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Original Article

### Records Management Practices and School Management Decisions in Selected Secondary Schools in Kibuku District, Eastern Uganda

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Kirika.*

The study examined the effect of records management practices on school management decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku District, Eastern Uganda. The objectives of the study included: i) to establish the effect of records management practices on academic decisions, and ii) to examine the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools. A cross-sectional survey design was used to guide this study. The study involved 113 respondents. These were purposively and simply randomly selected. The questionnaires, interview guide and focus group discussion helped in collecting the data. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of frequencies and percentages as well as SPSS, whereas, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The study findings revealed that records management practices have a significant effect on academic decisions in selected secondary schools in the Kibuku District ( $r=.686^{**}$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The study also revealed that records management practices have a significant effect on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district ( $r=.342^{**}$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The study concluded that records management practices in administrative and financial decisions had the highest significant positive relationship on the school management decisions in secondary schools. It was concluded that records management practices play a key role in the management of academic institutions, so they should be handled seriously. The study recommended that records management practices should be improved through the introduction of computerized formats such as e-payment of fees, and digitized systems to check teachers' class attendance. In the same way, secondary schools should draft a records management policy to govern and regulate the management of students' academic records.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the United States, formal records management practices started around 1980 and gradually spread to the rest of the public education institutions across the state. This is because records are germane to the success of organizations since they enhance the achievement of organizational goals (Clarke et al. 2019). It is well documented that schools in Bangladesh with proper records management and competent staff to do so are at the very heart of all sound, high-performing education systems. At the same time, numerous studies in Hong Kong schools (Seyal, 2019) indicate that record management systems are vital because they help teaching staff manage education records online and protect their student's privacy, including test scores.

Rains & Bonito (2017) tackled the challenges of public secondary schools in the Sagbayan district, Bohol. They found out that schools experience weaknesses in making timely academic, financial and administrative decisions, of which the lack of records management is among the major contributing factors. Research shows that secondary schools with proper records management practices in Singapore are important for digitalizing all the files that were stored for easy retrieval of academic records, which has a bearing on good academic decisions in schools (Bryman, 2019). This was investigated, especially scrutinizing the frequently

applied record management practices and their influence on school management decisions.

In Africa, Oluwole (2020) tackled the obstacles of secondary schools in Ghana and revealed that teachers experience the challenge of timely awarding students with correct marks, and academic records for future reference have remained scarce, with improper records management practices being one of the major contributing factors. Similarly, in Nigeria, the Federal University of Technology relies on effective records management, which enhances the orderly and reliable flow of information that enables the administration and lecturers to effectively carry out their tasks. Abuga (2020) puts it that records management practices in Zanzibar schools play an important role in the proper decision-making and management of students' academic records, such as assessment and admission, among others. Thus, the smooth running of any educational institution depends on its effective and efficient information management.

In Kenya, according to Kiplagat (2018), effective records management practices in public institutions have played an integral part in aiding administrative decisions, academic decisions, and financial decisions. The records management policy has been put in place, which has helped to ease the school management decisions, like administrative decisions, for example, in aiding in tracking public school resource allocation for intended purposes.

Ultimately, well-managed records are fundamental to service delivery, proper planning and good governance in schools (Oseb, Maina & Kurgat, 2018). Proper records management at school aids in protecting vital, academic, historical, administrative, financial as well and legal records, which facilitates the functionality of the school (Agumya, 2018).

It should be noted that secondary schools in Uganda have continued experiencing gaps in records management practices. School leaders have failed to keep track of public school resource allocation. In some schools, tracking or accessing student grades for decisions of promotion has remained a nightmare (Karemire et al., 2023). The Uganda Government White Paper on Education (1992) attempted to address the records management gap in secondary schools to improve the quality of school administrative and academic decision-making, but these efforts appear to have failed to yield positive results in Kibuku District.

There is a close relationship between effective administration and effective decision-making. The strength of effective decision-making is hinged on the best evidence, which is normally based on day-to-day records (Mbabaali, 2023). The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, saw to it that schools, both public and private, needed records upon which day-to-day decisions would be based for effective management of those schools. It came up with two categories of such records including; statutory and non-statutory records. Statutory records are records prescribed by the education edicts and laws of a state, which must be maintained by school administrators, like the 1995 Constitution of Uganda (as amended). Non-statutory records, while not prescribed by law, are equally as important to the smooth functioning of a school, especially the school rules and regulations (Obura, 2021).

