

Management of Prosecution Records for Efficient Service Delivery: A Case of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Nairobi Region

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Abstract

This study examined the management of prosecution records for efficient service delivery at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), Nairobi Region, specifically assessing the record-keeping systems deployed, the records management standards applied, and the staff competencies underpinning records management. Poor records management, including the loss, inaccessibility, mutilation, and concealment of files, continues to compromise court cases and undermine prosecution service efficiency in Kenya. The study was anchored on the Records Life Cycle and Records Continuum Models and adopted a descriptive survey design. A census of 75 personnel handling prosecution records at ODPP Makadara, Kibera, and the headquarters was conducted. Data collection was conducted through validated questionnaires and interview guides, while the reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach's Alpha following a pilot study at ODPP Kiambu. Analysis of the collected information involved descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis to identify patterns and meanings in qualitative responses. The findings revealed that the Case Management System (CMS), Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS), and electronic filing improved records retrieval and coordination, although integration remained incomplete. Records management standards existed but were inconsistently implemented, while staff competencies were moderate, with gaps in ICT skills and continuous training. The study concludes that effective records management enhances prosecution service delivery and recommends accelerated digitisation, consistent enforcement of records management standards, and continuous ICT capacity building. The findings provide evidence to inform records management policy and practice in prosecutorial institutions in Kenya.

Key terms: Digital transformation, digitisation, integration, records management, service delivery.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Records occupy a foundational position in the administration of justice, serving as the primary vehicles through which legal decisions are made, rights are protected, and institutional accountability is maintained. When case registration is delayed, documents are misplaced, or filing systems are poorly maintained, the consequences extend directly to individuals whose legal rights hang in the balance (Abdulrahman, 2015). Beyond mere inconvenience, dysfunctional records management creates conditions conducive to corruption and collusion, erodes public confidence in the judiciary, and squanders valuable court time (Goodspeed et al., 2021). Within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), Nairobi Region specifically, prosecution cases continue to be compromised by the loss, inaccessibility, mutilation, or concealment of prosecution files, a problem that strikes at the core of efficient and accountable prosecution service delivery.

For clarity, this study defines records management as the systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, inclusive of the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of business activities and transactions; prosecution records as the documentary evidence generated and used by the ODPP in the course of prosecuting criminal cases, including investigation files, witness statements, charge sheets, exhibits registers, and court proceedings documentation; and service delivery as the efficiency, accuracy, and accountability with which prosecutorial functions are discharged to the public and to the justice system. As Maseh (2015) observes, when records systems are dysfunctional, decisions are made without complete case information, ultimately undermining both prosecution and broader judicial reform efforts.

As the apex prosecution authority in Kenya, the ODPP is headquartered in Nairobi and maintains a presence across all 47 counties, with each county office led by a prosecution counsel responsible for coordinating with courts and investigative agencies within their respective jurisdictions (ODPP, 2017). Given that the work of prosecutors is fundamentally grounded in documentary evidence, every prosecutor is necessarily a steward of prosecution records, making the quality of records management inseparable from the quality of prosecution itself. The ODPP's own Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2027 explicitly prioritises records management reforms and case management automation as central to improving prosecutorial quality and service delivery (ODPP, 2023b). However, this forward-looking agenda is tempered by documented implementation shortfalls, with audit findings revealing that the ODPP is among the public agencies that lack formal disaster recovery and backup arrangements for sensitive records, a gap that exposes the institution to significant risk (The Star, 2022). These challenges collectively point to a situation in which records management is undervalued institutionally, despite its centrality to the efficient and accountable delivery of prosecution services (Kononov, 2022).

