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(SLADS)

RESEARCH REPORT ON

AN INVESTIGATION ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF BAGAMOYO DISTRICT COURT

BY

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A Research Report Submitted at the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies as Partial Fulfilment for the Award of Ordinary Diploma Records and Archives Management

2026

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that the supervisor has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies the research report entitled "An Investigation on Records Management in Evidence Based Decision Making in Public Institutions: A Case Study of Bagamoyo District Court" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Ordinary Diploma in Records and Archives Managements

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report work to my parents and relatives who gave me financial and psychological support throughout my studies

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research report would not have been possible without the cooperation and help of many people. Firstly, I would like to thank Almighty GOD for His creation and sustaining me in this world, and for giving me this opportunity to get education in this college.

Also, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS) Administration and other stakeholders for making sure that I conducted this study well.

Special thanks and honour go to my research report supervisor for using time to lead, guide, supervise and orient me in the report writing. Also, thanks to the tutors who played a role in providing the instructions in the class on how to write the research report.

May the Almighty GOD bless them all.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CMS: Case Management System

ERMS: Electronic Records Management System

ICT: Information Communication Technologies

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

PAIA: Promotion of Access to Information Act

SLADS: School of Library, Archive and Documentation Studies

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

URT: United Republic of Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on investigating records management in evidence-based decision making in public institutions, whereby the study was conducted at Bagamoyo District Court. The study involved a sample size of 30 respondents who were selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents indicated that records management was considered as a fundamental part of the judicial decision-making process. The findings of the study implied that records management contributed significantly to the development of court operations as it supported timely and fair decisions through proper record-keeping practices.

The findings revealed that the number of case files retrieved, completeness of case records, accessibility of evidence, and timely availability of court documents were the types of records management evidence collected and used in the court. The findings revealed that lack of staff skills, as many court staff lacked adequate training on using information technology in managing court records, presented a wide variety of technological challenges to making these records useful in supporting judicial decision-making. Also, lack of supportive policies was identified, as most of the court records management practices operated without clearly implemented policies that act as blueprint statements. The findings also showed lack of budget and lack of infrastructures, as the court had suffered severe budget cuts from the government in recent years, forcing it to cut down on qualified personnel, infrastructures and motivations that were supportive in managing court records information.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study on the investigation of records management in evidence-based decision making in public institutions, with a specific focus on Bagamoyo District Court. It covers the introduction and background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms as well as the limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Records were considered a strategic asset and a vital resource in any organization across the globe. In public institutions, records served as the backbone of administrative operations, legal accountability, and institutional memory. Effective records management ensured that information was created, maintained, accessed, and disposed of in a way that supported the business functions of the organization (Ngoepe, 2022). For instance, in the United Kingdom, the National Archives acted as the government's expert archive, setting standards that ensured information was managed effectively to support transparency and democracy. Similarly, in the United States, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) mandated strict records schedules to ensure the federal government operated with accountability. The judiciary, being a key public institution, relied heavily on these records to adjudicate cases and ensure justice. Court records contained the vital evidence required for fair hearings and the rendering of judgments, a principle seen in the rigorous document handling protocols of the International Court of Justice. Consequently, the ability of court officials to manage these records directly influenced the quality of justice delivery worldwide.

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In Africa, records management was not merely an administrative task but a critical component of organizational governance. The integrity of decisions made by magistrates and judges depended on the integrity of the records presented before them. If records were misplaced, incomplete, or inaccessible, the principle of natural justice was compromised (Katuu, 2022). For instance, in South Africa, the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) relied heavily on the proper maintenance of records to ensure citizens could hold the government accountable. Similarly, in Kenya, the judiciary implemented the e-Justice system to improve record-keeping, though it faced hurdles in uniform implementation across rural and urban areas. Therefore, investigating the state of records management provided a lens through which the broader relationship between records keeping and decision making in public institutions could be understood across the continent. The struggle to maintain these standards was evident in nations like Nigeria, where the transition from colonial-era paper systems to digital platforms remained a significant governance challenge.

In Tanzania, the government had been implementing various reforms to improve public service delivery, including the justice sector. The adoption of electronic records management systems and the enforcement of legal frameworks such as the National Archives Act were steps towards improving records keeping (URT, 2023). For example, the High Court of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam had been a pilot site for digital case management systems, aiming to reduce the physical clutter of files. Despite these efforts, public institutions, including the judiciary, continued to face challenges in managing the sheer volume of records generated daily. The transition from paper-based to hybrid systems presented its own set of challenges regarding human capacity, infrastructure, and policy implementation, a struggle also visible in regional offices like Mwanza and Arusha. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the nexus between records management and evidence-based decision making at Bagamoyo District Court. It aimed to establish how current records management practices influenced the quality, speed, and fairness of decisions made within the institution.

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1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public institutions were mandated to make decisions that affected the lives of citizens and the general governance of the country. These decisions needed to be based on accurate, reliable, and accessible evidence, which was derived from well-managed records. However, despite the existence of records management policies and the recognized importance of information, many public institutions in Tanzania still struggled with poor records management practices (Lujala, 2023).

At Bagamoyo District Court, there had been reports and observations of delays in case hearings, missing case files, and difficulties in retrieving historical legal documents. These issues suggested a disconnect between records management processes and the decision-making needs of the court. The problem was that while it was widely acknowledged that records supported decision making, there was limited empirical evidence specifically examining how the effectiveness of records management directly impacted the quality of decisions in the judicial context. It remained unclear whether the current records management systems at Bagamoyo District Court provided the necessary evidence to support efficient and fair decision making. This study intended to investigate this relationship to identify gaps and propose solutions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate records management in evidence-based decision making in public institutions, specifically focusing on Bagamoyo District Court.

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1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To examine the influence of records management on decision making in public institutions.
ii. To determine the impacts of records management evidence on decision making in public institutions.
iii. To assess the challenges hindering records management and their impact on decision making in public institutions.
iv. To explore strategies for effective records management towards the improvement
v. of decision making in public institutions.

1.4 Research Question

The study was guided by the following questions;

i. How does records management influence decision make in public institutions?
ii. What are the impacts of records management evidence on decision making in public institutions?
iii. What are the challenges hindering records management and how do they impact decision making in public institutions?
iv. What are the strategies for effective records management towards the improvement of decision making in public institutions?

1.5 Significance of the Study.

The significance of this study spans across judicial, professional, and academic sectors, offering critical insights to enhance institutional efficiency and governance. Crucially, the findings provide the Bagamoyo District Court Management with a comprehensive assessment of how daily records management practices directly influence judicial outcomes and administrative decisions. This empirical evidence serves as a practical guide for targeted interventions, including the modernization of filing systems,

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structured staff training, and strategic technology adoption aimed at eliminating administrative bottlenecks and expediting justice delivery. At a macro level, the study contributes valuable operational data to the Judiciary of Tanzania, thereby informing national policy reviews and guiding the strategic scaling of digital platforms, such as the Electronic Case Management System (e-CMS), to systematically reduce case backlogs in other courts nationwide.

