

The State of Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework for Improved Records Management in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania

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Abstract

Rationale of the study- The study evaluated the awareness of the legal framework in records management to enhance records management practices in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania. Specifically, it aimed to assess how aware records management staff and action officers are of the legal framework, identify key factors influencing their awareness, and explore the strategies Local Government Authorities use to promote awareness of their legal obligations in records management.

Methodology- A survey or census sampling approach was employed to select 240 respondents from a population of 168 Action Officers (AOs), 60 records management staff (RMS), and 12 key informants.

Findings- The study revealed that 60.0% of records management staff were familiar with the legal framework governing records management. It also showed that only 24.35% of the action officers were aware of it. Generally, all respondents reported a positive link between awareness of the legal framework and records management practices.

Implications - This study's results confirm the validity of the conceptual framework and theory used. The results address established research objectives and constructs derived from and modified within the existing framework and theory. The focus on creating, raising, and enhancing awareness acts as a call to action for public organisations and policymakers to establish the awareness pillars and guidelines needed for effective records management, leading to better service delivery. Furthermore, the study adds to existing theories of records management and the records management cadre in both public and non-public organisations, highlighting the importance of awareness creation for successful operations in LGAs.

Originality- In addition to employing a mixed-methods research approach, this study will enhance awareness of the legal framework for records management in LGAs in Tanzania, thereby improving records management practices in local government authorities, where such studies have been scarce.

Keywords: Local Government, records, records management, archives, legal framework, records management staff, Action Officers, registry, standards

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1 Introduction

The legal framework in records management provides organisations with guidelines to help them meet their obligation to achieve a minimum level of compliance (Kashaija, 2020). It also establishes the criteria for the efficient and systematic management of information and records, including legal requirements and best practices, that organisations use to ensure records are managed in accordance with laws and regulations. In general, the legal framework outlines the framework for creating, capturing, managing, and accessing records while protecting sensitive information and maintaining privacy (Rutta & Ndenje Sichelwe, 2021). Therefore, a strong legal framework is crucial for ensuring that the records management program meets its objectives by establishing accountability, compliance, and access to records, which are essential for effective record keeping (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020).

There have been international and national efforts to ensure that records are managed in line with the accepted legal framework. For instance, the International Standards Organisation (ISO 15489) establishes the fundamental concepts and principles for creating, capturing, and managing records by developing policies, procedures, and legislation for effective records management (Rutta & Ndenje-Sichelwe, 2021). Likewise, the establishment of the International Records

Management Trust (IRMT) in 1989, with a special focus on strengthening records management practices and ensuring compliance with accepted standards (Mohamed, 2018). In Tanzania, after independence, the President's office issued Circular No. 7 of 1963, Government Notice Number 289, published on 1st October 1999, under the Records and Archives Management Department (RAMD), with emphasis on the proper care and disposal of public records (Rutta & Ndenje-Sichelwe, 2021). RAMD also created a Registry Procedures Manual in 2003, which detailed procedures for handling all types of records (IRMT, 2011). Moreover, the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002 was later enacted to ensure the administration and management of public records and archives throughout their life cycle. Additionally, the National Records and Archives Management policy was established in September 2011 to provide a framework for records and archives management, in accordance with legal requirements and international standards (Rutta & Ndenje-Sichelwe, 2021). Effective records management largely depends on some level of awareness and utilisation of the records management legal framework, which comprises procedures, policies, and laws governing the management of records (Kashaija et al., 2022).

However, in most Local Government Authorities in Tanzania, effective records

management is hindered by limited awareness of the importance of records and records management (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020; Mwasenga, 2021). This study, therefore, critically examined the level of awareness of the legal framework for records management within Local Government Authorities in Tanzania to promote compliance with records management practices among these authorities.

