

# Transparency and Accountability in Records Safekeeping: Regional Standpoint

## **Gian Carlo Ceniza**

Administrative Officer II, DepEd Division of Mandaue City  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2407-7850> | [cenizagc@gmail.com](mailto:cenizagc@gmail.com)

## **Marie Marguirete Lourdes G. Yu**

Administrative Officer IV, DepEd Division of Mandaue City  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8473-3876> | [marie.yu@deped.gov.ph](mailto:marie.yu@deped.gov.ph)

## **Shella P. Malinao**

Administrative Officer II, DepEd Division of Mandaue City  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2490-1221> | [shella.malinao@deped.gov.ph](mailto:shella.malinao@deped.gov.ph)

## **Tara Gay S. Dapat**

Administrative Officer IV, DepEd Division of Negros Oriental, Philippines  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4325-8078> | [tara.dapat@deped.gov.ph](mailto:tara.dapat@deped.gov.ph)

## **Abstract:**

This research assessed the actual practices for the safekeeping of records of the non-teaching personnel of the Divisions of Mandaue City and Negros Oriental as the basis the crafting a of technical assistance plan for a systematic records management system. The researchers used the descriptive-correlational research design with the use of a modified standardized questionnaire in data gathering that is relevant to the study. The important findings of the study are as follows: The profile of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents are 31-40 years old, mostly females, with varied educational attainment, have been in the service for more than 10 years, and have attended trainings/seminars. The findings showed that the demographic profile of the respondents did not influence their level of practice in record keeping. A conclusion is drawn that the competencies in records management such acknowledge in the legalities involved, the identification of public records, the existence of a records management system, the conduct of annual inventory of records, and the liabilities in handling records were satisfactorily practiced in the research locales. It is recommended

that the output of the study, the Learning and Development Modality, be implemented in the research locales.

*Keywords:* Master in Public Administration, Records Keeping, Descriptive-Correlational Design, Learning and Development Modality, Department of Education, Mandaue City, Negros Oriental

## Introduction

Records, in various forms such as documents, signatures, texts, photos, and data, have been an integral part of human history. They serve multiple purposes, including providing evidence, aiding decision-making, ensuring business continuity, promoting transparency and accountability, and facilitating data and information management. The methods of record-keeping have evolved over time, from ancient practices such as writing on bamboo stalks and birch bark to modern paper-based and electronic formats.

In ancient times, records were maintained using various materials, such as bamboo, birch bark, bones, shells, clay tablets, ostraca (broken pottery pieces), palm leaves, papyrus, parchment, silk, and wax tablets. These materials provided a means to record information, whether for accounting, predictions, philosophical writings, or official transactions.

Despite technological advancements and the availability of electronic record-keeping systems, paper-based records remain prevalent in everyday transactions and government operations. However, managing paper-based records comes with numerous challenges. One of the main issues is the need for significant storage space, leading to the accumulation of voluminous records. Additionally, paper-based documents are susceptible to loss, mishandling, and damage, posing risks to data security. Natural calamities or fires can result in the permanent loss of critical information, especially if no backup copies are made.

Moreover, paper production contributes to environmental damage, as it relies on wood and involves the release of harmful chemicals into the air. Transportation of paper-based documents is also inefficient and time-consuming, and making changes to paper records requires starting the process anew, often leading to confusion with different versions.

In response to the limitations of paper-based records, electronic records have gained popularity due to their advantages in terms of space efficiency, data security, ease of collaboration, and cost-effectiveness. However, electronic records face challenges, especially in areas with no or slow internet connectivity, hindering their processing and retrieval.

To address the challenges and maximize the benefits of records keeping, records management has become an essential concept. According to the International Standards Organization (ISO) 15489-1 issued in 2001, records management involves the systematic and scientific control of recorded information required for an organization's operations. It encompasses various stages, such as creation, storage, use, retrieval, transmission, protection, retention, preservation, maintenance, and disposition of records.

In the Philippines, formal records-keeping practices began during the Spanish colonial government in the 19th century. The establishment of the National Archives of the Philippines, formerly known as the Archives, was realized through Republic Act 9470 in 2007. This act aimed to strengthen the management and administration of archival records in the country.

Records, in various forms, play a crucial role in supporting decision-making and organizational processes. The shift from traditional paper-based records to electronic formats has brought about new challenges and opportunities in records management. By conducting a comprehensive assessment of records keeping practices in specific government divisions, this study seeks to promote more efficient, effective, and economical records management, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of valuable information. Implementing better records management practices will not only enhance organizational performance but also contribute to overall sustainability and accountability.

