

Examining Regulatory Compliance in E-Records Management in the Selected MDAs and LGAs in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examined regulatory compliance in selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania. The study focused on three objectives: staff awareness of regulatory frameworks, the relevance of existing frameworks to e-records management and the availability of resources to support compliance. The study was guided by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) E-Readiness Tool. A pragmatist approach was adopted, using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. A total of 238 respondents were included in the study using a census approach. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, document review and observations, allowing both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered. Quantitative data were analysed with SPSS version 21, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings show that staff awareness of regulatory frameworks and their legal responsibilities regarding e-records management is generally low. The study also found that many existing regulatory frameworks are poorly aligned with current requirements for e-records management. In addition, institutions face limited resource capacity, especially in trained personnel, ICT infrastructure, and financial support, which affects compliance with e-records management. The study concludes that regulatory compliance in e-records management remains low across the studied institutions. It recommends improving resource allocation, reviewing and updating relevant legislation, and strengthening staff awareness and capacity to support effective e-records management practices.

Keywords: *E-records, E-records management, Regulatory frameworks, Regulatory compliance*

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1.0 Introduction

Public offices began transitioning from paper to electronic records management between the late 1950s and the late 1970s, coinciding with the introduction of computers into operations (Kamatula & Kemoni, 2018). This shift has continued as organisations adapt their record-keeping practices to meet the demands of the digital era (Akporkonor, 2020). This initiative aimed to improve service by implementing e-record management to address challenges associated with manual systems (Kamatula & Kemoni, 2018). To fulfil their e-records role, public offices must comply with regulatory frameworks governing e-records management to ensure information security and promote uniformity across organisations (Marutha, 2018). Comprehensive regulatory frameworks, such as Acts, policies, and guidelines governing e-records, not only enhance accountability but also foster transparency among records practitioners in their management (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020). For that reason, governments around the world have developed relevant regulatory frameworks for effective e-record management, supported by resources and awareness strategies (Abdulkareem et al., 2021).

Regulatory compliance in managing electronic records is essential for improving e-governance and services. In Spain, laws such as the Protection of Personal Data Act of 1999, the Law on Services of the Information Society and Electronic Commerce, and the General Data Protection Regulation of 2018 have ensured data security and personal privacy within public offices. For example, the General Data Protection Regulation of 2018 can impose fines of up to €20 million for non-compliance (Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017). According to Voigt and Von dem Bussche (2017), the Spanish government emphasises that organisations must be aware of the laws, regulations, standards, and codes of good practice governing electronic records management systems to avoid legal penalties and reputational damage.

Similarly, the government of Botswana developed the National ICT Policy in 2004 and the E-Government Strategy in 2010 to promote readiness for e-records (Moatlhodi, 2015). South Africa enacted the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 and the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act of 2000. Collectively, these Acts provide a comprehensive framework for the management, access, and security of digitised records. Furthermore, governments in Africa have allocated resources and training to improve regulatory compliance, although challenges remain, especially within the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branches of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) (Malatji & Marutha, 2023).

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT), in promoting e-government, has enacted and developed regulatory frameworks to ensure e-records management is integrated with information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance efficiency in governance and provide timely services to citizens, as well as ensure electronic workflows, electronic productivity, and electronic service delivery (Hassan, 2022). For example, the National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011 mandates the allocation of resources and the review of irrelevant legislation to enforce regulatory compliance in e-records management. Additionally, the URT government has developed the Cyber-Crime Act of 2015, the Access to Information Act No. 6 of 2016, the National ICT Policy established in

2003 with amendments in 2016 and the Electronic Transactions Act of 2023, all of which provide best practices for e-records management (Manase, Mwantimwa, & Ndimbwa, 2024).