The study was being for records and information management professionals, this investigation underscores the symbiotic relationship between rigorous records custody and the integrity of the administration of justice, effectively elevating the value of the profession while isolating specific competency gaps unique to legal environments. Ultimately, this research enriches the global academic community by expanding the existing body of literature on evidence-based decision making and public sector records governance. By focusing on the often-understudied judicial landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa, it establishes a foundational reference for students and scholars pursuing advanced research in law, records management, public administration, and judicial governance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focused on investigating the relationship between records management and evidence-based decision making at Bagamoyo District Court. The scope encompassed the examination of current records management practices (both manual and digital), their perceived influence and impact on judicial and administrative decisions, the challenges faced, and potential improvement strategies. The study involved court staff who created, managed, or used records in decision-making, including magistrates, court clerks, registrars, records officers, and administrators. The geographical and institutional scope was limited to Bagamoyo District Court in the Coastal Region of Tanzania.

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1.7 Limitations of the Study

In conducting this study, the researcher faced the following limitations:

1.7.1 Limited Time Frame

The duration for data collection and analysis was constrained by academic schedules. The solution to this limitation was for the researcher to adhere to a strict time management plan with predefined milestones. Data collection tools were pre-tested and streamlined for efficiency to maximize the use of available time.

1.7.2 Sensitivity of Court Records

Access to certain case files or administrative records was restricted due to confidentiality and legal protocols. The solution to this limitation was for the researcher to utilize a multi-source data approach, relying on officially released anonymized data, aggregated court statistics, and semi-structured interviews with judicial staff to gain perceptual and experiential insights where direct document access was not feasible.

17.3 Financial Constraints

Costs associated with transport, printing, and data analysis posed a challenge. The solution to this limitation was for the researcher to employ cost-effective methods, including digital surveys, focused local fieldwork, and the use of open-source data analysis software. The research focused on a strategically selected, manageable sample size to ensure depth within available resources.

1.7.4 Potential Reluctance of Respondents

Judicial staff were hesitant to participate due to heavy workloads or concerns about criticism. The solution to this limitation was for the researcher to build good relationships with respondents, assure them of anonymity and confidentiality, and emphasize the academic and non-evaluative purpose of the study.

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1.8 Definition of the Key Terms

1.8.1 Evidence-Based Decision Making

Evidence-Based Decision Making was defined as the process of making organizational decisions based on the best available factual information, data, and research evidence, rather than solely on intuition or anecdote (Kemoni & Ngulube, 2020).

1.8.2 Public Institution

A Public Institution was defined as an organization established, funded, and operated by the government to provide services or enforce laws for the benefit of the public, such as courts, hospitals, and ministries (URT, 2023).

1.8.3 Records Management

Records Management was defined as the systematic control of records throughout their lifecycle, from creation or receipt through processing, distribution, organization, storage, and retrieval to their final disposition (ISO 15489-1:2016).

1.8.4 Judicial Records

Judicial Records were defined as all documents filed in a court case, including pleadings, motions, evidence, transcripts, and final judgments, which formed the official account of court proceedings (Mnjama & Mwalimu, 2022).

1.8.5 Records as Evidence

Records as Evidence referred to the information contained in records that served as proof or substantiation for actions taken, decisions made, or events that had occurred within an organization (Ngoepe, 2021).

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed existing scholarly works and publications related to records management and its role in evidence-based decision making, with a focus on public and judicial institutions. The review was structured according to the specific objectives of the study, covering the influence, impacts, challenges, and strategies. The emphasis was on literature from 2020 onwards to ensure contemporary relevance.

2.1 The Influence of Records Management on Decision Making in Public Institutions

Effective records management was identified as a fundamental enabler of sound decision-making in public institutions. According to Ngoepe (2021), well-managed records provided the evidential foundation upon which rational, transparent, and accountable decisions were built. In the context of the judiciary, this influence was paramount. Kalusopa and Zulu (2020) argued that every judicial decision from granting bail to delivering a final verdict was inherently an evidence-based process contingent on the availability, authenticity, and integrity of court records. Records management systems, therefore, directly influenced the speed, accuracy, and legitimacy of these decisions.

Studies in African contexts highlighted this causal link. For example, Katuu (2020) posited that in public institutions where records were disorganized, decision-makers often relied on incomplete information or memory, leading to inconsistencies and potential injustices. Conversely, where records were systematically managed, they created an "institutional memory" that supported precedent-based rulings and consistent administrative policies. Mosweu and Ngoepe (2022), in their study of Botswana's judiciary, found that the implementation of electronic court records significantly

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influenced case scheduling and reduced adjournments caused by missing files, thereby streamlining the decision-making timeline. Thus, the influence of records management extended from operational efficiency to upholding the very principles of justice.

2.2 The Impacts of Records Management Evidence on Decision Making

The impact of reliable records evidence on decision making was found to be multifaceted, affecting both qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Ngulube and Tafor (2021) identified key impacts including enhanced accountability, improved service delivery, and strengthened legal defensibility of decisions. When decision-makers had access to complete and accurate records, the quality of the decision improved, as it was based on a full understanding of the facts.

In public institutions like courts, the impact was profound. Kemoni and Ngulube (2020) noted that accessible records evidence reduced the time court officials spent searching for information, allowing more time for analysis and deliberation. This led to faster case disposal rates and reduced backlogs critical metric for judicial performance. Furthermore, Mnjama and Mwalimu (2022) highlighted the impact on public trust. When citizens perceived that court, decisions were based on meticulously kept and unbiased records, their confidence in the justice system increased. However, the impact could be severely negative when records management failed. Lujala (2023) documented instances in East African courts where misplaced evidence files had led to case dismissals or wrongful judgments, demonstrating that poor records management could directly undermine the rule of law and erode public confidence.

2.3 Challenges Hindering Records Management and its Impact on Decision Making

Despite its importance, effective records management in public institutions, particularly in resource-constrained settings, faced persistent challenges. A synthesis of recent literature pointed to several interconnected barriers. Infrastructural and technological deficits were identified: many courts, especially at district levels, lacked adequate

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storage facilities, leading to damage or loss of physical files, and insufficient IT infrastructure for digital systems (Ndenje-Sichalwe et al., 2020). Inadequate policy implementation was another challenge: while policies like Tanzania's National Archives Act existed, their enforcement and alignment with daily court operations were often weak, leading to ad-hoc practices (URT, 2023). Human resource constraints were also evident, including a shortage of trained records professionals within the judiciary and a lack of continuous training for existing staff on modern records management principles and technologies (Katuu, 2020).

