

Electronic Records Management in Malaysia: A Case Study in One Government Agency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at identifying the electronic records management (ERM) practices at one prominent government organization, namely the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Institute. It attempts to investigate the level of awareness among the staff on ERM, the training on ERM among them, and the availability of qualified personnel to manage the electronic records systematically. This study also seeks to find out whether EPF Institute has developed an awareness and attitude towards Electronic Records Management (ERM) and also to find out the qualifications of those staff handling ERM and training provided for effective implementation of ERM. The objectives of this study are to investigate whether EPF Institute has complied with the guidelines and policies; and provide appropriate ERM facilities. This study adopted survey as its method by using questionnaires and observations at EPF Institute. The findings revealed the lack of compliance with the guideline and policy - e-SPARK, while a number of problems arose on the issues related to guidelines and policy related to ERM. The results shows that there is a need to apply ERM systematically to ensure that records created today would be assessable, useable, readable, preserved, reliable and authentic to ensure the good governance and preserve the corporate memory. The organization did not appoint specific staff who are trained and qualified in managing ERM. They were aware of the importance of ERM training, but the number of employees who attended the training were small. They were also not aware of the existence of the national policy *Elektronik Sistem Pemeliharaan Arkib dan Rekod Kerajaan* (e-SPARK) on ERM. The findings indicated that staff in EPF has initiative; good capacity building and excellent physical infrastructure. The findings also showed that before any sustainable solutions can be made, it may even be necessary to establish the principle that all electronic records are considered part of the organization's record management system.

Keywords: electronic records management (ERM), Malaysia; Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Malaysia; e-SPARK, records life cycle, continuum concepts, records keeping, archive administration, Malaysia; ERM training, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, the Malaysian Government launched the Electronic Government initiative known as e-Government. The implementation of e-government was initiated with the introduction of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) in 1996. E-Government seeks to make interaction easier for the public and businesses by enhancing accessibility and indirectly eliminating red tapes to a considerable degree. In digital era, the use of electronic records has increased. There are many types of electronic records which require proper management to ensure the availability of the records for future use, which will benefit organizations and the nation. Even though most of the transactions are done electronically, many organizations or agencies are still practicing the hybrid approach; ie. everything in the system has to be printed, put into a manual file and stored in a file room for further reference, as well as to maintain and to preserve the vital records.

Electronic Records Management (ERM) has become mandatory for government agencies in applying electronic records in administration in line with government policy to encourage E-government. Most organizations have huge allocation for ICT development. However, the systems used in most departments are not managed in compliance with national policy for example E-SPARK developed by National Archives of Malaysia (NAM). Mismanagement of records seems to be the main problem caused by poor recordkeeping and lack of attention. Umi & Zawiyah (2009) reported that not all government departments possess electronic records management policy; some electronic records are far from complete, clear or easy to access. Many organizations are carrying out electronic records management without any policy in place. Rick (2006) found that records and information are not managed as agency business assets. Records management is not viewed as critical to agency mission or incorporated into automated business processes in a timely manner. There is a low support for records management that has led to a lack of training, tools, and guidance for all staff, as well poor integration of records

management and Information Technology (IT) disciplines. The lack of awareness among administrators has made it difficult to establish records management programme. Staff are not fully informed and trained about records management. This has led to a lack of training, tools, and guidance for all staff, as well poor integration of records management and Information Technology (IT) disciplines. According to Raja Abdullah Yaacob (2007), policies, standard and procedures are vital to ensure records management program can be implemented efficiently and effectively in organizations. However, less attention was given to records management although records and information management is an important element to help improve the performance, accountability and transparency of an organization (Umi & Zawiyah, 2009). In addition, Ahmad and Othman (2006) reported that one of the challenges in e-government is some government department do not recognize ICT expenditure as an investment. This will create a barrier for implementation of the ERM in organization.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the current practice of electronic records management at a prominent government agency in Malaysia, i.e. The employees Provident Fund Institute. The specific objectives of the research are as stated below:

- i. to identify EPF Institute staff's awareness of ERM;
- ii. to find out the qualification of staff involved in ERM;
- iii. to find out the training provided for staff involved in ERM;
- iv. to identify whether the agency possesses guidelines and policies on ERM; and
- v. to find out the infrastructure provided in managing ERM.

