

Digitalization of Students' Registration and Records Management in the University of Bamenda: An Analysis of Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

This paper examines how the advent of digitalization affects students' registration and records management in The University of Bamenda, emphasizing on students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the LMS platform. The study adopted the quantitative research approach, with a sample size of 377 respondents. The respondents were selected among final year undergraduate students across various faculties and schools of the University, using the simple random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using closed-ended questionnaire guide. Data was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and regression analysis was employed to test and verify the hypothesis. Findings depicted that digitalization has not significantly influenced students' registration and records management in The University of Bamenda, statistically proven at $r = -0.0446$, $PV = < 0.05\%$ level of significance). The study further revealed low internet connectivity, poor system maintenance, and frequent electricity power failure as some of the key factors impeding the effectiveness of online system with regards to students' registration and records management in the institution.

Keywords: Digitalization, Students' Registration, Records Management, The University of Bamenda.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, digitalization has been welcomed for its enormous effects and contribution to numerous fields and sectors of the economy (Amutha, 2020; Babu & MA, 2018; Das, 2019). The core functions of a university are learning, teaching, research and community engagement, and in order to carry out these functions records are created and received. Records therefore, constitute an essential instrument of administration of any institution without which operational processes and functions cannot be executed effectively (Ademola et al., 2012; Kendall and Mizra, 2006, Yunus et al., 2016). Thus, a proper and efficient management of records is critical to the functioning and administration of institutions

According to Toyo (2017), digitalizing students' records makes report generation easier, faster, and more organized. These are not the only advantages of digitalization, the use of ICT has benefited almost every aspect of human life (Rusmansyah et al., 2018;

Vestergaard, 2021) which made working much more enjoyable (Adisa et al., 2017; Satpathy et al., 2021). As the use of computers and other information and communication technology infrastructure grows, so does the need for electronic records to improve productivity (Eze-Asogwa, 2013). Organizations are now in a paperless era where all papers will fade (Gupta, 2015; Pfister & Schwabe, 2016). Converting existing or new paper records to electronic format is becoming an increasingly important issue for records management professionals (Leonard, 2011; Magsamen-Conrad & Checton, 2014).

Records management plays a leading role in the smooth functioning of higher institutions of learning such as a university; given that the activities of a university are documented in the records generated from the different components of the institution. These records are a vital in ensuring the institution is governed effectively and efficiently, and is accountable to its staff, students and community. Records support decision-making, document

general operational activities, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation. Thus, it is imperative for the University of Bamenda to be responsible in ensuring proper and reliable management of its records. Particularly, students' academic records include: Admission/enrollment details, Form B/list of courses registered, class attendance and participation in academic activities, assessment and examination results per semester, progress reports, transcript; containing summaries of all courses attempted, grades, and credits over a specific duration, and certificates of completion or merit awards. These records serve as official evidence of students' educational progress.

The University of Bamenda (UBa) is one of eleven State run Universities in Cameroon, located in the country's Northwest region. The institution was created following promulgation of Decree n°. 2010/371 of 14 December 2010. Being one of the implementing Universities of the national plan for the digitalization of State Universities in Cameroon within the framework of the E-National Higher Education Network Project (ENHEN), the digitalization wave was effectively embraced in the University of Bamenda especially; the learning management system and the student management platforms during the 2018-2019 academic year, although as a consequence of the Anglophone conflict, and the restrictive measures of Covid-19 Pandemic which hinder face-to-face classroom teaching in higher learning institutions and the University in particular. The university's online platform is built on the Moodle system which consists of: The UBa Online student management portal and an E-learning management portal. The UBa student portal (ubastudentonline) facilitates the registration of applicants for various programs in the institution, enabling students to manage fee payments, register for courses (form B), and allowing students to access their academic results. These significant strides have greatly distinguished The University of Bamenda from other higher education institutions in Cameroon. Arguably, The University of Bamenda has depicted itself as a giant in the implementation of government policy geared towards the digital transformation of higher education in Cameroon.