2 Statement of the Problem

The records management legal framework sets guidelines, standards, and directives to ensure compliance, accountability, and effective records management throughout the entire records life cycle (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020). The framework includes laws, policies, standards, and guidelines that oversee the creation, retention, disposal, and access to records. The records management system should be designed to help organisations properly manage records, protect sensitive information, and fulfil legal requirements. To attain this, the awareness of the Legal Framework is essential. Awareness of the records management legal framework influences records management performance (Rutta & Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2021). In this case, non-compliance with this framework can lead to serious issues, such as delays in decision-making, challenges in demonstrating accountability and transparency, and the loss of important records, which can impair service delivery (Mwasenga, 2021). Awareness of the

records management legal framework promotes effective operational records management practices, which in turn control the number of records created within a given organisation by fostering accountability, transparency, and good governance (Rutta & Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2021). However, in Africa, awareness of modern records management is low across many public sectors due to inadequate policies, standards, and guidelines, as well as inefficiency and a lack of management continuity (Mwasenga, 2021). This study was therefore conducted to assess the level of awareness of the legal framework among Records Management Staff and Action Officers in local government authorities, to ensure improved and outstanding records management.

The primary objective of this study was to assess staff awareness of the legal framework among Local Government Authorities in Tanzania to enhance records management.

The following objectives guided this study:

- i. To assess the current level of awareness of the legal framework among Records Management Staff and Action Officers in Local Government Authorities
- ii. To determine the key factors influencing the awareness of the legal framework in records management

- iii. To find out the strategies that Local Government Authorities use to create awareness of the legal framework in records management practices.

3 Literature Review

Proper records management is significant because it enables organisations to control their information and supports better strategic planning for their activities. This is possible when records management practices are implemented in accordance with the legal framework to reduce risks, costs, and potential liabilities associated with handling sensitive data. This study underwent a review of related literature based on the following concepts:

3.1 Awareness of the Legal Framework in Records Management in Local Government Authorities

The Recognition of the importance of awareness in records management is a concern in every organisation. Awareness of the records management legal framework among staff encourages better practices, ensures compliance, and promotes effective information management, thereby improving efficiency and effectiveness (Kanyabwira, 2024).

Generally, awareness of the legal framework among records management staff and Action Officers can lead to better records creation, maintenance, and management of best practices (2020). Conversely, a lack of

awareness of the legal framework may create bottlenecks and delays in LGAs' records management practices. Despite the role of awareness of records management legal framework towards organisational performance, it is not very clear whether records management staff and action officers in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania are aware of the existing legal framework, nor is it known what strategies are used to create awareness among organisational staff in these Local Government Authorities.

3.2 Factors Influencing Understanding of Records Management Legal Framework in Local Government Authorities

Awareness of the legal framework governing records management varies across different levels within an organisation and is influenced by several Factors. Generally, awareness of the legal framework in records management is critical for ensuring compliance, accountability, and effective records management practices (Kashaija & Ndumbaro, 2020). Some scholars have suggested implementing strategic records management for accountability, focusing primarily on raising awareness of records management and its role in establishing efficient systems for managing an organisation's records (Tagbotor et al., 2018). However, improper record-keeping has been reported in most LGAs. Kyando et al. (2022) revealed a poor record system, a lack of record tools, a lack of record materials and

equipment, poor record working conditions, and a lack of record safety and security. Rutta and Ndenje-Sichalwe (2021) reported poor protection and preservation of public records. Hassan (2022) discloses limited storage space. Kachota (2023) reveals, however, that these studies did not provide sufficient detail on the factors that contribute to the effective implementation of the records management legal framework, a gap this study aims to address.

3.3 Strategies that LGAs may employ to Raise Awareness of the Records Management Legal Framework among the organisation's Staff

The local government has been observed to have many interlinking departments in which records are generated daily (Bakare et al., 2016). Each department must maintain appropriate and effective control over records in its respective areas of responsibility. However, low awareness of relevant legal frameworks is widespread in LGAs. For instance, Kashaija (2019) reported a lack of knowledge of the existing legal framework, Kamatula (2019) revealed the loss of files caused by action officers keeping records for too long in their offices, and Safura et al. (2018) identified misplacements and loss of records in government institutions caused by a lack of retention and disposition plans. However, a study by Rutta and Ndeje-Sichalwe (2021) found that some records practitioners lack awareness of regulations and procedures

that ensure effective records management in public institutions. However, there is no clear information on the strategies LGAs use to raise staff awareness of the legal framework in the Tanzanian context, a situation that warranted this study.