These challenges had a direct, deleterious impact on decision making. Ngoepe (2021) contended that inadequate storage and retrieval systems caused delays, forcing magistrates to make interim decisions without full context. Similarly, Ngulube and Tafor (2021) argued that the absence of digital records in an analogy environment made trend analysis and data-driven planning for case management nearly impossible for court administrators. The cumulative effect, as observed by Mosweu and Ngoepe (2022), was a justice system that was slower, less predictable, and potentially more prone to error, thereby compromising its core mandate.

2.4 Strategies for Effective Records Management for Improved Decision Making

To mitigate the challenges and harness the positive impacts, scholars and practitioners proposed several strategic interventions. Strengthening legal and policy frameworks was emphasized: Mwalimu and Mnjama (2023) stressed the need for specific, mandatory records management guidelines for the judiciary, backed by regular audits to ensure compliance. Investment in technology and infrastructure was recommended: a phased adoption of Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS) or Case Management Systems (CMS), starting with digitization of backlogs and ensuring robust digital preservation plans (Ndenje-Sichalwe et al., 2020). Capacity building was also critical: continuous professional development for all court staff from magistrates to clerks on the

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value of records and how to manage them was essential for creating a culture of good information governance (Kemoni & Ngulube, 2020).

Furthermore, leadership and change management were identified as crucial: successful implementation of these strategies required committed leadership from court principals to champion records management as a strategic priority, not just a clerical task (Katuu, 2020). Public-private partnerships were suggested as a way to overcome budget constraints, exploring collaborations with technology firms or academic institutions for sustainable solutions, such as cloud-based archiving (Ngulube & Tafor, 2021). Ultimately, an integrated strategy that combined policy, technology, people, and process was considered essential for building a records management regime that reliably supported evidence-based decision making.

2.5 Research Gap

Existing literature robustly established the theoretical link between records management and decision-making in the public sector. However, there was a discernible gap in context-specific, empirical studies that delved into the practical dynamics of this relationship within Tanzanian district courts. Most studies, such as those by Ndenje-Sichalwe et al. (2020), focused on central government ministries or national archives, while others like Mosweu and Ngoepe (2022) examined different national contexts. There was limited recent research (post-2020) that took a micro-level, investigative approach to understand exactly how records flowed (or failed to flow) as evidence into the daily decision-making processes of magistrates and court administrators in Tanzania. This study aimed to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth investigation at Bagamoyo District Court, thereby generating contextually relevant insights that could inform practice and policy within the Tanzanian judiciary and similar public institutions.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the approaches that were used to undertake the problems of the study. It focused on research design, research approach, area of study, population of the study, sample size, sampling techniques, data and collection methods, research instruments, research ethics, and data analysis plan.

3.1 Research Design

According to Yin (2024), research design is the logical structure of a study that ensures the evidence collected adequately addresses the research questions. The study adopted a descriptive case study design. This design was chosen as it allowed for an in-depth, holistic exploration of the unique processes and challenges at Bagamoyo District Court. The descriptive case study design was appropriate for investigating a contemporary phenomenon (records management for decision-making) within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context were not clearly evident.

3.2 Research Approach/Type

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2023), research approach is a method which a researcher uses for the aim of collecting, analysing data and drawing conclusions. This research adopted a mixed-methods approach (Convergent Parallel Design). This involved concurrently collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, analysing them separately, and then merging the results to draw comprehensive conclusions. The mixed-methods approach was used because it enabled the researcher to quantify the prevalence of certain practices and perceptions while also providing depth, context, and detailed explanations.

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3.3 Area of the Study

According to Shenton (2014), area of the study refers to the actual place within which the research was conducted. The study was conducted at Bagamoyo District Court, located in Bagamoyo District, Coastal Region, Tanzania. As a primary court of first instance handling a wide array of civil and criminal cases, it represented a typical and critical setting for investigating records management practices and their judicial implications. The reason for choosing this area was due to the fact that there were observable records management challenges which related to the study requirements, ensuring the availability of respondents and study phenomena.

3.4 Population of the Study

The entire group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). The target population for this study comprised all staff members at Bagamoyo District Court whose professional duties involved the creation, management, or use of records for official decision-making. This specifically included four key categories of personnel: Magistrates, Court Clerks or Registrars, Records Management Officers or Clerks, and Court Administrators. Based on available institutional data, the estimated total size of the target population was between 40 and 50 staff members.

3.5 Sample Size

The number (n) of observations taken from a population through which statistical inferences for the whole population are made (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). The sample size was 30 respondents representing the whole population, involving 5 magistrates, 10 court clerks/registrars, 10 records management officers/clerks, and 5 court administrators. This sample size enabled the researcher to obtain reliable, efficient, and valid data that covered the study.

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3.6 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality of what the population is made (Atakan, Atilgan, and Arslantekin, 2018). The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select magistrates and court administrators, and simple random sampling technique to select court clerks and records officers.

3.6.1 Purposive Sampling Technique

Lancy (2013) defined purposive sampling as a type of sampling technique which sometimes is known as judgmental or selective sampling. Purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied. It was used to select 5 magistrates and 5 court administrators as it was less costly and guaranteed inclusion of relevant records under study. These individuals were chosen deliberately due to their central role in making key judicial and administrative decisions and their strategic oversight of court operations.

3.6.2 Simple Random Technique

Simple random sampling is a procedure in which all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2016). Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 court clerks and 10 records officers from their respective staff lists. This ensured each member had an equal chance of selection, enhancing the representativeness of the findings from operational staff.

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3.7 Data Collection Methods

Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) asserted that data collection method refers to all records a researcher gathered for his/her study. In this study, both primary and secondary data were collected.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data are original sources which the researcher directly collects that have not been previously collected by interacting with people (Atakan, Atilgan, and Arslantekin, 2018). Primary data for this study were collected through questionnaires and interviews.

3.7.1.1 Questionnaire Method

This method was used to collect data from respondents with the help of set questions. Respondents normally fill in answers in written form and the researcher collects the forms with the complete records (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2016). Structured questionnaires with closed-ended (Likert-scale) and a few open-ended questions were administered to court clerks and records officers (20 respondents). This method efficiently gathered data on their daily practices, perceived challenges, and the accessibility of records for casework.

3.7.1.1 The advantage of questionnaires.

i. Respondents have a right to answers feely and open without any fear since the research is not around.
ii. It helps to meet unapproachable persons
iii. Respondents will have enough time to fill the questions collection to the research for low costs.

