SCHOOL OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVE AND DOCUMENTATION STUDIES

(SLADS) BAGAMOYO

RESEARCH REPORT ON

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT TO PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT IN DISTRICT COURT IN TANZANIA . A CASE STUDY OF TANDAHIMBA DISTRICT COURT

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A Research Report Submitted to the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS) as a Partial Fulfillment for the Award of Ordinary Diploma in Records and Archives Management.

August 2026

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS), Bagamoyo, a research report entitled: **"An Assessment of the Contribution of Records Management to Performance Improvement in District Courts in Tanzania"** A Case Study of Tandahimba District Court**,**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Ordinary Diploma in Records and Archives Management.

Signature: …….

Madam Rose Makuhana

(Supervisor)

Date: ……

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I, Tariki Kassim Jafari, declare that this research report is my own original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other institution for a similar or any other award.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work would not have been possible without the help of Allah and the people created by Him. It is possibly not easy to mention them all but Allah knows how thankful I am for what they did. He has granted me for my study at SLADS.

I am grateful for inspiration and wisdom from men and women, all around the world. Their good teachings and counseling have qualified me to be who I am today. My special thanks go to my lovely parents Mr. & Mrs. Kassim for their loyalty.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Madam Rose Makuhana who generously gave her precious time for reading the draft and offered very helpful criticism, constructive comments and guidance that ultimately led to the completion of this work.

I also thank all tutors and staff of SLADS for their hard work, SLADSSO and fellow students, especially my classmates (NTA Level 6 2025/2026). You guys, may God bless you all.

Finally, I am thankful to the whole management at Tanzania Library Service Board (TLSB), and library staff and undergraduate students for trusting me to conduct my research.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my beloved family, whose love, encouragement and sacrifices have been the foundation of my academic journey. Their unwavering support gave me the strength to overcome challenges and remain focused throughout my studies.

I also dedicate this work to my friends and colleagues, who provided motivation, shared ideas and stood by me during the demanding period of these research.

Finally, this research report was dedicated to all judicial officers and records managers in Tanzania whose commitment to justice and accountability inspired this study. May this work contribute to strengthening records management practices and improving performance in the courts for the benefit of society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ARMA	Association of Records Managers and Administrators
ECMS	Electronic Case Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IRMT	International Records Management Trust
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
URT	United Republic of Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This research assessed the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district courts in Tanzania, focusing on Tandahimba District Court. Chapter One introduced the background, highlighting that poor recordkeeping practices in Tanzanian courts have historically led to case backlogs, delays, and limited transparency. The study set out objectives to examine current practices, evaluate their role in accountability and transparency, assess their relationship with case resolution efficiency, and identify challenges hindering effective systems. It emphasized the significance of records management in enhancing judicial performance, guiding reforms, and building public trust. Chapter Two reviewed literature, showing that records management is not just a technical process but a strategic discipline essential for governance, accountability, and efficiency. It discussed the importance of accurate and accessible records in judicial environments, the role of electronic case management systems, and how records management supports transparency, accountability, and case resolution efficiency.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology, describing the case study approach at Tandahimba District Court, the population scope including magistrates, registry officers, ICT staff, and administrators, and the use of interviews, questionnaires, and document reviews to collect data. Chapter Four presented the findings, revealing that effective records management improved case resolution efficiency, reduced backlogs, and strengthened transparency and accountability. Courts with electronic systems performed better, but challenges such as reliance on manual filing, inadequate infrastructure, limited training, confidentiality concerns, financial constraints, and resistance to change persisted.

Chapter Five concluded that records management is a critical driver of judicial performance improvement. It recommended strengthening digital infrastructure, expanding professional training, ensuring sustainable funding, and fostering cultural change to support modernization. The study contributes both academically and practically: academically by enriching literature on records management in developing judicial systems, and practically by offering policy guidance and capacity building strategies for Tanzanian courts. Overall, the research demonstrates that robust records management is central to improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency, thereby enhancing access to justice and reinforcing institutional integrity.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This section presents the background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, general and specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Management was a backbone of judicial performance and accountability. In Tanzania, district courts played a critical role in delivering justice at the grassroots level, yet they faced challenges such as case backlogs, delays, and limited transparency. Records management systems, whether paperbased or digital, were essential for ensuring timely access to information, reducing duplication, and supporting evidence based decision making. Historically, Tanzanian courts relied heavily on manual record keeping, which often led to inefficiencies and compromised service delivery. Studies showed that poor records management contributed to delays in case resolution, loss of files, and difficulties in monitoring judicial performance (IRMT, 2011).

Recent reforms, including the adoption of electronic case management systems and digital court records, were introduced to enhance efficiency, accountability, and accessibility of justice services (Hassan, 2025). The Judiciary of Tanzania emphasized performance improvement through technologydriven initiatives such as e-justice platforms, virtual courts, and electronic case tracking. These reforms highlighted the importance of integrating records management into broader performance frameworks. The Annual Performance Report of the Judiciary (2023/24) underscored that improved records management contributed to reducing case backlogs and enhancing transparency, with clearance rates reaching up to 95% (Judiciary of Tanzania, 2024).

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The relationship between effectiverecords management and organizational performance was the subject of considerable scholarly attention, with researchers across multiple disciplines documenting the positive impacts of well functioning records systems. According to ARMA International (the Association of Records Managers and Administrators), organizations that invested in robust records management programs experienced improved operational efficiency, reduced costs associated with records storage and retrieval, enhanced compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and better decisionmaking capabilities (ARMA International, 2015).

Tanzania's judicial system operated within a framework established by the Constitution and various legislative instruments, including the Magistrate Courts Act, the High Court Act, and the Court of Appeal Act. The country was divided into administrative regions, each containing district courts that constituted the first tier of the formal judicial system and handled the majority of criminal and civil cases at the local level. These courts served as the primary Interface between the formal legal system and the majority of Tanzanians who sought redress for grievances or faced criminal proceedings.

The Government of Tanzania acknowledged the Importance of judicial reform and implemented various initiatives aimed at improving court operations. The Justice Sector Reform Programme, supported by development partners, sought to enhance access to justice, improve court infrastructure, and modernize court procedures. However, Ndunguru (2015) noted that records management received relatively limited attention within these reform efforts, despite its fundamental importance to court operations. Many district courts continued to rely on manual filing systems that were prone to deterioration, misplacement, and unauthorized access.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of district courts in Tanzania justice system, inefficiencies in records management continued to undermine judicial performance. Manual record keeping practices, coupled with inadequate adoption of modern information systems, had led to persistent challenges such as case backlogs, misplaced files, and delays in

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case resolution. These shortcomings compromised transparency, accountability, and timely access to justice for citizens.

Although reforms such as electronic case management systems had been introduced, their implementation remained uneven across district courts. Studies highlighted that poor records management contributed directly to reduced efficiency, limited monitoring of judicial performance, and weakened institutional integrity (International Records Management Trust, 2011; Hassan, 2025). Furthermore, the Judiciary of Tanzania's Annual Performance Report (2024) acknowledged that while improvements had been made, gaps in records management practices still hindered the achievement of consistent performance outcomes.

Therefore, there was a pressing need to assess the extent to which records management contributed to performance improvement in district courts. Without such an assessment, efforts to modernize judicial processes risked being fragmented, leaving unresolved systemic issues that continued to affect service delivery and public trust in the judiciary.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district courts in Tanzania.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To examine the current records management practices employed in district courts in Tanzania.
ii. To evaluate the role of records management in enhancing transparency and accountability within judicial processes.
iii. To assess relationship between records management and case resolution efficiency
iv. To identify challenges hindering effective records management in district courts.

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1.4 Research Questions

i. What records management practices are currently employed in district courts in Tanzania?
ii. How does records management influence the efficiency of case resolution in district courts?
iii. In what ways does records management contribute to transparency and accountability in judicial processes?
iv. What challenges hinder effective records management in district courts in Tanzania?
v. What strategies can be recommended to strengthen records management systems for improved court performance?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, both practically and academically,

Judiciary Performance Enhancement

By assessing how records management contributed to performance improvement, the study provided insights that could have helped the Judiciary of Tanzania strengthen efficiency, reduce case backlogs, and improve service delivery in district courts. This directly supported the judiciary's mission of ensuring timely and accessible justice.

Transparency and Accountability

Effective records management was closely linked to transparency in judicial processes. The findings of this study highlighted how proper documentation and information systems could have reduced corruption risks, enhanced accountability, and built public trust in the courts.

Policy and Reform Guidance

The study informed policymakers and judicial administrators about the gaps and opportunities in records management. Recommendations derived from the research

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guided future reforms, particularly in the adoption of digital systems and training of court personnel.

Contribution to Academic Knowledge

Academically, the study enriched the body of literature on records management and judicial performance in developing countries. It provided a contextualized analysis of Tanzania's district courts, offering comparative insights for other jurisdictions facing similar challenges.

Capacity Building

This research also benefited court staff and records managers by identifying best practices and strategies for improving records handling. This contributed to professional development and institutional capacity building.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on assessing the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district courts in Tanzania, whereby the study was conducted at Tandahimba District Court. There were geographical scope, content scope, and population scope.

Geographical scope

Geographical scope defined the physical or spatial boundaries of the study. It specified the location where the research was conducted. For example, this study focused on Tandahimba District Court in Tanzania, meaning the findings were limited to that geographical area. According to Kothari (2014), defining geographical scope helped narrow the study to a manageable setting and ensured relevance to the chosen context.

Content scope

Content scope referred to the specific subject matter or themes that the research covered. It outlined what aspects of the topic were included and what was excluded. In this study,

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the content scope was records management practices and their relationship with case resolution efficiency. Creswell (2014) noted that clearly defining content scope ensured that the study remained focused and avoided unnecessary diversions.

