

## **Records Management Practices and Administrative Efficiency in Nakuru County Government, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

Effective records management is fundamental to good governance, particularly in devolved systems where access to accurate information promotes accountability, transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and efficient service delivery. However, county governments in Kenya continue to face challenges, including inadequate storage facilities, reliance on manual systems, limited technological infrastructure, and insufficient staff capacity. This study examined the relationship between records management practices and the efficiency of devolved governance in the County Government of Nakuru. The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Of 152 officers in the County Executive and County Assembly, 126 were selected through stratified random sampling, yielding 120 usable questionnaires (95.2% response rate). Qualitative data were collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Records management practices were moderately implemented, with records creation and classification scoring highest ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), followed by disposal ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) and storage and retrieval ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). All three dimensions correlated positively with governance efficiency ( $r = .339-.622$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The regression model was significant,  $F(3, 116) = 32.41$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 45.6% of the variance. Records creation and classification ( $\beta = .471$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and storage and retrieval ( $\beta = .279$ ,  $p = .001$ ) significantly predicted governance efficiency, while disposal did not ( $\beta = .053$ ,  $p = .487$ ). Qualitative findings highlighted inadequate infrastructure, limited digitization, inconsistent policy implementation, and insufficient staff training, with 35.0% reporting no formal records management training. The study concludes that effective records management is positively associated with governance efficiency. It recommends investment in electronic records management systems, continuous staff training, stronger policy implementation, monitoring, and adequate resource allocation.

**Keywords:** *records management, devolved governance, governance efficiency, accountability and transparency*

## 1.0 Introduction

Records are a critical resource in public administration because they provide reliable evidence for decision-making, accountability, policy implementation, performance monitoring, and institutional memory. Within devolved systems of governance, effective records management enhances transparency, operational efficiency, and public trust. The capacity of county governments to create, maintain, retrieve, and preserve authentic records directly influences governance outcomes and the quality-of-service delivery. In Kenya, these principles are anchored in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which provides the legal framework for county administration (Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Nyambergi et al., 2023). The Access to Information (General) Regulations, 2023 further require public entities to create, maintain, and manage accurate and authentic records with integrity, to disclose information proactively, and to retain records for prescribed periods (Access to Information (General) Regulations, 2023).

Globally, records management has evolved from a routine administrative function into a strategic component of governance and organizational effectiveness. Robust records management practices support evidence-based decision-making, strengthen accountability, ensure legal compliance, and improve public service delivery. Conversely, weak records management systems contribute to information loss, delays in decision-making, increased operational costs, and declining public confidence in public institutions. These challenges remain prevalent across many African countries (Momanyi et al., 2024). In Singida Local Authorities, Tanzania, for example, weak electronic records strategies, shortages of professional staff, inadequate security, and the absence of retention schedules were found to undermine governance and service delivery (Kashaija et al., 2024), while South African evidence shows that technology alone cannot ensure effective records management (Matlala & Maphoto, 2023). Inadequate funding, limited technological

infrastructure, weak policy implementation, and insufficient institutional capacity are also reported across East Africa (Tekle, 2024).

The implementation of devolution in Kenya has significantly increased the volume and complexity of records generated by county governments, particularly in areas such as financial management, procurement, human resource administration, planning, and service delivery. Consequently, sound records management has become indispensable for promoting accountability, transparency, legal compliance, and efficient county operations. Despite these developments, many county governments continue to face inadequate storage facilities, fragmented information systems, limited technological infrastructure, insufficient budgetary support, and shortages of skilled personnel. Continued reliance on paper-based systems further limits timely access to information and weakens evidence-based decision-making (Musyoka et al., 2023). In Uasin Gishu County, for instance, large volumes of paper-based records and a poor state of records management were linked to inefficient service delivery (Maina, 2022), and the devolution of records management itself has created difficulties in the closure and transfer of records and in the resources and criteria available for managing transferred records (Nyambergi et al., 2023).

