

**CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF RECORDS OFFICERS IN SELECTED
DISTRICTS IN UGANDA**

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DECLARATION

I am **Alum Anne Mary**, hereby declare that the dissertation is original and a result of my own efforts, and it has never been submitted to any university for any academic award. Where the works of others have been, acknowledgement has been made in the text and references.

Sign: 

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APPROVAL

I certify that this dissertation is on the capacity building needs of records officers in local government in Uganda, has been prepared under my supervision and is ready for submission.

Sign 

Assoc. Prof. David Luyombya

Date 13th / October / 2026.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my beloved mum, Emma Aceng.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I wish to thank the almighty God for the gift of my life and spiritual guidance that has enabled me to compile this research report. I expressed my utmost thanks to my supervisor, Assoc Prof. David Luyombya, whose generous guidance was indispensable in the production of this dissertation. Your commitment, knowledge and technical experience in records and archives management gave an intellectual shape to this academically rewarding report.

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Finally, I acknowledge the respondents from all the Local government for having accepted to participate and become part of this study; minus your input, the study would not have acquired shape and meaning.

May the highly exalted God bless the works of my hands.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACEIE	African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics
ARMA	Association of Records Managers and Administrators
CAO	Chief Administrative Officers
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DLG	Local government
EDMS	Electronic Document Management Systems
EDRMS	Electronic Document and Records Management Systems
ERMS	Electronic Records Management System
ESARBICA	East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IRMT	International Records Management Trust
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
UGX	Uganda Shillings (currency)

ABSTRACT

Effective records management is fundamental to accountability, transparency, and efficient service delivery in Uganda's Local governments (DLGs). However, differences in institutional capacity, infrastructure, and digital readiness continue to affect records management practices across local government. This study assessed the capacity-building needs of local government records officers in selected local governments in Uganda. Specifically, the study sought to: identify the current state of records management practices; establish the existing records management skills and knowledge of records officers; determine the knowledge and skills gaps that hinder effective records management; and propose strategies that will enhance the capacity of the staff in managing records. The study was conducted in eight local government across Uganda's four regions: Lira and Arua (Northern), Mbale and Moroto (Eastern), Mbarara and Kasese (Western), and Mukono and Masaka (Central).

The study adopted an exploratory mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 32 purposively selected respondents, comprising 16 Records Officers, 8 Human Resource Officers, and 8 Chief Administrative Officers. Questionnaires were administered to Records Officers and Human Resource Officers, while Chief Administrative Officers participated in semi-structured interviews. Documentary review and observation checklists were also used to complement the primary data. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 27 through descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis.

The findings revealed that records creation, classification, and access control were generally well established across the selected local government. However, storage facilities, digitisation, and electronic records management remained inadequate, particularly in the Northern and Eastern regions. Although records officers demonstrated sound knowledge of traditional records management practices, significant gaps existed in digital records management, preservation, disaster preparedness, analytical reporting, and policy application. Limited ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding, and insufficient continuous professional development constrained effective records management across the local government.

The study concludes that strengthening records management requires simultaneous investment in human capacity and institutional support. It recommends that Local governments allocate dedicated budgets for records management, the Ministry of Public

Service develop and implement regular training programmes, the National Records and Archives Centre establish mentorship programmes linking well-performing local government with less-resourced local government, local government administrations conduct regular policy awareness programmes on records management standards, and government strengthen ICT infrastructure and monitoring systems to support sustainable digital records management.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Background to the Study

Local governments generate and receive large volumes of records in both paper and electronic formats while carrying out administrative, financial, human resource, planning, health, land, and service-delivery functions. Effective management of these records is essential for transparency, accountability, institutional memory, informed decision-making, and efficient public service delivery (Mosweu & Rakemane, 2020). Within Uganda's decentralised governance structure, local government operate as frontline administrative units responsible for implementing government programmes and delivering services to citizens. Records officers therefore play an important role in ensuring that official information is properly created, organised, maintained, accessed, preserved, and disposed of throughout its lifecycle.

Capacity building in records management refers to a deliberate and continuous process of strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, resources, institutional systems, and working conditions required for records officers and their organisations to manage records effectively (Honadle, 2018; Katuu, 2023). In this study, capacity building is understood at three related levels. At the individual level, it involves improving the technical, digital, legal, analytical, and interpersonal competencies of records officers. At the organisational level, it includes strengthening policies, procedures, leadership support, staffing, technology, infrastructure, and funding for records management. At the institutional level, it concerns the wider legal, professional, educational, and government systems that guide, regulate, and support records management across local governments. These dimensions are interdependent because improved individual skills may not produce effective performance where organisational resources and institutional support remain inadequate.

The study was informed by a capacity-building framework which views effective performance as dependent on the interaction between competent personnel, supportive organisational systems, adequate resources, clear policies, and enabling institutional arrangements (Honadle, 2018). This framework provides a basis for assessing not only what records officers know and can do, but also whether their working environment enables them to apply their competencies. It therefore supports the examination of training needs, technological capacity, management support, professional development, and resource availability within local government offices.

The capacity-building framework complements the Records Life Cycle Theory used in this study. While the Records Life Cycle Theory explains the stages through which records pass from creation and active use to disposition or permanent preservation, the capacity-building framework explains the human and institutional capabilities required to manage records effectively at each stage. For example, proper records creation requires competent staff and clear procedures; maintenance and use require classification, storage, retrieval, security, and digital skills; while disposition requires knowledge of appraisal, retention schedules, legal requirements, and archival preservation. Together, the two frameworks provide a stronger theoretical basis for examining both records management practices and the capacity of officers responsible for carrying them out.

In Uganda, developing viable education, training, and professional-support programmes for records officers remains an ongoing challenge (Luyombya, Ssendikadiwa, & Mulindwa, 2023). Although several scholars have discussed capacity building in records management, concerns remain regarding the limited number of professionals with the specialised knowledge and practical methods needed to strengthen organisational records management systems (Luyombya et al., 2023; Mosweu & Kenosi, 2018; Shibambu & Marutha, 2022; Ssekitto & Najjuka, 2019). Capacity building must therefore move beyond occasional training to include continuing professional development, mentorship, access to technology, adequate infrastructure, policy awareness, and organisational support.

Sey and Mudongo (2021) identify skills development and knowledge improvement as two important elements of professional capacity. Skills development strengthens the practical abilities required to classify, store, retrieve, preserve, digitise, and dispose of records, while knowledge development improves understanding of legal requirements, institutional policies, information governance, and technological change. Gesmundo et al. (2022) further explain that professional performance depends on the ability of officers to apply acquired knowledge and skills to changing work environments. This is particularly important in records management, where digital technologies, data-protection requirements, cybersecurity risks, and electronic service-delivery systems continue to transform professional practice.

Records management professionals, including archivists, records managers, and records officers, preserve institutional memory and support evidence-based administration within local governments. The International Records Management Trust emphasises that trained records officers are necessary for ensuring that records are properly created, organised,

maintained, and made accessible throughout their lifecycle (Matongo & Jacobs, 2022). Capacity building therefore enables records officers to respond to both traditional and emerging records management demands and to support accountable governance.

Despite this importance, records management in Uganda's local governments continues to face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited technological capacity, insufficient professional knowledge, weak institutional support, and inadequate access to structured capacity-building programmes (Kaddu, Ssekitto, & Kyarimpa, 2023; Ssekitto & Najjuka, 2019). These challenges affect the ability of records officers to manage records consistently and efficiently across their lifecycle. It is against this background that the study examined the capacity-building needs of records officers in selected local government of Uganda, focusing on existing records management practices, current competencies, specific knowledge and skills gaps, and strategies for strengthening effective records management.

1.1 Selected Local government from the Region of Uganda

In Uganda's local government system, records management follows a structured hierarchy that flows from the national level to the local government level, with specialised departments responsible for ensuring the systematic control and preservation of records.

Noteworthy, Uganda, as of 2025, is organised into 146 local government, categorised into four administrative regions: Northern, Eastern, Central, and Western regions (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Since 2005, the Ugandan government has embarked on a decentralisation initiative, dividing larger local government into smaller units.

The administrative hierarchy within a local government is segmented into counties and municipalities, which are further divided into sub-counties. At the helm of each local government is the Chairperson of the Local Council Five (LCV), the elected political head. The Local government Council, comprised of elected representatives, exercises both legislative and executive powers. Similarly, lower local government councils hold political authority within their jurisdictions, ensuring that governance and service delivery extend to all administrative levels.

This study focused on selected local government representing Uganda's four administrative regions to ensure a balanced and representative assessment of records management practices:

Northern Region: Lira and Arua were selected to represent local government in the north. These areas face challenges of resource constraints and fragmented administrative structures that affect records management.

Eastern Region: Mbale and Moroto were included to provide insights from both a developed urban centre (Mbale) and a semi-arid rural local government (Moroto), which faces infrastructural and digital access limitations.

Central Region: Mukono and Masaka were selected to represent local government in proximity to the capital, with relatively advanced administrative systems but increasing record volumes.

Western Region: Mbarara and Kasese were included to reflect the western context, where records management practices are evolving but constrained by limited capacity and technology.

By studying local government from each region context, the study provides a holistic picture of records management realities across Uganda's diverse administrative local government offices.

1.1.1 Digital Systems Adoption in Ugandan Local government

The adoption of digital systems is vital for improving efficiency, transparency, and access to government services. According to the Digital Transformation Roadmap (2023/2024–2027/2028), the Government of Uganda has implemented over 236 information systems to enhance service delivery and promote cost-effective administration. This shift aims to overcome traditional barriers of time and distance by using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to make services more accessible.

However, despite progress, many systems still operate in isolation, limiting data sharing and efficiency. To address this, the government prioritises single identifiers and shared digital registries as trusted “sources of truth” to promote interoperability and reduce duplication. The goal is for 85% of government transactions to be conducted through shared digital platforms.

For local government, integrating electronic records management is critical to this digital vision. Yet, many still rely on manual systems, highlighting the need for capacity building, ICT infrastructure, and skilled records officers to support the effective use of digital tools.

Thus, the current state of records management within these local government reveals significant challenges, including outdated practices, insufficient skills, and inadequate technological infrastructure (Ssekitto & Najjuka, 2019). These issues are exacerbated by the rapid increase in the volume of records and the growing complexity of information management requirements (Kaddu *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, this study focused on examining the capacity-building needs of local government records officers of Uganda to develop strategies for promoting effective records management within the local government offices.

1.2 Problem Statement

The Uganda National Records and Archives Act (2001) requires local governments to establish and maintain effective records management systems. However, reports by the Office of the Auditor General (2020/2021) continue to reveal weaknesses in records creation, storage, retrieval, preservation, and access to official records across several local government. Similarly, the Local Governments (Financial and Accounting) Regulations (2015) require proper maintenance of public records, yet compliance remains inconsistent due to inadequate infrastructure, limited technological capacity, insufficient professional skills, and inadequate structured training for records officers.

These weaknesses affect timely retrieval of information, evidence-based decision-making, service delivery, accountability, and institutional memory within local governments. Although records management challenges have been documented in Uganda, the capacity-building needs of local government records officers require greater attention, particularly in relation to the knowledge, skills, technological competencies, institutional support and resources required for effective records management across different regional contexts. This knowledge gap makes it difficult for local governments and relevant stakeholders to design targeted interventions that address existing competency gaps. Therefore, this study assessed the capacity-building needs of records officers to provide evidence for strengthening records management practices.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The study assessed the capacity-building needs of records officers in selected local governments in Uganda.

1.4 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the current records management practices in selected local governments in Uganda.
2. To assess the existing records management knowledge and skills of records officers in selected local governments in Uganda.
3. To determine the knowledge and skills gaps that hinder records officers from effectively managing records in selected local governments in Uganda.
4. To propose strategies that will enhance the capacity of the staff in managing records.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of records management practices in selected local governments in Uganda?
2. What records management knowledge and skills do records officers possess in selected local governments in Uganda?
3. What knowledge and skills gaps hinder records officers from effectively managing records in selected local governments in Uganda?
4. What strategies can enhance the capacity of the staff in managing records?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was limited to the geographical, time and conceptual scope as explained below:

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of this study covered selected local government across Uganda, ensuring a balance between different regions while considering both urban and rural contexts. The study focused on Lira and Arua in the Northern region, Mbale and Moroto in the Eastern region, Mukono and Masaka in the Central region, and Mbarara and Kasese in the Western region.

1.6.2 Time Scope

The study took place between November 2023 and October 2025, as reflected by the Gantt chart, see *Appendix three*.

1.6.3 Conceptual Scope

The study was limited to records officers and other staff directly engaged in managing local government records. It focused on assessing the current state of records management practices, examining the skills and knowledge levels of records officers, identifying existing gaps that hinder performance, and suggesting practical strategies to strengthen records management within Uganda's local government offices.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will contribute to improving records management practices at the Ugandan local government, as explained below:

First, the study will be useful to government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Local Government, Finance, Trade, and Tourism, as it highlights the existing gaps in records management practices and the skills required by records officers in local governments. The Ministry of Local Government is responsible for overseeing the administration and governance of local governments, including ensuring efficient records management systems that support service delivery, accountability, and transparency. The findings of this study draw attention to the pressing need for the ministry to strengthen training programs, allocate resources, and implement strategic policies aimed at enhancing records management in local government offices.

The donor community, such as the World Bank, would find this study beneficial as it identifies gaps in knowledge, skills, and resources that can be addressed through their local government development programs. These insights can guide donors in tailoring their support to meet the specific needs identified.

The implementation of the study's recommendations promises improved public service delivery at the local level, benefiting the general public. Strengthened records management systems will ensure accuracy, transparency, and efficiency in administrative operations, contributing to better governance and accountability.

For the researcher, the study was a critical step towards attaining a master's degree in Records and Archives Management from Makerere University, contributing to their academic and professional development.

Future scholars would find the study valuable as it provides secondary data on the state of records management practices, skill gaps, and strategies for improvement, particularly in the context of Uganda. This data can serve as a foundation for further research in different contexts or government sectors, enriching the academic discourse on records management.

The findings would also offer insights to academics in higher learning institutions about the critical importance of records management in Ugandan local government and the challenges involved. This information can help enrich curricula by providing students with extensive knowledge of these challenges. Additionally, the study may inspire academic institutions to propose projects aimed at improving records management practices.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

This study is informed by both the Records Life Cycle Theory and the Capacity Building Framework. The Records Life Cycle Theory explains the key stages through which records pass, while the Capacity Building Framework explains the knowledge, skills, resources and institutional support required for records officers to manage records effectively.

The conceptual framework therefore links the capacity-building components (independent variables) to effective records management (dependent variable), while recognising that organisational and institutional conditions influence this relationship.

