Records Management Practices in Universities: A Comparative Study of Examples in Canada and Turkey

Pratiques de gestion de documents dans les universités : une étude comparative d'exemples au Canada et en Turquie

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Résumé : Cette étude compare les processus de gestion de documents dans une université turque aux processus de deux universités canadiennes. L'étude vise à vérifier l'état des systèmes de gestion de documents de deux pays, à établir des profils de formation professionnelle du personnel, à illustrer les méthodes de création, d'accès, de récupération, de conservation et de disposition des documents, et à évaluer les conditions administratives et les problèmes des systèmes de gestion de documents. Les pratiques de gestion de documents dans les universités turques sont évaluées par l'entremise de l'exemple de l'Université Hacettepe. Au point de vue canadien, l'Université de Colombie-Britannique et l'Université Simon Fraser ont été sélectionnées et les données recueillies de ces deux universités ont été fusionnées. Les résultats de l'étude mettent en relief l'importance des études comparatives internationales pour évaluer l'état des systèmes de gestion de documents.

Abstract: This study compares record keeping processes in a Turkish university with those of two Canadian universities. The study aims to clarify the condition of the record systems of two countries, lay out the profiles of professional education of the staff, illustrate the methods of creation, access, retrieval, retention, and disposition of the records, and evaluate administrative conditions and the problems of the record systems. Records management practices in the Turkish universities is evaluated in the example of Hacettepe University. For the Canadian counterpart, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University have been selected and the data gathered from these two universities have been merged. The results of the study shed light on the importance of international comparative studies for evaluating the condition of records systems.

Introduction

This study examines the records systems of Turkish and Canadian universities, describing their conditions, problems, similarities, and differences. The participating Canadian universities—University of British Colombia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU)—have records management programs describing records procedures from creation to disposition. SFU especially has a comprehensive records management program that is followed in almost all units in the university. An examination of SFU's records retention, disposition schedules, and records management training might be useful resources for international professionals. UBC has a records management program but it is not mandatory, and only some units follow the proposed best practices, including retention and disposition schedules. On the other hand, Hacettepe University (HU) is trying to develop a records management program similar to all other Turkish universities. This study, then, should provide crucial information for these Turkish universities at the development stage of records management programs, as well as offer a chance to Canadian counterparts to compare their systems' advantages and disadvantages. Overall, this study depicts the records management practices between Turkish and Canadian universities, and attempts to describe the current conditions, procedures, and practices of each university's records systems.

Terminology

Generally, records are created and used to meet institutional goals and to document what, when, and how any transaction occurs in an institution. Records are the memories of an institution; they are the raw materials for decision making and the basis of legal defensibility. Records are organized units of information that are comprehensive, authentic, accurate, and reliable (Hare and McLeod 1997). They are managed in order to execute formal communication or any transaction inside or outside the institution. For efficient communication, it is necessary to have an effective records system that uses management elements such as the information life cycle or the records continuum model.

Life cycle—one of the most important approaches for managing records—is described by Pen, Pennix, and Coulson (1994) as the analysis of institutional information needs; the creation, recording, and storage of the necessary information; and the disposition of this information at dif-

ferent phases according to various requirements. Records, which have a critical role for an institution, must be managed properly, and thus efficient systems and procedures for the creation, organization, and disposition of records must be created. In addition, appraisal and evaluation is necessary for system continuity and development. Because institutional circumstances—especially policies for records format, distribution, use, and storage—change rapidly, disposition methods and retention schedules need to be scrutinized routinely. These evaluations depend on institutional and legal analysis to determine current conditions and problems.

