

# Assessing Needs, Conditions and Challenges of Establishing Public University Archives in Tanzania

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## Abstract

This study assessed the necessity for establishing university archives in the selected public universities in Tanzania. The study was guided by four research questions and Archival Theory, focusing on two main concepts: the Records Life Cycle and the Records Continuum Model. A mixed method with a convergent design was employed. A total of 223 participants were selected combining convenient (200) and purposive sampling (23) to ensure the collection of rich and relevant data. Data were analyzed concurrently using Excel as well as thematic analysis for quantitative and qualitative insights respectively. The findings revealed strong support for the establishment of public university archives, with a preference for a hybrid model combining physical and digital records. Key categories of records identified for archiving included faculty publications such as research papers, theses and dissertations, enrollment statistics, student transcripts and program review reports. The study also highlighted the benefits of public university archives, including improved accessibility to institutional records, enhanced decision-making and support for academic and administrative functions. However, it was found that several challenges hinder their establishment, including inadequate funding, low awareness and technological limitations. The study recommends that university management should allocate sufficient resources for digital infrastructures, raise awareness about the importance of archives and implement appropriate policies to support their long-term sustainability. Addressing these challenges will enhance access to archival materials for current and future generations.

**Keywords:** university archives, archival theory, records management, digital preservation, institutional memory, information accessibility

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## 1. Introduction

Archives play a vital role in preserving historical records and institutional knowledge, ensuring continuity and supporting informed decision-making (Sibhidla-Saphetha, 2013). They serve as essential resources for individuals, organizations and nations by safeguarding valuable records for legal, administrative and research purposes (Bajwa & Rafiq, 2023). In universities, archives are established to manage records related to governance, academic programs, policies and research outputs. Archives safeguard institutional memory, facilitate knowledge transfer and ensure a long-term accessibility of critical documents. Universities worldwide recognize the importance of archives in managing academic records, research data and administrative files efficiently (Bajwa & Rafiq, 2023). In Africa, countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe have made significant progress in developing university archives, thereby enhancing institutional governance, research facilitation and cultural heritage preservation (Netshakhuma, 2021). Archival units help to ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks and provide a structured approach to records management which improve university operations.

In Tanzania, public universities generate extensive records, including academic transcripts, governance documents, research findings, financial records, and administrative reports. These documents are crucial for decision-making, strategic planning and historical references. However, the absence of dedicated archival units in many public universities has resulted in records misplacement, deterioration and inaccessibility. Over time,

such lack of formalized archival structures has hindered institutional knowledge preservation and disrupted university operations. Despite such challenges, efforts to establish university archives in Tanzania remain limited. This study highlighted the essential role archives can play among public universities in Tanzania. Krtalić, Dinneen, Liew & Goulding (2021) emphasized that archives are indispensable for preserving records with enduring value; they are required for improving managerial decision-making, legal accountability and knowledge succession. Public universities such as University of Dodoma (UDOM), Mzumbe University (MU) and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) produce huge volumes of documents including historical and administrative records. However, due to the lack of dedicated archival units, these vital documents remain at risk of loss, which intimidates research continuity and administrative efficiency.

While universities are supposed to have archives, they should also consider having the requirements that facilitate their establishment. These requirements include adequate physical and digital infrastructures, proper storage facilities such as fireproof and climate-controlled rooms that are essential for preserving physical records. Additionally, they need digital repositories and records management systems to ensure long-term accessibility and security of electronic records. Additionally, they need to have trained personnel, including archivists and records managers who can implement best practices in archival management, financial investment for acquiring archival equipment, digitization technologies and database management systems (Sharifabadi, Derakhshani & Soltani, 2021).

Although public universities may intend to establish archives, several challenges might impede the intention. Such limitations include limited funding, lack of institutional policies and regulatory frameworks on archival management that creates uncertainty in implementation, shortage of trained archivists and records managers and resistance to change from university administrators and staff (Mollel & Mungwabi, 2023). All these challenges affect the establishment and management of archives in public universities, as they can slow down the process of integrating archival units into public institutional structures.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

University archives are essential for preserving academic, administrative and governance records, contributing to informed decision-making, research continuity and institutional memory. Archives bridge an institution's past and present, playing a crucial role in maintaining historical records that contribute to societal knowledge and legacy (Daga et al., 2022; Zhu, 2024). However, many public universities in Tanzania, like many across Africa, lack structured archival systems, leading to the mismanagement of valuable academic and administrative records (Phiri, 2016). This lack of formalized archives has resulted in the dispersal of essential documents across departments and offices, which hinders access, increases the risk of document degradation and impedes institutional efficiency (Ncala, 2017).

The absence of well-managed archives has severe consequences for public university archives in Tanzania. As Mkuwira (2015) highlights, crucial academic records such as student transcripts, research findings, governance documents and financial records are often lost, poorly preserved or inaccessible. This lack of systematic archival practices delays decision-making processes, disrupts the continuity of research and weakens institutional memory (Rafoneke & Mnjama, 2019). Faculty, administrators and researchers frequently struggle to retrieve important information, which undermines their ability to make informed strategic decisions (Bajwa & Rafiq, 2023). The absence of structured archival systems also complicates governance and historical research, as fragmented records hinder the tracking of institutional progress and policy changes over time (Mnjama, 2017).

Although archival management issues have been thoroughly examined in several settings, little attention has been paid to Tanzanian public universities' particular requirements for university archives. Studies that have already been done mostly focus on general records administration rather than how archives might improve governance, academic integrity and research facilitation (Musyoka, Macharia, Ratemo & Kamau, 2023; Kamatula, 2011). The present study sought to fill this gap by assessing the necessity, conditions and challenges of establishing public university archives in Tanzania, focusing Mzumbe University, the University of Dar es Salaam and University of Dodoma, based on their significant academic and administrative records. Given the critical role archives play, this study provides actionable recommendations for safeguarding institutional memory,

improving governance and ensuring the accessibility of academic and administrative records for research and decision-making.

### *1.2 Research Questions*

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a need to establish public university archives in Tanzania?
2. What types of documents should be preserved in the public university archives in Tanzania?
3. Which infrastructural and technological requirements are necessary for establishing public university archives in Tanzania?
4. What are the main obstacles preventing the establishment of public university archives in Tanzania?

## **2. Literature Review**

This section presents the review of the literature and theoretical framework that was used to inform this study. It covers an overview of the needs for the establishment of university archives, types of documents to be kept in public university archives, infrastructural and technological requirements and challenges affecting the establishment of university archives in Tanzania and the theoretical framework that highlights the Records Life Cycle Model as well as the Records Continuum Model.

### *2.1 The Needs for Establishing University Archives*

As the significance of good governance increasingly gains power on the global stage, the creation of university archives has become indispensable for managing institutional matters, preserving institutional memory and promoting transparency. However, this is largely not the case for many public universities in Tanzania. The absence of archives at public universities, particularly in Tanzania, has turned into a substantial topic of research in recent years. The aim is to detect the impediments avoiding their establishment in public universities so that they can be addressed and level their creation to achieve institutional goals and objectives (Phiri, 2016). Various researchers have recommended that the establishment of public university archives is useful for several reasons. They include provision of resources for research and education that support the institution's mission, protection of documentary heritage and establishment of dependable systems for preserving, accessing and managing records (Margot Note Consulting LLC, 2024; Munadi & Annur, 2021).

### *2.2 Types of Documents to be Kept in Public University Archives*

The initiatives for establishing university archives enrich the ability of universities to manage archival documents successfully while also managing secondary mutually academic activities and community growth (Sharifabadi, Derakhshani & Soltani, 2021). Archives also serve as centralized platforms for the storage and dissemination of research resources such as conference papers, theses and dissertations, fostering collaboration and improving institutional visibility (Alao, Owolabi & Inaya, 2024). Furthermore, they safeguard well-documented and available materials that help both institutional employers and the surrounding community (Manek & Mosweu, 2022). They act as guardians of an institution's collective memory, preserving important lessons from the past and enabling universities to address current challenges while shaping a successful future. University archives retain documents of historical, evidential, legal, fiscal and administrative significance, ensuring their long-term accessibility (Mlambo, Saul & Buys, 2024). Moreover, archives are essential for maintaining institutional memory, providing resources for researchers, students, and the wider community.