While these have been suggested and recommended by the government, in Kibuku district, some schools have not implemented these directives of records

management fully, while others have partially implemented them with varying challenges. Different school managers have not seen the importance of this because there was only a recommendation/directive, but no indication of the magnitude of importance of these records. This explains why some school managers, specifically in public secondary schools in Kibuku district, keep making irrational and baseless decisions, some of which seem to have worked to their advantage while others have led to the collapse or decline of some schools. If this trend continues, Kibuku is most likely to have its formerly best schools decline further or even collapse. This is attributed to a lack of knowledge about the use and the importance/magnitude of records in decision-making that would improve and sustain the schools that they lead.

Some scholars have studied the importance of records management on school management but most of these have focused on other aspects of records such as the impact of records on teaching and learning, implications of academic records on school management, academic performance, school performance, excreta (Kawade, 2023; Oluwole, 2020; Agumya, 2018). You hardly come across a study that has categorically studied the magnitude of the effect of records management practices on decision-making in secondary schools, more so in Kibuku district. Knowing the importance and magnitude of records management practices would save and improve the use of records to make evidence-based decisions, which will improve and ensure professional school management. Therefore, the current study aimed to establish the effect of records management practices on school management decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku District. The objectives of this study were twofold: i) To analyze the effect of records management practices on academic decisions. ii) To examine the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Area

The study was carried out in Kibuku district among five selected secondary schools found in Kirika and Kibuku Sub-County. Three Universal secondary education schools from Kirika Sub-County and the remaining two schools from Kibuku Sub-County. This particular area was selected because of continued weaknesses in school management decisions in selected secondary schools. The area was also selected because all schools are in a rural setting where records management had been reported to be worse in the district.

### Research Design, Study Population and Sampling:

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. This approach is appropriate as some data were collected quantitatively, and other data qualitatively. The population of the study was 113 respondents from Kibuku district who comprised; 5 headteachers, 8 IT technicians, 8 Library assistants, 10 Deputy headteachers, 5 directors of studies, and 75 teachers that were selected following the recommendations of Morgan and Krejcie (1970) table. Apart from teachers who were randomly sampled, the rest of the categories were purposively sampled.

### *Purposive Sampling*

We used the purposive technique to identify the headteachers (since they are the decision-makers), deputy headteachers (these participate in decision-making which are academic), directors of studies (these are the engines of academic activities in a school), IT specialists and library assistants (these are the custodians of all documents in a school). We purposively selected those particular respondents from their respective offices. Purposive sampling is popular in qualitative research, and those respondents were chosen purposively and interviewed to provide qualitative data.

### *Simple Random Sampling*

Two sets of small pieces of paper of the same size were prepared for all the teachers for each school, but only the required number of teachers per school were the papers which had the writing “Yes” and the rest had the writing “No”. All were placed in a container, and each teacher was asked to take only one piece of paper from the container. If the writing on the paper read “Yes”, those teachers were qualified to participate in answering the questionnaires.

### Methods of Data Collection:

#### *Questionnaire Method*

The questionnaire had closed-ended questions where answers were based on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1=Strongly Agree (SA), 2=Agree (A), 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree (D), 5=Strongly Disagree (SD). Respondents were only required to tick the best-suited answer about the subject matter (Cohen, 2011). A questionnaire was administered with the help of Research Assistants who were trained to ensure that they administered the tool effectively. We used questionnaires and tried to apply the process of guiding the respondents where necessary, in ensuring that the right primary information concerning the effect of records management practices on school management decisions in selected secondary schools was collected from the respondents. The data collected centred around the type of records management practices and the effectiveness of the practices in administrative decisions.

#### *Validity of Instruments*

Validity was established through test-retest of the questionnaires to the same sample after two weeks and the higher the reliability coefficient the higher the reliability of the instrument (Sekaran 2003). The pre-test sample was done using 10 respondents who were not included in the study. This was done as a way of eliminating or reducing errors in the study

instruments in order to ensure the quality of research findings. Pre-testing helped to estimate the time it took to fill the questionnaires, the relevancy of the questions, and the accuracy of the questions in measuring the subject under study.

