
The influence of office supervisors' competence in enhancing personnel records management in local government authorities in tanzania.

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Abstract: The study assesses how office supervisors' skills, knowledge, and leadership abilities influence personnel records management. A quantitative research design was employed, utilising structured questionnaires to collect data from 179 office supervisors across selected LGAs. The findings reveal that the Office Supervisor's Competence significantly influences Personnel Records Management, as indicated by the path coefficient ($\beta = 0.489$, $p = 0.001$). This suggests that office supervisors' competence contributes to better adherence to record-keeping policies, improved accessibility of records, and enhanced confidentiality. The originality of this study lies in its contribution to the growing body of knowledge on records management within the context of LGAs, specifically emphasising the role of office supervisors as key enablers of effective personnel records management. Based on the findings, the study recommends the development of a standardised competency framework for office supervisors, mandatory continuous professional development programs, and increased investment in digital records management infrastructure. Future research should explore the role of emerging technologies and leadership styles in strengthening personnel records management practices.

Keywords: *Office Supervisor's Competence, Personnel Records Management, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), Records Management, Tanzania.*

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INTRODUCTION

Personnel records management provides a rational basis for making decisions about recorded information, including what should be saved and discarded (Saffady, 2021). These decisions are necessary to support the administrative needs of public institutions and the general public (Rosenbloom et al., 2022). On that view, improved personnel records management in terms of creating, organizing, storing, and retrieving is becoming an important instrument in the management of organizations of all types, especially in the public sector, where accountability and good governance are assigned even greater importance (Dewah & Ndlovu, 2013; Thabakgolo, 2023). In Malaysia, for example, Mukred et al. (2021) noted cases of incorrect placement of personnel records. Moreover, in South Africa, there are instances where government departments inadvertently mishandle recorded information (Zuma, 2023). In Ghana, the issue of improper records management has been manifested in terms of misplacement of vital records, loss of vital records, lack of a disposition schedule, ineffective means of retrieving records, and insufficient space for records (Mahmud, 2023). Generally, Elizabeth (2020), Mosweu & Rakemane (2020), and Muhumuza et al. (2022) identified that problems facing personnel records management in Africa are difficulties in storage and retrieval.

Tanzania is not far from other parts of the world, as there are reported cases of improper personnel records management (Mosweu & Rakemane, 2020). For example, Matimbwa et al. (2020) commend the existence of inaccurate and incomplete personnel information in local government authorities and other department databases. Rutta & Ndenje-Sichalwe (2022) identified issues about poor organisation of files, lack of indexes in files, and missing information in the Kinondoni Municipal Council in Dar es Salaam. Furthermore, Issa & Wamukoya (2018) reported misfiling, lack of timely evidence in the form of records, and absence of systematic recordkeeping and controls in the Dar es Salaam Commercial Court. Further, according to Mubofu & Malekani (2023), the problems related to improper management of personnel records are more pronounced in local government offices., Mubofu & Malekani (2023) state that personnel records are highly improperly managed in the Liwale District Council. Hence, the government has often failed to make proper decisions on personnel development due to the unavailability of accurate data (Ojiemhenkele & Ofangbonmu, 2024).

The government of Tanzania has taken a lot of initiatives to minimize or end the problem; such initiatives include the enactment of the Records and Archives Management Act No. 3 of 2002, which mandates that the head of each public office establish and maintain accurate records of transactions and occurrences (Mubofu & Malekani, 2023). The Employment and Labour Relations Act (ELRA) of 2004 and the Public Service Act (PSA) of 2002 offer a legal and regulatory framework for managing personnel records (Makwae, 2021). The other major intervention to be taken on board was the Human Capital Management Information System (HCMIS), put in place in 2010, which enhances data accuracy and ease of use, reduces paper load, and shapes useful decisions toward the well-being of the employees in this sector (Nsenga, 2022).

Despite the noted efforts, instances of improper management of personnel records continue to exist (Hassan Dotto & Mwantimwa, 2024; Kamatula, 2019; Matimbwa & Masue, 2019; Mubofu & Malekani, 2023; Newa & Mwantimwa, 2019). Previous studies have associated the management of personnel records with the level of training and competence among records management staff and the quality of storage equipment (Mubofu & Malekani, 2023;

Sarto, 2021; Wright, 2013). Very few studies have been carried out to address personnel records management as a result of office supervisors' competence (Choo, 2013a; Franks, 2013; Gil-Garcia et al., 2021; Lian et al., 2022; Sundqvist & Svärd, 2016; Svärd, 2014; Thabakgolo, 2023).