To support the implementation of e-records management, several guidelines and circulars have been created. Notable among these are Government Circular No. 2 of 2021, which focuses on the e-office system in public offices; the User Guidelines for the correct and safe use of equipment, data, and IT systems in government (2022); the Guidelines and Procedures for Personnel Records Management in Public Offices (2013); and the guidelines for deploying the Public Employees Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) (2024). Despite existing regulations, studies indicate that many African countries still struggle with poor e-records management (Moatlhodi & Kalusopa, 2016; Marutha, 2018; Maseh, 2016; Manase et al., 2024; Thabakgolo & Nsibirwa, 2022). In Tanzania, as reliance on electronic records increases and regulatory compliance improves, e-records management remains a challenge; programmes for managing e-records still face challenges in storage and use across MDAs and LGAs (Maleko, 2022; Pessa, 2019). While the government works to promote effective electronic records management that enhances transparency, efficiency, accountability, and trust in service delivery, key elements of reconciliation, resilience, reform, and the rebuilding of compliance with these regulatory frameworks remain questionable.

While several studies (Kamatula, 2019; Madulu, 2016; Manase et al., 2024; Pessa, 2019) have examined e-records management, they have mainly focused on e-readiness and practices in public offices. However, there is limited research on the status of regulatory compliance in e-records management. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate regulatory compliance in e-records management by determining staff awareness of existing regulatory frameworks, assessing whether available resources meet the requirements of these frameworks, and examining their relevance to current e-records management requirements.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Staff awareness of Regulatory Frameworks in Managing e- Records

Studies agree that staff awareness is a determinant of regulatory compliance in e-records management. It helps record practitioners understand regulatory requirements, responsibilities, procedures, offences, and penalties associated with e-records management (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020; Moatlhodi, 2015; Madulu, 2016; Maseh & Mutula, 2015; Tsabedze, 2020; Nsibirwa, 2022). Moatlhodi (2015), Tsabedze (2020), and Netshakhuma (2019) emphasise that staff awareness ensures understanding of responsibilities, procedures, offences, and penalties, while Hassan (2022), Leon (2022), and Madulu (2016) highlight limited awareness, which affects regulatory compliance and leads to improper e-record creation, capture, maintenance, and disposition. These multiple dimensions show that effective regulatory compliance depends on awareness of regulatory requirements. These studies did not explain why awareness is low or propose mechanisms to address the situation in the Tanzanian context. This unresolved gap prompted an assessment of staff awareness of existing regulatory compliance in e-records management.

2.2 Availability of Resources for Enhanced Regulatory Compliance in E-Records Management

The literature consistently agrees that resources are the cornerstone of successful implementation of regulatory frameworks in e-records management (Mampe, 2013; Malanga & Chawinga, 2017; Marutha, 2018; Netshakhuma, 2019; Newa, 2015). Nengomasha and Chikomba (2018), Kamatula & Kemoni (2018), and Moatlhodi and Kalusopa (2016) emphasise the need for ICT infrastructure to ensure regulatory compliance. In contrast, Daniel and Ndumbaro (2023) and Newa and Mwantimwa (2019) emphasise the need for qualified human resources to implement regulatory frameworks. Meanwhile, Malanga and Chawinga (2017) and Marutha (2018) stressed that regulatory compliance requires adequate funds to support system design and adoption, training programmes, and maintenance activities. The literature shows that Infrastructure, staff, and funds are required to implement regulatory requirements, as they determine the ability to adhere to best practices outlined in regulatory frameworks. However, the status of resource capacity in Tanzania's MDAs and LGAs to enhance regulatory frameworks for e-records management is not supported by empirical evidence. These unsolved gaps provided the rationale for assessing this capacity to enhance regulatory compliance in e-records management in Tanzania.