The student population of the University of Bamenda following the previous years as a consequence of the prevalence of the Anglophone conflict in the region (which began since the 2016-2017 academic year till present) and the subsequent outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, during the 2018/2019 academic year witnessed a significant decline. According to the Admission and Records Division of the institution (ARD/UBa, 2023), student enrolment rate significantly decreased by 3.54% from 2017/2018 to 2018/2019 academic years, but witnessed a slight increase of 1.22% during the 2018/2019-2020 academic years and a further increase of 0.889% during the 2021/2022 school year. However, the enrolment rate of students in the institution has proportionally been increasing since the 2022/2023 academic year till present.

The effectiveness of students' records management largely depends on the development of capacity to manage records and information, considering the fact that the challenges of; conceiving, initiating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities continually require reliable, pertinent and timely records as well as information (Kalusopa, 2011). To this effect, scholars like Chigariro, 2017; Coetzer, 2012; Graham, 2005; Thurston, 1991 argue that the danger of not having a records and archives program in a university setup may lead to inability to carry out functions, failure in accountability and delays or an inability to respond quickly and accurately to a freedom of information request, pose threat to the reputation of the university. This study therefore seeks to examine how digitalization affects students' registration and their records management, and also to identify the challenges facing the effective digitalization of these services in The University of Bamenda.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

➤ Study Area:

This study was carried out in The University of Bamenda. The University of Bamenda is a distinctive Anglo-Saxon university located in Bambili, in the Tubah Subdivision of the Northwest region of Cameroon. It possesses high standards of achievements and innovations in all areas of professionalism, arts, sciences and technology. The goals of the University of Bamenda are not different from those of the other ten State Universities in Cameroon. The University of Bamenda comprise of six classical faculties and six professional schools, respectively. Enrolment into a faculty is through the examination of files, while entrance into the professional schools is to a larger extent subjected to a pass in a competitive entrance examination, as programed according to the calendar of activities prescribed by Ministry of Higher Education.

➤ Research Design:

This study adopted the quantitative research approach and the descriptive survey design. This descriptive survey research design allows the researchers to comprehensively collect data from the students in all faculties and schools that make up The University of Bamenda. Students constitute a greater proportion of the University's community. Thus, the choice of the descriptive survey facilitated the ability to understand the trend of adherence and behavior of the respondents on the effectiveness of the online system with regards to registration and records management in the institution.

➤ Sample Size and Sampling Technique:

The student enrolment in the University of Bamenda during the 2023/2024 academic year stood at 20654 students. The study considered a sample size of 377 respondents (students), selected using the Krecie and Morgan table for sample size determination. However, it is worth pointing out that only 330 respondents actively participated during the data collection phase of this study. Samples were obtained using the simple random sampling technique.

➤ *Instrumentation:*

A self-administered questionnaire was used in collecting data for this study. This instrument was adopted on the basis that it enabled the collection of comprehensive data from a large sample.

Table 1 Response Rate of Questionnaire

Total Number Of Questionnaire Administered	377
Number Of Questionnaire Filled/Returned	330
Number Of Questionnaire Not Returned	47

Source: Designed by Authors (2025)

Statistically,

$R = \frac{\text{Total number of questionnaire administered}}{\text{Number of questionnaire filled/returned}}$

That is; $(330/377 \times 100)$ the response rate =87.5%

Data obtained from the field survey was analyzed quantitatively with the aid of descriptive statistics and regression analysis to determine the test of association between the variables. This analysis was presented with the aid of statistical tools such as frequency distribution tables, graphs and charts.

➤ *Sources of Data and Methods of Analysis:*

This study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source of data was employed by means of administering questionnaire during field survey in order to capture first-hand information on the effectiveness of digitalization in the management of students' records in the institution. Secondary sources on the other hand comprised of books, published materials, online publications; e-journals, e-theses, e-databases.

