RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SELANGOR ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

Wan Abdul Malek Wan Abdullah
Faculty of Information Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Perdana Campus
40150 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail: *wamalek@salam.uitm.edu.my*
tele: 013-6204466

Ahmad Zam Hariro Samsudin
Faculty of Information Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Perdana Campus
40150 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail: *ahmadzam@salam.uitm.edu.my*
tele: 012-2041374

Mohd Zairul Masron
Faculty of Information Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Perdana Campus
40150 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail: *zairul_masron@salam.uitm.edu.my*
tele: 013-2735104

Mohd Nazir Ahmad
Faculty of Information Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Perdana Campus
40150 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail*: mnazir794@salam.uitm.edu.my*
tele: 019-2825596

Abstract: *This study was carried out with the objectives of investigating records management practice inthe Selangor Islamic Religious Council (SIRC). Using the survey research methodology, involving 105 personnel attached to 17 agencies under SIRC. Thequestionnaires incorporated information on records management practices segmented into severalsections namely institutionalization; records creation; classification; maintenance and use; selection and acquisition; description of records inventory and finding aids; preservation. The findings of the studyindicate that records management practices in SIRCneed to be improve to ensure records are managed properly throughout the life cycle.*

Keywords: *Archives, Records, Records management, Selangor Islamic Religious Council, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

Very few religious institutions has embarked on record management initiatives. In South California, Catholic Diocese of Charleston housed among the earliest records dates back

to 1723. It also has comprehensive manual of records keeping practices such as management of electronic records, practices and policies as well as the disaster managements guide (Bergeon, 1999). Therefore, The purpose of this research is filling the gap, by exploring the practice of records management in Islamic institutions in Malaysia and attempt to develop Malaysian's first records management model for Islamic institutionin Malaysia. This study was carried out to fulfill the following objectives (i) to ascertain whetherorganizations in SIRC manage their records in accordance to the life cycle concept (ii) and (iii) To find out whether organizations in SIRC are aware of theimportance of records management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Record life cycle is a complete process starting from records creation, use and maintenance up to the last process of the disposal or permanent storage. Hare and McLeod (1997) argues that the Life Cycle Records can provide huge potential in an efficient records management, particularly in the form of paper based records. Records manager and archivists have adopted this concept since it was introduced by the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 1930.

Whereas according to Atherton (1985), he stressed that Ottawa Public Archives has long won the life-cycle, which combines both complete records management phase of the combined records management and archive management. The consolidation theory lists eight (8) full phase as listed below;

i.   The creation or production of information in the form of records.
ii.   Distribution of records
iii. Maintenance and use of records
iv.   The disposal or transfer to archives
v.   The election for permanent storage
vi.   Listing record and search tool
vii. Conservation

Evan (1967) confirmed the merger of two (2) phases of records management and archive management is based on the needs of the government for the disposal of records starting from the initial processes in the management of records in the office. This phase has been used repeatedly in modern institutions and organizations for a preliminary assessment to the establishment of internal archives unit in each of the premises. More interesting, Johare et al. (2012) have added a pre-process to the eight (8) existing processes, namely the institutionalization which includeslegal documents, administrative policy (Brown, 1999) and the mandate (Canadian Council of Archive, 2001).

New South Wales University (2005) has conducted a survey on the records management in Australian Public Office at the aim of investigating either the practice complies with the standards. Other objective was to improve and to execute the change and compliance. The finding has showed that there was 70% government office has appointed special officers to look after the records management practices. In addition, it is evidence that organizations has taken appropriate identify and maintain vital records

in their organization. Besides, In 2012 PustakaNegeri Sarawak has engaged Faculty of Information Management to conduct the records management practices survey. Finding showed that more than 50% of the institutionalization aspect has been complied with relevant documentation, acts and circular (Johare et al., 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents during their annual gathering for the year of 2015. To facilitate the analysis process, a quantitative data analysis software called SPSS versi 21 was used.

FINDINGS

Aware about the existence of standards related to records management.

Table1: Awareness about the existence of standards related to records management.