Conversely, the records continuum model is described as "a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the creation of records (and before creation, in the design of keeping record through to the preservation and use of records as archives" (National Archives of Australia 1996, pt. 1, clause 4.22). Four dimensions of the continuum are document creation, records capture, organization of corporate and personal memory, and pluralization of collective memory. It can be argued that the best practice behind the records continuum model is the integrated approach used for managing records and archives. Records managers and archivists are brought together in an integrated recordkeeping framework, to guarantee the reliability, authenticity and completeness of the records (An 2002; McKemmish and Piggott 1994). The framework provides common understandings, consistent standards, unified best practice criteria, interdisciplinary approaches, and collaborations in recordkeeping and archiving for the paper and digital worlds. The advantage of the records continuum model over the life cycle model is in the mechanism behind the best practice, which is integration of management of documents, records, and archives (An 2001). Generally, both models offer useful alternatives for implementing records management, from creation or capture to disposition of the records.

Only approximately 5% of organizational records are normally identified as vital (Brumm 1995; Skupsky 1994). Thus, it is important to separate necessary from unnecessary records (Stephens 1995). Retention programs are developed after evaluation determines which records have institutional value, how long they should be retained, and the proper time for disposition (Montaña 1997). Records retention is the continued storage and maintenance of records for as long as they are required by the creating or holding organization, until their disposal according to their

administrative, legal, financial, and historical value (Skupsky). After the legal retention period, records are transferred to archives for permanent retention or they are destroyed (Shiff 1956). This retention period must be managed and monitored efficiently. If there is a problem at any phase of the cycle, the entire records system—even the institutional administrative structure—could be adversely affected.

Efficient management of records is necessary if aforementioned administrative applications of any organization are to succeed (Cisco 1999; Dollar 2002; Penn, Pennix, and Coulson 1994; Shepherd and Yeo 2003), so the administrative structure of the institution and its actual capacity for records applications must be analyzed. Therefore it is necessary to consider institutional and national regulations and standards as well as international conditions that can affect record procedures (Alberta 2005; Shepherd and Yeo 2003; Williams 2002). In order to develop institutional records-management applications, it is first necessary to define the records procedures, their problems, and the related expectations in all departments and units attached to the institution, and to investigate the international framework in the field (Pemperton 1997; Shepherd and Yeo 2003; Spratt 2003; Zawiyah and Chell 2002).

Subsequent to this identification, the current records system should be evaluated by taking all these conditions into consideration. The appropriate techniques for each records management function should be used or developed in the evaluation of the records management system. Field surveys may be conducted either in accordance with preliminary studies in the institution or by making use of previously developed techniques (Alberta 2005, ss. 1–74; Shepherd and Yeo 2003, ss. xii–xiii).

Surveys developed with institutional regulations will determine if records management programs satisfy institutional and external needs. Program development in records management rests substantially on institutional analyses. The administrative and legal conditions of every process that affects the institutional records procedures should be evaluated in these analyses. International standards can be assessed by analyzing the administrative and legal processes that affect the institutional records procedures and the development of institutional records management programs (Pemperton 1997, s. 22; Shepherd and Yeo 2003, ss. 30–1; Spratt 2003, 8; Zawiyah and Chell 2002, s. 55).

Development of records management programs

Examples of studies conducted on the development of records management systems are presented below in chronological order. In a doctoral study on capacity assessment in records management conducted at La Verne University (Hutchinson 1996), information and records management applications in California public institutions are discussed comprehensively. In a study conducted at Royal Roads University (O'Brien 1999), the staff members, who run the records procedures in the 23 institutions of the sample, stated that the workload in records management systems is heaviest at the out-of-unit records centres (at the storage centres where the records are half-active). Williams (2002), with the support of Enterprise Content Management Group attached to the Association of International Information Management, analyzed the content of the records management applications within businesses providing services in the United States. In a study conducted in Mozambique, the relationship between records management applications and sustainable development plans was examined and it was concluded that efficiency in public administration depended largely upon effective records management applications (Chibambo 2003). In 2005, Alberta published *Information Management Planning* as a result of detailed analyses and assessments carried out in public institutions attached to the province. Munro (2005) examined electronic records and assessed them within the framework of risk factors created by Internet service providers, including personal information and legal access issues. In the same year, the relationship between the applications of records management and quality system documentation in universities was examined and a quality records management model for the Turkish Higher Education System was developed (Külcü 2005). In another study carried out in 2008, a comprehensive field survey was conducted on e-records management applications within e-government and its results were evaluated in the scope of InterPARES III Project (Külcü 2008).