2.3 The Relevance of Regulatory Frameworks Governing E-Records Management in Public Offices

The literature agrees that regulatory compliance in e-records management depends on effective, relevant, and comprehensive regulatory frameworks (Katuu & Van der Walt, 2016; Modiba, 2024). Modiba (2024) emphasised that regulatory frameworks must specify requirements for the creation, use, maintenance, storage, appraisal, and disposition of regulated products. Most studies present contrasting views on the relevance of regulatory frameworks across countries. Modiba (2024), Moatlhodi (2015), and Moatlhodi and Kalusopa (2016) reported that regulatory frameworks are relevant to enhancing e-records management in Malaysia and Botswana. In contrast, Kamatula (2018), Tsabedze and Kalusopa (2018), Netshakhuma (2019), Marwa (2023), Malatji and Marutha (2023), and Ngoepe et al. (2020) reported that regulatory frameworks were outdated, fragmented, and incomplete in addressing e-records management practices in Kenya, Tanzania, Eswatini, and Malawi. These studies indicate the need for relevant regulatory frameworks to ensure effective e-records management. Although studies have identified weak regulatory frameworks, there is limited empirical evidence on policies, guidelines, and circulars currently being developed to promote e-records management in the Tanzanian context. This gap laid the foundation for studying the relevance of both organisational and national regulatory frameworks to e-records management in the Tanzanian context.

2.4 The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) E-readiness Theory

According to Kamatula and Kemoni (2018), the IRMT e-readiness tool identifies six components for organisational-level e-record management. These include policies and responsibilities for records management; tools and procedures for records and information management; e-records management products and technologies; resources and training for records and information management personnel; preservation strategies for public records;

and compliance with records and information management policies and procedures. One aspect of the IRM e-readiness tool is the availability of effective regulatory frameworks, including policies. Regarding the theory, the study assessed the presence of resources available to comply with regulatory frameworks for e-records management. Another aspect concerns policies and responsibilities for records management and compliance with records and information management policies and procedures, examining staff awareness of these frameworks and legal responsibilities for e-records management. Furthermore, across all components, regulatory frameworks were assessed for their relevance to these theoretical requirements. Therefore, the theory provided variables for objectives, helped develop data collection tools based on the variables specified by the theory, and the data were presented, discussed, and analysed using the theory as a benchmark.

3.0 Methodology

This study employed a pragmatist paradigm and conducted a parallel, convergent mixed-methods study, collecting data from 238 respondents selected through a census. The study targeted the following groups: Directors, Managers, Heads of Units and other action officers, ICT staff, HROs, Office Management Secretaries, and Records staff, since all play a role in e-records management. The study was limited to PO PSM&GG, PO-RAMD, e-GA, TRA, MCC, and KMC. PO PSM&GG, PO-RAMD, and e-GA were included not only because they are public institutions required to comply with regulatory frameworks for e-records management, but also because they were mandated to enforce compliance in other public offices. TRA, MCC, and KMC are representatives of public offices that need to comply with regulatory frameworks in managing e-records, despite studies by Leon (2022), Pessa (2021), and Mrope (2024) finding indicators of poor e-records management. This situation prompted an examination of the extent to which regulatory frameworks are being complied with in institutions where e-records management challenges have already been identified, as well as the factors contributing to these challenges.

Data were collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document reviews. One set of questionnaires was administered to 203 respondents across the categories of record staff, HROs, Action officers, Office Management Secretaries, and ICT staff. Interview questions were administered to 35 respondents: Directors, Managers, HROs, Record Officers, and HoDs. Data reliability and validity were ensured through triangulation, the pragmatist paradigm, consultation with experts and supervisors, and pretesting the tools before data collection. Descriptive statistics were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 21) for the quantitative data, while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis aligned with the research objectives. Ethical principles were upheld by obtaining university approval and research permits from the respective organisations prior to data collection, securing informed consent from respondents, ensuring privacy and confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and committing to truthful reporting.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Staff Awareness of E-Records Management Regulatory Frameworks

The first objective assessed staff awareness of the existing regulatory frameworks and the responsibilities they outline for e-records management. The study aimed to determine whether staff are aware of the existing regulatory frameworks and their responsibilities regarding e-records management as stipulated in these frameworks. The first question asked respondents whether staff are aware of the existing regulatory frameworks; 105 (51.7%) agreed, while 84 (41.4%) disagreed. Further, respondents were asked about the adequacy of staff awareness of regulatory frameworks, and the results are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Staff Awareness of the Existing Regulatory Frameworks for E-Records Management (n=203)