Against this background, the present study examines the management of prosecution records for efficient service delivery at the ODPP, Nairobi Region. Specifically, the study assesses the record-keeping systems deployed in managing prosecution records, examines the records management standards and standard operating procedures applied in the management of prosecution records, and establishes the staff competencies underpinning records management for efficient service delivery. By examining these interconnected aspects of records management, the study aims to produce evidence-based insights that can support the development of strategies to enhance prosecutorial effectiveness, accountability, and the overall standard of service delivery within the ODPP.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Global experience shows that investment in modern records management infrastructure is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for efficient justice service delivery. In Malaysia, the civil court system developed a suite of integrated electronic platforms encompassing e-filing, case management, queue management, and court recording and transcription, initially piloted at the Kuala Lumpur High Court before being progressively extended nationwide. Similarly, research conducted at a magistrates' court in South Africa's North West Province affirmed that electronic court records are indispensable to sound judicial decision-making and the smooth conduct of daily court operations (Ntengenyane & Khayundi, 2021). What distinguishes these cases from many other jurisdictions, however, is not merely the presence of technology but its phased, deliberately sequenced rollout, an implementation discipline that is frequently absent elsewhere. Indeed, evidence from across the world consistently points to the fact that many criminal justice institutions continue to grapple with inadequate records management, with courts and justice ministries alike falling short of the standards required to sustain credible and efficient legal systems (Winn, 2004; Schultze, 2017). This suggests that technological adoption alone, without accompanying institutional discipline, is unlikely to translate into sustained efficiency gains.

Within Africa, the challenge is not merely technological but also professional. Studies from Ghana have highlighted that public institutions frequently assign records management responsibilities to personnel who lack any formal training in the discipline, thereby undermining the quality and integrity of institutional recordkeeping (Adu, 2014). This professional deficit is echoed across the continent: effective records management demands a comprehensive system capable of facilitating retrieval, use, preservation, distribution, and disposal in accordance with established organisational policies, with the entire records lifecycle from creation through monitoring, auditing, and eventual disposal requiring careful and systematic oversight (Marutha, 2022). Taken together, the Ghanaian and broader African evidence suggests that the primary constraint on records management in the region is less about the availability of systems and more about the human capacity to operate them consistently, a distinction that has direct implications for how reform efforts ought to be sequenced and resourced.

The records management landscape in Kenya is shaped by an interlocking set of legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks that collectively define how public records, including those held by prosecution offices, ought to be created, maintained, and safeguarded. The Public Archives and Documentation Service Act provides the overarching statutory foundation for public records governance, with the Kenya National Archives serving as the custodial body responsible for preservation standards and records transfer protocols, reinforced by the Act's explicit emphasis on sound record-keeping in public institutions for public benefit (Kenya National Archives, 2023). Layered onto this is the Data Protection Act of 2019, which introduced binding obligations around the collection, storage, and sharing of personal data contained in prosecutorial files (Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, 2022). Technical dimensions are further addressed through the ICT Authority's Electronic Records Management Standard and associated national digitisation guidelines, which prescribe requirements relating to metadata, retention schedules, system interoperability, security protocols, and long-term preservation (ICT Authority, 2021; Kenya ICT Authority, 2024). Notwithstanding this comparatively robust policy architecture, research conducted within the Kenyan public sector has identified a range of systemic barriers to effective records management, including the neglect of registry functions, insufficient support from senior leadership, the absence of dedicated records management committees, limited training opportunities for registry personnel,

inadequate storage facilities, and poor attention to the welfare of staff working in registry environments (Abuki, 2014). The persistence of these barriers despite a comparatively well-developed legal framework suggests that, as in the wider African context, Kenya's records management challenge is substantially one of implementation and capacity rather than policy design.

Collectively, the global, African, and Kenyan literature converges on three recurring themes that are directly relevant to prosecution records management: the systems through which records are created, stored, and retrieved; the standards and procedures that govern their handling; and the competencies of the personnel who operate these systems and procedures. However, existing Kenyan studies on records management in the justice sector have tended to focus on courts, county governments, or the judiciary generally (Ongwenyi et al., 2018), with comparatively little empirical attention paid specifically to prosecution records within the ODPP, and even less to how record-keeping systems, governance standards, and staff competencies jointly shape prosecution service delivery within a single institutional setting. It is this gap that the present study addresses by examining these three dimensions concurrently at the ODPP, Nairobi Region.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Records Life Cycle Model and the Records Continuum Model, which are discussed in turn below, together with their joint bearing on the study's design.