Methodology

The goal of this study was to gather required information about procedures, processes, and problems in SFU, UBC, and HU record systems in order to compare the two countries' record practices. Quantitative methodology (Taylor and Bogdan 1998) was used in the study and the data gathered through literature reviews and the questionnaire developed

by the author. All the information about HU was extracted from the author's doctoral dissertation (Külcü 2005), where the data were gathered through the questionnaire, which was also implemented in UBC and SFU.

The questionnaire was distributed to 216 individuals, responsible for records processes at six faculties, 48 departments, five department divisions, four institutes, three high schools, five research centres, and 17 administrative units in HU. A total of 186 questionnaires were returned out of 216. Therefore, the response rate of the questionnaire was 86.1%. The university administration distributed the questionnaires to the related divisions in HU.

At one of the leading state universities, HU's administrative structure, records procedures, and problems are very similar to other state universities, which makes it a representative example. The information about Canadian university records management system was taken from UBC and SFU samples, which were considered as a representative sample for Canada. In order to choose the sample universities from Canada to compare with the Turkish sample, general development levels and advanced records management applications of all universities were taken into consideration. For example, UBC is ranked among the top 50 universities of the world (Institute of Higher Education 2006). On the other hand, the records management system and the program of SFU are among the best examples in Canada. The author examined these two Canadian university records management systems during four months in the field. Accessibility was another factor in the selection of Canadian samples.

Questionnaires were sent to the central records and archives units of UBC and SFU for their distribution to the related units. The questionnaires were sent to 78 participants who were identified as those responsible for record issues in both universities. Fifty-six out of 78 participants responded and returned the questionnaires. Therefore, the response rate of the questionnaires was 71.8%.

Turkish and English versions of the questionnaire were used in the study. Some questions allowed participants to select more than one option and to rank them from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important). Other questions were on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Likert-scale
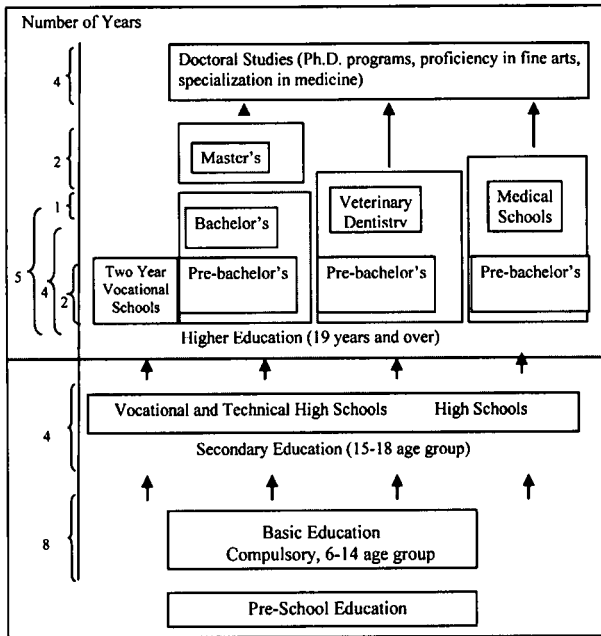
Figure 1: General structure of the Turkish educational system
Source: Turkey, Ministry of National Education, 2009

responses were analyzed by calculating mean rates (X is the mean of a statistical distribution with a discrete random variable, or the mathematical average of all the terms) and the standard deviation for calculating deviations of responses (s is the standard deviation, or a measure of the spread of the values in a data set; for example, s larger than 1.00 would mean uncertain or scattered responses) (Baş 2001; Egghe and Rousseau 1990).

At the beginning it might be helpful to explain the Turkish education and training system. The contemporary Turkish education system was established in 1924. A graphic image of the Turkish education system is shown at figure 1.