Key documents that must be archived include administrative records of daily operations, decision-making processes and institutional policies (Margot Note Consulting LLC, 2024). Other significant documents are committee reports, meeting minutes, subject files, personal papers from influential officers, photographs and audiovisual materials (Margot Note Consulting LLC, 2024). Likewise, research project reports, dissertations and multimedia productions are vital as they reflect institutional events and progress (Sharifabadi, Derakhshani & Soltani, 2021). Additionally, academic materials like research articles, learning objects, curricula and theses are important components of the archives (Musa, Shittu & Abdulkadir, 2014). Other materials wealthy for archiving

include correspondence, official reports, financial records and publications from university offices, ensuring a thorough account of institutional activities (Bajwa & Rafiq, 2023).

### *2.3 Infrastructural and Technological Requirements*

A well-structured approach is required to ensure the effectiveness of university archives, which involves policy frameworks, technological infrastructures, human resources, stakeholder engagement and security measures. A robust policy framework is crucial to guide the establishment and management of archives. Policies should address budgeting, acquisition, appraisal, access, copyright issues and preservation of digital content (Azim, Yatin, Jensonray, Ayub & Mansor, 2018). These policies enable the search, retrieval and utilization of university archival materials, facilitating academic activities and decision-making (Sharifabadi, Derakhshani & Soltani, 2021). Archives must also adhere to international standards so that quality and long-term sustainability are ensured.

Allocation of adequate financial and human resources is vital for managing public university archives. Trained archivists with expertise in archival science and information technology are crucial for organizing, preserving and facilitating access to archival materials. Professional development training guarantees that archivists meet the needs of archival management (Soyka, 2022). Without skilled personnel, maintaining efficient and systematic archival operations becomes a challenge, and it can even deter the accessibility of valuable materials. Similarly, funding and resource allocation is necessary for the sustainability of university archives as they are the primary requirements. Archives need financial support for operational costs, technological investments and preservation efforts. It implies that universities must have reliable funding sources such as grants and partnerships to ensure the continued growth and stability of the archives (Deure, 2024). This is because insufficient funding can lead to poor infrastructures and maintenance, which in turn jeopardizes the preservation of archival records.

Engaging stakeholders is another important variable for a successful archival establishment in public universities. Among others they comprise faculty members, researchers and library staff. Their participation helps to improve archival services and ensure that archives meet the needs of the university community (Barut & Cabonero, 2021). Therefore, it implies that joint efforts enhance the relevance and influence of university archives.

Technological infrastructures are gradually becoming important for the management of digital archives. Therefore, universities must invest in secure servers, storage solutions, backup systems and archival management software. Digital asset management systems (DAMS) improve organization, retrieval and preservation of digital content (Deure, 2024). Robust digital infrastructures ensure that archival materials are both secure and accessible. Preservation of digital records is basically crucial in maintaining accessibility, authenticity and longevity of such records. This process involves identifying which records need preservation, ensuring long-term storage and protecting them against various threats. The capability for digital records preservation encompasses infrastructure resources, technical elements and capabilities related to digital preservation networks (Daniel & Ndumbaro, 2021).

Furthermore, security and preparedness for disasters are vital components for establishing and managing archives. Universities need to implement security measures to shield archives from risks such as unauthorized access, data breaches, fires and environmental hazards. An all-encompassing disaster recovery plan must be established to address emergencies and safeguard critical records (Aulianty & Samsiyah, 2023). The location, infrastructures and upkeep of university archives greatly influence their effectiveness. Archives should be stored in secure settings, protected from threats like water damage and fire hazards. Appropriate equipment and facilities must be utilized to guarantee the safety and accessibility of materials. According to Aulianty & Samsiyah (2023) routine monitoring and maintenance are essential for the long-term preservation of archival materials and for maintaining optimal storage conditions.

### *2.4 Challenges Affecting the Establishment of University Archives*

The establishment of archives in public universities has never been an easy task due to multiple challenges. Alao, Owolabi and Inaya (2024) and Manek and Mosweu (2022) agree that inadequate facilities, poor funding,

organizational barriers and lack of expertise are the key aspects that hinder the establishment of archives. In the same way, Narayan and Luca (2017) reported that poor/low understanding among faculty and management members about the importance of archives could impede establishment of archives.

The absence of clear policies and legal frameworks, according to the SAA Council (2023) can hinder the creation of archives. Without clear guidelines, institutions struggle to determine which materials to archive and for how long, making it difficult to maintain archival standards. Another study by Margot Note Consulting LLC (2024) found that universities also face spatial and financial constraints, making it challenging to maintain proper storage conditions for physical archives. While digital archives help to reduce space requirements, they still require significant investment in storage solutions. Additionally, a shortage of trained archivists and standardized policies further limits the development of university archives (Bajwa & Rafiq, 2023). Furthermore, Netshakhuma (2020) specified that absence of regulations, poor housekeeping and insufficient security measures could also threaten the sustainability of archives. These cumulative barriers hinder access to crucial institutional information, undermining efforts to preserve public university archives for current and future use.

### *2.5 Theories Guiding the Study*

The Records Continuum Model (RCM) and the Institutional Theory (IT) guided this study. They were selected based on the reason that they provide a framework suitable for evaluating the importance of establishing archives in public universities. By integrating the RCM with IT, this study offers a thorough understanding of the technical, infrastructural and institutional factors influencing the development of university archives. While the RCM provides a structured approach to records management and archival preservation, the IT places the organizational challenges and governance issues surrounding archival practices in context. Together, these theories form a solid conceptual framework for analyzing the needs, requirements and challenges in the establishment of institutional archives in Tanzanian public universities.

#### *2.5.1 The Records Continuum Model*

The Records Continuum Model (RCM) provides a valuable framework for understanding how archives are developed in public universities in Tanzania. The RCM highlights the necessity of continuous and integrated records management, ensuring that records remain accessible and usable throughout their entire life cycle. The RCM fosters a perspective where the processes of records creation, organization, usage and preservation are interrelated (Upward, 1996; McKemmish, 2017). This perspective is especially vital for universities that generate large amounts of academic, administrative, governance and research-related records which require systematic preservation. Previous studies have demonstrated the RCM's utility in higher education and government entities. For instance, McKemmish et al (2010) applied the model to illustrate how digital records can be effectively managed to ensure their long-term preservation and accessibility. Similarly, Piggott (2012) highlighted the model's importance in structuring university archives to facilitate research and policy formulation. Given the challenges facing public universities in Tanzania in managing their records, including misplacement, deterioration and restricted accessibility, the RCM provides a robust theoretical foundation for creating organized archival systems that can safeguard institutional memory and enhance informed decision-making. However, the RCM has its limitations especially its failure to place the organizational challenges and governance issues surrounding archival practices in context. That is why the Institutional Model is employed to cover the gap.

#### *2.5.1 Institutional Theory*

The Institutional Theory (IT) provides a relevant theoretical framework for this research, clarifying how organizations develop their structures, policies and practices in reaction to external pressures, regulatory requirements and governance expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This theory is particularly significant for understanding the obstacles encountered when attempting to implement institutional archives in public universities in Tanzania, which include inadequate policies, resistance to change, financial constraints and lack of awareness about the importance of organized archival systems. Prior studies have employed the IT to explore how organizations such as universities navigate regulatory and operational challenges. Netshakhuma (2021) investigated the effects of governance frameworks on the adoption of records management policies in African universities. In this research, IT facilitated the assessment of how external regulations, internal administrative

procedures and cultural perceptions impact the establishment of archives in Tanzanian public universities. Furthermore, the IT underscores the importance of institutional legitimacy, suggesting that universities adopting formal archival systems align themselves with global standards in higher education and knowledge management (Scott, 2008). This viewpoint highlights the need for policy enhancements, commitment from leadership and resource allocation to effectively create university archives in Tanzania.

