**MANUAL AND ELECTRONIC FILLING SKILLS POSSESSED BY OTM GRADUATE FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS IN THE ICT AGE (CASE STUDY OF MINISTRY OF WORKS AND FINANCE, OSOGBO OSUN STATE)**

**ABSTRACT 2**

**CHAPTER ONE 3**

**INTRODUCTION 3**

1.1 Background of the Study 3

1.2 Statement of the Problem 6

1.3 Objectives of the Study 7

1.4 Research Questions 8

1.5 Significance of the Study 8

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study 8

1.7 Definition of Terms 9

**CHAPTER TWO 9**

**LITERATURE REVIEW 9**

2.1 Concept of Record Management 9

2.2 Overview of Filing Systems: Manual and Electronic 11

2.3 Importance of Filing Skills in Record Management 12

2.4 Challenges in Record Management in the ICT Age 17

**CHAPTER THREE 25**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 25**

3.1 Research Design 25

3.2 Population of the Study 25

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques 26

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection 26

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments 27

3.6 Method of Data Collection 27

3.7 Method of Data Analysis 28

**CHAPTER FOUR 29**

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 29**

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents 29

4.2 Analysis of Manual Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates 30

4.3 Analysis of Electronic Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates 32

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Manual and Electronic Filing Skills 33

4.5 Discussion of Findings 34

**CHAPTER FIVE 36**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 36**

5.1 Summary of Findings 36

5.2 Conclusion 37

5.3 Recommendations 38

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research 39

REFERENCES 40

Questionnaire 43

# ABSTRACT

This study examines the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates and their effectiveness in managing records within the ICT age, focusing on the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State. With the digital transformation of record-keeping processes, organizations now rely heavily on electronic filing systems, yet manual filing remains relevant in many operational contexts. The study aims to assess the extent to which OTM graduates are equipped with the necessary skills for managing both manual and electronic records, exploring how these skills contribute to efficient record management in modern-day organizations. The research employed a quantitative methodology, using structured questionnaires to collect data from OTM graduates employed in the Ministry of Works and Finance. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected, with an 82% response rate. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, to evaluate the proficiency levels in both manual and electronic filing systems. Findings revealed that while OTM graduates possess adequate skills in manual filing, they are more proficient in electronic filing, reflecting the growing influence of ICT on records management. However, challenges such as the need for continuous training in advanced digital systems and issues with data security were identified as significant obstacles. The study concludes that while OTM graduates are competent in both filing methods, greater emphasis should be placed on enhancing their digital competencies to align with the evolving demands of the ICT age. The study recommends targeted professional development programs to bridge any gaps in electronic filing skills and emphasizes the importance of integrating ICT training into OTM curricula. Future research could explore the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain on record management practices.

**Keywords:** *OTM graduates, records management, manual filing, electronic filing, ICT, skills, Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State.*

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

The rapid evolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought significant changes to how organizations manage records. Traditional manual filing systems, which rely on physical storage and paper documents, have been largely replaced or complemented by electronic filing systems in many sectors. Effective records management is essential for organizational efficiency, accountability, and compliance with regulations, especially in public institutions like ministries. The integration of electronic filing into the existing record management framework poses unique challenges and requires distinct skills for seamless operation.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates are expected to possess both manual and electronic filing skills necessary for the efficient management of records. OTM programs are designed to equip graduates with knowledge and practical skills in modern office technologies and techniques, including the handling and processing of information through both manual and electronic means (Osagie, 2018). In a digital age where ICT is ubiquitous, having a workforce that is proficient in both traditional and modern filing systems is crucial for organizations, particularly government agencies such as ministries, which manage vast amounts of sensitive information daily.

In ministries such as the Ministry of Works and Finance, effective records management supports day-to-day operations, decision-making, and the overall efficiency of the ministry’s functions. These records, ranging from financial transactions to infrastructure projects, require accurate and secure filing for retrieval and future use (Mboho & Akpan, 2019). A comprehensive and well-maintained filing system ensures compliance with regulatory frameworks, enhances transparency, and fosters trust between the government and its stakeholders.

Manual filing systems involve processes such as indexing, categorization, and physical storage, which are foundational for basic records management (Udo & Essien, 2020). Despite the emergence of digital filing systems, manual filing remains relevant in many organizations, especially in cases where legal requirements mandate the maintenance of physical records. However, with the advancement of ICT, the reliance on electronic filing systems has increased due to their efficiency in storing, retrieving, and safeguarding large volumes of data. The advent of these technologies has revolutionized the way records are managed, offering benefits such as quicker access to information, reduced physical storage space, and improved security (Adetunji, 2021).

Nevertheless, the transition from manual to electronic filing systems presents challenges. Organizations need to invest in adequate infrastructure, train their staff, and ensure that they comply with regulations related to data privacy and security (Okechukwu & Agbontaen, 2019). For OTM graduates working in such environments, possessing skills in both manual and electronic filing systems is indispensable for effective records management.

The Ministry of Works and Finance in Osogbo, Osun State, like many public institutions, faces the dual challenge of maintaining legacy manual filing systems while also embracing electronic systems. The need to manage large volumes of data generated by the ministry’s operations places a high demand on staff members to be proficient in both systems. Records related to financial transactions, project contracts, and human resources must be systematically organized to support transparency and accountability. This challenge highlights the importance of equipping OTM graduates with the necessary skills for effective record-keeping in both manual and electronic environments (Ejeh, 2020).