The Turkish public education system, similar to the Canadian system, provides for five stages of education: preschool (compulsory), primary school (compulsory, eight years), middle school (not compulsory, three years, including four years vocational schools), high school (college, two years), and university (at least four years).

General information about the participating universities

Table 1 shows basic information about the three universities.

Table 1: General information about participating universities

	HU	UBC	SFU
Founded	1967	1908	1965
Rank[1]	409	37	339
Students	33,011	45,000	25,000
Budget (US$ millions)	235	1,254	479

Sources: Institute of Higher Education 2006; Simon Fraser University 2006; Toope 2006

HU is a state university supported mainly by state funds allocated by the Turkish parliament. The university has nine faculties, 15 vocational schools, 20 institutes, and 24 research centres offering over 150 undergraduate and more than 173 graduate degree programs. HU has 3,748 full-time academic staff and 4,643 administrative staff (Hacettepe Üniversitesi 2006). HU has about 30,000 students enrolled for undergraduate studies and 3,011 for postgraduate. The total HU 2006 budget of $235,059,000 is based on total revenues without staff expenditures (Hacettepe Üniversitesi 2006).

HU does not have a central records and archival management unit. Each department or directorate has its own records management units in six faculties, 48 departments, five department divisions, four institutes, three schools, five research centres, and the 17 administrative units of the presidency. But correspondence from outside the university is managed by the Directorate of Foreign Issues. Staff responsible for records in HU are separated in the departments and divisions, deans' offices, institutes, schools, research centres, presidency, and service and support units. Most staff who carry out records procedures are administrative officials, computer operators, administrative chiefs, and typists. Academic titles were fewer than 10%. Staff responsible for records management in the university follow administrative and legal procedures such as the Act of HU Records and Archival Practice, Act of Republic of Turkey Records Elimination, and HU Filing Plan. The major problem of HU records systems is that it does not have retention schedules or a campus-wide records management program.

UBC is a state university, ranked among the world's top 40 universities. In the past ten years it has grown from 31,000 students to more than 45,000, mainly because of the expansion of UBC Vancouver's academic core, including new buildings dedicated to science and engineering, forestry, health sciences, and the library. In 2001, UBC strengthened its bonds with the Vancouver community by establishing a downtown campus. Additionally, 3,500 undergraduate and graduate students participate in degree programs at the rapidly growing UBC campus in Okanogan Valley.

UBC has policies on records management, records retention, and disposition. Since 1994, University Archives has had responsibility to coordinate development and implementation of records management systems.

Some university offices develop and apply their own records management systems. Others, however, may require varying degrees of assistance in dealing with their administrative and operational records.

UBC has a classification system and retention schedules for the institution, but some university offices are redesigning their filing systems and developing their own internal records management programs. To help support implementation of an effective records management program, the University Archives provides records management services to the university community. It provides UBC offices with up to two hours of free consultation and advice free of charge. Thereafter, a fee for service based on the scope of activities undertaken is charged (UBC Archives—Records Management 2008)

SFU, in less than 40 years, has gained an international reputation in the liberal arts and sciences and for its innovative interdisciplinary and professional programs. *Maclean's* magazine's has rated it Canada's best comprehensive university five times (1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2000) and has consistently placed it at or near the top in other years. The university has three campuses: the main Burnaby campus, the Harbour Centre campus in downtown Vancouver, and the Surrey campus in Surrey.

Through the records management program the SFU Archives and Records Management Department provides campus departments with advice and services relating to records and information management.

These services include records retention and disposal, semi-active records storage in the University Records Centre, records classification, and office record keeping systems. The department also plans to develop strategies for the management of electronic records, including information systems, databases, email, and multimedia documents. Planning will be done while working closely with other university departments directly involved in this area. The Directory of University Records is a compendium of information about SFU's records and record-keeping systems. It was created and is maintained by the university's Archives and Records Management Department. SFU has a comprehensive records management program that includes records retention schedules and disposal authorities, personal information directory, file classification management, model file classification plan and records management toolkit.