Aware about the existence of standards related to records management.	YES	NO
Security Instruction	85.7	14.3
Official Secrecy Act	83.7	16.3
Treasury instructions	81.2	18.8
State Government Circulars	80.8	19.2
Records Management Standard (ISO 15489)/MSO	73.4	26.6
Statutory Bodies (Financial and Accounting Procedures Ordinance, 1995)	69.8	30.2
Records Management Standard.MS ISO 2223-1: 2009	69.8	30.2
Guide to Office Management 2007	69.7	30.3
Records transfer management	69.4	30.6
National Archives Act, 2003	66	34
Guide to Dispose Government Financial Records	65.3	34.7
Guide to Public Records Management	65.3	34.7
Overall mean	73.34	26.66

Table 1 illustrates data on Institutionalization section of the questionnaires. The majority of the respondents 85.7% were aware about the existence of security instruction. Pertaining to the question with regard to the awareness of the existence of official secrecy act, the data revealed that majority of the respondents which made up of 83.7% were aware of it existence. On the treasury instruction, 81.2% of the respondents agreed. Relating to the question on the awareness of the existence of state government circulars majority of the respondents 80.8% were aware about it existence. The above data also revealed that majority of the respondents 73.4 % were alert of the existence of records Management Standards (ISO 15489). Regarding the question on Statutory Bodies (Financial and Accounting Procedures Ordinance, 1995), 69.8 % of the respondents agreed. Asking about the awareness of the existence of Records Management Standard MS ISO 2223-1: 2009, 69.8 % of the respondents did agree. Majority of the respondents 69.7 % agreedon the awareness of the existence of Guide to Office Management 2007. Following the question on Records transfer management, 69.4% of the respondents agreed. Only 66% of the respondents were aware of the existence of National Archives

Act, 2003. On the Guide to Dispose Government Financial Records and Guide to Public Records Management, both share the same percentage, 65.3%. The overall mean score of this topic is 73.34% which indicates that respondents have positive perceptionregarding the existence of standard related to records management.

Standards related to records management distributed to SIRC staff

Table 2: Percentage of standards related to records management distributed to SIRC staff

Standards related to records management distributed to SIRC staff	YES	NO
National Archives Act, 2003	18.9	81.1
Statutory Bodies (Financial and Accounting Procedures Ordinance, 1995)	21.7	78.3
Guide to Dispose Government Financial Records	28	72
Records transfer management	31.2	68.8
Guide to Public Records Management	36.2	63.8
Records Management Standard. MS ISO 2223-1: 2009	37	63
State Government Circulars	38.3	61.7
Records Management Standard (ISO 15489)/MSO	38.9	61.1
Guide to Office Management 2007	44.8	55.2
National Archives Act, 2003	45.7	54.3
Treasury instructions	51	49
Security Instruction	55.2	44.8
Overall mean	37.24	62.76

Table 2 shows data on records management standards which have been distributed to SIRC staff. Majority of the respondents 81.1% did not received National Archives Act, 2003. Regarding Statutory Bodies (Financial and Accounting Procedures Ordinance, 1995) 78.3 of the respondents did not received it. Only 28% of the respondents agreed that they received Guide to Dispose Government Financial Records. Following the question on distribution of standard related to Records transfer management 31.2% of the respondents agreed. Asking about the guide to public records management 63.8 % disagreed.Pertaining to Records Management Standard, MS ISO 2223-1: 2009, 63% of the respondents disagreed. Data also suggests that 55.2% of the respondents received Guide to Office Management 2007. On the National Archives Act, 2003, data revealed that 54.3 % disagreed. On the other hand, 51 % of the respondents agreed on the Treasury instructions and 55.2% on the Security Instruction.The overall mean score of this topic is 37.24% which indicates that respondents have negative perception regarding the receipt of standard related to records management.

Awareness about the records creation

Table 3: Awareness about the records creation

Awareness about records creation	YES	NO
Have recordkeeping requirements been identified for your organization?	81.4	18.6
Are inventory records created in SIRC?	81.2	18.8
Are there any manual procedures for the implementation of inventory records?	75.8	24.2
Are you familiar with the concepts and regulations concerning the creation of records?	74.5	25.5
Are active and semi-active records being kept in the organizational registry?	69.1	30.9
Are you familiar with basic filing principles?	69.1	30.9
Is there any procedure manual provided by SIRC for records creation?	65.6	34.4
Overall mean	73.81	26.19

Table 3 revealed data on awareness about the records creation among SIRC staff. Majority of the respondents 81.4% agreed that recordkeeping requirements have been identified by their organizations. Pertaining to records inventory, 81.2 % of the respondents agreed. Regarding the existence of manual procedures for the implementation of inventory records75.8% of the respondents agreed. Following the question onfamiliarity with the concepts and regulations concerning the creation of records 74.5% agreed. On the question of if active and semi-active records are being kept in the organizational registry, 69.1% agreed. Data also shows that majority of therespondents 69.1% arefamiliar with basic filing principles. It is good to know that 65.6% of the respondents agreed that there is procedure manual provided by SIRC for records creation. The overall mean score of this topic is 73.81% which indicates that respondents have positive perception regarding the awareness about the records creation.