➤ *Ethical Considerations:*

All the respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and given the option to decline participation if they didn't deem necessary to. Respondents were equally assured that their responses will be kept confidential and that they can withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before administering the questionnaire for them to complete. To ensure anonymity of responses, the questionnaire will not require any personal information from the respondents.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ *Demographic Presentation of Respondents*

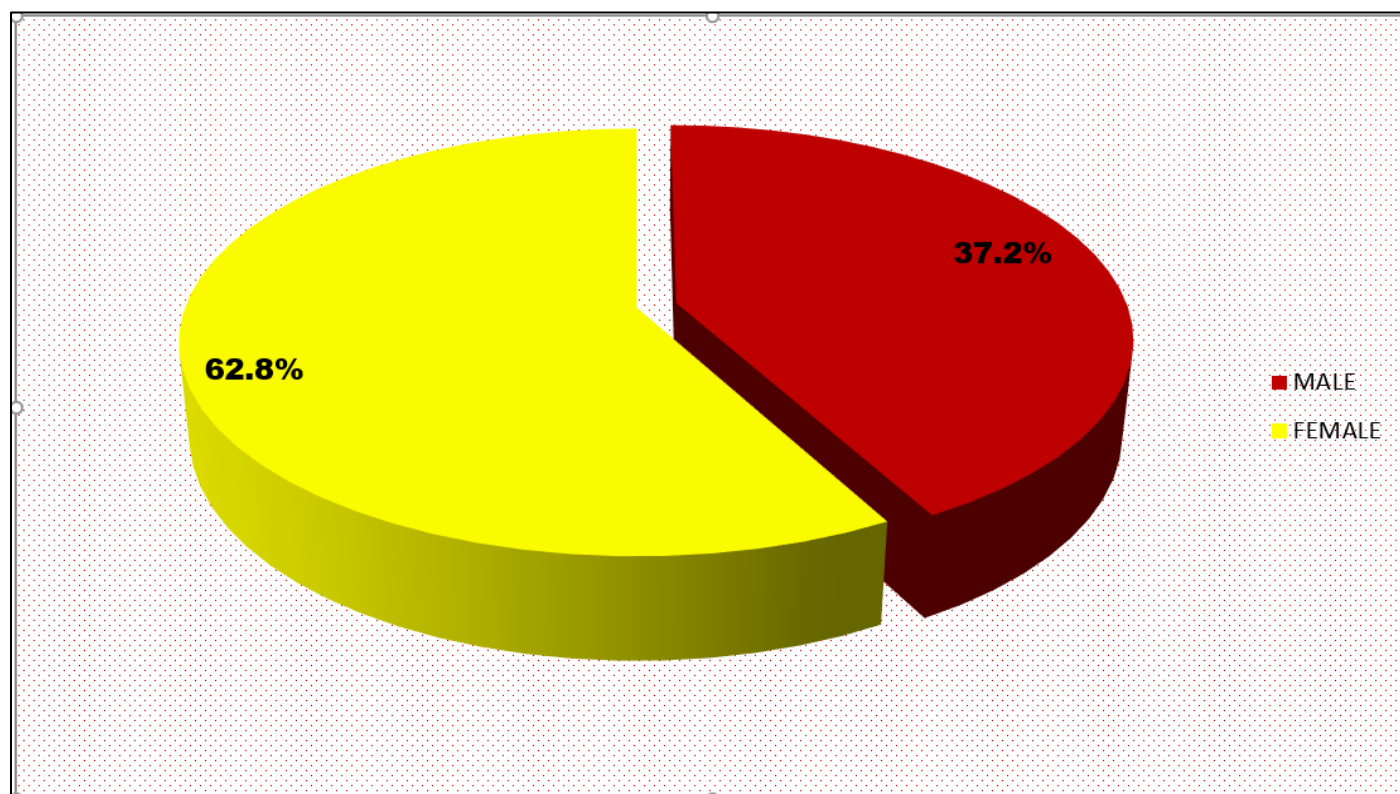


Fig 1 Respondents' gender
Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Fig 1 above presents the respondents on basis of their gender. According to the analysis, it was observed that 62.8% proportion of the sample was made up of females and 37.2% was constituted by males.