RELATED LITERATURE

Records as evidence and as sources of information must be always authentic and trusted. If a record is to function effectively as evidence of an activity, it must first be compliant with any external requirements in the environment where the organization operates. According to Sprehe (2005), records management is an essential element of organization infrastructure together with financial management and human resources management. The rationales for records to ensure business is conducted in an orderly, efficient, and accountable manner, and deliver services consistently and rightfully towards maintaining its corporate and institutional memory. Milar (1997) insists that without records to provide documentary evidence of its activities, no government or organization can be held accountable. Raman, Maniam, and Cheng (2007) confirm that the challenge for E-government are, as accessibilities to government information, but slow adoption of E-government applications was due to lack of integration and insufficient engagement of key stakeholders (especially users and citizens). Ahmad and Othman (2006) stated in order for e-government services to gain widespread acceptance, they must have the same standing as the equivalent paper process and ensuring the privacy and security before advancing the online e-government services. More importantly, as reiterated by Umi & Zawiyah (2009) the accountable records are required in any legal matter, which process finding, preserving, and producing information in response to a dispute or lawsuit. However, Ahmad and Othman (2006) describe that confusion over what exactly should be in the law is also a problem. Thus, a good law should be emplaced for good governance of the government records.

METHODOLOGY

The case study research strategy was chosen because the objective was to identify, the ERM practices to ensure the electronic records are managed and preserved systematically. The survey methodology is used to answer the research questions and the data gathering techniques for the survey included observation and questionnaires. Observations entailed visits to randomly selected units in the EPF Institute, for instance Knowledge Management and I-Learning Section and Training Infrastructure Section. The visits were partly meant to supplement and validate the information obtained from the questionnaires.

This study used the representative and probability sampling design, which is the simple random sampling. All personnel in the EPF population were considered, such as the senior managers, executive managers, supervisors or unit heads, officers, clerks and support staff. A sample of about 76 people is needed for some specific survey. The researchers decided to include in the sample 66% of the EPF Institute members as representative, and for the purpose of the survey, fifty (50) sets of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Forty-eight (48) questionnaires or 96% of the respondents were returned.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Respondents' Profile

How many people replied to the questionnaire survey? More than half (60.4%) of the respondents were female, while 39.6 % were male. About 39.6 % of the respondents were in the 40's aged group, while 37.5% in the 20's aged group and 22.9 % in the 30's aged group. The academic qualifications of the respondents consisted of 37% degree holder, followed by SPM with 31 percent, 16 percent of STPM, 14% with a diploma and 2% with a master degree. The job classifications of the respondents comprise of clerical staff 45% of the respondents, assistant manager accounting for 16%, executive officer consisted of 20 percent and the balance were composed of course coordinator, creative designer, finance officer, portal engineer, senior training officer and the secretariat personnel. Tenure of service of the respondents were also analyzed of which about 37.5% had under 5 years of service, 8.3% had worked for 11 to 15 years, 8.3 % with 6 to 10 years of service and the highest with 45.8 percent had more than 15 years of service. The respondents were further split by job function/section with the following breakdown : about 48 percent were in administration, 22 % in training, 13 percent in infrastructure and facility, 6 percent in knowledge management and 48% were classified under "other" comprising of Call Centre, E-Learning, Finance, Customer Service, Human Resource, and Services, as shown in Figure 1.

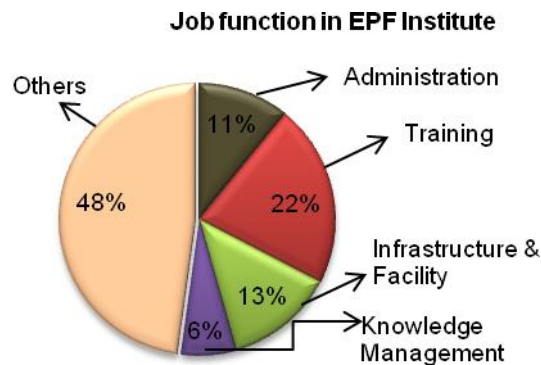


Figure 1: Respondents' Job Function in EPF Institute

RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS IN MANAGING ERM

Respondents were asked on how they knew about their organization's ERM. The results indicated that 31.9 % of the respondents have been trained in electronic records management and policies, while 25.5 % of respondents have been briefed by their department head and another 17 percent stated that they were briefed by their colleague, 17 percent have accessed to the organization ERM policies and guidelines and 8.5 % stated 'others' and specified "don't know what ERM" and "no idea" at all. The staff was informed about ERM through several of sources, and the highest percent is from being trained in ERM use and policies. (See Figure 2)