Population scope

Population scope identified the group of people from whom data was collected. It specified who the participants were and why they were relevant to the study. For this research, the population scope included court staff such as magistrates, registry officers, ICT staff, and administrative personnel. Marshall and Rossman (2016) emphasized that defining population scope ensured that the study captured perspectives from those directly involved in the processes under investigation.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While this study aimed to provide valuable insights into the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district courts in Tanzania, at Tandahimba District Court, this study was expected to face a number of limitations including the following;

1.7.1 Lack of Experience

Experience was considered as a limitation because the researcher had less experience in conducting the research study since it was the first time. Hereby, consultation with the supervisor had to be made in order for the researcher to get practical experience effective in carrying out the research study.

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1.7.2 Financial Constraints

The budget allocated for this study was not enough to cover all the costs when carrying out the research study. However, due to the little amount of money, the budget covered the necessary issues that enabled the study to be accomplished as scheduled.

1.7.3 Access to Information

Some judicial records and performance reports were confidential or restricted, limiting the researcher's ability to obtain comprehensive data. This could have affected the completeness of the analysis.

1.7.4 Respondent Bias

Data collected through interviews and questionnaires were subject to bias, as court staff and judicial officers might have provided socially desirable responses or underreported challenges in records management.

1.7.5 Dynamic Reform

Ongoing judicial reforms and technological upgrades might have changed records management practices during the course of the study, making it difficult to capture a stable picture of the situation

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Records

ISO (15489-1:2016) defined records as documented information, regardless of form or medium, that was created, received, and maintained by an organization or individual in the course of its activities. Records provided evidence of actions, decisions, or transactions and were typically preserved for legal, regulatory, or historical purposes.

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1.8.2 Records Management

Dando, M (2004) defined records management as the process of capturing, classifying, storing, and maintaining records throughout their lifecycle. It ensured that records were appropriately retained, accessible, and disposed of according to legal, regulatory, and organizational requirements. Records management in district courts referred to how court documents, case files, and other legal records were handled and maintained, ensuring they were accurate, organized, and easily retrievable in order to ensure case referencing and decision-making processes.

1.8.3 Performance Improvement

Hoskisson, R. E. (2017) defined performance improvement as the efforts and actions aimed at enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of an organization or system. This often involved optimizing processes, reducing waste, increasing accountability, and ensuring quality outcomes. Therefore, performance improvement in district courts referred to the enhancement of the efficiency and effectiveness of court operations, including faster case processing, improved decisionmaking, and better service delivery.

1.8.4 District Court

United Republic of Tanzania (1977) explained district courts as the primary courts handling civil and criminal cases at the district level, which played a crucial role in the administration of justice at the local level.

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SECTION TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section reviewed the relevant literature on records management and its contribution to performance improvement in judicial systems, particularly in the context of district courts. The review highlighted key concepts, theoretical frameworks, previous studies, and empirical evidence regarding records management in courts and its impact on the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of judicial processes. It also discussed the challenges and opportunities for improvement within the records management practices of Tanzanian district courts.

2.1 The Concept of Records Management

Records management encompassed the policies, procedures, and practices that guided the creation, classification, maintenance, use, and eventual disposition of records within an organization. It was not merely a technical function but a strategic discipline that supported organizational governance, accountability, and operational efficiency. While Dando (2004) emphasized the lifecycle approach, contemporary scholarship expanded this view by highlighting the role of metadata, digital preservation, and information governance frameworks in ensuring that records remained authentic, reliable, and usable over time. ISO 15489-1:2016 reinforced this by defining records as evidence of business activities, underscoring their value in supporting decision making, compliance, and institutional memory.

In judicial environments, records management took on heightened significance because courts relied heavily on accurate, complete, and accessible records to administer justice. Case files, affidavits, rulings, and transcripts formed the backbone of judicial processes, and their integrity directly influenced the fairness and efficiency of legal proceedings. Hassan (2025) noted that secure storage and controlled access were essential to prevent tampering, unauthorized alterations, or loss of sensitive information. This was

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particularly important in systems where judicial credibility was closely tied to the transparency and traceability of decisions.

Beyond operational efficiency, effective records management supported legal continuity. Courts had to maintain records that could withstand scrutiny over long periods, especially in cases involving appeals, constitutional matters, or historical precedents. Poorly managed records could have compromised the evidentiary value of documents, leading to miscarriages of justice or administrative disputes. Scholars such as Shepherd and Yeo (2003) argued that records management was integral to public sector accountability because it ensured that actions taken by officials could be reconstructed and evaluated.

In Tanzanian district courts, the need for robust records management was amplified by the increasing volume of cases and the growing demand for timely justice. Efficient systems enabled quick retrieval of case information, reduced administrative burdens, and supported the monitoring of judicial performance indicators. ARMA International (2015) highlighted that well-structured records systems enhanced organizational responsiveness by ensuring that information flowed seamlessly across departments. When applied to the judiciary, this translated into faster case processing, improved communication between court actors, and better service delivery to the public.

Furthermore, records management contributed to institutional resilience. Courts had to be able to recover essential information in the event of disasters, system failures, or security breaches. Digital preservation strategies, including redundancy, encryption, and backup protocols, were increasingly recognized as essential components of modern records management. As courts transitioned toward hybrid or fully digital systems, the ability to maintain the authenticity and accessibility of electronic records became a critical success factor. Scholars such as Gilliland (2014) emphasized that digital records required proactive management to prevent obsolescence and ensure long term usability.

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2.2 Importance of Records Management in Judicial Performance

The relationship between records management and judicial performance was well established in both theoretical and empirical literature. Courts depended on accurate and timely information to process cases efficiently, and any breakdown in records management could have led to delays, inconsistencies, and administrative bottlenecks. In many jurisdictions, including Tanzania, the introduction of electronic case management systems (ECMS) had been a transformative development. Hassan (2025) and the Judiciary of Tanzania (2024) reported that digital systems had reduced case backlogs, improved workflow coordination, and enhanced the transparency of judicial operations.

Efficient records management supported judicial performance in several ways. First, it enabled timely retrieval of case files, which was essential for hearings, rulings, and appeals. When records were disorganized or incomplete, judicial officers spent valuable time searching for information, leading to unnecessary delays.

Second, records management facilitated monitoring and evaluation. Courts could track case progress, identify bottlenecks, and generate performance reports that informed administrative reforms. The International Records Management Trust (2011) noted that poor record keeping undermined the ability of courts to measure productivity, allocate resources effectively, and enforce accountability.

Third, effective records management enhanced coordination among judicial actors. Judges, magistrates, clerks, prosecutors, and lawyers relied on shared information to perform their roles. When records were accurate and accessible, communication improved, reducing the likelihood of adjournments, procedural errors, or conflicting decisions. ARMA International (2015) emphasized that wellmanaged records supported organizational coherence by ensuring that all stakeholders operated from a common information base.

The adoption of e-justice systems in Tanzania illustrated the transformative potential of digital records management. Electronic platforms allowed real time tracking of case statuses, automated notifications, and centralized storage of documents. These features

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reduced administrative burdens and minimized opportunities for human error. Hassan (2025) highlighted that digital systems had also expanded access to justice by enabling remote hearings, electronic filing, and online case reviews. Such innovations were particularly valuable in geographically dispersed regions where physical access to courts might have been limited.

Therefore, digital records supported data driven decision making. Courts could analyze trends in case types, durations, and outcomes, enabling evidence based reforms. This aligned with global best practices, as seen in countries that had adopted integrated judicial information systems to enhance efficiency and transparency. Scholars such as Contini and Lanzara (2014) argued that digital transformation in the judiciary was not merely a technological shift but a structural reform that reshaped institutional workflows and governance.

2.3 The Role of Records Management in Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability were foundational principles of democratic governance, and the judiciary played a central role in upholding these values. Records management was a key enabler of judicial transparency because it ensured that decisions, processes, and actions were documented and accessible for review. ARMA International (2015) asserted that robust records systems reduced opportunities for corruption by creating clear audit trails that could be examined by oversight bodies, researchers, and the public.

In judicial contexts, transparency was closely linked to public trust. Citizens expected courts to operate fairly, consistently, and openly. When records were well managed, stakeholders could verify that procedures were followed, decisions were justified, and rights were respected. This was particularly important in environments where perceptions of corruption or inefficiency undermined confidence in the justice system. Proper documentation of proceedings, rulings, and administrative actions allowed for independent scrutiny and reinforced the legitimacy of judicial outcomes.

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Accountability was equally dependent on effective records management. Judicial officers had to be able to justify their decisions, and this required accurate and complete records. Without reliable documentation, it became difficult to investigate complaints, conduct audits, or evaluate performance. Hassan (2025) noted that digital records systems enhanced accountability by providing time-stamped logs of actions taken within case management platforms. These logs created a transparent chain of custody that reduced the likelihood of malpractice or unauthorized alterations.

In Tanzanian district courts, improving records management was essential for strengthening transparency and accountability. Digital systems allowed for standardized documentation practices, reducing inconsistencies across regions. They also facilitated public access to information, enabling citizens to track case progress and obtain copies of judgments. This aligned with global trends toward open justice, where courts published decisions online and provided digital access to case information.

Research indicated that digital records management significantly enhanced transparency by reducing the discretion of individual officers in handling files. Automated workflows minimized opportunities for manipulation, while centralized databases ensured that information was consistent and verifiable. Scholars such as Bannister and Connolly (2014) argued that e-government initiatives, including digital judicial systems, improved accountability by embedding transparency into institutional processes.

2.4 Relationship between records management and case resolution efficiency

Records management referred to the systematic control of records throughout their lifecycle, from creation to disposal. In courts, proper records management ensured that case files, evidence, and administrative documents were easily accessible and reliable. Mwangi (2022), in a study of the Eldoret High Court Registry in Kenya, found that effective records management practices significantly improved the efficiency of judicial operations by reducing case backlogs and delays.