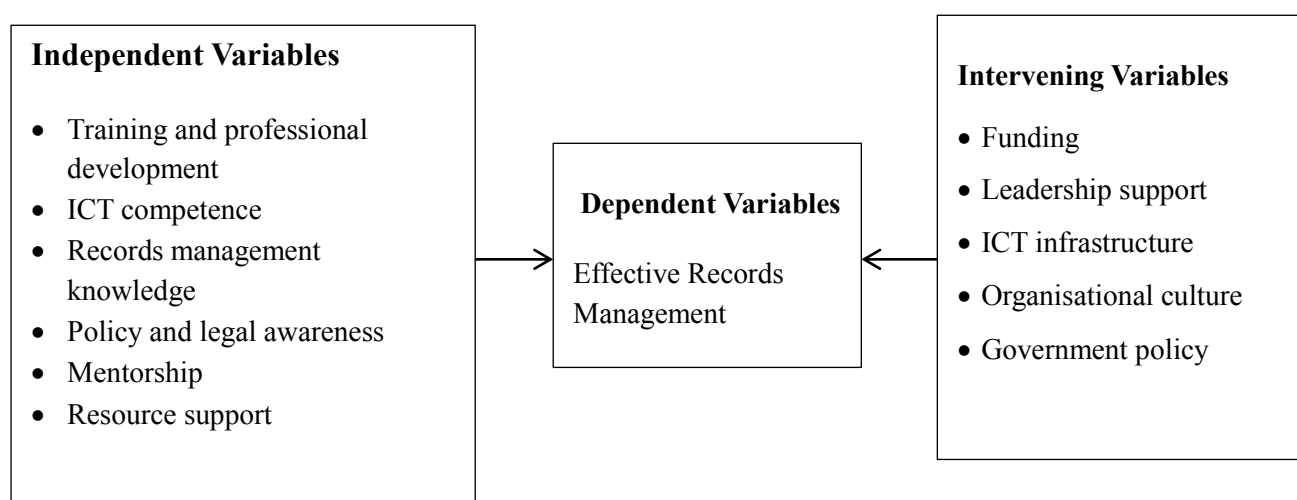


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Researcher's conceptualisation based on the Records Life Cycle Theory (Schellenberg, 1956) and the Capacity Building Framework (Honadle, 2018; Katuu, 2023).

The independent variables comprise training, ICT competence, records management knowledge, policy awareness, mentorship and resource support. These factors build the competencies required by records officers to perform records creation, classification, storage, retrieval, access control, retention, disposition and digitisation. The dependent variable is effective records management, reflected in efficient, secure and compliant management of records throughout their life cycle. However, the relationship is influenced by intervening variables including funding, leadership support, ICT infrastructure, organisational culture and government policy. These factors may strengthen or weaken the application of acquired competencies in local governments. The framework guided the development of the study objectives, research instruments, data analysis and interpretation of findings.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Records Life Cycle Theory as the foundational framework to assess the state of records management practices and the capacity of records officers in Uganda. It provides the ideal practices required to manage records in organisational settings (Matongo & Jacobs, 2022). This model, developed and popularised by Theodore R. Schellenberg in his seminal work *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (1956), remains integral to contemporary records management practices (Luyombya et al., 2023).

Schellenberg's Records Life Cycle Model outlines several stages: creation, maintenance and use, and disposition, either through destruction or permanent preservation in archives (Matlala & Maphoto, 2020). This cyclical approach ensures that records are systematically managed, ensuring their integrity, accessibility, and security throughout their existence.

The creation stage involves the generation of records through various administrative activities. In the context of Ugandan local government, this includes documentation of government operations, decisions, and transactions. Effective records management begins at this stage, requiring records officers to be proficient in capturing accurate and comprehensive information. Training in records creation is essential to ensure that records are complete, reliable, and compliant with regulatory requirements (Touray, 2021).

During the maintenance and use stage, records are actively used and referenced. This phase requires robust systems for storing, retrieving, and managing records. In Ugandan local government, this stage is often affected by outdated practices and inadequate technological infrastructure, hindering efficient access and utilisation of records (Metto, Kinuthia & Mwita,

2022). Capacity-building initiatives must therefore focus on enhancing records officers' skills in digital records management, metadata application, and electronic filing systems to streamline operations and improve service delivery.

The final stage, disposition, involves determining the fate of records based on their value. Records can either be destroyed or transferred to archives for permanent preservation. This stage is crucial for managing space and resources effectively and ensuring that valuable records are preserved for historical and legal purposes. In many Ugandan local government, the lack of clear disposition policies and practices results in the accumulation of obsolete records, complicating records management efforts (Ssekitto & Najjuka, 2019). Training programs should therefore emphasise appraisal, retention schedules, and archival processes.

Thus, the application of the Records Life Cycle Model in this study highlights the critical areas where capacity building is needed for records officers in Ugandan local government. The model provides a comprehensive framework to assess practices and identify gaps at each stage of the records lifecycle. By addressing these gaps, especially in creation, maintenance, and disposition, local government can improve efficiency, ensure compliance, and promote accountability in public service delivery.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

This section provides a general definition of key terms used in the dissertation and within this study:

Records Management Capacity Building

Capacity building in the context of records management refers to the process of developing and strengthening the skills, knowledge, resources, and systems required for local government to effectively manage records. It focuses on empowering records officers to effectively and sustainably manage its records. Through capacity building, records officers are equipped to handle both traditional and electronic records, ensuring accountability, transparency, and efficient service delivery within local government offices.

Records

According to the International Standard Organisation (ISO 15489, 2016), records are “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an

organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or the transaction of business.” In this study, a record is either paper or electronic information created or received by local government to document administrative and operational activities.

Records Officers

A records officer is an individual with expertise in an organisation’s records and the authority to make decisions regarding their management (Franks, 2018). At the local government level, a records officer is responsible for overseeing the creation, use, storage, and disposal of records, ensuring compliance with established records management policies and procedures.

Local government

A local government refers to an administrative area within Uganda that has established boundaries and governance structures. In this study, local government represent local government entities responsible for implementing records management practices to support service delivery and accountability.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

A well-written literature review is fundamental in providing a solid theoretical framework and context for research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The scholars emphasise that a literature review helps to identify gaps in existing knowledge, which aligns with this study's aim to explore and address various aspects of records management practises and capacity building among local government records officers.

2.1 The Concept of Capacity Building in Records Management

This subsection reviews the concept of capacity building in records management from a global perspective, narrowing to Africa, East Africa and Uganda. It examines the knowledge, skills and institutional resources required for effective records management, drawing on existing studies to establish the importance of capacity building among records officers, particularly those working in district local governments.

At the global level, capacity building refers to the process of developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes and resources that individuals and organisations require to perform their responsibilities effectively and respond to changing environments (Abutu et al., 2020). Capacity building is closely associated with sustainable development because it strengthens institutional performance, accountability, transparency and informed decision-making in both public and private organisations (Iwhiwhu, 2020). Similarly, Jabeen and Iqbal (2020) explain that capacity building involves both human and institutional development, including professional skills, leadership, financial resources, organisational structures and effective working practices. These dimensions demonstrate that capacity building extends beyond individual training to include the institutional conditions that enable employees to apply their knowledge and skills.

In records management, capacity building focuses on strengthening the competencies of records officers to create, classify, maintain, retrieve, preserve and dispose of records throughout their lifecycle. As organisations increasingly depend on information for administrative and strategic decisions, records officers are required to possess both traditional records management skills and modern technological competencies (Iwhiwhu, 2020). Furthermore, Oppenheim et al. (2020) emphasise the importance of understanding legal and regulatory frameworks, including data protection requirements, privacy regulations and

records retention schedules. Such knowledge enables records officers to maintain compliance, protect sensitive information and reduce the risks associated with improper records handling.

The increasing adoption of electronic records management systems has further expanded the capacity-building needs of records officers. According to Netshakhuma (2020), effective management of electronic records requires knowledge of digital file formats, metadata, electronic classification and digital preservation techniques. Similarly, Kaupa and Chisa (2020) and Teffo and Chuma (2023) emphasise the importance of training in electronic document and records management, database management, cybersecurity, hardware management and cloud storage technologies. These competencies are necessary for ensuring that electronic records remain accessible, secure and reliable throughout their lifecycle. Consequently, continuous professional development has become an important requirement for records officers working in changing technological environments.

Within Africa, capacity building in records management has received increasing attention because of the challenges affecting professional competence, technological adoption and institutional support. Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007) observed that inadequate professional training and limited records management competencies remain challenges in some African institutions. Similarly, Iwhiwhu (2020), in the Nigerian context, emphasises the importance of developing digital records management competencies, particularly where inadequate technological skills affect the management and preservation of electronic records. These findings suggest that strengthening professional competence is necessary for improving records management practices across African public institutions.

Furthermore, studies conducted in Ghana and South Africa highlight the importance of legal knowledge, institutional support and continuous professional development. Adusei and Senyah (2022) emphasise the need for records officers to understand records management policies, regulatory requirements and professional responsibilities. Likewise, Mosweu and Rakemane (2020) highlight the role of government support in promoting awareness of records management laws and ensuring compliance with established standards. In addition, Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) emphasise the importance of appropriate records disposition and preservation practices in protecting information and preventing unauthorised access. These studies demonstrate that capacity building in Africa requires attention to professional training, policy awareness and institutional support.

Capacity-building initiatives in Africa have also focused on improving professional knowledge through training institutions and regional professional associations. According to Maluleka and Nkwe (2020) and Saurombe (2020), professional development initiatives supported by institutions and regional bodies such as the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) contribute to improving competencies in electronic records management and information technology. However, access to such programmes varies across institutions and countries, creating differences in professional development opportunities. In addition, Gohain et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of training records officers in disaster preparedness and recovery planning to protect vital records against environmental damage and other emergencies. Therefore, capacity building should address both technological competencies and the practical knowledge required to preserve records.

At the East African regional level, studies conducted in Kenya and Tanzania provide further insights into the capacity-building needs of records officers. In Kenya, Nyamperi et al. (2023) emphasise that records officers working in county governments require comprehensive records management competencies to manage both paper-based and electronic records effectively. Their findings highlight the importance of strengthening professional knowledge and practical skills to support records creation, classification, storage, retrieval and preservation within decentralised administrative institutions. Similarly, Hofman and Katuu (2023) discuss records lifecycle management training, including the development of competencies necessary for managing records from creation to final disposition. These studies indicate that capacity building is important for improving records management practices within local government institutions.

In Tanzania, Hassan Dotto and Mwantimwa (2024) highlight the need to strengthen records officers' competencies in digital records management to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of records handling within public institutions. Their study demonstrates the importance of technological knowledge and practical training in supporting the management of electronic records. Furthermore, Mutisya and Makokha (2016) emphasise the importance of communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing in strengthening records management practices. These findings suggest that capacity-building programmes in East Africa should address both technical competencies and interpersonal skills to enable records officers to work effectively with different departments and stakeholders.

In Uganda, capacity building in records management remains important because records officers are responsible for supporting administrative operations, accountability and public service delivery. Kaddu et al. (2023) highlight the strategic role of records officers in managing institutional information and supporting organisational objectives. This responsibility requires records officers to possess adequate knowledge of records management procedures, relevant policies and emerging technologies. Furthermore, the increasing use of electronic records in public institutions creates a need for continuous training in digital records management, electronic filing, records security and information retrieval.

Within Uganda's district local governments, records officers are responsible for managing administrative, financial, personnel and other official records generated during service delivery. Their responsibilities require knowledge of records creation, classification, storage, retrieval, preservation and disposition. However, the effective performance of these functions also depends on institutional resources, management support and opportunities for professional development. As Netshakhuma (2020) observes, collaboration and knowledge sharing among records officers can strengthen professional competencies and encourage the adoption of improved records management practices. Such approaches are relevant to district local governments, where records officers work with human resource departments, administrative offices and other units responsible for generating and using official records.

Moreover, capacity building among district records officers should extend beyond conventional filing practices to include digital records management, legal compliance, disaster preparedness and records appraisal. Training in these areas can strengthen the ability of records officers to manage both paper-based and electronic records while ensuring that information remains accessible and protected. The findings of Nyamperi et al. (2023) and Hassan Dotto and Mwantimwa (2024) provide relevant regional perspectives on the importance of these competencies within decentralised public institutions. Similarly, the emphasis on leadership and professional development by Adusei and Senyah (2022) and Touray (2021) suggests that records officers require the ability to communicate records management needs, participate in institutional planning and support policy implementation.

Therefore, the reviewed literature demonstrates that capacity building in records management involves developing professional knowledge, practical skills, technological competencies and institutional support. While global studies emphasise continuous professional development

and digital transformation, African studies highlight challenges associated with professional training, technological resources and policy compliance. Studies from East Africa further demonstrate the importance of strengthening records management competencies within public institutions and decentralised administrative structures. In the Ugandan context, these perspectives provide a basis for examining the existing competencies of district records officers, identifying the specific knowledge and skills gaps affecting their performance, and determining appropriate capacity-building strategies for improving records management practices in selected district local governments.

2.2 Records Management Practices in Local Governments

Records management practices all stem from the systematic records lifecycle. This subsection provides an in-depth synthesis of studies on these practices.

The first stage in the records management lifecycle is the creation and capture of records, whether they are manual or electronic (Matongo & Jacobs, 2022). Government offices settings, such as local government, for instance, facilitate the creation and capture records manually and electronically (Alegbeleye & Chilaka, 2019a). The authors aver that this enhances accessibility and streamlines the recording of patient information. On the other hand, manual documents like printed forms/ case notes or handwritten notes could be preserved using conventional filing systems (Mojtahedi *et al.*, 2021).

Like records creation and capture, indexing and classification are both practised manually and electronically, thus indexing and classification of records are very important for efficient retrieval and use of any format records (Putri & Azwar, 2022). Records can be classified based on various criteria such as confidentiality, importance, or subject matter. For instance, confidential records like employee personal files require restricted access and careful handling (Touray, 2021). Additionally, indexing methods can vary, including alphanumeric systems that use letters and numbers to organise records, chronological systems that arrange records by date, and subject indexing that categorises records by topic (Čtvrtník, 2023).

One of the mandated practices that make up the records office work includes physical and electronic. Physical storage solutions are designed to protect records from environmental damage and unauthorised access. A recent study of (Inoue, 2024) The Japanese Prosecutor's office highlights the importance of secure filing cabinets, which are often reinforced to prevent tampering and are typically locked to restrict access. Additionally, off-site storage facilities provide an extra layer of security, safeguarding records from potential on-site

hazards such as fire or floods (Saffady, 2021b). Moreover, these facilities are often climate-controlled to prevent deterioration of physical documents due to temperature and humidity fluctuations. More equally important, (Franks, 2018a) emphasizes the benefits of electronic storage media and cloud storage, including the ability to access records from multiple locations and the ease of scaling storage capacity as needed.

In the case of physical records, security measures may include restricting physical access to storage areas, using secure containers, and employing surveillance systems (Mukred & Yusof, 2018). Security procedures for electronic records need multiple levels of protection. One important method for securing data is encryption, which transforms it into a code that only authorised users can decipher (Motau, 2019). In addition, passwords and biometric verification are examples of access controls that guarantee sensitive records can only be accessed by authorised persons (Kyando, Kisawike and Bahati, 2022).

Retention schedules are established to determine how long different types of records should be kept before they are eligible for disposal (Saffady, 2021). The author opines that these schedules are based on legal, regulatory, and operational requirements. For example, financial records may need to be retained for seven years to comply with tax regulations (Kyando *et al.*, 2022). Noteworthy, these retention schedules help organisations manage their records efficiently, ensuring that necessary information is available when needed while avoiding the clutter and cost associated with keeping obsolete records (Kyando, Kisawike and Bahati., 2022, Saffady, 2021).