CVI = No. Item

Total No. Item

Where by CVI= Content Validity Index

The researcher first enumerated the number of relevant items for the study and divided them by the number of items in the instruments. Ten questionnaires were pilot-tested on teachers, outside the sampled secondary schools in Kibuku district that did not participate in the study. Each questionnaire has 43 items.

Total items = 43 x 10 = 430 Invalid items = 55

Relevant items = 430 – 55 = 375

CVI = 375/430 = 0.87

The instrument was said to be valid since the CVI was 0.85 which was far above 0.7 the recommended value for validity. Results from the field helped to identify gaps and make modifications to the instrument where it was necessary. Similarly, the questionnaire items were constructed such that they were related to the questions in order to ensure that the research questions were well covered.

### **Interviews**

Key informant interviews were used to conduct face-to-face interviews with the key people having in-depth information about the effect of records management practices on school management decisions in selected secondary schools. The interview guide had a list of topical issues, and the data collected centred on the extent to which schools have embraced records management.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

The librarian and ICT technicians were involved in focus group discussions. The group was chosen due to predefined demographic traits, and the questions were designed to shed light on the effect of records management practices on school management decisions in selected secondary schools. Each group was composed of 3 members. The discussions were face-to-face between the researchers and selected participants, enhancing confidentiality and observing non-verbal behaviours.

### **Methods of Data Analysis:**

The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches.

### **Analysis of Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26). Preceding the analysis, a codebook for the different quantitative variables was prepared on the basis of the numbering structure of the questionnaires. All the questionnaires were numbered prior to data collection to make referencing easier.

After confirming that all the data entered was accurate, descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics are frequency distribution, percentages, measures of central tendencies (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation) as described by Creswell (2014). The data was then presented in tables. Additionally, the researcher used both correlation and regression statistical approaches to analyze data. Prior to testing for the relationships between variables, a normality test was carried out to test the validity of the correlation model. Data was analyzed to determine the degree to which changes to the value of one variable predict a change to the value of another variable. The relational change can either be positive or negative.



### Analysis of Qualitative Data

A qualitative data analysis approach was used to analyze data, which was collected using the interview method from the headteachers, deputy headteachers, directors of studies, IT specialists and library assistants. Thematic content analysis was used. The following steps were employed in the analysis: recording of data, with prior consent from the respondents. The recorded data was transcribed. The second step involved grouping the responses according to their respective themes. The themes were felt under the respective research objectives. The key responses based on respective themes were cited verbatim. To facilitate the codification, we used content and thematic analysis for the preliminary data coding. Coding started immediately after the interviews had been transcribed. The early coding helped in categorizing

data and understanding the collected information. A de-identification process was conducted during data analysis to ensure the anonymity of respondents. Finally, direct quotations of individual responses that explain the respondents' views and bring out their voices were identified and presented in the respondents' own words to give more insight into the issues under consideration (Creswell, 2014).

## RESULTS

### Response Rate of Respondents

Out of a total of 160 targeted study respondents, 113 were reached and positively responded by participating in the study, giving a 70.6% response rate. Non-achievement of 29.4% was due to targeted participants being busy and out of station during the study period, despite several attempts made to reach them. Further details are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of Respondents Who Participated in this Research Study**

Category(s)	Targeted participants	No. actually involved.	% of response rate.
<b>Questionnaire.</b>			
Teachers	122	75	61.5%
<b>Interviews</b>			
IT Specialists	10	10	100%
Library Assistants	10	10	100%
<b>Interviews</b>			
Headteachers	5	5	100%
Deputy headteachers	10	10	100%
Directors of Studies	5	5	100%
<b>TOTAL.</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>70.6%</b>

**Source:** Primary data (2024)

### Demographic Information of the Participants

The demographic information of the participants included; gender, age of the respondents and highest education level as shown in Table 2.

From Table 2, 113 respondents participated in this study, 57.5% were males, while 42% were females.

15.9% of the participants were 18-27 years, 28.3% between 28-37 years, while 45.2% (majority) were between 38-47 years, and 10.6% were from 48 years and above. In terms of education level, the majority of the respondents were holders of a Bachelor of Education and only one respondent had a PhD (Table 2).