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Case resolution efficiency referred to the ability of courts to process and conclude cases within reasonable timeframes, which was essential for ensuring justice and maintaining public confidence in the judiciary. Delays often occurred due to missing files, poor storage systems, and disorganized registries, all of which disrupted the smooth flow of judicial processes. Studies showed that effective records management played a central role in addressing these challenges. Mwangi (2022), in a study of the Eldoret High Court Registry in Kenya, found that proper records management significantly reduced case delays by improving file organization, retrieval speed, and overall administrative coordination. When records were well managed, judges and court staff spent less time searching for documents, enabling faster hearings and timely judgments.

Agu et al. (2021) similarly emphasized that efficient records keeping enhanced organizational performance by improving employee effectiveness and service delivery. The relationship between records management and case resolution efficiency was evident in several ways such as accessible records reduced adjournments caused by misplaced files, proper documentation strengthened accountability and transparency, and wellmaintained systems helped courts minimize backlogs and improve operational efficiency through better scheduling and monitoring.

Kanyabwira (2024) further noted that effective records management was essential for accountability and efficient service delivery in public institutions, a principle that directly aligned with the judiciary's need for timely and reliable case resolution. Overall, strong records management practices were a key driver of judicial efficiency and were vital for improving case resolution outcomes.

2.5 Challenges Facing Records Management in Tanzanian District Courts

Despite the recognized benefits of modern records management, Tanzanian district courts faced several persistent challenges that hindered effective implementation. Ndunguru (2015) observed that many courts continued to rely heavily on manual, paperbased systems. These systems were vulnerable to physical deterioration,

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misplacement, and human error. Paper files could be lost, damaged by environmental factors, or mishandled, leading to delays and administrative inefficiencies.

The uneven adoption of electronic records management systems was anotherrr major challenge. While some courts had implemented digital platforms, others lacked the infrastructure, funding, or technical expertise to transition from manual systems. Hassan (2025) noted that this fragmentation resulted in inconsistent service delivery, with some regions benefiting from modern systems while others lagged behind. Such disparities undermined national efforts to improve judicial performance and created inequities in access to justice.

Infrastructure limitations further complicated the implementation of digital systems. Reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and secure data storage facilities were essential for electronic records management, yet these resources were not uniformly available across all district courts. In some rural areas, frequent power outages or limited bandwidth disrupted digital workflows, forcing courts to revert to manual processes.

Human capacity constraints also posed significant challenges. Effective records management required trained personnel who understood classification schemes, metadata standards, digital preservation techniques, and information security protocols. The International Records Management Trust (2011) highlighted that many judicial staff lacked adequate training in modern records management practices. Without continuous professional development, courts struggled to maintain consistent and high quality record keeping.

Confidentiality concerns added another layer of complexity. Judicial records often contained sensitive personal information, and unauthorized access could have compromised privacy and security. Courts had to balance the need for transparency with the obligation to protect confidential data. Weak access controls, inadequate cybersecurity measures, or poorly designed systems could have exposed records to breaches or misuse.

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Financial constraints also limited progress. Implementing and maintaining digital systems required significant investment in hardware, software, training, and maintenance. Budget limitations might have forced courts to prioritize other operational needs, delaying modernization efforts. Scholars such as Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) argued that sustainable records management in developing countries required long term funding strategies and strong institutional commitment.

Change of management remained a critical challenge. Transitioning from manual to digital systems required cultural shifts, new workflows, and organizational restructuring. Resistance to change, lack of awareness, or fear of technology could have impeded adoption. Successful implementation required leadership support, stakeholder engagement, and clear communication about the benefits of modern records management.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework was the structure that supports and guides a research study by providing the lens through which the problem was examined. It explains the theories, concepts, and models that underpin the research, showing how they relate to the objectives and questions of the study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a theoretical framework was a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories which provide guidance to a research study. Also Creswell (2014) emphasizes that a theoretical framework helps the researcher to anchor the study in established knowledge, ensuring that findings were interpreted within a scholarly context. In this research, the Records Lifecycle Model is adopted as the guiding theoretical framework to assess the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district courts in Tanzania.

2.6.1 Records Lifecycle Model

The Records Lifecycle Model was one of the earliest and most widely recognized theories in records management. It conceptualizes records as passing through a series of

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distinct stageswhich were creation or receipt, classification, use and maintenance, and final disposition (archival preservation or destruction). Dando (2004) defines records management as the process of capturing, classifying, storing, and maintaining records throughout their lifecycle,emphasizing that each stage requires systematic control to ensure authenticity, reliability, and accessibility. Similarly, ISO 15489-1:2016 describes records as documented information created and maintained in the course of organizational activities, underscoring their evidential and legal value.

In judicial contexts, the lifecycle model is particularly relevant because court records must be managed from the moment they are created examplecase filings, affidavits, rulingsthrough their active use in hearings and appeals, and finally to their long term preservation or disposal. Each stage of the lifecycle directly influences judicial performance. For example, proper creation and classification of records ensures accuracy and completeness, effective maintenance supports timely retrieval during hearings and appropriate disposition safeguards historical memory while reducing storage burdens.

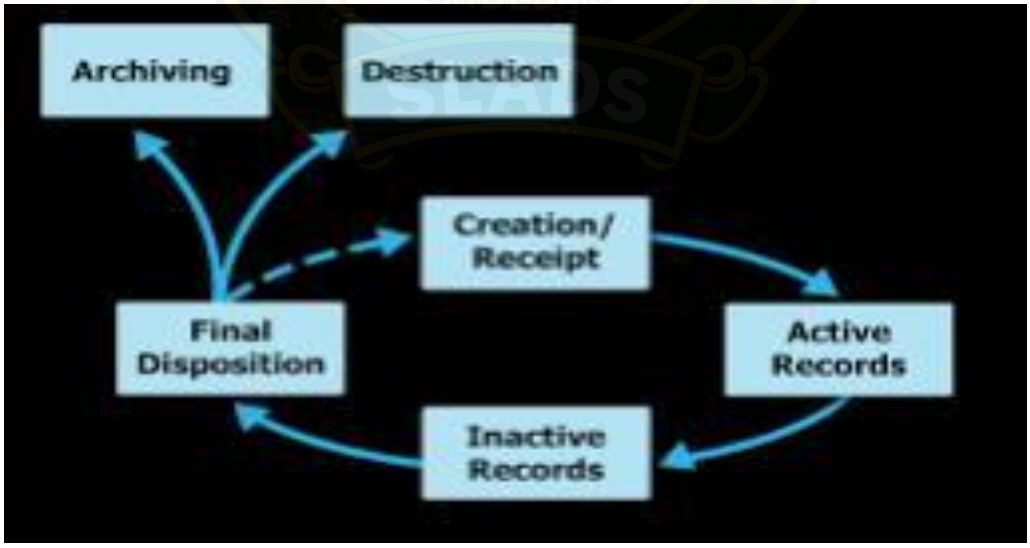


Figure 2.1 Records Lifecycle Model Diagram

Source: New York State Archives. (2021).

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The diagram above illustrated the Records Lifecycle Model, which represented the systematic stages through which court records passedfrom creation to final disposition. In the context of Tandahimba District Court, this cycle began when case files and judicial documents were created, followed by their classification, active use, and maintenance during hearings. After cases were concluded, records were either preserved for longterm reference or disposed of according to legal and institutional requirements.

Each stage of the lifecycle was found to be crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and performance improvement within the judiciary. Proper management across the lifecycle had reduced delays, prevented loss of files, and supported efficient case resolution. The process of creation and classification ensured that all case documents were properly registered and accessible, the maintenance stage allowed court staff to retrieve and update records efficiently and the disposition stage ensured that inactive records were either archived for future reference or securely destroyed to maintain confidentiality.

This systematic approach to managing records had demonstrated how effective records management contributed directly to improved judicial performance. It had enhanced service delivery, strengthened institutional memory, and promoted public trust in the court system. Therefore, the lifecycle model provided a clear framework for understanding how records management practices influenced the overall efficiency and accountability of district courts in Tanzania.

2.6.2 Application to Judicial Performance

Applying the lifecycle model to Tanzanian district courts highlights how records management contributes to transparency, accountability, and performance improvement. When records are systematically controlled across their lifecycle, courts can reduce case backlogs, minimize delays,

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And enhance service delivery. Conversely, weaknesses at any stage such as poor classification or inadequate preservation can lead to misplaced files, adjournments, and loss of public trust.

This framework also aligns with reforms such as the introduction of Electronic Case Management Systems (ECMS), which extend lifecycle principles into digital environments. By ensuring that electronic records are properly created, maintained, and preserved, ECMS strengthen judicial efficiency and accountability.

2.7 Research Gap

Although existing scholarship recognizes that effective records management enhances efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public institutions, a significant gap remains in understanding how these practices specifically influence judicial performance within Tanzanian district courts. Much of the available literature focuses on national level judicial reforms or general public sector record keeping challenges, offering limited empirical evidence on district level realities where case volumes are highest and operational constraints are most severe (International Records Management Trust, 2011; Ndunguru, 2015). While digital case management systems have been introduced in some courts, their adoption is uneven, and little is known about how disparities in technological infrastructure, staff competence, and policy enforcement affect the quality of records management and subsequent judicial outcomes (Hassan, 2025). Furthermore, although transparency and accountability are frequently cited as benefits of effective records management, their mediating roles in the relationship between records management and judicial performance remain underexplored (ARMA International, 2015; Bannister & Connolly, 2014). This lack of focused, district level, theory driven, and empirically grounded research creates a gap in understanding whether improved records management directly enhances judicial performance or whether its impact is realized through strengthened oversight and reduced opportunities for malpractice. The present study addresses this gap by examining how records management practices shape judicial performance in Tanzanian district courts, with particular attention to the mediating roles of transparency and accountability and the contextual influence of institutional and technological factors.