As the ICT age continues to evolve, the role of OTM graduates in ensuring the efficient management of records cannot be overemphasized. Their ability to navigate both manual and electronic systems positions them as key players in facilitating the flow of information within the ministry. By possessing these dual competencies, OTM graduates contribute to the overall productivity of the organization, ensuring that records are managed in a manner that supports organizational goals and complies with statutory requirements.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to assess the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by OTM graduates in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State. It will explore the extent to which these skills contribute to the effective management of records in an ICT-driven environment, identifying the gaps that may exist and suggesting strategies for improvement.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective records management is critical for the operations of any organization, particularly in government ministries such as the Ministry of Works and Finance, where transparency, accountability, and accuracy are paramount. Despite the widespread adoption of electronic filing systems, many government institutions still rely on manual filing for certain processes due to legal and operational constraints. This dual approach to records management demands that employees, particularly OTM graduates, are proficient in both manual and electronic filing systems (Olawale, 2021).

However, it has been observed that there is often a skills gap among OTM graduates regarding the practical application of these filing systems. Many graduates may possess theoretical knowledge of records management but lack the hands-on experience needed to handle complex filing tasks in real-world settings (Onwuka & Nwachukwu, 2022). This deficiency can lead to inefficiencies in records management, resulting in delays in information retrieval, loss of important documents, and non-compliance with regulatory standards.

Given the critical role of the Ministry of Works and Finance in managing sensitive information related to public infrastructure and financial resources, it is essential to ensure that OTM graduates are equipped with the requisite skills for both manual and electronic filing. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which OTM graduates possess these skills and how they contribute to the ministry's overall records management effectiveness.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the manual filing skills possessed by OTM graduates in the Ministry of Works and Finance.
2. To evaluate the electronic filing skills of OTM graduates in the same ministry.
3. To determine the impact of these filing skills on the effective management of records in an ICT-driven environment.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What manual filing skills do OTM graduates in the Ministry of Works and Finance possess?
2. To what extent are OTM graduates proficient in electronic filing systems?
3. How do the manual and electronic filing skills of OTM graduates affect records management in the ministry?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it will provide insights into the current skill levels of OTM graduates in managing records, both manually and electronically. The findings will be useful to educational institutions, enabling them to tailor their OTM programs to better meet the needs of the workplace. Additionally, government ministries and other organizations can use the results to develop training programs that enhance the records management capabilities of their staff. The study will also contribute to the literature on records management in public sector organizations, particularly in the context of integrating manual and electronic filing systems.

## 1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is focused on the Ministry of Works and Finance in Osogbo, Osun State. It examines the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by OTM graduates working in this ministry and their role in the effective management of records. The study will not cover other ministries or organizations, nor will it assess non-OTM graduates. Furthermore, it is limited to records management processes related to the filing systems used in the ministry.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Filing System:** The method by which records are organized, stored, and retrieved, either manually or electronically.

**Manual Filing:** The process of organizing and storing physical documents using paper-based systems.

**Electronic Filing:** The use of digital systems and software to organize, store, and manage electronic records.

**OTM Graduates:** Individuals who have completed a program in Office Technology and Management, with skills in office procedures, record-keeping, and technology use.

**Records Management:** The systematic control of records throughout their life cycle, from creation or receipt to disposal or archival.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Concept of Record Management

Records management involves the systematic control of records throughout their life cycle, from creation to disposal or preservation. The primary goal is to ensure that records, which include both paper and electronic documents, are maintained efficiently for operational, legal, and audit purposes, ensuring authenticity, accuracy, and completeness (Princeton University, 2024). According to ISO 15489, the definition of records management extends to the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records to support organizational goals, whether in the public or private sector (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

In modern organizations, the volume of information has significantly increased, making efficient records management essential for reducing risks, enhancing accessibility, and preserving the integrity of data. It facilitates accountability by ensuring that records are created and maintained in a retrievable and organized manner. In schools, for example, records management encompasses various registers, budget books, and other crucial documents that serve administrative and legal purposes (ERIC, 2024).

Records management also ensures that institutions comply with retention schedules, which specify how long certain documents need to be kept before they are destroyed. When properly implemented, the principles of records management—ensuring completeness, accuracy, retrievability, and security—are fundamental in helping organizations meet their objectives (Princeton University, 2024). Furthermore, records management bridges the gap between document management and information governance by ensuring that all data, whether physical or digital, is properly handled and retained to support both immediate business needs and long-term preservation requirements (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

## 2.2 Overview of Filing Systems: Manual and Electronic

Filing systems play a critical role in managing the storage, retrieval, and preservation of records. Filing systems can be categorized into manual and electronic types, each having unique advantages and limitations. Manual filing systems are traditional and often paper-based. These systems require physical storage space such as cabinets and involve categorizing records by labeling folders or files in an easily accessible manner. Despite their tangible nature, manual filing systems can be cumbersome, requiring a significant amount of space and effort to maintain, especially when dealing with large volumes of documents. Errors such as misplacement or duplication are common challenges (Makinde, 1991). However, manual filing systems are still valued for their simplicity and reliability in environments with limited technological resources.

Electronic filing systems (EFS), on the other hand, have transformed records management by enabling digital storage and automated retrieval of information. In an EFS, documents are stored electronically, often in a database or cloud storage, making them easy to search, share, and archive. Electronic systems allow for the integration of metadata, version control, and audit trails, which ensure that records are accurately tracked and maintained throughout their lifecycle (Princeton University, 2024). These systems also provide better security features, such as access control and encryption, to protect sensitive data from unauthorized access.