Classification

Table 4: Classification

Classification	YES	NO
Does SIRC have its own filing classification scheme?	69.9	30.1
Does the classification code of the existing files facilitate/improve the process of searching and retrieving files?	66.7	33.3
Is a standardized classification system is being used in SIRC's sub-agencies?	52.7	47.3
Does SIRC file classification system different from National Archives of Malaysia?	52.4	47.6
Is there a specific staff in charge of monitoring the filing classification? If 'YES' please answer question no 6. If 'NO' please go to question no 7.	44.8	55.2
Is the file classification process follows the National Archive of Malaysia's convention?	44.1	55.9
Is the classification manual provided to every one of SIRC administrative staffs?	31.9	68.1
Overall mean for Institutionalization	51.79	48.21

Table 4 shows data on classification. Majority of the respondents 69.9% agreed that SIRC has its own filing classification scheme. Following the question on if classification code of the existing files facilitate/improve the process of searching and retrieving files and 66.7% agreed. The data revealed that 52.7% of the respondents agreed that a standardized classification system is being used in SIRC's sub-agencies. Regarding the question on the existence of the difference between SIRC file classification system different and National Archives of Malaysia, 52.4% agreed. On the other hand, 55.2% of therespondents stressed that there is no specific staff in charge of monitoring the filing classification.Asking about ifthe file classification process follows the National Archive of Malaysia's convention only 44.1% agreed. Majority of the respondents 68.1% disagreedthat classification manual is provided to every one of SIRC administrative staffsThe overall mean score of this topic is 51.79% which indicates that respondents have positive perception regarding the classification.

Maintenance and use of records

Table 5: Maintenance and use of Records

Maintenance and use of records	YES	NO
Are you familiar with the requirements governing classified and sensitive records?	51.6	48.4
Are appropriate controls provided for records that are viewable only to authorized personnel?	58.9	41.1
Has a dedicated record storage facility been constructed on-site?	64.2	35.8
Is additional commercial space leased for record storage?	32.6	67.4
Are inactive records kept in MAIS premise?	66.7	33.3
Does SIRC conducts recovery/repair process to conserve damage records?	33.3	66.7
Overall mean	51.21	48.79

Table 5 shows data on maintenance and use of records. Majority of the respondents 66.7% agreed that inactive records kept in SIRC premise. Following the question onhas a dedicated records storage facility been constructed on-site and 64.2%. The data revealed that 58.9% of the respondents agreed that aappropriate controls provided for records that are viewable only to authorized personnel. Regarding the question on familiarity with the requirements governing classified and sensitive records, 51.6% agreed. On the other hand, 33.3% of therespondents stressed that SIRC conducts recovery/repair process to conserve damage records.Asking aboutthe additional commercial space leased for records storage only 32.6% that agreed on the statement. The overall mean score of this topic is 51.21% which indicates that respondents have positive perception regarding the maintenance of records.

Disposition of records

Table 6: Disposition of Records

Disposition of Records	Yes	No
Do you understand the needs of the general disposition of records ?	62.8	37.2
Do SIRC implement the evaluation process before the records disposed ?	67.4	32.6
Do SIRC have officers who carry out the process of records evaluation?	58.5	41.5
Do SIRC provides a guide to assess the records prior to disposal ?	57.1	42.9
Do SIRC has a record disposal schedule ? If ' YES ' please answer the questions below , if 'NO ' please answer question number 6 .	48.8	51.2
Are existing disposal schedule involving the disposal of all kinds of records in SIRC?	41.8	58.2
Are records destroyed only in accordance with approved schedules?	46.5	53.5
Does your organization have its own disposal schedule database?	36.5	63.5
Do SIRC transfer their records to the records center or Archives ?	41.0	59.0
Do SIRC have manual procedures for the transfer and storage of records ?	43.5	56.5
Are inactive records destroyed by SIRC?	45.2	54.8
Overall mean	49.91	50.09