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SECTION THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section presents the research methodology that guides the systematic investigation of how records management practices influence judicial performance in Tanzanian district courts. A clear methodology is essential because it outlines the procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in a way that ensures the study is credible, reliable, and aligned with its objectives. According to Creswell (2014), a well designed methodology provides a structured plan that connects the research problem with the methods used to address it. Therefore this section outlines the research design, area of study, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research ethics and data analysis plan,

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a research design that provided a clear and systematic plan for investigating how records management practices influenced judicial performance in Tanzanian district courts. A research design served as the overall blueprint that guided the procedures for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in a way that ensured the study was valid and reliable. According to Kothari (2014), a well chosen research design helped the researcher obtain accurate and objective answers to the research questions. The study used a mixedmethods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design was appropriate because the study sought to measure the extent of the relationship between records management practices and judicial performance while also exploring the experiences and perceptions of judicial staff. Creswell (2014) explained that mixedmethods designs were useful when a single approach was insufficient to fully understand a complex problem.

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3.2 Area of Study

Area of the study referred to the actual place where the research was conducted (Kothari, 2014). For the purpose of this research the area of study was at Tandahimba District Court in the Mtwara region of Tanzania. The court handled a large number of civil and criminal cases, making it an important setting for examining how records management affected judicial performance.

3.3 Population of the study

The population for this study consisted of all judicial and administrative staff at Tandahimba District Court who were directly involved in the creation, handling, storage, and use of court records. These individuals played a central role in ensuring that records supported efficient case processing, transparency, and accountability. District courts in Tanzania relied heavily on accurate and accessible records to deliver justice, making their staff an essential population for examining how records management affected judicial performance. The target population of this study was 50, which included resident magistrates, court clerks, ICT officers, administrative officers, and registry staff.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample size referred to the number of participants selected from the total population to take part in a study. It helped ensure that the findings were reliable and represented the larger group being studied. According to Kothari (2014), determining an appropriate sample size was essential for achieving accuracy and minimizing errors in research results. The sample size for this study was 30 respondents whereby 5 magistrates, 10 court clerks, 5 ICT officers and 10 registry staff at Tandahimba District Court.

3.5 Sampling Technique

This study used a combination of probability and non probability sampling techniques to ensure that the selected participants accurately represented the staff involved in records management at Tandahimba District Court. Sampling techniques helped the researcher choose individuals who could provide reliable and relevant information for the study.

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According to Kothari (2014), an appropriate sampling technique increased the accuracy and credibility of research findings.

3.5.1Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling has used to select respondents for the questionnaire. In this method, every staff member had an equal chance of being included in the sample. This technique reduced bias and ensured that the sample represented the entire population (Kothari, 2014). It was suitable for the quantitative part because it supported statistical analysis and generalization of results.

3.5.2 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling has used to select key informants such as magistrates, registry staff, ICT officers, and administrative officers. These individuals were chosen because they had direct experience with records management processes and could provide deeper insights. Creswell (2014) noted that purposive sampling was appropriate when the researcher needed participants who possessed specific knowledge relevant to the study.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods were the tools and procedures a researcher used to gather information needed to answer the research questions. They helped ensure that the study obtained accurate, relevant, and sufficient data. According to Creswell (2014), selecting appropriate data collection methods strengthened the validity and reliability of a study by allowing the researcher to capture both numerical trends and detailed experiences. In this study data were collected through three main methods which were questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire referred to the pieces of paper with the prepared questions given to respondents in order to be answered. This study used closeended questionnaires and open ended questionnaires. The researcher distributed questionnaires to respondents in

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order to get the right answer on the study. Kothari (2014) noted that questionnaires were suitable for studies that required measurable and comparable data.

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews were a data collection method that involved asking participants questions directly to obtain detailed information about their experiences, opinions, and perceptions. They allowed the researcher to explore issues more deeply. Creswell (2014) explained that interviews were especially useful when the researcher needed rich, descriptive data about processes or behaviors within an institution. In this study semistructured interviews were used to gather insights from magistrates, registry staff, ICT officers, and administrative personnel at Tandahimba District Court. This approach provided flexibility, allowing the researcher to ask guiding questions. According to Kothari (2014), semi structured interviews helped capture both consistent information across participants and unique perspectives that enhanced understanding of the research problem.

3.6.3 Documents Review

Document review was a method of collecting data by examining existing written materials such as reports, case files, policies, and administrative records. It helped the researcher obtain factual, historical, and verifiable information that supported the study. Bowen (2009) explained that document analysis was useful because it provided stable and reliable data that could be reviewed repeatedly without influencing the setting or participants. In this study, document review involved analyzing court records, case registers, performance reports, and records management guidelines at Tandahimba District Court. This method helped the researcher understand how records were created, stored, and used in daily judicial processes. Creswell (2014) noted that reviewing documents strengthened a study by supporting triangulation, where information from documents was compared with data from interviews and questionnaires to improve accuracy.

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3.7 Data Analysis plan

A data analysis plan was the structured process a researcher followed to organize, interpret, and draw conclusions from collected data. It ensured that the information gathered was examined systematically and in a way that answered the research questions. According to Kothari (2014), a clear analysis plan helped transform raw data into meaningful findings that supported sound decision making in research.

3.7.1 Quantitative analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to summarize responses. Statistics were then used to examine relationships between variables like records management, transparency, accountability, and judicial performance. Creswell (2014) noted that statistical analysis helped identify patterns and test assumptions in quantitative studies.

3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and document reviews were analyzed through content analysis. This involved reading the data carefully, identifying recurring ideas, and categorizing them into meaningful themes. Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained that content analysis was effective for interpreting participants' experiences and understanding institutional practices.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were the basic principles that guided how research involving people should be carried out to ensure fairness, safety, and respect. They helped protect participants and maintained the credibility of the study. Creswell (2014) noted that ethical conduct was essential at every stage of research to safeguard participants' rights and promote responsible practice.

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Informed Consent

All respondents were provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, its objectives, and how the data would be used. Consent forms and verbal explanations ensured that participants understood the research before agreeing to take part. No respondent was included without their informed consent.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were informed that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any consequences. This safeguarded their autonomy and minimized any sense of coercion.

Anonymity of Respondents

To protect confidentiality, no names or identifying details of respondents were recorded in the report. Codes were used instead of personal identifiers, and responses were aggregated to prevent tracing back to individuals. This ensured that participants' privacy was respected throughout the research process.

Permission from Tandahimba District Court

Formal permission to conduct the study was obtained from the administration of Tandahimba District Court. A written request was submitted to the court management, and approval was granted before data collection commenced. This authorization ensured that the research complied with institutional protocols and respected judicial procedures.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of findings from the study conducted at Tandahimba District Court. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews, and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings are organized according to demographic characteristics of respondents and thematic areas aligned with the research objectives: records management practices, transparency and accountability, case resolution efficiency, and challenges facing records management.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents in this part represents distribution of gender, age and level of education. The researcher decided to get personnel information of respondents for purpose of knowing which group in target population are aware on the contribution of records management in performance improvement in district court. The study involved 30 respondents 17 females and 13 males, drawn from magistrates, registry officers, ICT staff, and administrative personnel. Their demographic characteristics provide context for interpreting the findings.

4.2 Gender of Respondents

Out of 30 respondents, 17 were female and 13 were male. Females were more represented in registry and administrative roles, while males dominated ICT-related positions. This distribution reflects staffing patterns in Tanzanian district courts.

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Table 4.1: Information on Gender of Respondents (N=30)

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	13	43.3%
Female	17	56.7%
Total	30	100%

Source: Field Study (2026)

The table 4.1 show that 13(43.3%) were male and 17(56.7%) were female respondents from the study area. Findings revealed that female was considered much in the study than male but the researcher was succeeded to get information from both of them. This distribution highlights gendered staffing patterns in Tanzanian courts. Women's dominance in registry roles means they are central to daily records handling, which directly influences transparency and accountability. However, men's dominance in ICT roles suggests a gender gap in technical capacity building, which may affect digital adoption.

4.3 Position of respondents in the Court

The distribution of respondents by their position within the court system. A total of 30 respondents participated in the study and were categorized into four groups which are Magistrate and Judge, Court Clerk, Records Officer, and Other positions including Administration and ICT staff.

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Table 4.2 Position of respondents in the Court

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Magistrate/ Judge	1	3.3%
Courtclerk	8	26.7%
Records officer	3	10%
Other	18	60%
Total	30	100%

Source: Field Study (2026)

The table 4.2 show that most respondents were other court staff, followed by court clerks and records officers, while magistrates/judges were very few. This means the study mainly reflects the experiences of staff who work directly with daily records handling and case file management. Their involvement in routine record keeping tasks makes their responses highly reliable for assessing how records management affects court performance. The low number of magistrates is expected due to their limited availability, but their inclusion still adds value by offering a judicial view points. One respondent stated that;

"I have been a court clerk for three years. My daily work revolves around preparing case files, updating registers, and ensuring that documents are available during hearings. Records management is central to my role because missing or disorganizedfiles can cause adjournments and frustrate both the court and litigants."

The information from the court clerk shows that records management is central to daily court operations. Clerks are responsible for preparing case files, updating registers, and ensuring documents are available during hearings. When records are missing or disorganized, hearings are delayed, cases are adjourned, and both the court and litigants become frustrated. This finding confirms that proper records handling directly affects the efficiency of case resolution. It also highlights that clerks, as frontline staff, are deeply

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involved in routine recordkeeping tasks, making their experiences reliable for assessing how records management influences performance. Their perspective supports the idea that effective records management reduces delays, improves service delivery, and strengthens public trust in the judiciary.