**Table 2: Participants' Demographic Information**

<b>Gender of the participants.</b>	<b>Freq. (f)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Male	65	57.5
Female	48	42.5
<b>Total.</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age.</b>	<b>Freq. (f)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
18 to 27 years	18	15.9
28 to 37 years	32	28.3
38 to 47 years	51	45.2
48 years and above	12	10.6
<b>Total.</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of education.</b>	<b>Freq. (f)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
PhD holders	1	0.9
Masters" degree	4	3.6
Bachelors" degree	98	86.7
Diploma holders	10	8.8
<b>Total.</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Primary data (2024)

### **The Effect of Records Management Practices on Academic Decisions**

Objective one sought to establish the effect of records management practices on academic

decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. The structure was measured using different study variables and a five-point Likert scale, whose results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Effect of Records Management Practices on Academic Decisions**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Level of (dis)agreement</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>percentage</b>	<b>Mean &amp; Standard Deviation</b>
In our school, we have teachers and student registers	SA	34	45.4	4.25±0.8
	A	38	50.6	
	N	3	4	
	SD	0	0	
	D	0	0	
In your opinion does your school practice document retention like admission books?	SA	32		4.3±0.8
	A	32	42.7	
	N	37	49.3	
	SD	4	5.3	
	D	02	2.7	
In my school, records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on student promotion to the next levels	SA	30	40	3.4±0.7
	A	35	46.5	
	N	3	4	
	SD	7	9.3	
	D	0	0.0	
In my school, we base on records retrieval to determine the students that need remedial lessons	SA	27	36	3.9±0.9

Statement	Level of (dis)agreement	Number	percentage	Mean & Standard Deviation
	A	34	45	
	N	6	8	
	SD	8	10	
	D	0	0	
In my school, we monitor misfiling and non-filing	SA	25	33.3	4.4±0.8
	A	35	46.7	
	N	7	9.3	
	SD	6	7	
	D	2	2.7	
In my school, we practice secure storage of records through branded boxes	SA	26	34.7	4.1±0.8
	A	33	44	
	N	3	4	
	SD	9	12	
	D	4	5.3	
In my school, we know when and how to destroy records that we generate.	SA	25	33.3	4.1±0.7
	A	31	41.3	
	N	4	5.3	
	SD	10	13.4	
	D	5	6.7	
Does your school have records generation practices?	SA	23	30.7	3.9±0.8
	A	31	41.3	
	N	7	9.3	
	SD	9	12	
	D	5	6.7	
In my school, electronic document management is used for record documentation	SA	21	28	3.6±0.7
	A	29	38.7	
	N	9	12	
	SD	11	14.6	
	D	5	6.7	
In my school, we base on retrieved timetables to plan time allocation for the new term	SA	17	22.7	3.6±0.7
	A	26	34.8	
	N	11	14.6	
	SD	10	13.6	
	D	11	14.6	

NB: SA= strongly agree, A=agree, N=Neutral, SD= strongly disagree, D=Disagree.

**Source:** *Primary data (2024)*

Table 3 represents the descriptive statistics on the effect of records management practices on academic decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. The results show that 72 (96%) of the respondents accepted the statements that secondary schools have teachers and students' attendance



registers (Mean=4.25); followed by 69 (92%) of the respondents who accepted that secondary schools practice document retention like admission book (Mean=4.33). The respondents equivalent to 65 (86.7%) accepted that school records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on promotion of students to next class (Mean=4.36). Lastly, 61 (81.3%) of the respondents showed that school leaders base on records retrieval to determine the students that need that need remedial lessons (Mean=3.91).

The first objective was also set to establish the effect of records management practices on academic decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. Interview schedules were used to solicit information from the headteachers, deputy headteachers, Directors of Studies, IT specialists, and Library assistants. Respondents were involved in answering interviews.