The success of personnel records management is profoundly influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of responsible individuals within the organisation (Wood et al., 2024). Supervisor's competence is essential for successfully managing personnel records because it directly influences employee behaviour, enforces best practices, and ensures optimal resource utilisation (Abdulfatai, 2021). Supervisor's competence shapes and nurtures the organisation's information culture, which governs how records are handled and maintained (Muhammad et al., 2020). Even when resources and technology are present, their effectiveness is highly dependent on the supervisor's competence to manage and deploy them effectively (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021). Supervisor's competence, therefore, offers a more sustainable approach to personnel records management compared to external factors like technological infrastructure or resource availability, which may offer only temporary solutions without strong leadership (Gusvita & Alon, 2021).

Besides, current research confirms that quality leadership, particularly that of the supervisors, straight away connects with workplace effectiveness. Sutarno (2023) study highlights how effective office supervisors possess necessary capabilities, capacity, knowledge, and qualities to advance organizational performance. They are leading agents in managing, motivating, and facilitating the successful completion of organisational responsibilities (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020). Therefore, without leadership, even strong interventions may not have the intended effect on records management (Virkus & Salman, 2021). Hence, this study puts the office supervisor's competency as the independent variable that can better explain better management of personnel records.

This perspective aligns with David McClelland's Competency Theory (1973), which posits that organisational success is driven by specific competencies, including knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes (Wong, 2020). Undertaking this study had both theoretical and empirical contributions to the management of personnel records in the Local government authorities in Tanzania and similar institutions elsewhere. The main question addressed in this study was how the officer supervisor's competence influences the management of personnel records in the local government authorities in Tanzania. To answer this question, the study examined the sense of purpose, reliability, self-awareness, job knowledge, and confidence in skills among office supervisors against records creation, records storage, records use, records maintenance, and records disposition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The present study is underpinned by two interrelated theoretical frameworks: McClelland's Theory of Competency and Schellenberg's Records Life Cycle Model. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive analytical lens through which the influence of office supervisor competence on personnel records management can be understood, particularly within the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania, where both manual and digital record-keeping systems coexist.

McClelland's Theory of Competency, developed in the 1970s, posits that an individual's

job performance is primarily determined by observable competencies rather than by intelligence or formal qualifications alone (Wong, 2020). Competencies in this theory are conceptualised as a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal traits that predict effective performance in specific job roles. Within this study, office supervisor competence is broken down into five key dimensions: sense of purpose, reliability, self-awareness, job knowledge, and confidence in skills. Each of these elements is hypothesised to play a critical role in influencing how personnel records are created, managed, and preserved. For instance, a supervisor with a strong sense of purpose is likely to align record management practices with organisational goals, while one who is reliable ensures consistency and compliance with procedures. Self-awareness enhances the ability to identify personal limitations and seek professional development, whereas job knowledge and confidence in skills directly impact the technical execution of records management tasks.

Complementing this is Schellenberg's Records Life Cycle Model, which conceptualises records management as a structured process that occurs in successive phases. These stages include records creation, storage, use, maintenance, and disposition (Lappin, 2023). This model provides a systematic framework for assessing the effectiveness of personnel records management by identifying the core activities involved and the standards each stage must meet to ensure record integrity and usability. Within this model, the role of the office supervisor becomes pivotal. A supervisor's competence is expected to directly influence the quality and efficiency of each life cycle stage. For example, job knowledge and technical skill are critical for accurate records creation and proper storage, while reliability and confidence in skills support secure maintenance and timely disposition of records. Supervisors with high levels of competence are better equipped to guide their teams through the record-keeping process, enforce compliance, and adopt best practices even in resource-constrained settings.

The integration of McClelland's competency theory and the Records Life Cycle Model thus provides a dual-layered analytical framework. While the competency theory explains the behavioural and cognitive traits required for effective supervision, the life cycle model illustrates how these traits translate into concrete record management outcomes. This combined framework facilitates an in-depth analysis of how specific supervisory competencies relate to distinct stages of personnel records management. The study, therefore, draws on both theories to examine the extent to which office supervisors' competence, disaggregated into specific attributes, enhances the effectiveness of managing personnel records across LGAs in Tanzania.