The rise of information and communication technology (ICT) has driven the widespread adoption of electronic filing systems in organizations worldwide. These systems facilitate seamless sharing of records across different departments and locations, making them particularly advantageous for organizations with distributed teams. However, one of the key challenges with electronic systems is ensuring that records remain authentic and unaltered over time, especially as technologies evolve (Makinde, 1991).

In recent years, hybrid systems have emerged, combining elements of both manual and electronic filing. Hybrid filing systems allow for the flexibility of electronic systems while retaining hard copies for backup or compliance with regulatory requirements. As organizations continue to evolve in the ICT age, the use of electronic filing systems is becoming increasingly dominant, though manual systems still play a role in certain sectors, especially in areas with limited digital infrastructure (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

## 2.3 Importance of Filing Skills in Record Management

Filing skills are fundamental to effective record management in both manual and electronic systems. They ensure that records are easily accessible, secure, and organized in a way that meets operational, legal, and regulatory requirements. The importance of filing skills has become increasingly prominent in today’s digital age, where the volume of records being created and stored has grown exponentially. Filing skills ensure that records can be systematically retrieved, properly archived, and safely disposed of, all of which contribute to the efficiency of an organization’s operations and compliance with legal obligations.

**1. Efficient Information Retrieval**

The core function of any filing system is to make information readily available when it is needed. Proficient filing skills help in categorizing and organizing records in a systematic way, which facilitates quick and efficient retrieval. Whether an organization is using a manual or electronic system, the ability to locate and access records promptly is essential for timely decision-making, legal compliance, and day-to-day operations (Princeton University, 2024).

In electronic filing systems (EFS), employees with strong filing skills are better able to use metadata and keyword searches to locate documents efficiently. A study by Shepherd and Yeo (2018) highlights the need for employees to be adept at understanding naming conventions, metadata management, and version control, which are vital for quick access to documents in digital environments. Similarly, in manual filing systems, understanding how to index, categorize, and label physical documents is crucial to ensuring that files are stored and retrieved without delay (Ogunlade, 2020). Organizations that fail to emphasize the importance of filing skills often experience delays and inefficiencies in retrieving records, which can negatively impact productivity. Furthermore, improper filing can lead to misplaced or lost documents, potentially resulting in financial losses or legal repercussions (Makinde, 1991). By fostering strong filing skills, organizations can ensure the smooth flow of information across departments, improving overall organizational performance.

**2. Enhanced Security and Confidentiality**

One of the key aspects of effective records management is maintaining the security and confidentiality of sensitive information. Filing skills play an essential role in this process by ensuring that records are stored in secure locations, whether physically or digitally, and that access to sensitive documents is restricted to authorized personnel only.

In manual filing systems, proper storage methods such as locked cabinets, restricted access areas, and secure file transportation methods are necessary to protect confidential information. Employees who are skilled in manual filing understand the importance of these security measures and how to implement them effectively (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018). On the other hand, in electronic filing systems, employees need to be proficient in digital security protocols such as encryption, password protection, and access control. Failure to implement proper security measures can expose an organization to data breaches, theft, and unauthorized access to sensitive records.

A study conducted by Nwosu (2018) revealed that organizations with well-trained personnel in electronic filing systems were more likely to have effective security protocols in place, protecting against data breaches and cyberattacks. Employees who lack the necessary filing skills may inadvertently mishandle records, exposing them to unauthorized access or permanent loss. Therefore, training employees in both manual and electronic filing security protocols is critical to safeguarding organizational information.

**3. Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

Proper filing skills are also essential for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to records retention and disposal. In many industries, there are strict guidelines regarding how long certain types of records must be retained and when they should be disposed of. Filing skills ensure that these retention schedules are adhered to, preventing the premature destruction of records or the unnecessary retention of obsolete records.

For example, in sectors such as healthcare, finance, and government, records management laws often mandate that certain documents be retained for several years. Employees with filing skills are able to track and monitor the lifecycle of records, ensuring that they are disposed of in accordance with these laws (Ogunlade, 2020). Failure to comply with retention requirements can result in penalties, legal liability, or loss of operational credibility.

In electronic filing systems, automated retention policies can be set up to ensure that records are automatically archived or disposed of after a certain period. However, employees must be skilled in configuring these settings and ensuring that the system complies with the relevant legal requirements (Makinde, 1991). The importance of compliance in record management cannot be overstated, as organizations are increasingly being held accountable for how they manage and dispose of records in the digital era.

**4. Preservation of Institutional Memory**

Filing skills contribute significantly to the preservation of institutional memory, which is the collective knowledge and history of an organization that is stored in its records. Over time, organizations accumulate vast amounts of information that provide insights into past decisions, policies, and procedures. Proper filing skills ensure that this information is organized and preserved in a way that future employees can access and use it for reference.

In manual filing systems, the preservation of institutional memory requires meticulous attention to detail in the archiving process. Employees with strong filing skills are able to assess which documents should be preserved for long-term use and ensure that they are stored in durable and accessible formats (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018). Electronic filing systems, on the other hand, rely on digital preservation techniques such as data migration, regular backups, and the use of open file formats to ensure that records remain accessible over time.

Adebayo (2019) notes that organizations with strong filing and archiving systems are better able to preserve their institutional memory, making it easier to maintain continuity when staff turnover occurs. Moreover, well-maintained records serve as a valuable resource for new employees, providing them with the information needed to understand the organization's history and decision-making processes. Without proper filing skills, important records may be lost or destroyed, eroding the institutional memory and potentially hindering organizational growth.