The present study aims to assess the records keeping practices within the Department of Education, specifically in the Divisions of Mandaue City and Negros Oriental. The research aims to identify common issues in records management and address them as a basis for formulating a learning and development plan to achieve a systematic records management system.

## Literature Review

The research on records management practices within the Department of Education, particularly in the Divisions of Mandaue City and Negros Oriental, is grounded in the Records Management Theory and the Records Life Cycle Concept/Theory. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the efficient and systematic control of records throughout their life span, from creation to disposition. The research also takes into account relevant laws and regulations, such as Republic Act No. 9470 and Republic Act No. 10173, to ensure compliance and safeguard individual privacy.

### Records Management Theory and Records Life Cycle Concept/Theory

The Records Management Theory, as supported by Pemberton and Nugent (1995), Walters (1995), and Zawiyah M Yusof & Robert W Chell (2002), emphasizes the importance of managing records systematically. It involves the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, capturing evidence of business activities and transactions. The theory is guided by the Records Life Cycle Concept/Theory, which traces the life span of records, from creation to death (disposition phase). This concept was developed in the USA during the 1930s by the National Archives, addressing the increasing volume of records produced by organizations.

The Records Life Cycle Concept consists of several stages:

1. Creation: Records are born when data is received and officially documented.
2. Maintenance: Records go through an active phase and are frequently used by the creating office and decision-makers. They are stored onsite in the active or current files.
3. Semi-active: Some records may be reduced to a semi-active status, still valuable but not needed for day-to-day decision-making. They may be stored off-site or eventually enter the disposition phase.
4. Disposition: Records are either transferred for archival purposes or destroyed if they have no further value.

### Roles in Records Management during Each Stage

The theory also defines the roles of different stakeholders in managing records during each stage. The record creators primarily manage records during the creation and active periods, while records managers may be involved to varying degrees. In the semi-active stage, the records manager takes the lead in records management, while archivists are responsible for conserving, describing, and making archival records accessible during the inactive period.

## Relevant Laws and Regulations

Republic Act No. 9470, known as the "National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007," strengthens the management and administration of archival records, establishing the National Archives of the Philippines. The law emphasizes policies regarding public records of government agencies, as well as the creation, maintenance, storage, use, and disposition of paper-based records.

Republic Act No. 10173, or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," protects individual personal information in both government and private sector information and communications systems. The act aims to defend the fundamental human right of privacy while fostering information flow for innovation and progress.

## Importance of Effective Records Management

Implementing an effective records management system brings several benefits to an organization, particularly within government agencies such as the Department of Education in the Divisions of Mandaue City and Negros Oriental:

1. **Easier Compliance:** A well-established records management system ensures easier compliance with laws and regulations, such as HIPAA, FACTA, and the HITECH Act. Meeting these standards becomes more manageable through a unified and comprehensive records system.
2. **Better Workflow:** A solid records management system allows organizations to access and provide detailed data efficiently, improving workflow and enhancing operational capacity.
3. **Cost Savings:** Proper records management reduces costs associated with excessive storage and improves organizational productivity, as electronic records minimize storage fees.
4. **Effective Retrieval:** An effective records management system enables organizations to retrieve and access documents quickly, leading to improved decision-making and retention of useful files.
5. **Minimizing Risks:** Detailed and cautious records management reduces the risks of lawsuits and sanctions by ensuring proper records disposal and retention.
6. **Protecting Data:** An effective records management system enhances data security and prevents unauthorized access to personal and classified information.
7. **Knowledge Preservation:** Records preservation contributes to knowledge preservation, facilitating future reference, policy-making, and organizational efficiency.
8. **Boosting Morale:** A proper records management system boosts staff motivation and efficiency by providing a well-organized and easily accessible filing system.

The study on records management practices in the Department of Education, Divisions of Mandaue City, and Negros Oriental is grounded in the Records Management Theory and the Records Life Cycle Concept/Theory. These frameworks provide a systematic approach to managing records throughout their life span, ensuring compliance, efficiency, and accountability. By understanding the importance of effective records management and its impact on workflow, cost savings, data security, and knowledge preservation, organizations can implement practices that support their long-term success and efficiency.

This section summarizes the methods used in collecting data, the design used, the process involved or the data collection procedure, the research instruments, the research location and research respondents, the data analysis or the statistical treatments of data, the scoring procedures, and the definition of terms.