Review of Empirical Literature

Several empirical studies have explored the role of supervisors in ensuring effective records management across the public sector. However, while many confirm the significance of supervisory competence, fewer have disaggregated competence into its distinct attributes such as sense of purpose, reliability, self-awareness, job knowledge, and confidence in skills nor have they related these attributes to specific stages of personnel records management (creation, storage, use, maintenance, and disposition), particularly within the Tanzanian Local Government Authorities (LGAs) context, which operates under both manual and electronic systems.

Ameyaw and Frempong-Kore (2020) conducted a study in Ghanaian public organisations using a descriptive survey approach involving administrative staff and supervisors. Their

findings established that supervisors with strong leadership and reliability enhanced the accessibility, recovery, and safety of records. It was also noted that a lack of formal training in records management constrained supervisors' job knowledge and ability to oversee records creation and maintenance. While the study provided useful insights into supervisory roles, its emphasis was on general leadership and training issues without analytically detailing how individual competence attributes may influence distinct personnel records management functions. Moreover, the study setting was in centralized public organisations, making its applicability to decentralized LGAs in Tanzania less direct.

In Malaysia, Ahmad Tajudin et al. (2023) employed a quantitative research design involving structured questionnaires administered to managerial staff in government agencies. Their findings indicated that managerial competence, particularly a proactive orientation reflective of a strong sense of purpose and confidence in skills, was positively associated with the organisation and security of personnel records, especially regarding records storage and use. However, the study was situated in a highly digitized context and concentrated on general managerial behaviour. It did not break down competence into attributes such as self-awareness or reliability, nor did it focus on mixed (manual and electronic) record environments like those found in Tanzanian LGAs.

Moreover, Sundqvist and Svärd (2016), working within Scandinavian public authorities, adopted a mixed-methods approach to examine how information culture influences records management practices. Their results highlighted that supervisors with strong policy compliance orientation and high self-awareness contributed significantly to effective records creation, use, and disposition. Supervisors with sound job knowledge facilitated efficient retrieval and safeguarding of records. While their study enriches the understanding of behavioural influences in records management, the competence dimensions were embedded within broader cultural or organisational factors rather than treated as distinct analytical constructs. Furthermore, the study was situated in highly structured, technologically advanced settings, which differ markedly from Tanzania's LGA context.

Furthermore, Marutha (2019) conducted a qualitative case study in South Africa's health sector, focusing on how supervisory roles contribute to the enforcement of records retention policies. Interviews with supervisors and records officers revealed that reliable and knowledgeable supervisors played a critical role in maintaining compliance and ensuring efficient records maintenance and disposition. The study emphasized supervisory influence but concentrated more on sector-specific regulatory enforcement. It did not extend its scope to analytically examine how individual competence attributes, such as self-awareness or confidence in skills support records use or creation in broader public administrative settings.

Existing empirical literature affirms that supervisor competence is vital in ensuring effective records management. However, most studies have addressed competence as a general construct, without analytically unpacking its individual traits and how each may relate to the personnel records management. Additionally, many studies have been conducted in highly digitized or sector-specific contexts, with limited applicability to Tanzanian LGAs, where infrastructure, training gaps, and mixed record systems present unique operational challenges. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on how disaggregated office supervisor competencies influence personnel records management practices in Tanzanian LGAs, offering a context-specific and variable focused contribution to the literature.

Conceptual Framework
Independent variable

Dependent variable

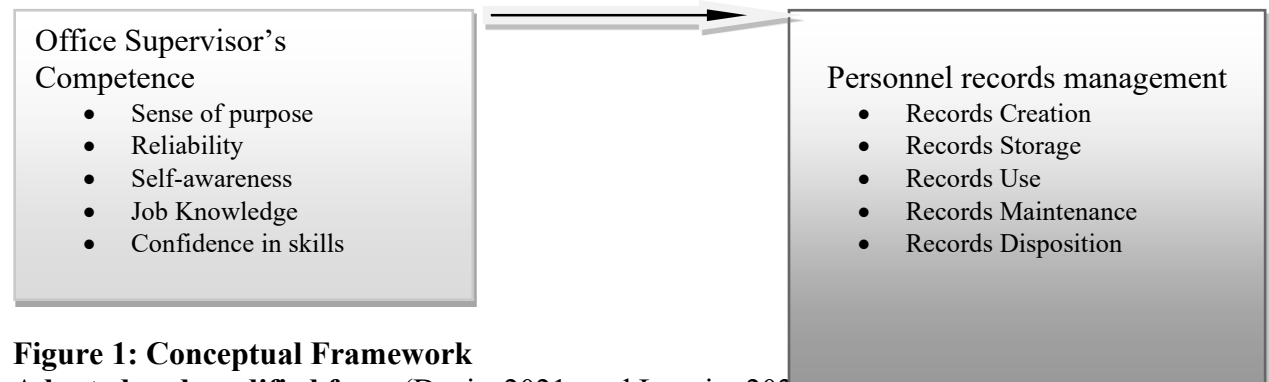


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Adopted and modified from (Davis, 2021; and Lappin, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The study area