With the current changes in technology, access control measures are crucial for regulating who can view or use specific records, particularly sensitive information such as public administration records (Bani Issa *et al.*, 2020). In both Nigeria and South Africa, studies have highlighted the significance of robust access control mechanisms in records management. A study in Nigeria found that implementing biometric authentication and role-based access controls significantly enhanced the security of electronic health records (Akwaowo *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, research in South Africa demonstrated that integrating physical and electronic access controls, such as secure card entry systems for physical records and multi-factor authentication for electronic records, substantially reduced unauthorised access incidents (Tsabedze & Ngoepe, 2020).

Records disposal and destruction involve the systematic elimination of records that are no longer needed, in accordance with established retention schedules (Ssekitto & Najjuka,

2019). Proper disposal methods vary depending on the type of record; for instance, paper records might be shredded, while electronic records require secure deletion methods to ensure that data cannot be recovered (Silva & de Souza Dutra, 2024). Thus, effective disposal practices prevent unauthorised access to discarded information and reduce storage costs. Moreover, a study conducted in Arua Local Government, Uganda, found that proper records disposal practices significantly mitigated the risks of data breaches and optimised the use of storage resources (Ssekitto & Najjuka, 2019).

Effective records management involves a comprehensive approach to creation, capture, indexing, storage, retention, access control, and disposal. Every practice is vital for record maintenance, accessibility, and security.

2.3 Knowledge and Skills (Competences) Required of a Local government Records Officer

The duties carried out by local government records officers originate fundamentally from a well-understood legislative and policy framework controlling the undertakings of records management practices. Familiarity with the following statutes, namely, the National Archives and Records Act (2001), the Data Privacy and Protection Act, (2019), and the Electronic Records Signature Act (2015), is a must. These regulations ensure adherence to national standards, uphold the authenticity of records and protect sensitive information (Mosweu & Rakemane, 2020; Peterson, 2021).

In addition, knowledge of policy documents and institutional policies enables records officers to harmonise their activities with the goals of the organisation. Scholars such as Setyawan et al. (2024) have called for officers to integrate legal literacy into their daily activities to prevent risks associated with bad management or non-compliance. Equally importantly, a shift towards global data-driven governance requires record officers to be attuned to dynamic legislative landscapes, meaning that the officer has got to be continuously learning about legal systems (Netshakhuma, 2020). Collaboration has become one skill local government record offices have to gain in modern record management.

Successful collaboration requires close involvement of information technology experts to ensure the setup and maintenance of electronic records management systems, as noted by Mukred et al. (2021). Also, the understanding of basic IT terminologies and processes helps the records officer to relate technical and operational records functions and thus fosters

smoother transitions into digital environments. Collaboration with legal units is important to ensure that the regulatory regimes governing electronic records are respected (Saffady, 2021).

Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) indicated that communications competencies are required, where records officers must communicate the strategic importance of records management to top leadership. One of the key elements in this advocacy is communication, where clarity by the records officers on the importance of records management should be ensured, since its goals align with broader organisational goals (Katuu, 2015).

The implementation of EDRMS requires change management competencies in dealing with resistance to innovative technologies. As expressed by Netshakhuma (2020), many records officers in developing countries face huge challenges in encouraging staff to adopt new digital systems, often due to cultural resistance or ignorance about the benefits that such change will bring. Change management involves not only the technical implementation but also the ability to motivate and guide stakeholders through the process. Research by Mukred et al. (2021) has put an emphasis on the need for alignment of change management strategies to organisational readiness in EDRMS adoption.

Records officers also need to have skills that are ICT-based, hence, to work on digital tools. The ability to manage metadata, apply security controls, and navigate electronic systems with expertise is important to ensure the long-term durability and accessibility of digital records (Maina & Erima, 2023). This is of great importance as more and more governments worldwide now embrace e-governance that heavily depends on the perfect incorporation of technology into public service provision (Saffady, 2021).

Optimal practices in records management are informed by international benchmarks, such as those illustrated by the European Union's Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records (MoReq), which outline fundamental principles that are critical for effective electronic records management (Franks, 2018). Katuu (2015) stressed that records officers are not only expected to understand these model requirements but also to adapt them to suit local conditions to address unique organisational challenges. For example, developing a retention schedule that is tailored to specific administrative needs ensures that records are disposed of in compliance with institutional policies (Matlala & Maphoto, 2020).

Interpersonal skills, particularly persuasion and advocacy competencies, will considerably enhance the effectiveness of records officers. Mosweu and Rakemane (2020b) noted that persuading top-level decision-makers often requires records officers to clearly and

confidently express the strategic value of records management. This, therefore, goes beyond the internal stakeholders to external partnerships where alliance building can drive resource mobilisation and policy support for records management initiatives.

Continuous professional development remains a key factor in keeping the records officers abreast of new skills and knowledge. Rapid changes in technology and records management practices require lifelong learning if one must remain effective in this field. Setyawan et al. (2024) posited that a good professional development needs to include, besides the formal training, avenues for peer learning through which records officers can share knowledge and collectively seek solutions to common challenges. Adding professional certifications, workshops, and online learning sites can easily provide accessible skill enhancement opportunities.

2.4 Specific Knowledge and Skills Gaps That Hinder Local government Records Officers from Managing Records

This sub-section provides an in-depth understanding of various synthesised studies about barriers to the implementation of capacity building for records officers.

Insufficient financial resources often hinder the development and implementation of training programs for records officers. Without adequate funding, organisations struggle to provide the necessary training, tools, and technologies essential for effective records management. For example, (Alegbeleye & Chilaka, 2019) found that financial constraints in Nigerian public institutions significantly limited their ability to invest in records management training, resulting in poorly maintained records and ineffective information governance. Moreover, this lack of investment in capacity building leads to a cycle of inadequate records management practices, further exacerbating the problem.

This resistance often stems from a lack of understanding of the benefits of capacity building, leading to a reluctance to adopt new methods or technologies. For instance, (Kurgat, 2019) observed that employees in Kenyan government offices were hesitant to embrace electronic records management systems due to unfamiliarity and fear of redundancy. Similarly, (Balogun & Kalusopa, 2021) noted that in South African municipalities, staff were resistant to changes in records management procedures, hindering the implementation of modern practices.

The absence of a structured training infrastructure can impede capacity-building efforts (Temboqe & Diso, 2022). The authors elucidate that organisations may lack qualified

trainers, training materials, or appropriate venues, making it difficult to deliver effective training programs for records officers. (Kyando *et al.*, 2022) highlighted that many institutions in Tanzania lacked the basic infrastructure to support comprehensive training programs for records management. Similarly, (Jacob *et al.*, 2021) found that Nigerian universities faced challenges in providing adequate training facilities and resources for their records officers, resulting in a gap between the needs and the capabilities of the staff.

There is often limited awareness among top leaders in the local governments about the critical role of records management in achieving operational efficiency and compliance. This lack of recognition can result in insufficient prioritisation of capacity-building initiatives for records officers. (Molepo & Cloete, 2017) emphasised that in many African countries, records management is often seen as a low-priority administrative function rather than a strategic asset. (Giba-fosu & London, 2020) similarly noted that without awareness and support from top management, records management programs are unlikely to receive the necessary resources and attention, leading to suboptimal practices and compliance issues.

Frequent turnover of records management staff significantly disrupts capacity-building efforts. When trained personnel leave, organisations often struggle to retain critical knowledge and skills, leading to a cycle of inadequate training and diminished records management capabilities. Kilelo (2015) found that in Kenyan public institutions, high staff turnover led to a continuous loss of trained records officers, making it challenging to maintain consistent and effective records management practices.

Public offices and records centres often face challenges such as budget constraints, lack of institutional support, and limited access to expert trainers, making it difficult to provide ongoing training that keeps staff proficient in the latest records management technologies (Matlala *et al.*, 2022). Matlala *et al.* further noted that many South African institutions faced difficulties in updating their staff's skills in line with technological advancements, leading to inefficiencies in records management processes. Moreover, the lack of continuous professional development in technology for records officers in several sub-Saharan African countries further exacerbated these challenges, resulting in poor adoption and utilisation of new records management systems (Hofman & Katuu, 2023; Matlala *et al.*, 2022).

An organisational culture that does not prioritise records management can severely hinder capacity-building efforts. When records management is viewed as a low priority, it leads to a lack of support for training initiatives and insufficient engagement from staff. (Mukred *et al.*,

2021) identified that in many institutions similar to education sectors, records management was often considered an administrative burden rather than a strategic asset, leading to minimal investment in training and development. Makwae (2021) similarly found that the Garissa County government in Kenya, similar to those in Uganda, struggle to foster a culture that values records management, resulting in limited enthusiasm and support for capacity-building programs among staff and management.

In many organisations, records management systems are fragmented and poorly integrated. This fragmentation complicates training efforts, as records officers may need to learn multiple systems and processes, making it challenging to implement cohesive capacity-building programs. (Mosweu & Kenosi, 2018) observed that in Botswana, the lack of a unified records management system led to inconsistencies in training and difficulties in maintaining standard practices across different departments. Iwhiwhu (2020) further highlighted that in Nigerian public institutions, fragmented records management systems created obstacles to effective training and hindered the development of a comprehensive records management strategy.

2.5 Strategies that will Enhance the Capacity of the Staff in Managing Records

This subsection provides a synthesis of studies on various strategies to barriers or challenges impeding capacity building for records officers in several DLGs and the public sector.

Organisations must prioritise securing adequate funding for capacity-building initiatives specifically aimed at enhancing records management capabilities. This can involve seeking grants, forming strategic partnerships, or reallocating existing budgets to ensure that training programs and necessary resources are available for records officers. As noted by Nwankwo (2020), financial constraints significantly hindered the development of effective records management training programs in Nigeria. Therefore, it is crucial to advocate for dedicated financial resources that can support comprehensive training and the acquisition of essential tools and technologies, as highlighted by Aikins & Bumbie-Chi (2018) in their findings on Ghanaian institutions.

Implementing a robust change management strategy is essential for overcoming resistance to new records management practices. This involves effectively communicating the benefits of capacity building, actively involving staff in the planning process, and providing ongoing support during transitions. (Kurgat, 2019) emphasised that successful change management in Kenya was achieved through inclusive planning and clear communication of benefits.

Drawing from (Alegbeleye & Chilaka, 2019a) organisations or institutions in Nigeria can similarly benefit from proactive change management strategies that foster a culture of acceptance and adaptability, ensuring smoother transitions to new practices.

Establishing a structured training infrastructure is crucial for enhanced records management in local governments (Iwhiwhu, 2020). The author elucidates that local governments should invest in developing comprehensive training programs, hiring qualified trainers, and creating accessible training materials tailored to the specific needs of records officers. (Hassan Dotto & Mwantimwa, 2024) identified that the absence of structured training programs in Tanzanian institutions, such as courts, led to inadequate records management practices.

Raising awareness of the need for efficient records management practices can be vital for garnering support from organisational leaders and stakeholders (Ashaye & Irani, 2019). Moreover, advocacy efforts should highlight the critical role of effective records management in achieving operational efficiency, compliance, and good governance. Mosweu and Rakemane (2020) found that increased awareness among leadership in South Africa led to greater prioritisation of records management initiatives. Similarly, Giba-fosu and London (2020) noted that advocacy was crucial in ensuring that records management received the necessary attention and resources across various African countries.

To combat high staff turnover, organisations should develop retention strategies that encompass career development opportunities, competitive compensation, and a positive work environment. (Kurgat, 2019) found that offering career development opportunities in Kenyan institutions significantly helped retain skilled records officers. (Nyamberi *et al.*, 2023) highlighted that competitive compensation and a supportive work environment were key factors in reducing staff turnover in Kenyan county governments, which is essential for maintaining institutional knowledge and enhancing records management capabilities.

Organisations should offer continuous training on emerging technologies relevant to records management. This can include workshops, online courses, and hands-on training sessions to ensure that records officers remain proficient in the latest tools and practices. Mukred *et al.*, (2019) observed that ongoing technological training in Yemen enabled records officers to stay current with evolving technologies, that is, through the implementation of an electronic records management system. Furthermore, (Dubale *et al.*, 2023) the importance of continuous professional development in technology for records officers or other professionals working in

electronic medical records, which leads to improved adoption and utilisation of new records management systems in the public health sector.

Adopting comprehensive records management software that consolidates information can simplify training efforts for records officers and improve overall operational effectiveness. Kalusopa *et al.*, (2021) found that in Botswana, integrating records management systems led to more cohesive and effective training programs. Iwhiwhu (2020) highlighted that Nigerian institutions could benefit from unified systems, which facilitate better training and consistent records management practices, ultimately supporting sustainable information management.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature extensively explores the influence of technology on records management, it also highlights the impact of stakeholder engagement, emphasising the roles of stakeholders in fostering a collaborative environment for effective records management practices. Interestingly, most of the studies acknowledged the significance of structured training programs. Despite these advancements and highlights, there is a noticeable lack of focused studies on capacity-building needs, barriers, and strategies specifically tailored to records officers in Uganda. The existing body of research generalises findings from other regions, often neglecting Uganda's unique administrative and resource constraints, stakeholder dynamics, and limited technological integration at the local government level. Additionally, while current studies emphasise capacity building broadly, they fail to explore in-depth the specific roles and responsibilities of local government records officers, as well as the influence of key stakeholders like CAOs, human resource departments in shaping effective capacity-building initiatives. It is from this need to bridge the gaps that the study selected to understand the key stakeholders in the selected local government, their specific roles, competencies, and identify barriers to effective implementation of capacity-building needs to records officers in these local government in Uganda.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods, procedures and techniques that were used in the study. It explains the research approach and design, area of study, population, sampling and techniques, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint that guides the collection, analysis and interpretation of research data in order to answer the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analysed separately, and integrated during the interpretation of the findings. The design was QUAN-dominant, meaning that quantitative data formed the primary source of evidence, while qualitative findings were used to explain, validate and enrich the statistical results.

The quantitative component involved administering structured questionnaires to Records Officers and Human Resource Officers to obtain measurable information regarding records management practices, knowledge, skills and capacity-building needs. The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with Chief Administrative Officers, together with document review and observation, to obtain deeper insights into institutional practices, management perspectives and operational realities. The convergent design strengthened triangulation by allowing findings from different methods to complement one another, thereby improving the credibility and completeness of the study findings.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the capacity-building needs of local government records officers in Uganda. The quantitative approach enabled the researcher to collect numerical data that were analysed using SPSS Version 27, while the qualitative approach provided detailed explanations of participants' experiences, perceptions and institutional practices.

Combining the two approaches improved the validity of the findings because numerical trends obtained from questionnaires were supported by interview responses, document reviews and observations. The mixed-methods approach was therefore appropriate because it

captured both measurable patterns and contextual information necessary for understanding records management practices and capacity-building needs within local governments.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted across Uganda's four major regions: Northern, Eastern, Western and Central, to ensure a diverse representation of records management practices in different administrative and geographical contexts. Specifically, the study focused on eight selected local governments representing both urban and rural settings. These local government included Lira and Arua (Northern), Mbale and Moroto (Eastern), Mbarara and Kasese (Western), and Mukono and Masaka (Central), thereby providing broad regional representation.

3.4 Population

Population refers to the entire group of individuals possessing characteristics relevant to a study from which a sample is selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The target population for this study comprised 60 officers working within the selected local governments. These included Records Officers, Human Resource Officers and Chief Administrative Officers, all of whom directly participate in records creation, management, supervision, policy implementation and administrative decision-making. Their institutional responsibilities made them appropriate sources of information regarding records management practices and capacity-building needs within local governments.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of participants from the target population to represent the entire population under investigation (Luciani et al., 2019).