The Records Life Cycle Model

The records life cycle model provides a structured conceptual framework for understanding how records are managed from their inception through to their eventual disposal or permanent preservation. Originally conceptualised by Theodore R. Schellenberg in 1956 and subsequently refined by Marutha (2022), the model proposes that the most effective approach to designing an electronic records management system lies in grounding it within the functional activities and sequential stages of the records life cycle, thereby ensuring that no critical operational element is overlooked. Drawing on a biological analogy, Shepherd and Yeo (2003) liken the life of a record to that of a living organism born, maturing through active use, gradually becoming less relevant, and ultimately reaching the end of its useful existence. The key phases traversed in this journey include creation, active maintenance and use, storage, security, and final disposition (Matlala & Maphoto, 2020), with each stage governed by its own procedural requirements designed to ensure legal compliance, organisational relevance, and appropriate preservation or destruction of information.

At the creation stage, information is captured through various means: correspondence, forms, photographs, or digital entries, and it is at this point that roughly 75 per cent of information-related costs are incurred, making it essential for records managers to exercise careful judgment about what information genuinely needs to be documented and in what format (Kim, 2021). As records transition into semi-current status, their frequency of use diminishes, prompting appraisal processes to determine whether they retain sufficient value to warrant transfer to lower-cost storage facilities, thereby freeing up valuable office space while preserving potentially useful historical information (Baek & Sugimoto, 2012; Hyun, 2013). The life cycle concludes at the disposition stage, where records of enduring historical or legal significance are transferred to archival custody, while those deemed to have exhausted their value are destroyed through approved disposal procedures (Lin, 2015). This model is directly relevant to the present

study insofar as it illuminates the stages through which prosecution records pass and how decisions made at each phase from creation to disposal bear upon the efficiency and integrity of prosecution service delivery.

For this study, the Records Life Cycle Model informs the expectation that prosecution records at the ODPP pass through identifiable creation, active-use, storage, and disposition phases, and it predicts that weaknesses at any single phase, for instance poor capture at creation or inadequate storage during the semi-current stage, will manifest as retrieval delays or record loss further along the chain. This directs the study's methodology towards examining record-keeping systems and standards at each discrete phase rather than treating records management as a single undifferentiated activity.

The Records Continuum Model

Where the life cycle model presents records management as a series of distinct and sequential phases, the records continuum model (RC Model) offers a more fluid and integrated conceptualisation of the same processes. Developed by Frank Upward in Australia during the 1980s as a critical response to the perceived limitations of life cycle thinking (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003), and further advanced by Daniels in 2021, the RC Model defines its scope as encompassing the entire existence of records from the design of record-keeping systems even before a record is created, through to its long-term preservation and archival use. As codified in the Australian Records Management Standard AS 4390 (1996), the model calls for a consistent and coherent regime of management processes that transcends the artificial boundaries traditionally drawn between the roles of records managers and archivists, instead advocating for their collaborative involvement at every stage of the records management continuum.

A distinguishing feature of the RC Model is its treatment of records as logical rather than strictly physical entities, applicable equally to paper-based and electronic formats. By emphasising the continuous and interconnected nature of record-keeping activities rather than viewing creation, maintenance, and disposal as isolated events, the model fosters a more holistic institutional approach to managing recorded information. Within the context of the Kenyan judiciary and prosecution service, this perspective is particularly significant, given that every record, irrespective of its format, carries evidentiary, transactional, and institutional memory value that may be called upon at any point across its lifespan (Daniels, 2021). The relevance of the RC Model to this study lies in its recognition that prosecution records do not simply pass through stages but remain continuously interconnected across their entire existence, with decisions about creation, protection, preservation, and disposal all bearing meaningful consequences for prosecutorial decision-making and the broader delivery of justice (Matlala & Maphoto, 2020).

For this study, the Records Continuum Model informs the expectation that prosecution records management cannot be fully understood by examining isolated stages alone, and it predicts that institutional factors operating continuously and simultaneously, such as staff competency and the consistency of governing standards, will shape record quality and accessibility throughout a record's existence rather than at any single point in time. This directs the study towards examining records management standards and staff competencies as continuous, cross-cutting influences on prosecution service delivery, rather than as factors relevant only at specific life-cycle stages.