When they were asked: *What is the effect of records management practices on academic decisions in secondary schools in Kibuku district?* In interviews, it was shown that secondary schools have teachers and students' attendance registers; in fact, one of the interviewees asserted that;

*"....it goes without saying that attendance/regularity and punctuality are a fundamentally vital part of education. A strong school attendance system is all about ensuring health and safety in a very real way. Class teachers do daily roll calls to capture the students' attendance, thus minimizing absenteeism. Schools have adopted the use of biometrics to enhance the attendance system that is clear and error-free...."* (Deputy Headteachers in charge of academics from School A)

This implies that the teacher and student attendance register is a tool that helps to record the regularity of learners and teachers on a day-to-day basis. School administrators and teachers sometimes base on it while giving marks or determining the

promotion of students. On the other hand, school managers use it for payroll/salary purposes. Broadly speaking, the function of teaching staff is to help learners learn by imparting skills and knowledge to them and by setting up a situation in which learners can and shall learn effectively.

The study noted that school records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on the promotion of students to the next class. The interviewed participant noted that;

*"...school administrators decide on the promotion of learners to the next class based on the examination records. They also retrieve records to determine the students who need remedial lessons focusing on enhancing, achieving improved academic performance results..."* (Headteacher from School C)

In addition, the study findings showed that secondary schools practice document retention like an admission book. Another interviewee asserted that:

*".... schools provide document retention, and this happens when an academy closes and some records are identified and get retained either by the trust or the academy. This is commonly done for regulatory or legal purposes until the retention period is reached. Alternatively, these similar records tend to be transferred to the higher authorities (local authority or ministry) for archive service...."* (Deputy Headteacher in charge of Administration and Discipline from School E)

This implies that government and school history records are offered to the district or local authorities for permanent preservation. For students who are transferring to a new educational setting, academies should follow the statutory guidance on keeping and maintaining academic records and transferring the records to the new schools. The school's history records are things that deserve to be permanently preserved at an archive, for example, where there is

community interest, such as whole school photos. Academic records need to be kept for a limited time and transferred to higher authorities.

The study also showed that various devices are used to back up records, such as a hard disk or on server in secondary schools. One of the interviewees asserted that;

*“.... secondary schools use several devices to back up academic decisions or records. This ensures that even if one or two copies are compromised, one still has a secure backup. For schools, this could indicate having data servers, on external hard drives kept in a secure location and cloud storage services. It is important to back up data using a device other than the computer on which the data is stored. Saving your files on a personal device is not enough to avoid being stolen or hacked....”* (IT Specialist from School C)

This implies that effective backup strategies rely on well-organized schools to keep data in a central repository for easy academic records management. Data backup is essential for every school to perform their core business functions and to keep the school running in the event of a hardware failure or natural disaster. Making backups of school records is critically vital in data management. Backups protect against human errors, hardware failure, virus attacks, power failures, and natural disasters. It can also save time and money if these failures occur.

It was also shown that secondary school stakeholders monitor misfiling and non-filing; in fact, one of the interviewees explained that;

*“.... proper filing of school academic records ensures easy retrieval contributes to decreased student waiting time to access their academic information. It is, therefore, imperative that academic records are always kept in the interest of the school managers, teachers and students. The academic folder must always be in the custody of the school while the students enjoy*

*the right to information....”* (Director of Studies from School C, 2024)

This implies that the problem of academic record-keeping practices in secondary schools, such as duplication, incomplete data and inaccuracies in academic data, made it difficult for school managers to accurately and reliably identify and define academic problems. Therefore, the strengthening of academic records in general and a computerized folder retrieval system, in particular, could contribute to its position as a valuable source of information for school delivery and quick decision-making.

It was also shown that secondary schools have record-generating practices; in fact, one of the interviewees explained that;

*“.... safeguarding cases where inappropriate record keeping prevents prompt action from being taken to keep students. Many schools now use an electronic system for recording safeguarding and student protection concerns. There are many benefits to this, automated notifications, the ability to allow staff to share concerns directly and easy ways to draw down data to look at trends and patterns....”* (Head-teacher from School E, 2024)

This implies that the key tenets of effective record-generating practices in schools must still be in place to ensure a clear picture of academic decisions on which exam or when exams are to be done. Records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on the promotion of students to the next class. These electronic records should be organized chronologically and should be stored securely, implying that they should only be accessed by the appropriate individuals, not kept with a full school file.