3.7.1.2 Interview Method

An interview is a method of obtaining data by talking directly to subjects (Lancy, 2013). In this study, interviews were used as they allowed the researcher to establish rapport, explain the purpose of the study, clarify issues, and also provide detailed records. Semi-structured interview guides were used to conduct in-depth interviews with magistrates and court administrators (10

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respondents). This method allowed for probing and gaining detailed insights into how records evidence informed their rulings and management decisions, and their perspectives on systemic challenges and solutions.

3.7.2.1 The advantage of interview.

i. Both access and speed are higher than questionnaire.

ii. High response rate as compared to the questionnaire.

iii. Flexibility than another method.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

These are sources of records which contain data that have been collected and compiled for another purpose (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). For the sake of this study, secondary data were collected through different materials both published and non-published such as court annual reports, case backlog statistics, records management policy manuals, the National Archives Act, and other relevant publications to provide context and support primary findings.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Data from the field survey were coded and analysed through descriptive analysis such as frequencies and percentages. This showed easily the extent of the problem to the area and to the nation as a whole. Quantitative data from questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and entered into Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Analysis involved descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores) presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questions were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. This involved reading through the data, identifying recurring patterns and themes, coding them, and interpreting them in relation to the research objectives.

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3.9 Research Ethics

Ethical consideration goes beyond the design of the study. Any piece of research that involves human subjects must protect the rights, dignity, physical privacy, and physiological welfare of the participants (Shenton, 2014). The research involved respondents who were court staff and court administrators. During the collection of data, the researcher ensured confidentiality and privacy were maintained. The researcher sought formal approval from the Bagamoyo District Court Registry. Prior to data collection, all participants were asked for their informed consent, having been clearly explained the purpose of the study, its voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained; no names or identifiable case details appeared on questionnaires or in the final report.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the analysis and presentation of data obtained from the study dealing with the investigation of records management in evidence-based decision making in public institutions, with a case study of Bagamoyo District Court. Most of the results were presented in tables whereby frequencies and percentages were shown. The presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings were based on the research objectives and questions.

4.1 Response rates

A total of 30 responses were received from the targeted 30 respondents, which 100% response rates for the study, this happened because research made a very close follow - up to make sure that all proposed respondents were involved in the study.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of Respondents

In social science research, personal characteristics of respondents play a very significance role to play in expressing and giving responses about the problem. In this study aspects of personal characteristics, age, sex or gender, and education level of the respondent, were examined and and presented as follows

4.2.1 Gender Distributions of Respondents

The respondents were requested to mention their respective sex. The question was asked because respondents in this study were divided into male and female. The aim was to see the response rate from each sex. Table 4.1 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender (N=30)

Gender	**Court Staff (Questionnaire)**		**Magistrates & Administrators (Interview)**	
	Frequency	Percentage %	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	8	40%	3	30%
Female	12	60%	7	70%
Total	**20**	**100**	**10**	**100%**

Source: Field data (2026)

The findings showed that for court staff who responded to questionnaires, 8 (40%) were male while 12 (60%) were female. For magistrates and court administrators who were interviewed, 3 (30%) were male while 7 (70%) were female. Therefore, the study revealed that both males and females contributed to the study to avoid bias.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

The respondents were requested to mention their respective age. The question was asked because respondents in this study were in different age groups. The aim was to see the response rate from each age as Table 4.2 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents by age (N=30)

Age	**Court Staff (Questionnaire)**		**Magistrates & Administrators (Interview)**	
	Frequency	Percentage %	Frequency	Percentage %
20-25	4	20%	-	-
26-30	8	40%	-	-
31-35	5	25%	2	20%
36-40	2	10%	3	30%
41 and above	1	5%	5	50%
Total	**20**	**100%**	**10**	**100%**

Source: Field data (2026)

The findings showed that for court staff, 4 (20%) were aged 20-25 years, 8 (40%) were aged 26-30 years, 5 (25%) were aged 31-35 years, 2 (10%) were aged 36-40 years, and 1 (5%) was aged 41 and above. For magistrates and court administrators, 2 (20%) were aged 31-35 years, 3 (30%) were aged 36-40 years, and 5 (50%) were aged 41 and above.

The findings showed that the majority of court staff respondents were aged between 26-30 years, while the majority of magistrates and administrators were aged 41 years and above. This implied that the participation of respondents in the study was sufficient across different age groups to investigate records management in evidence-based decision making.

4.2.3 Level of Education/Position of Respondents

The respondents were requested to mention their respective educational level or position. The question was asked because respondents in this study had different levels of education and positions. Table 4.3 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents by position/education level (N=30)

Position/Education Level	Frequency	Percentage %
Certificate	3	10%
Diploma	8	27%
Bachelor's Degree	12	40%
Master's Degree	5	16%
Postgraduate Diploma	2	7%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field data (2026)

The findings showed that 3 (10%) respondents held certificates, 8 (27%) held diplomas, 12 (40%) held bachelor's degrees, 5 (16%) held master's degrees, and 2 (7%) held postgraduate diplomas.

The findings showed that the majority of respondents involved in the study held bachelor's degrees, although respondents with other levels of education were also involved. This implied that the participation of respondents in the study was based on different levels of education, which enhanced the quality of data collected on records management practices.

4.2.4 Working Experience of Respondents

The respondents were requested to indicate their working experience in years at Bagamoyo District Court. This question was asked to understand the depth of institutional knowledge and practical exposure each respondent had to the court's records management and decision-making processes. A mix of new and experienced employees provides a comprehensive perspective on current practices and historical context. Table 4 summarizes the findings.

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Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Working Experience (N = 30)

Working Experience	**Court Staff (Questionnaire)**		**Magistrates & Administrators (Interview)**	
	Frequency	**Percentage (%)**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 1 year	2	10%	–	–
1–5 years	7	35%	1	10%
6–10 years	6	30%	3	30%
More than 10 years	5	25%	6	60%
Total	**20**	**100%**	**10**	**100%**

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings showed that among the court staff who completed the questionnaires, 2 (10%) had worked for less than one year, 7 (35%) had between 1 and 5 years of working experience, 6 (30%) had 6–10 years of experience, while 5 (25%) had worked for more than 10 years. Among the magistrates and court administrators who participated in the interviews, none had worked for less than one year, 1 (10%) had 1–5 years of experience, 3 (30%) had 6–10 years, and the majority, 6 (60%), had more than 10 years of working experience.

