

Records as Strategic Resource in the Malaysian Public Sector

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Received Date: 3 November 2023

Accepted Date: 15 December 2023

Revised Date: 4 January 2024

Published Date: 31 January 2024

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ABSTRACT

Records may be used to ensure transparency, to keep individuals and organisations responsible for their acts and responsibilities, and to show that organisations have met legal or regulatory standards or accepted best practices. Records appear as a medium to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation, it becomes a strategic resource that provides information for future use. This study aims to describe how public records are managed and used among officers in departments and ministries of the Malaysian government. The respondents and key informants engaged in this study are Diplomatic Administer Officers (PTD) from different position grades starting from grade M44 to JUSA because they are categorized as top management that acts as administer, policymaker, decision-maker, etc. in the organisation. The respondents were randomly selected from twelve ministries and one department of the Malaysian public sector in Putrajaya. The study conducted is quantitative method. Findings show that all hypotheses are accepted. Records users were found to have a significant and positive relationship with the strategic use of records. Records value was also found to have a significant and positive relationship with strategic use of records same as the relationship between records user and records value. Moreover, the records' value is hypothesized as a mediator between the records user and strategic use of records also indicates the same result. The results of the study have contributed to the development of a research model and theory for using records as a strategic resource, especially, in the government sector. Government servants especially PTD must use records as one of the strategic resources in carrying out their daily affairs.

Keywords: diplomatic administer officer, Malaysian government, public records, records management

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Resource is defined as anything that can be regarded as a strength or weakness of a particular organisation. The resource that has an advantage can bring strategic changes to the organisation as the organisation can emphasize how resources can hinder or may lead to organisational learning to adapt. Records are a strategic resource for any organisation, especially for the public sector in day-to-day business. Records are regarded as one of the important sources due to their features of uniqueness, authenticity, reliability, usability, integrity, and flexibility. Records become an important resource nowadays, especially in the government sector and their absence will result in inefficiencies or failure in operating procedures. According to Thomassen (2001), records entail documented information in any format. Deprived of records, no assessment can be made on the accountability and authentication of transactions and actions made by any individuals or organisations, compliance of the actions and transactions to the criteria of efficiency, legitimacy or the principles of good governance, and morality of the individuals. Records are a key resource for organisations and should be used following sound record management practices (Mutula & Wamukoya, 2009). Furthermore, Shepherd (2010) stated that individuals and organisations create records of their current activities to support management, ensure accountability and culture to meet the needs of society for collective memory and protect the identity of individuals and communities and their histories.

According to Mwaura (2013), Malaysia is regarded as one of the countries that has accomplished a great measure of economic prosperity and has become a model of economic progress and development for developing countries. It was realized as early as the 1960s that Records Management in Ministries and Departments should be improved upon to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services, ensure integrity and accountability as well as eradicate or minimize corruption. Since then, Malaysia has been enjoying the positive impacts of managing its records efficiently and strategically. However, despite the crucial role of records described above, researchers agree that many organisations, including government departments, pay little attention to records management (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005). In Malaysia, for example, government departments and businesses sometimes treat recorded information carelessly, oblivious to the fact that records are essentially as important as other resources of financial, people, money, and equipment (Yusof, 1999). Despite the increasing importance of effective records management for organizations and government agencies in Malaysia, several challenges persist, hindering the establishment of a streamlined and secure information management infrastructure. The lack of standardized practices, inadequate training, and insufficient allocation of resources have led to a situation where many entities face difficulties in handling both physical and digital records. In addition, the absence of a comprehensive and uniform approach to records management has resulted in security vulnerabilities, compliance issues, and impediments to efficient information retrieval. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the integrity, accessibility, and security of records in Malaysia, as well as fostering a culture of responsible information governance. In light of the mentioned issue, it is therefore relevant for the researcher to explore the strategic use of records in the public sector of Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Records contain valuable information about an organisation. A systematic records management approach is very important to ensure that an organisation can protect and preserve its records as an organisation's strategic resource. Touray (2021) stated that a record is information that exists in various forms whether printed or electronic. It is created or received based on the activities or transactions that take place in an organisation. Records are kept and preserved to ensure all activities and transactions are recorded and become a strategic resource in the future. Furthermore, the International Standards Organisation [ISO 15489] (2001) defined a record as information that is created, received, and kept as a source of reference for an organisation and individuals in carrying out a business and purpose.