3.6 Sample Size

The study targeted a sample of 32 respondents drawn from an accessible population of 60 officers across the selected district local governments. The sample comprised 16 Records Officers, 8 Human Resource Officers and 8 Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs). These participants were included because of their responsibilities in records creation, management, supervision and institutional decision-making.

Different categories of respondents participated using different data collection instruments based on their institutional roles. Records Officers and Human Resource Officers completed structured questionnaires because they are directly involved in the creation, handling,

classification, storage and retrieval of records. Their participation provided measurable quantitative data on records management practices, knowledge and competencies. Conversely, Chief Administrative Officers participated in semi-structured interviews because they provide strategic leadership, policy oversight, budgeting and administrative supervision. Their managerial responsibilities enabled them to provide in-depth qualitative insights into institutional support, resource allocation, policy implementation and capacity-building initiatives affecting records management.

The population, sample size and sampling techniques are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique Categorisation

Category of Participants	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Records Officers	24	16	Simple-random
Human Resource Officers	20	8	Simple-random
Chief Administrative Officers	16	8	Purposive Sampling
Total	60	32	

Source: Primary Data (2024)

3.7 Data collection methods

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), data collection methods are the approaches researchers use to gather information from the field. This study relied on qualitative methods, specifically, questionnaires, interviews, documentary reviews, and observations, to collect primary and secondary data. These methods were chosen because they provide rich, contextual, and descriptive insights into the lived experiences and practices of local government records officers.

3.7.1 Questionnaire Method

A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from records officers, CAOs, and human resource officers. The questionnaire had four sections: demographic data, knowledge levels, skills assessment, and records management practices. It contained both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. The questionnaire was self-administered and is provided in Appendix I. The data collected through the questionnaire were coded and analysed using SPSS Version 27, generating descriptive statistics that supported the qualitative findings.

3.7.2 Interview Method

Yin (2017) noted that one of the most important sources of information is an interview. Umesh Kumar and Kothari (2022) note that an interview is an extended conversation between partners that aims at having in-depth information and understanding about a certain topic or subject. Through which a phenomenon can be interpreted in terms of meaning. The study adopted the interview method as the main data collection method. This is because an interview is recognised as one of the most important qualitative data collection methods that has been widely used in conducting descriptive research. Interviews work very well where there is a need to establish an in-depth understanding of people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Therefore, an in-depth interview was conducted. Additionally, the researcher interviewed the records officer from the selected 8 DLGs. Interview methods were used to get opinions about barriers of capacity building needs and strategies to enhance capacity of staff in management records. A pen and paper tool were used to record the answers from the respondents accompanied by audio recorders.

3.7.3 Documentary Review Method

Documentary review involved the systematic examination of existing documents relevant to records management in local government. This included Local government Reports (2016-2025), Records Management Policies, and Strategic Plans. Reviewing these documents helped the researcher corroborate data from interviews, understand existing policies, and identify gaps between documented practices and actual implementation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.7.4 Observation Method

The observation method was used to gather first-hand evidence of the operational environment of records management offices. The researcher examined storage facilities, filing systems, technological tools, and space availability. Observation helped identify discrepancies between reported and actual practices, providing tangible evidence of infrastructure and capacity challenges.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

This subsection presents the interview guide, document review and observation guide used in the study.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data. It included demographic items, Likert-scale questions, and performance-related items based on records management standards. The instrument underwent pre-testing to refine clarity and accuracy (see Appendix I).

3.8.2 Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed, guided by the study's objectives. It allowed flexibility in questioning and gave participants freedom to elaborate on their experiences (Umesh Kumar & Kothari, 2022). The guide contained thematic sections focusing on skills, training needs, resources, and barriers to effective records management. Additionally, these were separated to provide various insights from the study respondents such as the CAOs, human resources administrators, see appendix II, and for the records officers see appendix I.

3.8.3 Documentary Review Guide

A documentary review guide was used to extract data from official reports and manuals systematically. It ensured consistency in reviewing documents across the selected local government (Delahunty & Ní Ríordáin, 2022). The guide focused on identifying existing policies, training initiatives, and administrative support for records management (see Appendix III).

3.8.4 Observation Guide

The observation guide provided a structured framework for assessing the physical condition of records offices, storage arrangements, equipment, and the integration of ICT tools. It allowed the researcher to systematically document visible evidence supporting the qualitative findings (see Appendix IV).

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis refers to the systematic process of examining and interpreting qualitative data to identify meaningful patterns and themes (Islam et al., 2019). In this study, thematic content analysis was used. The researcher reviewed interview transcripts, observation notes, and document extracts, identifying recurring ideas and grouping them into themes aligned with the research objectives.

Themes such as skills and knowledge, training needs, resource adequacy, and barriers to records management emerged. Data were presented narratively, supported by verbatim quotes to illustrate participants' perspectives. This approach allowed the integration of different viewpoints and provided a comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

3.10 Data Quality Control

This section presents various data quality control measures utilised in the study.

3.10.1 Validity

To ensure validity, the interview and observation guides were reviewed by experts and the research supervisor to confirm alignment with the study objectives. The tools were pre-tested to refine questions and ensure they captured all relevant information.

Content validity was ensured through expert review of instruments. Pre-testing allowed adjustments to unclear items. Triangulation across methods also strengthened validity.

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability of quantitative instruments was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All constructs recorded values above 0.70, confirming internal reliability. Consistent interviewing procedures and standardised data collection tools further enhanced reliability.

3.11 Ethical considerations

According to Meier (2018), ethical issues are principles that guide the responsible conduct of research. Ethics effectively set out how the researcher is expected to behave, and why. In doing so, the researcher notified the management about the study, its objectives, and the support its staff is seeking. Several parameters were followed:

Informed consent: Before participation in the study, all participants were provided with detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. They were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before commencing data collection (see *Appendix Four*).

Confidentiality: Confidentiality of participant information was rigorously upheld throughout the study. Participants' identities and sensitive information were always anonymised and kept confidential. Only the researcher had access to identifiable data, and measures were in place to securely store and protect participant data from unauthorised access.

Compliance with regulations: The study adhered to all relevant ethical guidelines and regulations governing research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate East African School of Library and Information Sciences, and the study was conducted following the ethical principles outlined in every DLG.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings, interpretations, and discussions in relation to the research objectives. The findings were obtained through interviews, document reviews, and observations, which provided rich qualitative data on records management practices and capacity-building realities within Uganda's local governments.

The chapter is structured around the following objectives:

- (1) To identify the current state of records management practices in the selected local government of Uganda.
- (2) To identify the existing skills and knowledge of records officers in the selected local government of Uganda;
- (3) To determine the specific knowledge and skills gaps that hinder local government records officers from managing records effectively; and
- (4) To propose strategies that will enhance the capacity of staff in managing records.

The findings are presented thematically according to these objectives, integrating respondents' views with evidence from document reviews and observations. Each section provides a detailed interpretation that connects field data to the reviewed literature, enabling triangulation of empirical findings with theoretical and contextual insights. The use of verbatim quotations from respondents, identified by assigned codes such as (R01, R02), ensures anonymity while authentically capturing participants' voices. These narratives are further enriched with interpretations to illustrate emerging patterns and to contextualise them within Uganda's local government-level records management environment.

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

This subsection presents the demographic profiles of the respondents who participated in the study. The demographic information includes gender, education level, and working experience.

4.1.1 Gender Categorisation

The gender distribution of respondents consisted of 14 males (43.8%) and 18 females (56.2%), reflecting a slight female majority. This gender composition provided a balanced representation of perspectives, aiding the analysis of gender-specific challenges and capacity-building needs among records officers, human resource officers, and chief administrative officers.

The findings revealed that gender influenced certain capacity-building challenges, particularly in access to training opportunities and participation in decision-making processes. The study also observed that female officers were increasingly occupying administrative and human resource positions, reflecting growing inclusivity in local government-level leadership.

4.1.2 Level of Education

The study established the educational attainment of the participants, and the results indicated a highly qualified workforce.

A total of 6 respondents (18.8%) held certificates or diplomas in Records and Archives Management, 16 respondents (50%) possessed bachelor's degrees, while 8 respondents (25%) had attained postgraduate qualifications such as master's degrees. Additionally, 2 respondents (6.2%) had other qualifications in related disciplines such as Public Administration, Human Resource Management, and Information Technology. This shows that the majority of participants had formal academic training relevant to their professional duties.

Table 2: Respondents' Education Categorisation

Education Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Certificate/Diploma	6	18.8%
Bachelor's Degree	16	50.0%
Postgraduate (Master's)	8	25.0%
Other Related Fields	2	6.2%
Total	32	100%

Source: Primary data, 2025

This distribution is significant because higher levels of education often correlate with improved analytical capacity, awareness of professional standards, and adaptability to digital transformation initiatives. Respondents with specialised records management qualifications demonstrated better understanding of filing systems, metadata, and classification schemes, while those from other fields brought broader administrative and policy perspectives. However, the study revealed a need for continuous professional development to bridge practical gaps in emerging areas such as electronic records management and data protection.

4.1.3 Respondents' Years of Service in Current Role

The years of service of respondents in local government administration and records management reveal a workforce predominantly composed of early-to-mid career professionals. According to Table 3, the largest segment of the workforce consists of 14 respondents (43.8%) who have less than 5 years of service. In addition, 10 respondents (31.3%) have between 5 and 10 years of experience, suggesting that over 75% of the individuals' handling records are within their first decade of service in their current roles. This high concentration of relatively new staff has significant implications for the necessity of structured capacity-building and continuous professional development.

Furthermore, the data indicates a sharp decline in representation among senior staff categories. Specifically, 3 respondents (9.4%) have served for 11-15 years, and 2 respondents (6.2%) reported between 16 and 20 years of service. Moreover, only 3 respondents (9.3%) possess over 20 years of experience. Drastically, the small number of long-serving officers highlights a potential crisis in institutional knowledge transfer within local government offices. Without targeted strategies to promote mentorship and skill-sharing between these few experienced officers and the large influx of new entrants, the DLGs risk losing critical historical and procedural memory.

Table 3: Respondents' Years of Service in Local government

Years of Service	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 5 years	14	43.8%
5-10 years	10	31.3%
11-15 years	3	9.4%
16-20 years	2	6.2%
Over 20 years	3	9.3%
Total	32	100%

Source: Primary data, 2025

4.2 Findings of the study as per the objectives

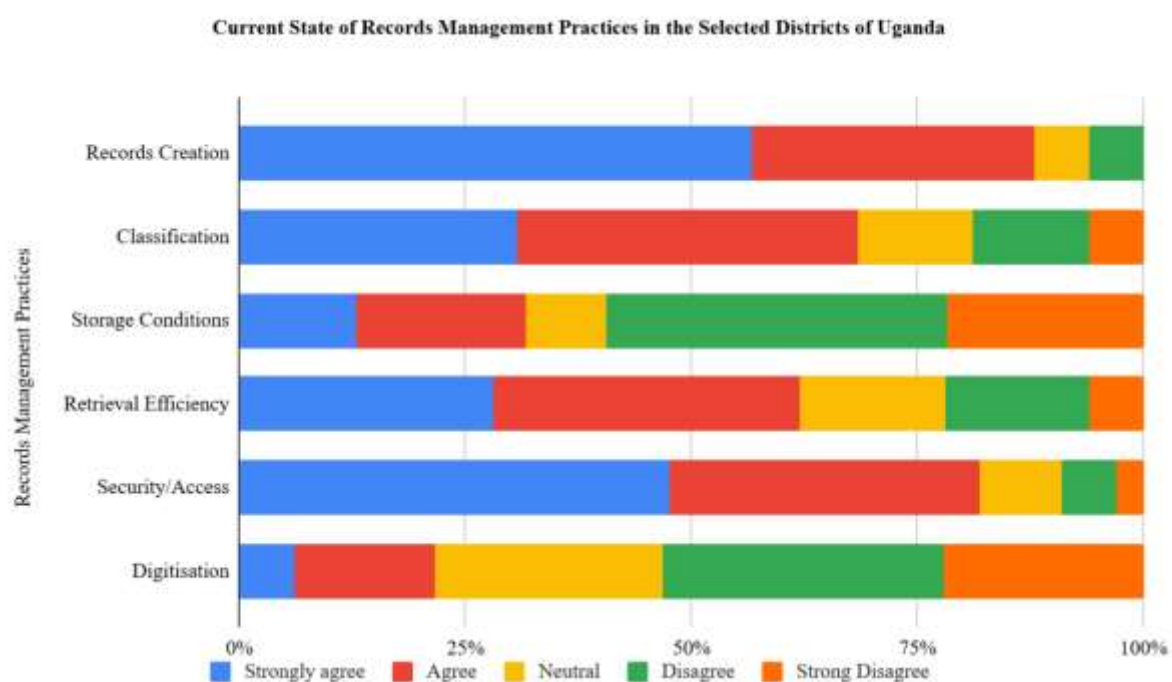
This section presents interpretations and discussions of study findings based on the study objectives.

4.2.1 Current State of Records Management Practices in the Selected Local government of Uganda

This section presents the findings for the study's first objective, which sought to identify the current state of records management practices in selected DLGs. The analysis draws from data collected from 32 respondents, comprising 16 Records Officers (RO), 7 CAOs, and 9 HR. The findings are presented using descriptive statistics derived from questionnaire responses and qualitative thematic analysis from interview sessions.

The results for the first objective of the study, which was to determine the present condition of records management procedures in the surveyed DLGs, are presented in this section. Data from 32 respondents, 16 Records Officers (RO), 7 CAOs, and 9 HR were included in the analysis. Descriptive statistics from questionnaire responses and qualitative topic analysis from interview sessions are used to present the results as indicated below.

Figure 2: Current State of Records Management Practices in the Selected Local government of Uganda



Source: Primary Data (2026)

The data in Figure 1 indicates a variance in the maturity of records management systems, heavily influenced by regional capacities and infrastructure.

As shown in the chart, records creation and security/access control had the highest levels of positive sentiment. This implies that, irrespective of the part of the country, the bureaucratic need to create and secure government papers is deeply rooted. Regarding the high concentration of "Strongly Agree" (Blue) responses for security, the Central region (Mukono and Masaka) and the Western region (Mbarara and Kasese) respondents were the most active. This is explained by the fact that the number of sensitive land and HR transactions in such more populated local government is higher, requiring CAOs and HR officers to act as stricter gatekeepers.