Further, the study showed that electronic document management is used for records documentation in secondary schools. Another interviewed participant noted that;

*“.... electronic document management tools can improve school efficiency and reduce costs, all while keeping teams in the loop on ongoing academic achievement. Such information is organized across the school so the right individual can have access to the right content, whether they are in the office, working remotely or on leave. Quickly locate files and view documents across the school by centralizing and organizing academic content in a repository with comprehensive search capabilities...”* (Library Assistant from School B)

This implies that electronic document management improves transparency without sacrificing security. Secondary schools based on retrieved timetables to plan time allocation for the new term. The streamlined approach to academic document management allows schools and individuals to access the information they need quickly and reliably, improving overall transparency and effectiveness in decision-making in areas of academic teaching methods.

Lastly, the study showed that departments are mandated to create an official file where they keep records related to their daily activities. Another interviewed participant noted that;

*“.... departments are mandated to create confidential and official files where academic records are kept safely and confidentially. It is vital that accurate documentation be kept by every school that claims mandated services. Even if our mandated services forms are completed by the diocesan office to an independent contractor, the school is responsible for maintaining complete academic records.”* (Library Assistant from School B)

This implies that each secondary school creates and maintains a mandated services documentation academic file for each school year. Records of student scores on termly or final level (government examinations), such as student score reports and other comprehensive information reports, are kept confidential. Thus, failure to maintain adequate supporting academic documentation may result in a disallowance or partial disallowance.

### **The Effect of Records Management Practices on Administrative Decisions**

Objective three sought to examine the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. The structure was also measured using different study variables and a five-point Likert scale, whose results are indicated in Table 4

**Table 4: The Effect of Records Management Practices on Administrative Decisions**

Statement	Level of (dis)agreement	Number	Percentage	Mean & Standard Deviation
In my school, the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete the academic syllabus in time as per approved lesson plans	SA	27	36	4.3±0.6
	A	44	58.7	
	N	0	0.0	
	SD	4	5.3	
	D	0	00	
academic syllabus in time as per approved lesson plans	SA	25	33.3	4.2±0.9
	A	41	54.7	
	N	2	2.7	
	SD	7	9.3	
	D	0	0.0	

Statement	Level of (dis)agreement	Number	Percentage	Mean & Standard Deviation
In my school, the lack of storage facilities for administrative records leads to delays in administrative decisions	SA	23	30.7	4.6±0.8
	A	38	50.7	
	N	6	8	
	SD	8	10.6	
	D	0	0	
In my school, wrong data entry leads to repeating a year by the students	SA	21	28	4.2±0.8
	A	36	48	
	N	5	6.7	
	SD	13	17.3	
	D	0	0	
In my school, proper records management helps to meet students' demands timely	SA	20	26.7	4.7±0.6
	A	34	45.3	
	N	3	4	
	SD	16	21.3	
	D	2	2.7	
In my school records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on the promotion of teachers	SA	23	30.7	4.1±0.8
	A	38	50.7	
	N	6	8	
	SD	8	10.6	
	D	0	0	

**Source:** Primary data (2024)

Table 4 represents the descriptive statistics on the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district, the results show that 71 (94.7%) of the respondents accepted the statements that the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete academic syllabus in time as per approved lesson plans (Mean=4.29). Lack of storage facilities for administrative records leads to delays in administrative decisions, and this was accepted by 66 (88%) of the respondents (Mean=4.21). Wrong data entry leads to repeating a year by the students in secondary schools, and this was accepted by 61 (81.4%) of the respondents (Mean=4.59). Lastly, proper records management helps to meet students' demands timely, and this was accepted by 57 (76%) of the respondents (Mean=4.17).

The second objective was also set to examine the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. Interview schedules were used to solicit information from the headteachers, deputy headteachers, Directors of Studies, IT specialists, and Library assistants. Respondents were involved in answering interviews.

However, when they were asked: *What is the effect of records management practices on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district?* In interviews, it was shown that the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete the academic syllabus in time; in fact, one of the interviewees explained that.

*"....teachers' completion of assigned tasks has been good in secondary schools where teachers' regularity and punctuality are good. In other words, proper time management by*

*teaching staff leads to quick content syllabus coverage as per the planned lesson plan and approved scheme of work. Teachers have ample time to concentrate on the teaching-learning process, thus leads to quick content syllabus coverage....”* (Head Teacher from School D)

This implies that proper teachers’ time planning enables them to plan and have a proper schedule for the syllabus. Employee time on task plays a vital role in improving classroom teachers’ workplace performance and job completion. In other words, effective, timely planning makes execution very easy and improves the use of time. Teachers’ time-planning makes execution of tasks much easier.

