

The Application of Legal Frameworks in Enhancing Electronic Records Management at the Singida Regional Office, Tanzania

Grayson Herman Msakila¹

Abstract

This study assessed the application of legal frameworks to enhance electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary's Office (SRASO) in Tanzania. Specifically, it examined the availability and use of legal frameworks, staff awareness of relevant regulations, and challenges affecting their implementation. Guided by the Records Continuum Model, the study employed a mixed-methods research approach with 73 respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observation, and were analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Findings revealed limited availability and application of legal frameworks for electronic records management at the SRASO. The 2007 Registry Procedures Manual was the most recognised legal framework, while awareness of other national and international legal frameworks remained low. Key challenges included inadequate awareness, insufficient training, limited funding, resistance to change, and poor stakeholder engagement. The study concludes that despite the adoption of electronic systems for service delivery, the application of legal frameworks remains inadequate at the SRASO. The study recommends strengthening awareness, staff training, stakeholder collaboration, and implementing relevant frameworks to support effective e-record management and e-governance initiatives in Tanzania.

Keywords: *Electronic records management, legal frameworks, records continuum model, e-governance, public service.*

1.0 Introduction

Electronic records management has become an integral component of modern public administration due to the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies and the increasing digital transformation of government operations (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Komba & Ngulube, 2021). Governments worldwide are increasingly relying on electronic systems to create, capture, maintain, access, and preserve records in support of efficient service delivery, transparency, accountability, and institutional memory (UNESCO, 2023; Komba & Ngulube, 2021). Unlike traditional paper records, electronic records require robust technological, organisational, and legal infrastructures to guarantee their authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability throughout their lifecycle (Amisa et

¹ Tanzania Public Service College, Singida, grayson.msakila@tpsc.go.tz

al., 2021). The successful management of electronic records is largely influenced by the existence and implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks that guide their creation, maintenance, use, storage, preservation, and disposal (Kashaija, 2021).

Legal frameworks provide institutions with standards, policies, laws, regulations, and procedures that establish responsibilities and accountability mechanisms for records management activities (Amisa et al., 2021). These frameworks also safeguard information security, confidentiality, privacy, and the evidential value of records within digital environments (Masanja & Lwoga, 2020). Globally, many countries have adopted legal and regulatory frameworks to support electronic records management as part of broader digital transformation and e-government initiatives. International organisations and governments have increasingly emphasised the need for effective records governance, standardised records management practices, and legal compliance to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficient public service delivery (UNESCO, 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The adoption of electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) and international standards has enhanced the management, preservation, accessibility, and security of electronic records in many developed countries (UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, integrating records management into digital governance frameworks has facilitated secure information management and improved decision-making processes in public institutions (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In Africa, the implementation of electronic records management has gained increasing attention as governments pursue digital transformation and e-government initiatives (Msakila, 2022). Despite this progress, studies indicate that many public institutions continue to face challenges in policy implementation, legal compliance, awareness, resources, technology, and institutional capacity (Tsabedze, 2021; Nyangila, 2022; Amisa et al., 2021).

Similar challenges have been reported across countries within the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA), where weak enforcement of records management frameworks and inadequate staff competencies continue to affect the effective management of electronic records (Nyangila, 2022; Tsabedze, 2021). Despite these efforts, recent studies continue to report challenges in implementing legal and regulatory frameworks governing electronic records management in Tanzanian public institutions. Kashaija and Ndumbaro (2020) observed that legal non-compliance remains a significant factor contributing to ineffective records management practices in public organisations. Similarly, Kashaija (2021) reported that inadequate institutional preparedness, limited awareness of records management requirements, and insufficient implementation of legal frameworks undermine electronic records management initiatives within local government authorities. Furthermore, Msakila (2022) found that challenges related to policy implementation, staff competencies, and resource constraints continue to undermine the effective management of electronic records in public institutions. While existing studies have examined electronic records management and legal compliance in various public organisations, limited attention has been given to Regional Administrative Secretary Offices operating under the President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), particularly the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary Office. Consequently, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the extent to which legal

and regulatory frameworks are applied to enhance electronic records management in this important administrative setting. Therefore, this study assessed the application of legal frameworks in enhancing electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary's Office. Specifically, the study examined the availability and use of legal frameworks for electronic records management, assessed staff awareness regarding these frameworks, and explored challenges affecting their implementation. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on electronic records management and provide practical recommendations for strengthening legal compliance and records governance in Tanzanian public institutions