Records management is a fundamental activity of any given organisation. Records are essential underlying elements for every aspect of the governance process, and institutions of all kinds should highly embrace records management. According to ISO 15489 (2001), “records management is a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.” What keeps the public service going in any modern system of government is having recorded information, which is used for planning, decision making and controlling. Effective planning, decision-making and controlling surely involve timely access to records (Amina, 2011). Records are essential to all organisations. They improve the effectiveness of operations and document services in organisations by enhancing the delivery of services, supporting the administration, documenting the rights and responsibilities of individuals, and capturing evidence of the work in public authorities. Implementation of proper records management leads to good public management since government activities are based on access to information contained in records (Smith, 2007).

Records are an important source of information for an organisation. Therefore, records need to be managed systematically based on certain elements and criteria. Based on the records management perspective, there are four characteristics used to describe trustworthy records namely authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability (ISO 15489.1, 2002; Cullen et al., 2000; Upward, 1996). Records must be viewed as a valuable and reusable asset, as well as a source of content, context, and knowledge (Sutcliffe, 2003). As the organisation is currently involved in knowledge management, record management should be viewed as an enabling or support function for knowledge management. The argument should be that an organisation would lose a wealth of knowledge produced by its employees during daily operations if records were not well managed. Wamukoya’s theories on the importance of records management may be summarized according to De Mingo (2018) who viewed the role of records in an organisation as assisting organisations in providing services in an orderly, efficient, consistent, and equitable manner, supporting policy and management decisions, supporting current and future research activities, assisting organisations in meeting legal obligations and defending themselves against lawsuits, and assisting organisations in protecting the public’s right to information by keeping or destroying records.

Records are indeed a strategic resource which can be used to improve the organisation’s effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Khumalo (2019) identified several benefits of records management in an organisation including the use of records for preserving the corporate memory. An organisation’s files contain its institutional memory, an irreplaceable asset that is often overlooked. Records are created every day in business which could become background data for future management decisions and planning. Saur (2005) stated that corporate memory is information of an organisation that is of value for re-use. A record according to Millar (1999) is “the information created, received and maintained by an organisation or a person, in pursuance of a legal obligation or the transaction of business. A record is evidence of what had happened”. Saur (2005) added that corporate memory consists of all the active and historical information in an organisation that is worth sharing, managing, and preserving and use. Corporate memory records include board, commission and committee minutes, contracts, ideas, regulations, technical reports, transaction reports, videotapes and films, memos etc. It encompasses all the many types of documented and undocumented information that organisational units require to function effectively. This information is used throughout the organisation, from executive management to the finance legal and personnel departments, and by those involved in the engineering manufacturing and marketing activities. Much of the corporate memory is normally reflected in documents that consist of information packages which are products of the work of the organisation.

Mnjama (2004) pointed out that there are several reasons why organisations should manage records as a key resource. Records are organisational assets as they document organisational activities and are required for audit trails, particularly in determining who did what, why, and when. Records document financial activities, and without them, meaningful audits are impossible to conduct, fraud is impossible

to be proven, and those in charge of an organisation's financial management cannot be held accountable for their actions. Apart from that, records are an important tool for keeping organisations accountable to the public. In the event of a disaster, disaster plans, and recovery plans are required to safeguard records that are critical to the organisation's continued operation. Records must be kept in accordance with the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO 15489) and other international best practices. There is a significant need to manage records efficiently and effectively, particularly electronic records as they are susceptible to a variety of threats. Mechanisms should be in place to ensure that electronic records are captured, stored, or migrated to a more stable medium that can be accessed over time.

Records management goes beyond the traditional conceptualization of usage that involves several dimensions. Therefore, this study looks upon similar topics and fields of study. Five theoretical perspectives were selected for consideration. The justification for selecting these theories are: (1) the theory applies to certain domains of work – motivational, process, job, or task, (2) the theory explains work design and user engagement, (3) the theory includes technological (technical). Human (individual), and contextual (environment) to explain the work design and user engagement. The five theories selected are Records Life cycle Theory, Sociotechnical System Theory (STS), Flow Theory, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Individual Differences Theory.

METHODOLOGY

Research design involves a series of decision-making choices (Sekaran, 2016). This study adopted a combination of exploratory, descriptive, and hypothesis testing. First, it is exploratory because there is a lack of research on the strategic use of records, as well as a lack of knowledge on the effect of contextual dimensions towards the strategic use of records. Second, this study used descriptive statistics. Third, it also involved hypothesis testing as several hypotheses were formulated during the development of the theoretical framework. For the type of investigation, the focus of the study was to test the correlation between the variables. Even though there might be a causal relationship between variables, the objective of the study did not focus on the causal relationship; instead focusing on determining the relationship between variables through correlation.