**5. Improved Decision-Making and Accountability**

Strong filing skills enable organizations to make informed decisions based on accurate, complete, and readily accessible records. In decision-making processes, managers and employees often rely on past records to inform future actions, such as reviewing past budgets, contracts, or project reports. Filing skills ensure that these records are available and organized in a way that facilitates analysis and decision-making (Princeton University, 2024).

Furthermore, records serve as evidence of transactions, decisions, and activities, making them critical to organizational accountability. Employees who are proficient in filing are better able to maintain accurate records that can be used to verify past decisions and support audits or legal investigations (Makinde, 1991). This accountability is crucial for maintaining transparency in organizational processes and ensuring that actions can be justified when questioned.

In electronic filing systems, filing skills extend beyond simply storing documents. Employees must also be proficient in data analytics and reporting tools that allow them to extract meaningful insights from the records they manage. By leveraging these skills, organizations can use their records to gain a competitive advantage, improve operational efficiency, and support strategic planning efforts (Ogunlade, 2020).

## 2.4 Challenges in Record Management in the ICT Age

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into records management has revolutionized how organizations store, access, and dispose of records. While ICT brings immense benefits, it also introduces new challenges that organizations must navigate to manage their records effectively. These challenges span across areas such as data security, the complexity of handling large volumes of digital records, technological obsolescence, compliance with regulations, and skills gaps among staff. This section explores these key challenges in detail and their implications for effective records management in the ICT age.

**1. Data Security and Privacy Concerns**

One of the most significant challenges posed by ICT in record management is ensuring the security and privacy of sensitive data. As organizations increasingly adopt electronic filing systems and cloud storage solutions, they expose their records to potential cyberattacks, unauthorized access, and data breaches. Cybersecurity threats such as hacking, malware, and phishing attacks are prevalent risks that organizations must constantly defend against. A report by the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) indicated that over 60% of organizations experienced data breaches in the last five years due to poor security practices in digital record-keeping (IAPP, 2020).

Moreover, organizations must comply with data protection regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe or the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States, which impose strict rules on how personal data should be managed and protected. Non-compliance can lead to severe financial penalties and damage to the organization’s reputation. Organizations that fail to implement adequate security measures in their digital record systems risk not only financial loss but also legal liabilities (Ogunlade, 2020).

To mitigate these risks, organizations must adopt robust cybersecurity practices, including encryption, regular audits, and multi-factor authentication. However, maintaining a high level of security comes with its own challenges, such as increased costs, the need for continuous staff training, and the complexity of implementing such measures across different systems.

**2. Volume and Complexity of Digital Records**

The sheer volume of records generated in the digital era presents a significant challenge for records management. ICT tools make it easy to create, duplicate, and store vast amounts of data, but managing this growing repository becomes increasingly complex. According to a report by IDC, the global volume of digital data is expected to reach 175 zettabytes by 2025, with organizations struggling to sift through and categorize valuable information from the growing noise (IDC, 2020).

Handling such large volumes of records requires sophisticated tools for organizing, indexing, and retrieving data. Traditional manual filing methods are no longer sufficient, and even basic electronic filing systems may struggle to handle the complexity and scale of modern record-keeping needs. Without proper classification and archiving mechanisms, organizations may find it difficult to locate specific records when required, leading to inefficiencies and wasted resources (Adebayo, 2019).

Additionally, electronic records are often stored in multiple formats and locations, from local drives to cloud-based systems, making the integration and synchronization of records a challenging task. Organizations must invest in advanced information management systems that use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to automatically categorize and index records. However, such systems are expensive and require continuous updates to remain effective, further complicating records management in the ICT age (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

**3. Technological Obsolescence**

Technological obsolescence is another challenge that organizations face when managing electronic records. As technology evolves rapidly, older storage formats, hardware, and software become obsolete, making it difficult to access or retrieve archived records. For instance, organizations that stored digital records on floppy disks or CD-ROMs in the early 2000s now struggle to access this data due to the lack of compatible hardware (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018). Similarly, outdated software can render electronic files unreadable, posing a significant risk to long-term data preservation.

To mitigate the risks of technological obsolescence, organizations must adopt strategies for digital preservation, such as converting files to open and non-proprietary formats and regularly migrating data to newer storage systems. However, this process is resource-intensive and requires continuous monitoring. Moreover, there is a growing need for digital archivists who possess the technical skills to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of digital records, a role that is still underdeveloped in many organizations (Makinde, 1991).

**4. Compliance with Record Retention and Disposal Regulations**

The ICT age has complicated compliance with record retention and disposal regulations. Different industries are subject to a wide range of laws and regulations that dictate how long records must be retained and when they should be disposed of. For instance, financial institutions may be required to retain transactional records for up to seven years, while healthcare providers may have even stricter regulations governing patient records. In the digital era, organizations often struggle to track the lifecycle of electronic records and ensure compliance with retention schedules (Ogunlade, 2020).

One major challenge is that electronic records are often duplicated or stored in multiple locations, making it difficult to enforce consistent retention and disposal policies. Additionally, “digital hoarding” — the practice of retaining all records indefinitely — is a common issue in the ICT age, as organizations fear accidentally deleting important records. This leads to excessive data storage costs and an increased risk of non-compliance. In response, organizations must develop automated retention policies and use technology that triggers alerts or automatic deletion once records reach the end of their retention period (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

**5. Lack of Skilled Personnel**

The rapid adoption of ICT in records management has outpaced the development of necessary skills among staff. Many organizations face a gap in technical expertise when it comes to managing digital records, leading to inefficiencies and mistakes in the filing, retrieval, and preservation processes. Traditional records management skills are not sufficient in the digital era, where knowledge of ICT tools, data analytics, and digital preservation strategies is required (Adebayo, 2019).