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Electronic records are records created, received, maintained, used, and stored in electronic form through information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Pessa, 2019). According to the International Records Management Trust (IRMT, 1999), electronic records include digital documents, emails, databases, audio files, and other forms of information generated and maintained within computer-based systems. Like paper records, electronic records serve as evidence of organisational activities and decisions. On the other hand, Electronic Records Management (ERM) refers to the systematic control of electronic records throughout their lifecycle, from creation and capture to maintenance, use, preservation, and disposition (Newa, 2017). Effective electronic records management ensures that records remain authentic, reliable, accessible, and usable over time (Kamatula & Kemoni, 2018). In the current digital era, electronic records management has become an essential component of e-governance because government institutions increasingly rely on digital platforms to deliver services efficiently and transparently (Asogwa, 2013). The growing adoption of Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS) has transformed how governments and organisations conduct business 24 hours a day, 6 days a week. These systems facilitate quick information retrieval, support decision-making, improve accountability, and enhance service delivery. However, the benefits of electronic records can only be fully realised when supported by appropriate legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study employed the Record Continuum Model (RCM), as propounded by Frank Upward in the 1990s, with the view that managing e-records is a continuous process comprising four dimensions: create, capture, organise, and preserve (Ndenje-Sichwale, 2010). Figure 2.1 depicts the continuum model concept.