### **3. Methodology of the Study**

This section presents the research methods which were used to address the research problem. It comprises research approach, research design, target population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and data quality and validity. These aspects are penned here-under:

#### *3.1 Research Approach*

This study employed a multi-faceted methodology that integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The application of mixed methods research involves intentional data integration, permitting researchers to examine a phenomenon from multiple viewpoints and research frameworks for an inclusive understanding of the subject (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). Mixed methods research (MMR) represents a scientific strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a cohesive framework. It offers a wider, more holistic view and corroborates findings through a more robust design, capitalizing on the strengths of various paradigms while addressing their inherent limitations (Tovin & Wormley, 2023). The mixed-methods research approach merges quantitative and qualitative data to explore research issues, derive conclusions, and gain insights into phenomena. This strategy brings a detailed summary and a broader array of perspectives, potentially leading to the development of significant theories (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). Subsequently, this study leveraged the benefits of mixed methods research to achieve a deeper understanding of the views of participants/respondents on the importance of establishing public university archives in Tanzania. This approach was also applied to validate the findings through triangulation.

#### *3.2 Research Design*

This study used a convergent design which combined both quantitative and qualitative data to compare results (Asio, 2021). This design allows for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to enhance the comprehensiveness of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). Both types of data, from qualitative and quantitative methods are gathered simultaneously and examined in databases to identify differences, convergences and combinations (concurrent triangulation). The aim is to balance strengths or weaknesses with equal weighting. The data is then merged into the discussion or interpretation section (Taherdoost, 2022).

The choice of this design was informed by the need to assess the necessity of public university archives by integrating numerical data on stakeholders' perceptions with in-depth qualitative insights on institutional needs, challenges, and infrastructural requirements. The convergent parallel design ensures that both types of data are collected independently but later merged for interpretation, thereby facilitating triangulation and increasing the validity of findings (Bryman, 2016). The selection of the convergent parallel mixed methods research was justified by the complexity of archival development, which requires both statistical evidence and contextual understanding. Prior studies, such as Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007), have demonstrated that the effectiveness of archival systems in African universities depends not only on documented policies and infrastructures but also on institutional attitudes and resource availability. Through the guidance of MMR, this study captured both the quantifiable gaps in archival systems and the nuanced institutional perspectives that shape records management practices (Demir & Pismek, 2018). Quantitative data was collected through structured surveys to gather statistical evidence on respondents' perceptions, while qualitative data was obtained through interviews to provide contextual depth, addressing their inherent limitations (Tovin & Wormley, 2023). MMR strategy brings a detailed summary and a broader array of perspectives, potentially leading to the development of significant theories (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). Subsequently, this study leveraged the benefits of MMR to achieve a deeper understanding of the views of participants/respondents on the importance of establishing public university archives in Tanzania. This approach was also applied to validate the findings through triangulation. Such a concurrent triangulation process used in this study is depicted in Figure 1:



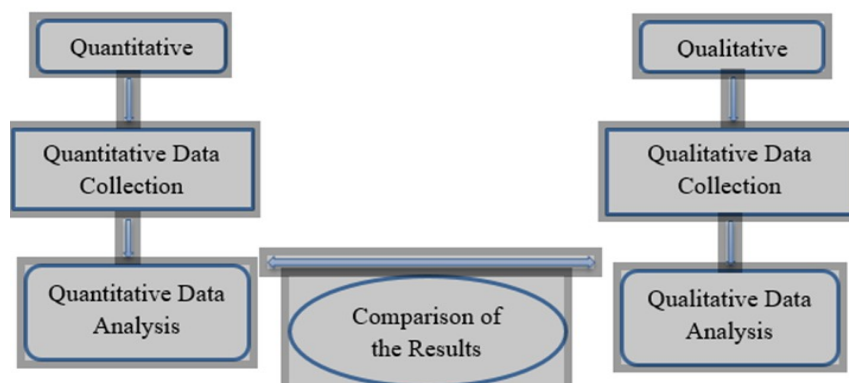


Figure 1. Concurrent Triangulation Process (Source: Taherdoost, 2022)

In this study, quantitative data was gathered through structured surveys, capturing statistical insights into respondents' perceptions regarding the necessity of public university archives, types of documents to be preserved and perceived challenges affecting their establishment. Qualitative data was obtained through interviews, providing in-depth insights into which types of archival materials (e.g., governance files, academic transcripts, research outputs) are most critical for archiving. Additionally, interviews with university administrators and archivists explored the infrastructural requirements such as fireproof storage, climate-controlled rooms and digital repositories needed to support effective archival systems. During the analysis, these data sources were merged and compared to identify patterns, contradictions and complementary findings. For example, while survey data highlighted the need for archives, qualitative findings revealed key challenges such as financial constraints, policy gaps and staff shortages which hinder implementation. This triangulation approach strengthened the findings of the study by balancing quantitative trends with contextual depth, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation of the needs of public university archives.

### 3.3 Target Population and Sampling Procedures

A population is a group of people or objects a researcher intends to study. Researchers study a specific target population, limited to their reach and representing the main interest group. This involves defining boundaries, identifying and explaining the population, understanding its composition and scale and planning resources for the study (Hossan, Mansor & Jaharuddin, 2023). Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to measure attitudes, belief and characteristics to reduce costs and workload, increase data collection speed and improve results accuracy (Rashid, Rasheed, Amirah, Yusof, Khan & Agha, 2021). This study targeted staff and students of three public universities located in Tanzania, namely the University of Dar es Salaam, University of Dodoma and Mzumbe University, totaling 410 respondents (UDSM: 130; UDOM: 150; MU: 130). A combination of convenient and purposive sampling techniques was employed to select participants of the study.

#### 3.3.1 Convenient Sampling

This study used a convenient sampling technique to get the participants and respondents. Convenient sampling is a method used to select participants from the target population based on their ease of access (Golzar, Noor & Tajik, 2022). In using this sampling technique, researchers select study participants based on who they are most comfortable with or happen to connect with during a given period (Hossan, Mansor & Jaharuddin, 2023). Convenient sampling is a cost-effective data collection method that allows researchers to access data at their convenience but is often criticized for biased selection due to population disparity (Rashid, Rasheed, Amirah, Yusof, Khan & Agha, 2021). In this study, convenient sampling facilitated quick and cost-effective data collection from readily accessible participants, particularly those available during the university's long vacation period. A sample of 200 respondents was selected using convenient sampling from three Tanzanian public universities: 81 at University of Dodoma (UDOM), 63 at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and 56 at

Mzumbe University (MU). This sample size balanced statistical significance with resource feasibility.

### 3.3.2 Sample Size Determination

The sample size of this study was calculated to ensure statistical significance while considering resource constraints. Utilizing Cochran's Formula for sample size determination, which is appropriate for large populations, the following parameters were set: a 95% confidence level ( $Z = 1.96$ ), a margin of error ( $d$ ) of 5% and an estimated proportion ( $p$ ) of 0.5, reflecting maximum variability. The formula is expressed as follows:

$$n_0 = (Z^2 * p * (1 - p)) / d^2.$$

Substituting the specified values:

$$n_0 = (1.96^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)) / 0.05^2;$$

$$n_0 \approx 384.$$

Given the finite population of 410 individuals across the three selected universities, the sample size was adjusted using the finite population correction formula as follows:

$$n = n_0 / (1 + (n_0 - 1) / N)$$

Where  $N$  is the population size, substituting the values:

$$n = 384 / (1 + (384 - 1) / 410)$$

$$n \approx 196.$$

A sample size of 200 respondents was therefore selected out of 410 of the targeted population as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Population and Sample Size

University Category	Population Size	Population (%)	Sample Size Computation ( $N_i / N$ ) $n$	Sub-sample ( $n_i$ )	Sample (%)
UDOM	150	36	$(150/410)200$	73	37
UDSM	130	32	$(130/410)200$	63	31
MU	130	32	$(130/410)200$	64	32
Total	410	100		200	100

Source: Field Data, 2024

### 3.3.3 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, is a method used to select small, informative cases from a population's characteristics (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022). It involves intentionally selected individuals based on their unique traits and qualities (Hossan, Mansor & Jaharuddin, 2023). This is a cost-effective method based on personal judgment to select a group of individuals who are aware of a problem disparity (Rashid, Rasheed, Amirah, Yusof, Khan & Agha, 2021). To address potential biases inherent in convenience sampling, purposive sampling was utilized to select 23 participants with specialized knowledge relevant to the objectives of the study. Among them, seven were found at MU, nine at the UDSM and seven at UDOM. These individuals included records management staff, university administrators, and academic staff, whose insights provided a focused understanding of institutional-specific needs, document types for archiving, infrastructural requirements, and potential challenges in establishing dedicated archival systems. Purposive sampling therefore targeted key informants based on their expertise in archival practices. Ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent and institutional ethics approvals, safeguarding participants' rights and data confidentiality.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected using a combination of survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a literature review. A questionnaire is a common tool for collecting information from respondents, providing both qualitative



and quantitative data. It is suitable for large samples and cannot be obtained from secondary resources, making it a valuable tool in research (Taherdoost, 2022). This study utilized the questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions to capture quantitative data on perceptions regarding the necessity of public university archives and their potential benefits as well as qualitative insights into infrastructural requirements and possible challenges. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, with 168 completed responses received, yielding an 84% response rate.