The Degree of Staff Awareness	Name of Institution													
	KMC		MCC		TRA		PO- PSM &GG		PO- RAMD		e-GA		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Strongly aware	10	18.5	12	25.0	15	41.7	19	63.3	15	62.5	7	63.6	78	38.4
Moderately aware	18	33.3	18	37.5	15	41.7	9	30.0	6	25.0	3	27.3	69	34.0
Strongly unaware	26	48.1	18	37.5	6	16.7	2	6.7	3	12.5	1	9.1	56	27.6
Total	54	100	48	100	36	100	30	100	24	100	11	100	203	100

Source: Field Data (2025)

Although 38.4% of respondents indicated that they were strongly aware of the existing e-records management frameworks, compared to moderately aware (34%) and strongly unaware (27%), the findings imply that staff awareness was not high, thereby hindering regulatory compliance.

Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate their responsibilities as outlined in the records management regulatory frameworks for e-records. Table 2 provides further details on the findings using multiple responses.

Table 2: Staff Responsibilities for E-Records Management (n=203)

Identified ERM Responsibilities	Name of Institution													
	KMC		MCC		TRA		PO PSM & GG		PO-RAMD		e-GA		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Creating and maintaining e-records	4	7.4	9	18.8	5	13.9	6	20.0	5	20.8	2	18.2	31	15.3
Storage and preservation of e-records	4	7.4	11	22.9	7	19.4	9	30.0	14	58.3	6	54.5	51	25.1
Classification of e-records	4	7.4	7	14.6	4	11.1	5	16.7	5	20.8	0	0.0	25	12.3
Controlling the movement of record files	4.0	7.4	6.0	12.5	6	16.7	5	16.7	5	20.8	0	0.0	26	12.8
To alert action officers to work on pending mails	5.0	9.3	0	0.0	2	5.6	2	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	4.4
Installation of the Keyword file classification system	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	29.2	3	27.3	10	4.9
Access control of public records	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	10.0	7	29.2	0	0.0	10	4.9
Enforcing compliance with other staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	20.8	0	0.0	5	2.5
Training other staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.7	5	20.8	0	0.0	7	3.4
System administration	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.5	0	0.0	3	1.5
No response	35.0	64.8	30.0	62.5	22	61.1	12	40.0	11	45.8	0	0.0	110	54.2

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 shows that 60.7% of respondents did not indicate their responsibilities under e-records management regulatory frameworks, while a few respondents (15% and 25%) indicated that they are responsible for creating and maintaining e-records, respectively, and for storing and preserving e-records. At the institutional level, PO-RAMD, PO PSM&GG, and e-GA reported the highest percentage of respondents aware of their responsibilities, compared to KMC, MCC, and TRA. Interview extracts show that staff awareness of regulatory frameworks is limited; one respondent said:

There is low staff awareness of existing tools, especially the E-Government Act of 2029. For instance, the Act prohibits sharing documents on social media and via personal email accounts such as Gmail and Hotmail. As you know, there are penalties, but staff still commit such offences. That's why we are struggling to increase awareness programmes (MCC R3).

Further, respondents stressed that awareness among records management staff is somewhat good, but some action officers and HROs who supervise records management activities are extremely unaware of the e-records management regulatory frameworks. One respondent said:

To my knowledge, regulatory frameworks exist for managing records, but I don't understand them. Records management staff can provide relevant information about these frameworks (TRA R2).

Therefore, combining quantitative and qualitative data shows that staff awareness of existing regulatory frameworks for e-records management was very low, particularly in LGAs compared with MDAs. The findings also show that action officers and HRO supervisors are less aware of regulatory frameworks than ICT and records staff. Each staff member focuses only on the frameworks relevant to their specific area of practice.