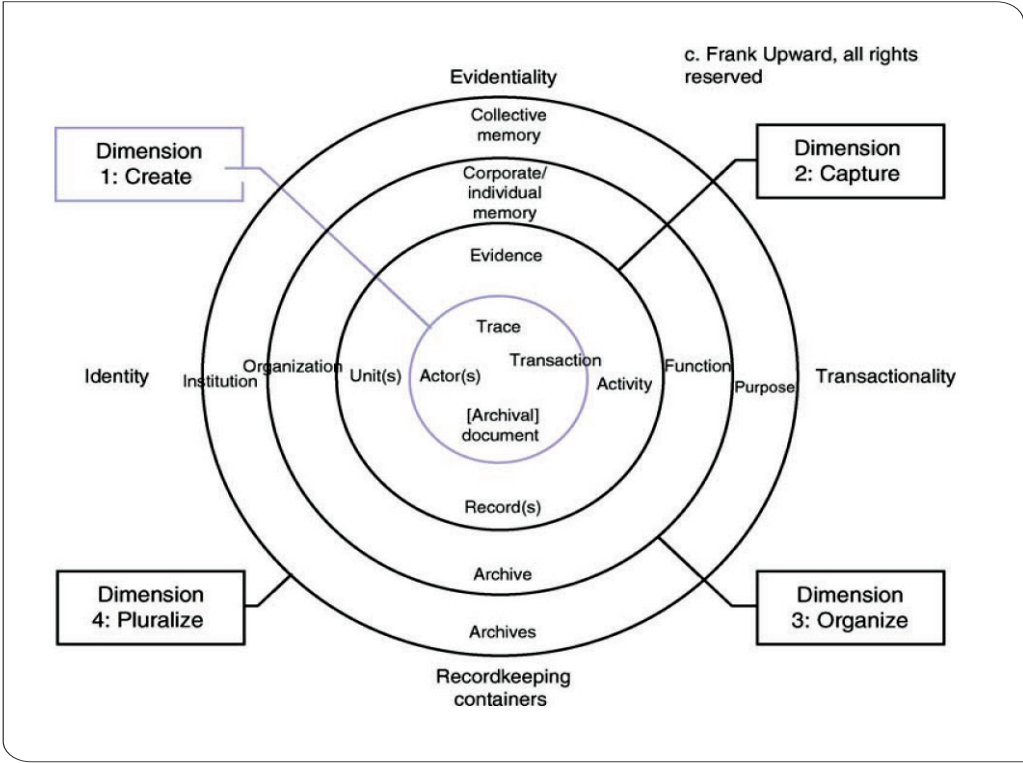


Figure 2.1 Records Continuum Model

The model views records management as a continuous, integrated process rather than a sequence of separate stages. Unlike the traditional records lifecycle model, which treats records creation, maintenance, use, and disposal as distinct phases, the Records Continuum Model emphasises the ongoing management of records across time and space. The model comprises four interrelated dimensions, namely Create, Capture, Organise, and Pluralise (Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2010). The first dimension, Create, refers to the generation of records during organisational activities and transactions (Mohamed & Wamukoya, 2018). In this study, electronic records created within government systems should comply with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure authenticity, reliability, and accountability. The second dimension, Capture, involves securing records as evidence of organisational activities. Legal frameworks play an important role in this dimension by establishing procedures and standards to maintain the integrity, security, and evidential value of electronic records. Staff awareness of these legal requirements is essential to ensure proper capture and management of electronic records. The third dimension, Organise, focuses on the classification, maintenance, storage, and retrieval of records. Effective organisation of electronic records requires compliance with policies, laws, standards, and procedures governing records management. Failure to implement legal frameworks may compromise the accessibility of records, confidentiality, and long-term preservation. The fourth dimension, Pluralise, refers to making records accessible for broader organisational and societal use while maintaining accountability and transparency. This dimension supports e-government initiatives by ensuring that electronic records remain available, reliable,

and legally admissible for decision-making, service delivery, and public accountability. The Records Continuum Model was considered appropriate for this study because it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how legal frameworks influence electronic records management throughout the records continuum. The model further highlights the importance of staff awareness and institutional capacity in ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Therefore, the study used the model to examine the availability and use of legal frameworks, staff awareness, and implementation challenges affecting electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary's Office (SRASO).

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Empirical Studies outside Tanzania

Several studies conducted outside Tanzania have highlighted the importance of legal and regulatory frameworks in supporting electronic records management. Amisa et al. (2021) examined barriers to implementing electronic records management in public institutions and found that the mere existence of legal and regulatory frameworks does not guarantee effective records management. The study established that organisational commitment, staff competencies, technological infrastructure, and legal compliance are critical factors for successful electronic records management. Similarly, Tsabedze (2021) reported that inadequate implementation of records management policies and weak institutional support mechanisms continue to hinder the effective management of electronic records in many African public institutions. The study emphasised the importance of strengthening legal compliance, staff awareness, and organisational support for sustainable electronic records management practices.

Nyangila (2022) further observed that legal and regulatory compliance remains a critical factor influencing the success of electronic records management programmes in public organisations. The study found that institutions operating without clear legal guidance often struggle to maintain the authenticity, reliability, accessibility, and long-term preservation of electronic records. Likewise, UNESCO (2023) reported that the increasing adoption of digital technologies in public administration requires stronger legal frameworks, effective governance structures, and continuous capacity-building initiatives to ensure the effective management and preservation of electronic records. The report further emphasised that staff awareness and institutional commitment are essential for ensuring compliance with records management requirements in digital environments. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the existence of legal frameworks alone is insufficient to ensure effective electronic records management. Successful implementation requires adequate awareness, institutional commitment, legal compliance, technological readiness, and continuous capacity-building programmes.

2.3.2 Empirical Studies in Tanzania

In Tanzania, several recent studies have examined issues related to electronic records management and legal compliance within public institutions. Kashaija and Ndumbaro (2020) identified inadequate legal compliance, limited awareness of records management requirements, and insufficient institutional support as major barriers affecting records management practices in public organisations. Similarly, Komba and Ngulube (2021)

found that despite the availability of records management laws and policies, many public institutions continue to experience challenges in implementing electronic records management programmes due to inadequate resources, limited staff competencies, and weak enforcement mechanisms. Furthermore, Chang'a and Mwilongo (2022) examined the use of e-records guidance tools in records sharing at the Tanzania Public Service College and established that awareness and utilisation of records management guidance tools significantly influence effective records sharing and compliance with records management requirements.