In terms of unit analysis, the study adopted individual analysis; in this context the PTD at departments and ministries in the Malaysian government. An online survey was sent to the PTD according to their respective ministries and departments. In social science research, studies at the individual level are very common instead of organisational or group. As for sampling, the study adopted a nonprobability sampling specifically purposively sampling. According to Forster (2001), nonprobability sampling refers to any method for collecting survey data which does not utilize a full probability sampling design. The non-probability sampling technique is usually cheaper and easier to gather the data than probability sampling. However, there are several drawbacks. Such methods can be prone to selection bias, and standard design-based methods of inference cannot be used to ensure approximately unbiased estimators of population quantities or to provide associated measures of precision. The most obvious advantage of the non-probability sampling technique is the ability to target groups of the population. Non-probability sampling technique is often dismissed or criticized because it does not have the statistical foundation of the probability method. Non-probability method is also more cost-effective to conduct (Galloway, 2005). According to Lavrakas (2008), a purposive sample which is referred to as a judgmental or expert sample is a type of nonprobability sample. The main objective of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. This is often accomplished by applying expert knowledge of the population to select in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represent a cross-section of the population.

The respondents and key informants engaged in this study are PTD from different position grades starting from grade M44 to JUSA because they are categorized as top management that acts as administrator, policymaker, decision-maker, etc. in the organisation. The respondents were randomly selected from twelve ministries and one department from the Malaysian public sector in Putrajaya. The study conducted employs a quantitative method. A total of 271 questionnaires were collected and only 266 were analysed using SPSS and Smart-PLS software.

FINDINGS

The data gathering instrument for this research was a mix of self-developed and adapted structured questionnaires consisting of four (4) sections parallel to the variables involved in the study. Section A of the questionnaire contained seven (7) self-developed questions related to the demographic profile of the respondents such as the name of the ministry or department in which the officer is working, current position grade of the officer in the organization, number of years in which the officer are in the current position, number of year in which the officer are in the current ministry or department, gender and age of the officer and education level of the officer.

Section B of the questionnaire contained self-developed questions measuring the Strategic Use Records in Organization (SUR). This section was divided into four (4) topics whereby Topic 1 contained five (5) questions to measure good governance; Topic 2 contained six (6) questions to measure the evidence; Topic 3 consisted of four (4) questions to measure the decision making, and Topic 4 contained five (5) questions to measure the efficiency of the service. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (low) to 7 (high) was used for all the questions in this part to obtain the answers from the respondents. Section C of the questionnaire also contained self-developed questions measuring the Records user. This section was divided into two (2) topics whereby Topic 1 contained fourteen (14) questions measuring the user attitude and Topic 2 had eight (8) questions measuring user participation. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (low) to 7 (high) was used for all the questions in this part to obtain the answers from the respondents. Lastly, Section D of the questionnaire contained self-developed questions measuring the Records Value. This section was divided into two (2) topics whereby Topic 1 had thirteen (13) questions measuring the ease of use and Topic 2 had fourteen (14) questions measuring the usefulness. A Likert scale ranging from the scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high) was used for all the information in this part to obtain the answers from the respondents. A total of 271 responses were returned; in which 5 responses were excluded due to an empty dataset and not completed. As a result, 266 usable responses were used for further analysis. The following Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondent's responses:

Table 1: Response Rate

Ministries and Department	Frequency	Per cent
Prime Minister Department	69	25.9
Ministry of Works	9	3.4
Ministry of Health	32	12
Ministry of Rural Development	19	7.1
Ministry of Finance	16	6
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	12	4.5
Ministry of Education	22	8.3
Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment & Climate Change	16	6
Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry	19	7.1
Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources	17	6.4
Ministry of Communication and Multimedia	9	3.4
Ministry of Defense	17	6.4
Ministry of International Trade and Industry	9	3.4
TOTAL	266	100

The distribution of the questionnaire is based on the number of PTDs available in a ministry. The Prime Minister's Department recorded the highest respondent responses with 25.9% (or n=69), meanwhile, the Ministry of Health had the second highest with 12% (or n=32). The third highest response rate was recorded by the Ministry of Education with 8.3% (or n=22). The fourth highest response rate was shared both by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Agriculture & Agro-Based Industry with 7.1% (or n=19). The Ministry of Water, Land & Natural Resources and the Ministry of Defense shared the same number of responses rate of 6.4% (or n=17). Next is the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment & Climate Change with the same response rate of 6% (or n=16). This is followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with 4.5% (or n=12) and 3.4% (or n=9) for the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Communication & Multimedia and Ministry of International Trade & Industry.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the discussions of the relationships of the variables in the conceptual framework of the study, the following research hypotheses are tested and analyzed:

- H1.** There is a significant relationship between Records User (RU) and Strategic Use of Records (SUR) in the Malaysian Public Sector.
- H2.** There is a significant relationship between Records Value (RV) and Strategic Use of Records (SUR) in the Malaysian Public Sector.
- H3.** There is a significant relationship between Records User (RU) and Records Value (RV) in the Strategic Use of Records (SUR) in the Malaysian Public Sector.
- H4.** Record Value (REV) mediates the relationship between Records User (RU) and Strategic Use of Records (SUR) in the Malaysian Public Sector.