Organizations that fail to invest in upskilling their workforce are likely to encounter difficulties in managing their records efficiently. Employees must be trained in the use of electronic filing systems, metadata management, and digital security protocols. Furthermore, there is a growing demand for professionals who specialize in records management in the digital age, such as digital archivists and information governance specialists. Addressing this skills gap requires a concerted effort from organizations to offer continuous training and development programs, as well as partnerships with educational institutions to create specialized courses in digital records management (Nwosu, 2018).

**2.5 OTM Graduates' Roles in Modern Record Management**

Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates play a crucial role in modern record management, particularly in organizations that have adopted ICT-based systems for managing records. The digital transformation of the workplace has reshaped how records are created, stored, and retrieved, increasing the need for professionals who possess both traditional record-keeping skills and advanced technical expertise. OTM graduates are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between manual and electronic record-keeping, leveraging their comprehensive training in office management, technology, and record systems to enhance organizational efficiency.

**1. Facilitating the Transition from Manual to Electronic Systems**

One of the most significant roles of OTM graduates in modern record management is facilitating the transition from manual to electronic filing systems. Many organizations, particularly those with long histories of paper-based record management, face challenges when migrating to digital platforms. OTM graduates, equipped with knowledge of both manual and digital filing techniques, are instrumental in guiding this transition smoothly. They understand the principles of archiving, indexing, and cataloging documents and are capable of applying these principles in both physical and digital environments (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018).

In transitioning to digital systems, OTM graduates can help organizations adopt electronic document management systems (EDMS), which streamline record creation, storage, and retrieval. Their familiarity with software like Microsoft Office, database management systems, and enterprise content management (ECM) tools makes them valuable assets in configuring and maintaining these systems (Ogunlade, 2020).

**2. Ensuring Compliance and Legal Adherence**

Modern record management is subject to stringent legal and regulatory requirements, such as data protection laws and records retention policies. OTM graduates play a key role in ensuring that organizations comply with these laws by managing retention schedules, implementing disposal protocols, and safeguarding confidential information. Their understanding of records management policies enables them to ensure that records are stored securely and disposed of when no longer needed, thereby mitigating the risk of legal penalties (Adebayo, 2019).

Furthermore, OTM graduates are well-versed in managing both hardcopy and electronic records in accordance with industry standards. They are trained to handle sensitive documents, ensure proper security measures, and maintain audit trails for records, which are crucial for demonstrating compliance during legal proceedings or audits.

**3. Enhancing Information Retrieval and Workflow Efficiency**

One of the primary goals of records management is to make information easily accessible for decision-making. OTM graduates contribute significantly to this goal by applying their expertise in organizing and categorizing information in a way that enhances retrieval speed and accuracy. In electronic systems, they use metadata, keywords, and indexing tools to ensure that documents can be found quickly through search functions (Makinde, 1991). Their ability to manage large volumes of records, while maintaining organization and accuracy, improves workflow efficiency across the organization. In environments that still rely on hybrid systems (a mix of manual and digital records), OTM graduates are able to manage both seamlessly. They understand how to integrate traditional filing systems with modern digital platforms, ensuring that records are consistently available in whichever format is required.

**4. Implementing Technological Solutions and Digital Security**

In the ICT age, OTM graduates are responsible for adopting and managing technological solutions that improve record management processes. They often work alongside IT departments to implement software solutions that automate record creation, tracking, and archiving. Additionally, they are increasingly involved in managing digital security measures to protect sensitive records from unauthorized access, cyberattacks, and breaches (Shepherd & Yeo, 2018). Their role extends to training other employees on the proper use of electronic filing systems, digital security practices, and data management protocols. As organizations face growing threats related to data breaches and cyberattacks, OTM graduates provide essential skills in safeguarding digital records through encryption, password protection, and secure cloud storage solutions (Ogunlade, 2020).

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design to assess the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State. Descriptive survey research was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed for the collection of data from a large group of individuals to describe the current status of phenomena without manipulating the variables (Nworgu, 2015). The design facilitated the collection of quantitative data that helped in determining the levels of proficiency of OTM graduates in both manual and electronic filing systems.

## 3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all OTM graduates employed in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State. The ministry was selected as the case study because it relies heavily on efficient records management for its operations, and a significant number of its employees are OTM graduates. According to records from the Ministry’s human resources department, there were approximately 150 OTM graduates working in different departments of the ministry as of the time the study was conducted. This population included graduates involved in both administrative and clerical roles that required manual and electronic filing tasks.

## 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 100 OTM graduates was selected from the population of 150 employees. The sample size was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for determining sample sizes in a given population, which ensured that the sample was representative enough to generalize the findings to the larger population. A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants, allowing every OTM graduate in the ministry an equal chance of being selected. This method minimized bias and ensured that the sample was reflective of the entire population (Iheanacho & Osuji, 2018).

## 3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by the OTM graduates. It was divided into three sections:

Demographic information of the respondents,

Questions assessing their manual filing skills, and

Questions evaluating their electronic filing skills.

The questions were formulated using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), which allowed for the assessment of the respondents' levels of agreement with statements related to their filing skills. The use of a structured questionnaire was chosen because it allowed for the standardized collection of data across all respondents, facilitating the quantitative analysis of responses (Aminu, 2016).