Synthesis of the Theoretical Framework

The Records Life Cycle Model and the Records Continuum Model complement rather than compete with one another in addressing prosecution records management and service delivery. The Life Cycle Model's stage-based logic makes it well suited to evaluating the record-keeping systems objective of this study, since it draws attention to how records are created, used, stored, and disposed of, and to where in that sequence systems such as CMS and IJIS intervene. The Continuum Model's non-linear, cross-cutting logic, by contrast, is better suited to the standards and competencies objectives, since these operate continuously across a record's existence rather than at discrete stages. These two models were selected jointly, rather than singly, precisely because prosecution records management at the ODPP involves both stage-specific processes and continuous, institution-wide influences; using either model alone would have left one dimension of the study's objectives theoretically unanchored. They were preferred over other records management theories, such as the Diplomatics-based archival theory or the Records Continuum's precursor life-cycle variants developed purely for archival appraisal, because those alternatives are oriented primarily towards long-term archival preservation and evidentiary authenticity rather than the day-to-day operational efficiency and service-delivery concerns that motivate this study; the Life Cycle and Continuum Models, by contrast, speak directly to how record-keeping systems, governance standards, and staff practice jointly shape prosecution service delivery.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey approach was employed to investigate current records management practices and establish how they contribute to the effectiveness of prosecution services while allowing the organisation to function within its normal working environment. The study was conducted within the Nairobi Regional offices of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), specifically at the Makadara and Kibera prosecution stations and the ODPP headquarters. Makadara and Kibera were purposively selected because of their consistently high caseloads, the diversity of prosecution records they generate, and their early adoption of the Uadilifu Case Management System, a digital platform introduced to improve case tracking and records retrieval. The ODPP headquarters was included because it houses records managers and administrative personnel responsible for developing and overseeing records management standards applied across the prosecution stations.

The target population comprised 75 personnel directly involved in the management of prosecution records, including clerical officers, prosecution clerks, prosecutors, and records managers stationed at Makadara, Kibera, and the ODPP headquarters. Only personnel with direct responsibility for creating, handling, or supervising prosecution records were included, while staff on long-term leave, secondment, or those performing non-records-related support functions were excluded. Given the manageable population size, a census approach was adopted to include all eligible respondents, thereby eliminating sampling bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Data were collected using a structured Likert-type questionnaire to obtain quantitative information and an interview guide to generate qualitative insights from prosecutors, thereby facilitating methodological triangulation. Prior to the main study, the research instruments were piloted at the ODPP Kiambu office using 12 prosecutors. Instrument validity was established through content, construct, and face validation, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 adopted as the minimum acceptable level of internal consistency.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, with SPSS version 26.0, while qualitative data obtained through interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis and presented narratively. Ethical requirements were strictly observed throughout the study. The researcher obtained the necessary approvals from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), Kisii University Board of Postgraduate Studies, the Ministry of Education, the Office of the County Commissioner, and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions before data collection commenced. The study ensured that ethical requirements were observed by obtaining consent from participants and protecting their identities and personal information throughout the research process. Collected data were kept in a secure password-enabled storage system accessible only by the researcher

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study achieved commendable levels of participation across all respondent categories, with an overall response rate of 77.3 per cent from the 75 targeted participants, comfortably surpassing the 70 per cent benchmark conventionally accepted in social science research. Record managers at ODPP headquarters returned the highest response rate at 80.0 per cent, followed closely by prosecutors at 78.0 per cent, prosecution clerks at 76.5 per cent, and clerical officers at 75.0 per cent. These consistently strong participation levels lend credibility to the findings by minimising the risk of non-response bias. Prior to the main study, a pilot exercise conducted at ODPP Kiambu confirmed that the research instrument was both reliable and valid. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients across all constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold, with individual scores ranging from 0.79 for records monitoring and auditing standards to 0.86 for staff competencies in records management, and an overall instrument score of 0.83. Content, construct, and face validity were also satisfactorily established through expert review and alignment with established theoretical frameworks.