Level of Strategic Use of Records

In the context of the study, four variables were used to assess the level used of records as a strategic resource among the PTD in the Malaysian Public Sectors namely good governance (GOG), decision making (DEM), evidence (EVI) and services efficiency (SEF). A higher-order construct was developed to simplify the relationship between the variables. To measure the level of the use of records as a strategic resource, a descriptive analysis was conducted. The variable of GOG was measured using five items. The resulting total mean score of GOG revealed that most respondents have a moderate level of good governance. Descriptive analysis shows that most of the respondents leaned towards positive responses. Therefore, it can be deduced that most of the respondents believed that good governance can be performed by using records strategically. Respondents were aware that the existence of records can assist their daily routine work smoothly. The finding of the study shows that most of the respondents in the ministries and departments of the Malaysian government use records to achieve accuracy in their tasks. Records have become an important reference source in their daily routine task. The PTD depend on the records to make sure that they achieve accuracy in all the tasks assigned to them. Perhaps, the main reason for this situation is that records contain solid information recorded from past events and activities related to their work. Therefore, when records are used strategically, they can contribute to good governance.

It was also revealed from the findings that records are used as a strategic resource to improve accountability in daily routine tasks. Each employee has their responsibilities in an organisation. Each of them is assigned with different task in accordance with their respective positions. Therefore, to ensure that the task entrusted can be carried out well, they will rely on records and correct information. They believe that by referring to the record, the task given can be completed excellently and responsibly.

Perhaps, hopefully by using records in daily work, this will further improve the quality of work and contribute to good governance.

The Impact Records User on the Strategic Use of Records

Two variables were used to measure the impact of user attitude and user participation on the strategic use of records. Each variable consisted of fourteen items and eight items. A higher-order construct was developed to simplify the relationship among variables. The result of hypothesis one (H1) shows that Records User (RU) (user attitude and user participation) positively and significantly affects the strategic use of records. (H1: Supported, $\beta = 0.6474$, $t = 12.0563^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the PTD attitude and participation in the strategic use of records in terms of GOG, EVI, DEM and SEF have a significant impact.

Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. Firstly, the officers have an awareness of the importance of records as well as records management in their organisation. They know that records are a very important source of reference in various matters related to the organisation such as decision-making, protecting rights, evidence and so on. Secondly, the officers have been exposed to information and skills related to record management through training and workshops attended such as record classification training, record disposal, record preservation and preservation and many more. Thirdly, the officers are aware of the existence of policies and acts related to record management that must be adhered to by an organisation in carrying out its operations and functions. They are also aware of the possible consequences of non-compliance. Looking into the descriptive analysis of user attitude and user participation, the overall mean score indicates that the PTD were able to realise the benefits of records in their daily task.

The Impact of Records Value on Strategic Use of Records

Two variables were used to measure the impact of record value on the strategic use of records. Ease of use (EOU) was measured using thirteen items and ease of usefulness (USE) was measured using fourteen items. A higher-order construct was developed to simplify the relationship among variables. The result of hypothesis two (H2) shows that record value positively and significantly affects the strategic use of records. (H2: Supported, $\beta = 0.2975$, $t = 4.9287^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the combined effect of EOU and USE positively influences the PTD in using records.

Ease of usefulness is defined as the “degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” (Davis, 1993). Ease of use is also referred to as the “degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental effort” (Davis, 1993). It was argued that these two features form the user’s attitude towards using the computer system, which in turn impacts upon actual system use. Thus, the more positive the ease of use and ease of usefulness of the system is, the higher the probability of employees using the system. Furthermore, Davis et al. (1989a, b) and Davis (1993) also postulated that ease of use has a direct impact on ease of usefulness, but not vice versa. The findings of this study indicate that ease of usefulness and ease of use do influence the intention of PTD in using the records in their organisation. This finding is consistent with several other prior studies (Abbas & Hamdy, 2015; Barnes, 2011; Kang, Hong & Lee, 2009; Kim, Mirusmonov & Lee, 2010; Sorebo, Halvari, Gulli, & Kristiansen, 2009). This implies that if users consider records to be useful and could improve their tasks in their organisation, then they will be more likely to continue using the records. Therefore, the organisation must consider the needs of users in managing records systematically. Thus, if the records management program is effective and practical, this will strengthen the users’ perceived ease of use of records.

