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**Records Management Practices for Effective Service
Delivery in Public Service: Case of Kirinyaga County
Government Registries, Kenya**

Langat Bernard Kipkurui & Dr. Kamau Maina

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Records Management Practices for Effective Service Delivery in Public Service: Case of Kirinyaga County Government Registries, Kenya

¹Langat Bernard Kipkurui & ²Dr. Kamau Maina

¹Postgraduate student, Kenyatta University

²Lecturer, Department of Computing and Information Science, Kenyatta University

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Abstract

Effective service delivery in the public sector is central to good governance, accountability, transparency, and citizen satisfaction, with registry-based services serving as key interfaces between government and citizens in devolved units such as Kirinyaga County. Despite the importance of effective registry services, Kirinyaga County Government registries continue to face significant challenges undermining service delivery, including poor records management, missing or misplaced files, lack of digitization, inadequate staffing and infrastructure, absence of properly designed policies, and delayed processing that led to service delays and citizen dissatisfaction. Thus, the study assessed the effect of records management practices on effective service delivery in Kirinyaga County Government registries. The study was anchored on service quality theory, records lifecycle theory, and the records continuum concept. The research employed a descriptive design, targeting a population of 124 respondents comprising 10 top management officers, 20 action officers, 40 registry staff, 4 records managers, and 50 clerical officers, with a sample of 103 respondents selected through proportionate sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview schedules, with a pilot study conducted in Nakuru County Registry to test instrument reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.7 threshold. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS and presented through tables and charts, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically with findings presented in narrative form. The study found that Kirinyaga County Government has established robust records management frameworks characterized by effective programs, standards, and policies, demonstrates commendable practices evidenced by regular audits and technology utilization, allocates resources adequately with sufficient staff and infrastructure, and maintains proactive approaches to addressing challenges despite rare incidents of data mismanagement. The study recommends that the county should regularly review and update records management programs, invest in modern electronic document management systems, conduct comprehensive resource assessments, strengthen data security measures through encryption protocols and access controls, and establish centralized oversight committees to coordinate efforts across departments for enhanced service delivery outcomes.

Keywords: *Records Management Practices, Service Delivery, Public Service, Kirinyaga County Government Registries, Kenya*

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1.0 Background of the Study

Records management practices refer to the systematic process of creating, receiving, maintaining, using, and disposing of both physical and electronic records throughout their life cycle. In the public sector, these practices ensure that government information is properly captured, organized, secured, and made accessible to support accountability, transparency, and effective service delivery (Sato, 2023). Records management helps guarantee that information remains authentic, reliable, and usable to facilitate decision-making, safeguard institutional memory, and preserve public trust (Limo, Kwanya, & Chepchirchir, 2019). Effective records management is essential for efficient public administration and good governance. It promotes accountability by ensuring that public officials can be held responsible for their actions through verifiable documentation. Furthermore, it enhances transparency by allowing citizens access to government information, thereby strengthening democracy and trust in public institutions (Ngoepe & Saurombe, 2020). Well-maintained records also facilitate timely decision-making, improve service delivery, and minimize operational costs through the elimination of duplication and record loss. Additionally, it ensures compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks, supports auditing, and preserves valuable historical and cultural information, making it a cornerstone of effective public service (Wamukoya & Kemoni, 2021).

In the United States, records management practices are guided by the Federal Records Act (1950, amended 2014) and overseen by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The country employs electronic records management systems (ERMS), cloud-based storage, and metadata tagging to enhance the retrieval and authenticity of digital records. Federal agencies utilize automated classification systems and follow retention schedules to ensure data integrity and compliance with legal requirements. The use of digital signatures, document imaging, and disaster recovery systems are also standard, promoting the security and accessibility of information across all levels of government (Conway, 2021). In the United Kingdom, records management is regulated under the Public Records Act (1958) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000), with oversight by The National Archives (TNA). The UK public sector has largely transitioned to digital systems, employing digital records management systems (DRMS) and electronic document and records management systems (Mitchell, 2021). Recent reports indicate a strong push toward fully digital workflows and secure data storage across government departments (UK Government, 2025). Common practices include digitization of paper records, metadata tagging, secure cloud storage, and adherence to retention and disposal schedules to ensure compliance with statutory requirements (Yamamoto, 2021).

Malaysia's records management is governed by the National Archives Act (2003), which mandates the National Archives of Malaysia to oversee the management and preservation of both paper and electronic records (Tanaka, 2020). The government widely uses Electronic Records and Document Management Systems (ERDMS) and the e-SPARK platform to manage and monitor official documents. These digital platforms have improved accessibility, efficiency, and data security. Additionally, Malaysia emphasizes the integration of traditional and digital systems, staff training, and standardized filing structures to promote consistency in government documentation practices (Ariffin & Anwar, 2021). In Nigeria, records management falls under the purview of the National Archives of Nigeria, governed by the Public Archives Ordinance (1957). Although manual filing

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systems and registry offices remain prevalent, recent years have seen gradual adoption of electronic document management systems (EDMS) within ministries and agencies as part of broader e-government initiatives. Practices such as records classification, retention scheduling, and digital imaging are being implemented, though challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure and limited funding hinder widespread modernization (Alo, 2022).

South Africa's records management practices are guided by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996), which provides a clear framework for the creation, management, and preservation of public records (Dlamini, 2022). The National Archives and Records Service (NARSSA) promotes the use of electronic records management systems (ERMS), metadata standards, and integrated workflow management (Makhura, 2022). The adoption of the Integrated Document and Records Management System (IDRMS) has been instrumental in improving efficiency and accessibility within government institutions. South Africa continues to prioritize digitization and disaster preparedness to ensure information continuity and accountability (Mokgosi & Ngoepe, 2021). In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian National Archives and Library Agency (NALA) oversee recordkeeping under Proclamation No. 179/1999. Most agencies still rely on manual filing systems, though there is a growing shift toward electronic document management systems (EDMS). Recent modernization efforts include digitization of vital records, creation of central databases, and introduction of scanning technologies to preserve and secure government data. Nonetheless, limited ICT infrastructure, low staff capacity, and insufficient funding remain barriers to effective implementation (Haile, 2022).