4 Theoretical Framework

This study used the Theory of Regulatory Compliance (TRC) developed by Fiene (2016). TRC provides insight into the importance of complying with rules, regulations, and standards across the human services sector. TRC also emphasises the importance of selecting the best rules that are significantly predictive of positive outcomes. Therefore, TRC was adopted in this study because it was found to be adequate for explaining the linkage between compliance level and performance outcomes (Fiene, 2016; Juretha et al., 2018).

This study adjusted several variables in the TRC theory. The variables, rules, regulations, and standards were replaced with the awareness of the legal framework in records management. The independent variables for this study include the awareness of the legal framework in records management, like awareness (particularly the awareness of Records and Archives Management Policies, Acts, guidelines, regulations, and standards), which are determined by the factors influencing the awareness, such as education level and training, work experience, policies, and legislation. The dependent variable

encompasses good records management practices, including proper creation, maintenance, use, security, and disposition of records, with improved records management.

TRC theory, therefore, helped the researcher identify concepts and variables that guided the construction of research instruments and establish the relationships among attributes, variables, and data.

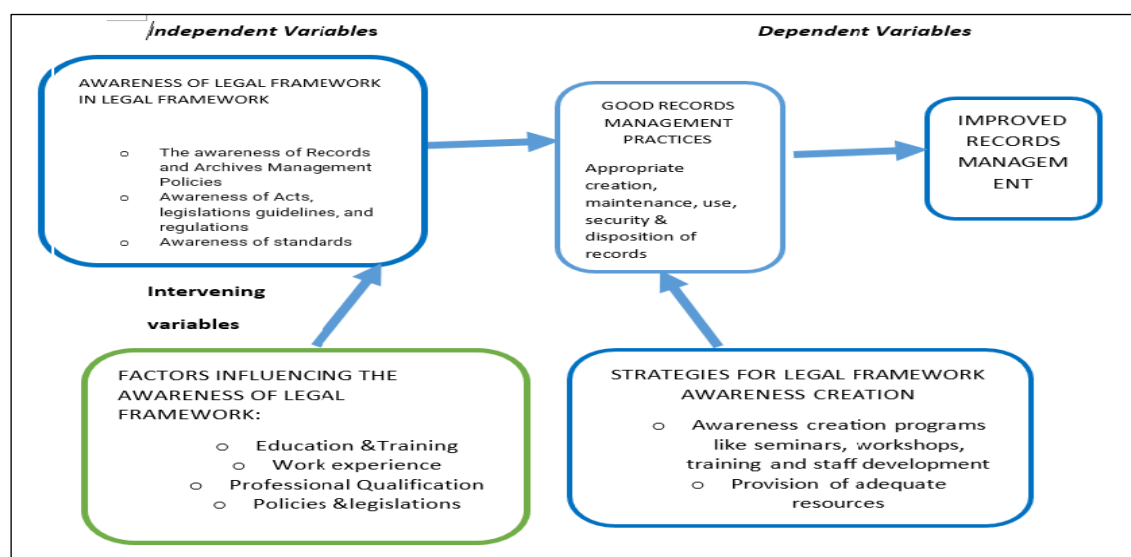


Figure 1: Conceptual framework used in the study

Source: Modified from Fiene (2016)

5 Methodology

This study was carried out in 12 local government authorities selected from six administrative regions found in six zones of Tanzania, namely: Kibaha District Council, Bagamoyo District Council, Dodoma City Council, Chamwino District Council, Iringa Municipal Council, Kilolo District Council, Tabora Municipal Council, Nzega District Council, Moshi Municipal Council, Mwanga District Council, Mtwara Municipal Council, and Lindi District Council. The study targeted 12 local government authorities, randomly selected from six administrative regions across Tanzania's six zones, to collect reliable, representative information that addresses the

research problem from geographically diverse areas. Also, to obtain a sufficient sample for the study, given that the records management staff cadre is small in the LGAs in Tanzania.