4.2 Regulatory Frameworks Relevance in Governing E-Records Management

The study aimed to assess the relevance of regulatory frameworks for the creation, classification, storage, protection, and access and control, which are cornerstones of best e-records management. Respondents were asked to indicate the relevance of existing regulatory frameworks for e-records management in terms of creation, classification, storage, protection, and access and control. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3: The Relevance of Regulatory Frameworks on Creation, Classification, Storage, Protection, Access and Control of E-records (n=203)

Regulatory frameworks	Very relevant		Relevant		Moderately		Slightly relevant		Not relevant	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Records and Archives Management Act No.3 of 2002	37	18.2	61	30.0	92	45.3	8	3.9	5	2.5
National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011	35	17.2	66	32.5	87	42.9	12	5.9	3	1.5
Access to Information Act No. 6 of 2016	40	19.7	58	28.6	85	41.9	18	8.9	2	1.0
The Cyber-Crime Act, 2015	21	10.3	89	43.8	75	36.9	16	7.9	2	1.0
The National ICT Policy in 2003 and its amendments of 2016	44	21.7	92	45.3	46	22.7	18	8.9	3	1.5
Electronic Transactions Act of 2019	50	24.6	67	33.0	66	32.5	17	8.4	3	1.5
The Government Circular No. 2 of 2021 for the e-office system	71	35.0	36	17.7	78	38.4	15	7.4	3	1.5

Regulatory frameworks	Very relevant		Relevant		Moderately		Slightly relevant		Not relevant	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Guidelines and Procedures for Personnel Records Management in Public Offices of 2013	43	21.2	60	29.6	84	41.4	14	6.9	2	1.0
PEPMIS guideline of 2024	30	14.8	73	36.0	81	39.9	17	8.4	2	1.0
User guidelines for the best, correct and safe use of equipment, data and IT Systems in the government of 2022	41	20.2	52	25.6	91	44.8	17	8.4	2	1.0
e-Government Act No. 10 of 2019	52	25.6	46	22.7	88	43.3	15	7.4	2	1.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that, aspect of e-records creation, classification, storage, protection, access and control of E-records most rated at moderate level of relevancy though the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002, The User Guidelines for the best, correct, and safe use of equipment, data, and IT systems in the government of 2022 and the e-Government Act No. 10 of 2019 were mostly rated moderate than other regulatory frameworks. Also, the Cybercrime Act of 2015 and the National ICT Policy were considered relevant tools in creating and classifying e-records. The findings indicate that, with respect to e-record creation and classification, most regulatory frameworks were moderately relevant to current requirements.

Findings from the interview indicated that regulatory frameworks were largely irrelevant because they were overly general and lacked specific principles for e-records management.

Respondents reported that;

There is no e-records management regulatory framework that is relevant to all specialised records and harmonises e-records management principles and procedures across acts in different specialised fields. For instance, e-records management principles and procedures in finance management differ from those in land management and procurement management, and do not align with the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002 (e-GA R1).

Furthermore, interviews with PO-RAMD revealed that, due to the low relevance of regulatory frameworks, mandated institutions lack the authority to enforce compliance. One respondent emphasised:

The Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002 does not mandate inspections and penalties to enforce regulatory compliance in public offices, unlike mandates held by agencies such as PCCB, CAG, and the Public Service Commission (PD R10).

The study further examined why responsible actors were aware of the limitations of existing regulatory frameworks, yet no review initiatives have been undertaken to address these weaknesses. The findings suggest that both records users and records management staff who are in a position to initiate such processes often lack sufficient awareness of the risks of non-compliance and do not fully appreciate the implications of managing e-records outside established regulatory frameworks.

Respondent commented that:

There is no enforcement of certain regulations because users are not demanding the changes. Record staff are not part of the consequences of managing records without adhering to regulatory frameworks. (PSM R1).

Therefore, qualitative and quantitative findings show that the current regulatory frameworks are not well aligned with e-records management requirements. The study identified several weaknesses in the management of e-records. While the frameworks remain relevant in areas such as the creation and classification, storage and protection, and access and control of e-records, they are too general and outdated to fully support current needs.