The Impact of Records User on Records Value

Two variables were used to measure the impact of user attitude and user participation on record value. Each variable consisted of fourteen items and eight items. A higher-order construct was developed to simplify the relationship among variables. The result of hypothesis three (H3) shows that Records User (RU) (user attitude and user participation) positively and significantly affect records value. (H3: Supported, $\beta = 0.681$, $t = 16.58^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that PTD attitude and participation in the value of the record have a significant impact.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), attitude is an individual's positive or negative feelings associated with performing a specific behaviour. They believed that an individual would hold a favourable attitude towards a given behaviour if she/he believed that the performance of that behaviour would lead to mostly positive outcomes. On the other hand, if the individual believes that mostly negative outcomes will result from the behaviour, he/she will hold a negative attitude towards it (Myktyin & Harrison, 2003). From a psychological point of view, attitude is an implicit response with drive and strength which occurs within the individual as a response to stimulus patterns and which affects subsequent overt responses. In the context of this study, user attitude influences an employee to use the record as a strategic resource in performing his or her duties. Participation is a very broad concept that means different things to different people. The term is often used by people with different ideological positions, who give it very different meanings. Participation refers to the creation of opportunities under suitable conditions for people to influence decisions affecting them. That influence can vary from a little to a lot as participation is a special case of delegation in which the subordinate gains greater control, and greater freedom of choice, with respect to his responsibilities (McGregor, 1960). In the context of this study, user participation refers to the involvement of an employee based on his or her positive judgment in using the record as one of the strategic resources in the affairs related to his or her job.

The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of the records and ease of usefulness as well as user attitudes. This means that users are likely to form a positive attitude towards using the records when it is proven as a useful tool to the practice and vice versa. This finding is in line with Taylor and Todd, (1995) who indicated that perceived usefulness has both direct and indirect influences on the attitude towards using the system (Mohammed, 2010). However, in contrast, Davis (1989) found that a system will be adopted if it is regarded as useful, irrespective of attitude towards the use of the system. The usefulness construct may reflect considerations of both the "benefits" and the "costs" of using the target system. Ease of use may be seen as part of the cost of using the system from the user's perspective. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significantly positive relationship between ease of use and user attitudes towards using the records. This implies that ease of use by the user influences the attitudes towards using the records significantly. In other words, users intend to use the records more frequently as the records become easy to use. This finding is consistent with Davis (1989), who proposed that perceived ease of use does not only predict attitude towards the IS but is also an antecedent of perceived usefulness, that is to say, the lesser effort required by a system is to be used, the more it will be used to increase job performance (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Sally et al., (2006).

The findings of the study also revealed that there was a significantly positive relationship between user participation towards using the records and ease of use as well as ease of usefulness. This implies that the ease of use and ease of usefulness influence the user participation in using the records significantly. In other words, users have a positive judgment in using the record as one of the strategic resources in the affairs related to his or her job. It has been recognised that user participation can clarify project goals, reduce management conflicts, promote sharing technology and encourage commitment (Dearden & Rizvi, 2008). Participation is often considered to be a central factor in sustainable development and confidence building. User participation can be motivated by concern about social equity for underprivileged groups and sometimes by more technically oriented perspectives aimed at

developing more efficient systems (Pilemalm & Timpka, 2007) in which efficiency is market-driven and measured to market success. Spears and Barki (2010) concluded that user participation improves awareness of security risks as participants are more careful in managing sensitive information, increasing controls, and are more aligned with the business processes, and organisational awareness rises. However, user participation also involves challenges, especially regarding communication, possible conflicts and increased work; therefore, it is important to apply proper strategies for user participation (He & King, 2008).

Mediating Role of Record Value

The measurement model and structural model were performed to test the following hypothesis. Two variables were used to measure the impact of records value as a mediator between records user and strategic use of records. Ease of use (EOU) was measured using thirteen items and ease of usefulness (USE) was measured using fourteen items. A higher-order construct was developed to simplify the relationship among variables. The result of hypothesis four (H4) shows that record value mediates the relationship between records user and strategic use of records. Records value as mediator positively and significantly affects the strategic use of records. (H4: Supported, $\beta = 0.2026$, $t = 4.4738^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the combined effect of EOU and USE positively influences the PTD in using records.