These findings indicate that the court staff were largely composed of employees with moderate working experience, while the magistrates and administrators were predominantly long-serving professionals. This combination provided the study with both contemporary operational perspectives and extensive institutional knowledge. The substantial experience of magistrates and administrators strengthened the reliability of

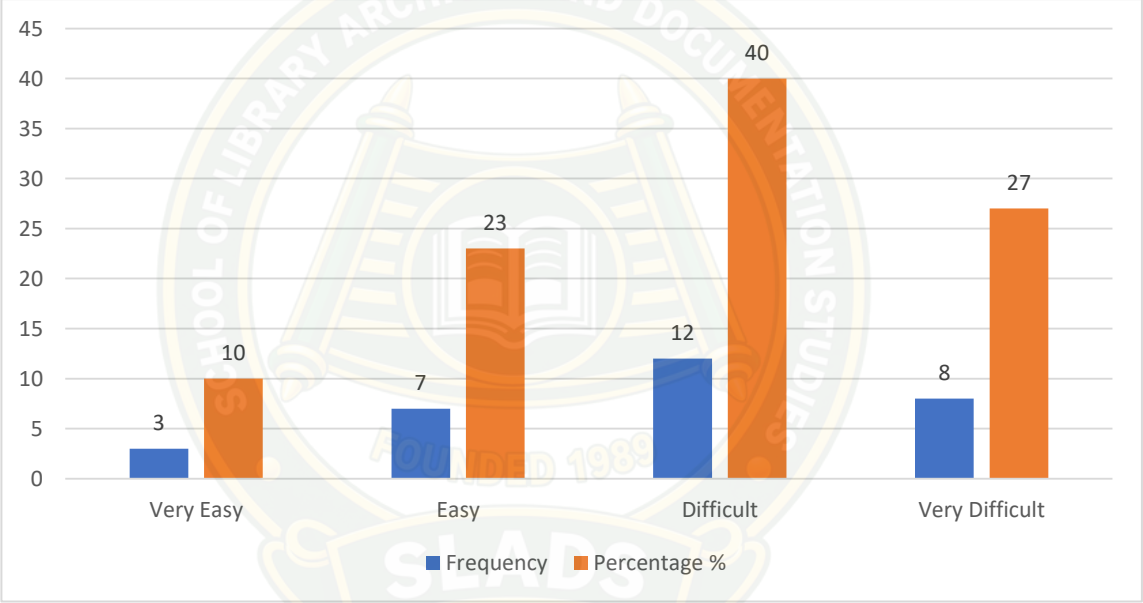
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information regarding the historical development of records management practices and the application of evidence-based decision-making at Bagamoyo District Court

4.3 Ease of Retrieving Complete Case Files When Needed for Hearing or View.

Respondents were asked to indicate how easy it was to retrieve a complete case file when needed for a hearing or review. Figure 4.1 below summarizes the results.

Figure 4.1: Ease of retrieving complete case files (N=30)



Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 3 (10%) respondents indicated "Very Easy," 7 (23%) indicated "Easy," 12 (40%) indicated "Difficult," and 8 (27%) indicated "Very Difficult."

The finding revealed that the majority of respondents (67%) found it either difficult or very difficult to retrieve complete case files when needed. This was attributed to poor filing systems, missing documents, and inadequate storage facilities. One records officer

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stated: "Sometimes we spend hours looking for a single file, and when we find it, some documents are missing. This causes unnecessary delays in court proceedings."

4.3.1 Extent of Well-Kept Records on Speed of Case Processing

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which well-kept records influenced the speed of case processing. Table 4.5 below summarizes the results.

Table 4. 5: Influence of well-kept records on speed of case processing (N=30)

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
To a very great extent	8	27%
To a great extent	10	33%
To a moderate extent	7	23%
To a small extent	3	10%
Not at all	2	7%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 8 (27%) respondents indicated "To a very great extent," 10 (33%) indicated "To a great extent," 7 (23%) indicated "To a moderate extent," 3 (10%) indicated "To a small extent," and 2 (7%) indicated "Not at all."

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (60%) agreed that well-kept records influenced the speed of case processing to a very great or great extent. This implied that proper records management was considered a fundamental tool for judicial operations. As one magistrate stated during an interview: "We cannot make sound decisions without proper case files. Records are the backbone of our work here."

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4.3.2 Primary Format of Records Used

Respondents were asked to indicate the primary format of the records they worked with most. Table 4.6 below summarizes the results.

Table 4.6: Primary format of records used (N=30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Paper-based only	11	37%
Mostly paper-based, some digital	10	33%
Both equally	5	17%
Mostly digital, some paper	3	10%
Digital only	1	3%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 11 (37%) respondents indicated "Paper-based only," 10 (33%) indicated "Mostly paper-based, some digital," 5 (17%) indicated "Both equally," 3 (10%) indicated "Mostly digital, some paper," and 1 (3%) indicated "Digital only."

The finding revealed that the majority of respondents (70%) worked primarily with paper-based records, either exclusively or predominantly. This implied that Bagamoyo District Court still heavily relied on traditional paper-based record-keeping systems, with limited adoption of digital technologies.

4.4 Impact of Records on Decisions in decision making

4.4.1 Often Frequency of Missing or Incomplete Records Delaying Court Proceedings

Respondents were asked to indicate how often missing or incomplete records delayed a court proceeding or decision. Table 4.7 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.7: Frequency of missing or incomplete records delaying proceedings (N=30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Very Often	9	30%
Often	8	27%
Sometimes	7	23%
Rarely	4	13%
Never	2	7%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 9 (30%) respondents indicated "Very Often," 8 (27%) indicated "Often," 7 (23%) indicated "Sometimes," 4 (13%) indicated "Rarely," and 2 (7%) indicated "Never."

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (57%) indicated that missing or incomplete records very often or often delayed court proceedings. This was a significant concern as it directly impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of justice delivery at the court.

4.4.2 Quality of Record-Keeping and Fairness of Court Decisions

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the quality of record-keeping affected the fairness of court decisions. Table 4.8 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.8: Quality of record-keeping and fairness of court decisions (N=30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	10	33%
Agree	11	37%
Neutral	5	17%
Disagree	3	10%
Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 10 (33%) respondents indicated "Strongly Agree," 11 (37%) indicated "Agree," 5 (17%) indicated "Neutral," 3 (10%) indicated "Disagree," and 1 (3%) indicated "Strongly Disagree."

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (70%) agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of record-keeping affected the fairness of court decisions. This implied that proper records management was essential not only for efficiency but also for ensuring justice and fairness in judicial outcomes. One court administrator noted: "When case files are well-organized and easily retrievable, our magistrates can focus on analyzing evidence rather than searching for missing documents. This directly speeds up the delivery of justice."

4.4.3 The Influence of Records Management on Decision Making

Respondents were asked to indicate the influence of records management on decision making at Bagamoyo District Court. Table 4.9 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4 9: The influence of records management on decision making (N=30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Timely access to case files	10	33%
Availability of complete evidence	9	30%
Accuracy of court records	7	23%
Consistency in rulings	4	14%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 10 (33%) respondents indicated timely access to case files, 9 (30%) indicated availability of complete evidence, 7 (23%) indicated accuracy of court records, and 4 (14%) indicated consistency in rulings as the key influences of records management on decision making.