4.3 Resource Capacity to Enhance Regulatory Compliance in E-Records Management

This subsection presents the organisational resources' capacity in terms of funds, personnel, and infrastructure, and their adequacy for supporting e-records management in line with regulatory frameworks' requirements. Firstly, respondents were asked whether resources were provided for e-records management, and more than 50% agreed that they were. The second question asked respondents to assess the adequacy of resources available to enhance regulatory compliance in e-records management. Table 4 summarises the results.

Table 4: Resources Adequacy for E-records Management (n=203)

Resources	Level of Adequacy									
	Very Adequate		Adequate		Neutral		Inadequate		Very Inadequate	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Up-to-date hardware (computer, servers, storage devices)	76	37	93	46	20	10	9	4	5	2
Reliable and secure software systems for records management	72	35	92	45	24	12	9	4	6	3
Access to regulatory and regulatory guidelines	66	33	86	42	35	17	9	4	7	3
Trained personnel or staff with expertise in e-records management	77	38	86	42	22	11	6	3	12	6
Funding or budget allocations for records management activities	28	14	56	28	40	20	74	36	5	2
Technical support and maintenance service	74	36	79	39	29	14	10	5	11	5

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4 show that the majority of respondents indicated that the resource capacity was adequate to support regulatory compliance in e-records management, while a few (36) indicated that it was inadequate.

Findings from interviews with the visited institutions added that;

In terms of human resources, management has ensured a sufficient number of professional staff, but other facilities are somewhat inadequate. We have not been able to provide computers to every staff member, but each records staff member has a computer (KMC R1).

At other institutions, resources were insufficient to enhance regulatory compliance in e-records management. The main challenges were a shortage of trained staff and a limited budget. Due to insufficient funding, institutions have not been able to fully implement e-records management requirements, particularly in acquiring adequate resources and complying with e-GA directives. Respondents stressed:

Due to the limited budget, other resources, such as staff computers, are affected; hence, some staff are sharing facilities like scanners and computers (MCC R3).

These responses indicate that mandated institutions struggle to enforce regulatory compliance in e-records management due to resource constraints. Resource shortages affect the adoption and use of e-records management systems. Despite these claims, it was observed that KMC has improved its infrastructure, and its e-office system is installed and used effectively.

Generally, although quantitative data showed that most resources were adequate, qualitative data showed that not all public offices had sufficient resources to support regulatory compliance in e-records management. Both MDAs and LGAs lacked adequate resources, though LGAs were more affected; for instance, it was reported that professional staff dislike working in local areas.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Staff Awareness of E-Records Management Regulatory Frameworks

Staff awareness is fundamental to implementing regulatory frameworks, as it ensures that staff understand the principles, practices, responsibilities, offences, penalties, and the importance of managing records in accordance with regulatory requirements (Moathodi, 2015). Despite the need for staff awareness, the study found lower levels of awareness of the existing organisational and national regulatory frameworks in LGAs than in MDAs, which affected staff's ability to understand the principles and procedures for e-records management. The findings also indicated that awareness levels differ among ICT and records management staff, HROs, and Action officers. This is because most staff focus on the regulatory frameworks that are relevant to their profession. Remarkably, this situation limits regulatory compliance because the records management unit is supervised by HROs who are insufficiently familiar with regulatory frameworks. As a result, supervision and enforcement of regulatory requirements remain weak. Similarly, Thabakgolo and Nsibirwa

(2022) reported that staff were unaware of existing regulatory frameworks for creating and capturing records, or of the correct metadata to use. The findings of this study differ from those of Chang'a and Mwilongo (2022), who reported that records practitioners were well informed about e-records guidance tools and procedures, which positively influenced access to and use of these tools. Correspondingly, the IRMT e-readiness tool emphasises the importance of internal and public awareness of regulatory frameworks for records and information management, which were limited in the studied institutions.