Another FGD participant added that;

*“...time scheduling helps classroom teachers in organizing their daily curriculum activities. It helps them to have a timetable to follow on a daily basis, weekly and even on a termly basis. This keeps teachers organized and productive while ensuring they have plenty of time to finish assignments, lessons and enjoy or have time for their social life...”* (IT Specialist from School B)

This implies that time scheduling allows teachers to give their attention to tasks that are vital and urgent so that they can later focus on low-priority tasks. Therefore, establishing priorities is important in order to complete everything that needs to be done. Thus, prioritization is vital because it will allow teachers to give their attention to tasks that are vital and urgent so that they can later spend more time focusing on the most important priority tasks. This implies that task prioritization ensures that teachers allocate sufficient time to complete tasks and also make necessary changes in order to save time and become more productive at work.

It was shown that proper records aid school managers to make quick administrative decisions; in fact, one of the interviewees asserted that;

*“....these records help administrators to make a decision of which instructional materials need to be purchased. Still, proper administrative records aid school leaders to always make quick academic decisions, for example, it is easy for teachers to retrieve records on marks, and make decisions on the enrollment of students. It also aids teachers in assessment and helps teachers to follow the learners’ performance records to decide on those in need of remedial classes...”* (Director of Studies from School A)

This implies that teaching staff always base the available administrative records at their disposal for making quick administrative decisions, especially the purchase of instructional materials. They always base on the administrative records to decide those learners who need to attend remedial classes.

It was, however, shown that wrong data entry leads to repeating a year by the students in secondary schools; in fact, one of the interviewees asserted that;

*“....with improper entry of academic records, it has led learners to repeat classes. Some teachers fail or enter academic data in the system, thus leading to students losing marks, thus being affected at the end of the year. Students get denied of promotion because of a lack of marks in the system, yet they sat for the exams”* (Directors of Studies from School E, 2024)

This implies that cases of inaccuracies in data entry are on the rise. Students who sat for exams and submitted assignments tend to lose marks in the available records, and this could be a result of wrong data entry. This has created mistrust and tension between teachers and students, making the teaching and learning environment unconducive to promoting academic excellence.

The study also noted that proper records management helps to meet students’ demands



timely manner in secondary schools. One of the respondents in the interviews noted that;

*“...proper records management ensures information can be accessed easily, and it ensures that decision-makers have reliable data at their fingertips to make the right decisions for the school and its workers. It helps schools to have systematic control of students’ administrative records, throughout their life cycle, in order to meet operational school desires, statutory and fiscal requirements, and parents’ expectations...”* (Library Assistant from School E)

This means that records management allows fast, accurate and reliable access to administrative records, ensuring the quick decision-making and

timely destruction of redundant administrative information and the identification and protection of vital, as well as historically important, administrative records.

In the study, it was revealed that having a proper examination timetable helps teachers to adequately prepare for examinations earlier to avoid errors.

**Correlation Analysis**

This section highlights a series of inferential analyses that were carried out to examine and establish the relationships between the different variables. The correlation analysis was undertaken to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables as explained in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis**

Correlations		
Academic decisions	Pearson Correlation	Records management practices .686 **
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
	N	75
Administrative decisions	Pearson Correlation	Records management practices .342**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002
	N	75

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

**Source:** Primary data (2024)

The study findings in Table 5 showed a positive and significant relationship between records management practices and academic decisions in selected secondary schools at  $P < 0.05$  (ie 0.000) and  $r = 0.686$ . This implies that where the availability of records management practices, such as register retention, academic decisions are easier to make.

The correlation results in Table 5 indicate a positive and significant correlation between records management practices and administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district at  $P < 0.05$  (ie 0.002) and  $r = 0.342$ . This implies that in that situation, the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete the academic syllabus in time, lack of storage facilities for

academic records leads to delays in academic decisions, proper records management helps to meet students’ demands timely, and wrong data entry leads to repeating a year by the students.