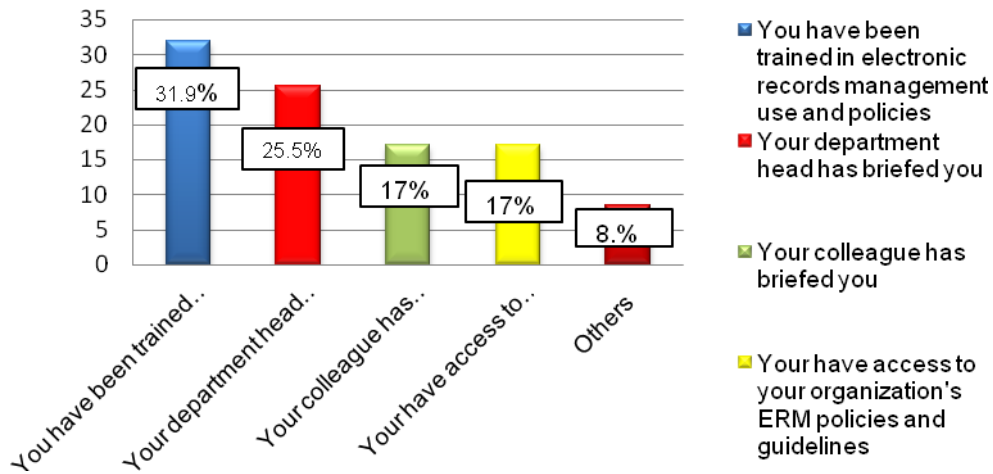


Figure 2: Awareness among the Respondents about ERM

The majority (68.7 %) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they were aware of the electronic transactions in their organization were recorded in the system called ERM. However, 22.9 % remained neutral and 8.4 % of respondents thought that electronic transaction were not recorded in the ERM system. They were not well informed on the electronic transactions in ERM. (See Figure 3).

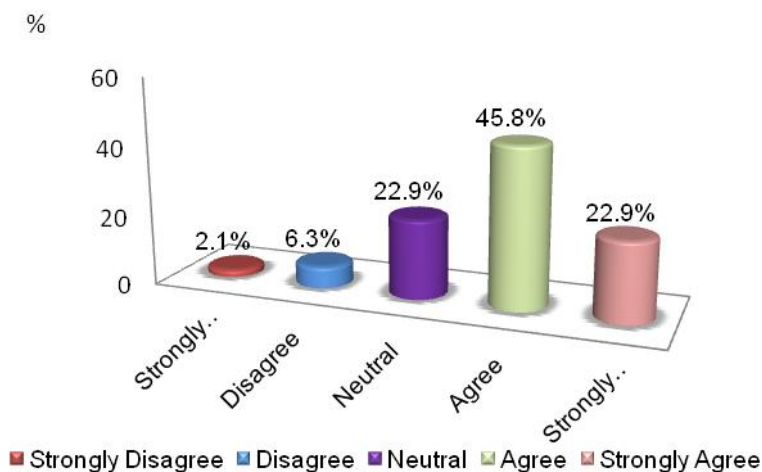


Figure 3: Awareness about the Electronic Transactions in ERM System

Preference of use

The survey showed that the majority (85.4 %) of the respondents agreed that the electronic records need to be managed systematically, 8.3 % is neutral and 6.3 % thought it's not critical for the electronic record to be managed systematically. In addition, 85.4 percent preferred to use electronic records than manual records, whereas 8.3 % of respondents were neutral, and 6.3 % of the respondents were not interested to use the electronic records. They preferred to use manual approach in their daily work.

ERM could enhance the organization governance

Then, 83.3 % of respondents responded that the ERM could enhance the organization governance at the EPF Institute, especially in their daily work as a training centre to achieve the institute's goals. However, 10.4 % were neutral, and 6.3 % of the respondents felt that ERM did not enhance the organization governance. The level of awareness is very low, in terms of understanding of the function of ERM.