There are various contributing factors to this phenomenon. First are the features and characteristics found on the record. The use of records as one of the important sources is driven by the characteristics of uniqueness, authenticity, reliability, usability, integrity, and flexibility. According to Thomassen (2001), these characteristics of records make them different from other types of information. A record should reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken and should provide enough information so that it is understood. It should reflect how it was used or why it was created including the date, the time, and the participants. It should be linked to other documents or information to which it relates. Records must be trusted to be a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities, or facts and can be relied upon in subsequent activities. To ensure reliability, records should be created at the time of the transaction or incident or soon afterwards and by individuals with direct knowledge of the facts. To be useable, records must be retrievable, presented, and interpreted. The links between other records should be maintained. Based on Igbaria, Livari, & Maragahh (1995), records that are easy to use, easy to read, understandable and linkable create a high influence on the user. The existence of records' value as a mediator to records users and strategic use of records encourages and influences the PTD to use the records as a strategic resource in their organisation as they are aware of the characteristics and features of records.

Second is the practices of records management programs in organisations. Records management refers to the entire set of activities that an organisation must carry out to properly manage its records. The key activities include setting records management policy, assigning responsibilities, establishing and promulgating procedures and guidelines, as well as designing, implementing and administering recordkeeping systems. All organisations need to identify the regulatory environment that affects their records management. The regulatory environment may comprise such elements as laws and regulations, codes of best practices, codes of conduct etc. Good records management starts with a policy which reflects an organisation's needs. The objective of the policy should be the creation and management of authentic, reliable, complete, and usable records which are capable of supporting business functions and activities of the organisation for as long as they are required. PTD has been exposed to various rules and legislation related to records management throughout its service in the Malaysian government. This makes them aware of the importance of records in carrying out their daily tasks. Furthermore, defining and assigning records management responsibilities and promulgating such responsibilities within an organisation is crucial to good records management and to meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders. The authorities and responsibilities for records management of

different employees within an organisation should also be clearly defined, including senior management, records managers, records management staff and all staff who create, receive and keep records as part of their daily work. A recordkeeping system is a tool to manage records. It is a manual or automated information system having the necessary functionality that enables it to carry out and support the various records management processes such as collection, organisation and classification of records to facilitate their retrieval, distribution, use, disposal or preservation.

The third factor is the benefit of the record. Records are an unlimited source of reference because they contain true information based on the activities and events that took place. this will be able to help PTD carry out their duties more effectively and further improve the quality of their work. Records are important for their content and as evidence of communication, decisions, actions, and history. Public institutions and authorities are accountable to the public and government. Records support openness and transparency by documenting and providing evidence of work activities and by making them available to the public. Records support quality programs and services, inform decision-making, and help meet organisational goals. Records are a strategic resource for any organisation, especially for the public sector in conducting its day-to-day business. Records need to be recognized as a vital and reusable asset, as well as a source of content of content, context and knowledge (Sutcliffe, 2003). As organisations are currently involved in knowledge management, records management should be seen as a support function towards knowledge management. The argument should be that without records, an organisation would lose a wealth of knowledge produced by its employees during its daily operation.

Looking into the descriptive analysis of ease of use and usefulness, the overall mean score indicates that PTD were able to realise the benefits as a result of their using the records strategically. The interaction with the record value improves PTD self-esteem and feeling of awareness, as well as their confidence towards records. Moreover, most of the PTDs in the participating ministries and departments also agreed that the use of records speeds up their accomplishment of tasks, reduces the effort to find appropriate resources and helps them to continue working in a greater amount of time.

Research Contributions

The contributions of the research are discussed in three subsections, namely empirical, theoretical, and practical contributions. The subsections will discuss each contribution in detail. The following Figure 2 shows the contributions of this study.