An interview guide is a research tool used to gather participants' views, opinions and feelings on a specific inquiry through a set of questions (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data among the 23 purposively selected respondents. This method helped to gain in-depth insights from the participants, including records management staff, administrators and academic personnel. These participants were interviewed face-to-face at their respective universities. Semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in exploring key topics while maintaining consistency across interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted by viewing academic databases, namely Google Scholar, JSTOR and Scopus. Keywords included "university archives," "archival practices in Tanzania," and "records management". Documents were selected based on their relevance and credibility, focusing on peer-reviewed articles and authoritative sources published. The inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers and reports published, that directly addressed university archives, archival practices and records management, particularly in the Tanzanian and broader African context. Studies that provided theoretical insights, case studies or empirical data on archival policies and implementation were prioritized.

#### 3.4.1 Distribution of Questionnaires

Based on the population sizes of the selected public institutions, 200 questionnaires were distributed proportionally among the universities. The overall response rate was 84%, which emanated from 168 completed questionnaires returned. This high response rate enhanced the reliability of the findings of the study. The sample allocation ensured representation from each university, facilitating a comprehensive assessment of the need for establishing university archives. The distribution and response rates are detailed in Table 2:

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution

University	Population Size	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Respondents' Rate (%)
University of Dodoma	150	81	63	78
University of Dar es Salaam	130	65	59	91
Mzumbe University	130	58	46	79
Total	410	200	168	

Source: Field Data, 2024

#### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, to examine the respondents' views on the necessity of university archives. Statistical software (Excel) was utilized to process and analyse these data. As per Kotronoulas, et al., (2023), descriptive statistics summarized the data using frequencies, total numbers, and percentages for dichotomous and categorical variables. Tables and graphs were used to visually condense and easily understand the summarized data. The tables and figures are self-explanatory and include details in headings and descriptions.

For qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to identify and examine patterns within participants' responses. Thematic analysis is a widely used technique for analyzing textual data and is especially effective for uncovering key themes, patterns and relationships in responses (Clarke & Braun, 2016). Thematic analysis

involves six steps: familiarizing oneself with data, generating initial code, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report (Özden, 2024). This study followed thoroughly the six steps. Throughout the analysis process, the present research also examined the similarities, differences and relationships within the data. By comparing responses from different participants, shared concerns about the establishment of public university archives were identified including importance of institutional support and resource allocation. Differences in responses provided insights into varying levels of awareness and engagement with the issue across universities. Additionally, the relationships between themes were explored to understand how factors, namely leadership, infrastructures and policy influenced perceptions about public university archives.

### 3.6 Data Quality and Validity

Qualitative research credibility is achieved through trustworthiness, which allows for quality checking and vetting of participants' information (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022). Validity and reliability are also crucial in quantitative research (Kakar, Rasheed, Rashid & Akhter, 2023). To ensure credibility in this research, appropriate research instruments were used to collect first-hand information, ensuring it is free from distortions and fabrications. Trustworthiness is based on the researcher's credibility and adherence to data collection principles. In this case, triangulation was given high priority through comparison of the findings from various investigators, sources and methods; hence, reduced the chance of association and systematic bias. There was peer examination or review of the data collection instruments to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

## 4. Findings of the Study

### 4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The study sought to identify the respondents' characteristics in terms of their positions (academic staff, administrative staff and students), levels of education and working experiences. This was important as it established their relevance and suitability to enrich the study with insightful information.

#### 4.1.1 Respondents' Positions

The present study involved administrative staff, academic staff and postgraduate students. The findings presented in Figure 2 provide valuable insights that directly support the research objectives of the study:

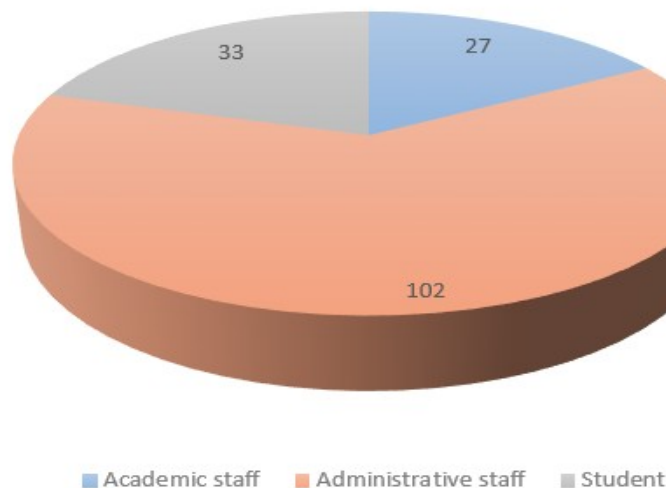


Figure 2. Respondents' Positions (Source: Field Data, 2024)

As stipulated in Figure 2 above, the findings indicated that majority (102) of the respondents were administrative staff, followed by students and academic staff respectively. These findings highlight the need for the establishment of archives at the selected public universities as these groups are liable for managing and utilizing

a wide range of institutional records. This lines-up with the first objective, which aimed to find out the need for university academic archives. The disparity also shows the types of documents to be included in the archives, namely research publications, teaching materials, administrative records and student-related documents. This is supporting the second objective of identifying types of documents to be archived.

#### 4.1.2 Respondents' Levels of Education

The findings presented in Figure 3 depict the distribution of respondents' levels of education, which provides important context for understanding their perspectives and expertise about the objectives of the study. The distribution indicates that 59 respondents hold advanced degrees, followed by 43 who hold a Diploma, 42 who hold a Master degree, 15 who hold a PhD and 3 who hold a certificate. These findings suggest that the respondents have a high level of academic expertise, which sufficed the assessment of the need for the establishment of public university archives. This is since their levels of education may influence their understanding of the importance of preserving academic materials. The high number of degree and diploma holders also adds a diversity of perspectives, with each group potentially having different experiences and expectations regarding the role of archives in supporting academic and administrative functions. This distribution of educational levels helps to inform the research objectives by providing a broad spectrum of insights on the need for university archives, the types of documents to be archived and the infrastructural and personnel requirements necessary for their successful establishment. It also highlights the potential challenges in ensuring that university archives meet the needs of a diverse groups of stakeholders with varying levels of education as shown in Figure 3:

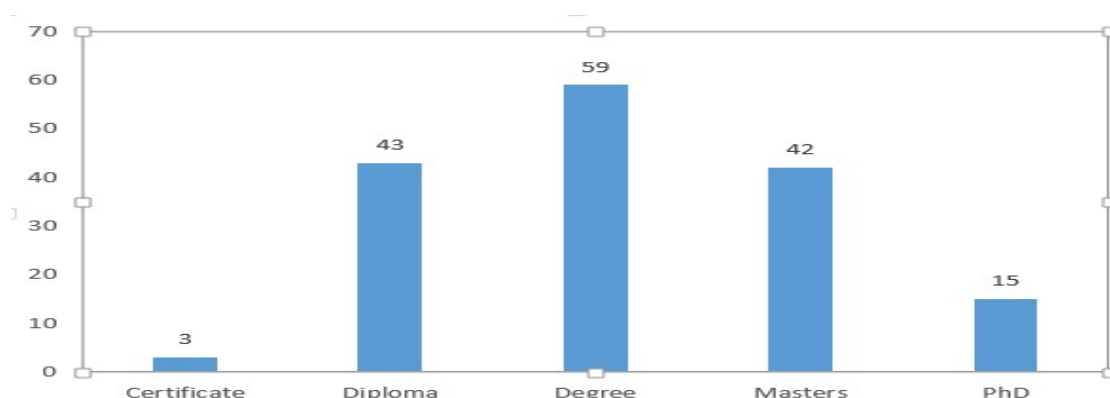


Figure 3: Respondents' Levels of Education (Source: Field Data, 2024)

#### 4.1.3 Respondents' Working Experience

The findings presented in Figure 4 indicate that the 98 respondents, who are the majority, have between 0-10 years of working experience, followed by 42 respondents with 11-20 years of working experience. Smaller proportions of respondents fall into the categories of 21-30 years (2 respondents), between 31-45 years were 11 respondents and 41-50 years comprised 4 respondents. This indicates that most of the respondents are relatively early to mid-career professionals, which can influence their perceptions of the need for university archives and their empathy toward the importance of records-keeping and preservation. The high percentage of respondents with less than 10 years of experience suggests the potential of the young generation in terms of awareness of the importance of records and archives management as they are recently being taught as courses at different levels of education. Likewise, the smaller group of respondents with inclusive experience (over 30 years) may offer valuable insights into historical records-keeping challenges and embryonic needs for archiving systems.