ERM to make records easily available

On the subject of organization application of ERM to make records easily available, the finding generated a high response of 87.5 % in agreement to the aim of the application of ERM in the EPF Institute to be able to make the records or information in their organization easily available or facilitate the retrieval of information in their organization without difficulty. However, 6.3 % of the respondents experienced difficulties to get through the information or records by using the ERM and the rest were neutral.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF INVOLVED IN ERM

The rationale for these questions was to discover the experience and opinion of the EPF Institute staff about the qualification requirements for those involved in ERM. It consists of the need of special skills, required knowledge, appointment of trained staff, function of the IT Officer, and top management support or commitment. The qualifications of staff involved in ERM are shown in Figure 3. More than half, 57.4 % of the respondents agreed that their organization have appointed qualified personnel with records management qualification to manage the ERM. However, 42.6 % of the respondents were not sure whether a qualified person or not have been given the task to manage ERM. Some felt that their organization was not so concerned in getting the right specific qualification for the ERM position.

Estimation on staff performance

The respondents were asked of their estimation or evaluation for their institute's staff who managed the electronic records. Overall, the results demonstrated confidence in their staff with 58.7 % of respondents felt that the staff performance in managing the ERM tasks were sufficient. There were 26.1 % of the respondents who expressed more than sufficient and only 15.2 % indicated insufficient. The findings indicated that seven (15.2%) of the respondents were not confidence with the performance of the managers or administrators in managing electronic records.

Special skills needed

The staff were asked whether the organization needed to identify the special skills in managing ERM or not. Majority of the respondents (77.1 %) agreed that a special knowledge and skills are required for every staff involved in the ERM management. They believed that a person must have a basic knowledge on records management in order to perform his/her work effectively. Such skills include the life cycle of records from creation to disposal, metadata and preservation. In the present study, eleven (22.9%) respondents rated the need for specialised skills in managing ERM as strongly agreed, twenty six (54.2%) agreed, seven (14.6%) considered them to be neutral on that issue and four (8.3%) of the respondents disagreed. It is evident that, without personnel with expertise or with special knowledge and skills, the implementation of ERM would be extremely difficult.

Required knowledge and skills

With regards to the organization's needs to provide staff who have specialised knowledge and skills in ERM, the finding shows that majority (85.4 percent) of the respondents agreed that the institute requirements is to ensure the staff have the particular knowledge and skills to be employed in managing ERM with only a small number (4.2%) who disagreed. Based on the findings, it was revealed that those who were neutral (10.4%) in their opinion were not aware or did not understand about the qualification of personnel (See Figure 4). Majority (85.4%) of the respondents felt that the organization needs to provide qualified staff from the top to the lower level, especially at the leadership level to ensure the records management programme in their organizations are carried out according to the rule of law.

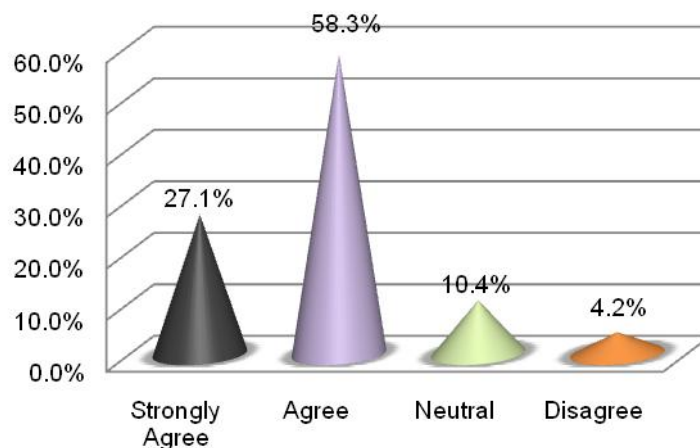


Figure 4: Respondents' Knowledge and Skills in ERM

Further, 52.1 % of respondents agreed that staff who manage the ERM given to only the qualified personnel who can manage or focus in doing the ERM task. Another 25.0 % of respondents strongly agreed or felt that the institute must be effective in managing the ERM process, and recognized the critical requirements for determining the process of appointing them to manage the electronic records. However, 10.4 % remained neutral and 12.5 % thought that the institute does not need to appoint special personnel for managing their ERM.

Specialization in ERM

As indicated in Figure 4, key to formulating and implementing effective ERM programme is to have personnel trained specifically in ERM. A total of 77.1 % of the respondents expressed agreement on the need for specialized personnel to manage electronic records. Such responsibilities should not be delegated to clerical staff arbitrarily. The results presented in Table 1, showed that more than half (58.4%) of the respondents supported the idea that electronic records can only be managed by Information Technology (IT) Officer. A total of 41.7 % and 16.6 % agree and strongly agree that and IT Officer was suited for the ERM position. On the other hand, a total of 27.1 % of them disagreed and strongly disagreed that only IT Officer could manage the record as they believed that ERM should be managed by all staff with background and interest in the system that includes all the elements in ERM, such as creation and maintenance of records in all formats, safeguarding records, identification and retrieval of information held within records. About 14.6 % of the respondents were neutral on this issue.