Msakila (2022) also reported that inadequate implementation of legal and policy frameworks, together with limited staff training and technological challenges, continues to affect the management of electronic records in Tanzanian public institutions. Recent studies further indicate that although Tanzania has made considerable progress in establishing legal and regulatory frameworks for records management and digital governance, challenges related to implementation, awareness, compliance, and institutional preparedness remain prevalent (Masanja & Lwoga, 2020; Kashaija, 2021). These challenges continue to hinder the effective management of electronic records and limit the realisation of the full benefits of e-government initiatives and digital transformation programmes in the public sector. Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that Tanzania possesses a relatively comprehensive legal and policy framework for records management. However, challenges related to implementation, awareness, compliance, staff capacity, and institutional support continue to affect the effective management of electronic records in public institutions.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach supported by descriptive statistics (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore how legal frameworks can be applied to enhance electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary Office (SRASO), with particular emphasis on the availability and use of these frameworks, staff awareness, and the challenges affecting their implementation. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Questionnaires were administered to selected employees to obtain general information regarding the availability and application of legal frameworks for electronic records management. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers, Registry Officers, Procurement Officers, Accountants, and Information Technology Officers, to obtain in-depth insights into records management practices and legal compliance issues. Observation was used to verify the availability and utilisation of relevant legal and regulatory frameworks within the office. The study involved 73 respondents selected from a target population of 93 employees. Simple random sampling was used to select questionnaire respondents, while key informants were purposively selected based on their roles and responsibilities related to records management and administrative processes. Qualitative data obtained through interviews and observations were analysed using content analysis, in which responses were organised into themes aligned with the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Quantitative information obtained from questionnaires was analysed using descriptive

statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to summarise respondents' views and support the qualitative findings. The findings were then presented using tables, narratives, and direct quotations from participants.

4.0 Presentation of Findings

4.1 Availability and Use of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management at SRASO

The first objective sought to examine the availability and use of legal and regulatory frameworks for electronic records management at SRASO. Respondents were asked to identify legal frameworks available within the institution that support the management of electronic records. Table 4.1 presents the responses obtained from the questionnaires.

Table 4.1: Availability of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management at SRASO (n = 73)

Legal Framework Available	Frequency	Percentage
Registry Procedures Manual of 2007	7	9.6
The e-Government Act of 2019	0	0
The National ICT policy of 2003	0	0
The National Security Act no 3 of 1970	0	0
The National Records and Archives Management Act no 3 of 2002.	0	0
The National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011	0	0
Electronic Transaction Act of 2015.	0	0
The Cyber Crime Act no 14 of 2015	0	0
The Access to Information Act of 2016.	0	0
ISO 15489 (Part 1&2) of 2001 and its new version of 2016 (Part 1&2)	0	0
The National Records and Archives Management Regulation of 2007	0	0
Desk Instruction for Records Users and Registry Staff of 2009	0	0

Source: Field data (2024)

The findings indicate that only 7 of 73 respondents (9.6%) identified the 2007 Registry Procedures Manual as available within the institution. None of the respondents identified the availability of other legal and regulatory frameworks, such as the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002, the Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011, the Electronic Transactions Act of 2015, the Cybercrimes Act No. 14 of 2015, the Access to Information Act of 2016, or the e-Government Act of 2019. These findings suggest low visibility and utilisation of legal and regulatory frameworks for electronic records management within SRASO. The results further indicate that employees' awareness of existing legal instruments is limited, despite the increasing use of electronic systems in government operations. Observation findings supported the questionnaire results: during

the field observation, the researcher noted the presence of the Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 within the registry section, while other legal and regulatory documents related to electronic records management were not readily available for staff reference.

Interview findings further revealed limited utilisation of legal frameworks. One Information Technology Officer explained:

...I have learnt these legal tools in the lecture sessions during my studies at the university when studying as an undergraduate. However, in the real working environment, when I came across them in public service, I have never printed them and have them on the working desk for reference; however, I remember some of the important issues addressed in these tools, especially in issues related to data integrity, security and confidentiality of e-records existing in the Electronic Records Management System (Interview, RESP 3).