The study was conducted across all Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania Mainland (PO-RALG, 2024), due to the widespread issue of improper personnel records management, characterized by mishandling of files, loss of files, and missing relevant information (Manyeke & Joshua, 2023; Newa & Mwantimwa, 2019). This comprehensive inclusion of all 184 LGAs was necessary to capture the full extent of the problem and provide a thorough understanding of personnel records management practices across the country, but also increase external validity of the study.

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, which involves collecting data from a population at a single point in time to capture a snapshot of various characteristics, behaviours, or attitudes (Cohen et al., 2017). The design was applied by collecting data from office supervisors across various local government authorities, with one supervisor from the respective local government authority. This design enabled the study to achieve a broad representation of perspectives and variations in supervisory competencies and records management practices at a single point in time (Williamson, 2002).

Research Approach

The study utilised a quantitative approach, which is designed to measure and analyse numerical data to identify statistical relationships and patterns (Mohajan, 2020). This methodology focuses on quantifying variable relationships and exploring their statistical interactions (Ahmadian et al., 2020). It was chosen for this study to examine the statistical dynamics among personnel records management and office supervisor competence within local government authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania (O'Brien & Aliabadi, 2020).

Population

The study involved selecting one office supervisor from each of the 184 local government authorities (LGAs) across Mainland Tanzania, which was methodologically sound, particularly in contexts where insights from individuals responsible for key personnel records management were critical. For example, Foster and Jonker (2005) used a

comparable method by involving one decision-maker per organisation in their study on Stakeholder relationships: the dialogue of engagement, hence ensuring the representativeness of each organisation's perspective. Targeting office supervisors, who hold a central role in managing records, provided an accurate and reliable understanding of the practices and challenges of personnel records management.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

For this study, a survey method was used as the primary and only data collection method (De Leeuw, 2012). The decision to employ this method was informed by the manageable number of local government authorities (LGAs) across Mainland Tanzania, which made a census approach feasible (Sutherland, 2006). To efficiently gather data from a large number of respondents spread across a vast geographic area, structured multi-topic questionnaires were employed (De Brauw & Carletto, 2012). These questionnaires were designed to collect quantitative data effectively, thus minimising the time and effort required compared to other data collection tools (Axinn & Pearce, 2006).

Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data were first coded and cleaned using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) to ensure accuracy and completeness (Mehta & Patel, 2011). This initial phase involved generating descriptive statistics, identifying missing values, and ensuring internal consistency across variables. Following this, the data were exported to SmartPLS 4 for advanced analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This technique was selected due to its suitability for analyzing complex models involving latent constructs, especially in predictive and exploratory research. PLS-SEM is robust with non-normal data and small to medium sample sizes, making it appropriate for this study (Cheah et al., 2024). The data analysis proceeded in two major stages: the assessment of the measurement model and the evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model was evaluated for reliability and validity through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Once the measurement model met the required thresholds, the structural model was assessed to test the hypothesized relationships using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Key indicators such as path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and multicollinearity (VIFs) were analyzed to confirm the model's explanatory power and robustness. This analytical process provided a comprehensive and statistically valid basis for interpreting the relationships among the study's variables.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, focusing on length of service, years in the current position, number of years in records, and number of staff in the section.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Length of Service	1-5 years	10	5.59%
	6-10 years	20	11.17%

	11-15 years	50	27.93%
	16-20 years	65	36.31%
	20+ years	34	18.99%
Years in Current Position			
	1-5 years	39	21.79%
	6-10 years	40	22.35%
	11-15 years	58	32.40%
	16-20 years	40	22.35%
	20+ years	2	1.12%
Number of Years in Records			
	1-5 years	20	11.17%
	6-10 years	30	16.76%
	11-15 years	59	32.96%
	16-20 years	55	30.73%
	20+ years	15	8.38%
Number of Staff in the Section			
	1-5 Staff	70	39.11%
	6-10 Staff	75	41.90%
	11-15 Staff	34	18.99%
	16-20 Staff	0	0%
	20+ staff	0	0%

The demographic profile of the respondents demonstrates a solid foundation of professional experience, which is crucial for assessing the competence of office supervisors in managing personnel records. Notably, over 65% of the respondents had served in their current positions for more than 11 years, and more than 72% had been engaged in records-related duties for over a decade. This extensive tenure indicates that most office supervisors have likely acquired both technical expertise and managerial capabilities essential for effective personnel records management. Their long-term involvement equips them with the ability to implement the records life cycle, adhere to regulatory requirements, and maintain systematic, accurate, and accessible personnel records, critical components for promoting accountability, transparency, and informed decision-making within Local Government Authorities (LGAs).