Top management support

Top management support is a critical factor for the successful implementation of the ERM as it requires finance, policy approval, training program, infrastructure provision, etc. The EPF Institute is very fortunate in that the top management is committed to the ERM with 64.6 % of

the respondents indicated full support by their management. However, 29.2 % remained neutral on their management support and only 6.3 believed that they never receive good support from their section head or top management. (See Figure 5)

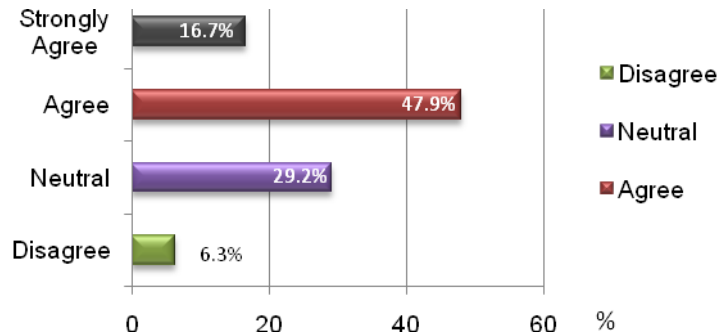


Figure 5: Commitment and Support from Management in ERM

TRAINING PROVIDED FOR STAFF INVOLVED IN ERM

The training provision for personnel involved in the ERM was to discover on whether the institute has a training program and guidance in their recordkeeping practice or procedures for ERM implementation or not. Table 1 indicated that 52.1 % of respondents said 'yes' and confirmed that the institute have training programs either internal or external that was related to the electronic records environment. The respondents that stated 'no' for the existence of the training programs in particular courses for managing records in electronic environment were 16.7 % and about 31.3 % stated that they were 'not sure' or never noticed of the training program in their institute. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Training Program for Electronic Records Management

TRAINING	(%)	Frequency (n)
No	16.7	8
Yes	52.1	25
Not Sure	31.3	15
Total	100.0	48

In addition, cross tabulation analysis was made between job function or section and training programme to determine the significance of training in record keeping for particular job function. The findings indicated that those working in the administration and others were the highest groups receiving training in record keeping practices and procedures. On the other hand, 60 % and none of the staff in the training and knowledge management had any training at all respectively. Therefore, the sections head need to review and plan for the appropriate training that relate to the electronic records management.

The answer to training provided in the institute was illustrated by "Yes", "No" and "Not Sure": The findings are as follows;

- 45.8 % respondents received training and guidance in recordkeeping practices and procedures.
- 50.0% respondents that attended training reported that training programme was effective in assisting them in managing ERM.

- 58.3% respondents were actively encouraged to attend electronic records management training, while 20.8 per cent expressed that they did not have any encouragement for any training.
- 68.8 % respondents believed that end user training were supported in the institute.

GUIDELINES AND POLICY ON ERM

The compliance of policies, standard and procedures are vital to ensure records management programme can be implemented efficiently and effectively in organizations. National Archives of Malaysia as a leader in records management has developed the *e-Strategy for Preservation of Government Records and Archives (e-SPARK)*. The e-SPARK is a special research project supported by the highest authority to promote good record keeping in the public sectors. Its implementation was carried out in two phases. The first phase concentrated on preparation of working tools, such as guidelines, procedures and system specification. The second phase was dedicated to system development and system integration - ERMS (Electronic Records Management Systems) and AMS (Archival Management Systems). This study revealed that more than half (56.3 %) of the respondents at EPF Institute were 'not sure' about the existence of the guideline or national policy, called e-SPARK. About 2.1 % mentioned that they did not know about the policy at all. However, on the positive note, 41.7 % of the respondents were aware and familiar with the policy, as shown in Figure 6.