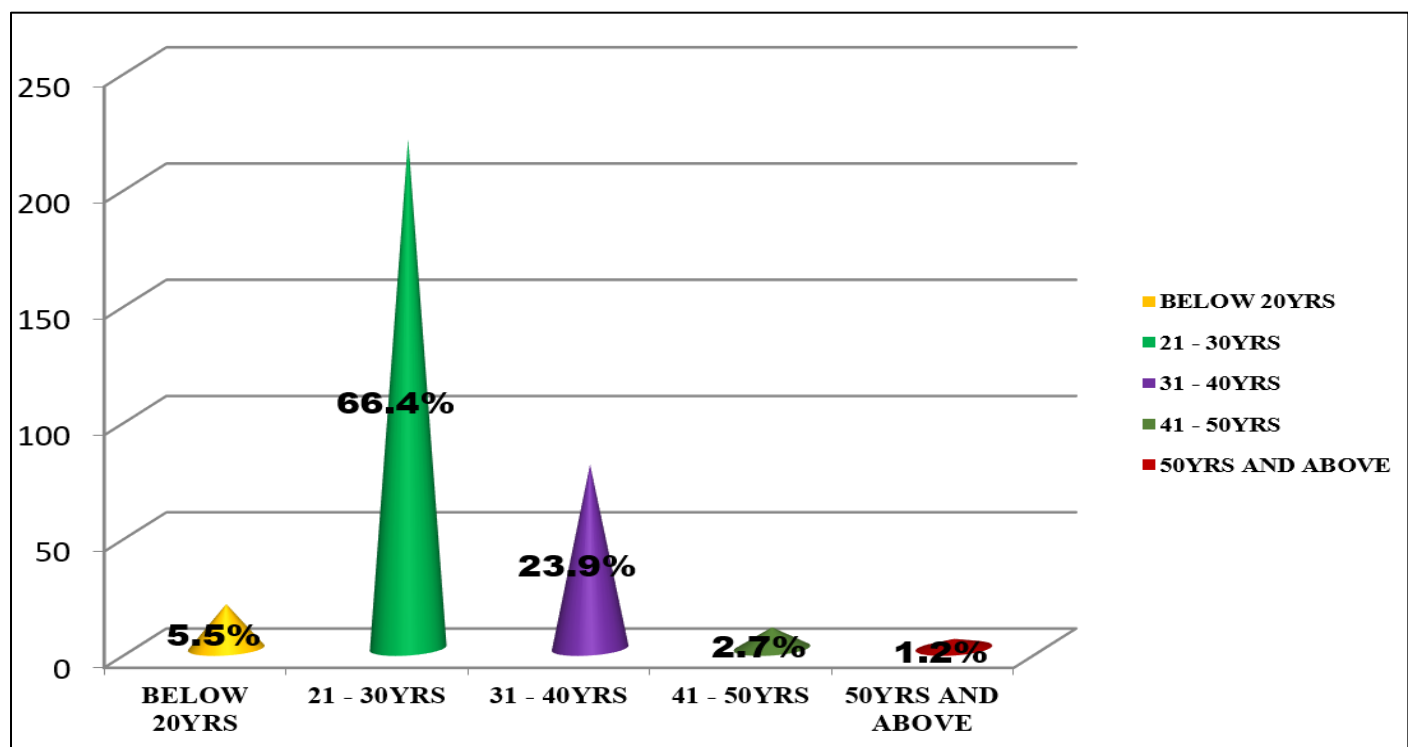


Fig 2 Presentation of Respondents' Age Group
Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Fig 2 depicts that majority of the respondents were between the age bracket of twenty-one and thirty years (66.4%), those ranging between the ages thirty-one and forty years 23.9%, 5.8% of the sample was represented by respondents aged 20years or below, those between forty-

one to fifty years represented 2.7% meanwhile the least proportion of the sample were 50 years and/or above (1.2%). This further reveals that more young people participated in the study then the elderly ones or minors.