The findings of the study implied that records management significantly influenced decision-making processes at the court.

4.5 Challenges Hindering Records Management

Respondents were asked to indicate the challenges that hindered effective records management at Bagamoyo District Court. Table 4.10 below summarizes the results.

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Table 4.10: Challenges hindering records management (N=30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Lack of organized storage/archives	8	27%
Missing or misfiled documents	7	23%
Inadequate number of staff	5	17%
Lack of training on records management	9	30%
Poor condition of physical files	4	13%
Lack of computers/digital systems	6	20%
Unreliable electricity or internet	3	10%
Other	2	7%

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings revealed that lack of training on records management (30%) and lack of organized storage/archives (27%) were the most frequently cited challenges. Missing or misfiled documents (23%) and lack of computers/digital systems (20%) were also significant concerns. Additionally, inadequate number of staff (17%), poor condition of physical files (13%), unreliable electricity or internet (10%), and other challenges (7%) were mentioned.

The finding revealed that lack of skills was a major challenge, as many court staff lacked adequate training on using information technology in managing court records. This presented a wide variety of technological challenges to making these records useful in supporting judicial decision-making. Also, lack of policies was identified, as most of the court records management practices operated without clearly developed and implemented policies that act as blueprint statements. The findings also showed lack of budget and lack of infrastructures, as the court had suffered severe budget cuts from the government in recent years, forcing it to cut down on qualified personnel,

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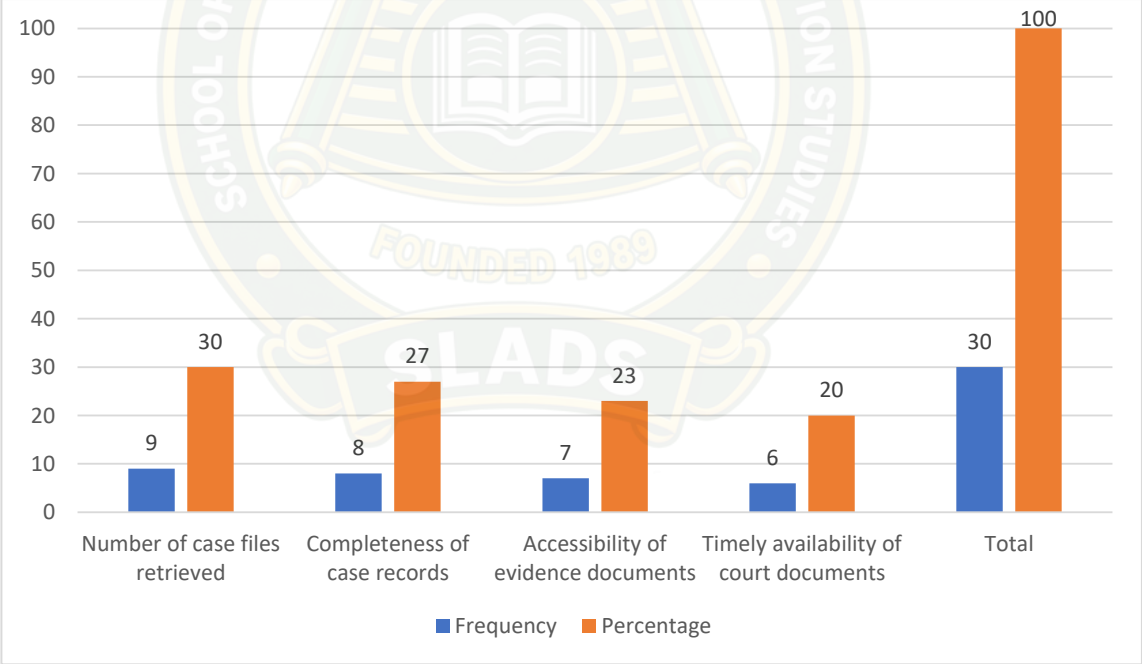
infrastructures, and motivations that were supportive in managing court records information.

One records officer lamented: "We try our best with what we have, but we lack proper filing cabinets, computers, and trained personnel. Sometimes files get misplaced simply because we don't have enough space to store them properly."

4.6 The Types of Records Management Evidence Collected in the Court

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of records management evidence collected and used in the court for decision making. Figure 4.2 below summarizes the results.

Figure 4.2: The types of records management evidence collected in the court (N=30)



Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings from Table 4.11 showed that 9 (30%) respondents indicated number of case files retrieved, 8 (27%) indicated completeness of case records, 7 (23%) indicated

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accessibility of evidence documents, and 6 (20%) indicated timely availability of court documents as the types of records management evidence collected in the court.

The finding revealed that case file retrieval statistics, completeness of records, accessibility of evidence, and timely availability of documents were the key types of records management evidence collected and used at Bagamoyo District Court. These records, when properly maintained, helped the court in maintaining efficient judicial service delivery

4.6.1 Single Most Important Improvement Needed for Records Management,

Respondents were asked to indicate the single most important improvement needed for records management at Bagamoyo District Court. Table 4.11 below summarizes the results.

Table 4.11: Single most important improvement needed (N=30)

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Better physical storage and organization	8	27%
Proper digitization of all records	9	30%
More training for all staff	7	23%
Hiring more records staff	4	13%
Stronger supervision and policies	2	7%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings showed that 8 (27%) respondents indicated "Better physical storage and organization," 9 (30%) indicated "Proper digitization of all records," 7 (23%) indicated "More training for all staff," 4 (13%) indicated "Hiring more records staff," and 2 (7%) indicated "Stronger supervision and policies."

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The findings revealed that proper digitization of all records (30%) and better physical storage and organization (27%) were considered the most important improvements needed. This implied that respondents recognized the need for both immediate improvements in physical storage and long-term digital transformation.

4.6.2 Possible Solutions to Challenges Hindering Records Management

Respondents were asked to indicate the possible solutions to challenges that hindered effective records management at Bagamoyo District Court. Table 4.12 below summarizes the results.

Table 4.12: Possible solutions to challenges hindering records management (N=30)

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Allocation of enough funds	9	30%
Review of court records policy	8	27%
Training of court staff	7	23%
Improvement of supportive infrastructures	6	20%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Source: Field Study (2026)

The findings from Table 4.13 above showed that (30%) indicated allocation of enough funds, 8 (27%) asserted review of court records policy, 7 (23%) respondents said training of court staff, and 6 (20%) respondents said improvement of supportive infrastructures.