In Kenya, records management is regulated by the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act (Cap 19) and overseen by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNADS). Recent reforms under the Public Archives, Records and Documentation Act (2019) have strengthened frameworks for digitization and established the Directorate of Public Records Management to guide policy and training (Kenya, 2019). Most institutions continue to use registry-based filing systems, but the adoption of electronic records management systems (ERMS) is increasing under e-Government and e-Citizen platforms. Practices such as file tracking, digitization, and secure off-site storage are becoming standard. County governments, including Kirinyaga, are progressively integrating digital recordkeeping to enhance efficiency and accountability (Limo et al., 2019). Hence, the study examined the relationship between records management practices and effective service delivery in Kirinyaga County Government registries.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective service delivery in the public sector is central to good governance, accountability, transparency, and citizen satisfaction (Mwangi & Nzioka, 2022). When registries in county governments operate efficiently handling records accurately, securely, and in a timely manner they facilitate other government functions such as licensing, land registration, civil registration (births and deaths), revenue collection, legal processes, and public planning . In Kirinyaga County, for example, registry-based services (such as document issuance, permit approvals, and civil registration) are a key interface between the government and citizens, and delays or breakdowns in registry services directly undermine trust, increase costs to citizens, and slow down economic and social development (Karanja, 2023).

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Despite the importance of effective registry services, Kirinyaga County Government registries continue to face significant challenges undermining service delivery. Issues such as poor records management, missing or misplaced files, lack of digitization, inadequate staffing and infrastructure, absence of properly designed policies, and delayed processing persist, leading to delays in services, loss of records, and sometimes corruption opportunities (Mutua, 2020). The Ethics & Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has faulted county governments generally, including registries, for lack of record-management policies and procedures, inadequate classification systems, lack of inventories, poor tracking and retrieval systems, congested storage facilities, and weak disposal/retention schedules, all of which contribute to delays and inefficiencies in service delivery (EACC, 2024).

Statistics show that while Kirinyaga has performed relatively well in some service delivery indices, there remain substantive gaps. In the 2023 County Trak Performance Index, Kirinyaga scored 55% in use of technology and 54% in closeness of government services, indicating above-average performance but also leaving room for improvement (Kirinyaga County, 2023). Simultaneously, national statistics on civil registration reveal more severe shortcomings: as of 2024, birth registration completeness was 70.3%, and death registration stood at 44.8% nationally (Kenya Vital Statistics Report, 2024). These registration gaps likely translate also into counties like Kirinyaga therefore the study sought to assess records management practices for effective service delivery in Kirinyaga County Government registries, Kenya.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To evaluate records management programs and policies governing records management in Kirinyaga County Government registries.
- ii. To assess the current status of records management practices for public service delivery in Kirinyaga County Government.
- iii. To establish the availability of resources for records management at registries within Kirinyaga County government agencies.
- iv. Identify the challenges the County faces in ensuring effective records management practices.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on service quality theory, records lifecycle theory and the records continuum concept

Service Quality Theory

Service Quality Theory, originally proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, refined 1988), asserts that service quality can be measured by comparing customer expectations with their perceptions of actual service experiences, with the model emerging from recognition that services are intangible, heterogeneous, and simultaneously produced and consumed, making their quality more difficult to assess than physical goods (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The theory identifies five key dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance,

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and empathy—through which service delivery can be evaluated, with these dimensions creating a comprehensive framework for assessing customer experiences across different sectors. This theory is particularly relevant to the current study's examination of records management practices' effects on service delivery in Kirinyaga County, as it provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how well-maintained records contribute to service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, though the theory's gap-based approach may be limited by the fluid and sometimes unrealistic nature of customer expectations in public service contexts where citizens' perceptions vary significantly.

Records Lifecycle Theory

Records Lifecycle Theory, developed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the mid-20th century, proposes that records undergo systematic stages from creation to disposition, suggesting that records must be effectively controlled and preserved throughout their existence to support organizational accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency, with institutions managing records through three primary stages: creation or receipt, maintenance and use, and disposition (Akor & Udensi, 2021). This theory directly supports the current study's investigation of records management practices' effects on service delivery in county registries, as it explains the systematic mechanisms through which records must be managed to ensure administrative efficiency and accountability, providing theoretical justification for why properly managed lifecycle stages should demonstrate better service delivery outcomes. The theory's relevance is particularly strong given the critical role of Kirinyaga County registries in handling vital documents such as personnel files, land records, and financial reports, though the theory's linear nature may not adequately capture the complexities of modern digital records environments where records often exist in multiple forms and locations simultaneously (Shepherd, 2021).

Records Continuum Concept

Records Continuum Concept has evolved through contributions from Australian scholars including Frank Upward during the 1990s, arguing that records management should be viewed as a multidimensional, integrated, and ongoing process rather than a sequence of discrete stages, with records existing in continuous states of use, transformation, and reinterpretation across time and space (Upward, 2020). The concept identifies four interrelated dimensions—creation, capture, organization, and pluralization—that occur simultaneously rather than sequentially, ultimately enhancing records' accessibility and reusability across multiple stakeholders and purposes, though it assumes robust information systems capable of capturing metadata and ensuring long-term digital preservation, which may be disrupted by limited technical capacity and resources in developing contexts (Evsborokhai & Akor, 2022). This concept is central to the current study's examination of records management practices' effects on service delivery in Kirinyaga County registries, providing the theoretical framework for understanding how modern digital transformation initiatives operate and why integrated records systems should influence service delivery performance, though the concept's limitations regarding operational complexity and abstract nature are particularly relevant given the ongoing transition from paper-based to electronic systems in county government registries (Shepherd, 2021).