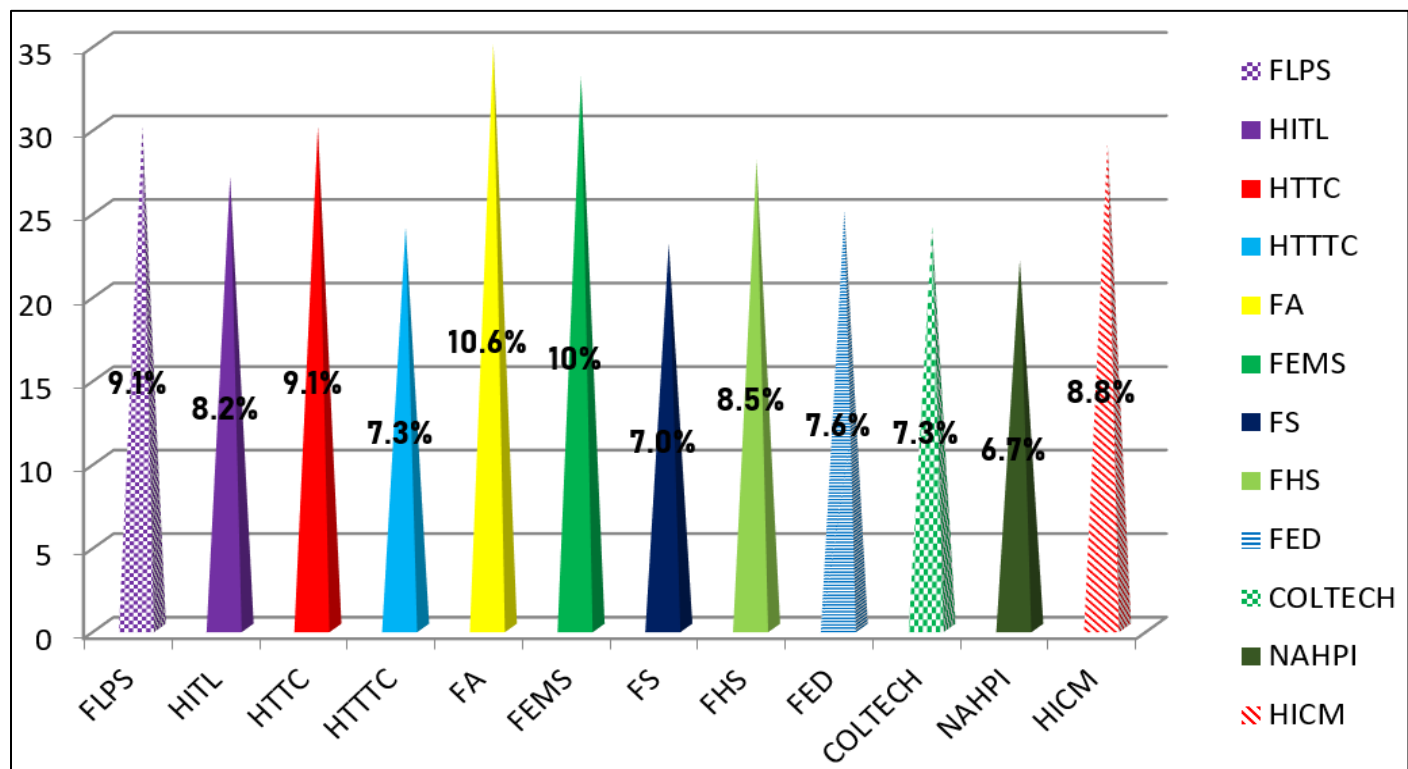


Fig 3 Presentation of Respondents per Faculty/School
Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

The results display on figure 3 shows the proportion of respondents from the various faculties and schools in The University of Bamenda, represented as follows : Faculty of Arts (FA),10.6%; Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences (FEMS), 10.0%; Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) and Higher Teachers Training College (HTTC),respectively, 9.1%; Higher Institute of Commerce and Management (HICM), 8.8%; Faculty of Health Science (FHS), 8.5%; Higher Institute of Transport and Logistics (HITL), 8.2%; Faculty of

Education (FED), 7.6%; Higher Technical Teachers Training College (HTTTC) and College of Technology (COLTECH), respectively, 7.3%; Faculty of Science (FS), 7.0%; and least represented by those from the National Polytechnic Higher Institute (NAPHI), 6.7%). Worthnoting is the fact that students (respondents) in the various institutions had equal probability to participate in the study, hence, variations in the population reached during data collection phaseis statistically insignificant.