Through the records and information management efforts the department applies systematic standards to the recorded information that is required to administer and operate Simon Fraser University. Policies, procedures and standards cover the creation, receipt, distribution, use, retention, storage, retrieval, protection, preservation and final disposition of all types of recorded information throughout the University's faculties, departments, schools, centres and institutes.

Professional education

Table 2 summarizes responses to the survey question about training courses and education. There are great differences between Turkish and Canadian staff in their level of professional education. While workers in Turkey have learned mostly from experience, the Canadians generally have more formal education in the professional area.

Table 2: Professional education of staff responsible for records

	UBC/SFU (%)	Turkey (%)
Graduated from professional school	37.5	5.1
Taken some professional courses or other training	37.5	9.2
Learned only by doing	25.0	85.7

Types of records

Table 3 summarizes survey responses on the kinds of records at UBC/SFU and HU. Correspondence, directories, reports, and forms are types

of records common to the three records systems. Since the participants in HU generally selected more than one category and Canadians focused on only one (although more than one could be selected), in this section there appears to be more correspondence in Turkey than in Canada, but in general the ratios are similar. The main difference is that in Canada email and database systems are part of the records system, while in Turkey no electronic systems are included in the records management environment. This difference affects the overall ratios.

Table 3: Types of records in UBC/SFU and HU

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
Correspondence	25.0	46.6
Directories	8.2	12.4
Reports	27.1	20.7
Forms	12.5	20.3
Email	16.7	—
Other (retention schedules)	6.3	—
Database reports	4.2	—

Record formats

Table 4 summarizes responses to the survey question about the formats of records. Since electronic records are not part of the Turkish records management environment, information about records formats was obtained only from the Canadian universities, where electronic records are almost half of the total records. This demonstrates that a dramatic shift which has occurred from print to electronic format in the last 10 to 15 years. Audio-visual materials were considered in the fourth question as the open-ended component. However, none of the participants included anything in that part of the question.

Table 4: Records formats at UBC/SFU

	UBC/SFU (%)
Paper	39.3
Electronic	46.4
Cartographic	7.2
Microfilm	7.1

Although electronic records are acceptable in the Turkish juridical system, few examples can be found in Turkey. Indeed, even though the Turkish juridical system has accepted electronic records as evidence since the approval of the Electronic Signature Act of 2004, many institutions such as HU are hesitant to use electronic records in the administrative system.

Method of accessing records

Table 5 summarizes survey responses on methods of accessing institutional information or records created in the two countries' university systems. One of the most common methods used to access the records is the direct use of active files in all university systems. But UBC/SFU web pages were used more than the HU web page for accessing the recorded information. The ratios of the UBC/SFU and HU are quite similar for the other options, such as department archives and other archives. Because participants had a chance to select more than one option, the total of ratios is more than 100%.

Table 5: Receiving point of any institutional information

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
Active files	62.5	82.3
Unit archives	25.0	68.3
Other archives	12.0	43.5
Website	37.5	30.1

Use of finding aids to retrieve information

Table 6 summarizes responses to the survey question about tools developed to help retrieve the needed information or records. Such tools are called finding aids, which are largely used in archives. But it is also necessary to use some tools for accessing information in current records. In this section, a tool for accessing current records is called a finding aid. In Turkey, these include inventories, catalogues, and indexes. In Canada, however, knowledge of the files is heavily used for accessing records. On the other hand, the use of electronic tools is much more limited in Turkey than in Canada.

Table 6: Use of finding aids to retrieve information

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
Inventories, catalogues, or indexes	44.4	77.4
Active records files	12.6	67.7
Knowledge of the files	70.0	47.3
Electronic tools	60.2	19.9

Records retention periods for active files

Table 7 summarizes responses on retention periods of institutional records. According to the analysis, the most common retention period for records held as active files in Canada is seven years. Conversely, in Turkey, records are generally held permanently in departmental units, for lack of retention schedules. Because each records series has a different life cycle, it is not surprising to see varying periods. Retention periods for records in active files are tracked smoothly in Canada. In contrast, more than half of records in Turkey are retained permanently, for lack of retention schedules.