A Cross-sectional research design was employed to obtain comprehensive data for this study. The study used a sample of 240 respondents obtained through a census or population survey: 168 action officers and 60 records management staff were selected by simple random sampling, and 12 heads of registry were selected purposively. The reliability of the research instruments (questionnaires) was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.921, consistent

with an acceptable minimum of 0.70 (Taherdoost, 2016).

Qualitative data were collected from 12 key informants (Heads of Registries) through an interview guide and direct observation. The data were coded, analysed using content analysis, and finally presented in an explanatory form. Quantitative data, which were acquired through questionnaires from 60

records management staff and 168 action officers, were analysed using the IBM SPSS (Statistics Product and Service Solution) V20 computer program. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyse quantitative data, with tabulated, graphical, and statistical descriptions, and commentaries summarising the data. Inferential statistical analysis was also conducted using the chi-square test and ordinal regression.

Table 1: Population Sample (n=240)

Population Type	Sample Size	%	Sampling Technique	Data Collection Instrument
Records Management Staff	60	25	Population/census survey	Questionnaires
Heads of registry	12	5	Population/census survey	Interview Guide
Action Officers	168	70	Population/census survey	Questionnaires
Total	240	100		

6 Results and Discussions

This chapter presents analysis and interpretations of the findings. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation, and data was presented according to the research objectives as follows:

6.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents involved in this study are presented in the Table.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency		Percentage	
	RMS	AOs	RMS	AOs
Education Level				
PhD	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Master degree	0	34	0.00	20.2
Bachelor Degree	6	109	10.0	64.9
Diploma	25	25	41.6	14.9
Certificate	28	00	46.7	0.00
CSE	1	00	1.7	0.00
Total	60	168	100	100
Working Experience				
1 to 10 years	30	41	50.0	25.0
11 to 20 years	22	43	36.7	26.2
21 to 30 years	5	36	8.3	22.0
31 to 40 years	2	29	3.3	17.7
40 years and above	1	15	1.7	9.1
Total	60	168	100	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

As shown in Table 2, the education levels of the participants were assessed (in Table 2) since it was assumed that there could be a relationship between the awareness of the legal framework in records management for the adequate provision of information services in Local Government Authorities. Findings in Table 2 indicate that 46.7% of records management staff had a certificate in Records Management, followed by 41.6% with a Diploma in Records Management. Others, 10.0% had bachelor's degrees, while a few (1.7%) had a Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE). Among Action Officers, 64.9% had a bachelor's degree, 20.2% held a master's degree, and 14.9% had a diploma in relevant fields. Generally, these results imply that the majority of the records management staff in the study area had adequate education to manage records effectively. Moreover, the results indicate that records management staff had a lower level of education than action officers.

Regarding work experience, Table 2 indicates that 50% of the Records Management Staff had 1 to 10 years of experience, 36.7% had 11 to 20 years, and 8.3% had 21 to 30 years. Moreover, findings indicate that 3.3% of the Records Management Staff had 31 to 40 years of experience, whereas 1.7% had 40 or more years of experience. Among Action Officers, 25.0% had work experience of 1 to 10 years, 26.2% had experience of 11 to 20 years, 22.0% had experience of 21 to 30 years, 17.7% had experience of 31 to 40 years, whereas 9.1% had experience of 40 years and above.

