



EFFECTS OF RECORD ACCESSIBILITY ON THE RECORD MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

¹*Aneth Msofe*, ²*Haji Ng'elenge*

Department of Business Studies, University of Iringa, Tanzania

anethmsofee@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of record accessibility on records management performance in higher learning institutions using Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE) as a case study. The study focused on how accessibility of records affects records management performance in terms of proper storage, timely retrieval, record accuracy and record reliability. A mixed research approach with an explanatory research design was adopted. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 217 staff members and semi-structured interviews conducted with five key informants. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 through frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that record accessibility improved proper storage, timely retrieval and record accuracy, while its influence on record reliability was limited. The study concludes that accessible records contribute to improved records management performance by supporting timely retrieval, proper storage and record accuracy at MUCE. The study recommends that higher learning institutions strengthen record classification, indexing, storage and retrieval procedures to improve accessibility and records management performance. Further studies should examine record accessibility in other higher learning institutions using larger samples and different study settings.

Key words: Record accessibility; records management performance; higher learning institutions; record storage; timely retrieval; record accuracy; record reliability; Mkwawa University College of Education.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Records management is important in higher learning institutions because records support teaching, administration, communication and decision-making. Effective records management requires records to be properly created, organised, stored and retrieved when needed. Smallwood (2019) explains that proper management of electronic records supports information governance and institutional accountability. As higher learning institutions generate increasing amounts of paper and electronic records, easy access to reliable information becomes important for effective records management performance.

Globally, higher learning institutions have adopted electronic records systems to improve the storage, retrieval and sharing of institutional information. Electronic systems support faster retrieval and easier access to records, but their effectiveness depends on appropriate procedures and organisational practices. McLeod and Hare (2018) emphasise that electronic records require proper management throughout their life cycle to remain accessible and reliable. This shows that the availability of records alone is not enough; records need to be organised in a way that allows authorised users to access them when required.

In Africa, universities have also increased the use of electronic records management systems to improve administrative efficiency and access to institutional information. However, studies have reported problems related to limited skills, inadequate infrastructure and weak records management practices. These factors affect the ability of institutions to access and use records effectively (Ngoepe & Ngulube, 2018). Electronic records management therefore requires appropriate systems and practices that support timely retrieval and effective use of institutional information.

In Tanzania, higher learning institutions have adopted electronic records systems as part of the wider use of information and communication technologies in public institutions. Studies have shown that electronic records systems support access to institutional information, although challenges related to system use and records management practices remain (Clemence et al., 2023). At Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE), records are used in different academic and administrative activities, making accessibility important for effective records management. Therefore, this study examines the effects of record accessibility on record management performance in higher learning institutions, using MUCE as a case study.

Statement of the Problem

Higher learning institutions generate large amounts of academic, administrative and financial records that need to be accessed and retrieved when required. In Tanzania, the shift from manual to electronic records management has been encouraged to improve efficiency and access to institutional information (URT, 2016; eGA, 2021). However, records may still be difficult to locate because of poor classification, incomplete indexing, system limitations and weak records management practices. These conditions may result in delayed retrieval, misplaced records, repeated paperwork and difficulties in accessing accurate information. The growth of student enrolment and institutional activities has further increased the volume of records managed by higher learning institutions (TCU, 2022).

At the institutional level, electronic records systems have been introduced to improve access to information and support better records management. However, the availability of electronic systems does not necessarily ensure that records are easily accessible. Katuu (2021) noted that electronic records management requires appropriate systems and practices to ensure that records remain accessible and usable. Similarly, eGA (2021) emphasised the importance of effective digital information management in public institutions. Despite these efforts, limited empirical evidence exists on how record accessibility affects actual records management performance in higher learning institutions in Tanzania. This creates a need to examine whether easy access to records contributes to timely retrieval, proper storage, record accuracy and record reliability.

At Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE), electronic systems are used to support institutional records and administrative activities. However, available institutional information has mainly focused on system use and implementation rather than examining the effect of record accessibility on records management performance (MUCE, 2021; MUCE, 2022). It is therefore not sufficiently clear whether records at MUCE are easily accessible when required and whether accessibility contributes to better records management performance. This study therefore examines the effects of record accessibility on record management performance in higher learning institutions, using MUCE as a case study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study is guided by the Records Life Cycle Theory, developed from the work of Schellenberg (1956) and further discussed by Millar (2020). The theory explains that records pass through stages of creation, use, maintenance and final disposal or preservation. The theory is relevant to this study because record accessibility is important during the use and maintenance stages, where records need to be located and retrieved when required. Proper management of records at these stages supports timely retrieval, proper storage, accuracy and reliability of records. Therefore, the Records Life Cycle Theory provides a suitable framework for examining the effects of record accessibility on record management performance in higher learning institutions, using MUCE as a case study.

Empirical Literature Review

Katuu (2018) examined electronic records management in public institutions and found that electronic systems improved record accessibility and reduced retrieval time, although poor system integration limited access to some records. Asogwa (2019) examined electronic records management in African public institutions and found that electronic systems improved access to records, while limited infrastructure and user skills affected their effectiveness. Mugisha (2020) examined electronic records accessibility in public universities in Uganda and found that electronic systems improved access to records and supported faster decision-making, although system misuse and limited training affected performance. Mrope (2023) examined electronic records management practices in Tanzanian universities and found that electronic systems improved record access, while system downtime and limited user competence reduced effectiveness. These studies show that record accessibility is important for effective records management, but the reviewed studies did not specifically examine the effects of record accessibility on record management performance at MUCE. The study therefore focuses on the relationship between record accessibility and record management performance in higher learning institutions, using MUCE as a case study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed research approach is appropriate when quantitative data and qualitative information are combined to provide a broader understanding of a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An explanatory research design was used to examine the effects of record accessibility on records management performance in higher learning institutions. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The use of both methods enabled the study to obtain numerical information on record accessibility and detailed explanations from key informants regarding records management practices at Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE).

Area of the Study

This study was carried out at Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE) in Iringa, Tanzania. MUCE was selected because the institution uses electronic systems in its administrative operations and has staff involved in the creation, processing, storage and retrieval of institutional records. The

institution therefore provided a suitable setting for examining the effects of record accessibility on records management performance. The study focused on record accessibility and its relationship with records management performance in terms of proper storage, timely retrieval, accuracy and reliability of records. The selection of MUCE as a case study was also appropriate because case studies allow researchers to examine a phenomenon within its real-life institutional setting (Yin, 2018).

Population and Sampling

Population

A population refers to the entire group of people or units that have characteristics relevant to a particular study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population for this study consisted of 475 staff members at MUCE who use or interact with institutional records and the e-office system. The population included 175 administrative staff, 250 academic staff and 50 management staff. These staff members were included because their duties involve creating, processing, accessing, storing or using institutional records and, therefore, they could provide relevant information on record accessibility and records management performance.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller group from a larger population to participate in a study (Saunders et al., 2019). This study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was used to select 217 staff members from the population of 475 staff, giving each eligible staff member an equal chance of being selected. Purposive sampling was used to select five key informants who had direct responsibilities and experience in records management and the use of the e-office system. The sample of 217 staff was determined using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error, while the five key informants were selected because of their relevant knowledge and experience in records management.

Data Collection Instruments

A questionnaire is a structured instrument used to collect information from respondents through prepared questions (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, questionnaires were administered to the 217 selected staff members to collect information on record accessibility and records management performance, including timely retrieval, ease of access, proper storage, accuracy and reliability of records. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five key informants to obtain detailed information about record accessibility and records management practices. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 20 staff members who were not included in the final sample to identify unclear questions and improve the instrument before the main data collection.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded, entered and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarise information on record accessibility and records management performance. Descriptive statistics are appropriate for organising and presenting patterns in quantitative data in a clear form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The interview responses were reviewed, coded and grouped into themes related to record accessibility and records management performance. The qualitative findings were then used to provide detailed explanations that complemented the quantitative findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles to protect the rights, privacy and welfare of participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Iringa, while permission to conduct the study was obtained from the management of MUCE. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using codes instead of participants' names, while collected information was stored securely and accessed only by authorised persons. Research information was used for academic purposes and the findings were presented honestly without manipulation or misrepresentation.