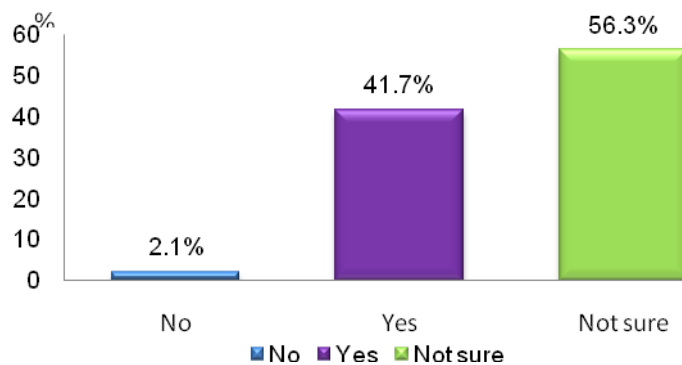


Figure 6: Awareness of Existence of National Policy (e-SPARK)

Guideline or policy referred to

The respondents were asked about the source of their guideline or policy that they referred to in managing the electronic records. The answers were outlined in three sources, namely, 'internal guideline,' 'guideline by section' and 'authority organization' (such as NAM, MAMPU or PSD). The results displayed in Figure 7 represents the table, showed that the 'internal guideline' is most accepted or popular with 47.9%, then followed by internal guideline with 27.1% and the balance 25 % indicated their source to be from the authority of the organization.



Figure 7: guideline and policy was referred by respondents in managing ERM

About 65 % of respondents could get the guideline and policy easily. On the other hand, 35 % expressed difficulty in getting the guideline and policy. This is because of the lack of promotion or approach in the distribution of the policy or access to the information is not properly established. In addition, the respondents were asked about their understanding on the guidelines and policies. A total of 71 % of the respondents stated that the guideline and policy on ERM practices is easily understood. The Institute was very concerned on this and ensured that its staff fulfil the organizations requirements and comply with the guideline and policy. Whereas, only 29 % of the respondents indicated difficulty in understanding the procedures, record keeping and professional aspects in ERM.

Compliance of policy

Even though the majority (71%) of the respondents could easily understand the policy, the compliance rate is still not very favourable. Only 25% expressed their compliance rate as excellent, 67 % said they fairly complied and 8 % poorly complied with the guidelines and policies. This study also revealed that the factor of compliance was related with the complication of the policy and their level of understanding. (See Figure 8).

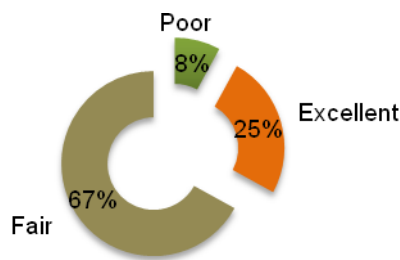


Figure 8: The Level of the Respondents' Compliance on ERM Policy and Guidelines

Not complying with policies

Some factors contributing to not being fully complying with the guidelines and policies are: time constraints, tedious, complicated and "don't know what to do". The reason on the complexity of the guideline and policy is the highest with 38.5 %. The second major reason for not complying was said to be tedious at 28.2 percent, followed by not knowing what to do with the policy at 17.9 % and 15.4 % said it's due to time constraints, as indicated in Figure 9.

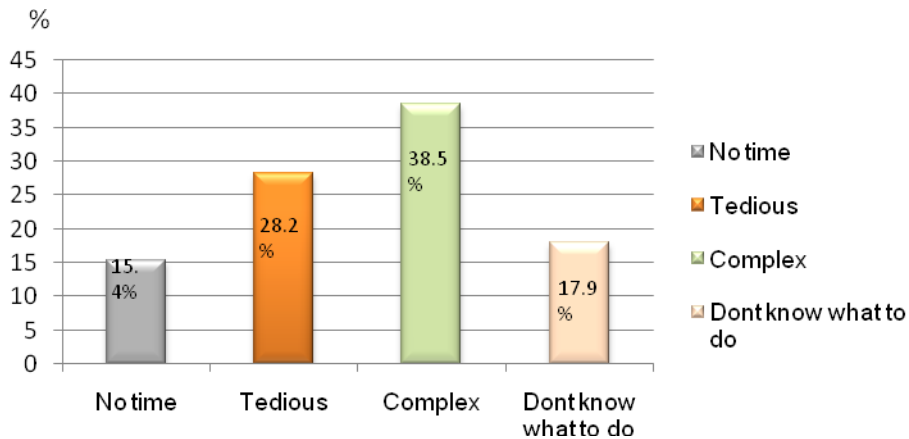


Figure 9: Reasons for not Complying with the Policy

The finding shows on the respondent perception towards the importance of policy in managing ERM. Almost half of them (49 %) agreed that the electronic records guidelines and policies are very critical in their daily work, while 34 % admitted that they were unclear about it and stayed neutral, and the rest failed to do so as they thought that the ERM policy is not critical in their daily work.