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1.4 Conceptual Framework

The summary of the conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1

Independent Variable

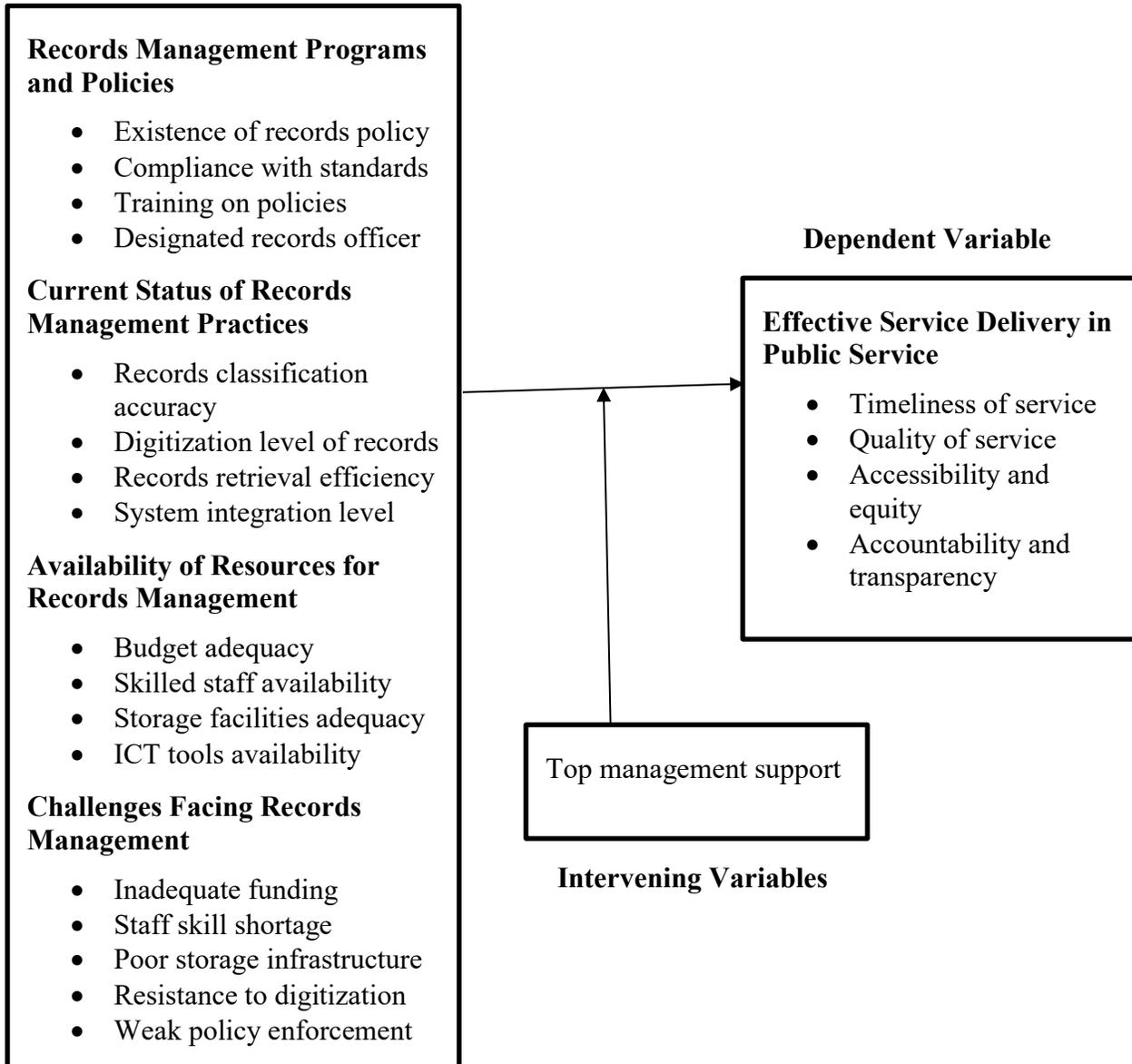


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.0 Empirical Review

Research on records management programs and legal frameworks demonstrates varied implementation outcomes across different governance contexts, with Makwae (2021) analyzing personnel records management at Garissa County Government and finding that lack of

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comprehensive legal frameworks led to weak accountability, document loss, and poor communication despite existence of draft policies, while Obunde (2022) examined records management's role in governance at Homabay County Headquarters and revealed that classification systems were inconsistent, retention schedules lacked clear guidelines, filing was often delayed, and more than half of employees were unaware of policies and standards, with financial commitment to records management insufficient to sustain efficiency. Musyoka et al. (2023) assessed records management practices in Mavoko Sub-County and found that practices were not fully institutionalized due to inadequate staff training and insufficient facilities, though records management was recognized as vital in improving efficiency and facilitating timely service delivery, while Adusei and Senyah (2022) examined practices at Offinso Municipal Assembly in Ghana and showed that 84% of respondents were aware of policies and procedures, with strong positive association between work experience and effective records management systems, though challenges such as limited information technology infrastructure and inadequate support hindered efficiency.

Current status of records management practices research reveals consistent challenges with institutional frameworks and operational capacity across public institutions, with Rutta and Ndenje-Sichalwe (2021) assessing practices at Kinondoni Municipal Council in Tanzania and finding that the council lacked an effective records management programme mainly because of absence of institutional legal and regulatory frameworks, translating into weak governance and ineffective service delivery. Mphunda and Mnjama (2022) evaluated the records management programme at Chancellor College, Malawi, and revealed that while accountability mechanisms existed, records management responsibilities were often delegated to individuals without formal training, with only partial compliance with legal frameworks and problematic retrieval of semi-current records due to inadequate storage space, while Maina (2022) examined records management at Uasin Gishu County and found that the county generated significant volumes of paper-based records but lacked proper systems to manage them, with poorly maintained records leading to inefficiencies in retrieval and low service delivery standards. Malatji and Marutha (2025) investigated legislative framework implementation in Limpopo Provincial Government, South Africa, and discovered that although legislative frameworks existed, implementation was weak due to persistent resource constraints, with provincial archives' enforcement role undermined by inadequate staffing, insufficient training capacity, and lack of resources, while Mubiana (2024) examined Lusaka City Council in Zambia and revealed that the council primarily relied on paper-based systems with minimal digital tools, lacked official records management policy, had manually organized records with no structured disposal or disaster recovery plan, and demonstrated low staff knowledge levels with inconsistent training.