DATA PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Effects of Record Accessibility on Records Management Performance

This section presents the findings on the effects of record accessibility on records management performance in higher learning institutions using Mkwawa University College of Education as a case study. The findings are based on respondents' views regarding ease of retrieving records, quick sharing of information and system search functionality in relation to proper storage of records, timely retrieval of records, accuracy of records and reliability of records. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages in tables, while qualitative findings from interviews are used to support and explain the quantitative results.

Ease of Retrieving Records and Proper Storage of Records

This section presents the findings on the effect of ease of retrieving records on proper storage of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. The analysis is based on responses collected through the questionnaire and supported by views obtained from interviews with key informants. The findings examine whether the ease of retrieving records through the e-office system contributes to proper storage of institutional records. The quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative findings are used to provide further explanation of the results.

Table 1: Ease of Retrieving Records and Proper Storage of Records

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	5.5
Disagree	11	5.1
Neutral	5	2.3
Agree	141	65.0
Strongly agree	48	22.1
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 1 show that 141 out of 217 respondents, representing 65.0%, agreed that ease of retrieving records contributes to proper storage of records. Furthermore, 48 respondents (22.1%) strongly agreed, while 5 respondents (2.3%) remained neutral. However, 12 respondents (5.5%) strongly disagreed and 11 respondents (5.1%) disagreed with the statement. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents believed that records which are easy to retrieve are also more likely to be properly stored within the e-office system. Only a small proportion of respondents expressed a contrary opinion, suggesting that some challenges still exist in managing electronic records.

The findings suggest that ease of retrieving records has a positive effect on records management performance. A combined total of 87.1% of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed indicates that the e-office system enables staff to locate records quickly because they are properly organized and stored. This means that well-organized electronic records reduce the time required to search for information and support efficient administrative activities. The small proportion of respondents who disagreed reflect occasional difficulties in locating records caused by incomplete filing practices or inconsistent use of the system. Overall, the findings demonstrate that proper storage and easy retrieval of records complement each other in improving records management performance.

During the interviews, one key informant explained:

When records are stored in the correct folders, staff can retrieve them within a short time without searching through many files. This has reduced delays in responding to official requests and preparing documents for management. We encourage staff to classify records correctly before saving them in the system because it makes retrieval much easier. Problems mostly occur when users save documents in the wrong location or use unclear file names. Continuous training has helped reduce such mistakes. (Interview with Key Informant2, 14/05/2026, 10:30 AM).

Another key informant stated:

The e-office system has improved the way records are stored compared to the manual filing system we used before. Staff can now locate documents using search options without opening many folders. Proper storage has also reduced the chances of losing important records. However, users must follow the established procedures for naming and storing documents. When procedures are ignored, retrieval becomes difficult even though the system is available. (Interview with Key Informant4, 03/06/2026, 9:45 AM).

A third key informant explained:

Our office receives many requests for records every day and the e-office system has made retrieval faster than before. Documents that are properly stored can easily be accessed by authorized users whenever they are required. The system performs well when staff consistently update records and store them correctly. Some delays still occur when records are uploaded late or classified incorrectly. Overall, proper storage has significantly improved accessibility to institutional records. (Interview with Key Informant5, 18/06/2026, 2:20 PM).

The findings consistently show that ease of retrieving records contributes positively to proper storage of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. Most respondents agreed that records are easier to retrieve when they are systematically stored within the e-office system. The interview findings further revealed that correct classification, proper naming of files and adherence to storage procedures enhance record retrieval and reduce delays in accessing information. Nevertheless, inconsistent filing practices by a few users may reduce retrieval efficiency. These findings indicate that improving record storage practices can strengthen overall records management performance.