The Kenyan evidence base is, however, methodologically uneven. Kashaija et al. (2024) used a qualitative case study of 41 respondents in Singida Local Authorities, Nyambergi et al. (2023) used an interpretive multiple-case design with 43 participants, and Maina and Maseh (2023) is a literature review. Such designs illuminate institutional experience but provide limited statistical evidence on the strength of the relationship between specific records management practices and governance outcomes. A systematic review by Saiba et al. (2025) likewise confirms that records function as evidence and accountability mechanisms in governance while highlighting persistent structural barriers that prevent them from fulfilling that role. In addition, findings from

Uasin Gishu County and Mavoko Sub-County cannot be assumed to hold in Nakuru, because counties differ in organizational structure, resource capacity, technological development, and administrative practice (Maina, 2022; Musyoka et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship underscores the need to align records management practices with broader governance objectives through digital transformation and the adoption of electronic records management systems (ERMS). Electronic records management systems facilitate the creation, capture, storage, retrieval, preservation, and disposal of records throughout their lifecycle, and technological innovations have enhanced records management processes, thereby strengthening accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency in public institutions (Smallwood, 2020). Evidence from East Africa, however, indicates that barriers to the adoption of ERMS persist in public sector organizations (Tekle, 2024).

The County Government of Nakuru provides an appropriate context for examining the relationship between records management practices and governance efficiency. As a major economic and administrative hub, the county generates substantial volumes of administrative records to support planning, budgeting, policy implementation, and service delivery. However, concerns persist regarding records creation and classification, storage and retrieval systems, disposal practices, and the adoption of electronic records technologies, all of which may influence institutional performance and governance efficiency (Maina & Maseh, 2023).

*“This study examined the relationship between records management practices and the efficiency of devolved governance within the County Government of Nakuru”*

The study is anchored in two complementary theoretical perspectives. The Records Continuum Model, associated with Upward (1996, 2000), rejects the view that records move in a linear sequence from creation to active use and eventual archiving. Instead, it treats record keeping as a multidimensional process in which a record serves several purposes at once. A procurement record, for example, first supports a purchasing transaction, later provides evidence in an audit, may subsequently help resolve a dispute, and eventually becomes part of institutional memory. Records must therefore be managed from the point of creation rather than only when they are transferred to an archive, a principle that recent work extends to records created in organizational and development contexts (Khabar & Oliver, 2022). The model is, however, primarily a theory of record keeping and says little about the organizational, financial, and technological conditions that shape implementation. Institutional Theory fills this gap by explaining that organizations are governed not only by technical efficiency but also by legislation, policies, professional standards, and norms, so that a county government may have a records policy on paper while implementation remains weak in practice (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Taken together, the two perspectives treat records management as both a technical and an institutional matter, and they underpin the study’s treatment of records management practices as the independent variable and governance efficiency as the dependent variable.

Although previous studies have examined records management within Kenya’s public sector, empirical evidence on its relationship with the efficiency of devolved governance in the County Government of Nakuru remains limited. In particular, few studies have comprehensively examined how records creation and classification, storage and retrieval systems, and disposal practices collectively relate to accountability, transparency, access to information, decision-making, and service delivery within county governments. Accordingly, this study addresses this gap.

Specifically, it assessed the current state of records management practices in the County Government of Nakuru and determined the relationship between records creation and classification, storage and retrieval, and disposal practices and the efficiency of devolved governance. The findings are expected to inform policy formulation, strengthen records management practices, and contribute to improved governance and service delivery across county governments in Kenya.

## 2.0 Materials and Methods

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design to examine the relationship between records management practices and the efficiency of devolved governance in the County Government of Nakuru, Kenya. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, and qualitative data were then used to explain and interpret the quantitative results, with the two strands integrated during interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). The study covered offices and departments of the County Executive (including the Governor's Office, County Secretary's Office, county departments, County Attorney's Office, City Board, municipal boards, water and sanitation companies, and county records registries) and of the County Assembly (including Assembly departments, the Speaker's Office, and the County Assembly Service Board).