Resource availability research demonstrates critical gaps in capacity, infrastructure, and policy implementation affecting electronic records management readiness, with Dinah et al. (2019) assessing Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service readiness to manage electronic records and revealing gaps in staff capacity, policy enforcement, and infrastructure to support comprehensive e-records management that raised concerns about sustainability in an increasingly digital environment. Newa and Mwantimwa (2019) examined e-records management determinants within Tanzania's Records and Archive Management Department and found that critical

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determinants were underdeveloped, with key barriers including shortage of competent staff, inadequate training opportunities, budgetary constraints affecting infrastructure maintenance, and weak policy implementation, while Ambira, Kemoni, and Ngulube (2019) investigated management of electronic records in Kenya and revealed that practices were inadequately positioned to support e-government despite significant adoption of digital governance initiatives, with persistent challenges including weak policy enforcement, lack of standardized procedures, and insufficient capacity of records staff. Kamatula (2020) examined e-readiness for e-government implementation in Tanzania and indicated that although government had invested in ICT infrastructure, management of e-records remained fragmented and underdeveloped, with many offices lacking structured procedures and records personnel demonstrating limited knowledge and skills in managing e-records and associated systems.

Challenges to effective records management research consistently identifies resource constraints, inadequate policies, and insufficient capacity as major impediments to service delivery, with Miriti et al. (2019) examining challenges at Egerton and Kabarak Universities and revealing that despite existence of policies and inventories, effectiveness was constrained by inadequate financing, shortage of equipment and materials, insufficient skilled manpower, poor infrastructure, and lack of sustainable preservation strategies that negatively affected service delivery. Msosa (2022) investigated practices at Northern Region Water Board in Malawi and found that the institution lacked formal records management policies, resulting in inconsistent and ad hoc practices with largely informal records creation processes and no documented guidelines for storage or classification, while Padoni (2023) examined M'mbelwa District Council in Malawi and revealed that despite presence of basic infrastructure, the council lacked fundamental governance instruments such as records management policy, retention and disposition schedule, or strategic plans, with inadequate top management support and insufficient funding undermining organization and sustainability of practices. Simwaka and Malanga (2023) conducted systematic review of records management practices in Malawi and established that while records were created and maintained in both paper and electronic formats with recognition of importance across sectors, persistent systemic challenges including lack of funding, inadequate policies, weak or absent standards and procedures, poor classification systems, and limited top management support undermined efficiency and contribution to governance and service delivery.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design to systematically examine the relationships between records management practices and effective service delivery among Kirinyaga County Government registries. The research targeted all registry departments within Kirinyaga County, utilizing a census approach that included the entire population rather than sampling. Primary data was collected from registry staff, records managers, action officers, and top management through structured questionnaires and interview schedules spanning the period 2023-2024, obtained through official approvals from Kenyatta University and research permits from NACOSTI. The data collection process involved systematic distribution of instruments using the drop-and-pick-later method and scheduled interviews to minimize disruption of official duties, with uniform structuring to enable comprehensive analysis across different registry departments. Data analysis

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utilized SPSS software for coding and processing, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, percentages, standard deviations) and thematic analysis techniques to examine variable relationships. Comprehensive validity and reliability tests were conducted including face validity through expert reviews, content validity through alignment with research objectives, and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.7 threshold to confirm instrument dependability. Ethical considerations included institutional approval from NACOSTI and university authorities, informed consent from all participants, and maintenance of respondent confidentiality through anonymous coding systems, with respondents free to decline participation at any stage without consequences.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

The research findings and discussions were done in sections.

Response Rate

The investigation delivered 103 surveys to staff at the public service: case study of Kirinyaga county government registries, Kenya. Out of which 95 responses were received representing 92% response rate.

Table 1: Response Rate

No. of Sampled Respondents	No. Of Returned Questionnaires	Response Rate (%)
103	95	92

Records Management Programs, Standards and Policies Governing Records

The researcher sought to find out the result of records management programs, standards and policies governing records management in Kirinyaga County Government records. The outcomes are indicated in table 2.

Table 2: Records Management Programs, Standards and Policies Governing Records

Statements on Records Management Programs	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std
The current Programs, Standards and Policies Governing Records Management in Kirinyaga County are effective in ensuring record are effectively managed	40	48	2	6	4	4.369	.722
The county government regularly updates and revises its records management programs.	38	52	2	8	0	4.351	.767
There are standardized procedures for record-keeping across all departments within Kirinyaga County Government Registries	34	50	12	2	2	4.345	.692
Compliance with record management procedures is regularly monitored and enforced.	44	50	0	4	2	4.273	.689
Regular audits are conducted to assess compliance with record management programs.	54	32	5	7	5	4.396	.723
There is a clear process for reporting and resolving non-compliance with record management programs.	41	39	15	3	2	3.869	1.023

SA=strongly agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

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From the findings, the study revealed that the current programs, standards and policies governing records management in Kirinyaga County are effective in ensuring records are effectively managed, 40% of the respondents strongly agreed, 48% agreed, 2% were neutral, 6% disagreed while 4% strongly disagreed with a Mean of 4.369 and Std of 0.722. On whether the county government regularly updates and revises its records management programs, 38% of the respondents strongly agreed, 52% agreed, 2% were neutral, 8% disagreed while none strongly disagreed with a mean of 4.351 and Std: 0.767. The study findings are in line with those of Ngulube, (2018) who found that records management involves the systematic control of an organization's records throughout their life cycle, from creation or receipt through processing, distribution, maintenance, and disposition. By regularly updating and revising these programs, the county ensures that they remain effective and aligned with changing regulations, technological advancements, and organizational needs.