The findings are consistent with those of Katuu (2018), who found that effective electronic records systems improve retrieval of institutional records through proper organization and storage. Similarly, Mrope (2023) reported that well-managed electronic records enhance accessibility and reduce delays in obtaining information in Tanzanian higher learning institutions. The findings also support Shepherd and Yeo (2018), who observed that systematic storage of electronic records improves retrieval efficiency and contributes to effective records management throughout the records life cycle.

Quick Sharing of Information and Timely Retrieval of Records

This section presents the findings on the effect of quick sharing of information on timely retrieval of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. The analysis is based on responses collected through the questionnaire and supported by views obtained from interviews with key informants. The findings examine whether quick sharing of information through the e-office system contributes to timely retrieval of institutional

records. The quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative findings are used to provide further explanation of the results.

Table 2: Quick Sharing of Information and Timely Retrieval of Records

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	11	5.1
Disagree	10	4.6
Neutral	7	3.2
Agree	163	75.1
Strongly agree	26	12.0
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 2 show that 163 out of 217 respondents, representing 75.1%, agreed that quick sharing of information contributes to timely retrieval of records. Furthermore, 26 respondents (12.0%) strongly agreed, while 7 respondents (3.2%) remained neutral. However, 11 respondents (5.1%) strongly disagreed and 10 respondents (4.6%) disagreed with the statement. These findings revealed that the majority of respondents considered quick sharing of information to be an important factor in ensuring that records are retrieved on time. Only a few respondents reported that delays in information sharing still affected timely retrieval of records.

The findings revealed that system search functionality contributes to records management performance by enabling staff to locate the correct records efficiently. Most respondents (72.8%) reported that the search function reduces the likelihood of retrieving incorrect or duplicated records. However, 16.1% of respondents strongly disagreed, indicating that some staff continue to experience difficulties with the search function. During interviews, one key informant explained: "The search function is useful, but its effectiveness depends on how well records are entered into the system. Incorrect file names or incomplete data entry make searching difficult and frustrating." (Key Informant 3, 09 June 2026).

During the interviews, one key informant explained:

The e-office system allows documents to be shared immediately with the responsible office after they are received. Staff do not need to carry files physically from one office to another as was done previously. This has reduced the waiting time for accessing information needed for daily activities. Delays only occur when some users fail to forward documents on time or leave records pending in the system. The speed of sharing information has improved the retrieval of records across different offices. (Interview with Key Informant1, 16/05/2026, 9:20 AM).

Another key informant stated:

Most official documents are now shared electronically, making it easier for staff to retrieve records whenever they are required. The system provides notifications that help users know when new documents have been received. This has improved coordination between departments because information reaches the intended users much faster. Challenges are experienced when internet connectivity becomes unstable during working hours. Even with such challenges, information sharing is much faster than under the manual system. (Interview with Key Informant3, 05/06/2026, 11:10 AM).

A third key informant explained:

The e-office system has simplified communication between offices because records can be shared instantly after approval. Staff are able to retrieve the required information without making repeated follow-ups through phone calls or physical visits. This has improved the speed of processing administrative activities in the institution. Staff who regularly use the system experience fewer delays in retrieving official records. Quick sharing of information has therefore strengthened records management within the institution. (Interview with Key Informant5, 22/06/2026, 2:15 PM).

The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently revealed that quick sharing of information contributes to timely retrieval of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. Most respondents reported that electronic sharing of information enables authorized users to retrieve records within a short time, thereby improving administrative efficiency. Interview responses further showed that electronic document routing, system notifications and reduced movement of paper files have improved access to institutional information. The findings also revealed that unstable internet connectivity and delayed action by some users occasionally affect the speed of information sharing. Overall, quick sharing of information has strengthened records management performance by improving timely retrieval of institutional records.