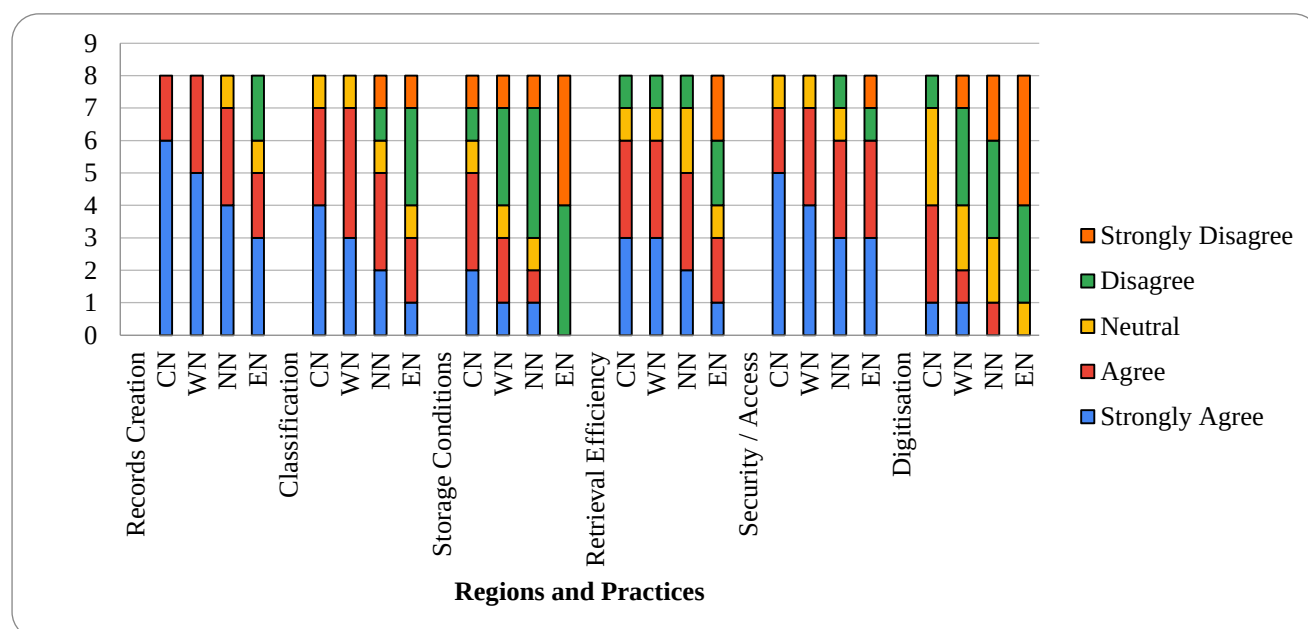
While classification scores were moderately positive, the distribution across the Neutral (Yellow) and Disagree (Green) segments indicates a disparity in opinions. When analysed by local government performance, respondents from the Northern region (Lira and Arua) and Eastern region (Mbale and Moroto) expressed more neutrality or disagreement. This suggests that while a classification system exists on paper, its operationalization is inconsistent in local

government facing staffing gaps. Consequently, retrieval efficiency is hampered in these regions compared to the Central region, where systems appear more streamlined.

The highest levels of disagreement (Green and Orange) were recorded for storage conditions and digitisation. This is a critical finding that highlights the “current state” as one of physical saturation and digital infancy. The negative responses regarding storage were predominantly from the Eastern region (Mbale and Moroto), likely due to geographical and environmental challenges affecting physical registries, and the Northern region, where infrastructure may still be recovering. Conversely, the small minority who agreed that digitisation is functional were almost exclusively from the Central region, reflecting proximity to central government resources and pilot programs like the EDRMS.

In an attempt to further assess the uniformity of these results, the researcher resorted to a frequency study of the responses to each indicator in the surveyed local government. This distribution showed the strength of the sentiment of the participants, showing where certain management practices are well-established and where they are not. The resultant data gives a detailed illustration of the administrative process and physical infrastructure gaps during operation.

Figure 3: Regional Comparison of Satisfaction with Storage Facilities (Central, Eastern, Northern, Western)



Source: Primary Data (2026)

The bar chart in Figure 2 presents the regional distribution of respondents' perceptions regarding the current state of records management practices across the selected local government, disaggregated by the Central (CN), Western (WN), Northern (NN), and Eastern (EN) regions.

The figure illustrates response frequencies ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree across six key records management indicators, thereby providing comparative insight into regional performance variations.

Across all regions, records creation practices demonstrate consistently strong performance, as reflected by the dominance of Strongly Agree and Agree responses, particularly within the Central and Western regions. The Central region records the highest level of strong agreement, followed closely by the Western region, suggesting that local government located closer to administrative and institutional support structures maintain more established procedures for capturing official records. Although positive perceptions remain evident in the Northern region, the Eastern region registers comparatively lower strong agreement alongside emerging disagreement responses, indicating operational strain linked to infrastructural limitations.

Similarly, security and access control mechanisms exhibit high levels of consensus across regions, reinforcing the finding that confidentiality and controlled access to official records remain institutional priorities within local government administrations. Strong agreement responses are again concentrated in the Central and Western regions, while minor variations observed in the Northern and Eastern regions suggest contextual challenges rather than systemic failure.

In contrast, classification and retrieval efficiency reveal moderate and regionally uneven performance. While agreement responses remain dominant in the Central and Western local government, increased Neutral and Disagree responses in the Northern and Eastern regions indicate inconsistencies in the practical implementation of filing systems. These disparities suggest that although classification frameworks formally exist across local government, differences in staffing capacity, legacy record backlogs, and operational resources influence retrieval effectiveness.

Most notably, storage conditions emerge as the weakest-performing practice across regions, with disagreement responses heavily concentrated in the Northern and especially Eastern regions. The Eastern region records the highest levels of disagreement and strong

disagreement, confirming significant inadequacies in registry infrastructure, equipment availability, and environmental storage conditions. This regional imbalance highlights the continued dependence on vulnerable physical storage systems within less-resourced local government.

Consistent with this pattern, digitisation demonstrates the greatest regional disparity, with only limited positive responses concentrated within the Central region, while Northern and Eastern local government display higher disagreement levels. The visual distribution therefore indicates that electronic records management adoption remains uneven, reflecting broader inequalities in ICT infrastructure, technical capacity, and institutional investment across Uganda's local governments.

To deepen the understanding of the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The findings are presented below, categorised by region to highlight the specific contextual realities of records management performance in the selected local government.

The Central region is characterised by high administrative activity and increasing records volumes across departments. Interview findings from both Records Officers and Human Resource officers indicate that records management systems are functional but operate under significant pressure arising from workload demands.

"...In our local government, the issue is not a lack of a system; we follow the Ministry guidelines strictly. However, the volume of files we generate daily in the HR department alone is massive. We have labelled the shelves, and the CAO insists that no file stays on a desk overnight. We are currently piloting a scanning project for land titles to reduce the paper bulk." (RO1, Masaka DLG)

Supporting this view, an HR officer explained:

"...Most departments comply with records procedures, but the challenge is the number of personnel files and transaction records handled every day. We rely heavily on manual systems, which makes space management difficult despite good supervision." (HR2, Mukono DLG)

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the current state of records management in the Central region reflects administrative efficiency constrained by record volume. While management enforcement and procedural compliance remain strong, digitisation initiatives are largely driven by operational necessity rather than strategic transformation.

In the Eastern region, interview responses from Records Officers and Chief Administrative Officers reveal that records management performance is significantly affected by environmental and infrastructural limitations.

“...Our registry is currently challenging. We have the files, and we know where they are supposed to be, but the environmental conditions here are harsh. We lack enough steel cabinets, so some older files are kept in boxes on the floor.” (RO4, Moroto DLG)

Similarly, a CAO noted:

“...Even when staff understand records procedures, the local government lacks adequate storage facilities and equipment. This affects preservation and delays retrieval when files are urgently needed.” (CAO2, Mbale DLG)

These combined views indicate that challenges in the Eastern region stem primarily from resource and infrastructure deficits rather than staff competence. Consequently, records management efforts focus more on safeguarding documents from deterioration than improving efficiency or accessibility.

Findings from the Northern region suggest a system undergoing institutional rebuilding and reorganisation. Both administrative leadership and operational staff emphasised historical and staffing challenges influencing records control.

“...We treat records with high confidentiality because of the sensitive nature of past rehabilitation projects. However, some old files are mixed with newer decentralised records, and we lack enough trained staff to reorganise them.” (CAO1, Arua DLG)

A Records Officer further explained:

“...Many files inherited from earlier programmes were not properly classified. We are trying to reorganise them, but the workload is high compared to available personnel.” (RO6, Lira DLG)

These perspectives demonstrate that although security awareness remains strong, the Northern region faces transitional organisational challenges, particularly in classification and indexing. The coexistence of legacy and contemporary records limits effective intellectual control over information resources.

The Western region presents a contrasting pattern characterised by active utilisation of records for administrative planning and service delivery. Insights from both Records Officers and HR personnel highlight frequent access and operational reliance on records.

“...We have decentralised some records to sub-counties to reduce congestion at the main registry. We can easily retrieve files for council meetings, although file covers wear out quickly due to constant handling.” (RO12, Mbarara DLG)

An HR officer added:

“...Departments regularly request records for planning and staff management decisions. The system works, but limited funds for registry supplies affect maintenance.” (HR5, Kasese DLG)

These responses indicate that the Western region demonstrates high records usage and accessibility, reflecting functional retrieval systems. However, sustained utilisation exposes weaknesses in maintenance funding and material replacement, creating long-term preservation risks.

Based on the triangulation of quantitative and interview findings, the study concludes that the current state of records management in Ugandan DLGs is not uniform across the country. The Central Region, specifically Mukono and Masaka, demonstrates the highest maturity in systems and early adoption of digitisation, largely due to better resource proximity and administrative pressure.

Furthermore, observation of registry facilities across the selected local government revealed variations in the physical condition of records management environments. Local government in the Central region generally had labelled shelves, lockable cabinets and organised filing arrangements, although congestion was evident due to increasing record volumes. In contrast, several registries in the Eastern and Northern regions stored inactive records in boxes placed directly on the floor because of inadequate shelving, exposing records to dust, pests and moisture. Limited ICT facilities, including computers and scanners, were also observed in these local government. These observations corroborate both the questionnaire responses and interview findings, which identified storage conditions and digitisation as major challenges.

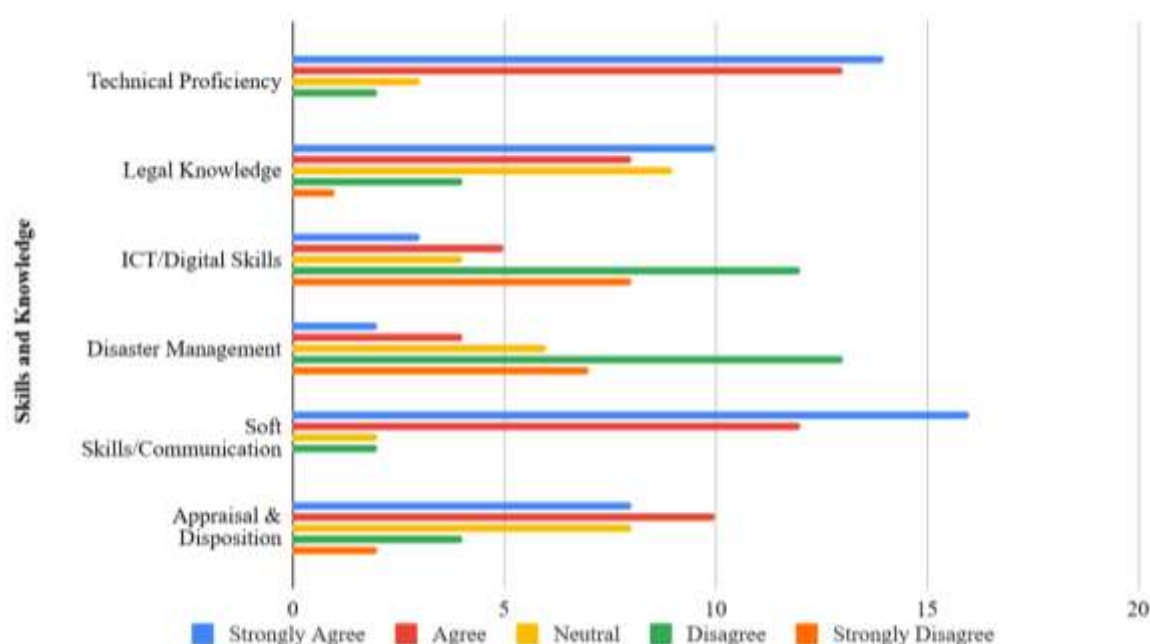
In contrast, the Western Region local government of Mbarara and Kasese perform well in retrieval and usage but struggle significantly with maintenance resources due to the high frequency of handling. Meanwhile, the Developing Performers in the Northern region (Lira

and Arua) and Eastern region (Mbale and Moroto) face deeper structural and environmental rigidities. These regions are hindered by historical filing backlogs and harsh environmental storage conditions, respectively, which significantly hamper the physical storage and classification aspects of records management despite the diligence of the staff. Therefore, the “current state” varies from advanced workflow management in the Central region to basic physical preservation struggles in the East and North.

4.2.2 Existing Records Management Skills and Knowledge of Records Officers in the Selected Local government of Uganda

This section presents the findings related to the second objective, which aimed to assess the professional competencies of the staff handling records. Respondents were asked to self-assess their competency levels and knowledge regarding various aspects of records management on a 5-point Likert scale (5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree). The results are visualised in Figure 3 below.

Figure 4: Respondents’ Revealed Existing Records Management Skills and Knowledge



Source: Primary Data (2026)

The chart reveals a significant disparity between traditional and modern competencies. Technical Proficiency shows high levels of confidence, with 14 respondents strongly agreeing and 13 agreeing that they possess the necessary core skills. In stark contrast, ICT/Digital Skills represent a major weakness; most respondents fall into the "Disagree" (12) or

"Strongly Disagree" (8) categories. From a regional perspective, respondents from the Central region (Mukono and Masaka) accounted for nearly all the positive responses regarding ICT skills. Conversely, those from the Eastern (Mbale and Moroto) and Northern (Lira and Arua) regions largely disagreed, indicating a severe skills gap in digital literacy. While officers across all regions are confident in manual filing, the inability to manage electronic records remains a critical deficiency outside the Central region.

Knowledge of the legal framework was found moderate, with 10 respondents strongly agreeing and 8 agreeing that they understand the statutory requirements for records management. Interestingly, 9 respondents remained neutral, suggesting some uncertainty regarding specific legal applications. Regionally, the Northern region (Lira and Arua) showed high awareness, likely due to frequent capacity-building workshops conducted by development partners and NGOs in the post-conflict recovery phase.

However, disaster management knowledge is critically low across all regions, with 20 respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with their proficiency in this area. This includes the Western and Eastern local government, which are prone to environmental hazards, suggesting that while officers may understand the law, they lack the strategic knowledge to protect physical records from disasters.

The highest consistency across all regions was observed in Soft Skills/ Communication, where 16 respondents strongly agreed and 12 agreed with their proficiency. Whether in Mbarara or Moroto, records staff feel highly competent in their ability to interact with users, indicating that the human element of service delivery is strong. Furthermore, Appraisal & Disposition, the process of determining record retention, shows a healthy split, with 18 total respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they understand these procedures. This suggests that while technical tools (ICT) and safety strategies (Disaster Management) are lacking, the fundamental administrative knowledge of how to handle and communicate about records is well-established.

In the Central region, the proximity to the capital Kampala and frequent government pilot programs have created a workforce that is transitioning towards hybrid skills (manual and digital).

"... We have received some training on the new EDRMS system, so I can say I am comfortable scanning and indexing digital files. However, my challenge is with the advanced troubleshooting. If the system hangs, I don't have the IT knowledge to fix it,

and I have to wait for the IT officer. But regarding classification, we are very sharp; we know the standing orders by heart.” - (HR2, Mukono DLG)

The researcher infers that the Central region possesses a Foundational Digital Competency. Unlike other regions, the skill gap here is not about *how to use* the computer, but *how to troubleshoot* it. The finding implies that records officers in Mukono and Masaka are evolving into “hybrid professionals” who can navigate both paper and screen, although they still rely heavily on external IT support for technical continuity.