The finding implied that the court records policy should be reviewed to allow changes in the aspects of the provision of information on contribution of records management to evidence-based decision making. The government and the judiciary should provide

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enough funds to facilitate records management programs. Technology should be improved to allow the access and **use** of electronic facilities in managing court records.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the summary and conclusion derived from the study findings as well as recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 The Tendency of Records Management Practices

The finding of the study revealed that the majority of respondents indicated that the court had a tendency of implementing records management practices. This was attributed to the fact that records management was considered a fundamental tool for judicial operations, as proper case files were essential for sound decision-making by magistrates.

5.1.2 The Influence of Records Management on Decision Making

The findings of the study implied that records management significantly influenced decision-making processes at the court. Timely access to case files, availability of complete evidence, accuracy of court records, and consistency in rulings were identified as key influences. For any effective judicial decision making to take place, there must be timely access to accurate and complete records.

5.1.3 The Impacts of Records Management Evidence on Decision Making

The findings of the study showed that proper records management had positive impacts on court operations and justice delivery. Improved case disposal rates, enhanced public confidence in the court, reduced adjournments due to missing files, and fairer judicial outcomes were identified as the main impacts of records management evidence on decision making.

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5.1.4 The Types of Records Management Evidence Collected in the Court

The finding revealed that the number of case files retrieved, completeness of case records, accessibility of evidence documents, and timely availability of court documents were the types of records management evidence collected and used at Bagamoyo District Court. These records, when properly maintained, helped the court in maintaining efficient judicial service delivery.

5.1.5 The Challenges Hindering Records Management

The finding revealed that lack of staff skills was a major challenge, as many court staff lacked adequate training on using information technology in managing court records. Lack of policies was identified, as most records management practices operated without clearly developed and implemented policies. The findings also showed lack of budget and lack of infrastructures, as the court had suffered severe budget cuts forcing it to cut down on qualified personnel and supportive infrastructures.

5.1.6 The Possible Solutions to Challenges Hindering Records Management

The finding implied that the court records policy should be reviewed to allow changes in the provision of information on records management. The government and the judiciary should provide enough funds to facilitate records management programs. Technology should be improved to allow the access and use of electronic facilities in managing court records. Training of court staff was also identified as a key solution.

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5.2 Conclusions

Generally, it was observed that records management was one of the vitally important tools for good judicial administration. This was due to the fact that the court kept all records of cases and proceedings. These records, when properly managed and statistically analyzed, helped the court in maintaining efficient and fair justice delivery. Although the study revealed that lack of skills, lack of policies, lack of budget, and lack of infrastructures hindered effective records management at Bagamoyo District Court, it was concluded that there was awareness among staff about the importance of proper records management for evidence-based decision making. Therefore, this study suggested some serious steps to be taken to improve records management at the court.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

5.3.1 Review of Court Records Policy:

The court records policy should be reviewed to allow changes in the aspects of the provision of information on the contribution of records management to evidence-based decision making. Clear guidelines and standards should be established and enforced.

5.3.2 Allocation of Enough Funds:

The government and the judiciary should provide enough funds to facilitate records management programs to expand the provision of information on the contribution of records management to evidence-based decision making.

5.3.4 Improvement of Supportive Infrastructures:

Technology should be improved to allow the access and use of electronic facilities in the management of court records. This includes investing in proper storage facilities, computers, and electronic records management systems.

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5.3.5 Training of Court Staff:

Provision of continuous professional development and training for all court staff on modern records management principles and practices should be prioritized. This depends on government support and other stakeholders.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

The following are possible topic areas that need further study:

i The challenges facing the implementation of electronic records management systems in Tanzanian district courts.

ii The role of information policies in supporting records management for evidence-based decision making in the Tanzanian judiciary.

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APPENDIX I

TIME SCHEDULE SHOWING ACTIVITIES DURING RESEARCH WORK

ACTIVITIES	JANUARY /MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULAY	AUGUST
Research proposal writing and submission						
Obtaining clearance and visiting the court						
Distribution of questionnaires and conducting interviews						
Data cleaning and analysis						
Report writing and compilation						
Final binding and submission						

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APPENDIX II

BUDGET

S/NO	Item	Qty/Cost (TZS)	Amount (TZS)
1	Research Proposal Printing & Binding	3copies @ 5000	15000
2	Questionnaire Printing	30 copies @ 500	15,000
3	Stationery (Pens, Papers, Files)	1 set	15000
4	Transport to Bagamoyo (Field work)	10 trips @ 2000	20000
5	Internet and Data bundles	Lump sum	30,000
6	Research Assistant Fees (If any)	8 days @ 10,000	80,000
7	Meals and Refreshments during field work	Lump sum	30,000
8	Final Report Printing & Binding	4 copies @ 15000	45000
	TOTAL		250,000

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APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR COURT STAFF

Dear Respondent,

I am LILIANI HAMISI KIFUNTA, a student at the School of Library Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS) Bagamoyo. I conducted research on **"An Investigation on Records Management in Evidence Based Decision Making in Public Institutions: A Case Study of Bagamoyo District Court"** as part of the fulfilment for the award of an Ordinary Diploma in Records and Archives Management.

The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather your views and experiences regarding the management and use of records in this court. Please be assured that the information provided was kept strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions: Please put a tick (√) in the box provided or write your answer where appropriate.

Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?
   a) Female ( )
   b) Male ( )
2. What is your age group?
   a) 18-25 ( ) b) 26-35 ( ) c) 36-45 ( ) d) 46 and above ( )
3. What is your current position/department Court Clerk/Registrar ( )
   b) Records Management Officer/Clerk ( )
   c) Other (specify)……

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4. How long have you worked at Bagamoyo District Court?
   a) Less than 1 year ( ) b) 1-5 years ( ) c) 6-10 years ( ) d) More than 10 years ( )

OBJESTIVES QUESTIONS

5. How easy was it to retrieve a complete case file when needed for a hearing or review?
   a) Very Easy ( )
   b) Easy ( )
   c) Difficult ( )
   d) Very Difficult ( )
6. In your experience, to what extent did well-kept records influence the speed of case processing?
   a) To a very great extent ( )
   b) To a great extent ( )
   c) To a moderate extent ( )
   d) To a small extent ( )
   e) Not at all ( )
7. What was the primary format of the records you worked with most?
   a) Paper-based only ( )
   b) Mostly paper-based, some digital ( )
   c) Both equally ( )
   d) Mostly digital, some paper ( )
   e) Digital only ( )

8. How often did missing or incomplete records delay a court proceeding or decision?
   a) Very Often ( )b) Often ( )
   c) Sometimes ( )

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d) Rarely ( )

e) Never ( )

9. To what extent did you agree that the quality of record-keeping affected the fairness of court decisions?

   a) Strongly Agree ( )

   b) Agree ( )

   c) Neutral ( )

   d) Disagree ( )

   e) Strongly Disagree ( )

10. What were the MAIN challenges you faced in managing or accessing court records? (Tick all that apply)
    a) Lack of organized storage/archives ( )
    b) Missing or misfiled documents ( )
    c) Inadequate number of staff ( )
    d) Lack of training on records management ( )
    e) Poor condition of physical files (damage, wear) ( )
    f) Lack of computers/digital systems ( )
    g) Unreliable electricity or internet ( )
    h) Other (specify)……..…

11. What, in your opinion, was the SINGLE most important improvement needed for records management here?

    a) Better physical storage and organization ( )

    b) Proper digitization of all records ( )

    c) More training for all staff ( )

    d) Hiring more records staff ( )

    e) Stronger supervision and policies ( )

Thank you for your participation!