4.4Work Experience in the Judicial Sector

Understanding the years of experience of respondents is important because it provides insight into their level of exposure to records management practices and the judicial environment. Staff with longer service tend to have deeper knowledge of traditional manual systems, while newer employees often reflect the current training and orientation provided by the court. This distribution helps determine how experience influences perceptions of records handling efficiency, adoption of digital systems, and awareness of challenges within the courts record keeping processes. The analysis of experience levels therefore strengthens the credibility of the findings by showing whether responses come from seasoned professionals, newly recruited staff, or a balanced mix of both.

Table 4.3 Work Experience in the Judicial Sector

Year of experience	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 2 years	4	13.3%
2-5 years	6	20.0%
6-10	10	33.3%
More than 10	10	33.3%
Total	30	100%

Source: Field Data (2026)

The respondents work experience is well balanced, with new employees, early career staff, and a large proportion of mid career and senior personnel. Only 13.3% had less than 2 years of experience, while 20% had 2-5 years, representing staff still building foundational skills in records handling.

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The majority 66.6% had 6-10 years or more than 10 years of service, giving them deep familiarity with both manual and emerging digital systems.This strong presence of experienced staff enhances the credibility of the study because they understand long standing challenges such as file misplacement, retrieval delays, and infrastructure gaps. One respondent noted that;

"*I have been in the judiciary for over fifteen years. My experience is rooted in traditional recordkeeping, and I have a deep understanding of the procedures and the difficulties that come with managing records manually."*

The respondent with over 15 years of service shows that long experience in the judiciary builds strong knowledge of traditional record keeping practices. They understand the procedures well and are aware of the difficulties that come with handling records manually.

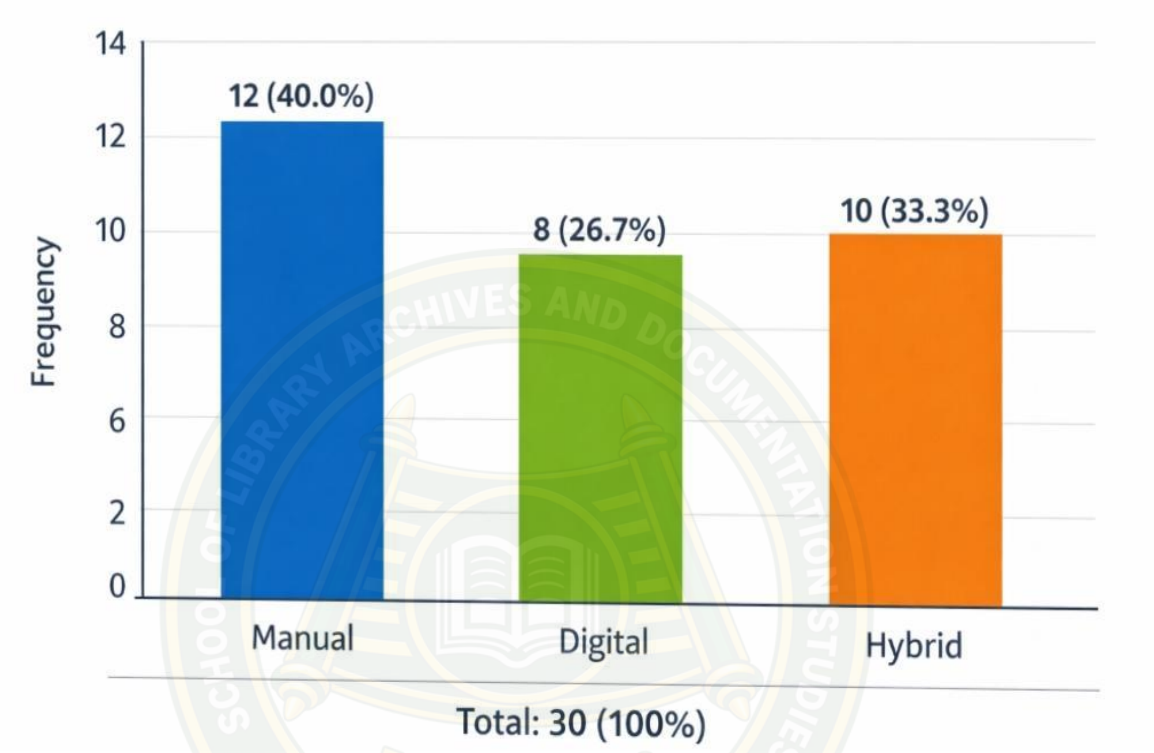
This finding indicates that staff with longer service provide valuable insights into how records are managed and the challenges faced. Their perspective adds credibility to the study because it reflects the views of someone deeply familiar with the system.Meanwhile, the inclusion of newer staff highlights ongoing needs for training and orientation to ensure consistent practices.The court benefits from substantial institutional memory but must continue strengthening capacity building efforts for new recruits to maintain effective and reliable records management.

4.5 Type of Records system used

Understanding the type of records system used in the court is important because it shows how staff manage, store, and retrieve information in their daily work. The responses help reveal whether the court relies more on manual filing, modern digital systems, or a combination of both through a hybrid approach. This information is essential for assessing the courts level of technological adoption and its readiness to improve efficiency and service delivery.

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Figure 4.1 Type of Records system used



Source: Field Data (2026)

The data shows that manual systems 40% remain the most common, reflecting the continued reliance on paper based filing due to limited ICT infrastructure and budget constraints in many courts. This reliance often leads to challenges such as file misplacement and slower retrieval times.The hybrid system 33.3%demonstrates that courts are attempting to modernize by combining manual and digital approaches. This transitional model allows staff to benefit from digital efficiency while still maintaining physical files for legal authenticity and backup. It highlights a cautious but progressive move toward modernization.The digital system 26.7%, though less common, represents courts that have invested in ICT infrastructure and staff training. These systems improve speed, transparency, and accountability, but their limited adoption suggests barriers such as inadequate funding, resistance to change, and lack of technical expertise.The

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researcher suggest that Tanzanian courts are at different stages of technological adoption. The dominance of manual systems indicates that courts still face challenges in moving toward modernization. One respondent stated that;

"We use a combination of manual and digital systems. Some records are still kept in physical files, while others are stored electronically, depending on the type of case or department."

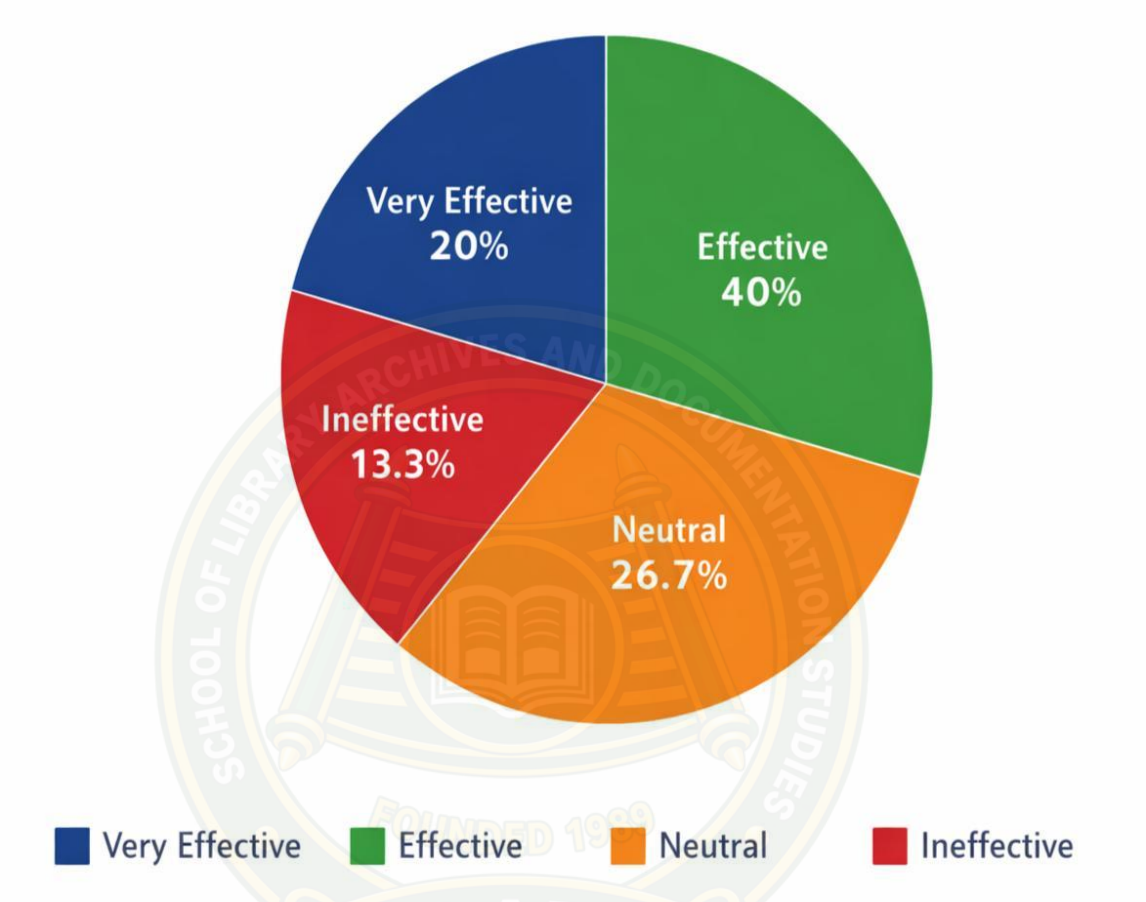
The presence of hybrid systems shows progress, as courts attempt to balance traditional practices with modern technology. Distribution reflects a gradual shift from manual to digital, with hybrid systems acting as a bridge. This has important implications for judicial performance, as effective records management directly influences case resolution speed, transparency, and accountability.