The Eastern region presents a scenario where officers are highly skilled in traditional methods but feel alienated by modernisation efforts due to a lack of exposure.

“... I have been a records assistant for 15 years. If you ask me to file a letter or find a minute sheet from 2010, I can do it with my eyes closed. But these computers? No. We have not been trained. In Moroto, we rarely get those workshops that they hold in Kampala. I am afraid I might delete something important, so I stick to the manual registers.” - (R05, Moroto DLG)

This finding highlights a Technological Anxiety rooted in exclusion. The proficiency in traditional tasks is high (“do it with my eyes closed”), confirming the quantitative data on technical filing skills. However, the fear of technology stems from a lack of training opportunities compared to their central counterparts. The researcher deduces that in Mbale and Moroto, the lack of ICT skills is a barrier to efficiency, not because of an inability, but due to a lack of confidence and exposure.

In the Northern region, the findings indicate a strong knowledge base in legalities and ethics, likely influenced by the rigorous accountability standards required during the region's rehabilitation.

“... We are very strict here. Every officer knows the Official Secrets Act. We were trained by the Ministry and some partners on why confidentiality is key. We know what to keep and what to dispose of. Our problem is not knowledge of the law; it is the lack of skills to preserve these papers from termites. We know they are important, but we don't know the modern chemical treatments for preservation.” - (CA3, Lira DLG)

The officers in Lira and Arua possess high “Intellectual Capital” regarding the legal value of records (compliance, secrecy, retention schedules). However, they lack the “Technical

Preservation Skills” to physically protect these assets. The finding suggests that training in the North has focused heavily on software (rules/laws) rather than hardware (preservation techniques).

The Western region respondents emphasised skills related to service delivery and managing the flow of information to council departments.

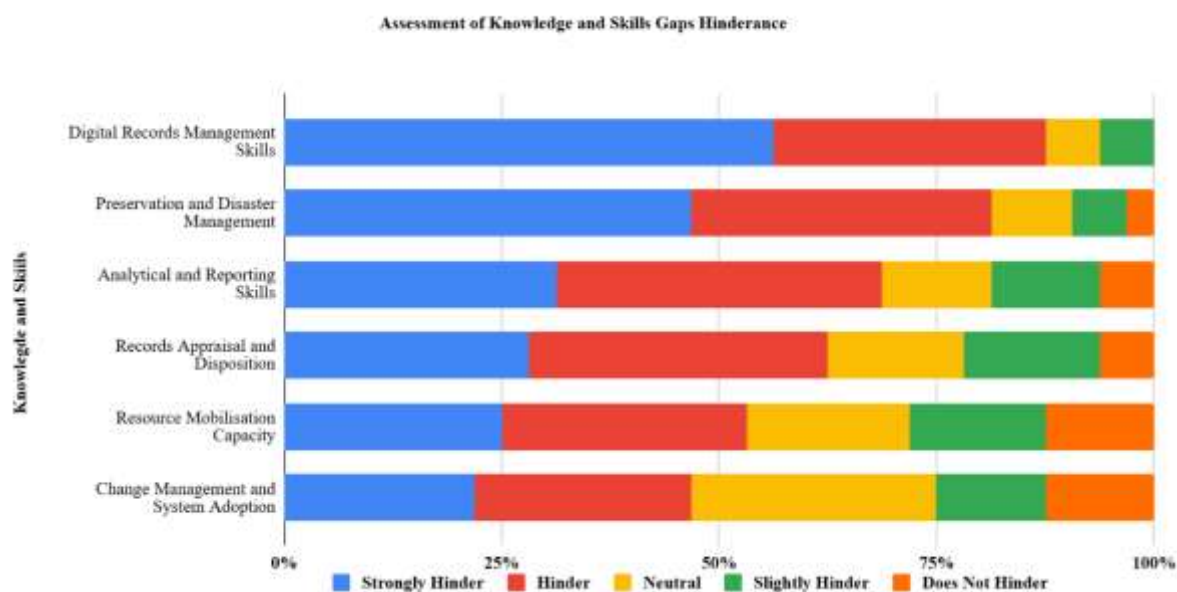
“... Our strongest skill is coordination. We handle many requests from the Land Board and the Local government Service Commission. We have learned how to track files fast so that the CAO does not get angry. But on the issue of appraisal, we need help. We have files from the 1990s clogging the room because we are not confident enough to say, 'burn this one' without fear of making a mistake.” - (HR2, Mbarara DLG)

This finding points to a specific deficiency in Appraisal and Disposition Confidence. While the “Soft Skills” of coordination and customer services are excellent (supporting the high quantitative score), there is a hesitation regarding the permanent destruction of records. The researcher infers that despite knowing the theory of retention schedules, the officers in Mbarara and Kasese lack the practical confidence to execute disposal, leading to the registry congestion noted in Objective One.

4.2.3 Specific Knowledge and Skills Gaps That Hinder Local Government Records Officers from Managing Records

This section addresses the third objective by examining the specific knowledge and skill deficiencies that impede effective records management. Respondents evaluated various potential gaps on a scale ranging from "Strongly Hinder" to "Does Not Hinder."

Figure 5: Knowledge and Skills Gaps in the Selected Local government



Source: Primary Data (2026)

Findings in Figure 4 above revealed a gap that was identified as the single biggest hindrance to record management. Over 50% of respondents rated digital records management skills as "Strongly Hinder," with nearly 90% of the total population indicating it as a significant barrier. The CAOs and HR officers across all regions confirmed that staff lack EDRMS and general digital record management skills. In the Northern (Lira and Arua) and Eastern (Mbale and Moroto) regions, the "Strongly Hinder" rating was most prevalent, reflecting minimal ICT infrastructure. Even in the Central region (Mukono and Masaka), the perceived gap remains high because, while basic tools are available, the specialised skills for metadata, security protocols, and system maintenance are missing.

Furthermore, preservation and disaster management and analytical reporting represent key strategic shortfalls. The hindrance level for preservation is particularly high, with the "Strongly Hinder" and "Hinder" categories accounting for approximately 80% of responses. This is most pronounced in the Eastern (Mbale and Moroto) and Western (Mbarara and Kasese) regions, where officers repeatedly experience document damage from environmental factors. The lack of analytical skills was highlighted by management staff across all regions, confirming that records officers struggle to transition from operational reporting (describing activity) to strategic reporting (linking records to performance outcomes).

Moreover, the gaps related to appraisal confidence, resource mobilisation, and change management are also significant, though they show a higher proportion of "Neutral" and "Does Not Hinder" responses compared to technical skills. The lack of confidence in appraisal was most noted in the Western region (Mbarara and Kasese), leading to unnecessary record accumulation. Poor resource mobilisation capacity was consistently cited by CAOs in the less-resourced Northern and Eastern regions, where records officers fail to make compelling funding cases to the local government council. Finally, Change Management shows the most variance, suggesting that while some local government are resistant to system adoption, others have begun to embrace newer workflows.

The interviews provided detailed institutional perspectives on how these skill gaps manifest in daily operations across the regions.

The main hindrance in the Central region is not access to technology, but the inability to fully integrate digital tools into the workflow, compounded by poor change management.

“... Many of our staff, especially the long-serving records officers, still see the computer as a typewriter, not a filing system. The lack of training in change management means they resist using the shared network drives, preferring to print and file everything. This gap makes the whole local government’s digital transformation strategy move slowly.” - (HR1, Mukono DLG)

Findings from the Central region indicate that the major hindrance to effective records management is not necessarily infrastructural limitation but challenges related to behavioural adaptation and system adoption. Interviews conducted with Records Officers and Human Resource administrators reveal that although ICT tools and institutional support exist, the transition toward integrated digital workflows remains slow.

“...We received computers and scanning equipment, but many officers still prefer handling files manually because that is what they are used to. Some staff feel digital systems increase workload instead of simplifying work.” (RO3, Mukono DLG)

Similarly, an HR administrator observed:

“...Training is conducted occasionally, but officers struggle to fully change their working habits. Even where systems exist, utilisation depends on individual willingness to adapt.” (HR1, Masaka DLG)

From these perspectives, the researcher infers that the primary hindrance in the Central region is a Behavioural and Change Management Gap (G6). Despite relatively better resource availability, limited motivation and resistance to procedural change undermine digital transformation efforts. This finding suggests that organisational culture, rather than technological absence, remains the dominant constraint.

In the Eastern region, interview findings highlight substantial deficiencies in disaster preparedness and policy interpretation arising from limited technical support and resource scarcity.

“...We have no guidelines for protecting records from fire or floods. Once files are damaged, they are gone forever. We know the Archives Act exists, but interpreting what qualifies as a vital record is difficult.” (RO14, Mbale DLG)

This concern was reinforced by local government leadership:

“...Most registries operate without disaster preparedness plans. Even when policies are circulated, officers lack practical training on how to implement preservation measures.” (CAO2, Moroto DLG)

These combined insights emphasise a critical Preservation and Disaster Management Knowledge Gap (G2). The researcher concludes that officers in the Eastern region operate under conditions of institutional vulnerability where national policy frameworks are insufficiently translated into operational practice, exposing records to permanent loss.

The Northern region demonstrates a compounded challenge involving weak analytical capacity alongside limited ability to mobilise institutional resources. Administrative respondents particularly emphasised deficiencies in strategic reporting and advocacy skills.

“...Reports we receive are mostly descriptive and rarely show how records contribute to planning or performance improvement.” (CA3, Arua DLG)

A Records Officer further explained:

“...We normally submit requests verbally, but preparing detailed proposals or cost justifications for registry improvements is difficult for many officers.” (RO8, Lira DLG)

These responses reveal interconnected Analytical Reporting (G3) and Resource Mobilisation (G5) gaps. The researcher infers that although officers perform routine registry functions effectively, their inability to generate evidence-based justifications limits management

investment, thereby sustaining infrastructure and digitisation challenges previously identified under Objective One.

In the Western region, findings indicate that the principal hindrance relates to limited professional confidence in executing appraisal and disposition decisions. Both operational and administrative respondents expressed concern regarding risk avoidance behaviour among records personnel.

“...When new challenges arise, most officers wait for instructions instead of proposing solutions, especially when dealing with old files.” (RO10, Kasese DLG)

Supporting this observation, an HR officer noted:

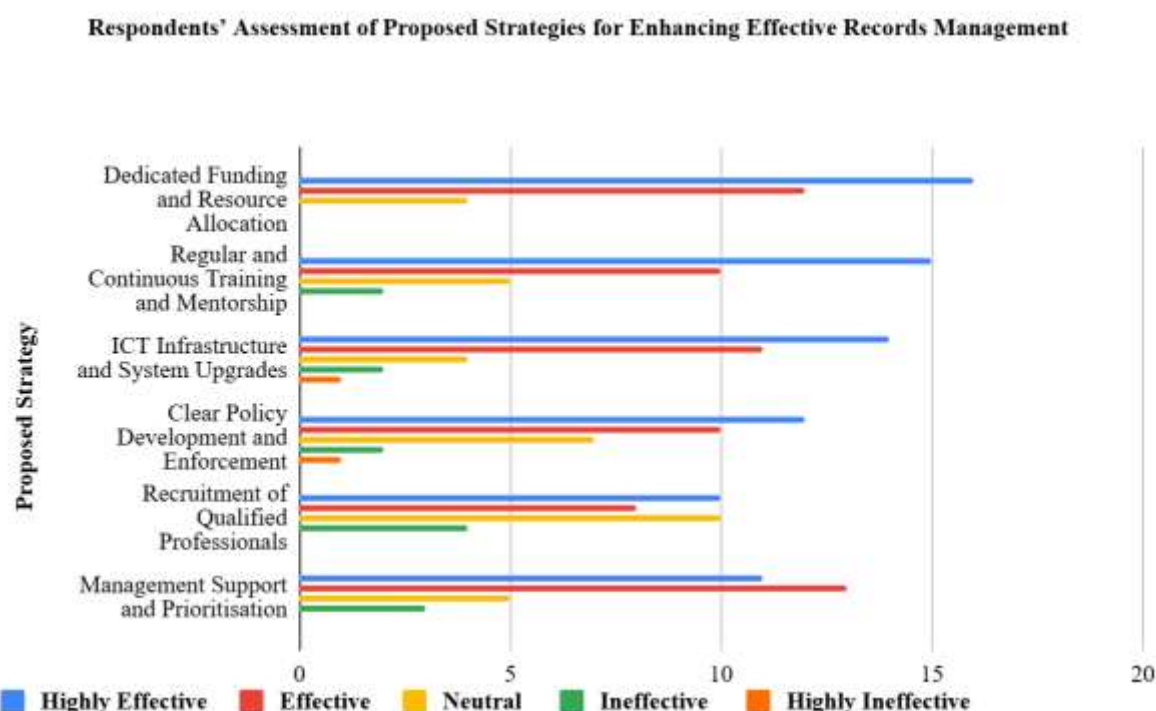
“...Staff fear accountability issues during audits, so inactive files are rarely disposed of even when retention periods have expired.” (HR6, Mbarara DLG)

These perspectives identify the Appraisal Confidence Gap (G4) as the dominant regional constraint. The researcher infers that uncertainty in decision-making transforms procedural hesitation into physical congestion within registries. Consequently, capacity-building interventions must prioritise practical judgement, confidence, and problem-solving competence rather than solely emphasising theoretical retention guidelines.

4.2.4 Strategies that will Enhance the Capacity of the Staff in Managing Records

This section presents suggestions proposed by the study respondents to improve the effectiveness of records management within the selected DLGs. The strategies address the current deficiencies (Objective One) and the identified skills gaps (Objective Three). Respondents were asked to rate the perceived effectiveness of key proposed strategies on a 5-point Likert scale (5=Highly Effective, 4=Effective, 3=Neutral, 2=Ineffective, 1=Highly Ineffective). The results in Figure 5 indicate the institutional consensus on the most critical interventions.

Figure 6: Respondents' Assessment of Proposed Strategies for Enhancing Capacity of the Staff Managing Records



Source: Primary Data (2026)

According to Figure 5, the most significant institutional priority involves dedicated funding & resource allocation and regular & continuous training/mentorship, which garnered the highest frequency of "Highly Effective" responses. In addition, this strong consensus confirms the earlier findings where resource neglect and skill deficiency were identified as primary bottlenecks. Furthermore, the Northern and Eastern regions (Lira, Arua, Mbale, Moroto) showed near-unanimous agreement on these specific strategies, as these local government require fundamental resources for preservation and the specialized skills needed to overcome the digital deficit.

Moreover, ICT infrastructure upgrades and management support were rated with high frequency in the "Highly Effective" and "Effective" categories. Drastically, the Central and Western regions (Mukono, Masaka, Mbarara, Kasese) emphasised these strategies, indicating that for local government with existing infrastructure, the challenge shifts from acquiring basic tools to maintaining and prioritising them within the local government administration. Furthermore, infrastructure upgrades are viewed as the direct countermeasure to the widespread digital deficit observed in earlier objectives.