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APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COURT ADMINISTRATORS AND RECORDS MANAGERS

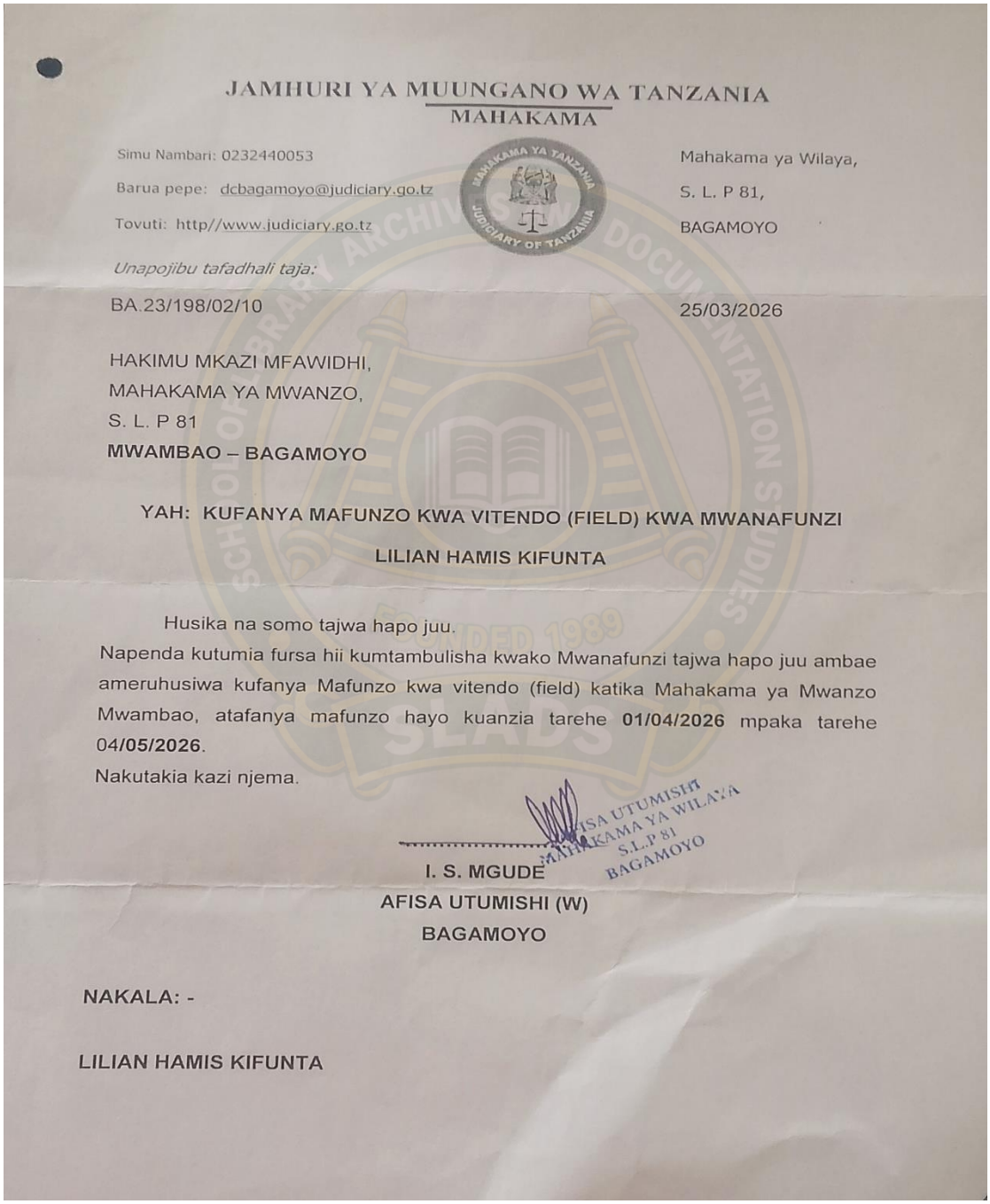
1. Can you describe the current system for managing case files and administrative records at this court? (Probe: filing system, classification, storage, digital components).
2. In your view, how did the quality of records management directly influence the decision-making process of the magistrates?
3. What specific impacts (positive or negative) had you observed on court operations and outcomes that you could attribute to the state of records management?
4. From a management perspective, what were the most significant challenges hindering ideal records management here? (Probe: resources, staff competency, infrastructure, policy).
5. How did you ensure that records were preserved as reliable evidence for future reference or appeals?
6. What strategies or steps did you believe were crucial for improving records management in this court to better support timely and just decisions?
7. Was there adequate support (policy, budget, training) from higher levels of the judiciary for records management improvement? What more was needed?
8. What was your vision for the records management system of this court in the next five years?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

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APPENDIX IV

LETTER APPROVAL



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
MAHAKAMA

Simu Nambari: 0232440053
Barua pepe: dcbagamoyo@judiciary.go.tz
Tovuti: http//www.judiciary.go.tz

Mahakama ya Wilaya,
S. L. P 81,
BAGAMOYO

Unapojibu tafadhali taja:
BA.23/198/02/10

25/03/2026

HAKIMU MKAZI MFAWIDHI,
MAHAKAMA YA MWANZO,
S. L. P 81
MWAMBAO – BAGAMOYO

YAH: KUFANYA MAFUNZO KWA VITENDO (FIELD) KWA MWANAFUNZI
LILIAN HAMIS KIFUNTA

Husika na somo tajwa hapo juu.

Napenda kutumia fursa hii kumtambulisha kwako Mwanafunzi tajwa hapo juu ambae ameruhusiwa kufanya Mafunzo kwa vitendo (field) katika Mahakama ya Mwanzo Mwambao, atafanya mafunzo hayo kuanzia tarehe **01/04/2026** mpaka tarehe 04**/05/2026**.

Nakutakia kazi njema.

.....

I. S. MGUDE
AFISA UTUMISHI (W)
BAGAMOYO

AFISA UTUMISHI
MAHAKAMA YA WILAYA
S.L.P 81
BAGAMOYO

NAKALA: -

LILIAN HAMIS KIFUNTA

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