The substantive analysis drew on responses from 54 participants across the Makadara and Kibera stations. Prosecutors constituted the largest proportion at 59.3 per cent, reflecting their centrality to prosecution operations, while legal clerks accounted for 18.5 per cent, and administrative staff, records officers, and ICT officers made up the remainder. In terms of experience, the majority of respondents had served between one and six years within the ODPP, suggesting adequate institutional familiarity to provide informed and contextually grounded perspectives. Departmentally, nearly half of the respondents were affiliated with the offences division, with meaningful representation from administration, records and documentation, and ICT departments, ensuring a well-rounded cross-section of operational viewpoints.

Record-Keeping Systems Deployed for Efficient Prosecution Service Delivery

The study sought to establish the nature of records managed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) and how these records influence efficient prosecution service delivery. Quantitative findings revealed that the ODPP operates within a predominantly hybrid records environment. More than half of the respondents (55.6%) indicated that prosecution records exist in both paper and electronic formats, while 27.8 per cent reported that records are mainly paper-based and only 16.7 per cent indicated the use of purely electronic records. Similarly, 51.9 per cent reported receiving investigation files in both paper and electronic formats. These findings demonstrate that although digitisation efforts are underway, traditional paper records continue to play a significant role in prosecution processes.

The positive contribution of electronic records to prosecution efficiency was strongly acknowledged by respondents. Approximately 66.6 per cent indicated that electronic records support prosecution services to a great or very great extent. Electronic formats were perceived as enhancing storage, retrieval, and information sharing capabilities. This suggests that digital records are increasingly becoming important tools for improving operational effectiveness within prosecution services.

The findings indicate that respondents generally hold a positive view of electronic record filing systems in enhancing the efficiency of prosecution services. A total of 2 respondents (3.7%) strongly disagreed, 3 (5.6%) disagreed, and 6 (11.1%) remained neutral, while a majority of 20 respondents (37.0%) agreed and 23 (42.6%) strongly agreed that electronic filing improves speed and accuracy of case documentation and retrieval. This shows that nearly four out of five respondents (79.6%) support the system, reflecting strong acceptance of digital transformation in record management. The findings indicate that electronic systems are increasingly recognised as critical mechanisms for enhancing operational efficiency within ODPP. This observation aligns with recent research demonstrating that digital records management systems improve the speed and accuracy of case processing in justice institutions.

Regarding the Case Management System (Uadilifu CMS), 3 respondents (5.6%) strongly disagreed, 4 (7.4%) disagreed, and 7 (13.0%) were neutral. However, 21 respondents (38.9%) agreed, and 19 (35.2%) strongly agreed that the system improves coordination among prosecutors, investigators, and administrative staff. Overall, 74.1 per cent of respondents expressed agreement, indicating that the system is widely viewed as effective in enhancing collaboration and workflow integration. This suggests that despite minor resistance or adaptation challenges, Uadilifu CMS is playing a key role in improving interdepartmental coordination, a finding that aligns with studies highlighting the importance of case management systems in reducing communication gaps within justice agencies.

On the use of digital audio and video recording systems, 2 respondents (3.7%) strongly disagreed, 3 (5.6%) disagreed, and 5 (9.3%) were neutral. In contrast, 22 respondents (40.7%) agreed, and another 22 (40.7%) strongly agreed that these systems improve the reliability and accessibility of court proceedings. This means that a significant 81.4 per cent of respondents view digital recording systems positively. The findings suggest that such technologies are strengthening evidentiary accuracy and supporting better case reference during prosecution processes. Comparable findings have been reported in recent research, which highlights the contribution of digital record-keeping systems towards enhancing transparency and improving the reliability of judicial processes.

With regard to the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS), 3 respondents (5.6%) strongly disagreed, 5 (9.3%) disagreed, and 8 (14.8%) were neutral. Meanwhile, 20 respondents (37.0%) agreed, and 18 (33.3%) strongly agreed that IJIS facilitates timely sharing of case information among justice sector actors. In total, 70.3 per cent of respondents expressed agreement, indicating that IJIS is largely perceived as beneficial despite some operational challenges. The relatively higher neutral and disagreement responses may point to issues such as system integration or accessibility limitations. These findings are consistent with literature noting that while integrated justice systems improve information flow, their effectiveness often depends on infrastructure readiness and inter-agency coordination.