4.6 Effectiveness of Current Records system

Assessing the effectiveness of the current records system is important because it shows how well the court's recordkeeping practices support case management and overall judicial performance. The responses reveal whether staff view the system as very effective, effective, neutral, or ineffective. This distribution helps to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and whether improvements are needed to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in court operations.

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Figure 4.2 Effectiveness of current records system



Source: Field Data (2026)

The results show that most respondents rated the current records system as effective 40% or very effective 20%, meaning that the majority believe the system supports court operations well. This suggests that existing procedures for records management are functioning satisfactorily in promoting accessibility and reliability of information. However, 26.7% of respondents were neutral, indicating that some staff see room for improvement, possibly in areas like digital integration or workflow consistency. A smaller group, 13.3%, found the system ineffective, pointing to challenges such as delayed retrieval or limited ICT support. One respondent stated that;

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"*The system is effective. We can manage and retrieve records without major problems, though there are still areas that could be improved."*

The respondent's view that*"the system is effective"* shows that the current records system is generally working well. Staff are able to manage and retrieve records without major problems, which means the system supports daily court operations and case management. At the same time, the mention that **"***there are still areas that could be improved"* indicates that while the system is functional, it is not perfect. Some weaknesses remain, and addressing them could make recordkeeping more efficient and reliable.

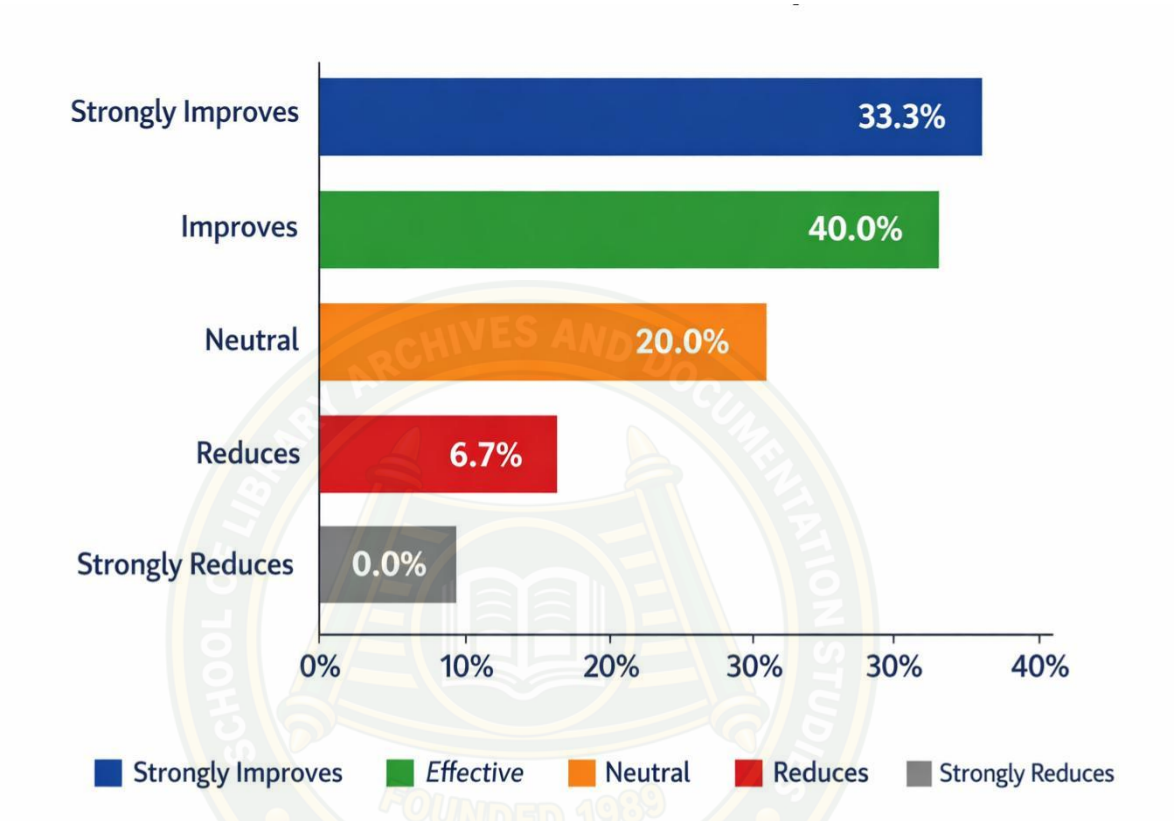
Overall, the researcher finding suggests that the system is adequate but not fully optimized. It provides a solid foundation for court work, but there was still a need for continuous improvement and modernization to achieve full efficiency and satisfaction among all court staff.

4.7 Impact on the Judicial Performance

Evaluating the impact of records management on case resolution speed helps to understand how well the current system supports timely delivery of justice. The responses show whether effective recordkeeping practices contribute to faster handling of cases or create delays in court operations. By analyzing how staff perceive this impact ranging from strongly improves to reduces the study identifies the extent to which records management influences judicial performance and efficiency in case processing.

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Figure 4.3 Impact of Records Management on the Judicial Pperformance



Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings indicate that effective records management has a positive impact on judicial performance, particularly in improving the speed of case resolution. A majority of respondents 40% believed that records management improves case resolution speed, while 33.3% stated it strongly improves efficiency. This shows that well organized records systems help judges and court clerks access case files quickly, reducing unnecessary delays and adjournments.Meanwhile, 20% of respondents were neutral, suggesting that some staff may not directly experience the benefits of improved record keeping or work in areas where its impact is less visible. Only 6.7% felt that records management reduces case resolution speed, possibly due to challenges such as poor system integration or limited ICT resources. None of the respondents believed it strongly

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reduces efficiency, reinforcing the overall positive perception. One respondent stated that;

> *"Whenever records are properly arranged, we retrieve case files quickly and hearings start on time. But when a file is missing, the whole session gets postponed. So good record keeping really helps us speed up case resolution."*

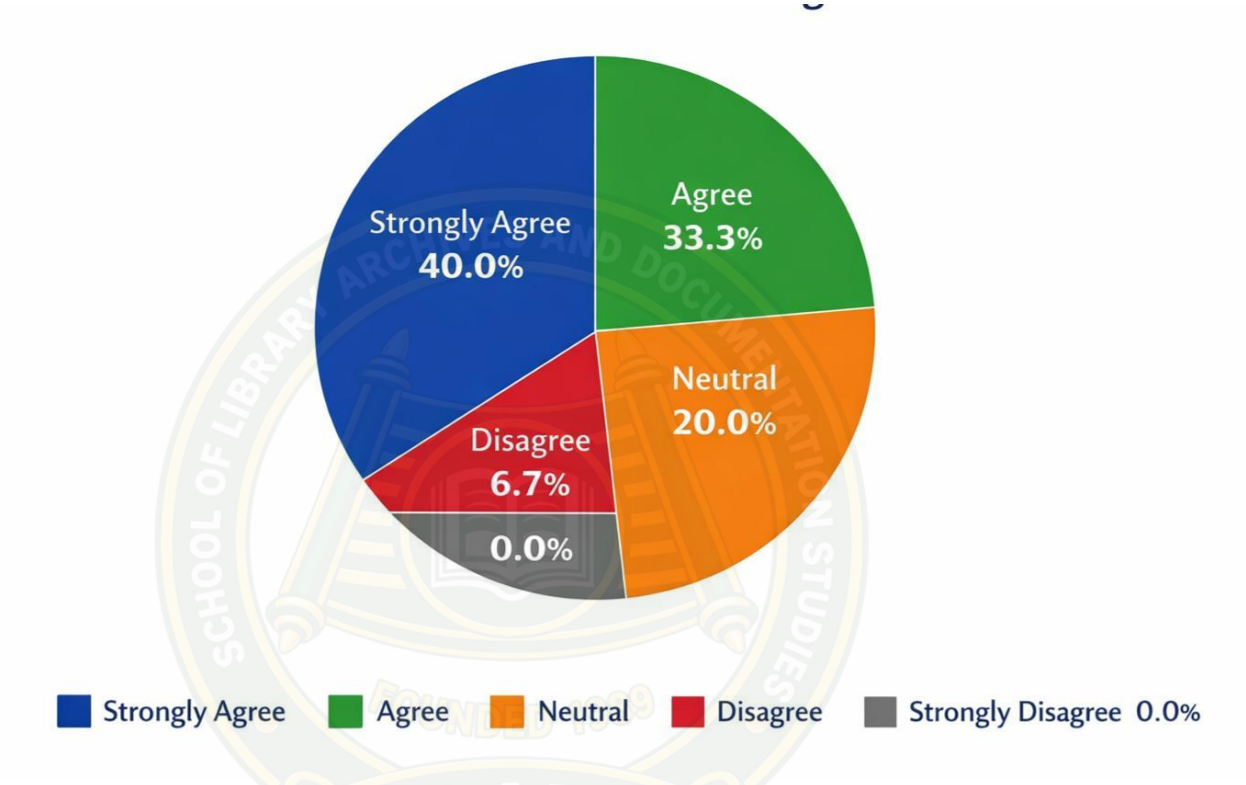
Therefore the results imply that effective records management contributes significantly to timely justice delivery by enhancing accessibility, organization, and accountability in court operations. The strong positive responses highlight the importance of continuous improvement and investment in record keeping systems to sustain judicial efficiency.

4.8 Examining reduction of Case backlogs due to effective records management

Examining the reduction of case backlogs helps to determine how effective records management is in supporting timely justice delivery. Efficient record keeping enables quick retrieval of case files, proper tracking, and improved scheduling, which together help minimize delays in court proceedings. The responses in this table show whether staff believe that good record management practices contribute to reducing case backlogs or not.