Table 7: Records retention periods for active files

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
1 year	0.0	0.7
2 years	6.3	1.4
5 years	25.0	24.7
7 years	37.5	0.0
10 years	6.1	13.7
20 years	0.0	2.3
Variety by records types	18.8	2.4
Permanently	6.3	54.8

Retention and disposition methods

Table 8 summarizes responses to the survey question on methods for retention and disposition of records. Analysis shows that in Turkey most dated records (54%) are transferred collectively to repositories without any assessment procedure. More than half of retention and disposition practices in Canada involve schedules. Although 36.8% of records

in Turkey are separated and classified according to priority, these records are not then scheduled for retention or disposal.

Table 8: Retention and disposition methods

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
Destroyed collectively without assessment	25.0	4.5
Separated and classified on the basis of priority	8.3	36.8
Sent to university archives	16.7	4.5
Scheduled at the series level	50.0	0
Dated records are sent collectively to repositories without assessment	0	54.2

Disposition of inactive records

Table 9 summarizes responses to the survey question about disposition practices for inactive records in archives of each country. In Turkey, great quantities of records are disposed of after five years or less in archives. This is quite different from Canada, where half of records are not destroyed at all after arrival in the archives. Because of the lack of records retention programs, Turkish university archives are burdened by the transfer of records from units for temporary retention only.

Table 9: Disposition of inactive records

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
After one year unnecessary records are destroyed	12.5	15.5
After 5 years unnecessary records are destroyed	0	70.1
After 10 years unnecessary records are destroyed	12.5	5.2
After 15 years unnecessary records are destroyed	12.5	6.7
After 20 years unnecessary records are destroyed	0	1.5
Records are destroyed according to retention schedule	12.5	0
Records are very seldom destroyed	50.0	0

Work time spent on records issues

Table 10 summarizes responses to the survey question about staff work time spent on records issues in the usual workday. There was little difference between the two countries.

Table 10: Work time spent on records issues in the usual workday

	UBC/SFU (%)	HU (%)
More than 4 hours	37.5	16.4
1 to 4 hours	12.5	37.2
31–60 minutes	25.0	26.1
30 minutes	25.0	20.3

Comparison of administrative conditions: Problems within the institutions

In addition to basic information about records management processes, this study aimed to elicit comments about current conditions and problems in institutional management and records programs. These responses are analyzed below, calculating mean values (X calculated by dividing a group's total responses as numeral data into the total number) and standard deviation of responses (s if greater than 1.00 means unacceptable or scattered responses). Table 11 summarizes the analysis of the responses.

Table 11: Comparison of administrative conditions

	Statements					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
UBC/SFU X	2.75	2.33	2.83	3.33	3.25	3.70
s	0.753	0.778	1.02	0.887	0.753	0.483
HU X	2.79	2.85	2.75	2.75	2.47	—
s	0.915	0.966	0.964	1.01	1.09	—

Statement A: The institution's administrative system is operating without problems. Responses indicate that the three universities' administrative systems have similar problems, as indicated by close ratios (UBC and SFU: 2.75; HU: 2.79, between 2 = disagree, and 3 = neutral).

Statement B: There are no communication and coordination problems between managers and their subordinate staff. Responses indicate that communication and coordination problems between managers and staff are slightly higher in Canada than in Turkey, though there is no significant difference between them.

Statement C: There are no communication and coordination problems among the staff. According to the responses, problems among same-level staff are very similar in the two countries, though there is a slightly negative ratio in each country (UBC and SFU: 2.83; HU: 2.76, between 2 = disagree and 3 = neutral).

Statement D: Administrative and legal regulations are inadequate to support the smooth running of the work processes within your working unit. Compared to their Canadian colleagues, participants working in records in Turkey considered administrative and legal regulations inadequate to support the smooth running of work processes (UBC and SFU: 2.75; HU: 3.33).