Table 6 revealed data on awareness disposition of records among the staff. Majority of the respondents 67.4% agreed that SIRC implement the evaluation process before the records disposed. Pertaining to understanding the needs of the general disposition of records, 62.8% of the respondents agreed. Regarding the either SIRC have officer who carry out the process of records evaluation 58.5% of the respondents agreed. Following the question onSIRC provides a guide to access the records prior to disposal57.1% agreed. On the question of has a records disposal schedule, 51.2% disagreed. Data also shows that majority of therespondents 46.5% agreed records destroyed only in accordance with approved schedules. 54.8% of the respondentsdisagreed that inactive records destroyed by SIRC. Majority of respondent 56.5% stated that SIRC do not have manual procedures for the transfer and storage of records. 59% respondent disagreed that SIRC transfer their records to the records center or Achieves. Majority of the respondent 63.5% agreed on organization do not have its own disposal schedule database. The overall mean score of this topic is 49.91% which indicates that respondents have negative perception regarding the disposition of records.

Appraisal and Acquisition

Table 7:Appraisal and Acquisition

Appraisal and Acquisition	Yes	No
Does your organization store permanent record?	68.6	31.4
Are permanent records routinely transferred to the state records repository/archives?	58.1	41.9
Do you understand the definition of permanent records and how to identify it?	31.4	68.6
Are you familiar with the procedure of transferring permanentrecords?	24.7	75.3
Does your organization provide proper procedure to identify vital records?	32.5	67.5
Do you know where and how vital records kept?	38.4	61.6
Are vital records stored properly according to procedures and duplicates updated routinely?	45.2	54.8
Are vital records stored outside the organization ? If ' YES ' please answer question number 9. If "NO" please go to question number 10 .	26.3	73.7
Was a risk analysis performed to determine the best storage method?	41.5	58.5
Are you involved in the process of storing vital records?	23.0	77.0
Overall mean	38.97	61.03

Table 7 shows data on appraisal and acquisition which have been distributed to SIRC staff. Majority of the respondents 68.6% agreed on organization store permanent records. Regarding permanent records routinely transferred to the state records repository/archives 58.1% of the respondents agreed on the statement. Following the question onvital records stored properly according to procedures and duplicates updated routinely 54.8% of the respondents disagreed. Asking about either risk analysis performed to determine the best storage method 58.5 % disagreed.Pertaining to know where and how vital records kept, 61.6% of the respondents disagreed. Data also suggests that 68.6% of the respondents disagreed on understand the definition of permanent records and how to identify it. On the vital records stored outside the organization, data revealed that 73.7% disagreed. On the other hand, 75.3% of the respondents disagreed on the familiarity with the procedure of transferring permanent records and 77% of respondent disagreed in involved in the process of storing vital records.The overall mean score of this topic is 38.97% which indicates that respondents have negative perception regarding the appraisal and acquisition of records.

Description of Records Inventory and Finding Aid

Table 8: Description of Records Inventory and Finding Aid

Description of Records Inventory and finding Aid	Yes	No
In MAIS, we practice records inventory listing.	48.8	51.2
Information to describe records for the inventory is provided by National Archive of Malaysia	42.4	57.6
MAIS has its own manual/procedure to describe records' inventory	57.1	42.9
Some of our staffs familiar with Rules for Archival Description. (RAD is designed to capture and present information necessary for comprehensive and intelligible descriptions of all classes of record material in all possible circumstances).	34.5	65.5
Is the finding aids come in form of paper based?	41.0	59.0
Does MAIS have electronic findings aids?	25.0	75.0
Is the finding aid useful?	42.7	57.3
Overall mean	41.64	58.36

Table 8 shows data on description of records inventory and finding aid. Majority of the respondents 57.1% agreed that SIRC has its own manual or procedure to describe records' inventory. Following the question onrecords inventory listing practice show 51.2% disagree on it. Only 42.4% agree that information to describe records for the inventory is provided by National Archive of Malaysia. The data revealed that 34.5% of the respondents agreed that some of staffs familiar with Rules for Archival Description. Regarding the question on the finding aids come in form of paper based 59% disagreed. On the other hand, 42.7% of therespondents stressed finding aids are useful.Asking about ifthe MAIS have electronic findings aids 75% disagreed MIAS have electronic findings aids. The overall mean score of this topic is 41.64% which indicates that respondents have negative perception regarding the records inventory and finding aids.