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Figure 4.4 examining reduction of Case backlogs due to effective records management



Source: Field Data (2026)

The researcher findings show that most respondents believe effective records management helps in reducing case backlogs. A large proportion, 40%, strongly agree, and 33.3% agree, indicating that organized record keeping enables faster access to case files and supports timely case processing. One respondent stated that:

> "*Once we improved how we store and track files, we noticed fewer cases piling up. The delays usually come from misplacement or slow retrieval. When records are well organized, the backlog goes down.*"

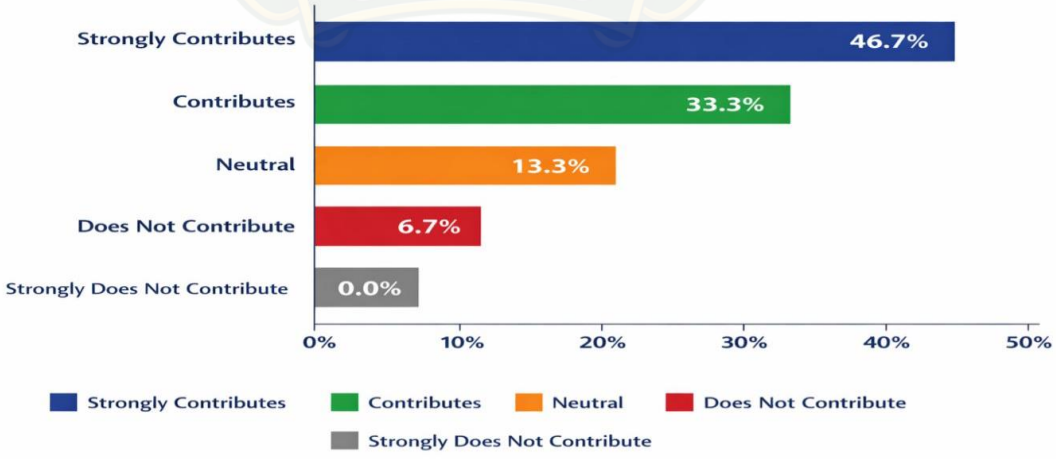
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About 20% of respondents were neutral, suggesting that some staff may not directly experience the benefits or work in departments less affected by backlog issues. Only 6.7% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, showing minimal doubt about the positive role of records management.Overall, the results imply that efficient records management practices contribute significantly to judicial efficiency by minimizing delays and improving case flow within the courts.

4.9 The contribution of Records Management in Transparency and Accountability

Evaluating how records management contributes to transparency and accountability is essential for understanding its role in promoting trust and integrity within the judicial system. Proper record keeping ensures that court activities are welldocumented, accessible, and verifiable, which helps prevent misconduct and supports fair decisionmaking. The responses in this table show whether staff believe that effective records management strongly contributes, contributes, or has little effect on transparency and accountability.

Figure 4.5 the contribution of Records Management in Transparency and Accountability



Source: Field Data (2026)

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The findings show strong agreement that records management greatly enhances transparency and accountability in the judicial system. Most respondents 46.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed indicated that proper record keeping ensures court activities are traceable, verifiable, and accessible, supporting openness and responsible decision making. One respondent noted that:

> **"***When files are well organized, it becomes difficult for anyone to hide or alter information. Proper records management prevents misconduct and supports fair decision making***."**

A small proportion of 13.3%remained neutral, mainly staff who do not interact with case files frequently. Only 6.7% felt records management does not contribute, likely due to challenges such as limited digital access or incomplete records.

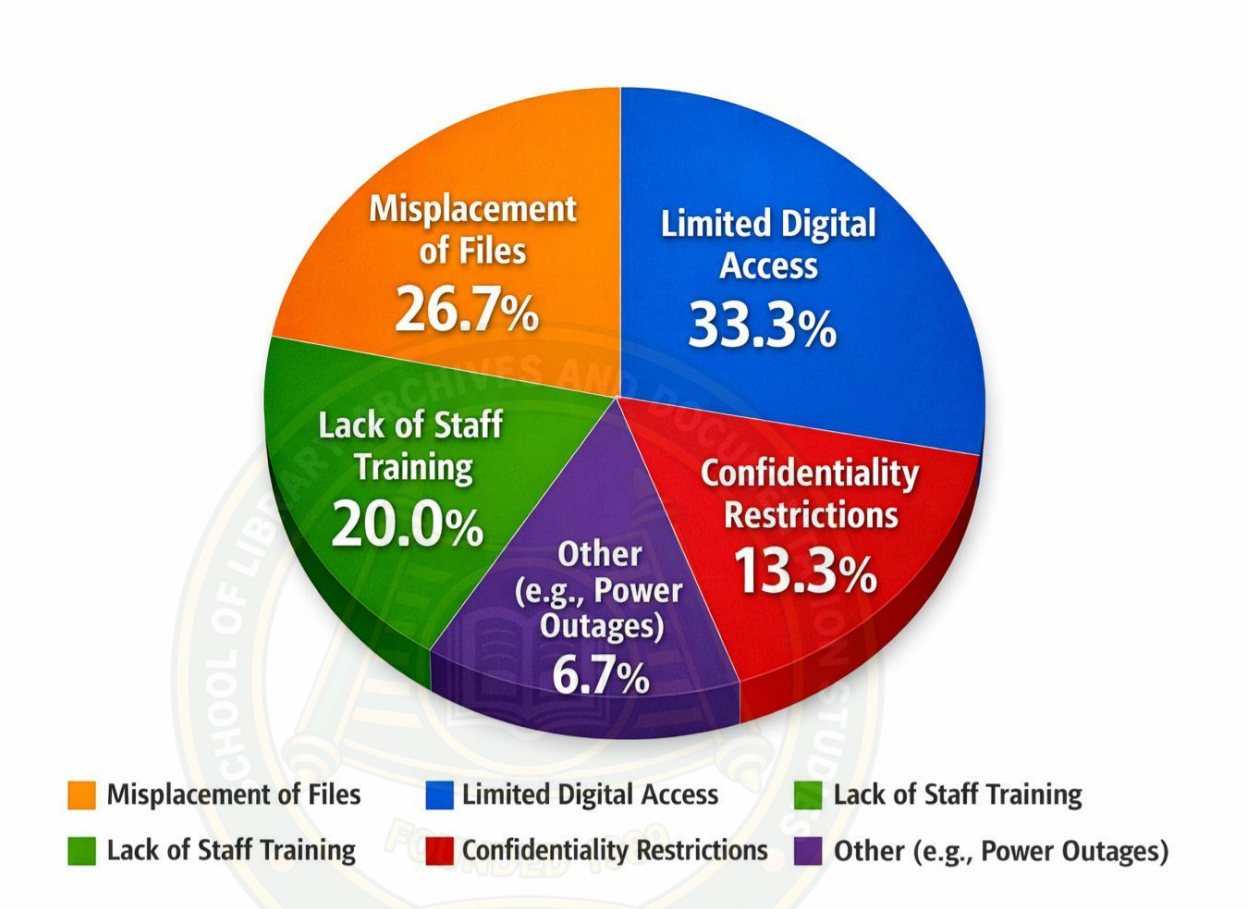
The researcher identified that both quantitative and qualitative evidence confirm that strong records management practices significantly strengthen judicial accountability, improve audit trails, and build public trust. The results highlight the need for continued investment in both manual and digital record keeping systems to sustain transparency and integrity in court operations.

4.10 Challenges faced Records Management in district court

Understanding the challenges faced in records management is crucial for identifying areas that hinder efficiency and reliability in court operations. Effective recordkeeping depends on proper organization, accessibility, and staff competence. However, institutions often encounter obstacles such as misplacement of files, limited digital access, and lack of staff training, which affect the smooth flow of information.

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Figure 4.6 Challenges faced Records Management in District Court



Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings show that district courts face several key challenges that weaken records management efficiency. The most common challenge is limited digital access 33.3%, caused by inadequate ICT infrastructure and continued reliance on manual systems. Misplacement of files 26.7% also remains a major issue, leading to delays and reduced confidence in record reliability. A further 20% of respondents identified lack of staff training, showing that many employees are not fully equipped to manage both manual and electronic records. Also challenges like confidentiality restrictions 13.3% which slow down access to sensitive files, and power outages 6.7%, which disrupt digital operations.

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The researcher findings revealed that limited digital access was the most frequently reported challenge 33.3%. Interview responses confirm that inadequate ICT infrastructure, few computers, unstable networks, and power interruptions hinder digital record keeping. This challenge shows that modernization and investment in digital platforms are urgently needed to improve efficiency, accessibility, and reliability of court records. One respondent stated that:

> **"***The digital system is helpful, but not all staff have access to it. We still depend heavily on manual processes."*

Also misplacement of files remains a major challenge due to reliance on manual filing systems and inconsistent tracking procedures. The 26.7% of responses showing that misplaced files cause delays, adjournments, and reduced confidence in record reliability. This challenge highlights weaknesses in organization and file movement control, emphasizing the need for improved filing systems and tracking mechanisms. Respondent stated that:

> **"***The manual filing system makes it easy for files to get mixed up or misplaced, especially when staff are overwhelmed***."**

The 20% of respondents identified lack of staff training as a challenge. Interview responses reinforce this by highlighting gaps in digital literacy, limited orientation for new staff, and insufficient training on both manual and electronic systems. This challenge affects consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in record handling, indicating a need for continuous capacity building. One staff responded that:

> **"***New staff struggle a lot because they join the court without any formal orientation on records management. They learn by observing others, which leads to mistakes and slows down work."*

Confidentiality restrictions were reported by 13.3% of respondents. These show that while confidentiality is essential, strict access controls can slow down retrieval and affect workflow. This challenge reflects the need for clear policies that balance privacy

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with timely access, ensuring both security and efficiency in court operations. Respondent stated that:

> **"***Balancing confidentiality and accessibility is difficult. Sometimes we cannot release a file immediately due to privacy concerns."*

Other challenges reported by a smaller proportion of 6.7%, power outages significantly affect digital record keeping and overall efficiency. The respondent responses confirm that external operational factors such as electricity interruptions hinder both manual and electronic processes. This challenge highlights the need for backup power solutions to ensure continuity of court operations.