On whether the county government has standardized procedures for record-keeping across all departments within Kirinyaga County Government Registries, 34% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 12% were neutral, 2% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed with a mean of 4.345 and Std: 0.692. Regarding compliance with record management procedures is regularly monitored and enforced, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, none were neutral, 4% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed with a mean of 4.273 and Std of 0.689. Regarding regular audits being conducted to assess compliance with record management programs, 54% of the respondents strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 5% were neutral, 7% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed with a mean of 4.396 and Std of 0.723. On whether there is a clear process for reporting and resolving non-compliance with record management programs, 41% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 15% were neutral, 3% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed with a mean of 3.869 and Std of 1.023. The study findings are in line with the findings of McIntosh., Antes., Schenk., Rolf, & DuBois (2023) who revealed that non-compliance could include actions such as improper record keeping, unauthorized access to records, or failure to dispose of records according to regulations. Having a clear process ensures that such issues can be promptly addressed and resolved. It typically involves steps for reporting the non-compliance, investigating the matter, taking corrective action, and potentially implementing preventive measures to avoid similar issues in the future.

Clarity of Various Aspects of Policies Governing Records Management

The study aimed to indicate the clarity of various aspects of policies governing records management in Kirinyaga County Government Registries. The findings are in Table 3

Table 3: Clarity of Various Aspects of Policies Governing Records Management

Statements on Clarity of the Aspects of Policies	VC (%)	C (%)	U (%)	VU (%)	Mean	Std
Preservation of institutional records	38	52	2	8	4.244	.950
Roles and responsibilities of employees involved in records management	49	41	2	8	4.107	1.016
The duties and authorities of each employees in creating records and maintaining records	35	45	7	13	3.869	1.023
Procedures for identifying records eligible for disposal, obtaining authorization for disposal, and documenting disposal actions	29	41	18	12	3.631	1.152
Procedure for retrieval of public records	39	43	10	9	3.735	1.134
Procedure for storage of public records	38	42	15	5	4.351	.767

VC=very clear, C=Clear, U=Unclear, VU=Very Unclear

The clarity of various aspects of policies governing records management in Kirinyaga County Government Registries was assessed, with respondents providing their perceptions across different categories. For the policies on preservation of institutional records, 38% of respondents found it very clear, 52% found it clear, indicating a generally positive perception. However, 2% found it unclear, and 8% found it very unclear, suggesting some level of ambiguity or lack of clarity for a minority of respondents. The mean score for this statement was 4.244, with a standard deviation of 0.950, indicating moderate variability in responses. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of employees involved in records management were evaluated. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) perceived these roles and responsibilities as very clear, while 41% found them clear. However, 2% found them unclear, and 8% found them very unclear. The mean score for this statement was 4.107, with a standard deviation of 1.016, suggesting some variability in perceptions among respondents. Regarding the duties and authorities of each employee in creating and maintaining records, perceptions varied. 35% of respondents found these duties and authorities are very clear, while 45% found them clear. However, 7% found them unclear, and 13% found them very unclear. The mean score for this statement was 3.869, with a standard deviation of 1.023, indicating a wider range of perceptions among respondents. The study findings are in tandem with those of Levallet and Chan (2019) the authority of each employee in these processes depends on their role and level within the organization, with managers often possessing decision-making power regarding record approval and retention. Clear communication and support from management are crucial in aligning employees' perceptions with the importance of their roles in records management, fostering a culture of diligence and accountability.

Furthermore, procedures for identifying records eligible for disposal, obtaining authorization for disposal, and documenting disposal actions were assessed. 29% of respondents found these procedures very clear, while 41% found them clear. However, 18% found them unclear, and 12% found them very unclear. The mean score for this statement was 3.631, with a standard deviation of 1.152, suggesting a notable degree of uncertainty or ambiguity among respondents. In terms of the procedure for retrieval of public records, perceptions leaned slightly more towards clarity. 39%

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of respondents found this procedure very clear, while 43% found it clear. However, 10% found it unclear, and 9% found it very unclear. The mean score for this statement was 3.735, with a standard deviation of 1.134, indicating moderate variability in responses. Lastly, the procedure for storage of public records was evaluated. 38% of respondents found this procedure very clear, while 42% found it clear. However, 15% found it unclear, and 5% found it very unclear. The mean score for this statement was 4.351, with a standard deviation of 0.767, suggesting a higher level of clarity compared to other aspects assessed.

Current Status of Records Management Practices

The study examined the current state of records management practices in the County Government of Kirinyaga. Table 4 shows results.

Table 4: Current Status of Records Management Practices

Current Status	VG (%)	G (%)	B (%)	VB (%)	Mean	Std.
Extent to which records are classified and organized according to a standardized classification	34	46	2	18	3.631	1.052
The level of compliance with records retention schedules	54	30	6	10	4.351	.684
Effectiveness of access controls to ensure that only authorized personnel	32	58	4	6	4.267	.858
Security measures in place to protect records from unauthorized access	33	57	2	8	4.089	.914
The level of training and awareness among employees regarding records management policies	47	43	2	8	4.403	0.557
The utilization of records management technologies, such as electronic document management systems	56	34	3	7	4.419	0.667

VG=Very Good, G=Good, B=Bad, VB=Very Bad

Regarding the extent to which records are classified and organized according to a standardized classification, 34% of respondents rated the current status as very good, while 46% rated it as good. However, 2% rated it as bad, and 18% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 3.631, with a standard deviation of 1.052, indicating a moderate level of variability in responses and potential areas for improvement in classification and organization practices. In terms of compliance with records retention schedules, a majority of respondents (54%) rated the level of compliance as very good, while 30% rated it as good. Only 6% rated it as bad, and 10% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 4.351, with a standard deviation of 0.684, suggesting a high level of satisfaction and adherence to retention schedules among respondents. The study agrees with the findings of Touray (2021) who revealed that compliance with records retention schedules is a critical aspect of effective records management within organizations. Employees are

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expected to adhere to these schedules, which outline the minimum and maximum periods records should be retained based on legal, regulatory, operational, and historical requirements.