Statement E: The records management system is ineffective and inefficient for formal communication, legal requirements, and decision making in my university. Records management systems in Turkish universities have more problems and are more inefficient according to the responses of staff responsible from records issues at HU; the higher mean ratio indicates this condition clearly (HU: 3.25).

Statement F: Doing a comparative study between Turkish universities and your institution will help Turkish institutions improve their records management systems. The final question in this group was directed only to UBC and SFU staff. The result shows high positive response in support of this study with minimum standard deviation ratio (mean = 3.7000; standard deviation = 0.48305).

Causes of administrative and records problems

This study also aims to learn about the management system at the participating universities, as well as about records and records management problems—in particular problems with communication systems and formal communications tools as records. Because mean ratios do not have comparative value, percentage ratios were used to compare the two countries' systems.

Statement A: Managers sometimes do not pay enough attention to our work. Regarding managers' attention to records workers' issues, each countries' responses have similar mean degrees, though slightly negative.

Table 12: Causes of administrative and records problems

	Statements				
	A	B	C	D	E
UBC/SFU X	2.8	1.8	2.6	2.3	4.0
HU X	2.9	1.6	2.4	3.3	2.9

Statement B: Ineffective bureaucracy and slow communication channels. Ineffective bureaucracy and slow communication channels are seen as some of the most important problems in each country's university system. High mean ratios support this evaluation (UBC and SFU: 1.8: HU: 1.6).

Statement C: Inefficiency of the records management system used for formal communication. The inefficiency of records management within the formal communication system is considered a problem, but not strongly so in each country.

Statement D: Retrieval of required records can be problematic. Analysis strongly suggests that access to records is a greater problem in Turkey.

Statement E: Problematic behavior of other workers. Staff responsible for records processes in Canada suffer from other workers' problematic behaviours more than Turkey, with a very high mean degree ($X = 4.00$, agree).

Reasons for records retrieval problems

After surveying the problems of the administrative systems in the two countries, this study aimed to define the problems of the records systems, with the followings results.

Table 13: Reasons for records retrieval problems (%)

	Statements				
	A	B	C	D	E
UBC/SFU	62.5	18.8	22.3	37.5	6.3
HU	37.6	28.0	37.6	26.9	7.0

A = Old records are not destroyed at the correct time.
B = Records sought have been lost, destroyed, or misarranged.
C = Records retrieval tools such as inventories, indexes, and lists, are inefficient.
D = The filing system is not efficient.
E = There are some hindrances to attaining records.

In the Canadian systems, there were difficulties in classification and in the retrieval of institutional records; conversely, in the Turkish university, there were more problems in the record retrieval systems. In addition, in the Turkish system, disarrangement of records, destruction of records by mistake, and lost records were marked as fundamental problems.

Frequency of records retrieval problems

After defining the records retention problems, this study aimed to determine the frequency of these problems, with the following results.

Table 14: Frequency of records retrieval problems (%)

	UBC/SFU	HU
Almost every day—A few times a week	18.5	29.1
A few times a month	37.5	24.4
A few times a year	6.25	20.3
No problem	37.75	26.2

Frequency of records retrieval problems was similar between the two countries. While daily problems were slightly higher in Turkey (29.1%), monthly rates were greater in Canada (37.5%). Thus, it is possible to say that at least half the participants encountered records retrieval problems in a month at the three universities.

Conclusion and suggestions

The following general conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the data collected in the survey of HU and UBC/SFU.

At both Canadian universities, records management programs are used in the administrative system. Both possess central record and archive management units in which professionals work to coordinate and manage institutional records and archives. However, there is not a unit for running and coordinating record procedures in Hacettepe University. Moreover, HU does not possess any central university archive other than administrative departments and related units.

The analyses conducted on the examples in both university systems show that correspondence, forms, directives, and reports constitute the major-

ity of the record types. However, it is remarkable that record generation and use in the electronic environment have reached almost the same level as the printed documents in the Canadian examples. While the rate of using the electronic environment for record access is above 60% in UBC/SFU, this rate is 19.9% at HU.