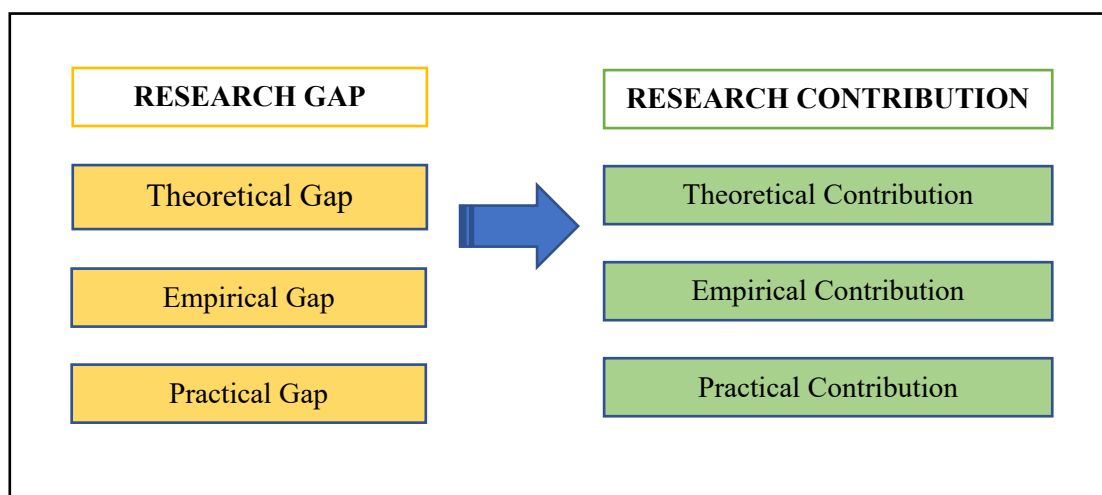


Figure 1: Research Contributions

Theoretical Contribution

Even though there are so many studies on records management, due to the complex nature of records, more research is required. Due to the scarcity of research on the strategic use of records, the corresponding theoretical model has depicted records management and strategic use of records especially in the public sector as almost unavailable until the conduct of this study. The previous research on the strategic use of records focused on a single dimension of usage, mostly from records-keeping perspective. Moreover, the previous theoretical model mostly did not include record users as one of the predictors of strategic use of records. The conceptual model linking records user and records value towards strategic use of records was not previously been tested. The theories referred to in this study are The Life cycle Concept of Records (IRMT, 1999), Sociotechnical System Theory (STS) (Bostrom & Heinen, 1977), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986), Individual Difference Theory (Motowildo et al., 1997) and Theory of Flow (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). The research models referred to in this study are the Records Management Practice model (Mwangi, 2017), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Yang, 2003), The Records Continuum Model (Upward, 2005), the Governance Records keeping Model (Phiri's, 2016), RM Role in Organisational Administration Model (Nyawamu, 2018), Records management practices in Malaysia Model (Irwan, 2009), Information System Success Model (Delone & McLean, 2003) and Recordkeeping Metadata Model (Lewellen, 2015).

Based on the mentioned theories and models, this study developed a conceptual model based on empirical assessment describing the strategic use of records, its determinants, and impacts. The model consisted of 3 variables which are Records User, Records Value and Strategic Use of Records followed by 8 dimensions which are User Attitude, User Participation, Ease of Use, ease of Usefulness, Good Governance, Decision Making, Evidence and Services Efficiency. Upon completion of the measurement model, two (2) items were removed which are Reference Sources and Corporate Memory. due to low loading factors. Henceforth, the main theoretical contribution of this study is the development of an empirically tested and validated model of Strategic use of records, its determinants, and impacts. Since the literature on the strategic use of records is sacred in numbers, this study will promote the concept of engagement among government servants and practitioners. The following Figure 3 shows the final conceptual framework of the study.