6.2 Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework

6.2.1 Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework by Work Experience

The study aimed to examine the relationship between awareness of records management legislation and work experience. The mean responses with associated statistical values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework by Work Experience n= (228)

RM legal framework	Working experience (Mean scores)								
	1-10years		11-20 years		21-30 years		31-40 years and above		p-value
	RMS	Aos	RMS	AOs	RMS	AOs	RMS	AOs	
Retention schedule	1.5000	2.1458	1.9000	2.1923	1.0000	2.4000	2.0000	2.2041	0.723
Records storage and conversion	1.4000	1.7500	1.4000	1.9423	1.0000	1.9333	1.5000	1.8163	0.483
Vital records program	1.6000	2.3125	2.0000	2.1923	2.0000	2.2000	1.5000	2.2449	0.889
Disaster prevention and recovery	1.6000	2.3125	2.0000	2.1923	2.0000	2.2000	1.5000	2.2449	0.935

Source: Field Data (2022)

In Table 3, Scale 1 to 2.5 indicates a high level of awareness of the legal framework in records management, and values above 2.5 indicate no awareness. As indicated in Table 3, staff with working experience ranging from 1 to 20 years had a mean score below 2, suggesting that they are highly aware of the legal framework; those with ages 1 to 10 have a mean score below 1.6, suggesting that they are highly aware of the legal framework. Moreover, those with 31 to

40 years of work experience have a mean score of 1 to 2, indicating that they are aware of the legal framework for records management.

6.2.2 Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework by Education Level

The study sought to understand the relationship between awareness of the records management legal framework and educational level. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Staff awareness with records management legal framework by education level (n=228)

RM legal framework	Master Degree		Bachelor		Diploma		Certificate		p-value
	RMS	Aos	RMS	AOs	RMS	AOs	RMS	AOs	
Retention schedule	NA	2.5413	1.9000	2.4823	1.0000	2.5000	2.0000	NA	0.723
Records storage and conversion	NA	2.6500	1.5000	1.9523	1.0000	1.9443	1.5000	NA	0.483
Vital records program	NA	2.4125	2.0000	2.1923	2.0000	2.3000	1.5000	NA	0.889
Disaster prevention and recovery	NA	2.3125	2.0000	2.1923	2.0000	2.3000	1.5000	NA	0.935

NB: NA- Not Available

According to the results in Table 4, scores from 1 to 2.5 indicate a high level of awareness of the legal framework, while scores above 2.5 suggest a lack of awareness in records management. As shown in Table 4, diploma holders had a mean score of 1-2.5, indicating a high level of awareness of the legal framework. Bachelor's degree holders had a mean score of

1.5 to 2.4, also indicating awareness, and certificate holders scored between 1.5 and 2, showing awareness as well. Table 4 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in familiarity concerning respondents' education levels at the 5% significance level.

6.3 Factors Influencing the Awareness of Records Management Legal Framework among Records Management Staff and Action Officers in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania

The second objective of this study was to identify the factors influencing staff awareness of the legal framework for records

management. The study hypothesised that among the factors, professional qualifications, staff education level, and work experience could be included (Tables 5 to 7). The analysis was conducted using ordinal regression, given the nature of the dependent variable (awareness of the records management legal framework), which had three response categories.

Table 5: A Summary of variables included in the ordinal analysis

Variable	Response	n	Marginal Percentage (%)
Awareness of the records management legal framework	Familiar	98	43.0
	Not familiar	35	15.4
Professional Qualification	RMS	60	26.3
	NON-RMS	168	73.7
Work experience (years)	Records Managers	60	26.3
	1 to 10 years	71	31.4
	11 to 20 years	65	28.5
	21 to 30 years	41	18.0
	31 to 40 years	31	13.6
	40 years and above	16	7.0
Education level	Certificate	28	12.3
	Diploma	50	22.0
	Degree	115	50.4
	Master Degree	34	15.0
	PhD	00	0.00
	CSE	01	0.4
Total		228	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

The results in Table 5 indicate that the variables included in the ordinal regression model contributed between 27.9% and 42.1% of the variation in the dependent variable

(familiarity with the records management legal framework), as indicated by the Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke values. Thus, these were not the only factors behind the observed variation.

There may be additional variables beyond the scope of this study that require further examination in future research.

Table 6: Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.279
Nagelkerke	.421
McFadden	.301
Link function: Logit.	