Participants in both countries reported that they spend approximately three hours in a working day on records procedures. The rate of the problems related to record access is emerging at least twice a month. The reason for this problem in Canada could originate in the ineffectiveness of the classification systems and filing applications. (Participants in Canada reported that they encounter problems more frequently than their Turkish counterparts related to classification and filing.)

As it was explained in the study, the main source of problems related to record access in the Turkish example is that records could not be sorted in due time, making it difficult to find the necessary document. Also, the record access tools, including electronic access facilities, are ineffective.

Other reasons for inaccessibility of records are loss, removal, and misplacement (28%), and ineffective filing system (26% in the Turkish example, 36.5% in the Canadian examples) were ticked by the subjects at a rate that cannot be discounted.

In Canada, 82% of participants said that record procedures could be developed, 50% that unnecessary storage may be prevented, and 37.5% that contribution to standardization may be achieved through application of records management programs and development of record retention charts. Of the participants in Turkey, 62.4% expected that standardization may be achieved, 59.1% that record procedures could be developed, and 59.1% that the storage of unnecessary records could be prevented through the adoption of records management programs in their institution. While the Canadian subjects did choose the option "It will not make any difference," the rate of the Turkish subjects choosing this alternative was 11.3%.

Personnel carrying out records procedures in all universities were of the opinion that record management programs are an important tool for achieving efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative systems and the related record procedures of universities. This view is demonstrated by the fact that there were fewer problems related to the usage of records

management problems in the Canadian examples compared to the Turkish example.

The following general suggestions can be drawn from the results of the study:

- Records management programs that are comprehensively designed using life cycle or records continuum models reduce record problems and increase efficiency, as in the Canadian example.

- The educational level of staff, especially in the information profession, was one of the most pressing problems for the records systems in Turkey.

- Channels of communication and institutional bureaucracies in each country showed similar problems. Turkish participants, however, experienced more problems, especially in records management, and showed a definite need for records management programs.

- The electronic databases that are very common in Canada may alleviate many of the accession problems of Turkish university environments.

- Records retention procedures in Turkey are not as systematic as those in Canada, and their absence can lead to serious problems such as lost, destroyed, or misarranged records, and to administrative and legal problems that follow such problems. The Turkish university environment shows a vital need for such schedules.

- Record keeping processes and practices are not very different in the two countries' universities. Nevertheless, the Turkish system lacks schedules of working procedures and technology in working areas, which could solve many problems.

- Canadian records workers were obstructed by fellow workers' problematic behaviours, compared to their Turkish counterparts. Communication and coordination problems between managers and subordinate staff were sometimes problematic because of the bureaucracy and slow speed of communication channels, and by the inadequate filing systems and the slowness of records retrieval.

The most important problems derived from the Canadian samples are filing and classification. The reason that the Turkish system experiences fewer problems with filing and classification is because standard filing

models are used nationwide and are governed by a central agency and the National Archive of Turkey. These filing and classification systems were developed under the guidelines of international standards such as EAD, ISAAR (CPF), ISAD(G), and ISO 15489 (UNESCO 2003; International Council on Archives 1996, 2000; International Standards Organization 2001), and local administrative and legal requirements of Turkish institutions. In the filing system, key units and codes were described by the schedule, which allows institutions to adopt their localized versions. This implementation could be useful for Canada context in developing a filing system and classification. Otherwise different codes and subject titles used by different institutions and divisions for the same concept could be problematic for any standardization efforts and for creating a national centralized archive.

Note

1. Institutions are ranked according to their academic or research performance. Ranking indicators include alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, Highly Cited Researchers in twenty-one broad subject categories, articles published in *Nature and Science*, articles indexed in *Science Citation Index-Expanded* and *Social Science Citation Index*, and academic performance with respect to the size of an institution (Liu and Cheng 2005).

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