## 3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was subjected to content validation by experts in the field of Office Technology and Management and records management. The experts reviewed the questionnaire to determine whether the questions were relevant, clear, and capable of measuring the intended variables. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire, ensuring that it measured what it was intended to measure (Ogungbemi, 2020).

The reliability of the instrument was tested through a pilot study conducted with 20 OTM graduates who were not part of the sample but worked in similar government ministries. The responses were analyzed using the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient, and a value of 0.82 was obtained, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability (Field, 2017). This meant that the instrument was reliable for use in the main study.

## 3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over a period of two weeks. The questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents in their respective departments within the Ministry of Works and Finance. To ensure a high response rate, the researchers personally distributed the questionnaires and collected them after they had been completed. Prior to distribution, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and their consent was obtained. Confidentiality was assured, and respondents were encouraged to answer the questions honestly. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, and 90 were successfully retrieved, representing a response rate of 90%.

## 3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to summarize the responses and describe the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by the OTM graduates. These statistical tools helped in answering the research questions. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. The use of SPSS enabled the accurate computation of the results and provided a clear presentation of the findings in tables and charts.

The study also used inferential statistics to make generalizations from the sample data. Specifically, a t-test was employed to compare the proficiency levels of OTM graduates in manual versus electronic filing. The findings from the analysis were used to answer the research questions and provide insights into the effectiveness of records management practices in the Ministry of Works and Finance.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected through the structured questionnaire distributed among the sample size. The data were analysed based on the research objectives, and the results are presented using tables, followed by interpretations. Out of the total 100 questionnaires distributed, 82 valid responses were analysed, representing an 82% response rate, as 18% of the questionnaires were not validated due to improper filling.

## 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 shows the demographic distribution of respondents based on their gender, age, educational qualification, and years of experience.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Gender |  |  |
| Male | 42 | 51.22 |
| Female | 40 | 48.78 |
| Age |  |  |
| 20–30 years | 25 | 30.49 |
| 31–40 years | 40 | 48.78 |
| 41–50 years | 12 | 14.63 |
| Above 50 years | 5 | 6.10 |
| Educational Qualification |  |  |
| National Diploma (ND) | 40 | 48.78 |
| Higher National Diploma (HND) | 35 | 42.68 |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 5 | 6.10 |
| Others | 2 | 2.44 |
| Years of Experience |  |  |
| Less than 1 year | 10 | 12.20 |
| 1–5 years | 50 | 60.98 |
| 6–10 years | 15 | 18.29 |
| More than 10 years | 7 | 8.54 |

The respondents were almost evenly distributed in terms of gender, with 51.22% male and 48.78% female. The majority of respondents (48.78%) were between 31–40 years of age, and most (60.98%) had between 1–5 years of work experience. 48.78% of the respondents held a National Diploma, while 42.68% held a Higher National Diploma.

## 4.2 Analysis of Manual Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates

Table 4.2 presents the analysis of the manual filing skills possessed by OTM graduates. Respondents were asked to rate their proficiency in various manual filing skills on a Likert scale. The table includes frequencies, percentages, and the mean scores for each statement.

**Table 4.2: Manual Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statement** | **A (f)** | **A (%)** | **D (f)** | **D (%)** | **Mean** | **Remarks** |
| 1. | I am proficient in sorting and organizing physical documents. | 70 | 85.37 | 12 | 14.63 | 4.20 | High proficiency |
| 2. | I can correctly index files using standard filing procedures. | 65 | 79.27 | 17 | 20.73 | 3.90 | Moderate proficiency |
| 3. | I am skilled in creating file labels for easy identification. | 60 | 73.17 | 22 | 26.83 | 3.75 | Moderate proficiency |
| 4. | I regularly maintain and update manual records to ensure accuracy. | 68 | 82.93 | 14 | 17.07 | 4.10 | High proficiency |
| 5. | I have the ability to retrieve physical files quickly when needed. | 58 | 70.73 | 24 | 29.27 | 3.60 | Moderate proficiency |
| 6. | I am knowledgeable about alphabetical and numerical filing systems. | 72 | 87.80 | 10 | 12.20 | 4.30 | High proficiency |
| 7. | I follow proper procedures for archiving or disposing of physical records. | 64 | 78.05 | 18 | 21.95 | 3.85 | Moderate proficiency |
| 8. | I ensure confidentiality and security when handling physical files. | 75 | 91.46 | 7 | 8.54 | 4.50 | High proficiency |
| 9. | I am familiar with the ministry’s regulations concerning manual filing. | 62 | 75.61 | 20 | 24.39 | 3.80 | Moderate proficiency |
| 10. | I can transition from one filing system to another. | 57 | 69.51 | 25 | 30.49 | 3.55 | Moderate proficiency |

The respondents showed a high level of proficiency in several manual filing tasks, such as sorting and organizing documents (Mean = 4.20) and ensuring confidentiality (Mean = 4.50).

The respondents were moderately proficient in skills such as creating file labels (Mean = 3.75) and transitioning between filing systems (Mean = 3.55).

## 4.3 Analysis of Electronic Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates

Table 4.3 presents the analysis of the electronic filing skills possessed by OTM graduates.