5.2 Regulatory Frameworks Relevance in Governing E-Records Management

Relevant regulatory frameworks address principles and practices for the creation, classification, storage, protection, and access and control of e-records (Modiba, 2024). The findings indicated that some regulatory frameworks were very weak in governing e-records management. Due to their limited relevance, appraisal and disposition of e-records are not adequately addressed. Thus, procedures for the transfer and destruction of e-records lack clear guidelines. This problem is particularly critical for specialised records, such as land, legal, medical and academic records. The absence of common legislation that establishes standardised practices for managing e-records across professions has led to poor e-records management that supports business activities. Most regulatory frameworks were developed before e-records management strategies were established in Tanzania. Although the regulatory framework remains somewhat useful, it is supplemented by newer laws, including the e-Government Act, the Cybercrime Act, and the National Security Act. The irrelevance of regulatory frameworks was also noted by Tsabedze and Kalusopa (2018) in Eswatini, who found that the legislative and policy frameworks on e-records were incomplete, weak and disconnected from e-records management. In contrast, Abdullah et al. (2020) found that despite low levels of legal compliance in managing e-records, the existing frameworks remained relevant for supporting e-records and information management systems in Malaysia. This finding also contrasts with the IRMT e-Readiness Tool, which requires public offices to develop e-records management regulatory frameworks that align with their organisational activities, structures, resources, and cultures.

5.3 Resources Capacity to Enhance Regulatory Compliance

Regulatory frameworks require the availability of resources to meet legal requirements (Netshakhuma, 2019). Trained personnel remain insufficient in both MDAs and LGAs, with a notable shortage in LGAs. The personnel shortage hinders legal compliance because emails are not addressed promptly. Sometimes, untrained staff are tasked with records management responsibilities that are not carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements. In some offices, limited facilities, such as fax machines, telephones, networked computers, photocopying services, internet access, email, and scanners, are necessary to support e-records management, as required by regulatory frameworks and to enable resource sharing. This sharing increases the risk of confidentiality breaches, as staff may leave copies on flash drives or in scanners, allowing unauthorised access to information from other departments.

Consequently, PO-RAMD and e-GA provide guidelines for system development, system reviews, and approved software, but public offices often lack the budget to comply with them. For example, studies (Abdallah, 2023; Kayanda, 2024; Maleko, 2022; and Maulid,

2015) have found that regulatory compliance is affected by inadequate ICT infrastructure, a shortage of technical staff, unstable internet connectivity, technological dependence, unreliable power supply, and insufficient funds for training and maintenance. The findings align with those of Kamatula and Kemoni (2018), who reported that despite mandates given to certain institutions to implement e-records management, these mandates have not been fully realised due to insufficient budgets to meet legal requirements. In contrast, Moathodi and Kalusopa (2016) found that some institutions allocate enough financial resources for records management from both management and government sources.

6.0 Conclusion

The study shows that regulatory compliance in e-records management remains low across many public institutions. This is mainly because staff are not well aware of the regulatory frameworks, principles, procedures, and their responsibilities. In addition, key laws such as the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002 and its 2007 Regulations do not fully meet current e-records management needs. There are also other challenges related to limited resources, including a lack of trained staff, insufficient budget, and inadequate ICT infrastructure. Because of these challenges, institutions cannot effectively implement e-records management requirements.

7.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that public institutions provide staff with awareness through regular training and capacity-building on regulatory frameworks and responsibilities in e-records management. This can be done in collaboration with PO-RAMD and PO-PSM&GG. There is also a need to allocate resources, including budget, skilled personnel, and ICT infrastructure, to support the proper implementation of e-records management requirements. Additionally, the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002 and its 2007 Regulations should be reviewed and updated to address current issues in e-records management, such as digital preservation, security, and record disposal. Further, the enforcement role of PO-RAMD should be strengthened to ensure that institutions comply with regulatory requirements. Public institutions should work closely with responsible government offices to ensure better coordination, monitoring and implementation of e-records management practices.

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