These findings support the research objectives by highlighting the diverse levels of professional experience among stakeholders, which can inform decisions about the types of documents to be archived, the infrastructures required and the challenges that may arise in establishing public university archives. Additionally, the

predominance of less experienced staff suggests the importance of creating user-friendly and well-structured archival systems that can cater to different levels of expertise.

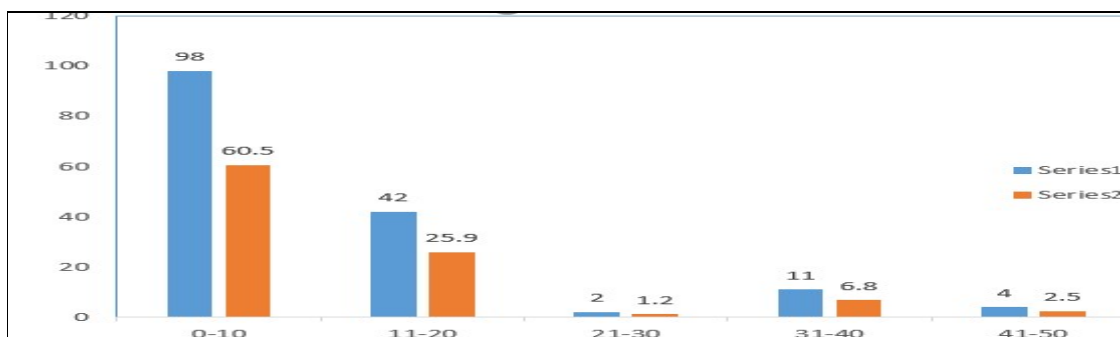


Figure 4. Respondents' Working Experience (Source: Field Data, 2024)

#### 4.2 The Needs of Establishing University Archives

The first objective of the study intended to establish the needs of establishing university archives among the selected public universities in Tanzania. The findings of the study on this area through survey questionnaires show that 161 out of 162 respondents agreed with the idea of the establishment of university archives. The findings suggest that stakeholders realize the importance of the university having archives. This massive agreement could likely reflect frustrations among respondents, who may have had trouble in accessing and managing records. The findings of the study imply that establishing university archives is crucial as a means of preventing the loss of important records and ensuring their proper maintenance. Archives provide references to the institution's history and key figures; thus, the idea of establishing archives has been delayed due to unsuitable storage conditions and pest attacks. Establishing university archives is essential for preventing the accumulation of records in unsuitable locations, ensuring their longevity and preservation. The responses from the respondents are summarized in Figure 5:

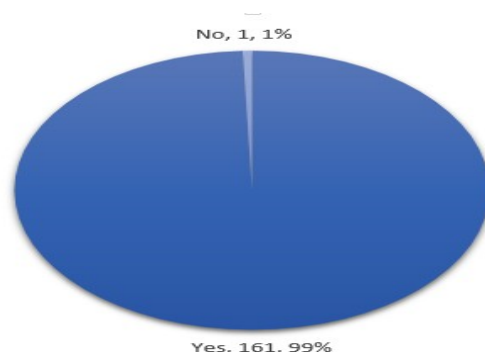


Figure 5. Responses on Needs to Establish University Archives

Likewise, the interview responses support the idea consistently, with all selected participants emphasizing the significance of university archives in addressing prevailing challenges in records-keeping and institutional memory. The participants highlighted the importance of archives in preserving academic records such as student transcripts, consultancy policies and university policies, which are critical for decision-making, academic activities and administrative tasks.

One participant at Mzumbe University said, *"A university must have archives that support institutional functions and preserve crucial records."* Likewise, an interviewee at UDOM said:

Establishing university archives is very important to eliminate the problem of loss of important records. For example, one program-reviewed document got lost, and during the review of existing programs, such a

document whose review was done 5 years back was not found. It was dearly needed for reference purposes on an important issue for simplification of the task.

The interview findings at the three universities revealed a strong consensus on the importance of establishing university archives to support institutional functions, preserve vital records and ensure proper records management. Participants emphasized that archives play a critical role in safeguarding documents needed for administrative, academic and research purposes. They are helping to avoid the loss of important records that could hinder key activities such as program reviews. They also noted that although the national archives exist, university-specific archives are necessary due to the unique and on-going need for easy access to historical records within the institutions. Concerns were raised about inadequate storage conditions, insufficient maintenance and delays in implementing archiving systems, all of which threaten the longevity and usability of important documents. Overall, the need for university archives was viewed as both urgent and essential.

The assimilation of interviews and questionnaire findings indicates a wide-ranging gratitude of stakeholders' perspectives on the necessity of university archives. This massive agreement between interview observation and questionnaire findings allows a common understanding of the potential benefits of university archives. These findings support the study of Basil-Iwhiwhu (2005) which emphasized that an organization cannot exist without proper records-keeping. The findings further correspond with the findings reported by Farotimi, Adegoke and Akeroro (2023), who argued that establishment of university archives is useful in enabling an organization's success, as it ensures the availability, accessibility and security of valuable information, both in the short and long term.

#### 4.2.1 Type of Archives to be Established in the Public Universities

Apart from the needs of establishment university archives, the study sought to find out the preferences of respondents on the type of archives to be established. Archives are categorized as the physical archives for print documents, the hybrid archives with both physical and digital documents and the digital/electronic archives with both digital-borne documents and scanned ones. The findings revealed that the hybrid archives with both physical and digital documents were preferred over other types. The quantitative data as presented in Table 3 exposed that 102 respondents preferred hybrid archives. It means they preferred a combination of physical and digital documents. These were followed by 36 who preferred digital archives and 13 respondents who advocated for physical archives. This spreading implies that participants have a broad understanding of archives but lack the ability and proper channel to communicate their importance to the university management effectively.

Table 3. Type of Archives to be Established

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Physical archive for print documents	13	8.0
Hybrid archive with both physical and digital documents	102	63.0
Digital/electronic archives with both digitally borne documents and scanned ones	36	22.2

The interview participants emphasized the importance of preserving different types of records, including legal, academic and multimedia documents, with many highlighting the adaptability of hybrid systems to meet evolving needs. Hybrid archives effectively integrate traditional and digital records, supporting both researchers seeking historical documents and administrators requiring quick access to digital files.

The interview findings revealed a strong endorsement for the adoption of hybrid archives, emphasizing their value in preserving both print and electronic documents to ensure continuity, accessibility, and reliability in university records management. Interview One from UDSM noted, *"Hybrid archives provide a backup for critical documents. If a hard copy is lost or damaged, the electronic version can still be accessed by users without interruption."* This perspective highlights the role of hybrid systems in enhancing institutional resilience. Similarly, an interviewee from MU (Mzumbe University) emphasized, *"Some users prefer physical documents for deep reading, while others—especially researchers—appreciate digital access for convenience. Hybrid archives allow us to serve both effectively."* This view underscores the need for inclusive information access

strategies that reflect user diversity. An interviewee from UDOM added, *"Maintaining hybrid archives is crucial because some old records cannot be fully digitized yet. Having both formats ensures comprehensive access and prevents information loss."*

These practical insights align with Jaillant (2022), who asserts that hybrid archival systems bridge traditional and digital methods by offering flexibility in access and ensuring long-term preservation. Jaillant emphasizes that hybrid systems not only store information but also improve discoverability and user interaction through search functions and metadata. Likewise, Peirson-Smith and Peirson-Smith (2020) support the use of hybrid archives to meet the needs of diverse user groups, noting that such systems enable both on-site access to physical materials and remote access to digitized content, thus supporting research, teaching, and learning in modern academic environments.