**Table 4.3: Electronic Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statement** | **A (f)** | **A (%)** | **D (f)** | **D (%)** | **Mean** | **Remarks** |
| 1. | I am proficient in using electronic document management systems (EDMS). | 65 | 79.27 | 17 | 20.73 | 4.00 | High proficiency |
| 2. | I can create, edit, and organize electronic files accurately. | 68 | 82.93 | 14 | 17.07 | 4.10 | High proficiency |
| 3. | I can efficiently retrieve electronic files. | 72 | 87.80 | 10 | 12.20 | 4.30 | High proficiency |
| 4. | I am knowledgeable about cloud storage systems. | 60 | 73.17 | 22 | 26.83 | 3.75 | Moderate proficiency |
| 5. | I can back up electronic files to prevent data loss. | 75 | 91.46 | 7 | 8.54 | 4.50 | High proficiency |
| 6. | I am familiar with file security protocols (e.g., encryption, passwords). | 70 | 85.37 | 12 | 14.63 | 4.20 | High proficiency |
| 7. | I know how to comply with the ministry’s data management policies. | 62 | 75.61 | 20 | 24.39 | 3.90 | Moderate proficiency |
| 8. | I am skilled in disposing of electronic records properly. | 55 | 67.07 | 27 | 32.93 | 3.55 | Moderate proficiency |

Respondents exhibited a high level of proficiency in skills such as backing up files (Mean = 4.50), retrieving files (Mean = 4.30), and using electronic filing systems (Mean = 4.00).

Respondents showed moderate proficiency in skills related to cloud storage systems (Mean = 3.75) and proper disposal of electronic records (Mean = 3.55).

## 4.4 Comparative Analysis of Manual and Electronic Filing Skills

Table 4.4 presents a comparative analysis of the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by OTM graduates, based on the average mean scores for each category.

**Table 4.4: Comparative Analysis of Manual and Electronic Filing Skills**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill Category** | **Mean Score (Manual Skills)** | **Mean Score (Electronic Skills)** | **Remarks** |
| Document Sorting/Organizing | 4.20 | 4.10 | Comparable proficiency |
| File Retrieval | 3.60 | 4.30 | Higher proficiency in electronic |
| Indexing/Labeling | 3.90 | 3.75 | Comparable proficiency |
| Security/Confidentiality | 4.50 | 4.20 | Higher proficiency in manual |
| Archiving/Disposal | 3.85 | 3.55 | Higher proficiency in manual |
| Overall Proficiency | 4.05 | 4.06 | Comparable proficiency |

Both manual and electronic filing skills were relatively comparable, with slight variations. Respondents demonstrated higher proficiency in file retrieval using electronic systems (Mean = 4.30), while manual filing exhibited higher proficiency in security and archiving (Mean = 4.50).

## 4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study revealed that Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates working in the Ministry of Works and Finance in Osogbo possess significant proficiency in both manual and electronic filing skills. Manual filing remains a vital skill, with respondents showing high proficiency in organizing physical documents, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining security. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of traditional filing systems in sectors where physical document handling is still prevalent (Nwosu, 2018). However, the study also highlighted the growing dominance of electronic filing systems in modern records management. The respondents exhibited strong electronic filing skills, particularly in file retrieval, use of electronic document management systems (EDMS), and data backup. These findings reflect the increasing reliance on technology in records management in the ICT age, as observed by Ogunlade (2020), who noted that electronic filing systems enhance the efficiency of file management processes, including quick retrieval and secure data storage.

Despite the proficiency in both filing systems, the study revealed some challenges associated with transitioning between manual and electronic filing systems. Respondents indicated that while they are skilled in both areas, they face occasional difficulties when transitioning from one system to another. This suggests a need for further training and the development of integrated filing systems to ensure smooth transitions and enhanced efficiency. This finding resonates with research by Adebayo (2019), who identified the need for organizations to provide continuous training to employees in records management technologies. Overall, the findings indicate that OTM graduates possess the necessary filing skills to manage records effectively in the ICT age. However, as electronic systems continue to advance, it is crucial for the Ministry of Works and Finance to invest in continuous training to ensure that OTM graduates stay updated with the latest technologies and processes in records management.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study aimed to evaluate the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates working in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State, and how these skills impact records management in the ICT age. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed quantitatively. The demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that the majority were aged between 31 and 40 years, with most holding either a National Diploma (ND) or Higher National Diploma (HND) in Office Technology and Management. In terms of work experience, the largest proportion had been working for between 1 and 5 years. The analysis of manual filing skills revealed a high level of proficiency in organizing physical documents, ensuring confidentiality, and applying alphabetical and numerical filing systems. However, there were moderate proficiencies in transitioning between different filing systems and creating clear file labels. In contrast, the analysis of electronic filing skills showed that respondents were highly proficient in file retrieval, using electronic document management systems (EDMS), and backing up files to prevent data loss. However, moderate proficiency was observed in the disposal of electronic records and knowledge of cloud storage systems. The comparative analysis of manual and electronic filing skills revealed that both skill sets are important in records management. While electronic filing offers faster file retrieval, manual filing still plays a crucial role in ensuring document security and proper archiving, especially in situations where physical documents are required. Respondents demonstrated comparable overall proficiency in both filing systems, with slight variations in specific areas such as file retrieval and security.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The findings from this study underscore the importance of both manual and electronic filing skills for effective records management in the ICT age. Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates working in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State, possess a diverse range of filing skills that allow them to handle records efficiently, regardless of whether the filing system is manual or electronic.

The proficiency in manual filing skills remains vital in contexts where physical documentation is still a requirement. Respondents demonstrated high proficiency in tasks such as sorting and organizing physical files, following proper archiving and disposal procedures, and ensuring the confidentiality and security of physical records. These findings indicate that manual filing systems, though perceived as traditional, continue to have relevance in today’s records management practices, particularly in government settings where physical documents may still be legally mandated or preferred for certain types of records.