Table 2 Presentation of Respondents by Ownership of Digital Tools

Do you own a personal Computer/Laptop/Android Phone?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	306	92.7
No	24	7.3
Total	330	100.0

Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Table 2 depicts that a greater proportion of the respondents had at least a digital gadget, such technological tools included; computers, laptop or android phone, however, 24 of the 377 respondents representing 7.3% indicated that they have neither of the gadgets.

Table 3 Presentation of Respondents by Ownership of LMS Account

Do you have an online student account?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	321	97.2%
No	0	0.0
Don't know	09	2.8
Total	330	100.0

Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Table 3 above shows that a vast majority of the respondents affirmed that they have a student account on the LMS platform, however, a least proportion of the respondents indicated their unawareness on whether or not they have such institutional accounts.

Table 4 Respondents' Opinion on Frequency of Access and Usage of the Online Platform

How often to you access your UBa student online account?		
	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	31	9.4
Very often	208	63.0
Sometimes	71	21.5
Not at all	20	6.1
Total	330	100.0

Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Table 4 depicts that a greater proportion of the respondents access their UBa student online platform or website at regular intervals, though 31 out of the 330 respondents pointed out that they rarely access the online platform. However, 20 respondents representing the least proportion of the sample indicate that they have never have or accessed the LMS platform. This is quite controversial given that all the students in the institution are expected perform most of their academic transactions online. Such processes include admission procedure, fee payment, course registration, access to semester results among others.

Table 5 Respondents' Opinion on how the Online System Affects Students' Registration and Records Management in The University of Bamenda

Opinion Statement	Strongly Agree/ Agree (Collapsed)	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (Collapsed)	Neutral
It permits a wider dissemination of information on admissions procedures and deadlines.	300 (90.1%)	17 (5.1%)	13 (3.9%)
Students no longer stand on long queues at banks, for payments of registration and admission fees.	266 (80.6%)	25 (7.6%)	39 (11.8%)

Saves time and energy in processing admissions ‘formalities.	225 (68.2%)	90 (27.3%)	15 (4.5%)
Access to acquire official school documents is more feasible and flexible.	159 (48.2%)	157 (47.6%)	14 (4.2%)
Accessing students personal record is made faster and at cheaper rate	243 (73.7%)	41 (12.4%)	46 (13.9%)
Facilitates the process of course registration and submission of Form B	225 (68.1%)	84 (25.5%)	21 (6.4%)
It enables students to obtain their personal results at their convenience, without roaming office corridors.	140 (42.4%)	170 (51.5%)	20 (6.1%)
It is cost effect, given that it permits students to retrieve their missing payment receipts and other valuable academic documents.	205 (62.1%)	99 (30.%)	26 (7.9%)
With the online system, students are able to receive notifications/electronic mailson the stake of their individual school records.	32 (9.6%)	155 (77.4%)	43 (13.0%)
The online system enablesstudents to gain access to, and download theirtranscripts via the LMS platform after paying relevant charges without having to be physically present on campus.	116 (35.2%)	173 (52.4%)	41 (12.4%)
The digitalized system permits students to authenticate and deposit their graduation files off campus, using the LMS platform.	26 (7.8%)	260 (78.8%)	44 (13.4%)

Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

Overall, finding shows that 90.1% as opposed to 5.1% of the respondents agreed that the online system permits a wider dissemination of information on admissions procedures and deadlines but a small proportion constituting 3.9% were neutral. A significant proportion 266 (80.6%) agreed that the online systemstudents no longer stand on long queues at banks, for payments of registration and admission fees, 25 (7.6%) disagreed and 39 (11.8%) were neutral. 225 (68.2%) as compared to 90 (27.3%) were of the opinion that it saves time and energy in process of filling admissions procedures. The findings also show that while 159 (48.2%) of students agreed that with the digital system access to acquiring official school documents is more feasible and flexible, 157 students out of the total sample constituting 47.6% expressed contrary views, and 14 of them representing 4.2% neither agree nor disagree. Also a significant proportion of the sample representing 73.7% compare to the views expressed by 12.4% of the respondents, confirmed that the LMS platform enables students tohave access to their personal school recordsat a faster and at cheaper rate although (13.9%) were neutral.