Similarly, a Human Resource Officer were noted:

In my capacity as a Human Resources Officer at the Singida RAS office, my primary expertise lies in Tanzanian Public Service Laws and Regulations, which I apply daily in my duties. While I actively utilise the e-office system for administrative tasks, the specific legal frameworks governing e-records management fall within the specialised domain of the Registry staff. They are better placed to provide detailed insights into those legal and regulatory frameworks (Interview, RESP 2).

One Registry staff member, once asked about the availability and use of legal frameworks for e-records, confidently replied:

... we indeed utilise the e-office system; however, as registry staff, we rely on the registry procedures manual for both electronic and physical records management. I am unfamiliar with the other laws you mentioned (Interview, RESP 5).

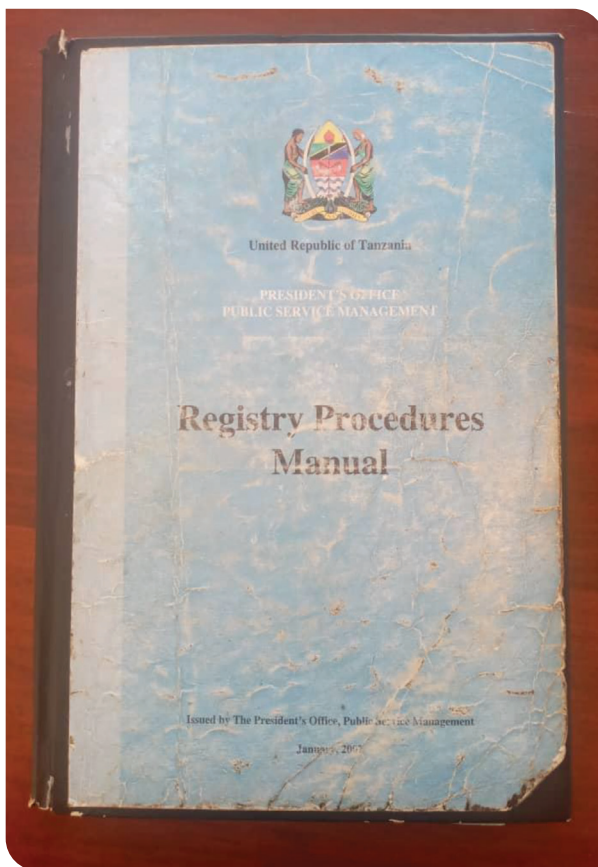


Plate 4.1: Registry Procedures Manual available at the SRASO

Source: Field Data (2024)

Furthermore, one accountant was noted:

...Regarding my role as an accountant, I only apply accounting laws to my daily work. Although I use the e-office system to respond to department-related minutes, I am not familiar with other legal frameworks (Interview, RESP 1).

According to the National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011, which emphasises the use of technology in managing records and archives, together with Government Circular no 2 of 2021 on the use of e-office for e-records management, all users of e-records within the e-office are expected to have a full understanding of and apply the legal and regulatory framework to ensure best practices. The findings generally indicate that although electronic records are created and used within SRASO, the legal and regulatory frameworks intended to guide their management are not widely known or actively utilised by employees.

4.2 Staff Awareness of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management

The second objective sought to assess staff awareness of legal and regulatory frameworks governing electronic records management. Interview findings revealed varying levels of employee awareness. While some respondents were generally aware of the existence of legal and regulatory frameworks, many lacked detailed knowledge regarding their application in electronic records management.

One respondent stated (HR Officer)

... To be frank, while we all create and use electronic records daily to keep the Singida region running, most staff members operate without a deep awareness of the formal legal frameworks behind them. We treat these systems as tools for work rather than legal entities. Our Registry staff, however, handles the core of record-keeping policy and would be the best point of contact to confirm which legal tools are currently being enforced in our office (Interview, RESP 2).

The Registry Staff respondent:

... The Registry Procedures Manual of 2007, issued by the President's Office, Public Service Management and Good Governance (PO-PSMGG), through the Records and Archives Management Department (RAMD), is the primary guidance document available to us. However, it focuses largely on paper-based records rather than electronic records (Interview, RESP 3).

Another Registry Staff member confirmed:

... Our existing Registry Manual is centred on physical record-keeping and lacks comprehensive protocols for electronic records. This misalignment between official procedures and our current digital practice (e-Office) hinders the effective and legally sound management of the e-records we generate daily (Interview, RESP 7).