In addition, the data shows that 81% of supervisors oversee sections with only 1–10 staff members, highlighting a predominance of small-sized teams. While such settings may enhance communication and enable close supervision, they also place greater operational responsibility on the office supervisor. In these lean environments, supervisor competence becomes a determining factor in organizing workflows, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring compliance with established records management standards. Limited opportunities for delegation in small teams demand that supervisors possess a balanced mix of leadership, technical knowledge, and hands-on experience. Therefore, the demographic characteristics not only provide meaningful context but also reinforce the empirical findings that link office supervisor competence to the effectiveness of personnel records management in Tanzanian LGAs.

Respondents Response Rate

The study initially targeted 184 respondents across 184 LGAs spanning the 26 regions of the Tanzanian Mainland, aiming to gather comprehensive perceptions from each locale.

However, 184 of the distributed questionnaires, 179 were returned, resulting in a response rate of approximately 97.28%. This exceptionally high return rate surpasses the threshold suggested by Wanyonyi et al. (2023), who state that a response rate above 50% is adequate for reliable data analysis. Consequently, the strong response rate of 97.28% not only highlights the high engagement and commitment of the participants but also ensures a solid foundation for the study's data analysis, hence enhancing the validity and depth of the findings derived from this extensive survey.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of Office Supervisor's Competence and Management of Personnel Records variables, for a sample population of 179 respondents, reveal the following fundamental findings. The average scores of the Office Supervisor's Competence items range from 3.93 to 4.15, with a highest average of the statement, "I show high levels of reliability and integrity in my work activities" (4.15), and the lowest for, "I possess the necessary knowledge to effectively perform my job requirements" (3.93). Standard deviations range from 0.811 to 1.293, indicating differing degrees of agreement by the respondents. For Management of Personnel Records, the means of the items are 3.92 to 4.19, the highest mean being for the item "Our LGA follows clear procedures for updating and correcting records as necessary" (4.19), and lowest for "Our LGA is aware of the need to ensure confidentiality and compliance when disposing of records" (3.92). Standard deviations for the variable range between 1.008 and 1.233, reflecting some response variability but continued high consensus about the LGA's people record management practice being effective.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management n=179

Latent Variables	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Office Supervisor's Competence	I am motivated by a strong sense of purpose in my daily work	3.96	1.293
	I exhibit high levels of reliability and integrity in my professional activities	4.15	1.127
	I have a clear understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in my role	4.14	1.145
	I possess the necessary knowledge to perform my job duties effectively	3.93	.811
	I am confident in my skills to accomplish my work tasks	4.12	1.219
Personnel Records Management	Our LGA has well-defined procedures for the creation of records that are consistently followed.	4.15	1.008
	The records created by our LGA contain all the necessary information required for efficient operations.	4.07	1.089
	Our LGA employs secure and organised methods for storing records.	3.98	1.109

Records in our LGA are regularly reviewed to ensure they are stored efficiently and are easily accessible.	3.95	1.228
Our LGA effectively utilises stored records to enhance operational decision-making.	3.96	1.109
Employees in our LGA can quickly access the records necessary for their job functions.	4.02	1.127
Our LGA routinely maintains records to ensure their accuracy and relevance over time.	4.09	1.233
Our LGA follows clear procedures for updating and correcting records as needed.	4.19	1.064
Our LGA adheres to established guidelines for the proper disposal of records that are no longer required.	4.07	1.132
Our LGA recognises the importance of maintaining confidentiality and compliance when disposing of records.	3.92	1.119

The descriptive statistics for Office Supervisor's Competence and Management of Personnel Records reveal several important implications for the management and development of these areas within Local Government Authorities (LGAs). The mean scores, which range from 3.93 to 4.15, indicate that office supervisors generally perceive themselves as competent, motivated, and capable in performing their roles. However, the relatively high standard deviation observed in specific items, such as “I am motivated by a strong sense of purpose in my daily work” ($SD = 1.293$), points to notable variability in responses. This variation suggests that, although a majority of supervisors express confidence in their competencies, a significant proportion may lack consistent motivation or a clear sense of purpose. These findings imply the presence of disparities in intrinsic drive and self-awareness among office supervisors, which may affect the overall effectiveness of personnel records management in LGAs.