Nakuru County was selected because counties generate large volumes of administrative, financial, personnel, legal, and operational

records in delivering decentralized services, which makes them appropriate settings for studying the relationship between records management and governance. Both arms of the county government were included because devolved governance involves administrative as well as legislative functions. Officers in the records registries were particularly relevant because of their direct involvement in the creation, classification, storage, retrieval, retention, and disposal of records, while other officers were included because they use records in decision-making, administration, service delivery, and accountability processes.

The target population comprised 152 county officers involved in records creation, management, and utilization, of whom 104 were in the County Executive and 48 in the County Assembly. Using official lists of eligible officers as the sampling frame, the population was stratified by institutional unit, and respondents were selected at random within each stratum in proportion to stratum size. Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations gives a minimum sample of 110 at a 5% level of precision; because the population was small and accessible, a larger sample of 126 respondents (82.9% of the target population) was adopted to improve representativeness (Table 1). In addition, 25 key informants were purposively selected based on their expertise and roles in records management, county management, and governance (Palinkas et al., 2015), and three focus group discussions, each comprising six participants, were conducted to generate complementary qualitative insights.

**Table 1**  
*Target Population and Sample Size by Institutional Unit*

| Category                          | Target population | Sample    | Sampling fraction (%) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Governor's Office                 | 5                 | 3         | 60.00                 |
| County Secretary's Office         | 4                 | 4         | 100.00                |
| County departments                | 50                | 38        | 76.00                 |
| County Attorney's Office          | 4                 | 4         | 100.00                |
| City Board                        | 4                 | 4         | 100.00                |
| Municipal boards                  | 12                | 9         | 75.00                 |
| Water and sanitation companies    | 15                | 12        | 80.00                 |
| Records management: main registry | 10                | 9         | 90.00                 |
| <b>County Executive total</b>     | <b>104</b>        | <b>83</b> | <b>79.81</b>          |
| Members of County Assembly        | 30                | 25        | 83.33                 |

| Category                      | Target population | Sample     | Sampling fraction (%) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| County Assembly departments   | 10                | 10         | 100.00                |
| Records management registry   | 3                 | 3          | 100.00                |
| Speaker's Office              | 2                 | 2          | 100.00                |
| County Assembly Service Board | 3                 | 3          | 100.00                |
| <b>County Assembly total</b>  | <b>48</b>         | <b>43</b>  | <b>89.58</b>          |
| <b>Overall total</b>          | <b>152</b>        | <b>126</b> | <b>82.89</b>          |

Note. Source: Researcher.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaire comprised sections on respondents' demographic characteristics, records management practices, and governance efficiency indicators. Records management practices comprised three dimensions, namely records creation and classification, storage and retrieval systems, and records disposal procedures (five items each), whereas governance efficiency (five items) was assessed in terms of accountability, transparency, access to information, decision-making efficiency, and service delivery. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The instruments were pilot-tested with participants from similar institutions outside the final sample (approximately 10% of the sample size was used as a guideline), and these participants were excluded from the main study. Face, content, and construct validity were established through review of the instruments by supervisors and by specialists in records management and research methods, and through alignment of items with the study constructs and conceptual framework.

Data collection followed a defined sequence. After obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher contacted county authorities to facilitate access to respondents, briefed participants on the study objectives and their role, and secured informed consent before administering questionnaires or conducting interviews. Questionnaires were distributed online or physically and were then checked, coded, and entered in Excel, where missing values, errors, and duplicates were removed before the data were imported into SPSS. Preliminary quantitative results were examined to identify areas requiring deeper explanation,

and these informed the qualitative phase with purposively selected informants. To strengthen the quality of the qualitative data, a common interview guide was used, interviews were recorded and transcribed systematically, analytical decisions were documented, and accounts were compared across participants.