The importance of guidelines and policies

A total of 77.1 % of the respondents agreed that guidelines and policy will help them in managing records. Of the 77.1%, 16.7% responded ‘strongly agreed’ and 60.4% responded ‘agreed’ to the policy usefulness in managing ERM. They felt that the policy was able to define the scope of electronic records management and its importance in serving the needs of the institute. In contrast, about 16.7 % of the respondents were neutral and 4.2% of respondents felt that the guidelines and policies were not useful in managing records.

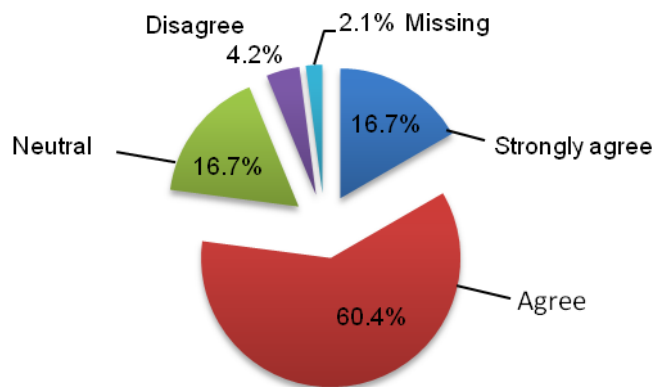


Figure 10: Importance of Guidelines and Policies in ERM

In addition, a total of 78.7 % of the respondents agreed that all the staff in EPF Institute must comply with the guidelines and policies. 19.1 % of the respondents decided to be neutral on this statement and 2.1 % believed that there is no necessity to comply with the policy. The findings indicated that even though the staff from knowledge management (100%) had never attended any training, they were really interested and felt that electronic records guidelines and policies were critical in their daily work. They felt that the policy aims to cover all records on paper, electronic and other media and those records that will be created in the future. They

were aware that electronic records are needed as a corporate memory of organization activities. Compared with those staff in the training division, 10% did not agree that guidelines and policy were critical in the daily work, 60% being neutral and only 30 % of the respondents in training division agreed and understood the purpose of the policy. While in the administration division, 60% of them sensed that policy is important to ensure the professionalism in managing the ERM by referring to the guidelines. For Infrastructure and Facility division, 60 % of respondents agreed while 40 % were neutral.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN ERM

The appropriate infrastructure is important for the effectiveness of the ERM. It includes the users and system requirements, hardware and software facilities which determine the success of information retrieval. About 95.7 % of the respondents felt that the institute has proper server room, complete with appropriated hardware and software facilities and 89 % stated their satisfaction with the adequate hardware and software in managing ERM.

A total of 70.2% of the respondents felt that their organization has provided adequate infrastructure facilities for electronic records management. However, 27.7 % remained "neutral" and 2.1 % did not agree that EPF Institute has provided an adequate infrastructure for ERM. The majority of the respondents (89.1 %) said that the information could easily be retrieved through the electronic environment system. Further, 80.9 % of the respondents believed the accessibility of electronic records are easy, while 12.8 % were neutral and 6.4 % of them experienced that accessibility of electronic records was not easy and time-consuming in terms of retrieving or searching the information/records. However, slightly more than half of them (57.5 %) stated that access speed to a particular database or information was always fast as expected while 31.9 % was neutral, and 10.6 % experienced access speed was not within their expectation

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed some significant findings relating to the development of the ERM which can be applied to other organizations in Malaysia, especially in the public sector. The lesson learned remind our government or department that they need to set up or review immediately the policies in handling electronic records management system. This is because the national policies have been formulated even though most transactions are already done electronically (Umi and Zawiyah, 2009). There must be plans to carry out the records management life cycle and the elements of records management. The existing policies need to be reviewed and adapted to suit the respective department. Specific and well-defined guidelines combined with strong infrastructure are needed in handling comprehensive records such as planning, development, maintenance, updating and disposal.

Good governance depends on the implementation of records management itself, either it is applying the conventional or e-government. Based on the findings, systematic records management could help the public delivery services and the positive impact of ERM system has been demonstrated in a number of public agencies. ERM could result in lesser time in completing transactions, reducing costs associated with travel of citizens to interact with government and also improving government ability to deliver service to larger segment of population. Also, the ability of managers to monitor task completion rates by the civil servants is increased. In fact, the Prime Minister of the country has repeatedly stressed the need to improve the public sector service delivery to enhance Malaysia's competitiveness in the global environment. Jamaluddin and Malek (2005) described that the public sector is there to serve the needs of the people and as such, public servants must change the mentality to serve rather than be served. Government bureaucracy should be replaced with professionalism in order for the administration of the country to be run effectively. Based on the findings, awareness on ERM at all level of public servants should be developed to create a culture to compel great service. The concern should not only be the clerks or lower level staff but also the top management. There is a need to increase the awareness among personnel or staff on the importance of electronic records management as foundation of integrity and accountability.