Table 7: Factors influencing the level of awareness of records management legal framework among staff in Local Government Authorities

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
[Awareness of the records management legal framework	4.248	7.683	.306	1	.580	-10.811	19.308
Policies	.406	1.519	.071	1	.789	-2.572	3.383
Legislations	1.135	4.599	.061	1	.805	-7.878	10.148
Professional qualification	-1.150	6.835	.028	1	.866	-14.547	12.247
Work experience	1.135	4.599	.061	1	.805	-7.878	10.148
Education level	.406	1.519	.071	1	.789	-2.572	3.383

As indicated in Table 7, several factors were included in the ordinal regression model to determine whether any had a statistically significant influence on awareness relative to the others. The study found that none of the variables used had a statistically significant effect at the 5% level (all p-values were greater than 5%). The Wald values in Table 8 are all non-zero, indicating a relationship between the strategies of awareness of the records management legal framework (policies,

legislation, education level, work experience, professional qualifications) and the dependent variables (good records management and improved records management).

6.4 The strategies that LGAs can use to create awareness of the records management legal framework among staff

This study sought to identify strategies for raising awareness of the legal framework in records management. The responses are presented in Figure 2.

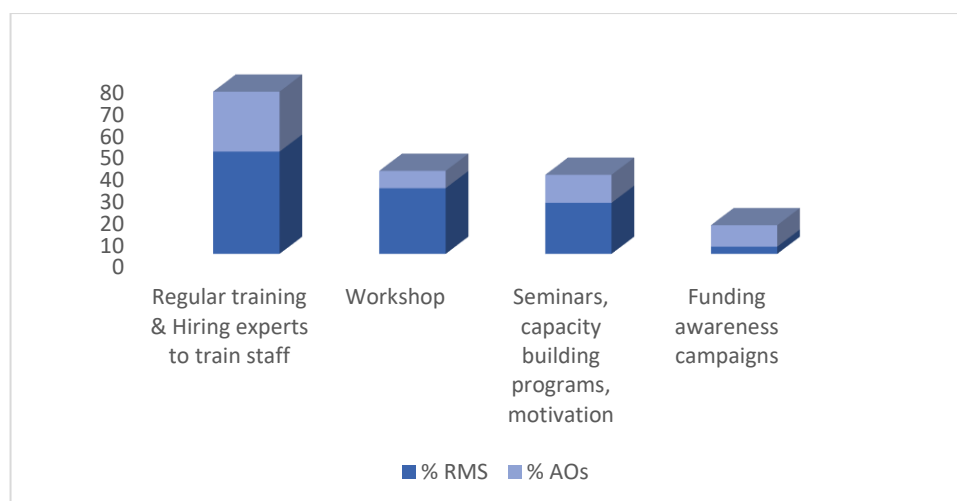


Figure 2: The strategies to create awareness of the records management legal framework among staff in LGAs (n=228)

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings in Table 8 show that training and hiring experts to train staff received 46.7% of responses from RMS, against 27.4% from AOs; the workshop received 30.0% of responses from RMS, against 7.9% from AOs. In contrast, seminars, capacity-building programs, and motivation received 25.0% of responses from RMS, compared with 12.8% from AOs.

7 Discussion of the Findings

7.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents were assessed based on education level and work experience. The results showed that the majority of records management staff held a Certificate, followed by a Diploma, a Bachelor's degree, and a Certificate of Secondary Education, with no Master's degree or PhD. This is contrary to the action officers, the majority of whom held a Bachelor's degree,

followed by a Master's degree, and a Diploma. These results show that the majority of the records management staff in the study area had adequate education to manage records effectively. Moreover, the results indicate that records management staff had a lower level of education than action officers. This might be because the records management training course at a higher level is provided in a few learning institutions in Tanzania (Nkebukwa, 2019). Education level explains the competencies a person has for performing specific tasks. It is assumed that the more educated a person is, the more competent they become and the more likely they are to contribute positively to a particular profession. The presence of competent, skilled, and educated staff in the studied Local Government Authorities indicates that Tanzanian Local Government Authorities have invested in sustaining records management as an information service.