A mean score was computed for each records management dimension (records creation and classification, storage and retrieval, and disposal) and for governance efficiency. The three-dimension scores served as the independent variables, and the governance efficiency score served as the dependent variable, in the inferential analysis.

Quantitative data were checked, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and the main study variables. The reliability of the questionnaire scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with  $\alpha \geq .70$  considered acceptable for internal consistency. Pearson's correlation was used to examine the direction and strength of relationships, and multiple linear regression was used to determine the combined and unique contributions of the three records management dimensions to governance efficiency, using the model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$ , where  $Y$  is governance efficiency and  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$  are records creation and classification, storage and retrieval, and disposal practices, respectively. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, multicollinearity using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics, and independence of errors using the Durbin–Watson statistic. Model fit was evaluated using  $R^2$  and analysis of variance (ANOVA), with statistical significance set at  $p < .05$ .

Qualitative data obtained from the key informant interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase framework: transcripts were read repeatedly, coded, grouped into themes, refined, and interpreted against the study objectives and the quantitative findings. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings during interpretation enhanced the credibility of the study and provided a richer understanding of how records management practices relate to governance efficiency.

Ethical approval and an introductory letter for this study were obtained from Kenyatta University. Research authorization was subsequently granted by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI; License No. NACOSTI/P/25/415433, issued 27 January 2025) and by the County Government of Nakuru before data collection commenced. All participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without adverse consequences. The confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of all participants were safeguarded: responses were

coded rather than named, interview data were anonymized, and the data collected were securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this study.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

Of the 126 questionnaires administered, 120 were returned in usable form, giving a response rate of 95.2%; the remaining six (4.8%) were either not returned or unusable, leaving 120 valid cases for analysis. All four scales showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .842 to .892 (Table 2). Of the respondents, 64.2% were male and 35.8% were female, and 40.0% were aged 35–44 years (Table 3). Most respondents (87.5%) held at least a diploma, and 47.5% had formal training in records and information management, 17.5% had attended short courses, and 35.0% had no formal training. Respondents were drawn from different units, the records or registry units contributing the largest share (23.3%). The quantitative findings are integrated with evidence from key informant interviews and focus group discussions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between records management practices and governance efficiency within the County Government of Nakuru.

**Table 2**  
*Reliability Analysis of Study Constructs*

| Construct                           | Number of items | Cronbach's $\alpha$ | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Records creation and classification | 5               | .842                | Good           |
| Records storage and retrieval       | 5               | .866                | Good           |
| Records disposal practices          | 5               | .877                | Good           |
| Efficiency of devolved governance   | 5               | .892                | Very good      |

Note.  $\alpha \geq .70$  indicates acceptable internal consistency.

**Table 3**  
*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 120)*

| Characteristic           | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <i>Gender</i>            |           |                |
| Male                     | 77        | 64.2           |
| Female                   | 43        | 35.8           |
| <i>Age group</i>         |           |                |
| 25–34 years              | 31        | 25.8           |
| 35–44 years              | 48        | 40.0           |
| 45–54 years              | 30        | 25.0           |
| Other age category       | 11        | 9.2            |
| <i>Highest education</i> |           |                |

| Characteristic                                        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Below diploma                                         | 15        | 12.5           |
| Diploma                                               | 59        | 49.2           |
| Bachelor's degree                                     | 46        | 38.3           |
| <i>Training in records and information management</i> |           |                |
| Formal training                                       | 57        | 47.5           |
| Short-course training                                 | 21        | 17.5           |
| No formal training                                    | 42        | 35.0           |

Note. Source: Field data.