The findings of the study also revealed a growing preference for digital archives among some respondents, who appreciated the reduced physical storage requirements and efficient searchability of digital systems. For instance, an interviewee from UDSM remarked, *"Digital archives make it easier to retrieve information instantly. You don't have to go through boxes of files—just type a keyword, and it's there."* An interviewee from MU echoed this view, stating, *"We are running out of physical storage space. Going digital saves room and helps us manage increasing volumes of documents."* Similarly, an interviewee from UDOM pointed out, *"Students and staff are now used to accessing materials online. Digital archives are not just convenient—they're expected."*

Despite these perceived benefits, Goudarouli, Sexton, and Sheridan (2019) caution that digital transformations have significantly altered the traditional boundaries of archives, introducing complex challenges. One of the key issues raised is the authenticity and longevity of born-digital records. They ask a critical question: *How can we ensure that a digital record archived today remains unchanged and trustworthy 20, 50, or even 100 years into the future?* This concern was subtly reflected by the UDOM respondent, who added, *"While digital systems are efficient, I sometimes worry about how safe our records will be in the long term—what if the software becomes outdated or files get corrupted?"* Thus, while digital archives are widely welcomed for their convenience and efficiency, the findings and literature both highlight the need for strategic digital preservation frameworks to guarantee the integrity, authenticity, and sustainability of digital records over time.

Table 3 depicts that few respondents underlined the need for physical archives for preserving historical documents. This moderately small percentage signifies that while physical archives remain important, they are regarded as less practical in the modern information management landscape. The respondents who preferred physical archives underlined their unique role in protecting rare materials such as original manuscripts, institutional charters and other historically significant records. The preference for physical archives among respondents underscores the lasting value of conventional archival materials.

These findings are supported by Huaiming (2016) who underscored the sole role of physical archives as the most in-born and straightforward medium for reflecting the developmental history and historical traces of institutions. It also emphasizes the trust and reliability associated with physical records in safeguarding sensitive materials, particularly when authenticity, preservation and contextual integrity are of paramount importance. Institutions must recognize this continued reliance on physical archives and balance it with digital advancements to ensure comprehensive archival strategies that meet diverse needs.

#### 4.2.2 Perceptions on the Establishment of Public University Archives

The study sought to find out the perceptions of respondents on the establishment of university archives in a range of very positive, positive, neutral, negative to very negative. The responses of respondents captured through questionnaires are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Perceptions on the Establishment of Public University Archives



Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very positive	124	76.5
Positive	29	17.9
Neutral	5	3.1
Negative	2	1.2
Very negative	2	1.2

Table 4 indicates that the majority (153) claimed to be ‘very positive’ and ‘positive’ towards establishment of university archives among the selected public universities in Tanzania and few (9) claimed it as ‘neutral’, ‘negative’ and ‘very negative’ respectively (refer Table 4) which generally showed a negative perception on the establishment of university archives. Most of these are ordinary staff who do not have managerial positions and so do not have direct contact with employees’ file/records. This indicates little knowledge they have on the significance of establishment of public university archives. Thus, the large number 99 respondents who showed affirmative attitude on the establishment of university archives relates with those who supported the need for establishment of university archives.

The findings of the study demonstrate a strong positive attitude towards establishing university archives, highlighting a general recognition of their importance. This suggests a broad agreement of the surveyed population regarding the perceived value and necessity of such initiatives. Despite the positive trend, the minority of respondents remained neutral or held negative views, which may point to gaps in awareness or understanding regarding the role of archives among public universities. The existence of five neutral respondents indicates a minor contradiction, but it is vital to understand that they signify a very small proportion of the overall sample. Furthermore, only two respondents expressed a negative perception, which suggests that opposition to the idea is minimal. These findings suggest that while there is broad support of the idea of establishing archives, there is a need for more advocacy and educational programs at these universities to ensure that all stakeholders, including staff and students, fully appreciate the importance of archives.

These results indicate the growing recognition of the importance of university archives as valuable resources for preserving institutional knowledge that backs-up research and administrative activities. The high level of support aligns with studies in similar contexts, which suggest that university archives play a crucial role in enhancing institutional memory and promoting academic excellence (Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2019). The minimal opposition may reflect a lack of awareness or understanding about the role of archives, which could be addressed through further awareness campaigns or educational programs on the importance of archives among public universities. The findings of this study indicate that all surveyed universities have a very positive view towards the establishment of archives, underscoring the growing recognition of the value of university archives in preserving institutional knowledge and supporting academic, administrative and research functions.

Similar findings were collected from interviewees; for instance, an admission officer at MU said, *“I can say that the establishment of archives is very important because it can help the university to preserve important information that will be used to support academic activities.”*

#### 4.2.3 Benefits of Archives to the University and to Individuals

The study sought to identify the benefits likely to be enjoyed by individuals and the institution once the public university archives are established. The findings of the study through interviews revealed that individuals and institutions benefit from establishing archives for various reasons. They can quickly make references in disputes, establish new programs and generate income for researchers. Archives aid in finding evidence regarding various issues and can be used commercially. They create space in offices for records production, increasing efficiency and reducing search time. Access to information becomes easier, and students studying records and archives have a place to refer and learn more. University archives ensure easy accessibility of archival material, reducing file backlogs and risks. They also help decision-makers refer easily. Moreover, disruption to customers who come from far away to track their information or that of their relatives will be reduced as many of them come from the far regions and solutions are not quickly obtained because documents are not available on time due to the current environment. The employees will also benefit from a safe working environment, as they can avoid health challenges when searching for non-active records. In this regard, Participant UDSM 5 said:

Disruption to customers who come from far away to track their information or that of their relatives will be reduced. Many come from the regions and solutions are not quickly obtained because documents are not available on time due to the current environment. On our part, we as employees will benefit from the working environment. We have had health challenges when searching for documents in dangerous environments where non-active records were stored.

Participants at the selected universities unanimously highlighted numerous benefits that would arise from establishing university archives. They emphasized that archives would enhance operational efficiency by allowing easy access to records, decreasing the time spent retrieving information and ensuring a systematic organization of documents. Archives were also regarded as crucial for supporting decision-making processes by providing reliable reference points for past actions, particularly concerning issues such as land disputes, academic program evaluations and administrative choices. Participants further noted that well-maintained archives could generate income by attracting researchers in need of historical data and records. Other perceived advantages included improved research capabilities, protection and preservation of records related to prominent leaders, enhanced university reputation and visibility, reduced risks of file loss, better space management and improved working conditions for staff. Additionally, university archives were seen as essential for serving external stakeholders such as alumni and community members seeking past records, thereby strengthening the institution's role of community engagement and historical continuity.

#### *4.3 Types of Documents to be Kept in Public University Archives*

The findings show that the most frequently cited records include historical and governance documents (104), legal documents (96) and faculty publications, theses and dissertations (96); the findings underline the significance of preserving institutional policies, decision-making records and scholarly output. Financial records (93), structure and land documents (86); these were also documented as crucial for ensuring transparency and long-term planning. Other substantial documents included enrolment statistics (74), committee records and departmental reports (75) and hospital records (63), reflecting the diverse information needs at universities. The relatively lower priority of hospital records suggests their specialized nature or separate management. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for a structured archival system that supports research, institutional memory and operational efficiency while ensuring accessibility to essential records.

From a research outlook, these findings underline the critical role of university archives in preserving institutional knowledge, guaranteeing liability and supporting research. The strong preference for historical, legal, academic and financial records proposes that universities recognize the importance of maintaining structured documentation for governance, institutional memory and scholarly reference. Notably, the emphasis on faculty publications, research papers and student theses (96 responses) highlight the role of archives in facilitating academic continuity and knowledge dissemination.