One administrative officer, once asked about awareness of legal frameworks for e-records, replied:

... as an Administrative Officer, I oversee administrative functions. Consequently, my expertise aligns more closely with public administration regulations than with records management laws (Interview, RESP 6).

Regarding the same question about awareness of legal frameworks for e-records, the Procurement Officer replied:

... In my capacity as a Procurement Officer, my expertise lies primarily in procurement regulations, which guide my daily operations, rather than in records management laws. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that I utilise the e-office system to receive and respond to correspondence relevant to the procurement department (Interview, RESP 8).

To complement the interview findings, respondents were asked via questionnaires to identify areas of electronic records management that legal frameworks could support.

Table 4.2: Areas of Electronic Records Management Supported by Legal Frameworks (n = 73)

Areas that legal frameworks in e-records might support	Frequency	Percentage
Creation of e-records	3	4.1
Maintenance of e-records	5	6.8
Uses of e-records	2	2.7
Appraisal and disposition of e-records	0	0
Ethical guidance to e-records users	7	9.6

Source: Field data (2024)

The findings indicate generally low awareness of the role of legal frameworks in supporting electronic records management. Only a small proportion of respondents identified functions such as creation, maintenance, use, and ethical guidance as areas supported by legal and regulatory frameworks. The results suggest that many employees are not adequately informed about how legal frameworks contribute to electronic records management processes. This limited awareness may affect compliance with records management requirements and the effective use of electronic records systems within the institution.

4.3 Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management

The third objective sought to identify challenges affecting the implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks for electronic records management at SRASO.

Table 4.3: Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management (n = 73)

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Non-existence of legal frameworks	72	98.6
Lack of knowledge and skills on legal frameworks (Lack of expertise)	71	97.3
Insufficient funding	63	86.3
Resistance to change	57	78.1
Poor compliance with regulations	45	61.6
Resources misallocation	19	26
Stakeholders' engagement	9	12.3

Source: Field Data (2024)

The findings indicate that the most frequently reported challenges were the lack of legal frameworks (98.6%), inadequate knowledge and skills regarding legal frameworks (97.3%), insufficient funding (86.3%), resistance to organisational change (78.1%), and poor compliance with regulations (61.6%).

These findings suggest that both institutional and individual factors hinder the effective implementation of legal frameworks within the organisation. Limited awareness, inadequate resources, and weak institutional support appear to be major barriers affecting compliance with records management requirements.

Interview findings supported these observations, whereby one respondent remarked:

... There is a notable lack of awareness regarding records management laws and regulations among the staff. Furthermore, the necessary regulatory documentation is currently unavailable at the Singida RAS office (Interview, RESP 1).

Another respondent emphasised:

... Our current efforts are focused on enforcing public service laws to instil discipline and enhance employee performance. Regarding the regulations for digital records management, we have noted your expert recommendation. We intend to act on it by acquiring the necessary documents and, if required, utilising our internal budget to improve our operations in that area (Interview, RESP 4).

Another respondent (Accountant Officer) argued:

... Here at SRASO Singida, people do not want to switch from paper-based to digital systems. As you know, many belong to a technophobic generation, so adapting to new technology is a real challenge. That is a major reason, aside from the lack of training on these digital records management laws and how to apply them. I believe anyone can learn modern digital systems right here on the job, even without formal training, but people lack the willingness to learn (Interview, RESP 6).

On the other hand, an IT officer once asked about the challenges hindering the implementation of legal frameworks for e-records at the SRASO, and commented:

... Understanding digital records management laws and regulations is a cross-cutting challenge for many employees. As an institution's IT professional, I believe it is crucial that all staff first learn to work digitally. For instance, officers need to understand IT systems and use them effectively when delivering services. Only after that should efforts be made to teach them the laws, regulations, and procedures that govern electronic records within those systems. I struggle with the fact that an employee will call you to their office to help them change their computer password or manage emails they have sent. My emphasis is that training should first focus on teaching them how to do their day-to-day work using IT, because that is where the biggest challenge currently lies (Interview, RESP 2).