Also, 68.1% as opposed to 25.5% of the respondents agreed that digitalization facilitates the process of course registration and submission of Form B. Moreover, a proportion constituted by 62.1% opposed to 30.0% were of the opinion that theLMS platform is cost effect, given that it permits students to retrieve their missing payment receipts and other valuable academic documents such as admission letters, transcripts among others. The result equally depicted that 77.4% compared to 9.6%of the total sample were of the opinion that even with the online system, students have not been receiving notifications/electronic mailson the stake of their individual school records.

On the other hand, 52.4% of the respondents were not in conformity with the assertion that the online system enables students to gain access to, and download theirtranscripts after paying relevant charges without having to be physically present on campus. Lastly, majority of the respondents representing 78.8% totally opposed the assertion that the digitalized system permits students to authenticate and deposit their graduation files off campus, using the LMS platform.

Table 6 Respondents’ Opinions on Challenges Facing the Digitalization of Students’ Registration and Records in the University.

Opinion Statements	Yes	No	Don’t know
Frequent updates leading to loss of valuable documents in the system	260 (78.8%)	42 (11.7%)	28 (8.5%)
Inadequate users’ skills and training	259 (78.5%)	54(16.4%)	17(5.1%)
Frequent electricity power failure.	283(86%)	37(11.2%)	10(3.0%)
Low internet connectivity/ Obstruction in technology.	294 (89.1%)	26(7.9%)	10(3.0%)
High cost of internet facilities.	217(65.8%)	106(32.1%)	7(2.1%)
System malfunctioning	307 (93.0%)	23 (7.0%)	0(0.0%)
Multiple Response Set (MRS)	1620	288	72

Source: Computed by Authors (2025)

In aggregate, the analysis above shows that 260 (78.8%) of the respondents were of the opinion that

updating the LMS system often lead to lo ss of valuable documents/ information stored in the system, 259 (78.5%)

indicated inadequate user's skills and training, 283(86%) of the sampled population pointed frequent electricity power failure, 294 (89.1%) pointed low internet connectivity and high cost of internet facilities as constraints facing the effective digitalization of student records management in the institution. Meanwhile, 307

respondents representing 93.0% affirmed that system malfunctioning, which is often visible during periods pertaining to the release of semester exam results was perceived as one key challenges facing the digitalization of registration/admission and students records management in The University of Bamenda.

Table 7 Test of Significance between Variables

	(1)	(2)
VARIABLES	admin_record	admin_record
Dig_governance_score	-0.0447***	-0.0473***
	(0.0128)	(0.0130)
Male		-0.00138
		(0.0437)
		(0.0941)
Own_computer		0.142*
		(0.0841)
Daily		0.0486
		(0.0780)
Twice_week		0.0319
		(0.0557)
Sometimes		-0.00586
		(0.0562)
Constant	2.848***	2.734***
	(0.0904)	(0.121)
Observations	330	330
R-squared	0.036	0.053

Standard errors in parentheses

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10

Statistically, the hypothesis test presented above depicts a negative and significant (at -0.0447 level of significance, P-Value of 0.000 <0.05%) relationship between digitalization and students' records management in The University of Bamenda. Thus, rejecting the alternative hypothesis, which postulated that digitalization, has significantly influenced registration and students' records management in the University of Bamenda. This test of association is quite controversial considering that since the introduction of the online system significant improvements have been witnessed in admission/registration procedures as well as the management of student records.

