resource records for the purposes of accountability and good governance as this enables it to fulfill its mandate that is good governance and accountability. 78% of the respondents revealed that human resource records management is not considered important, meaning the top management does not support it financially, while 22% agreed that human resource records management is considered important implying supported by top management.

The results also revealed that as much as the GCG do not regard human resource records as one of the important resources 100 %, the county cannot function without them as all the respondents revealed that the county value and rely on human resource records for its operations. Garissa County Government's human resource records enable it to perform its operations such as: providing reliable information about decisions and actions of its employees and to demonstrate that the public servants have acted appropriately and this will lead to accountability and good governance as well as achieving its goals. The study found that every county government in the globe employs personnel and maintains human resource records, and that the aim of managing these data is to accomplish county government goals and objectives. As a result, it was determined that the core of the county government's management mandate to ensure the management of human resource records is adhered to, since they are crucial to the county government's accountability and good governance is the concept management of human resource records in support of accountability in devolved governments.

The study revealed that to the greater extent, there is management of human resource records that is part and parcel of the county government, since human resource records contribute to good governance and accountability the wellbeing of the county government in terms of effective and efficiency of the county governments' accountability that will enhance the county government to maintain and to competitive service delivery. The findings signify the importance of managing human resource records to accountability in devolved governments, since human resources are the county governments' most valuable resource, and this will enhance accountability in the county government leading to

good governance and delivery of services that meets the client's expectation.

Garissa County Government human resource records enable it to perform its operations such as: providing reliable information about decisions and actions of its employees and to demonstrate that the public servants have acted appropriately and this will lead to accountability and good governance as well as achieving of the county governments' goals. Cain and Thurston (1997) opined that improved human resource records management is central to current development policy thinking. Accurate management of human resource records helps county governments in increasing the efficiency of recruitment, training and development, and promotion. They also provide the raw data to monitor equal opportunities issues and the legal requirements placed on all county governments.

Because human resource records deal with human, it is in everyone's best interest for the records to be accurate and secure. Understanding this will help to improve workplace relationships and accountability. Systems for managing human resource records have strong connections to other government systems, particularly those that deal with budget, payroll, and pension administration. The proof and permission to pay salary and benefits to employees are found in human resource records. Therefore, there is need to have accurate and reliable human resource records to provide information for accountability issues. To guarantee that records of human resources are recorded, kept up to date, and made available as needed for accountability and good governance, mechanisms should be put in place.

Conclusion

The respondents regarded human resource records as important and crucial to the to the roles GCG workers are expected to perform. To support government operations, to give trustworthy information on the choices and activities of public employees, and to show that the employees have acted correctly, human resource records are required. Based on the administration of human resource data, county governments function in very similar ways. These procedures are essential for any county

government that is focused on achieving its goals, because they will promote accountability and good governance via the proper handling of personnel files.

Recommendations

The study recommends that staff's training and development committee of GCG should conduct numerous trainings for the staff through workshops and seminars. In-house and on-job training will be the best method to inculcate the desired record management skills among county human resource management officers, as such programmes will be rolled at work place, hence the staff will stand a chance of enjoying concrete experiences. The study further recommends that for the county governments to be accountable, there is need for human resource records to: verify employee job documentation, pensions, vacation, and health benefits. The CCGs should provide information on previous acts or decisions, reaffirm policies and processes, and confirm human' rights, such as benefits or property ownership. All this will be achieved through recognising the role or uses of human resource records in achieving its objectives.

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