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of legal frameworks for electronic records management at SRASO is constrained by a combination of organisational, individual, financial, and knowledge-related challenges

5.0 Discussion of Findings

5.1 Availability and Use of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management

The findings revealed that the availability and use of legal frameworks for electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary's Office (SRASO) were limited. The majority of respondents were unable to identify key legal and regulatory frameworks governing electronic records management, and only a few cited the Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 as a guidance tool available within the institution. These findings suggest that although legal and policy frameworks supporting electronic records management exist in Tanzania, their visibility and practical utilisation at the institutional level remain inadequate. The findings are consistent with Kashaija (2021), who found low levels of compliance with records management legislation in public institutions due to limited awareness and weak implementation mechanisms. Similarly, Komba and Ngulube (2021) observed that the availability of records management laws and policies does not necessarily translate into effective implementation unless institutions actively integrate them into their operational practices. The findings further support Msakila (2022), who reported that inadequate implementation of legal and policy frameworks continues to affect electronic records management in Tanzanian public institutions. This situation may be attributed to inadequate dissemination of legal documents, limited institutional support, and insufficient emphasis on records governance within public organisations. From the perspective of the Records Continuum Model, the limited utilisation of legal frameworks may negatively affect the creation, capture, organisation, and long-term accessibility of electronic records. The model emphasises that records should be managed continuously in accordance with established legal and organisational requirements. Therefore, inadequate application of legal frameworks may compromise the authenticity, reliability, and accountability of electronic records.

5.2 Staff Awareness of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management

The findings revealed that staff awareness of the legal frameworks governing electronic records management was generally low. Although some employees demonstrated basic awareness of records management requirements, many respondents lacked detailed knowledge of the legal and regulatory instruments that underpin electronic records management. The findings are consistent with those reported by Chang'a and Mwilongo (2022), who established that awareness and utilisation of records management guidance tools significantly influence records management practices and compliance within public institutions. Similarly, Kashaija and Ndumbaro (2020) observed that limited awareness of legal requirements remains a major barrier to effective records management in Tanzania. Low awareness may stem from inadequate training opportunities, insufficient dissemination of legal and policy documents, and limited institutional emphasis on records management compliance. As electronic records management becomes increasingly integral to public service delivery, employees require adequate knowledge and understanding of legal frameworks to ensure compliance and accountability. The findings further support those of Amisa et al. (2021), who emphasised that staff competencies and awareness are essential prerequisites for the successful implementation of electronic records management programmes. The findings also align with the assumptions of the Records Continuum Model, which emphasises the importance of proper records capture and organisation throughout the records continuum. Effective implementation of these processes depends largely on employees' awareness and understanding of relevant legal requirements. Therefore, inadequate staff awareness may weaken compliance and reduce the effectiveness of electronic records management systems.

5.3 Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Legal Frameworks for Electronic Records Management

The findings revealed that several challenges impede the implementation of legal frameworks for electronic records management at SRASO. The major challenges identified include insufficient legal frameworks, limited employee knowledge and skills, inadequate funding, resistance to organisational change, and poor compliance with legal requirements. These findings align with those reported by Msakila (2022), who identified inadequate institutional capacity, limited staff competencies, and weak implementation mechanisms as significant barriers to electronic records management within Tanzanian public institutions. Likewise, Kashaija and Ndumbaro (2020) found that limited awareness, inadequate resources, and weak institutional support continue to hinder the effective implementation of records management legislation. The findings are also consistent with international studies. For example, Amisa et al. (2021) reported that organisational, technical, and managerial challenges continue to affect the implementation of electronic records management programmes despite the existence of supporting legal frameworks.

Similarly, Tsabedze (2021) observed that inadequate institutional support and weak implementation mechanisms limit the effectiveness of records management programmes in many African public institutions. The identified challenges suggest that effective implementation of legal frameworks requires more than the existence of laws and policies. It also requires adequate financial resources, staff training, institutional commitment, and continuous compliance monitoring. Without these supporting conditions, legal frameworks

may remain largely ineffective in guiding electronic records management practices. The findings further support the Records Continuum Model, which recognises that effective records management depends on coordinated organisational processes and supporting structures. Challenges affecting legal compliance may disrupt the creation, capture, organisation, and accessibility of records, thereby reducing the effectiveness of electronic records management systems within public institutions.