Furthermore, government needs to increased transparency and reduced corruption through the ERM implementation.

All organizations need to be aware of the legal and regulatory environments in which they operate that affect the requirements to document their activities. Based on the findings, the percentage of "not sure" on the e-SPARK is very high at 56.3%. Therefore, the training in organization needs to focus on awareness about the existence of the policy itself. According to previous research by Uma and Zawiyah (2009), not all government departments have a policy on electronic records management. However, the relationship between the existence of and adherence to policy does not guarantee that the staff will comply with the policy. This study showed that even though electronic records management policy is easy to get and understood, there are still 38.5% of the respondents who stated that it is very complicated to comply with. Therefore, every organization needs to recognize its requirements and simplify the policy to meet the organization's requirements. Records managers should be appointed in every agency or department and the need to learn about the environment in which the records management programme operates. This includes developing an understanding of the internal and external pressures on the organization as a whole as well as the legal and regulatory requirements that have a direct impact on records management. Records managers need to understand the context of their work at a number of different levels. They need knowledge and skills of ERM, understanding on the organizational activities that generate records and the systems used to control them. In addition, they should have a thorough understanding of the organization itself and how records management contributes to its objectives. The records managers can design and implement a programme that fits the organization's requirements.

In term of physical storage medium and protection, EPF Institute should define the appropriate storage environment and media, physical protective materials, handling procedures and storage systems. The institute should also need to consider the life span of the records when designing the system. For example, how long will the records need to be kept and maintained that will affect the decision on the storage media. Therefore, the institute should prepare the system disaster recovery plan as to ensure a risk can be identified and migrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the study, it is proposed that the EPF Institute take a concerted efforts and action to maintain and improve the management of electronic records. It is recommended that the organization:

- i. Create the awareness of ERM implementation*
- ii. Specify the qualification of staff those handling ERM*
- iii. Developing the guideline and policy of ERM*
- iv. Sustain the facilities/infrastructure for effective ERM*

The National Archives Act 2003 (amendment) mandated that organizations should be responsible for current records management and the organization has the leading role in governing the management of electronic records from creation till disposition. Through this Act (Act 639), it is clearly stated that destruction of public records (paper or electronic records) is prohibited, and no one should destroy any record without prior approval or written consent form the Director General of the National Archives Malaysia (NAM). It also makes it compulsory for records management system for auditing (International Standardization Organization-ISO) to control over the creation and organization of records, as the most important record keeping function. It is the key element that ensures that the goal of a sound ERM programme is achieved. Enforcement of the requirements is set out by the National Archives of Malaysia's Electronic Records Functional System Specifications. Any agency has to refer to NAM if it wants to develop the ERMS.

Equipment and software must meet the standard requirements. EPF Institute may need to come out with capital to enhance the existing system. Staff who can operate the equipment must be available and also appropriately trained, on maintenance to ensure the effectiveness of ERM practices.

This study has revealed several aspects of ERM in the EPF Institute that requires further research:

- Study on the staff from headquarters of EPF Department as a whole.
- Examine on trusted records management in electronic environment.
- Study on the management of e-mails as official records in public sectors. This can be conducted to explore and assess the understanding of the email management and detail study on the mindset of email users.
- Study on the vital records in electronic environment in the context of long term preservation must be performed to ensure the organization's implementation of the rational ERM policy.

CONCLUSION

Systematic management of electronic records and archives is crucial, not only for good governance, but also for nurturing the ideals of a higher world civilization built upon justice, peace and prosperity for humanity as a whole. Government agencies need to comply with the ERM policy formulated by the authority while applying the best practices so that the nations' corporate memory will be well administered and preserved. Organizations are not alone when it comes to planning and implementing ERM System. NAM as the leading agency could not stand alone and need support from all ministries, agencies, civil servants and public. Therefore, records management policy should be implemented transparently, explicitly and comprehensively. Controls are needed, in order to ensure effective electronic records management to support government information and official records.

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