



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The Records Management Practices in the Registrar's Office of Tiwi Community College

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Abstract

In the modern educational landscape, effective records management has become a cornerstone of institutional accountability and service delivery. International frameworks such as ISO 15489 and UNESCO's Records Management Manual emphasize systematic procedures for creating, capturing, and preserving records to ensure authenticity, reliability, and integrity. These guidelines encourage schools to adopt secure, transparent, and digital recordkeeping systems that safeguard student data, support mobility, and protect institutional memory. In the Philippines, national laws such as Republic Act No. 9470 (National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007) and Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012) mandate organized record creation, maintenance, and disposal, while ensuring student information remains confidential. Complementary Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Orders further reinforce the Registrar's Office's responsibility to uphold precise and secure academic records in line with quality assurance standards.

This study investigates the records management practices of the Registrar's Office at Tiwi Community College (TCC), focusing on compliance with both international benchmarks and national mandates. Guided by local ordinances and national statutes, TCC ensures that academic records are systematically managed to meet community expectations for transparency and integrity. The research assessed the effectiveness, accuracy, and reliability of TCC's current system, particularly its readiness to transition toward digital and automated records management. Findings highlight the importance of safeguarding student information against risks of mismanagement or breaches, while also strengthening institutional accountability. The study provides a foundation for updating internal policies, enhancing administrative processes, and supporting staff development, thereby reinforcing TCC's commitment to quality education, accreditation standards, and public service.

Keywords: Effective Record Management; Institutional Accountability

1. Introduction

In the evolving landscape of higher education, records management has become a vital component of institutional accountability, transparency, and service delivery. Public community colleges, which often serve diverse and underserved populations, rely heavily on their Registrar's Office to safeguard academic records, ensure compliance with data protection laws, and support student achievement. International frameworks such as ISO 15489 and UNESCO's Records Management Manual provide globally recognized principles for creating, capturing, and maintaining records that ensure authenticity, reliability, usability, and integrity. These frameworks emphasize the importance of systematic and digital recordkeeping to protect institutional memory, uphold student mobility, and guarantee data privacy. By aligning with these standards, educational institutions strengthen their governance systems and enhance their credibility in delivering quality education.

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In the Philippines, records management practices are guided by national statutes such as Republic Act No. 9470, the National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007, and Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. These laws mandate the organized creation, maintenance, and disposal of records while ensuring the confidentiality of student information. Complementary guidelines from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), including CMO No. 9, s. 2013 and CMO No. 46, s. 2012, further reinforce the Registrar's Office's responsibility to maintain secure and precise academic records. At Tiwi Community College, these national mandates are reinforced by local ordinances, ensuring that records management practices meet both community expectations and accreditation standards. This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of TCC's records management system, particularly its readiness to adopt digital solutions, while safeguarding student data and strengthening institutional accountability.

2. Methods Used

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology, specifically the phenomenological approach, to explore records management practices in the Registrar's Office of Tiwi Community College. Qualitative research was chosen because it seeks to understand the meanings individuals attach to their experiences, circumstances, and practices. The phenomenological method allowed the researcher to capture shared experiences of employees and former students regarding records management, reducing these accounts to central themes and essences. Data collection was conducted through extensive interviews with ten participants, including regular and contractual employees of the Registrar's Office and three former students who had direct experience requesting documents. The researcher employed an interview guide with open-ended questions, focusing on practices, challenges, coping strategies, and service delivery. To ensure ethical compliance, participant identities were coded, and informed consent was obtained. Data were analyzed through transcription, coding, and thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns and insights. The snowball approach was also used to expand perspectives and validate findings.

3. Materials Used

The primary material used in this study was a researcher-made interview guide divided into two sections. The first section focused on records management practices, while the second contained open-ended questions about challenges, coping strategies, and service delivery. Codes were assigned to participants to protect their identities. Supporting materials included audio recorders for capturing interviews, paper forms for guiding responses, and transcription sheets for data analysis. Secondary materials consisted of published and unpublished theses, dissertations, journals, books, memoranda, and online sources that provided theoretical and contextual support. Validation of the instrument was conducted by the Thesis Committee and external validators, including the Student Affairs Coordinator and Guidance Counselor, who suggested adding questions on technology use and expanding the scope of records management practices. These materials ensured that the study was grounded in both empirical evidence and scholarly literature.

4. Discussion

The findings revealed that records management practices in Tiwi Community College's Registrar's Office are shaped by both institutional procedures and individual coping strategies. Employees emphasized the importance of systematic filing, confidentiality, and compliance with regulations, but also acknowledged challenges such as limited technological resources, manual processes, and workload pressures. Former students highlighted delays in document requests, pointing to inefficiencies in service delivery. Coping strategies included improvisation, teamwork, and reliance on traditional filing systems, which, while functional, limited efficiency and scalability. The discussion underscores the need for modernization, particularly through digital recordkeeping systems, to improve accuracy, accessibility, and security. Moreover, the study highlights the human dimension of records management, where employee dedication and resourcefulness compensate for structural gaps. These insights suggest that institutional investment in technology, training, and policy refinement is essential to strengthen accountability and enhance service delivery.

5. Results

The study's results showed that Tiwi Community College's Registrar's Office maintains basic compliance with records management practices but faces significant challenges in modernization and efficiency. Employees reported that records are generally organized and safeguarded, with confidentiality observed, yet the reliance on manual filing systems often leads to delays and difficulties in retrieval. Former students confirmed these issues, citing long waiting times and occasional errors in document processing. Thematic analysis identified three major challenges: limited technological infrastructure, insufficient staff training, and high workloads. Coping strategies included teamwork, prioritization of urgent requests, and adherence to traditional filing methods. Despite these limitations, employees

demonstrated strong commitment to maintaining service delivery and protecting institutional integrity. The results highlight the need for digital transformation, including automated systems and electronic databases, to reduce inefficiencies and improve responsiveness. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that effective records management is not only about compliance but also about ensuring timely, reliable, and student-centered services. These findings provide a foundation for policy updates, capacity-building initiatives, and investments in technology to enhance the Registrar's Office's role in supporting academic integrity and institutional accountability.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights that effective records management is more than an administrative requirement—it is a human-centered practice that safeguards trust, accountability, and the dignity of students and institutions alike. At Tiwi Community College, the Registrar's Office carries the responsibility of ensuring that academic records are accurate, secure, and compliant with both national laws and international standards. The findings reveal that while systems are in place to meet archival and privacy mandates, the growing demand for digital transformation and the pressures of expanding enrollment require continuous improvement. Protecting student information against risks of mismanagement or breaches is not only about compliance but about honoring the personal journeys of learners whose futures depend on reliable documentation. By strengthening policies, investing in staff development, and embracing digital solutions, the college can reinforce transparency, enhance service delivery, and uphold its commitment to quality education. Ultimately, records management becomes a reflection of institutional integrity and care for the community it serves.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

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