6.0 Conclusion

This study assessed the application of legal frameworks in enhancing electronic records management at the Singida Regional Administrative Secretary's Office (SRASO). The findings revealed that although Tanzania has established legal and policy frameworks to support electronic records management, the availability and utilisation of these frameworks at SRASO remain limited. The study also found low levels of staff awareness of the legal frameworks governing electronic records management. In addition, inadequate awareness, limited access to legal frameworks, resistance to change, insufficient resources, and a lack of stakeholders' engagement were identified. Weak compliance mechanisms were identified as key challenges affecting their implementation. The study, therefore, concludes that effective electronic records management in public institutions depends not only on the existence of legal frameworks but also on their accessibility, staff awareness, institutional commitment, and effective implementation.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that SRASO and other public institutions should improve access to legal and regulatory frameworks governing electronic records management and strengthen staff training programmes to enhance awareness and compliance. Furthermore, responsible authorities such as PO-PSMGG, RAMD, e-GA, and TCRA should strengthen monitoring, enforcement, and awareness creation regarding records management requirements in line with the implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks. The government should also provide adequate financial, technological, and institutional support to facilitate the effective implementation of electronic records management programmes within public institutions.

References

- Amisa, A., Ahmad, R., & Yusof, Z. M. (2021). Barriers to implementing electronic records management in public institutions: A comparative study. *Journal of Information Systems and e-Government*, 9(2), 112–124.
- Asogwa, B. E. (2013). The readiness of universities in managing electronic records: A study of selected universities in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The Electronic Library*, 31(6), 792–807.
- Chang'a, S., & Mwilongo, J. (2022). Use of e-records guidance tools in records sharing at Tanzania Public Service College. *Journal of Records and Archives Management*, 4(1), 45–58.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Rana, N. P., Tamilmani, K., Sharma, A., & Weerakkody, V. (2023). Digital transformation of public administration: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Government Information Quarterly*, 40(1), 101749.
- International Records Management Trust. (1999). *Managing electronic records*. International Records Management Trust.
- Kamatula, G. A., & Kemoni, H. (2018). E-records management and e-government implementation in Tanzania public service. *ESARBICA Journal*, 37, 1–17.
- Kashaija, L. S. (2021). Electronic records management challenges in local government authorities in Tanzania. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, 16(1), 85–102.
- Kashaija, L. S., & Ndumbaro, F. (2020). Factors limiting legal compliance in managing public records: A case of Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA), Tanzania. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, 15(1), 87–100.
- Komba, M., & Ngulube, P. (2021). The role of e-records in improving public service efficiency in Tanzania. *Records Management Journal*, 31(1), 1–16.
- Masanja, M. K., & Lwoga, E. T. (2020). Digital transformation and information governance in Tanzanian public institutions. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 10(2), 45–60.
- Mohamed, M., & Wamukoya, J. (2018). Electronic records management practices in public sector organisations. *Journal of the South African Society of Archivists*, 51, 34–49.
- Msakila, S. T. (2022). *Challenges and prospects of electronic records management in the public sector of Tanzania: A case of selected government ministries in Dodoma City* (Master's dissertation). University of Dodoma Institutional Repository.
- Ndenje-Sichalwe, E. (2010). The significance of the Records Continuum Model in records management practices. *ESARBICA Journal*, 29, 78–91.
- Newa, J. (2017). *Readiness of records and archives management institutions in managing electronic records in Tanzania* (Master's dissertation). University of Dar es Salaam.

- Nyangila, J. M. (2022). Legal and regulatory compliance in electronic records management in African public institutions. *African Journal of Archives and Records Management*, 7(1), 33–49.
- Pessa, P. E. (2019). Electronic records management in public institutions: Concepts and practices. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, 14(2), 45–58.
- Tsabedze, P. M. (2021). E-government and records management in Eswatini government ministries. *Journal of the South African Society of Archivists*, 54, 50–65.
- UNESCO. (2023). *Guidelines for digital transformation of records and archives management*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.