### Research Design

The study employed the descriptive-correlational research design. The purpose of descriptive-correlational research is to describe the relationship among variables rather than to infer cause and effect relationships. According to Lappe, J.M (2000) the goal of descriptive correlational research is to describe rather than infer cause and effect correlations between variables. They're useful for illustrating how one event is related to another when the researcher doesn't have control over the independent variables, which are the ones thought to cause or impact the dependent or outcome variable.

### Research Respondents

The respondents of the research were the selected division office personnel of the Department of Education Division of Mandaue City, and Negros Oriental Division as distributed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Distribution of Respondents in Each Division

Respondents	N
Division of Mandaue City	40
Division of Negros Oriental	40
Total	80

Table 1 explains the distribution of respondents of this study. The study used the simple random sampling with respondents who were working in the division office for 2 years and onwards so 40 was the randomly selected division office personnel of each division.

### Research Instrument

The instrument used was adapted from the published thesis of Ms. Rechelle Olagar Comia, 2015, entitled "A Sample Assessment of Records Management Practices in the University of the Philippines toward a Development of a Self-Audit Tool". The questionnaire was subdivided into four (4) parts. The first part asked about the respondents' socio-demographic profile. The second part required perceptions by the respondents on their practices of safekeeping of records. The last part asked perceptions from the respondents on the prevalent issues and concerns related to records safekeeping as experienced by them.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Before administration of the questionnaires. A request letter was sent to the Superintendent of the Division of Mandaue City and Division of Negros Oriental by the concerned researcher belonging to his/her respective division. It is a letter asking for the approval of the respective Superintendents to conduct the study in the different units or sections in the division.

During actual administration of the questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered and sent as soft copies through google forms to their email. Clarifications and follow-up questions were done either email or any social platforms accessible to them. Answered questionnaires were then printed by the researchers for data gathering and documentation.

After administration of the questionnaires. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information that they have provided.

### Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical methods were considered appropriate for the study to evaluate and interpret the data to be obtained from the respondents:

**Percentage.** The percentage was used to split down the relevant information provided by respondents.

**Weighted Mean.** The weighted mean was used to determine the respondents' level of awareness in terms of the actual practices in Records Safekeeping.

**Chi-square.** The Chi-square was used to determine the significant association between the socio-demographic profile and the level of practices on safekeeping of records.

### Scoring Procedure

The following are the parametric measures that the study used in the research to determine the level of practice in records safekeeping by the respondents.

Range	Category	Interpretation
4.21-5.40	Strongly Agree	Strongly Practiced
3.41-4.20	Agree	Practiced
2.61-3.40	Neither Agree or Disagree	Neutral
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Not Practiced
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable

## Results

### Significant Association in the Profile and Level of Practice in Records Keeping of Respondents

The test for significant association between the demographic profile per category and the level of practice in records keeping explains how the respondents manage the public records under their custody. This procedure aids this research in coming up with a generalization that defines the status of demonstration in records kept by the respondents in their respective offices. The test attempted to investigate the association of each category of the demographic profile to their level of practice in record keeping. The research used the Chi-square test of independence as a statistical hypothesis test to determine whether two sets of variables are likely to be related to each other or not at a 0.05 level of significance, as explained in Table 2

**Table 2**  
**Test of Significant Difference between the Demographic Profile and the Level of Practice in Records Keeping of Respondents**

Difference between the demographic profile and the level of practice in records keeping of respondents @ 0.05 level of significance	df	X <sup>2</sup>	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	12	1.93	.9995	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Gender	4	0.01	.9999	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	16	0.55	1.000	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Years in Service	12	0.03	1.000	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Relevant training/seminars attended	16	0.05	1.000	Accept Ho	Not Significant

It can be glanced at the table that each category considered in the profile of the respondents finds no significant association with the level of practice in records keeping. This explains that the competencies demonstrated by the respondents in keeping the public records safe were not influenced by any of the categories. Notwithstanding their profile and their challenges, the respondents tried to manage the records in their custody impressively as shown in the results, however, there were some competencies that they found difficult to demonstrate especially those who are new in the service. Furthermore, the respondents predetermined their accountability and responsibility in dealing with public records and probably they understand the consequences if their actions did not conform to the existing provisions of law. The scenario provides an idea that the respondents whether tenured or new in the government service are careful and conscious in handling public records.

### Issues and Concerns Encountered by the Respondents in Keeping Records

Exercising one's duties and functions in the government service for the public interest seems to be onerous especially when it comes to archiving and management of public records. Hence, work-related challenges in their daily routine are always experienced by them. Table 3 shows the most prevalent issues and concerns confronting the respondents relative to records keeping.