IV. DISCUSSION

Momoti (2017); Osakede et al., (2017); Qureshe&Abro (2016); Abdurahim (2016) in their studies pointed to the ineffectiveness of records management in higher education institutions using the digitalized system. The findings of the study conducted by Metto et al., (2022) argue that there is no defined archival system for students' records management in Kenyan universities. Although an overall observation of the findings of this study aligned with the work of Ochwo, Atibuni&Sekiwu (2018); Kehinde et al., (2017), who argue that digitalized students' records in most universities was generally moderate, improved not only effectiveness, efficiency and accuracy in service delivery, but saves time and cost despite challenges such as inadequate funds, epileptic power supply and low internet connectivity.

However, scholars like Abduullahi (2021) argue that poor maintenance culture and lack of disaster management plan were some of the challenges affecting the effective management of students records in Hassan UsmanKatsina Polytechnic. In a study conducted by Ameyaw&Kore (2020), lack of periodic training, inability of students to furnish the admission office with needed information were identified as some of the challenges impeding digital records management. However, the study of Kavuta & Nyamanga (2018) argues that the manipulation of students' records especially in the digital era is inevitable in higher education institutions. This is true of some of the occurrences witnessed by most students in The University of Bamenda especially during circumstances whereby the LMS is being updated; with some vital students information lost or modified.

V. CONCLUSION

After several years of existence and application, the student online management system has been pivotal in facilitating the process of students' registration and records management in The University of Bamenda. Analysis of the study shows that the University has adequately embraced the electronic system of that facilitates the registration processes of applicants, and the handling of records in the institution. However, this move have been faced with challenges, particularly poor/low internet connectivity and frequent electricity cuts which sometimes questions the effectiveness of the online platform in the institution. Notwithstanding, if adequate

measures are implemented by the hierarchy of the institution, the student online management portal will be more effective and the University of Bamenda will further maintain its position as a giant in the implementation of the Cameroon government policy on the digital transformation of Universities across the country. Overall, the digitalized system is a catalyst in improving admission/registration procedures and records management in The University of Bamenda.

On basis of findings, this study proposes that; orientation sessions on how to use the online platform should be organized especially for freshmen during the beginning of each academic year, wifi networks should be made available and accessible to all students on campus.

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APPENDIX

➤ Questionnaire

- Gender: a. Male ☐ b. Female ☐
- Respondent's age: a. 20years or below ☐ b. 21-30 ☐ c.31-40 ☐ d. 41-50 ☐ e.51 and Above ☐
- Please specify your faculty/school.....
- Do you own a personal Computer/Laptop/Android Phone? A. Yes ☐ B. No.
- Do you have an online student account? a. Yes ☐ b. No ☐ c. Don't know ☐
- How often do you access the internet for academic purposes? a. Rarely ☐ b. Sometimes ☐ c. Very often ☐ d. Never ☐
- Below are some of the ways digitalization have affected students' registration and records management in The University of Bamenda. In your opinion are true are the statements below? Place a tick where appropriate.

Opinion Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral
It permits a wider dissemination of information on admissions procedures and deadlines.					
Students no longer stand on long queues at banks, for payments of registration and admission fees.					
Saves time and energy in processing admissions' formalities.					
Access to acquire official school documents is more feasible and flexible.					
Accessing students personal record is made faster and at cheaper rate					
Facilitates the process of course registration and submission of Form B					
It enables students to obtain their personal results at their convenience, without roaming office corridors.					
It is cost effect, given that it permits students to retrieve their missing payment receipts and other valuable academic documents.					
With the online system, students are able to receive notifications/electronic mails on the stake of their individual school records.					
The online system enables students to gain access to, and download their transcripts via the LMS platform after paying relevant charges without having to be physically present on campus.					
The digitalized system permits students to authenticate and deposit their graduation files off campus, using the LMS platform.					

- Below are some of the challenges facing the effective digitalization of students' registration and records management in The University Bamenda. Please kindly place a tick where applicable.

Opinion Statements	Yes	No	Don't know
Frequent updates leading to loss of valuable documents in the system			
Inadequate users' skills and training			
Frequent electricity power failure.			
Low internet connectivity/ Obstruction in technology.			
High cost of internet facilities.			
System malfunctioning			