Regarding the effectiveness of access controls to ensure that only authorized personnel can access records, 32% of respondents rated the current status as very good, while 58% rated it as good. Only 4% rated it as bad, and 6% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 4.267, with a standard deviation of 0.858, indicating a generally positive perception of access control measures in place. Concerning security measures to protect records from unauthorized access, 33% of respondents rated the current status as very good, while 57% rated it as good. Only 2% rated it as bad, and 8% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 4.089, with a standard deviation of 0.914, suggesting a favorable perception of security measures overall. Regarding the level of training and awareness among employees regarding records management policies, 47% of respondents rated it as very good, while 43% rated it as good. Only 2% rated it as bad, and 8% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 4.403, with a standard deviation of 0.557, indicating a high level of satisfaction with training and awareness efforts. Finally, in terms of the utilization of records management technologies, such as electronic document management systems, 56% of respondents rated the current status as very good, while 34% rated it as good. Only 3% rated it as bad, and 7% rated it as very bad. The mean score for this aspect was 4.419, with a standard deviation of 0.667, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the adoption and use of technology for records management.

Level of Agreement on the Current Status of Records Management Practices

The researcher sought to assess the level of respondent’s agreement regarding current status of records management practices for public service delivery in government records in Kirinyaga District. The findings were as shown in table 5

Table 5: Level of Agreement on the Current Status of Records Management Practices

Current Status of Records Management	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std
Regular audits are conducted to assess compliance with record management practices	%	%	%	%	%		
The county government regularly evaluates the accuracy and completeness of records.	26	47	17	10	0	3.887	0.907
Records are easily accessible when needed for public service delivery.	37	45	13	5	0	4.113	0.870
Technology is effectively utilized to facilitate record retrieval processes.	55	42	3	0	0	4.516	0.565
Feedback from service recipients is actively sought and considered for improving record management practices.	57	37	6	0	0	4.500	0.621
Kirinyaga citizens feel that their needs are adequately met through the records provided.	29	41	12	10	8	3.631	1.152

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

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In evaluating the county government's regular evaluation of the accuracy and completeness of records, 26% of respondents strongly agreed, 47% agreed, 17% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 3.887, with a standard deviation of 0.907, indicating some variability in perceptions. In terms of the accessibility of records when needed for public service delivery, 37% of respondents strongly agreed, 45% agreed, 13% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.113, with a standard deviation of 0.870, indicating a relatively high level of agreement among respondents. Respondents overwhelmingly perceived that technology is effectively utilized to facilitate record retrieval processes, with 55% strongly agreeing and 42% agreeing. Only 3% were neutral, and none disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.516, with a standard deviation of 0.565, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the technological aspect of record management. The study findings are in tandem with the findings of Haamann and Basten, (2019) who revealed that technology plays a pivotal role in facilitating record retrieval processes, enabling organizations to efficiently access and retrieve information when needed. Through the implementation of digital document management systems, advanced search capabilities, and automation tools, technology streamlines the retrieval process by providing quick and accurate access to relevant records.

Similarly, feedback from service recipients was actively sought and considered for improving record management practices, according to respondents. A majority of respondents (57%) strongly agreed, while 37% agreed. Only 6% were neutral, and none disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.500, with a standard deviation of 0.621, indicating a high level of agreement with the proactive approach to improving record management based on feedback. However, there seems to be some dissatisfaction among respondents regarding whether Kirinyaga citizens feel that their needs are adequately met through the records provided. While 29% strongly agreed and 41% agreed, 12% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 3.631, with a standard deviation of 1.152, indicating a notable degree of variability and potential areas for improvement in meeting citizens' needs through record provision. The study findings agree with the findings of (Mahmood, ., Weerakkody & Chen, 2020) who revealed that when citizens can easily access accurate and relevant records that address their inquiries, concerns, or requests in a timely manner, it fosters trust, transparency, and accountability. This positive experience is often facilitated by efficient record retrieval systems, user-friendly interfaces, and responsive customer service. Additionally, clear communication regarding the availability and access procedures for records contributes to citizen satisfaction.

Level of Adequacy of Resources

The researcher asked the respondents to indicate the level of adequacy of the following resources required for records management at registries. The findings were as indicated in table 6.

Table 6: Level of Adequacy of Resources

Statements on Availability of Resources	VA (%)	A (%)	I (%)	VI (%)	Mean	Std
Human Resources	49	39	10	2	4.333	.893
Hardware and Software	48	39	6	4	4.534	.831
Budgetary Resources	38	44	4	9	3.994	.989
Physical Space	32	52	3	10	3.375	1.176
Security Measures	47	34	13	6	3.887	1.073
Legal and Regulatory Guidance	59	31	3	7	4.177	0.932

VA= Very Adequate, A=Adequate, I=Inadequate, VI=Very Inadequate

In terms of human resources, nearly half of the respondents (49%) rated the availability as very adequate, while 39% rated it as adequate. Only 10% found it inadequate, and 2% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 4.333, with a standard deviation of 0.893, indicating a generally positive perception of the adequacy of human resources for records management. Similarly, for hardware and software resources, 48% of respondents rated the availability as very adequate, and 39% rated it as adequate. Only 6% found it inadequate, and 4% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 4.534, with a standard deviation of 0.831, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the availability of hardware and software resources. In terms of budgetary resources, 38% of respondents rated the availability as very adequate, while 44% rated it as adequate. Only 4% found it inadequate, and 9% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 3.994, with a standard deviation of 0.989, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction with the availability of budgetary resources.

Regarding physical space, 32% of respondents rated the availability as very adequate, while 52% rated it as adequate. Only 3% found it inadequate, and 10% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 3.375, with a standard deviation of 1.176, indicating a somewhat lower level of satisfaction with the availability of physical space. For security measures, 47% of respondents rated the availability as very adequate, while 34% rated it as adequate. Thirteen percent found it inadequate, and 6% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 3.887, with a standard deviation of 1.073, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction with the availability of security measures. Lastly, regarding legal and regulatory guidance, a majority of respondents (59%) rated the availability as very adequate, while 31% rated it as adequate. Only 3% found it inadequate, and 7% found it very inadequate. The mean score for this aspect was 4.177, with a standard deviation of 0.932, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the availability of legal and regulatory guidance.