However, the relatively lower prioritization of hospital records (63 responses) raises questions about whether such documents are managed separately under healthcare regulations or if their archival importance is underappreciated. Additionally, while financial and property records were considered crucial, the findings suggest a possible gap in awareness regarding the preservation of digital records and emerging data formats. This highlights the need for a well-defined archival policy, ensuring that both physical and digital records are properly managed for institutional efficiency, accessibility and historical documentation. Furthermore, challenges such as funding constraints, technological limitations and lack of awareness may hinder effective archival management, necessitating strategic interventions to establish sustainable university archives. These findings relate to Williams (2014) who stated that it is important for any organization to keep organizational records for future reference. These findings are summarized in Table 5:

Table 5. Types of Documents to be Kept in Public University Archives

Variable	Frequency
Legal documents (e.g., charters, by-laws, etc)	96
Faculty publications and research papers, theses and dissertations	96
Enrolment statistics	74
Documents containing information regarding the history, policies, personnel, and decision-making processes of the institution, e.g. council documents, policies, procedures and strategic plans	104
Committee records and departmental reports	75
Hospital records	63
Financial records	93
Building and land documents	86
Legal documents (e.g., charters, by-laws)	96
Faculty publications and research papers, theses and dissertations	96
Enrolment statistics	74
Documents containing information regarding the history, policies, personnel, and decision-making processes of the institution, e.g. council documents, policies, procedures and strategic plans	104

The findings through interviews at the selected universities consistently emphasized the importance of preserving a wide range of records with enduring value at university archives. Participants highlighted that such records are essential for supporting legal processes, decision-making, historical reference and academic continuity. Among the types of records identified were legal documents such as university charters, documents establishing academic programs, administrative records including meeting minutes and decisions and records related to university leadership and governance. Academic records like student files, research reports, and enrolment data were also mentioned, alongside historical documents such as photographs and audio and video recordings of events and speeches, particularly those involving national leaders and prominent alumni. Participants further noted the value of preserving policy documents, strategic plans, personnel records, tender agreements and files linked to institutional events such as Nyerere Day Commemorations. The need to maintain documents related to deceased staff and retirees was also emphasized, particularly for assisting relatives to make follow-ups. In this regard, Participant UDSM 5 said:

There are many types, including personnel records for retirees and the deceased because their relatives come to follow up. You find that a parent has died many years ago, but later you find children coming to follow up on their parent's benefits. In the current environment, it becomes very challenging to find those old records. In terms of subject records, there are guidelines and documents from the central government, and all records with enduring values can be used as references.

Overall, the responses reflected a strong understanding of the diverse and critical nature of records that need to be archived to support institutional memory, research, accountability and heritage preservation.

#### *4.4 Infrastructures Required for Establishing Public University Archives*

The third objective of the study was to find out infrastructural requirements for establishment of public university archives in Tanzania. Through interviews, the study revealed that when an institution intends to establish archives, consideration should be on the location, volume of records, buildings, storage items and a qualified archives protection standard. The building should be organized, have modern and traditional facilities for non-digital documents and have security systems to control fire, water and other risks. Documents need protection and the building must be durable and easily accessible. Electronic records require computers, scanners and security cameras. Storage facilities should include shelves, cabinets, computers, scanners, printers, security cameras, alarms and guards. The building should also be free from interference from non-archivists.

Participants were asked, “What do you think could be the main infrastructures required for establishment of university archives at your institution?” The interviewed participants emphasized the importance of selecting a suitable location and constructing a purpose-built facility designed specifically for archival functions, not just opting to use former residential or office spaces. The building must be durable, secure and capable of protecting both physical and electronic records. The essential equipment mentioned included shelves, cabinets, computers, scanners, flash disks and audio-visual storage facilities. For digital records, the need for modern IT infrastructures was underscored, while for traditional records, proper shelving and storage conditions were

considered crucial. Security measures such as surveillance cameras, alarms and systems to protect against risks like fire and water damage were seen as critical. Additionally, climate control systems like air conditioners and dehumidifiers were considered important to maintain suitable environmental conditions for records preservation. In this aspect, Participant UDSM 5 said:

First, it is a building, it is important to build it because until now there are documents stored in containers that allow rainwater to enter and there is no good air circulation. Also, friendly equipment for the maintenance of records should be available. Shelves and cabinets are friendlier to paper records. In electronic records, there should be computers, scanners and printers. Security cameras and alarms should be installed. Additionally, there should be security guards to safeguard the building and material against intruders. In the building there should be no interference from people not involved in archives management as is the case now where you have Lawson or IT people working inside the archives.

The findings through the survey questionnaires, as presented in Table 6 indicated among the identified requirements, a suitable location or building as the most critical, with 119 respondents recognizing its importance. Security systems were recognized by 110 and back-up and recovery mechanisms were equally prioritized by 110 respondents reflecting the growing awareness of the risks posed by unauthorized access, data breaches and potential loss of critical information due to disasters or technical failures. These were followed by 109 respondents who said that digital systems and digitization equipment are among the requirements needed to establish archives. Disaster control systems were recognized by 99 respondents, while 96 respondents acknowledged policies and procedures as foundational for guiding archival practices. Clear policies ensure consistency in archival operations, from document acquisition to disposal, and establish the legal framework within which archives operate. Lastly, staffing was also noted by 92 respondents as a critical factor for effective management of archival materials. Table 6 summarizes these findings:

Table 6. Infrastructures Required for Establishing University Archives

Variable	Frequency
Suitable location /building	119
Security systems	110
Digital systems	109
Digitization equipment	109
Backup and recovery	110
Disaster's control systems	99
Policies and procedures	96
Staffing	92

#### 4.5 Possible Challenges that Affect Establishment of Public University Archives

The findings through survey questionnaires, as presented in Table 7 show that 96 respondents agreed that financial constraint is the main challenge hindering establishment of university archives. A total of 64 respondents said that lack of awareness of the importance of archives is a challenge affecting establishment of university archives. Also, 59 respondents pointed out the lack of institutional support as one of the critical issues in the establishment of university archives. Another group of 50 respondents cited technological limitations as the challenge of establishing archives at universities, while about 49 respondents cited accessibility of documents and preservation of digital documents, respectively, and 45 respondents indicated sustainability and long-term maintenance as among the challenges. Also, 44 respondents referred to resistance to change and tradition among university members, while limited building space was referred by 41 respondents, and lack of professional archivists was mentioned by 40 respondents as the factors likely to affect establishment of university archives. Likewise, 38 respondents indicated legal and ethical concerns, and 35 respondents referred to preservation of physical documents as among the challenges prohibiting the establishment of university archives.

Table 7. Challenges that Affect the Establishment of University Archives

Possible Challenge	Frequency
Financial constraints	96
Lack of institutional support	59
Limited building space	41
Technological limitations	50
Resistance to change /traditional mind-sets.	44
Staffing issues/professional archivists	40
Legal and ethical concerns	38
Preservation of physical documents	35
Accessibility of documents	49
Sustainability and long-term maintenance	45
Preservation of digital documents	49
Awareness of the importance of archives	64

These findings are also related to interview findings at the three selected universities. The study revealed that limited funds, lack of awareness about the importance of archives, the inadequacy of digital systems and negative perceptions of management affect the establishment of public university archives. The study revealed that the universities face funding and support challenges for establishing archives due to government budget ceilings. Thus, despite efforts to request budget allocation, the records and archives management issues are often removed or given low priority. Leaders' awareness is low and lack of professionals in records matters are an obstacle in establishing the archives. The absence of a records department also hinders the establishment of archives as many issues are not given priority, leading to delayed submissions.

Concerning these findings, the participants had the following responses: The interviewed participants identified several challenges that could hinder the establishment of university archives. A major concern highlighted by multiple respondents was the inadequate funding. Participants emphasized that government-imposed budget ceilings tend not to align with the actual resource requirements needed to develop archives, making it difficult for public universities to allocate sufficient funds for the initiative.

Another critical challenge was the lack of a dedicated records department. It was noted that the absence of an autonomous unit solely responsible for records and archives management weakens the institutional capacity to drive and sustain the archival agenda. In some cases, the records function has been absorbed into other departments such as Human Resources. This tends to limit its visibility and influence. In this regard, Participant UDSM 3 said, *"The absence of a records department can be a hindrance. For the issue to have momentum, it is important to have a strong department that manages its process. This is a major challenge as the institutional structure has absorbed the records unit into the Directorate of Human Resources Management."*

Participants also mentioned limited awareness among university decision-makers and top management regarding the value and importance of proper records and archives management. This lack of awareness often leads to low prioritization of archives-related proposals and activities. In some instances, proposals are sidelined even when submitted early, simply because other departments or units are given more attention. In this regard, Participant UDSM 5 said:

Lack of awareness on the importance of archives among decision-makers can hinder the process at large records and archives management issues are not given priorities. Sometimes we submit our proposals to the management earlier, but you find that priority is given to the ones submitted later.