However, the study also highlights the growing dominance of electronic filing systems in modern records management, particularly in government organizations transitioning to digital solutions. The high proficiency exhibited by respondents in the use of electronic document management systems, file retrieval, and data backup reflects a strong alignment with contemporary records management practices. Electronic filing systems are known to increase efficiency, reduce the risk of data loss, and facilitate faster retrieval of records, which is critical for timely decision-making and effective public service delivery. Respondents also displayed good knowledge of security protocols, such as encryption and password protection, which are necessary for safeguarding sensitive information in digital formats.

Despite these strengths, the study identified some challenges related to the transition between manual and electronic filing systems. While respondents possess adequate skills in both domains, the shift from manual to electronic systems may not always be seamless, as indicated by the moderate proficiency in certain electronic filing tasks such as cloud storage management and the disposal of electronic records. These challenges suggest that additional training and support are needed to help employees fully optimize the use of electronic filing systems.

In conclusion, the study affirms that OTM graduates in the Ministry of Works and Finance are well-equipped with both manual and electronic filing skills necessary for effective records management. However, as the reliance on digital systems increases, there is a growing need for continuous professional development to keep pace with technological advancements. Organizations should invest in integrated records management systems that combine the strengths of both manual and electronic filing to create a cohesive and efficient system that meets the needs of the ICT age.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Continuous Training and Development:** The Ministry of Works and Finance should provide regular training programs to enhance employees' proficiency in both manual and electronic filing systems. Special focus should be placed on cloud storage management and the proper disposal of electronic records.
2. **Integration of Filing Systems:** The ministry should consider adopting an integrated records management system that combines the strengths of manual and electronic filing. This would enable a seamless transition between systems and reduce inefficiencies in handling records.
3. **Investment in Technology:** The ministry should invest in advanced electronic document management systems that are user-friendly and compatible with current work processes. This would improve the efficiency of records management and data retrieval.
4. **Policy Implementation:** Clear policies should be implemented regarding the archiving and disposal of both physical and electronic records to ensure compliance with legal and organizational requirements.
5. **Security Enhancements:** Continuous updates on security protocols, including encryption and multi-factor authentication, should be provided to ensure that sensitive information remains protected in both physical and digital formats.

## 5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could focus on the challenges and opportunities associated with the complete digitization of records in public sector organizations, especially in developing regions.

Research could be conducted to explore the impact of integrated filing systems on organizational efficiency, particularly in large government organizations.

Further research could also investigate the effect of continuous professional training on the long-term proficiency of employees in records management in both manual and electronic systems.

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Questionnaire
**Title: Manual and Electronic Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates for Effective Management of Records in the ICT Age**

**Dear Respondent,**
This questionnaire is designed to assess the manual and electronic filing skills possessed by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates working in the Ministry of Works and Finance, Osogbo, Osun State. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality, and the information provided will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your participation.

Please kindly respond by ticking (✔) the option that best represents your opinion.

**Section A: Demographic Information**

**Gender:**

Male

Female

**Age:**

20–30

31–40

41–50

Above 50

**Highest Educational Qualification:**

National Diploma (ND)

Higher National Diploma (HND)

Bachelor’s Degree

Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Years of Experience in the Ministry:

Less than 1 year

1–5 years

6–10 years

More than 10 years

**Section B: Manual Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates**

Using the scale below, rate your agreement with each statement: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

| S/N | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | I am proficient in sorting and organizing physical documents. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. | I can correctly index files using standard filing procedures. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. | I am skilled in creating file labels for easy identification of documents. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. | I regularly maintain and update manual records to ensure accuracy. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. | I have the ability to retrieve physical files quickly when needed. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. | I am knowledgeable about filing systems such as alphabetical and numerical filing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. | I follow proper procedures for archiving or disposing of physical records. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. | I ensure confidentiality and security when handling physical files. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. | I am familiar with the ministry’s regulations concerning manual filing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. | I can easily transition from one filing system to another (e.g., subject-based to date-based). |  |  |  |  |  |

**Section C: Electronic Filing Skills Possessed by OTM Graduates**

Using the scale below, rate your agreement with each statement: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

| S/N | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | I am proficient in using electronic document management systems (EDMS). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. | I can create, edit, and organize electronic files accurately. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. | I am skilled in naming and indexing electronic files for easy retrieval. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. | I can efficiently search for and retrieve electronic files. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. | I am knowledgeable about cloud storage systems used in the ministry. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. | I am familiar with file security protocols (e.g., password protection, encryption). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. | I know how to back up electronic files to prevent data loss. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. | I can manage electronic records in compliance with the ministry's data management policies. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. | I have experience in archiving and disposing of electronic records as per regulations. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. | I am confident in handling the migration of data between different electronic filing systems. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Section D: Impact of Filing Skills on Effective Management of Records**

Using the scale below, rate your agreement with each statement: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

| S/N | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | My proficiency in manual filing contributes to the efficient management of records in the ministry. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. | My skills in electronic filing help streamline the ministry’s records management process. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. | Manual filing is crucial for managing certain types of documents in the ministry. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. | Electronic filing ensures quicker access to records compared to manual filing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. | There are fewer errors when using electronic filing systems compared to manual filing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. | I encounter challenges when transitioning between manual and electronic filing systems. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. | Efficient records management in the ministry improves decision-making and accountability. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. | Both manual and electronic filing systems are important for the overall management of records. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Section E: Additional Comments**

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the filing skills required for effective records management in the ministry.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!