Availability of Resources for Records Management

The second objective of the study sought to examine the availability of resources for records management at registries within Kirinyaga County government agencies. The results were as shown in Table 7

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Table 7: Availability of Resources for Records Management

Availability of Resources	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
There are enough staff members dedicated to records management tasks.	50%	34%	3%	7%	0%	3.984	1.032
Staff members have sufficient time and resources to effectively manage records.	45%	34%	13%	8%	0%	4.145	0.921
The workload is distributed evenly among records management staff.	49%	38%	5%	8%	0%	4.145	0.807
Registries are equipped with appropriate technology for efficient record management.	52%	37%	8%	3%	0%	4.452	0.592
Staff members are trained to effectively use the technology available for record management.	50%	32%	13%	5%	0%	4.210	0.908

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Regarding the availability of staff members dedicated to records management tasks, 50% of respondents strongly agreed that there are enough staff members, while 34% agreed. Only 3% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 3.984, with a standard deviation of 1.032, suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction with staffing levels. In terms of whether staff members have sufficient time and resources to effectively manage records, 45% of respondents strongly agreed, and 34% agreed. Thirteen percent were neutral, 8% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.145, with a standard deviation of 0.921, indicating a generally positive perception of resource adequacy in this regard. Respondents also indicated satisfaction with the distribution of workload among records management staff, with 49% strongly agreeing and 38% agreeing that the workload is evenly distributed. 5% were neutral, 8% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.145, with a standard deviation of 0.807, suggesting a high level of agreement with workload distribution practices. The study findings agree with the findings of Sherf., Venkataramani, & Gajendran, (2019). who revealed that when tasks are fairly allocated among team members, it promotes a sense of equity and reduces the risk of burnout or resentment. Achieving even distribution often involves assessing individual strengths, skills, and workloads, then assigning tasks accordingly. Effective communication and collaboration among team members are also crucial for identifying workload imbalances and redistributing tasks as needed. Additionally, leveraging technology and workflow management tools can help streamline processes and optimize resource allocation.

Regarding technological resources, registries were perceived to be well-equipped, with 52% of respondents strongly agreeing and 37% agreeing that appropriate technology is available for efficient record management. Eight percent were neutral, 3% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.452, with a standard deviation of 0.592, indicating

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a high level of satisfaction with technological infrastructure. Lastly, respondents expressed confidence in staff members' training to effectively use available technology for record management, with 50% strongly agreeing and 32% agreeing. Thirteen percent were neutral, 5% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.210, with a standard deviation of 0.908, suggesting a positive perception of staff training in technological proficiency. The study agrees with the findings of Bonina., Koskinen, Eaton, & Gawer, (2021) who revealed that staff training in technological proficiency is crucial for ensuring that employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize technology in their roles. Training programs should be tailored to the specific technological tools and systems used within the organization, covering areas such as software applications, digital platforms, and information management systems.

Factors pose a challenge to the Management of Public Resources

The fourth objective of the study sought to establish the factors pose a challenge in the management of public records in Kirinyaga County. The results were as shown in Table 8

Table 8: Factors pose a challenge to the Management of Public Resources

Factors pose	VGE	A	N	D	Mean	STD
Financial and human resources	50%	45%	0%	5%	4.258	0.886
Accuracy, completeness, and consistency	61%	18%	13%	8%	4.403	0.557
Protecting sensitive data from unauthorized access and breaches	47%	39%	3%	9%	4.145	0.807
Outdated or inadequate technology infrastructure	49%	40%	4%	7%	4.419	0.667
Lack of clear governance structures and policies for managing data	51%	35%	9%	5%	3.887	1.073
Building the capacity of staff to effectively manage data	53%	37%	6%	4%	4.177	0.932

VGE= Very Great Extent, GE=Great Extent, LE= Low Extent, VLE= Very Low Extent

The findings revealed the challenges Kirinyaga County faces in managing public records. Financial and human resource constraints are perceived as significant hurdles, with 50% of respondents indicating this to a very great extent, 45% to a great extent, 0% being neutral, and 5% disagreeing. The mean score for this aspect is 4.258, with a standard deviation of 0.886. Similarly, accuracy, completeness, and consistency of records pose significant challenges, with 61% of respondents indicating this to a very great extent, 18% to a great extent, 13% to a low extent, and 8% to a very low extent. The mean score for this aspect is 4.403, with a standard deviation of 0.557. Protecting sensitive data from unauthorized access and breaches is another key challenge, with 47% of respondents perceiving it to a very great extent, 39% to a great extent, 3% to a low extent, and 9% to a very low extent. The mean score for this aspect is 4.145, with a standard deviation of 0.807.

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Additionally, outdated or inadequate technology infrastructure is a concern, with 49% of respondents indicating this challenge to a very great extent, 40% to a great extent, 4% to a low extent, and 7% to a very low extent. The mean score for this aspect is 4.419, with a standard deviation of 0.667. Moreover, the lack of clear governance structures and policies for managing data is perceived as a challenge by a significant proportion of respondents, with 51% indicating this to a very great extent, 35% to a great extent, 9% to a low extent, and 5% to a very low extent. The mean score for this aspect is 3.887, with a standard deviation of 1.073. Lastly, building the capacity of staff to effectively manage data is identified as a challenge, with 53% of respondents perceiving it to a very great extent, 37% to a great extent, 6% to a low extent, and 4% to a very low extent. The mean score for this aspect is 4.177, with a standard deviation of 0.932.

Challenges the County Faces in Ensuring Effective Records Management Practices

The researcher sought to find out the challenges the county faces in ensuring effective records management practices. The findings were as indicated in table 9

Table 9: Challenges the County Faces in Ensuring Effective Records Management Practices

Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
Data mismanagement incidents are rare within Kirinyaga County Government Registries	18%	64%	6%	12%	0%	3.855	1.185
There are clear procedures in place for reporting and addressing data mismanagement incidents.	42%	32%	12%	14%	0%	4.403	0.778
The county government takes proactive measures to mitigate the risk of data mismanagement.	30%	40%	18%	12%	0%	4.307	0.738
Staff members receive ongoing training to stay updated on best practices in record handling.	42%	30%	16%	12%	0%	4.145	0.807
Recurring issues in record management are promptly addressed and resolved.	52%	32%	6%	10%	0%	4.387	0.869
There is a process in place for identifying and addressing root causes of recurring issues	45%	40%	13%	2%	0%	4.371	0.607

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

The survey indicates that 18% of respondents strongly agree and 64% agree that data mismanagement incidents are rare within Kirinyaga County Government Registries. Only 6% remain neutral, while 12% disagree. None strongly disagree with this statement. The mean score for this statement is 3.855, with a standard deviation of 1.185. Regarding the existence of clear procedures, 42% strongly agree and 32% agree. Meanwhile, 12% are neutral, and 14% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.403, with a standard deviation of 0.778. In terms of

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proactive measures, 30% of respondents strongly agree and 40% agree. Additionally, 18% are neutral, and 12% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score for this statement is 4.307, with a standard deviation of 0.738.