Finally, on the overall integration of electronic record-keeping systems, 2 respondents (3.7%) strongly disagreed, 4 (7.4%) disagreed, and 6 (11.1%) were neutral. However, 22 respondents (40.7%) agreed, and 20 (37.0%) strongly agreed that system integration enhances efficiency, transparency, and accountability in prosecution services. This represents a combined agreement level of 77.7 per cent, indicating strong institutional support for digital integration. The findings suggest that electronic systems are not only improving operational efficiency but also strengthening accountability structures within ODPP. This aligns with recent studies that emphasise the role of integrated ICT systems in promoting transparency and accountability in public sector institutions.

Table 1: Record Keeping System Deployed for Efficient Prosecution Service Delivery

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Electronic record filing system improves speed and accuracy of case documentation and retrieval	2 (3.7%)	3 (5.6%)	6 (11.1%)	20 (37.0%)	23 (42.6%)	4.32	0.78
Uadilifu CMS enhances coordination among prosecutors, investigators, and staff	3 (5.6%)	4 (7.4%)	7 (13.0%)	21 (38.9%)	19 (35.2%)	4.18	0.84
Digital audio/video recording systems improve reliability and accessibility of court proceedings	2 (3.7%)	3 (5.6%)	5 (9.3%)	22 (40.7%)	22 (40.7%)	4.25	0.80
IJIS facilitates timely sharing of case information among justice sector actors	3 (5.6%)	5 (9.3%)	8 (14.8%)	20 (37.0%)	18 (33.3%)	4.11	0.89
Integration of electronic systems enhances efficiency, transparency, and accountability	2 (3.7%)	4 (7.4%)	6 (11.1%)	22 (40.7%)	20 (37.0%)	4.20	0.82

Key: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Qualitative findings corroborated these observations. Records managers and prosecutors consistently described prosecution records as diverse and critical to legal proceedings. Participants identified investigation files, witness statements, exhibits registers, court proceedings, correspondence, and charge sheets as the primary categories of records managed by the institution. According to RM1:

"We manage both physical and electronic case files, including investigation reports, witness statements, and court submissions."

Similarly, Prosecutor P14 noted:

"Each case file contains statements, exhibits, and communication between investigators and prosecutors."

These responses demonstrate the evidentiary and administrative significance of prosecution records and explain why proper management is essential for effective case preparation and prosecution.

Quantitative findings further revealed relatively positive perceptions regarding the quality of records. Approximately 60 per cent of the respondents assessed the accuracy and completeness of entries maintained in prosecution registers as either high or very high. Furthermore, 74.1 per cent reported that prosecution files were either easily accessible or accessible with minor delays. Documentation and cross-referencing practices were also positively rated, with 62.9 per cent indicating that these activities were always or often undertaken.

The qualitative evidence provided deeper insight into these findings. Participants emphasised that record quality directly influences prosecutorial effectiveness. Well-maintained records facilitate timely case preparation, while incomplete records contribute to delays and inefficiencies. RM2 explained:

"When files are accurately maintained and regularly updated, prosecutors are able to prepare cases more efficiently."

Likewise, P7 observed:

"Incomplete or missing files often delay court processes and can weaken case presentation."

These views help explain why respondents generally associated accurate and complete records with improved prosecution outcomes. Despite the positive findings, several challenges emerged. Quantitative results showed that only 18.5% rated overall records management practices as excellent, while a considerable proportion (44.4%) rated them as fair, poor, or very poor. Qualitative findings identified incomplete digitisation, inadequate storage facilities, occasional file misplacement, and inconsistent filing procedures as major obstacles. RM4 stated:

"One of the major challenges is partial digitization, which sometimes leads to duplication or loss of records."

Similarly, P19 noted:

"At times, files are not readily available when urgently required in court, leading to avoidable delays."