Preservation

Table 9: Preservation

Preservation	Yes	No
Does the institution consider having preservation department?	72.4	27.6
There are appropriate steps have been taken to preserve certain records collections	25.6	74.4
Are the institution's senior administrators and trustees aware of preservation needs?	42.9	57.1
Does one staff member have formal responsibility for preservation activities?	34.9	65.1
Is there any proper steps taken to preserve the certain records collection? For example MAIS vital records	48.8	51.2
Are procedures established to examine the condition of materials in the collections on a regular basis?	38.4	61.6
Are staffing and staff training adequate to carry out basic preservation activities and other needed activities for the collections?	27.1	72.9
Are there histories of natural (e.g., flood, hurricane, fires, earthquake) or man -made (e.g. water main failures, gas leaks, bomb threats) emergencies in the vicinity of the institution?	46.0	54.0
Is there any external events damaged historical collections in the past?	32.9	67.1
Are collections insured against disaster damage?	26.2	73.8
Does the institution have a written disaster plan?	14.5	85.5
Are the historical collections located within the MAIS building?	39.0	61.0
Have historical materials been repaired in-house in the past?	34.9	65.1
Does all MAIS historical collection even been repaired/conserve?	27.2	72.8
Overall mean	36.48	63.52

Table 9 revealed data on awareness about the preservation of records among SIRC staff. Majority of the respondents 72.4% agreed that institution need to consider having preservation department. 74.4% disagreed there are appropriate steps have been taken to preserve certain records collections in the institution. 57.1% respondent disagree that institution's senior administrators and trustees aware of preservation needs. 65.1% disagree that there is staff member have formal responsibility for preservation activities. Following question about proper steps taken to preserve the certain records collection and only 48.8% agreed. 61.6% disagree procedures are established to examine the condition of materials in the collections on a regular basis. 72.9% disagree that staffing and staff training adequate to carry out basic preservation activities and other needed activities for the collections. Data also shows that majority of therespondents 54% disagree there is histories of natural (e.g., flood, hurricane, fires, earthquake) or man - made (e.g. water main failures, gas leaks, bomb threats) emergencies in the vicinity of the institution. Only 32.9% agree there any external events damaged historical collections in the past. 26.2% agrees on collections is insured against disaster damage. It is show that 85.5% disagreed the institution have a written disaster plan. Besides that, 61% disagreedthe historical collections located within the SIRC building. Data also show 34.9% agree that historical materials been repaired in-house in the past. SIRC historical collection even been repaired or conserve and only 27.2% agree with it. The overall mean score of this topic is 36.48% which indicates that respondents have negative perception regarding the preservation of records.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, several recommendations were identified to improve the management of records in SIRC. The recommendations are as follows:

- Establish a Corporate Archive with appropriate fittings and equipment. This is in line with Circular No. 5 of 2007: office management guide section 8.2, section (b) which states that: it is the responsibility of departments to provide a record of the department with the appropriate fittings and equipment.

- Appointing officials records management professionals and related staff to smooth the MAIS records management program. This is in line with Circular No. 5 of 2007: office management guide section 8.2, section (d) which states that: it is the responsibility of head of departments to appoint a departmental Records Officer and inform the National Archives.

- Creating records management procedures manual and distributed to staff. The procedures manual should include a standardized records management in the SIRC and agencies under it. Examples of manual procedures can be obtained from the National Archives.

- Creating records preservation and conservation activities under the corporate archive to be formed. Given SIRC is a trustee of the assets of endowments, available documents and records relating to such property should be kept well-preserved and restored in the event of damage. Therefore, it is necessary for maintenance and conservation activities created in SIRC. Training related to maintenance and conservation activities can be obtained from the Records Management Program, Faculty of Management, UniversitiTeknologi MARA (UiTM) or from the National Archives.

- It is highly recommended that systematic and uniform records management system be implemented in SIRC. Therefore it is proposed that the records management audit being conducted to identify the actual situation in the SIRC records management.

- Establishing a disaster management plans relating to the management of records. Disaster Management Plan is a guide to assist an organization manages potential disaster occurs on the record and its environment. A good disaster management plan can serve as a guide to avoid or minimize the potential risk to the records in the event of disasters such as floods, fires and so on.

- Creating records disposal schedule. This is in line with Circular No. 5 of 2007: office management guide section 8.2, section (c) stating that: it is the responsibility of departments to carry out the disposal of public records under the Public Records Disposition Regulations, the National Archives of Malaysia Act 2003 [Act 629].

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CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it was found that the formation of a corporate archive MAIS managed by professional staff is highly significant in ensuring proper management MAIS records maintained in accordance with its lifecycle. In addition, the establishment of corporate archives MAIS can also ensure important records can be stored and kept for future reference.

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