Respondents evaluated records management practices in relation to records creation and classification, storage and retrieval systems, and disposal procedures. As shown in Table 4, records creation and classification recorded the highest mean ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), followed by disposal practices ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) and storage and retrieval ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), indicating a moderate level of implementation across all three dimensions. Within records creation and classification, the highest-rated item was the classification of records in a manner that facilitates retrieval ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), while the lowest was the consistent application of standardized procedures ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ). Adequacy of storage facilities was rated lowest of all indicators ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD$

$= 0.97$ ), and the larger standard deviation for disposal practices suggests greater variation in retention and disposal processes across departments. Overall, although formal records management procedures had been established across county departments, inconsistent application and deficiencies in storage infrastructure limited their effectiveness. These findings align with previous studies conducted in Kenyan public institutions, which have shown that inadequate infrastructure and implementation gaps continue to constrain effective records management (Musyoka et al., 2023), and they are consistent with Institutional Theory's distinction between formal procedures and actual practice.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 120)*

| Variable                               | M    | SD   | 1       | 2       | 3       |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Records creation and classification | 3.44 | 0.72 | —       |         |         |
| 2. Records storage and retrieval       | 3.36 | 0.74 | .466*** | —       |         |
| 3. Records disposal practices          | 3.39 | 0.80 | .395*** | .356*** | —       |
| 4. Efficiency of devolved governance   | 3.53 | 0.79 | .622*** | .518*** | .339*** |

Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Items were rated on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

The close clustering of the three-dimension means (3.36 to 3.44) indicates that none of the dimensions performed exceptionally well: a somewhat established records system exists in the county, but with shortcomings in standardization, storage, and consistency. The gap between the highest-rated item (classification that facilitates retrieval,  $M = 3.50$ ) and the lowest-rated item (consistent application of standardized procedures,  $M = 3.29$ ) suggests that the existence of classification practices did not necessarily mean that standardized procedures were applied consistently across institutional units. The moderate disposal score should likewise not be read as evidence that disposal is unimportant:

disposal must follow approved retention schedules and proper authorization, since improper disposal can lead to the loss of crucial evidence. The training profile points in the same direction. Although nearly half of respondents (47.5%) had formal training in records and information management, more than a third (35.0%) had none, which suggests capacity constraints and a continuing need for professional development.

Qualitative evidence reinforced these findings. Participants reported inadequate storage space and infrastructure and delays in accessing records, which affected administrative and reporting functions, and they emphasized the

need for electronic records management systems to improve security, retrieval speed, and controlled information sharing. Participants also linked effective practice to staff capacity, which is consistent with the finding that 35.0% of respondents had no formal training in records management. These delays adversely affected the timely execution of official duties and reduced administrative efficiency. This observation corroborates the findings of Tole (2023) and Tekle (2024), who reported that weak records management systems and inadequate technological infrastructure undermine institutional performance and public service delivery.

Governance efficiency was assessed using indicators of accountability, transparency, access to information, decision-making efficiency, and service delivery, and its aggregated score served as the study's dependent variable. Respondents rated governance efficiency positively ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), with the strongest ratings for transparency ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and service delivery ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ). Governance efficiency was positively and significantly correlated with records creation and classification ( $r = .622$ ,  $p < .001$ ), storage and retrieval ( $r = .518$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and disposal practices ( $r = .339$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Table 4). The correlations among the three predictors (.356 to .466) show that they are related components of records management without measuring the same construct. Respondents generally agreed that effective records management enhances accountability and transparency while

facilitating timely decision-making and improving public service delivery. This finding is consistent with the work of Franks (2025) and Smallwood (2020), who emphasize the strategic contribution of records management to evidence-based governance and institutional effectiveness. These are associations and do not by themselves establish causation.

Evidence from the key informant interviews further indicated that timely access to reliable records enabled county officials to respond more efficiently to information requests, support informed decision-making, and strengthen institutional accountability. These qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings by illustrating the practical value of effective records management in day-to-day governance. Similarly, Karanja et al. (2025). links effective records management to improved service delivery in Nairobi City County Government.