**DISCUSSION**

**The Effect of Records Management Practices on Academic Decisions**

Study findings showed a significant positive relationship between records management practices and academic decisions in selected secondary schools. Therefore, this implies that academic records that are generated have been of great help in deciding on the promotion of students to the next class. This concurs with Kayiwa., Raihan & Kum



(2023), who asserted that records storage leads to ease of access to academic records by the school administrators, which helps them to make academic decisions like the number of students to be admitted.

The study revealed that school leaders base on records retrieval to determine the students who need remedial lessons. Sometimes students who need remedial are those who have missed important lessons. These secondary schools have students' attendance registers to assess students' attendance for classes. Class teachers do daily roll calls to capture the students' attendance, thus minimizing absenteeism. This concurs with Oseb, Maina & Kurgat (2018) who argued that the retrieval of available records helps teaching staff to determine those students who need to attend remedial lessons.

Additionally, the study noted that secondary schools have record retrieval practices. They indicated that schools base themselves on retrieval practices, which is the strategy of recalling facts, events and concepts from memory in order to enhance learning and information sharing. Incorporating activities using retrieval practice into their (teachers') teaching can increase their students' ability to learn and grasp the subject concepts. This does not differ from Okuonzi (2019), who indicated that there is evidence which shows that retrieval practice is especially effective at increasing longer-term retention and generally outperforms more common strategies such as repeated studying. This implies that the act of retrieving something from school memory strengthens the connections holding it there, making it more likely that one will be able to recall it in the future.

### **The Effect of Records Management Practices on Administrative Decisions**

The findings showed that there is a significant positive relationship between records management practices and administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district. This implies that the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete the academic syllabus in time as per the

planned scheme of work, a lack of storage facilities for administrative records leads to a delay in administrative decisions, and wrong data entry by administrators leads to repeating a year by the students. This concurs with Baryamureeba (2010), who argued that the adoption of storage of administrative records in secondary schools in Uganda is aimed at improving the administrative decisions to complete the planned tasks and proper management decision-making. Therefore, this implies that since records are retrieved and valuable, they act as the backbone of every school. These retrieved records should be handled and organized in a good manner as they are potentially for providing evidence and accountability for school administrative functions.

The study noted that records management practices have aided in tracking public school resource allocation for proper checks and balances for administrative decisions of staff promotion. Results showed that secondary schools with proper records management practices in the study area found it easy to digitalize all the files that were stored for easy retrieval of administrative records, which had a bearing on good administrative decisions in schools. This is in line with, Rains & Bonito (2017), who argued that the challenges of public secondary schools in Sagbayan district, Bohol, and found that the schools experience weaknesses in making timely administrative decisions, of which the lack of retrieval of records is among the major contributing factors.

The study noted that the existence of a timetable encourages teachers to complete administrative roles in time, and this enables them to plan and have a proper schedule for syllabus and other assigned duties. It was found that employee time on task plays a vital role in improving classroom teachers' workplace performance and job completion. This is in agreement with Agumya (2018) who noted that effective timely planning makes execution very easy and improves the use of time since completion of assigned tasks has been good in secondary

schools where teachers regularity and punctuality is good.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on objective one, it is concluded that records management practices have a significant effect on academic decisions in selected secondary schools. Therefore, there is a positive significant relationship between records management practices and academic decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district ( $r = .686^{**}$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

With reference to objective two, it is concluded that records management practices have a significant effect on administrative decisions in selected secondary schools. Therefore, there is a positive significant relationship between records management practices and administrative decisions in selected secondary schools in Kibuku district ( $r = .342^{**}$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study recommends that records management practices in Kibuku District should be improved through the introduction of computerized formats such as e-payment of fees, and digitized systems to check teachers' class attendance.
- The study also recommends that school management decisions should be improved in secondary schools in Kibuku District by introducing a decentralized system, especially staff recruitment and transfers of staff.
- The study further recommends that secondary schools in Kibuku district should draft a records management policy to govern and regulate the management of students' academic records.
- The study further recommends that there is a need to improve on the technology advancement among school stakeholders in Kibuku district that communicate effectively with other departments or stakeholders handling students' records, and this should be

put in place and given adequate financial resources to do so.

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