Multicollinearity

The multicollinearity test results, as shown in Table 3, indicate that all the variables, both for Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management, have Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranging from 1.317 to 1.779. These values show that there is no high degree of multicollinearity among the items, as VIF values below 5 are generally considered acceptable. Specifically, the highest VIF noted is 1.779, which suggests that the variables are not highly correlated with each other, and multicollinearity is not an issue. This indicates that the items that have been used to measure both Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management are independent enough to yield valid and reliable results in future analysis.

Table 3: Multicollinearity Test

Variable(s)	Items	VIF
Office Supervisor's Competence	D1	1.735
	D2	1.492
	D3	1.550
	D5	1.431
Personnel Records Management	E1	1.625

E10	1.767
E2	1.317
E3	1.456
E4	1.779
E5	1.756
E6	1.585
E7	1.601
E8	1.498
E9	1.592

Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability test scores, as reported in Table 4, show that both the variables, Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management, have high internal consistency. In the case of Office Supervisor's Competence, Cronbach's alpha is 0.773, which shows acceptable reliability, and composite reliability (ρ_a) is 0.779 and ρ_c is 0.854, both showing excellent consistency. For Personnel Records Management, Cronbach's alpha is 0.846, and even better and also represents good reliability. Further, composite reliability estimates of Personnel Records Management ($\rho_a = 0.850$ and $\rho_c = 0.878$) further evidence the strength of the measurement. All this goes to show that items used to measure both variables are reliable and used confidently while analysing.

Table 4: Results of the Reliability Test

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)
Office Supervisor's Competence	0.773	0.779	0.854
Personnel Records Management	0.846	0.850	0.878

As regards the pilot study of 15 respondents, it was observed that the respondents were having issues with understanding the language of the questionnaire (English). To get around this and enhance understandability, the questionnaire was translated from English to Kiswahili through the assistance of a Kiswahili expert from the Department of General Studies at the Institute of Accountancy Arusha. Validity, on the contrary, informs the readers that the instruments possess the desired content domain (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Following the measurement model in Table 5, convergent validity was examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values with a cut-off point of 0.5 and higher, but lower than composite reliability, and factor loadings of 0.6 and higher to establish convergent validity (Ismail et al., 2020). The results of the convergent validity test, which is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), show that the constructs of the study in general have adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5: Results of Convergent Validity Test

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Office Supervisor's Competence	0.595
Personnel Records Management	0.540

Discriminant Analysis

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) matrix gives valuable information regarding the discriminant validity of the constructs investigated, in which values below 0.85 indicate acceptable discriminant validity and suggest that the constructs are sufficiently distinct (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT matrix results give a value of 0.640 for Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management, which is below the 0.85

cut-off threshold recommended. This provides adequate discriminant validity, i.e., the two constructs are sufficiently different and measure different concepts in the study. able 6: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

Discriminant validity

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

	Office Supervisor's Competence	Personnel Records Management
Office Supervisor's Competence		
Personnel Records Management	0.640	

Fornell-Larcker criterion

The Fornell-Larcker criterion scores indicate that the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs is higher than their inter-construct correlation. For example, the square root of AVE for Office Supervisor's Competence is 0.771, and for Personnel Records Management, it is 0.663, both greater than their inter-construct correlation (0.771). This confirms that the constructs exhibit proper discriminant validity, i.e., meaning they are distinct and measure different aspects within the study.

Table 7: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Fornell-Larcker criterion				
	Office Supervisor's Competence	Personnel Records Management		
Office Supervisor's Competence	0.771			
Personnel Records Management	0.771	0.663		

Coefficients of Determination

The coefficients of determination in Table 8 indicate that Office Supervisor's Competence explains 75.3% of the variance in Personnel Records Management ($R^2 = 0.753$), while the adjusted R-square value of 0.743 accounts for potential model overfitting. These results suggest a strong predictive relationship, implying that the Office Supervisor's Competence plays a significant role in influencing Personnel Records Management within Local Government Authorities.