Additionally, strategies related to policy enforcement and recruitment were also deemed effective, though they showed a more varied distribution of responses, including a notable number of "Neutral" ratings for recruitment. Furthermore, the Western and Central regions placed slightly less emphasis on recruitment, reflecting their greater existing staffing capacity. Conversely, the Eastern and Northern regions viewed the recruitment of qualified professionals as critical to moving beyond the reliance on unqualified administrative assistants for records roles.

The qualitative data provided context to the quantitative preferences, revealing the specific thematic needs of each region. The findings are grouped into key thematic areas below.

Respondents across both resource-constrained and relatively well-off local government saw funding as the foundation for all other strategies.

"...We need a dedicated budget for records management. Most of the challenges arise because funds are always diverted to other administrative priorities." - (CA4, Central Region)

"...Records officers depend on the local government to budget for everything. They don't know how to justify needs or make proposals." - (RO15, Northern Region)

This emphasises that the core administrative strategy must be to grant financial autonomy to records units (S1). The qualitative data links the need for dedicated funding to the advocacy gap (G5), indicating that not only must the money be available, but officers must be trained in proposal writing to secure and retain it.

Continuous capacity building was viewed as the necessary intervention to close the Digital Deficit (G1) and the Appraisal Confidence Gap (G4).

"...We should have continuous refresher courses to keep up with changes in electronic records systems and government standards." - (RO6, Eastern Region)

"... Records staff should be given ICT training. Many can't use the systems well, yet everything now is digital." - (RO12, Western Region)

The consensus on training (S2) confirms that the skills gap is not a lack of effort, but a lack of resources dedicated to continuous professional development. The strategy must be two-fold: basic ICT literacy for the East/North, and advanced appraisal/system management training

for the Central/Western local government. This intervention is the direct countermeasure to the Digital Deficit (G1).

“... If we could get computers, scanners, and better internet, it would ease digitisation. The systems should also be maintained regularly.” - (HR8, Central Region)

“... We are not yet fully digital, so integrating both manual and electronic systems would help during the transition phase.” - (RO7, Western Region)

Modernisation was consistently proposed as the key to overcoming physical storage deficits and improving efficiency. Therefore, this reinforces the need for Hybrid Systems and Gradual Digitisation (S3). The Western region’s suggestion to integrate manual and digital processes is practical, acknowledging the low maturity of the current state. The strategy shifts focus from immediate, total digital conversion to phased implementation, which promotes operational resilience and mitigates the Change Management Gap (G6).

Strategies S4 and S6 highlight the need for institutional commitment to enforce the use of proper records management systems.

“... Top management must start valuing records management like finance or planning. It should be part of every departmental performance target.” - (HR3, Northern Region)

“...There should be regular supervision from the Ministry or National Archives to ensure that each local government adheres to standards.” - (RO2, Western Region)

The proposed solution of Management Support (S6) and External Oversight (Monitoring and Evaluation) is crucial for enforcing Policy Compliance (S4). The Northern region’s insight (HRO3) connects records management to performance targets, a mechanism that addresses the Analytical Reporting Gap (G3) by forcing officers to think strategically about records as measurable institutional assets.

To address the shortage of qualified staff and knowledge isolation, respondents proposed structured HR and partnership strategies.

“... Many local government still rely on administrative assistants to manage records. We need professional records officers to improve quality and accountability.” - (CA5, Eastern Region)

“... We can partner with the National Archives or universities to help train our staff or advise us on modern best practices.” - (CA4, Central Region)

The strategy to prioritise Recruitment (S5) and Collaboration is a long-term solution. Partnership with the National Archives is a direct countermeasure to the Preservation and Disaster Management Gap (G2), as it provides access to specialised knowledge on archival techniques and policy interpretation that is currently missing at the local government level.

The findings of this study reveal that enhancing effective records management among local government records officers requires a combination of strategic, technological, and institutional interventions. Respondents identified four foundational strategies that are highly effective in overcoming the identified obstacles: Dedicated Funding (S1), Continuous Training (S2), ICT Infrastructure Upgrades (S3), and Strong Management Support (S6). The high consensus on these items confirms that the problem is rooted in neglect and resource scarcity, not unwillingness to perform. Regionally, the proposed solutions are highly targeted: the Northern and Eastern regions prioritise resource allocation (S1) and professional recruitment (S5) as the immediate means to bridge the infrastructure and skills deficit. Conversely, the Central and Western regions emphasise specialised training and policy enforcement (S4) to combat the behavioural and strategic hindrances (G4, G6). A key insight is the need for a phased, hybrid approach that leverages both manual and digital systems during the transition, ensuring inclusivity and operational resilience while aligning with broader national e-governance reforms.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

4.3.1 To Identify the Current State of Records Management Practices in the Selected Local government of Uganda

The results indicate a high level of regional differences on the maturity of records management practices in the chosen local government. Although the creation of records and the security procedures are deemed to be robust in most areas, classification systems and efficiency in retrieval is uneven, especially in the Northern and Eastern local government. There is lack of proper storage conditions in most areas that are manifested in infrastructural and environmental constraints. Digitisation is still in its infancy, and it has only been observed to be making headway in the Central local government. In general, the local government exhibit a combination of underlying strengths and unresolved operational gaps

that are determined by the regional realities, infrastructural capabilities, and administrative pressures.

The results of the study agree with the current body of literature, showing that the records management situation in most of the developing settings is defined by the unequal development, infrastructure hindrances and partiality in adopting the best practices. The good result in records creation and security, are supported by observation of Touray (2021) that public institutions tend to focus more on the creation and protection of official records because of the accountability requirements. This implies that the Ugandan local government adhere to the international regulation of administrative norms of protecting sensitive information, despite other aspects of the records lifecycle being underdeveloped.

Nevertheless, variations in classification and retrieval, specifically in the Northern and Eastern parts, are reminiscent of Ilmi and Mayesti's (2020) discoveries that standardised systems are present in policy documents and are ineffective in practice because of inconsistent operationalisation, inadequate training, and staff mismatch. Mixed filing systems stated in Arua are in line with this anxiety as they demonstrate how historical backlogs could complicate intellectual control and hinder the process of retrieval.

The paper also confirms the lack of the infrastructural facilities identified by Netshakhuma in his study where poor storage facilities are the cause of failure and destruction of records. Mbala and Moroto are poor examples of this issue; the poor storage standards indicate how the physical preservation of records is compromised by the environmental factors, dust and pests and the insufficient shelving.

The low mean score of digitisation agrees with Hawash et al. (2021), who state that the effectiveness of adoption of electronic records is determined by the willingness of users, ICT infrastructure, and organisational support. The relatively improved performance of the Central region can be attributed to the situation where pilot projects and the location of resources hasten digital adoption.

4.3.2 To Identify the Existing Records Management Skills and Knowledge of Records Officers in the Selected Local government of Uganda

The findings demonstrate that local government records officers in Uganda possess a balanced blend of technical, IT-based and interpersonal skills, reflecting both traditional competencies and an emerging readiness for modernisation.

This pattern is strongly supported across the literature. Several authors note that a strong grounding in traditional recordkeeping, classification, filing, appraisal and retention practice remains a necessary foundation for any later digital transition (Newa & Kelefa, 2019; ISO 15489). At the same time, contemporary studies emphasise that the role of records officers is evolving into one that requires hybrid competencies: technical recordkeeping knowledge combined with ICT literacy, information governance understanding and analytic capability (Mukred *et al.*, 2021; Saffady, 2021; Kaddu *et al.*, 2023).

Evidence from South Africa and other developing contexts shows this dual demand. For instance, research by Maluleka & Nkwe (2020) and Saurombe (2020) observes that training programmes which only focus on physical file management produce staff who are competent at maintaining paper registries but are ill-prepared for electronic records workflows.

Furthermore, interpersonal and managerial skills identified in the findings, communication, teamwork, mentoring and analytical reporting, are likewise emphasised in the literature as decisive enablers of sustainable records management. Marutha (2016) and Mukred *et al.* (2021) argue that mentoring and peer-learning can compensate where formal CPD is weak, preserving institutional memory and standardising practice across offices. Akotia (2015) and Kaddu *et al.* (2023) show that communication and coordination between records officers, HR and planners are crucial for embedding records practices into routine administrative workflows (for example, ensuring personnel files are complete during recruitment or that project documents are archived after project close-out).

From an information-governance perspective, the literature stresses the importance of legal and policy literacy as part of a records officer's competency set (Oppenheim *et al.*, 2020; Marutha, 2016). Knowledge of statutes, retention schedules and compliance obligations underpins risk mitigation and protects local government from legal exposures. Nevertheless, comparisons in the literature also highlight gaps that your findings hint at, several studies (Hassan Dotto & Mwantimwa, 2024; Bosco *et al.*, 2023; Mukred *et al.*, 2021) show that digital skills in records management often remain superficial unless reinforced by structured CPD, technical support and interoperable systems. In other words, scanning documents or storing files on shared drives, while useful, does not by itself amount to robust electronic records management; metadata standards, secure access controls, audit trails and backup regimes are required for long-term reliability (Saffady, 2021; Teffo & Chuma, 2023). The literature therefore frames the current competence seen among officers as a promising

foundation that still needs targeted strengthening: focused ICT training, legal/records governance modules, and institutional supports (funding, ICT infrastructure, and policy enforcement) to move from ad hoc digital practices to resilient ERMS adoption (Digital Transformation Roadmap; Maluleka & Nkwe, 2020).

Finally, the scholarship on change management and capacity building (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2020; Netshakhuma, 2020) underlines that human skills alone will not produce sustainable outcomes without parallel investment in organisational processes, clear SOPs, CPD pathways, mentorship schemes and monitoring & evaluation. Your respondents' leadership and mentoring activities are therefore both necessary and insufficient: they cultivate internal capacity but must be formalised through CPD credits, documented mentoring curricula and recognised competency frameworks if local government are to institutionalise these gains and scale them across administrative units.

4.3.3 To Determine the Specific Knowledge and Skills Gaps That Hinder Local government Records Officers from Managing Records

The findings conclusively demonstrate that the effectiveness of records management in the selected DLGs is severely limited by a set of predictable knowledge and skill deficiencies that vary in intensity by region. The single most pervasive and critical hindrance nationwide is the Digital Records Management Gap (G1), which cripples' efforts to modernise service delivery across all four regions. Furthermore, the strategic knowledge gaps in Preservation and Disaster Management (G2) and Analytical Reporting (G3) demonstrate a systemic failure to protect valuable assets and utilise records for evidence-based decision-making. Regionally, the Central region is primarily hindered by poor change management, the Eastern region by a lack of preservation policy and disaster knowledge, the Northern region by an inability to mobilise resources and advocate strategically, and the Western region by a critical lack of confidence in executing records appraisal and disposition. Addressing these gaps, particularly through targeted training in digital literacy and strategic advocacy, is essential to unlocking the potential of records for improved governance.

The findings revealed that while local government records officers demonstrate a solid foundation in traditional recordkeeping, they face pronounced knowledge and skills gaps in digital management, legal literacy, preservation, analytical reporting, and resource mobilisation. These results align with Touray (2021), who noted that many public organisations still rely heavily on manual registries, leading to inefficiencies in retrieval,

preservation, and accountability. Similarly, Ilmi and Mayesti (2020) found that non-compliance with functional requirements for electronic records management in Indonesia stemmed from limited digital literacy and weak integration of ICT tools, a challenge comparable to Uganda's local government context, where officers lack training in metadata and e-filing systems.

Furthermore, the study's finding that officers struggle to adopt electronic records management systems resonates with Hawash, Mokhtar, and Yusof (2021) in Yemen, who reported that acceptance of digital systems depends largely on user confidence and organisational support. In Uganda's case, rural local government exhibited stronger resistance due to minimal exposure and inadequate mentorship, while urban local government showed gradual improvement linked to national ICT programs. This suggests that adoption is not only a technical issue but also a behavioural one, influenced by institutional culture and training.

The absence of legal literacy among officers' mirrors observations by Touray (2021) that poor understanding of retention and access policies weakens compliance and governance. This is particularly critical in Uganda's decentralised setting, where officers operate under multiple administrative mandates. Likewise, preservation and disaster planning weaknesses identified in this study reflect a gap in applying systematic life cycle management, which is central to effective records governance.

4.3.4 Strategies that will Enhance the Capacity of the Staff in Managing Records

The findings of this study reveal that enhancing effective records management among local government records officers requires a combination of strategic, technological, and institutional interventions. Respondents identified four foundational strategies that are highly effective in overcoming the identified obstacles: Dedicated Funding (S1), Continuous Training (S2), ICT Infrastructure Upgrades (S3), and Strong Management Support (S6). The high consensus on these items confirms that the problem is rooted in neglect and resource scarcity, not unwillingness to perform. Regionally, the proposed solutions are highly targeted: the Northern and Eastern regions prioritise resource allocation (S1) and professional recruitment (S5) as the immediate means to bridge the infrastructure and skills deficit. Conversely, the Central and Western regions emphasise specialised training and policy enforcement (S4) to combat the behavioural and strategic hindrances (G4, G6). A key insight is the need for a phased, hybrid approach that leverages both manual and digital systems

during the transition, ensuring inclusivity and operational resilience while aligning with broader national e-governance reforms.

According to Honadle (2018), capacity building should aim at empowering staff through skills, tools, and motivation to perform effectively. This aligns with the study's finding that records officers need targeted training in digital systems, leadership, and communication to manage records efficiently. Similarly, Touray (2021) in her review of records management practices noted that organisational effectiveness depends on equipping staff with both technical and soft skills, which supports the idea that records officers must not only master classification and retention but also stakeholder engagement and teamwork to improve service delivery.

In addition, the study highlighted the importance of adopting electronic records systems as a long-term strategy. Hawash et al. (2021), in a study on the oil and gas sector in Yemen, found that user acceptance of electronic systems improves significantly when training and support structures are in place. This finding coincides with the responses from local government records officers, who stressed that systems such as EDRMS can enhance efficiency if they are backed by adequate user sensitisation and technical support. Similarly, Gelashvili (2020), in Georgia, observed that successful digital transitions depend on continuous staff involvement and government commitment, both elements that were emphasised by respondents in this study.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the effectiveness of records officers is strongly influenced by interdepartmental cooperation. For instance, CAOs and HR officers indicated that promoting cross-functional collaboration helps align records management with institutional planning. This complements Nguyen (2021)'s argument in Vietnam that organisational restructuring and teamwork can eliminate duplication of roles and foster accountability in administrative systems.

Respondents also suggested that supportive legal and policy frameworks are crucial. This is consistent with Hofman and Katuu (2023), who examined legal compliance in African countries and found that records management strategies thrive when guided by enforceable legal frameworks. The Ugandan local government's experience echoes this, as many officers recognised that policy enforcement at local levels improves consistency and adherence to national standards. Similarly, Makwae (2021)'s study in Kenya found that personnel records

systems are only effective when supported by a clear legal foundation, an observation mirrored in this research.

The adoption of e-records systems was another recurring theme. Respondents noted that electronic tools could bridge physical storage limitations, enhance accessibility, and strengthen accountability. Brohi et al. (2023) in Pakistan and Yehualashet et al. (2021) in Ethiopia observed that overcoming digital barriers requires strong leadership, capacity development, and reliable infrastructure. The study findings agree that while digital transformation presents challenges, it remains the most sustainable solution for improving efficiency in records handling.