### ***Diagnostic Tests and Regression Analysis***

Before conducting the multiple linear regression analysis, the normality of the study variables was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that all study variables recorded significance values greater than .05. Consequently, the null hypothesis of normality was not rejected, indicating that the variables were approximately normally distributed and that the normality assumption for parametric analysis was satisfied. Multicollinearity was not a concern, as tolerance values ranged from .723 to .806 and VIF values from 1.240 to 1.383.

**Table 5**  
*Shapiro–Wilk Tests of Normality (N = 120)*

| Variable                            | Statistic | df  | p    | Interpretation       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----|------|----------------------|
| Records creation and classification | 0.973     | 120 | .087 | Normally distributed |
| Records storage and retrieval       | 0.981     | 120 | .153 | Normally distributed |
| Records disposal practices          | 0.977     | 120 | .108 | Normally distributed |
| Governance efficiency               | 0.985     | 120 | .201 | Normally distributed |

*Note.* Variables with  $p > .05$  were considered approximately normally distributed.

Following confirmation of these assumptions, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of records creation and classification, records storage and

retrieval, and records disposal procedures on governance efficiency. The regression model summary is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Model Summary (N = 120)*

| Model | R    | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | SE of the estimate | Durbin–Watson |
|-------|------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1     | .675 | .456           | .442                    | 0.592              | 2.044         |

*Note.* Dependent variable: efficiency of devolved governance. Predictors: records creation and classification, storage and retrieval, and disposal practices.

The regression model demonstrated a moderately strong positive relationship between records management practices and governance efficiency ( $R = .675$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = .456$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = .442$ ) indicates that approximately 45.6% of the variation in governance efficiency was explained by records creation and classification, storage and retrieval, and disposal procedures. The remaining variation is likely attributable to other factors such as leadership, organizational culture, resources, staff capacity, politics, and technology, so records management should not be presented as the sole driver of governance

efficiency. The Durbin–Watson statistic (2.044) confirmed the independence of errors. These findings are consistent with Franks (2025), who emphasizes the strategic contribution of records management to institutional effectiveness and evidence-based governance.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results presented in Table 7 indicate that the overall regression model was statistically significant,  $F(3, 116) = 32.41, p < .001$ . This result confirms that the three dimensions of records management collectively exert a statistically significant influence on governance efficiency.

**Table 7**

*Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results (N = 120)*

| Source     | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | F      | p      |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|
| Regression | 34.119         | 3   | 11.373      | 32.408 | < .001 |
| Residual   | 40.708         | 116 | 0.351       |        |        |
| Total      | 74.827         | 119 |             |        |        |

*Note.* Dependent variable: efficiency of devolved governance.

The findings support previous studies highlighting the importance of effective records management in strengthening organizational performance, accountability, and governance effectiveness (Smallwood, 2020).

The regression coefficients presented in Table 8 indicate that records creation and classification and records storage and retrieval exerted positive and statistically significant effects on governance efficiency, whereas records disposal procedures did not. Records creation and classification emerged as the strongest predictor

( $\beta = .471, p < .001$ ), followed by records storage and retrieval ( $\beta = .279, p = .001$ ). Records disposal procedures had a positive but statistically non-significant coefficient ( $\beta = .053, p = .487$ ). This suggests that the quality and structure of information established at the creation and classification stage, together with timely access to reliable records, are particularly important for informed decision-making, administrative efficiency, and public service delivery, consistent with the Records Continuum Model's emphasis on managing records from the point of creation.

**Table 8**

*Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients (N = 120)*

| Predictor                           | B     | SE    | $\beta$ | t     | p      |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|--------|
| Constant                            | 0.554 | 0.322 | —       | 1.720 | .088   |
| Records creation and classification | 0.519 | 0.089 | .471    | 5.850 | < .001 |
| Records storage and retrieval       | 0.301 | 0.085 | .279    | 3.528 | .001   |
| Records disposal practices          | 0.053 | 0.076 | .053    | 0.697 | .487   |

*Note.* Dependent variable: efficiency of devolved governance.  $B$  = unstandardized coefficient;  $SE$  = standard error;  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient.