Table 8: Coefficients of Determination

R-square		
	R-square	R-square adjusted
Personnel Records Management	0.753	0.743

Model Prediction Summary

The model prediction summary in Table 9 shows a Q^2_{predict} value of 0.671, indicating strong predictive relevance of the model for Personnel Records Management. The Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) of 0.578 and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) of 0.428 suggest a good model fit, with relatively low prediction errors. These results confirm that the model has strong predictive accuracy in estimating Personnel Records Management outcomes.

Table 9: Model Prediction Summary

PLSpredict LV summary			
	Q^2_{predict}	RMSE	MAE
Personnel Records Management	0.671	0.578	0.428

Path Coefficients

The path coefficients in Table 10 reveal a high positive relationship between Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management, with a beta (β) value of 0.489 and p-value of 0.001. The positive beta coefficient suggests that office supervisor competence improvement is associated with the betterment of personnel records management in Local Government Authorities (LGAs). Besides, the p-value of 0.001 guarantees that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level, meaning that there is overwhelming evidence to prove the effect of office supervisor competence on personnel records management.

Table 10: Path Coefficients

	Beta (β)	P values
Office supervisor's competence -> Personnel Records Management	0.489	0.001

It stresses the importance of LGAs assigning top priority to the recruitment, training, and professional development of office supervisors. A stake in supervisory skill is likely to yield high dividends in record management, including greater accuracy of information, greater adherence to legislative and regulatory requirements, and better quality decision support. Furthermore, the competency of supervisors has the potential to establish a culture of accountability and sharing of information, which, in turn, will improve the overall records management system. These findings highlight the strategic importance of human capital development within public administration and drive policies fostering leadership competency at the management level.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a strong positive relationship between Office Supervisor's Competence and Personnel Records Management in Local Government Authorities (LGAs), with a statistically significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.489$, $p = 0.001$). This outcome reflects the robust quantitative methodology adopted, which employed a structured questionnaire grounded in validated theoretical constructs and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The use of SEM enabled precise estimation of the strength and direction of influence between disaggregated competence attributes such as job knowledge, self-awareness, and sense of purpose and distinct phases of the personnel records management cycle, including creation, maintenance, and disposition. This methodological approach not only enhanced internal validity but also offered nuanced understandings of how each dimension of competence aligns with specific record functions in the Tanzanian LGA context.

The results reaffirm theoretical perspectives, particularly the Competency Model (Choo et al., 2008), which highlights the role of competent supervisors in enhancing control over information and organizational decision-making, key components of effective records management. Similarly, Thabakgolo (2023) stresses that highly competent supervisors are well-positioned to enforce organizational policies, ensure compliance with regulations, and improve the accessibility and security of personnel records. The alignment between the methodology and findings in this study demonstrates how disaggregating competence into measurable components can yield more actionable understandings, ultimately contributing to improved personnel records practices in decentralized public institutions.

In support of this, Marsh and Farrell (2015) advocate for continuous professional development as a means to elevate supervisory capacity in managing records efficiently. Mazikana (2019) adds that training is essential, particularly in navigating the challenges posed by evolving regulations and the shift toward electronic records systems, a challenge highly relevant to Tanzanian LGAs, which operate in hybrid manual-electronic environments. This study's findings confirm that discrepancies in supervisor competence are associated with inconsistencies in record creation, maintenance, and disposition, calling for targeted capacity-building initiatives.

However, this study goes beyond affirming the general importance of supervisory competence by addressing a notable gap in existing literature, the disaggregation of competence into specific attributes (e.g., sense of purpose, job knowledge, self-awareness, reliability, and confidence in skills) and their relevance to different stages of records management. Prior empirical studies have largely treated competence as a broad construct. For example, while Ameyaw and Frempong-Kore (2020) found that reliability and leadership among supervisors in Ghana enhanced record accessibility and safety, they did not relate these traits to distinct personnel records functions, nor did they consider environments operating under both manual and electronic systems.

The current findings also find resonance with Ahmad Tajudin et al. (2023), who reported that a proactive orientation closely linked to the sense of purpose and confidence was instrumental in managing records in Malaysian public agencies. However, their context was highly digitized and did not account for attributes like self-awareness or reliability, nor did it reflect the dual recordkeeping systems prevalent in Tanzanian LGAs. Likewise, Sundqvist and Svärd (2016) observed that supervisors with strong policy compliance and self-awareness contributed to effective record creation and use, but their study framed these as cultural factors embedded within broader organizational environments, rather than treating them as discrete supervisory competencies.