Regarding ongoing training, 42% of respondents strongly agree and 30% agree. Furthermore, 16% are neutral, and 12% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.145, with a standard deviation of 0.807. In terms of addressing recurring issues promptly, 52% strongly agree and 32% agree. Moreover, 6% are neutral, and 10% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score for this statement is 4.387, with a standard deviation of 0.869. Regarding the identification and addressing of root causes, 45% of respondents strongly agree and 40% agree. Additionally, 13% are neutral, and only 2% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.371, with a standard deviation of 0.607. The study findings agree with those of Khan., Raya, & Viswanathan, (2022) who revealed that continuous training and professional development opportunities help employees stay updated on new technologies and adapt to evolving by investing in staff training in technological proficiency, organizations empower their employees to leverage technology to its fullest potential, enhance productivity, and drive innovation.

Service Delivery in the County Government of Kirinyaga

The respondents were asked to indicate the level of agreement on the statements regarding service delivery in the county government of Kirinyaga. The findings were as show in table 10.

Table 10: Service Delivery in the County Government of Kirinyaga

Performance	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
Members of the public are able to access service at the registries in the county government of Kirinyaga on time	44%	28%	14%	12%	2%	4.145	0.921
There has been a decline in the number of complaints concerning service delivered by the registries in the county government of Kirinyaga	52%	24%	12%	10 %	2%	3.855	1.185
The services offered by registries county government of Kirinyaga meet international standards	30%	52%	8%	10%	0%	4.403	0.778
Kirinyaga county government registries is able to effectively handle complaints from the members of the public on time	32%	34%	10%	20%	4%	4.307	0.738

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

The data indicates that 44% of respondents strongly agree and 28% agree that members of the public are able to access services at the registries in the county government of Kirinyaga on time. Additionally, 14% remain neutral, while 12% disagree and 2% strongly disagree. The mean score for this statement is 4.145, with a standard deviation of 0.921. Regarding the decline in complaints,

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52% of respondents strongly agree and 24% agree. Meanwhile, 12% are neutral, and 10% disagree, with 2% strongly disagreeing. The mean score is 3.855, with a standard deviation of 1.185. According to Noronha., Bhat., Gijo, & Laux, (2023)., the decline in the number of complaints concerning services delivered by the registries could be attributed to several factors. One possible explanation is an improvement in the quality of service provided by the registries. This could result from initiatives such as staff training, process optimization, or technology upgrades aimed at enhancing efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Concerning meeting international standards, 30% of respondents strongly agree and 52% agree. Additionally, 8% are neutral, and 10% disagree. None strongly disagree. The mean score for this statement is 4.403, with a standard deviation of 0.778. Regarding the effective handling of complaints, 32% of respondents strongly agree and 34% agree. Moreover, 10% are neutral, while 20% disagree and 4% strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.307, with a standard deviation of 0.738. According to Deep (2021) effective handling of complaints from the public on time indicates a commitment to responsive governance and citizen-centric service delivery. This achievement could be attributed to several factors. First, the establishment of clear and accessible channels for lodging complaints, such as online platforms, helplines, or physical complaint boxes, facilitates timely reporting and resolution of issues.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that records management programs, standards, and policies significantly influence effective service delivery in Kirinyaga County Government registries, with established frameworks, regular updates, and standardized procedures ensuring efficiency and consistency of record-keeping practices across all departments. Records management practices demonstrate commendable implementation, as evidenced by regular audits, accurate record evaluations, effective utilization of technology, and active solicitation of feedback from service recipients, underscoring commitment to continuous improvement that enhances accessibility and usability of records. Resource availability adequately supports effective records management, with sufficient staff, time, and technological infrastructure in place, while equitable distribution of workload among staff members and provision of training on technology usage optimize resource utilization, fostering conducive environments for maintaining and accessing records. Despite occasional challenges including rare incidents of data mismanagement, the county demonstrates proactive approaches to addressing records management obstacles through clear procedures for reporting incidents, ongoing staff training initiatives, and prompt resolution of recurring issues, signifying commitment to mitigating risks and improving practices.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that Kirinyaga County Government should regularly review and update records management programs, standards, and policies to ensure alignment with evolving best practices and regulatory requirements, while enhancing staff training programs to ensure all personnel are proficient in utilizing updated policies and procedures effectively. The county should invest in modern record management technologies such as electronic document management systems to streamline record retrieval processes and improve accessibility, establish comprehensive records retention schedules to systematically manage record lifecycles, and

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implement regular quality assurance measures including periodic data integrity checks and user feedback surveys to maintain accuracy and reliability of records. Kirinyaga County Government should conduct comprehensive assessments of resource needs and allocations to ensure adequate staffing levels, sufficient time allocation, and appropriate technological infrastructure, while implementing workload management tools and processes to optimize resource utilization and ensure equitable distribution of tasks among staff members. The county should strengthen data security measures by implementing encryption protocols, access controls, and regular security audits to protect against data breaches and unauthorized access, establish dedicated incident response teams tasked with promptly addressing data mismanagement incidents, and enhance staff training programs to raise awareness of potential data management risks while equipping employees with knowledge and skills needed to prevent and mitigate such risks. Additionally, the county should establish centralized records management oversight committees to coordinate efforts across departments and ensure consistency in record-keeping practices, foster cultures of accountability through mechanisms for regular audits and performance evaluations, and explore opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing with other government agencies to leverage economies of scale and enhance efficiency in service delivery outcomes.

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