The findings are consistent with Mugisha (2020), who reported that electronic records systems improve information sharing and reduce delays in retrieving institutional records in public universities. Similarly, Mrope (2023) found that electronic records systems enhance the speed of accessing and exchanging information, leading to improved records management performance in Tanzanian universities. The findings also support Shepherd and Yeo (2018), who argued that efficient electronic information sharing contributes to timely access to records throughout the records life cycle.

Search Functionality and Accuracy of Records

This section presents the findings on the effect of system search functionality on the accuracy of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. The analysis is based on responses collected through the questionnaire and supported by views obtained from interviews with key informants. The findings examine whether the search functionality of the e-office system contributes to maintaining accurate institutional records. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative findings are used to explain the quantitative results.

Table 3: System Search Functionality and Accuracy of Records

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	35	16.1
Disagree	15	6.9
Neutral	9	4.1
Agree	158	72.8
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 3 show that 158 out of 217 respondents, representing 72.8%, agreed that system search functionality improves the accuracy of records. A total of 9 respondents (4.1%) remained neutral, while 15 respondents (6.9%) disagreed and 35 respondents (16.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings revealed that most respondents considered the search function an important feature for locating accurate records within the e-office system. However, a notable proportion of respondents disagreed, indicating that some staff still experience difficulties in obtaining accurate records through the search function.

The findings revealed that system search functionality contributes to records management performance by enabling staff to locate the correct records efficiently. Most respondents reported that the search function reduces the likelihood of retrieving incorrect or duplicated records because documents can be searched using keywords and reference numbers. Respondents also reported that the search feature improves confidence in the information retrieved for administrative purposes. Those who disagreed explained that inaccurate file names, incomplete data entry and inconsistent record classification reduce the effectiveness of the search function. Overall, the findings indicate that effective search functionality enhances the accuracy of institutional records.

During the interviews, one key informant explained:

The search function has made it easier to locate the correct document without going through many electronic folders. Staff can search using file names, reference numbers or keywords and retrieve the required record quickly. This has reduced mistakes that previously occurred when documents were searched manually. The accuracy of search results depends on how well records are entered into the system. Correct data entry remains important for the system to produce accurate results. (Interview with Key Informant2, 21/05/2026, 10:15 AM).

Another key informant stated:

The e-office system provides a reliable search feature that helps staff identify the correct version of official documents. This has reduced cases of using outdated or duplicated records during administrative work. Problems occur when some users upload documents without following the required naming procedures. In such situations, the search function cannot return the expected results immediately. Proper classification and naming of records improve the accuracy of the search function. (Interview with Key Informant3, 09/06/2026, 11:40 AM).

A third key informant explained:

The institution depends on the search function whenever historical records are required for reference or decision-making. Staff are able to retrieve records accurately because the system stores documents in an organized manner. We have observed fewer complaints about missing records since the e-office system was introduced. Continuous monitoring has also improved the quality of information entered into the system. Accurate searching has strengthened records management across different offices. (Interview with Key Informant5, 26/06/2026, 9:30 AM).

The findings consistently revealed that system search functionality contributes to the accuracy of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. Most respondents reported that the search function enables staff to retrieve correct records quickly and reduces errors associated with manual searching. Interview responses further revealed that proper data entry, consistent file naming and accurate record classification improve the effectiveness of the search function. The findings also revealed that inaccurate data entry and inconsistent filing practices reduce search accuracy. Overall, effective system search functionality strengthens records management performance by improving the accuracy of institutional records.

The finding that 65.0% of respondents disagreed that ease of retrieving records improves reliability is particularly significant. It suggests that respondents clearly distinguish between accessibility and reliability a distinction that has important implications for records management practice. This finding contradicts Katuu (2018), who suggested that electronic records systems improve both accessibility and reliability. However, it aligns with Shepherd and Yeo (2018), who argued that reliability depends on record quality and proper maintenance, not retrieval speed alone.