The estimated regression equation was:

$$GE = 0.554 + 0.519(RCC) + 0.301(RSR) + 0.053(RDP) + \varepsilon$$

where *GE* denotes governance efficiency, *RCC* represents records creation and classification, *RSR* refers to records storage and retrieval, *RDP* denotes records disposal procedures, and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term.

Overall, the regression results indicate that better records creation and classification and storage and retrieval practices are associated with higher levels of governance efficiency within the County Government of Nakuru. Although disposal practices correlated positively with governance efficiency at the bivariate level ( $r = .339$ ), their unique contribution lost statistical significance once the other two dimensions were controlled. This does not mean that disposal is unimportant; its contribution may lie more in compliance, risk mitigation, knowledge preservation, and accountability than in day-to-day administrative efficiency. The prominence of records creation and classification, and of storage and retrieval, underscores the importance of accurate documentation and timely access to information for effective administration and evidence-based decision-making. These findings are consistent with Franks (2025) and Smallwood (2020), who identify records management as a strategic resource for promoting accountability, transparency, and institutional effectiveness.

The predictor pattern is consistent with the study's theoretical framing. That records creation and classification carried the largest weight fits the Records Continuum Model, because it is at creation and classification that the quality and structure of information are established for all later storage, retrieval, and use. Storage and retrieval also made a significant unique contribution, which reflects public organizations' need for timely access to credible information; however, the relatively low rating for the adequacy of storage facilities ( $M = 3.22$ ) suggests that infrastructural weaknesses may limit the benefits that efficient retrieval practices could otherwise deliver.

Finally, the finding that the weakest item concerned consistent application of standardized procedures, together with participants' emphasis on inconsistent policy enforcement, is what Institutional Theory would predict: formal procedures exist, but governance benefits depend on how far they are implemented in daily practice. The regression model explained 45.6% of the variance in governance efficiency, which shows that records management plays a substantial role in shaping efficiency but also that other organizational and governance factors contribute.

The qualitative findings further reinforced the quantitative results. Participants reported that inconsistent application of records management policies and procedures, delays in information retrieval, inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, and limited staff capacity contributed to operational inefficiencies, and that the problem lay less in the absence of procedures than in their inconsistent application. This matches the quantitative finding that consistent application of standardized procedures was among the lowest-rated items. Similar observations have been reported by Musyoka et al. (2023) and Tole (2023), who linked weak records management systems to diminished organizational performance and lower-quality public service delivery.

The explanatory sequential design allowed the qualitative phase to clarify the statistical patterns. Accounts of delayed retrieval, continued reliance on manual systems, and inadequate infrastructure help explain why storage and retrieval was rated lowest among the dimensions yet remained a significant predictor of governance efficiency. Accounts of inconsistent policy enforcement help explain why the presence of classification systems did not translate into uniformly high scores. Participants also argued that training in electronic records management and information security, and a shift to electronic systems that improve security and controlled information sharing, were the main routes to stronger

practice, which links the capacity and digitization themes directly to the weakest areas identified in the survey.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings highlight the central role of effective records management in strengthening devolved governance. The evidence suggests that sustained investment in modern storage and retrieval systems, digital technologies, and institutional capacity may enhance accountability, improve access to information, and support more responsive public service delivery within county governments.

Several limitations should be noted when interpreting these findings. First, governance efficiency and records management practices were assessed largely through respondents' perceptions, which may carry bias; this was mitigated by using structured instruments and by combining qualitative with quantitative evidence. Second, the study was confined to one county, so its findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized to all Kenyan counties, which differ in institutional set-up and resources. Third, the cross-sectional design limits inference about change over time or causality, so the statistical relationships are treated as associations only. Finally, the study was delimited to three dimensions of records management; other determinants of governance efficiency such as leadership, finance, organizational culture, and politics were not modelled, which is consistent with the 54.4% of variance left unexplained.