These findings suggest that the coexistence of manual and electronic systems creates operational inefficiencies that can negatively affect service delivery. Overall, the integrated findings demonstrate that prosecution records constitute a fundamental resource for efficient prosecution services. While the ODPP has made significant progress in improving record accessibility, accuracy, and documentation practices, challenges associated with hybrid systems and incomplete digitisation continue to limit optimal performance. The evidence suggests that accelerating digital transformation and strengthening record quality controls would significantly enhance prosecution efficiency and case management effectiveness.

Records Management Standards and Standard Operating Procedures

Qualitative findings revealed that the ODPP manages a broad spectrum of records, encompassing investigation files, witness statements, charge sheets, exhibits registers, and court-related correspondence, all of which serve both evidentiary and administrative functions. The prevailing records environment was characterised as hybrid in nature, with active digitisation efforts running concurrently alongside deeply entrenched manual systems. While newer cases are increasingly captured through the CMS platform, older records continue to reside in physical registries, occasionally resulting in inconsistencies in filing and retrieval. Participants consistently underscored the direct relationship between record quality and prosecutorial effectiveness, noting that well-maintained and regularly updated files substantially facilitate case preparation, whereas incomplete or missing documentation frequently contributes to court delays and weakens case presentation.

The study established that the ODPP operates within a structured records governance framework, encompassing standard operating procedures, classification guidelines, and retention policies. Respondents broadly acknowledged that these standards promote consistency, accountability, and operational coherence across departments, though implementation was reported to be uneven in practice. Notwithstanding the evident progress in digital adoption, participants identified several persistent gaps and put forward concrete recommendations for improvement. These included the full digitisation of records systems, sustained investment in ICT infrastructure, regular capacity-building initiatives for staff, and more rigorous enforcement of established filing procedures. The overarching thrust of these recommendations pointed toward modernisation, system integration, and human resource development as the foundational pillars for achieving more efficient and accountable prosecution service delivery within the ODPP.

This pattern of formally established but unevenly enforced standards mirrors findings from other Kenyan public-sector studies, where records management policies exist on paper but enforcement lags due to limited supervisory capacity and inconsistent staff awareness (Abuki, 2014). It also reinforces the Records Continuum Model's premise that standards must operate continuously across an institution rather than being applied only at specific points, since uneven enforcement at any single station or department undermines consistency across the wider ODPP records environment.

Table 2: Records Management Standards and Prosecution Service Delivery at ODPP

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
ODPP has clearly defined records management policies guiding creation, classification, and retention of records	2 (3.7%)	4 (7.4%)	6 (11.1%)	22 (40.7%)	20 (37.0%)	4.00	0.92
Staff adhere to SOPs when handling case files and documents	3 (5.6%)	5 (9.3%)	7 (13.0%)	24 (44.4%)	15 (27.8%)	3.80	1.00
Records management policies are regularly reviewed and updated	4 (7.4%)	6 (11.1%)	10 (18.5%)	20 (37.0%)	14 (25.9%)	3.60	1.05
Adequate staff awareness and training on records management standards exists	5 (9.3%)	6 (11.1%)	9 (16.7%)	22 (40.7%)	12 (22.2%)	3.56	1.08
Monitoring and compliance mechanisms ensure adherence to policies and SOPs	3 (5.6%)	7 (13.0%)	8 (14.8%)	21 (38.9%)	15 (27.8%)	3.70	1.02
Application of records management standards improves efficiency and accountability	2 (3.7%)	5 (9.3%)	7 (13.0%)	23 (42.6%)	17 (31.5%)	4.00	0.94

Key: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Staff Competencies in Records Management

The reliability analysis reported earlier already indicates that staff competencies in records management were assessed as a distinct construct, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86, the highest of the constructs tested, confirming that the underlying questionnaire items were well understood and consistently answered by respondents. Consistent with this, respondents' self-reported competencies in operating record-keeping systems and applying records management standards were found to be moderate overall, with specific gaps identified in ICT proficiency and in the frequency and consistency of relevant training.