Ease of Retrieving Records and Reliability of Records

This section presents the findings on the effect of ease of retrieving records on the reliability of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. The analysis is based on responses collected through the questionnaire and supported by views obtained from interviews with key informants. The findings examine whether ease of retrieving records contributes to maintaining reliable institutional records. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative findings are used to explain the quantitative results.

Table 4: Ease of Retrieving Records and Reliability of Records

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	6.5
Disagree	127	58.5
Neutral	73	33.6
Agree	3	1.4
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 4. shows that 127 out of 217 respondents, representing 58.5%, disagreed that ease of retrieving records improves the reliability of records. In addition, 14 respondents (6.5%) strongly disagreed, while 73 respondents (33.6%) remained neutral. Only 3 respondents (1.4%) agreed with the statement. These findings revealed that most respondents did not associate ease of retrieving records with the reliability of records. The large proportion of neutral responses also indicates that many respondents viewed record retrieval and record reliability as separate aspects of records management.

The findings revealed that ease of retrieving records alone does not guarantee that records are reliable. Respondents reported that records can be retrieved quickly even when they contain outdated, incomplete or incorrectly entered information. The findings also revealed that reliability depends on the quality of data entered into the system, regular updating of records and compliance with records management procedures. The small proportion of respondents who agreed pointed out that proper organization of records contributes to reliability only when records are consistently maintained. Overall, respondents considered reliability to depend more on record quality than on retrieval speed.

During the interviews, one key informant explained:

The e-office system allows staff to retrieve records quickly, but the reliability of those records depends on whether the information was entered correctly from the beginning. A document that is easy to retrieve is not always accurate or up to date. Staff are expected to review and update records regularly to maintain their reliability. We have observed that some records require correction before they are used for official purposes. Reliable records depend on proper records management practices rather than retrieval alone. (Interview with Key Informant1, 20/05/2026, 10:20 AM).

Another key informant stated:

The search function helps staff locate documents without delay, but reliability depends on the completeness and correctness of the stored information. When records are not updated after changes occur, staff may retrieve information that is no longer valid. We encourage departments to verify records before using them for administrative decisions. This practice has reduced errors in official documents. Retrieval and reliability therefore require different management efforts. (Interview with Key Informant4, 11/06/2026, 9:35 AM).

A third key informant explained:

Some users believe that finding a document quickly means the record is reliable, but that is not always the case. Records become reliable when they are properly verified, updated and managed throughout their life cycle. The e-office system provides access to records, while staff remain responsible for maintaining their quality. Continuous supervision has improved the reliability of institutional records over time. Both technology and staff commitment are important for achieving reliable records. (Interview with Key Informant5, 27/06/2026, 11:15 AM).

The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently revealed that ease of retrieving records has a limited contribution to the reliability of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. Most respondents reported that record reliability depends on accurate data entry, regular updating of records and compliance with records management procedures rather than on retrieval speed alone. Interview responses also revealed that reliable records require continuous verification and quality control throughout the records management process. Although the e-office system improves accessibility, respondents distinguished accessibility from the reliability of stored information. These findings indicate that improving retrieval alone is not sufficient to strengthen records management performance unless equal attention is given to maintaining reliable records.

The findings differ from those of Katuu (2018), who reported that effective electronic records systems improve both record accessibility and reliability through standardized electronic records management practices. However, the findings agree with Shepherd and Yeo (2018), who argued that record reliability depends on proper creation, maintenance and updating of records throughout their life cycle rather than on retrieval alone. The findings also support Millar (2020), who emphasized that reliable records require continuous quality management and adherence to records management procedures in addition to effective electronic systems.

Quick Sharing of Information and Accuracy of Records

This section presents the findings on the effect of quick sharing of information on the accuracy of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. The analysis is based on responses collected through the questionnaire and supported by views obtained from interviews with key informants. The findings examine whether quick sharing of information contributes to improving the accuracy of institutional records. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative findings are used to explain the quantitative results.