## **4.0 Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between records management practices and the efficiency of devolved governance within the County Government of Nakuru. Records management practices were found to be implemented at a moderate level, with records creation and classification rated highest and storage and retrieval lowest, and storage facilities emerging as the weakest indicator. The findings provide empirical evidence that records management is positively associated with governance efficiency, with the three

dimensions together explaining 45.6% of its variation. The regression analysis further demonstrated that records creation and classification and records storage and retrieval exerted positive and statistically significant effects on governance efficiency, with records creation and classification emerging as the strongest predictor, whereas records disposal procedures did not make a significant unique contribution.

Despite the existence of formal records management procedures, the study identified several institutional constraints that continue to limit their effectiveness. These include inadequate storage infrastructure, limited digitization, inconsistent application of standardized procedures and weak policy implementation, and gaps in staff training and capacity. Collectively, these challenges reduce administrative efficiency and constrain the ability of county governments to fully leverage records as strategic resources for effective governance.

The study concludes that effective records management extends beyond routine administrative functions and constitutes a strategic governance resource that supports institutional performance and responsive public administration. Strengthening records management systems through technological modernization, enhanced institutional capacity, consistent policy implementation, and adequate resource allocation is likely to improve governance outcomes and enhance public service delivery within Kenya's devolved system of government.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

The findings of this study provide several practical recommendations for strengthening records management and enhancing the efficiency of devolved governance within county governments.

County governments should prioritize the implementation and expansion of electronic records management systems (ERMS) to improve the creation, classification, storage, retrieval, preservation, and disposal of records

throughout their lifecycle. Expanding digital records management infrastructure will reduce reliance on manual record-keeping systems, improve access to information, and facilitate timely, evidence-based decision-making. Digital transformation should be pursued as an organizational reform supported by access controls, security procedures, backup mechanisms, and staff training, and not merely as a technological intervention.

Continuous professional development should be institutionalized for personnel responsible for records management, particularly given that more than a third of respondents (35.0%) had no formal training. Regular training on records management standards, electronic records management systems, information security, and emerging professional practices will strengthen technical capacity and promote the consistent implementation of records management procedures across county departments.

County administrations should strengthen the implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of records management policies by establishing effective compliance and oversight mechanisms, including regular compliance assessments across departments. Stronger institutional governance will enhance accountability, promote policy compliance, and ensure that records management practices, including retention and disposal in line with approved schedules, consistently support organizational effectiveness and service delivery.

Adequate resources should be allocated to modernize storage and retrieval infrastructure, expand digital technologies, and support continuous staff development, since inadequate storage facilities were among the weakest aspects of current practice. Sustained investment in these areas is essential for maintaining reliable records management systems, improving operational efficiency, and strengthening institutional performance.

Particular attention should be given to standardizing records creation and classification, which emerged as the strongest predictor of governance efficiency, and to strengthening records storage and retrieval systems, which was also a significant predictor. Consistent classification structures and improved accessibility, reliability, and timely retrieval of records will enhance administrative responsiveness, support informed decision-making, strengthen accountability, and improve the quality of public service delivery.

Retention and disposal controls should also be strengthened. Although disposal practices did not make a significant unique contribution to governance efficiency in this study, uncontrolled disposal risks both the unnecessary accumulation of records and the loss of essential evidence. County governments should therefore ensure that retention and disposition follow approved schedules and methods, and that appraisal distinguishes records that may be destroyed from those requiring permanent preservation.

Finally, records management should be integrated into county governance and performance frameworks. Departments should recognize records management as a strategic administrative function that is connected to decision-making and efficiency, and not merely a registry task, and should be assessed on it accordingly.

Implementing these recommendations will strengthen records management systems and contribute to more transparent, accountable, and efficient devolved governance. More broadly, the findings provide practical evidence to inform policy development, institutional reforms, and strategic investments aimed at improving public administration across county governments in Kenya. Future studies could compare other counties and use longitudinal designs to test whether these relationships hold over time and under different governance conditions.

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