> **"***Even simple activities like retrieving files from the digital register stop during power outages. It forces us to postpone tasks and affects the overall flow of court operations***."**

The researcher findings show that records management in district courts faces operational, infrastructural, and capacity related barriers. Limited digital access, misplacement of files, and lack of training are the most pressing issues, while confidentiality restrictions and power outages also contribute to inefficiencies. Strengthening digital infrastructure, improving staff training, and addressing operational barriers are essential steps toward enhancing records management and supporting judicial performance.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, conclusion, recommendations, and areas for further study based on the research conducted on records management and its influence on judicial performance in district courts at Tandahimba district Court. The study aimed to assess how records management practices affect case resolution speed, reduction of case backlogs, transparency and accountability, and overall efficiency of court operations. It also examined the challenges faced in managing records and identified strategies for improvement. The chapter synthesizes both questionnaire and interview findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of records management and its implications for judicial performance.

5.2 Summary of the Main Findings

The study revealed several key findings regarding the role and effectiveness of records management in district courts:

1.Impact on Case Resolution Speed

The majority of respondents indicated that effective records management improves case resolution speed, with 40% agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing. Interview responses confirmed that timely retrieval of case files reduces adjournments and supports faster hearings.

2.Reduction of Case Backlogs

Findings showed that 73.3% of respondents believed records management contributes to reducing case backlogs. Staff explained that organized filing systems and partial digital tracking help prevent delays caused by misplaced or incomplete files.

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3.Contribution of Records Management to Transparency and Accountability

A significant proportion of respondents 46.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed stated that proper record keeping enhances transparency and accountability. Interviews supported this by highlighting improved audit trails, verifiable decisions, and reduced opportunities for manipulation.

4.Challenges Facing Records Management

The study identified several obstacles that faced Records Management in Tanzanian district court

- Limited digital access 33.3% due to inadequate ICT infrastructure.

- Misplacement of files 26.7% caused by weak filing and retrieval systems.

- Lack of staff training 20% affecting both manual and electronic record handling.

- Confidentiality restrictions 13.3% slowing access to sensitive files.

- Power outages 6.7% disrupting digital operations.

These challenges collectively hinder efficiency, reliability, and timely access to court records.

5.Strategies Suggested by Respondents

Respondents recommended strengthening digital infrastructure, implementing a full electronic case management system, improving filing systems, enhancing staff training, establishing clear file movement policies, and providing backup power solutions.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that effective records management is essential for improving judicial performance in district courts. Proper organization, accessibility, and maintenance of records significantly enhance case resolution speed, reduce backlogs, and promote transparency and accountability. However, the presence of infrastructural,

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operational, and capacity related challenges limits the full potential of records management systems.

The findings demonstrate that courts relying heavily on manual systems face more delays, misplacement of files, and inefficiencies. Strengthening digital systems, improving staff competence, and addressing operational barriers are critical for achieving reliable, efficient, and transparent judicial processes. Overall, records management remains a foundational pillar for timely justice delivery and institutional integrity.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the researcher findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve records management and judicial performance at Tanzanian district court;

1.Strengthen Digital Infrastructure

Invest in computers, stable internet connectivity, and modern ICT tools to enhance digital access and reduce reliance on manual systems.

2.Implement a Full Electronic Case Management System

Adopt a comprehensive ECMS to support digital tracking, storage, and retrieval of case files, thereby reducing misplacement and improving case flow.

3.Provide Regular Staff Training

Conduct continuous training on both manual and electronic record keeping to improve staff competence and reduce errors.

4.Improve Filing and Storage Systems

Upgrade physical storage facilities, reorganize filing procedures, and enforce standardized filing practices to minimize misplacement of files.

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5.Establish Clear File Movement and Access Policies

Develop strict guidelines for borrowing, tracking, and returning files to enhance accountability and prevent unauthorized access.

6.Enhance Confidentiality Management

Introduce secure storage for sensitive records and clear protocols for authorized access to balance privacy with efficiency.

7.Provide Backup Power Solutions

Install generators or solar backup systems to ensure continuity of digital operations during power outages.

8.Digitize Old Case Files

Convert manual archives into digital formats to improve accessibility, preservation, and retrieval speed.

9.Conduct Regular Records Audits

Perform periodic audits to identify missing, outdated, or poorly managed records and improve overall record quality.

5.5 Areas for Further Study

The study opens opportunities for further research in the following areas;

1.Assessment of Digital Readiness in Tanzanian Courts

A detailed study on ICT infrastructure, digital literacy, and system readiness for full electronic case management.

2.Comparative Study Between Manual and Electronic Record Systems

Investigating performance differences between courts using manual systems and those using digital systems.

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3.Impact of Records Management on Public Trust

Exploring how record keeping practices influence public perception of transparency and fairness in judicial processes.

4.Evaluation of Staff Competency in Records Management

Assessing the level of skills and training needs among court staff handling records.

5.Long Term Effects of Digitization on Judicial Efficiency

Studying how digitizing old case files affects case flow, backlog reduction, and long term preservation.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear Respondent

I am Tariki Kassim Jafari student from SLADS Bagamoyo conducting research on assessing the contribution of records management to performance improvement in district court in Tanzania. Kindly assist by filling this form by choosing the collect answer or comments in the blanks by providing the best of your knowledge.

After filling in the form please hand it over to the researcher.

1.What is your gender?

a) Male

b) Female ( )

2. What is your position in the court?

a) Judge/Magistrate

b) Court Clerk ( )

c) Records Officer

d) Other (specify). ……..

3.How many years have you worked in the judiciary?

a) Less than 2 years

b) 2–5 years ( )

c) 6–10 years

d) More than 10 years

4.Which records management system is mainly used in your court?

a) Manual

b) Digital ( )

c) Hybrid

5. How fective is the current records management system?

a) Very effective

b) Effective

c) Neutral ( )

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d) Ineffective

6.How does records management affect the speed of case resolution?

a) Strongly improves
b) Improves
c) Neutral ( )
d) Reduces
e) Strongly reduces

7.Does effective records management help reduce case backlogs?

a) Strongly agree
b) Agree
c) Neutral ( )
d) Disagree
e) Strongly disagree

8.Does records management contribute to transparency and accountability in judicial processes?

a) Strongly contributes
b) Contributes
c) Neutral ( )
d) Does not contribute
e) Strongly does not contribute

9. challenges do you face in managing court records?

a) Misplacement of files
b) Limited digital access
c) Lack of staff training ( )
d) Confidentiality restrictions
e) Other (specify) ……..

10. strategies would you recommend to improve records management? ……
……

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APPENDIX II

INTERVIEWS GUIDE

1.Please describe your role in the court, how long you have worked here, and how involved you are in managing or handling court records.

2.How are records currently managed in this court? Please explain whether the system is manual, digital, or a combination of both, and how case files are stored and retrieved.

3.What challenges do you face when handling or accessing court records, and how do you ensure their security and confidentiality?

4.In your experience, how does records management affect the speed of case resolution and overall court performance? Please share any examples you have observed.

5.How does records management help promote transparency and accountability in court operations, and do you think it helps reduce corruption risks? Please explain.

6.What major challenges affect effective records management in this court, and how do these challenges impact service delivery and court performance?

7.What strategies or improvements would you recommend to strengthen records management, including your views on electronic case management systems and training needs?

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APPENDIX III

RESEARCH WORK PLAN

The research will be conducted for the period of six (6) weeks as follow

ACTIVITIES PROGRAM	**1ST WEEK**	**2ND WEEK**	**3RD WEEK**	**4TH WEEK**	**5TH WEEK**	**6TH WEEK**
Reporting at the working place						
Familiarization and distribution of questionnaire						
Interview schedules						
Collection of data and compilation						
Data analysis and presentation						
First draft proof reading and final report submission						

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APPENDIX IV

BUDGET

The study was required money in order to achieve the goals for data collection. It includes stationery, transport expenses as well as daily expenses for researcher survival. The expenditure will be as the follow:

S/N	Item	Quantity	Cost
1	Pens	1box	10,000/=
2	Papers	1ream @ 15000	15,000/=
3	Questionnaire and interviews questions preparation	35 copies @ 200	7,000/=
4	Typing and printing proposal		40,000/=
6	Meals	30 days @ 5000	150,000/=
	TOTAL		222,000/=

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APPENDIX V.

APPROVAL LETTER

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
JUDICIARY

Phone No: 023 2410094
Email:
dctandahimba@judiciary.go.tz
Website: http//www.judiciary.go.tz
If you reply please mention,

Ref No: AB.187/193/01/40

Administrative Officer,
Tandahimba District Court,
2 Barabara ya Mahakama,
S. L. P. 05,
Tandahimba.

16th Day of **April, 2026**

Campus Director,

The School of Library, and Documentation Studies (SLADS),

P.O.BOX 1051,

Mtwara.

REF. RESEARCH WORK ATTACHMENT FOR YOUR STUDENT

TARIKI KASSIMU JAFARI.

Reference is made to the heading above.

2. We have your letter dated **16Th** Day of **April ,2026** concerning request for research your student who is pursuing Ordinary Diploma in Record, Archive and Information Management.

3. Title this letter I would like to inform you that, research attachment is available at this entity from **30th** day of **March, 2026** To **15th** day of **May, 2026**

Please inform him/her to report at the office of administrative/Human resources Officer for directives.

NORAH P. MTYAMA
.....
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER,
TANDAHIMBA

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