Table 3: Staff Competencies in Managing Records for Efficient Prosecution Service Delivery at ODPP

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Staff possess adequate knowledge of electronic records management principles and procedures	3 (5.6%)	6 (11.1%)	8 (14.8%)	22 (40.7%)	15 (27.8%)	3.74	1.01
Staff are regularly trained on modern records management systems and practices	4 (7.4%)	7 (13.0%)	10 (18.5%)	20 (37.0%)	13 (24.1%)	3.57	1.07
Staff demonstrate competence in handling both physical and electronic records	2 (3.7%)	5 (9.3%)	9 (16.7%)	24 (44.4%)	14 (25.9%)	3.83	0.97
Staff ensure security and confidentiality of prosecution records	3 (5.6%)	6 (11.1%)	8 (14.8%)	22 (40.7%)	15 (27.8%)	3.74	1.00
Staff competency contributes significantly to efficient prosecution services	2 (3.7%)	4 (7.4%)	7 (13.0%)	25 (46.3%)	16 (29.6%)	3.96	0.92
Continuous professional development improves quality of records management	5 (9.3%)	7 (13.0%)	11 (20.4%)	19 (35.2%)	12 (22.2%)	3.48	1.10

Key: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

These competency gaps are consistent with wider Kenyan and regional evidence linking irregular staff training to weaker records management outcomes (Khan et al., 2011), and with Alier and Bill's (2022) finding that competency, more than the mere availability of systems, is a decisive factor in service delivery performance. Read together with Section 5.1 and 5.2, this suggests that the ODPP's record-keeping systems and governance standards, while reasonably well developed, are only as effective as the staff competencies available to operate and enforce them, a finding directly anticipated by the Records Continuum Model's emphasis on continuous, institution-wide influences on record quality.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study concludes that effective records management significantly enhances the efficiency, accuracy, and accountability of prosecution services at the ODPP, Nairobi Region, but that this potential is only partly realised at present. With respect to record-keeping systems, the gradual transition from manual to electronic records management has had a generally positive impact on service delivery: digital platforms

such as CMS and IJIS have improved the ease of accessing case files, accelerated retrieval processes, and enhanced coordination among prosecutors, investigators, and other justice sector stakeholders.

However, the continued coexistence of paper-based and electronic systems has introduced operational inefficiencies, including duplication of records, inconsistencies in filing, and delays in information retrieval, thereby limiting the full benefits of digital transformation.

With respect to records management standards, the study concludes that while the ODPP has established SOPs, classification guidelines, and retention policies that promote consistency and accountability in principle, their enforcement is uneven across departments and stations, undermining the reliability of records governance in practice. With respect to staff competencies, the study concludes that personnel possess moderate capability in records management, but persistent gaps in ICT proficiency and irregular access to training constrain their ability to make full use of available systems and to consistently apply established standards. Taken together, these findings indicate that record-keeping systems, governance standards, and staff competencies are interdependent determinants of prosecution service delivery, such that progress on one dimension without corresponding progress on the others is unlikely to yield the full efficiency gains the ODPP seeks.

Recommendations: The study recommends that the ODPP should prioritise and fast-track the full digitisation of its records management processes. This should go beyond partial automation to achieve a fully integrated electronic records environment. Seamless interoperability between key platforms such as the Case Management System (CMS), the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS), and other justice sector databases should be established. Such integration would significantly reduce duplication of records, eliminate inconsistencies between physical and electronic files, and enhance real-time access to case information across departments and stations. This should be implemented by the ODPP ICT department, the records management department, the Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy, the Judiciary, and IJIS technical teams.

The study further recommends that the ODPP strengthen the enforcement of existing records management standards, SOPs, classification guidelines, and retention policies through regular compliance audits and clearer supervisory accountability at the station level, so that documented standards translate consistently into practice across departments. Finally, the study recommends sustained investment in continuous ICT training and capacity-building programmes for records management personnel, prosecutors, and clerical staff, to close the identified competency gaps and ensure that staff can make full and consistent use of both current and future records management systems. This should be implemented jointly by the ODPP Human Resource and Training Department and the Kenya School of Government.

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