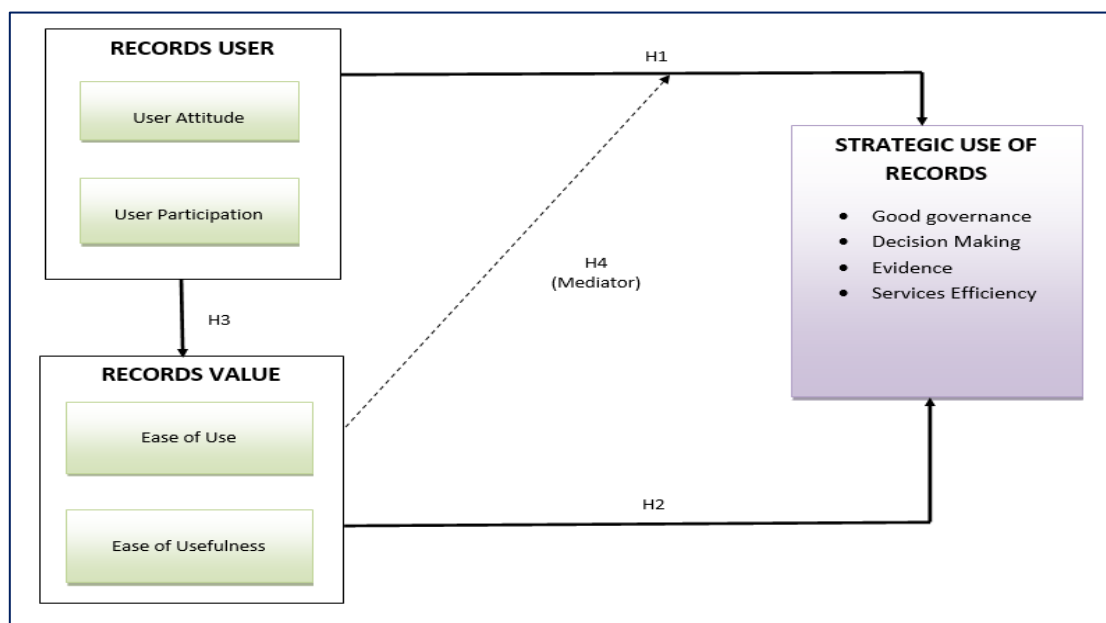


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Strategic Use of Records

Empirical Contribution

Studies on records management have become one of the most essential agendas for the nation. Malaysia Government through the National Archive of Malaysia (NAM) with the vision of moving towards Industrial Revolution 4.0, have introduced a lot of initiatives to foster records management programs in the public sector and private sector in Malaysia. However, previous research showed that the use of records resources was underutilised, indicating that there is significant ignorance and non-compliance with the records management program. Moreover, previous studies also showed that strategic records have received little attention over the years. Findings within other domains showed that strategic records do have a significant relationship with records user and records value. However, the empirical evidence of this relationship is scarce and almost non-existent within the context of Records and Archives management. Therefore, this study provides empirical evidence of the relationship between strategic use of records, its determinants and impacts. To provide answers to the questions posed in this study, the researcher has gone through the processes of developing hypotheses, formulating research methodology and strategies, performing systematic analysis of research findings and producing publications as proof of empirical evidence. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a scarcity of research that tested the relationship between the strategic use of records, its determinants, and its impacts. Henceforth, the conclusion of this study provides empirical evidence of the significant relationship between the constructs.

Other than that, the demographic profiles of the respondents in this study may provide some insights into the level of strategic use of records among government servants in Asia. Apart from that, this study may provide empirical evidence that could lead to a better understanding of the strategic use of records within the same geographical area. This study also can be used to measure other types of respondents such as private sector employees, information professionals, and others. In the context of participating ministries and departments, the result provides empirical evidence on the strategic use of records and its determinants as well as possible impacts. The results will help participating ministries and departments to improve their records management practices to be more efficient and systematic.

Practical Contribution

One of the practical contributions of this study is the development of comprehensive instruments to measure the strategic use of records, their determinants, and their impacts. In the context of this study, the instrument used was a survey consisting of 69 items. The instrument was developed by adapting and adopting instruments from the previous research with the combination of new items, especially in the context of strategic use of records. The conceptual framework was used as a guidance for the development of the questionnaire. The process developing of an instrument for this study involved several steps. Firstly, the instruments were pretested under the supervision of the research supervisors. Then, the revised version of the instruments was tested with several experts from local departments and ministries. Their level of expertise and experience ranges from junior to senior officer: all with adequate knowledge of the concept of records management. Then, the instrument was tested to determine the reliability of the instrument. The finding shows that all items met the required Cronbach's Alpha scores. Based on the above judgement, it can be established that the instrument is valid to be used as an instrument to measure the strategic use of records, its determinants and impacts in a different research setting. The context of participation in this research is mainly the PTD. However, the instrument is also suitable to be used for other types of organisations especially in business environments. Other than that, the instrument is also suitable for measuring other types of users such as academic staff and administrative staff in different types of research settings.

CONCLUSION

In the era of accountability and transparency, a government must be able to demonstrate its good governance and deliver good services to the public. Providing trustworthy records is essential to provide evidence of their performance and to strengthen trust among the public. Practising good and effective records management is particularly critical to organisations because good quality records are very much needed to make the right decisions and take actions to realize the mission of the organisations. Trustworthy and accessible records are authoritative sources of evidence and information that support and sustain the credibility and accountability of any organisation, be it the government or the private sector. The study shows that the PTD at the departments and ministries in the Malaysian government agreed that the engagement with records user and records value improves strategic use of records in organisation. A higher level of engagement leads to a higher level of record usage. The level of engagement was predicted by two dimensions: records user and records value. The resulting conceptual framework introduced in this study benefits both researchers and practitioners. Researchers may use the conceptual framework to further extend the framework in different situations. Practitioner may also use the result of this study to assess the level of strategic use of records in their organisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the team members for the assistance and constant support provided by them. The authors also would like to acknowledge the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah for providing the equipment, venue, and other resources to the researchers in completing this study.

FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the team members for the assistance and constant support provided by them.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

I/We certify that the article is the Authors' and Co-Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to Jurnal Intelek.

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