Additionally, inter-departmental conflicts and the risk of monopolization of archival functions by unrelated departments, such as library services or information science directorates were raised as concerns. This leads to misaligned priorities that favour other areas over the core needs of archives. In this regard, Participant UDSM 3 said, *"... You may find that the Directorate of Information Sciences is going to monopolize it... And if given to them, you may find that their mindset prioritizes the library area and not archives."*

Through the open-ended questions in the survey questionnaires, respondents identified several possible challenges. One respondent said, *"The varying environmental and storage conditions, air pollutions and persistence in disaster occurrence, intentional damaging (vandalism), minimal physical security on the premises housing archives may impact preservation of archives negatively."* Another respondent identified three

*challenges that “records and archives management is not prioritized in most public offices; there is not enough commitment of implementing the plans by the top management as things remain in papers; and management of records and archives seems like wastage of resources.” Similarly, another respondent said, “Lack of guidelines supporting university archives can be an obstacle in establishing university archives.”*

As noted by Shepherd and Cook (2021), universities must navigate the delicate balance of maintaining fragile physical records while simultaneously adopting digital preservation strategies that ensure long-term accessibility and integrity. The challenges identified require strategic interventions that include increased funding, capacity building, policy formulation and digital transformation. Universities such as the UDSM, MU, and UDOM must prioritize the establishment of robust archival systems to enhance institutional governance and academic excellence. Regional and global literature concur with this and Shepherd and Cook (2021) claim that addressing these challenges is critical for aligning university archives with international best practices and ensuring their relevance in an era of rapid technological and institutional change.

These findings concur with a study by Mohlala (2020) who stated that many African universities lag in adopting electronic document management systems due to financial and technical barriers. Furthermore, they are also supported by Khabouze (2022) who states that lack of awareness of the benefits of digital transformation and fear of job redundancy are significant barriers that impede modernization efforts in archival practices. These findings were furtherly echoed by Simwaka, Malanga & Chipeta (2023) who state that most universities in sub-Saharan Africa face a serious shortage of trained archivists and records managers. The skills gap, as noted by Rossman (2023), affects the quality-of-service delivery and the ability to implement modern archival standards.

#### *4.5.1 Recommended Measures to Address the Challenges*

To establish the possible ways likely to address the challenges, the study sought to collect the respondents' opinions on the strategies that may be used to address the identified challenges. The respondents/participants suggested that universities should write projects to secure reliable funds. The participants suggested that universities should establish a department with a strong budget to manage and coordinate the establishment of archives. Concerning lack of awareness among practitioners, there should be outreach programs to raise awareness about the importance of records-keeping, and the top management should be informed about the importance of archives, as they may not have encountered their importance during their studies. Thus, stakeholders should be made aware of the importance of proper records and archives management. The Tanzania Records and Archives Management Professionals Association (TRAMPA) should persuade the government to prioritize records-keeping and document management issues.

However, the participants noted that the issue of addressing challenges has persisted for years, and no proper solution has been found. Thus, they proposed various strategic directions to support the successful establishment and sustainability of university archives. A key recommendation was the development of well-crafted project proposals aimed at attracting dedicated funding. It was emphasized that such funds should be protected from diversion to other uses to ensure consistent financial support for archival initiatives.

Another recurrent suggestion was the need to raise awareness among stakeholders, particularly top management and key decision-makers. Participants noted that raising awareness of leaders on the importance of records and archives management could significantly influence budget allocations and institutional priorities. Without this understanding, leaders are often reluctant to support archival development, even when proposals are well presented. To further garner support, participants advocated deliberate sensitization efforts targeting both management and action officers. This, they argued, would increase the likelihood of approvals and resource commitment when proposals are tabled.

Additionally, there was a call for professional bodies such as the TRAMPA to take a more proactive role. Participants urged TRAMPA to lobby the government to mandate the prioritization of records and archives management in public institutions. It was stressed however that advocacy efforts must go beyond discussions and result in tangible actions and policy shifts, as past appeals have often been ignored or delayed.

Through the open-ended questions in the survey questionnaires, respondents recommended several measures. In this regard, one respondent recommended:

Commitment by top management in allocating adequate resources as well as raising awareness to top



management and the public on the importance of having an archival repository for the preservation of historical and valuable documents.

Likewise, another respondent proposed to have an effective financial strategic plan towards its achievement, while another respondent suggested setting aside enough budgets and training one or two staff on archival management. In connection with budget issues, one respondent suggested that the government should provide enough budgets for the establishment of university archives. Likewise, enough knowledge should be provided to staff on the importance of archives. As not enough, one respondent proposed three measures, which are development of policies to support presence of university archives; inclusion of university archives in strategic plan of the university; and seeking the tone from the top.

To cement on the above recommendations, one respondent recommended three measures as follows:

- Records and archives management should be given priority like the other management functions.
- The Records and Archive Management Department (RAMD) is to give directives/orders to all public offices to have internal archives. This can ensure the organization's commitment towards archives management.
- Establishment of an independent department for records and archives management in each public office so that enough resources are allocated for the department to run its activities smoothly.

As for the measures towards addressing the anticipated challenges, another respondent recommended as follows:

Installation of early warning systems for immediate responses to impending disasters, appropriate rendering of preservation education to staff and users visiting archival repository, imposition of strong sanctions against intentional and non-intentional acts of damaging archives, imposition of physical security around the area serving archival repository, proper location of the archive repository (the facility should not be positioned in lower land) to avoid possible floods and other related disaster impacts.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### *5.1 Conclusion*

This study aimed to assess the necessity, conditions, and challenges of establishing public university archives in Tanzania, focusing on Mzumbe University, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the University of Dodoma. The research questions focused on the need for archives, the types of documents to be preserved, necessary infrastructural and technological requirements, and main obstacles preventing their establishment. A mixed method with a convergent design was employed, with 223 participants selected for data collection. The findings highlighted that public university archives play a crucial role in preserving institutional memory, enhancing transparency and accountability. Likewise, they are supporting academic and administrative functions. The study also identified key types of documents that should be archived, including administrative records, research outputs, student records and historical materials. Moreover, the study revealed that the successful establishment of university archives requires adequate infrastructures, including secure and climate-controlled storage facilities as well as a well-structured digital archiving system. However, challenges such as financial constraints, lack of skilled personnel and inadequate policy frameworks were identified as potential obstacles to archive development. To address these challenges, universities should invest in sustainable funding mechanisms, capacity-building programs and clear archival policies to ensure efficient records management and long-term preservation. The study provides actionable recommendations for safeguarding institutional memory, improving governance, and ensuring accessibility of academic and administrative records for research and decision-making. Establishing well-functioning university archives will not only enhance decision-making and institutional governance but will also contribute to the overall academic and research development in public universities in Tanzania.

### *5.2 Recommendations*

The study recommends that the establishment of archives in public universities in Tanzania is crucial for supporting key institutional functions. University archives will enhance decision-making by promoting transparency and accountability while also supporting academic activities. To ensure the effective establishment and management of public university archives, the recommendations made according to specific objectives are as follows:

### *Archival Needs*

Public universities should conduct comprehensive assessments to identify archival needs, considering factors such as institutional memory, research support and legal compliance. Likewise, policies and guidelines should be developed to mandate the systematic preservation and management of essential university records.

### *Standardizing and Preserving Documents based on their Categories*

Public universities should classify and standardize documents for archiving, including administrative documents, research outputs, student records and historical materials. This should go in line with the implementation of a digital archiving system to facilitate preservation and easy retrieval of both physical and electronic archival materials.

### *Archival Infrastructures*

Public universities should invest in a secure location, climate-controlled storage facilities to protect archival materials from deterioration, theft or environmental damage. A dedicated archival management system, modern cabinet, including trained personnel and digitization infrastructures should also be established to ensure smooth organization and retrieval of records in public universities.

### *Funding and Manpower to Address the Challenges*

Public universities should secure sustainable funding sources to support the development and maintenance of archives. Capacity-building programs should also be introduced to equip management and staff with the necessary skills for effective archival management and digital preservation. These recommendations will open eyes of public universities in Tanzania to strengthen their archival systems, ensuring long-term institutional accountability, academic integrity and research support.

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