**Table 3**  
**Issues and Concerns Encountered by the Respondents in Keeping Records**

Issues and Concerns	f	Rank
Less space for storage of records for perpetual archiving	72	1
Lack of office space for filed records	68	2
Poor records safekeeping strategy	55	3
Lack of knowledge regarding records safekeeping	47	4
No specific personnel-in-charge to handling records	39	5

Note: n=80. Multiple responses

It is noted in Table 3 that less space for storage of records for perpetual archiving is the prevalent challenge to the respondents. This challenge is the most common encountered by the respondents not only in their respective offices but across all division offices in the region. This issue propels probabilities of misplaced or even loss of record for no permanent place where the same will be properly stored. Several studies have been conducted that discuss the high costs associated with lost documents and having them replaced. It is simple to know where documents are supposed to be stored with proper file classification, and even if a document is incorrectly classified, it can be easily found and moved to its proper location using the advanced search functionality (Iadmin, 2020).

Another issue that confronted some of the respondents was no existing strategy for record safekeeping. This issue is significant since all government offices under the law are required to establish a system to manage public records. Records management strategies, according to Hilinski (2021), aid in the efficiency and productivity of businesses. Companies suffer from miscommunication and data loss in the absence of a comprehensive, documented records management strategy. Hilinski (2021) further said that while a strong, well-thought-out records management process can make organizations efficient and effective, bad records management can lead to messy and incomprehensible workspaces, irritable employees, and the loss of information.

Based on the results, the majority of the respondents showed positive demonstration toward the desirable keeping of public records. However, the issue on lack of knowledge regarding records safekeeping seems to be serious. Though this is found at the bottom of the array of challenges but must be addressed since this situation is a big threat to the delivery of basic services. The last challenge is no specific personnel-in-charge to handle records. This issue can be addressed since each Division Office has been allocated with position item for Records Officer. Summing up all the predicaments expressed by the respondents, it is in this purpose that this research was conducted to aid the office heads address those realities.

## Discussion

Records keeping is a critical aspect of public administration, as it ensures the proper management and preservation of essential information for effective decision-making, accountability, and transparency. This research aimed to explore the association between the demographic profile of respondents and their level of practice in records keeping. Additionally, the study sought to identify the key challenges faced by respondents in their records keeping responsibilities. This discussion analyzes the research results presented in Table 2 and Table 3, highlighting the lack of significant associations between demographic profiles and records keeping practices. Furthermore, it delves into the issues and concerns encountered by respondents and proposes potential solutions to address these challenges.

### **Test of Significant Difference between Demographic Profile and Level of Practice in Records Keeping**

The research employed the Chi-square test of independence to determine whether the demographic profile of the respondents was related to their level of practice in records keeping. The findings presented in Table 2 show that no significant association exists between any of the demographic categories (Age, Gender, Highest Educational Attainment, Years in Service, and Relevant training/seminars attended) and the level of practice in records keeping. The p-values for all categories were greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted in each case, signifying no significant relationship between the variables.

These results imply that regardless of their demographic characteristics, respondents displayed similar levels of competency in managing public records. While it was noted that some competencies were more challenging for new government employees, overall, the respondents demonstrated impressive dedication and accountability in handling public records. This suggests that they were aware of the importance of adhering to existing legal provisions related to records keeping.

### **Issues and Concerns Encountered by Respondents in Keeping Records**

Table 3 presents the most prevalent issues and concerns faced by respondents in their records keeping responsibilities. The primary challenge identified was "Less space for storage of records for perpetual archiving," which ranked first in terms of frequency. This issue is critical as it poses the risk of misplaced or lost records due to a lack of permanent and organized storage facilities. The costs associated with lost documents and their replacements can be significant for government offices, emphasizing the need for effective records management strategies.

The second most common challenge was the "Lack of office space for filed records," which further compounds the issues related to inadequate storage. Insufficient office space can hinder the organization and accessibility of records, potentially leading to inefficient workflows and delays in providing services.

The third challenge, "Poor records safekeeping strategy," highlights the importance of having a well-defined and documented records management strategy in government offices. Effective records management strategies enhance efficiency and productivity, preventing miscommunication and data loss.

The fourth challenge, "Lack of knowledge regarding records safekeeping," is a serious concern that must be addressed urgently. Insufficient knowledge in records management can compromise the delivery of essential services and jeopardize the accuracy and integrity of public information.

The last challenge, "No specific personnel-in-charge to handle records," indicates that some Division Offices lack dedicated Records Officers, who play a crucial role in overseeing and ensuring proper records management practices.

The research results suggest that the demographic profile of respondents had no significant influence on their level of practice in records keeping. This implies that respondents from various backgrounds demonstrated similar competencies in managing public records.