Another notable strategy proposed was the institutionalisation of mentorship programs. Experienced officers expressed willingness to guide junior staff, a finding that coincides with Luyombya et al. (2023) in Mpigi Local government, Uganda, who highlighted mentorship as a sustainable way of preserving institutional knowledge. This also complements Simwaka et al. (2023), who found that informal peer learning is often a substitute for formal training in African institutions with limited budgets. Lastly, respondents emphasised the role of continuous professional development to maintain relevance in a rapidly evolving digital environment. This finding coincides with Jamil (2021), who underscored the need for digital inclusion and adaptability in developing contexts like Pakistan, where training ensures that staff remain competent amidst evolving technologies. The argument is further supported by Allibang (2020), who noted that structured learning programs help organisations identify and bridge performance gaps efficiently.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusions drawn from the empirical findings, and recommendations based on the capacity-building needs identified among local government records officers in the selected local governments.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section presents an analytical summary of the findings according to the study objectives.

5.1.1 Current State of Records Management Practices in the Selected Local government of Uganda

The study established that records management practices across the selected local government remain predominantly manual despite noticeable differences across regions. Records creation, classification and access control were generally well implemented in most local government, demonstrating that the basic principles of records management are understood and routinely applied. However, inadequate storage facilities, limited preservation measures and low levels of digitisation continue to affect effective records management. Regional differences were also evident. The Central region exhibited relatively organised systems despite handling large volumes of records, while the Western region showed active utilisation of records for administrative work. Conversely, the Northern region experienced challenges arising from mixed filing systems, whereas the Eastern region faced environmental and storage limitations that threatened the preservation and accessibility of records.

5.1.2 Existing Skills and Knowledge of Records Officers

The study found that records officers possess strong competencies in traditional records management functions such as manual filing, classification and registry operations. Their communication and coordination with other departments were also found to be satisfactory. Nevertheless, the findings revealed considerable weaknesses in digital records management, disaster preparedness and records preservation. Officers from the Central region demonstrated relatively greater exposure to digital systems, whereas officers from the Northern and Eastern regions relied mainly on manual records management practices because of limited ICT infrastructure and training opportunities.

5.1.3 Knowledge and Skills Gaps Hindering Records Officers

The findings revealed that digital records management skills constitute the greatest challenge affecting records officers across the selected local government. Additional gaps were identified in records preservation, disaster preparedness, analytical reporting, appraisal and disposition, resource mobilisation and change management. Although these challenges existed across all regions, their severity differed depending on the level of institutional support and available resources. Consequently, these competency gaps continue to limit effective records management and slow the transition towards digital recordkeeping.

5.1.4 Strategies for Enhancing Capacity of Staff in Managing Records

The study established that respondents preferred practical and achievable interventions to improve records management. The most frequently proposed strategies included increased funding for registry operations, continuous capacity-building programmes, improvement of ICT infrastructure, stronger management support, enforcement of records management policies, recruitment of qualified personnel and collaboration with professional institutions. Collectively, these strategies were viewed as essential for improving both individual competencies and institutional records management practices.

5.2 Conclusion of Findings

This section presents conclusions drawn from the study based on the relationship between the findings.

5.2.1 Current State of Records Management Practices in the Selected Local government of Uganda

The study concludes that although local governments have established basic records management procedures, continued dependence on paper-based systems, combined with inadequate storage infrastructure and limited digitisation, increases the risk of record deterioration, delayed retrieval and loss of institutional information. Regional variations further demonstrate that the availability of infrastructure and administrative support directly influences the effectiveness of records management practices.

5.2.2 Existing Skills and Knowledge of Records Officers

The study concludes that the existing competencies of records officers remain largely suited to traditional records management rather than modern digital environments. While officers perform well in manual registry operations, inadequate digital knowledge and limited

exposure to electronic records systems reduce their ability to support ongoing public sector digital transformation initiatives.

5.2.3 Knowledge and Skills Gaps Hindering Records Officers

The study concludes that effective records management is constrained not only by inadequate technical skills but also by organisational factors such as limited training opportunities, weak institutional support and insufficient resources. These interconnected challenges prevent records officers from effectively implementing modern records management practices and limit the benefits of existing ICT investments.

5.2.4 Strategies That Will Enhance the Capacity of the Staff in Managing Records

The study concludes that sustainable improvement in records management requires simultaneous investment in people, technology and institutional support. Capacity building alone cannot improve records management unless it is complemented by adequate infrastructure, management commitment, policy implementation and continuous monitoring of records management practices.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Local governments should establish dedicated budget lines for records management to facilitate the acquisition of filing equipment, storage facilities, digitisation tools and other essential records management resources.
2. The Ministry of Public Service should develop and implement regular training programmes for local government records officers covering digital records management, records preservation, disaster preparedness, records appraisal and relevant records management legislation.
3. Local government Human Resource Departments should prepare annual competency development plans that identify training needs for records officers and coordinate continuous professional development activities.
4. Local governments should improve ICT infrastructure by providing adequate computers, scanners, reliable internet connectivity and secure electronic records management systems to support the gradual transition from manual to digital records management.
5. Local government Chief Administrative Officers should establish mentorship and peer-learning programmes that enable experienced records officers from better-

performing local government to support officers in local government experiencing operational challenges.

6. The National Records and Archives Centre should conduct regular compliance inspections, provide technical guidance and support local government in implementing approved records management standards and procedures.
7. Local governments should organise regular awareness programmes to ensure that all staff understand records management policies, records retention requirements and procedures governing the creation, use and disposal of official records.
8. Local governments should establish routine monitoring and performance assessment mechanisms to evaluate records management practices, identify operational gaps and promote continuous improvement across all departments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Records Officers and Human Resource Officers

Study Title

Effective Records Management of Local government Records Officers in Uganda: A Case Study of Selected Local governments

Target Respondents

This questionnaire is intended for Records Officers and Human Resource Officers working in the selected Local governments in Uganda.

Introduction

I am conducting an academic study entitled "Effective Records Management of Local government Records Officers in Uganda: A Case Study of Selected Local governments." The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the current state of records management, existing records management knowledge and skills, capacity gaps, and strategies that can enhance effective records management in local governments.

The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes. You are kindly requested to answer all questions honestly by ticking (✓) the response that best represents your opinion.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Local government: _____

Region:

- ☐ Central
- ☐ Eastern
- ☐ Northern
- ☐ Western

Current Position

- ☐ Records Officer
- ☐ Human Resource Officer

Highest Level of Education

- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree

- ☐ Postgraduate Diploma
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

Years of Service in Current Position

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5–10 years
- ☐ 11–15 years
- ☐ Over 15 years

SECTION B: CURRENT STATE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Objective One:

To identify the current state of records management practices in the selected local governments in Uganda.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Official records are captured immediately upon receipt or creation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A standardised records classification system is operational and understood by staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The local government registry has adequate storage facilities including shelves and cabinets.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Files can easily be retrieved whenever required for official use.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confidential records are adequately protected from	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

unauthorised access.					
Records are preserved according to approved standards and retention schedules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The local government has functional electronic records management or digitisation initiatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: EXISTING RECORDS MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Objective Two:

To identify the existing records management skills and knowledge of records officers in the selected local governments.

Please indicate your level of agreement.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Records officers possess adequate technical skills in manual filing and classification.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Records officers understand records management laws, policies and retention schedules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Records officers possess adequate ICT skills for records management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Records officers are competent in electronic records management systems (EDRMS).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Records officers possess adequate records appraisal and disposition skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Records officers understand records preservation and disaster preparedness practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Records officers possess effective communication and coordination skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS GAPS

Objective Three:

To determine the specific knowledge and skills gaps that hinder local government records officers from effectively managing records.

Please indicate the extent to which each factor hinders effective records management.

Statement	Strongly Hinders (5)	Hinders (4)	Neutral (3)	Slightly Hinders (2)	Does Not Hinder (1)
Limited digital records management skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inadequate knowledge of records management policies and legislation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Weak records preservation and disaster preparedness knowledge.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Limited analytical and records reporting skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inadequate ICT integration skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor resource mobilisation and proposal writing skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Weak communication and interpersonal skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Limited change management skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Inadequate problem-solving and decision-making skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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SECTION E: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING EFFECTIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Objective Four:

To propose strategies that can enhance effective records management of local government records officers.

Please indicate how effective you consider each strategy.

Statement	Highly Effective (5)	Effective (4)	Neutral (3)	Ineffective (2)	Highly Ineffective (1)
Provide dedicated funding for records management activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct regular training and mentorship programmes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improve ICT infrastructure and electronic records management systems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop and enforce clear records management policies and procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recruit qualified and professionally trained records personnel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strengthen management support for records management programmes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Establish partnerships with the National Records and Archives Centre, universities and professional bodies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Adopt hybrid records management systems combining manual and electronic records.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Establish regular monitoring, evaluation and compliance assessment mechanisms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you very much for your valuable participation and contribution to this study.

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Records Officers

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. How many years of experience do you have in records management?
4. Which local government and department do you work in?

SECTION B: OBJECTIVE ONE

To identify the current state of records management practices in the selected local government of Uganda

1. How would you describe the current records management system in your local government?
2. What methods or tools do you use to store and retrieve records?
3. Are there any established procedures or guidelines that guide your daily recordkeeping tasks?
4. What challenges, if any, do you face in managing both active and inactive records?
5. How has the introduction of digital tools or systems affected your work, if at all?

SECTION C: OBJECTIVE TWO

To identify the existing skills and knowledge of records officers in the selected local government of Uganda

1. What skills do you currently use to perform your records management duties?
2. Have you ever received formal training in records or information management? If yes, in what areas?
3. How confident are you in applying classification, appraisal, or retention techniques in your daily work?
4. How would you describe your level of competence in using ICT tools for managing records?
5. What other professional skills (communication, reporting, or analytical) do you find useful in your work?

SECTION D: OBJECTIVE THREE

To determine the specific knowledge and skills gaps that hinder local government records officers from managing records

1. What specific areas do you feel you lack adequate skills or knowledge in?
2. Do you have access to policies, guidelines, or laws such as the National Records and Archives Act (2001)?
3. Are you familiar with disaster preparedness or preservation procedures for records?
4. What support or resources would help you perform better in your role?
5. What areas of training or professional development do you think are most needed for local government records officers?

SECTION E: OBJECTIVE FOUR

To propose strategies that can enhance effective records management of local government records officers

1. In your opinion, what strategies could improve records management in your local government?
2. How do you think training and mentorship can help you enhance your professional capacity?
3. What role do you think the local government leadership or central government should play in supporting effective records management?
4. Are there any partnerships or collaborations (with ministries, archives, or institutions) that could support your work?
5. What practical steps should be taken to promote digital transformation in managing records at the local government level?

Appendix III: Interview Guide for CAOs,

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. What is your current position in the local government?
4. How long have you served in this position?
5. In which local government do you work?

SECTION B: OBJECTIVE ONE

To identify the current state of records management practices in the selected local government of Uganda

1. How would you describe the records management system in your local government office?
2. What is the level of organisation and accessibility of records under your department?
3. Are there policies or guidelines that support records management in your local government?
4. What are some of the main challenges you observe in maintaining accurate and accessible records?
5. Has your local government adopted any digital systems or technologies to support recordkeeping?

SECTION C: OBJECTIVE TWO

To identify the existing skills and knowledge of records officers in the selected local government of Uganda

1. How would you assess the current skills and competence of records officers in your local government?
2. What kind of training or support have they received in the past three years?
3. Are there areas where records officers require improvement or additional capacity-building?
4. How do you ensure that officers remain updated with new trends and technologies in records management?
5. In your view, what key competencies should every records officer possess to perform effectively?

SECTION D: OBJECTIVE THREE

To determine the specific knowledge and skills gaps that hinder local government records officers from managing records

1. From your observation, what specific gaps hinder records officers from performing effectively?
2. How do these gaps affect service delivery or information flow in your department?
3. Are there policies or resource constraints that limit capacity-building for records staff?
4. What barriers exist in adopting modern records systems (digital or hybrid)?
5. In your opinion, what support is needed to close these skills and knowledge gaps?

SECTION E: OBJECTIVE FOUR

To propose strategies that can enhance effective records management of local government records officers

1. What strategies or interventions do you think could strengthen records management in your local government?
2. How can local government leadership support training and motivation of records officers?
3. What role should central government ministries or agencies play in improving records management at the local level?
4. Are there best practices or innovations from other local government that you think could be adopted?
5. How can collaboration between departments improve records handling and overall accountability?

Appendix IV: Document Review Guide

Introduction

The document review guide was designed to collect secondary information relevant to the study. It enabled the researcher to examine existing documents and reports related to records management practices, capacity-building, and policy frameworks in local governments.

A. Purpose of the Review

The document review aimed to:

Assess the presence and implementation of policies and guidelines on records management.

Identify institutional initiatives and programs related to capacity building and digital transformation.

Examine existing administrative and budgetary documents that support records management at the local government level.

Validate data collected from records officers and local government administrators.

B. Key Areas of Focus

Document Category	Specific Documents Reviewed	Key Information Extracted	Remarks
National Policy Documents	National Records and Archives Act (2001); Digital Transformation Roadmap (2023/2024-2027/2028)	Legal framework, roles of local government, policy provisions	Reviewed for compliance and relevance
Institutional Guidelines	Local government records management manuals, retention schedules, and circulars	Procedures for classification, appraisal, and disposal	Examined for implementation
Capacity-Building Plans	Training reports, staff development plans	Identified training gaps and programs	Triangulated with interviews
Budgetary Documents	Uganda National Budget 2025/2026	Funding allocations to local governments	Reviewed for local government-level

		and ICT	impact
Performance Reports	Local government service delivery and audit reports	Relationship between recordkeeping and service outcomes	Used to verify practical performance
ICT and Digitalisation Reports	e-Government and ICT strategic plans	Adoption of electronic systems in records management	Examined for integration challenges

C. Review Questions

1. What policy and legal documents exist to guide records management in local government?
2. How have local government integrated records management in their administrative structures and budgets?
3. What evidence exists of capacity-building programs for records officers?
4. How does the national budget support local government records and ICT initiatives?
5. What gaps or inconsistencies are observed between policy and actual practice?

Appendix V: Observation Guide

Introduction

The observation guide was developed to complement interviews and document reviews by capturing first-hand evidence of how records are created, managed, stored, and accessed in local government offices. Through on-site visits, the researcher observed practices, facilities, and tools used in records management, as well as staff interaction with records and ICT systems.

A. Purpose of Observation

1. To assess the physical conditions and organisation of records storage areas.
2. To observe the level of adoption of digital tools and filing systems.
3. To evaluate staff interaction with records and adherence to procedures.
4. To document visible challenges affecting efficient records management.

B. Observation Checklist

Observation Area	Specific Aspect	Observation Made	Remarks/Implications
Records Storage	Shelving, filing cabinets, and environmental control		
Classification and Labelling	File indexing, use of codes, standardisation		
Access and Retrieval	Retrieval procedures, user logs, and security measures		
Records Preservation	Handling of fragile files, disaster preparedness		
Digital Records Systems	Presence of computers, ERMS, and backups		
Staff Interaction	Staff roles, teamwork, supervision		
Compliance with Policy	Awareness of records policies, retention schedules		
Physical Environment	Space, cleanliness, lighting, ventilation		