Moreover, Marutha (2019), focusing on South Africa's health sector, highlighted the value of reliability and job knowledge in ensuring adherence to retention schedules, but the analysis remained confined to regulatory enforcement within a single sector. This study, in contrast, situates these competencies within broader public administrative functions, analyzing how each supports specific processes such as record creation, use, and disposition within decentralized Tanzanian LGAs.

In addition, while the present findings strongly support the argument that supervisor competence enhances records management, they also raise critical questions regarding the institutional mechanisms that mediate this relationship. Gustafsson et al. (2023) caution that even highly competent supervisors may be constrained by weak enforcement structures, poor infrastructure, or underdeveloped information cultures. This aligns with the Information Culture Assessment Framework, which suggests that individual competence must be supported by institutional norms and systemic capacity to yield sustainable improvements in records management.

Therefore, this study makes a unique contribution to knowledge by not only affirming the value of supervisor competence but also by analytically unpacking its key dimensions and their influence on various stages of personnel records management. It also emphasises the importance of contextual factors, including technological capacity, institutional support, and policy enforcement, that may either enhance or constrain the efficacy of competent supervisors in the Tanzanian LGA setting.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Office Supervisor Competence significantly influences Personnel Records Management in Tanzanian Local Government Authorities (LGAs).

Using a quantitative approach and employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the study established a strong and statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.489$, $p = 0.001$) between supervisor competence and records management effectiveness. The methodological rigour, including validation of measurement models, ensured that the constructs were reliably assessed, thus reinforcing the credibility of the results. The findings affirm existing literature that underscores the role of managerial competence in enforcing information control and implementing sound records management policies and procedures.

Moreover, while supervisor competence emerged as a critical determinant, the study also revealed that its effectiveness is intertwined with other organisational factors, such as institutional policy enforcement, adequate staffing, and the availability of technological infrastructure. These contextual conditions either enhance or constrain the supervisor's ability to manage records efficiently. Therefore, for LGAs to achieve sustainable improvements in personnel records management, efforts must go beyond individual competencies. A comprehensive strategy that integrates capacity building, institutional support, and system-level reforms is essential to enable consistent, compliant, and efficient recordkeeping practices across the public sector.

Recommendations

Policy recommendations

The government ought to formulate a national competency framework for office supervisors in LGAs that establishes significant skills, qualifications, and performance standards for the effective management of personnel records. This will ensure consistency and uniformity in record-keeping processes in all LGAs.

The Ministry responsible for Local Government should develop policies to make it mandatory for the office supervisors to undergo compulsory leadership courses in records management. The policies should include regular training sessions, certification programs, and regular competency assessments.

As technology increasingly contributes to records management, policy needs to address the adoption of electronic records systems in LGAs. The government must formulate guidelines for system installation, data security, and compliance to promote efficiency and accountability in personnel records administration.

Practical Recommendations

There must be regular training and mentoring sessions conducted in LGAs for office managers on best practices in record management of personnel, the law, and computerised record-keeping.

There must be visible accountability mechanisms to compel office supervisors to adhere to standard records management good practice. This could include performance reviews, regular audits, and compliance monitoring.

LGAs must prioritise introducing electronic records management systems and provide technical support for office supervisors. This will enhance efficiency, the accessibility of records, and ensure compliance with data protection policies.

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Appendix I: Summary of Measurements of the Variables

Table 11: Summary of Measurements of the Variables

S/n	Variable	Items	Source(s)
1	Office Supervisor's Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am motivated by a strong sense of purpose in my daily work I exhibit high levels of reliability in my professional activities I have a clear understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in my role I possess the necessary knowledge to effectively perform my job duties I am confident in my skills to accomplish my work tasks 	Omar and Fayek (2014); and Davis (2021).
2	Personnel Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our LGA has well-defined procedures for the creation of records that are consistently followed. 	Lappin (2023); and Matlala and Maphoto (2020).

- The records created by our LGA contain all the necessary information required for efficient operations.
 - Our LGA employs secure and organised methods for storing records.
 - Records in our LGA are regularly reviewed to ensure they are stored efficiently and are easily accessible.
 - Our LGA effectively utilises stored records to enhance operational decision-making.
 - Employees in our LGA can quickly access the records necessary for their job functions.
 - Our LGA routinely maintains records to ensure their accuracy and relevance over time.
 - Our LGA follows clear procedures for updating and correcting records as needed.
 - Our LGA adheres to established guidelines for the proper disposal of records that are no longer required.
 - Our LGA recognises the importance of maintaining confidentiality and compliance when disposing of records.
-