However, the identified challenges in records keeping demand attention and action. To address these issues effectively, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Improved Records Storage:** Government offices must invest in adequate and secure storage facilities to ensure proper archiving and perpetual safekeeping of records. Implementing advanced search functionalities can aid in locating misplaced documents efficiently.
2. **Establishment of Records Management Strategies:** Each government office should establish a comprehensive records management strategy, documenting processes for handling records throughout their lifecycle. This will improve efficiency, organization, and data preservation.
3. **Training and Capacity Building:** Regular training sessions and workshops on records management should be provided to government employees. This will enhance their knowledge and skills in records safekeeping, thereby bolstering the delivery of basic services.

4. Appointing Dedicated Records Officers: Ensure that each Division Office has a designated Records Officer responsible for overseeing records management practices. This will foster accountability and effective record-keeping.

This research highlights the lack of significant associations between demographic profiles and records keeping practices among respondents. It also sheds light on the critical challenges faced by government offices in their efforts to maintain effective records management. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended solutions, government agencies can improve their records keeping practices, ensuring better service delivery and accountability.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the office personnel of the Divisions of Mandaue City and Negros Oriental, whether new or tenured in service, were fairly oriented of their accountabilities and responsibilities in managing the records or documents under their custody. Their observed practices were supported by the results of the correlation which revealed that there was no relationship existed between their socio-demographic information and their level of practice in records safekeeping. However, it was noted that they showed deficiency in some competencies, but such flaw did not prevent them from keeping safely the records in their custody. The manifestations of the respondents toward records keeping inform their commitment and dedication to service, thus working hard to learn the basics on records keeping.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researchers recommend the utilization of the crafted Learning and Development Plan on the identified competencies of records keeping which the respondents had been found to have fairly practiced. The Learning and Development plan was designed to optimize the competencies of the respondents in record keeping.

## References

Barcelona, M. 2019. Records management, data privacy, and you. 2019. Retrieved from <https://upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads>

DepEd Records Management Operations Manual. 2009.

Hilinski, L. (2021, June 8). Poor Records Management Causes & Prevention. Record Nations. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from <https://www.recordnations.com/2017/08/poor-records-management-causes-consequences-prevent>

Iadmin. (2020, August 3). *Why you should consider electronic records management (ERM) - top ten reasons*. Electronic Records Management and Scanning. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from <https://imageadvantage.com/consider-electronic-records-management-erm-top-ten-reasons/>

Kane, Meredith. 2022. Records Management in 2022. Why is it important? Retrieved from <https://www.imageapi.com>

Kemoni, H. 2008-2022. Theoretical framework and literature review in graduate records management research retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290628672>

Khan Academy. 2021. Record-keeping and history. Retrieved from <https://www.khanacademy.org>

Laserfiche.2022. 10 ways people kept records before paper. Retrieved from <https://www.laserfiche.com/ecmblog>

Name, A. (n.d.). Enter content title. Government of Manitoba. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from [https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/gro/recordkeeping/about\\_records.html](https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/gro/recordkeeping/about_records.html)

NAP Circular 4 Guidelines on National Inventory of Records. 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.csc.gov.ph>

National Archives. 2019. Records disposition overview. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt>

National Archives and Records Administration. (n.d.). *Records inventory - introduction*. National Archives and Records Administration. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/scheduling/inventory-intro>

National Privacy Commission. Republic Act 10173-Data Privacy Act of 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.privacy.gov.ph/data-privacy-act>

Niiranen, Sonja & Niiranen, Samuli. (2015). Women in technology-oriented fields. Australasian Journal of Technology Education. 2. 10.15663/ajte.v2i1.29.

Ocampo & Suralvo Law Offices. March 2020. Data Privacy. Retrieved from <https://www.linklaters.com/en/insights/data-protected/data-protected-philippines>.

Primer of R.A. 9470. “An Act to Strengthen the System of Management and Administration of Archival Records, Establishing for the Purpose the National Archives of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes. retrieved from <https://nationalarchives.gov.ph>

Records Life Cycle. 2020. retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Recordkeeping systems - gov.mb.ca. (n.d.). Retrieved April 15, 2022, from [https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/gro/recordkeeping/docs/recordkeeping\\_systems.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/gro/recordkeeping/docs/recordkeeping_systems.pdf)

Records Management. 2022. Retrieved March 26, 2022 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Records\\_management](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Records_management)

Republic Act 9470, “National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007”

Zawiyah, M.Y. 2008-2020. Records life cycle. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249751045>