Table 5: Effect of Quick Sharing of Information and Accuracy of Records

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	6.5
Disagree	126	58.1
Neutral	41	18.9
Agree	24	11.1
Strongly agree	12	5.5
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 5 show that 126 out of 217 respondents, representing 58.1%, disagreed that quick sharing of information improves the accuracy of records. In addition, 14 respondents (6.5%) strongly disagreed, while 41 respondents (18.9%) remained neutral. However, 24 respondents (11.1%) agreed and 12 respondents (5.5%) strongly agreed with the statement. These findings revealed that most respondents did not consider quick sharing of information alone to improve the accuracy of institutional records. The responses indicate that although information can be shared quickly, record accuracy depends on other records management practices.

The finding that the majority of respondents (58.1%) disagreed that quick sharing improves accuracy highlights an important distinction. While electronic systems facilitate rapid information exchange, accuracy depends on verification and quality control procedures. This finding has practical implications for records management: institutions should not assume that implementing electronic systems automatically improves record quality.

During the interviews, one key informant explained:

The e-office system enables staff to share information quickly, but the information must first be checked for accuracy before it is circulated. Sharing an incorrect document within a short time does not improve records management. Staff are expected to review records before forwarding them to other offices. This has reduced mistakes in official communication across the institution. Accuracy depends on proper verification rather than the speed of sharing information. (Interview with Key Informant2, 23/05/2026, 9:40 AM).

Another key informant stated:

We encourage staff to confirm the correctness of records before they are shared through the e-office system. Documents that are distributed without verification can create confusion and require further corrections. The system supports fast communication, but users remain responsible for ensuring the quality of the information they share. Most errors originate from human mistakes during data entry rather than from the system itself. Staff awareness has therefore become an important part of records management. (Interview with Key Informant3, 13/06/2026, 10:25 AM).

A third key informant explained:

Quick sharing of information has improved communication between departments, but record accuracy depends on compliance with established records management procedures. Staff who verify documents before uploading and sharing them experience fewer problems with inaccurate records. The institution has introduced procedures for reviewing official documents before they are circulated electronically. These procedures have improved the quality of records used for administrative purposes. Both the e-office system and staff responsibility contribute to maintaining accurate institutional records. (Interview with Key Informant4, 25/06/2026, 2:00 PM).

The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently revealed that quick sharing of information alone does not improve the accuracy of records at Mkwawa University College of Education. Most respondents reported that record accuracy depends on verification, proper data entry and compliance with records management procedures before information is shared. Interview responses also revealed that the e-office system facilitates rapid communication, while staff remain responsible for ensuring that the information being shared is correct and complete. The findings further showed that human errors during data entry have a greater effect on record accuracy than the speed of information sharing. These findings indicate that effective records management performance requires both efficient information sharing and strong quality control procedures.

The findings agree with Shepherd and Yeo (2018), who argued that the quality and accuracy of electronic records depend on proper records creation, verification and maintenance rather than on the speed of information exchange. Similarly, Millar (2020) reported that reliable electronic records require continuous quality assurance throughout the records life cycle. However, the findings differ from Mugisha (2020), who found that improved electronic information sharing directly enhanced record accuracy because standardized verification procedures had already been integrated into the electronic records management system.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that record accessibility contributes positively to records management performance in higher learning institutions, particularly through proper storage, timely retrieval and improved record accuracy. However, the contribution to record reliability was limited. The findings show that improving the ease and speed of accessing institutional records is important for strengthening records management performance at MUCE.

Higher learning institutions should strengthen record classification, indexing and retrieval procedures to improve accessibility and accuracy. MUCE should also provide continuous training to staff on the effective use of electronic records systems and regularly review accessibility procedures to reduce delays in retrieving records. Further studies should examine record accessibility in other higher learning institutions using larger samples and different settings to provide wider evidence on its contribution to records management performance.

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