Recruiting educated records management professionals ensures that records management activities are handled carefully and remain long-lasting (Nsibirwa, 2015).

Work experience was also assessed, as it is believed to help individuals cope with and become aware of the various changes in records management that may be implemented periodically within the organisation. The majority of RMS had between one and ten years of experience, followed by eleven to twenty years, twenty-one to thirty, thirty-one to forty, and forty and above. While the majority of AOs had between eleven and twenty years of experience, followed by one to ten, twenty-one to thirty, thirty-one to forty, and forty and above. This means the staff under study had ample experience in records management. These findings also indicate that the younger generation predominantly leads records management in Local Government Authorities with 1 to 20 years of experience. This suggests that LGAs are making significant efforts to engage the youth in records management, which is promising for future improvements in the field. In line with that, Ndemanyisho (2014) alleged that experience is important, as it enables individuals to manage records and make informed decisions during specific events.

7.2 The awareness of the records management legal framework through working experience

The awareness of records management through working experience was assessed. Generally, the results show that all work experience categories for both RMS and AOs were aware of the legal framework in records management. However, the findings revealed that staff with 1 to 20 years of experience had a higher level of familiarity with the records management legal framework than those with 20 or more years of experience.

Thus, in the interview, one of the heads of the registry said:

“It is easier to work with the young generation. They are flexible in learning new aspects and in adapting to change. They learn very fast, and they are more exposed to technology.”

This might be due to negligence, a lack of commitment, and an unwillingness or lack of readiness to learn new aspects among Records Management Staff with many years of experience. Also, the results show that the awareness level of Records Management Staff is higher than that of Action Officers. This finding differs from that of Adusei and Senyah (2022), which indicates that, for a records management system to perform well in an organisation, several years of working experience are necessary. However, this is not the case in this study; the results reveal that working experience alone is insufficient for

Records Staff to be aware of the records management legal framework. Instead, other qualities, such as commitment and a readiness to learn and understand various aspects, are also needed. Furthermore, there is a profound need for targeted training and clear communication of the records management legal framework among staff to reduce inefficiencies and compliance issues.

7.3 The awareness of the records management legal framework by Education level

The awareness of the legal framework in records management based on education level was assessed. The study results demonstrate that all education level groups were aware of the legal framework in records management. However, the results show that awareness was higher among diploma and certificate holders than among bachelor's degree holders. This may be because the group comprised primarily younger staff members who are eager to learn about various aspects of records management and therefore expect a high level of familiarity. These results align with those of Makgahlela (2021) in his study on Records Management Practices in selected Municipalities in Limpopo province of South Africa, where the majority of records management staff held diplomas and certificates, with a few degree holders.

Generally, records management personnel should be knowledgeable about the requirements for managing records. Education

and training are vital for records management staff in implementing effective practices, as they impact success (Newa & Mwamtimwa, 2019). Proper and ongoing education and training in records management are essential to ensure compliance with regulations, keep employees informed, and update them on changes in the field. Therefore, a solid education at the start of the profession, competence-based training for ongoing professional development, and involvement in research and knowledge creation are all crucial for developing and maintaining well-rounded records professionals overall (Ndenje-Sichalwe et al., 2011). However, this study suggests that education level alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by the staff's willingness and eagerness to learn new aspects and technologies.

7.4 Factors influencing the level of awareness of the legal framework in records management among staff in LGAs

The study evaluated the factors influencing staff awareness of the legal framework in records management within Local Government Authorities. Several variables were included in the ordinal regression model to determine if any had a statistically significant impact on awareness compared to others. The findings showed a relationship between the strategies used to raise awareness of the records management legal framework (such as policies, legislation, education level, and work experience) and the outcomes (effective

records management and improved practices). Through direct observation, the study also identified a lack of willingness among young staff to learn and apply new knowledge and technologies. This suggests that awareness of the records management legal framework is influenced by factors such as policies, legislation, position, work experience, education, professional qualifications, and a willingness to learn and adapt. Supporting this, Kashaija and Ndumbaro (2020) demonstrate that the successful implementation of legal frameworks depends on additional factors such as training and awareness. Therefore, LGAs' ability to raise staff awareness of the records management legal framework is crucial to the effectiveness of records management practices and overall improvement.

7.5 The strategies used in creating awareness of the records management legal framework in LGAs

The strategies for raising awareness of the legal framework for records management in LGAs were examined. The findings show that training and hiring an expert to train staff received the highest response rate among strategies, such as workshops and seminars, motivation, and capacity-building programs. This indicates that awareness of the legal framework has not yet received sufficient emphasis in most Local Government Authorities. Furthermore, it suggests that administrative officials are not sufficiently involved in raising awareness of the legal

framework for effective records management within their respective Local Government Authorities. Additionally, it indicates that LGAs lack focus on records management practices, leading to inefficiencies, unaccountability, and problems in accessing information. In Support of this, Musembe (2016) outlined ways to strengthen the records management legal framework, such as workshops, training seminars, and staff development. These ways, however, were rarely implemented in most LGAs under this study. The LGAs, therefore, should establish clear policies, invest in training and awareness-raising programs, workshops, and seminars, and ensure adequate resources are available.

Also, to reduce the various barriers linked to inadequate support, the LGAs should prioritise records management by establishing learning opportunities and staff training to promote a culture of records management, ensuring records management practices remain effective, and fostering transparency, good governance, and sound decision-making.

8 Conclusion

Any organisation aiming to achieve its goals, such as those in history, law, and decision-making, should conduct records management activities in line with best practices. To do this, it is crucial first to raise awareness of the legal framework for records management to promote proper documentation and effective record-keeping. In this context, Local

Government Authorities should prioritise and support records management best practices by providing comprehensive training for all staff on records management principles and procedures, and by implementing training programmes to ensure proper storage and access controls. Furthermore, awareness of the records management legal framework should be strengthened by developing clear policies and procedures based on best practices, and raising awareness through capacity-building initiatives, staff collaboration, teamwork, and motivation. Additionally, by aligning with relevant theories and practices, Local Government Authorities should actively endorse records management practices to foster effective approaches for operational service delivery. Ultimately, records management must be supported by senior management to enable the organisation to fully back awareness programmes, such as regular training, workshops, seminars, and staff motivation initiatives. This will lead to improved efficiency, accountability, transparency, better-informed decision-making, and exceptional service delivery.

9 Recommendations

Since the results of this study have confirmed weaknesses in several areas, including poor record retention and disposition plans, lack of staff development programs, and inadequate organisational support, there is an urgent need to formalise records management by focusing on best practices with policies and procedures

that cover all aspects of record creation, classification, storage, retention, and disposal efforts. It is also important to note that, for any organisation, effective records management is the best way to guarantee compliance, ensure transparency, enable quick access to records, and deliver appropriate public services. Therefore, understanding and applying relevant records management theories, practices, and procedures is crucial for effective records management.

10 Implications of the Study

This study assessed the state of awareness of the legal framework in local government authorities. The study identified a lack of staff awareness of the legal framework in most local government authorities. The study provides clear strategies for ensuring practical records management in LGAs. This study also serves as a wake-up call for local government authorities to invest in staff training programmes, keep them up to date on technological change, and put the established records management acts, policies, and regulations into practice.

This study's results validate the conceptual framework and the theory used. This is because the results address established research objectives and constructs drawn from and modified in the existing conceptual framework and theory. The study's focus on creating, raising, and enhancing awareness serves as a call to action for public

organisations and policymakers to establish the awareness pillars and guidelines necessary for effective records management practices, thereby improving service delivery. Additionally, the study contributes to existing theories of records management and the records management cadre in public and non-public organisations, emphasising the importance of awareness-raising for successful operations in LGAs.

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