



## **LEGAL RECORDS AND JUSTICE DISPENSATION IN FEDERAL AND STATE HIGH COURTS IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the role of legal records in the dispensation of justice within the Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Despite the crucial role of legal records in ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the dispensation of justice, the Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, face significant challenges in managing, preserving, and accessing these records, which hinders timely and fair judicial outcomes. Through a survey of judges, legal practitioners, and academic lawyers, the study explores the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings, the effects of legal record unavailability, sources of legal records, and challenges affecting record management practices. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The population include 6 judges of Federal and 32 State High Court in Port Harcourt as well as 201 legal practitioners and academic lawyers. Census sampling technique was utilised to sample the 329 members of the population. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire. The face and content validity of the instrument was obtained through superficial reading, and the reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The findings highlight the critical importance of legal records in supporting transparency, accountability, and fair adjudication of cases. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate technology, legal complexities, resistance to changes, and training deficiencies pose obstacles to effective record management. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure the integrity and accessibility of legal records, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial process.*

**Keywords:** Legal records, Evidence, Admissibility, Justice, Courts

### **Introduction**

Court is an institution with the authority to adjudicate on legal dispute between parties and administer justice in civil, criminal and administrative matters in accordance with the rule of law. Delma, James and Brian (2019) described court as a person or body of persons having judicial authority to hear and resolve dispute in civil, criminal, ecclesiastical or military cases. In Nigeria presently, there are many courts ranging from the



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Supreme Court (as the apex court), Court of Appeal, Federal and States High Courts, Customary Court of Appeal, Sharia Court of Appeal in many states (especially in Moslem dominated states, and in Federal Capital Territory (FCT)), Customary Courts, Magistrate Courts and the lower courts, Grade III, II, and I. They are saddled with the responsibility of interpreting and enforcing the law for the good of the society. In the course of resolving disputes between parties, records are generated by courts. These records are referred to as legal records. These legal records include case files, registers, record books, cause lists, receipts of registered cases, documents presented as exhibits to mention but a few. These records are of keen interest to the parties in disputes, courts, legal practitioners, law lecturers and students, historians, etc.

The term 'record' is derived from a Latin word *recordum* meaning 'the testimony of a witness'. The British Standards Institution (2020) espoused the critical relationship between the management of records and their legal implications, emphasizing that only records that meet certain standards can be used as valid evidence in legal contexts. Ujournunna and Ezenwuzor (2019) defined legal record as a specific type of documents that serve as legal evidence, as such records are often necessary in order to prove compliance, regulation and law. Records are created, received and kept in pursuance of legal obligations. It is used to prove an existence of transaction for future references as evidence. A recent understanding of legal records often involves records generated and maintained by key institutions such as courts, police force, and prosecutors. These records are viewed as essential for ensuring transparency and accountability, with significant legal implications. They serve as official documentation for judicial and law enforcement activities, influencing both case outcomes and broader justice practices (California Courts, 2024; U.S. Department of Justice, 2023). Records produced by courts are not only important, they are also of value to the court themselves, the parties to the cases heard in the courts and the researchers and historians.

Motsaathebe and Mnyama (2007) argued that within the legal context, records provide evidence of every course of actions and enhance accountability in governments as well as in organisations. They further added that if legal records are not created, maintained and made accessible, citizens may have difficulties in the course of pursuing their matters in the courts. Not only that the judiciary will also fail to adjudicate justice in criminal and civil actions if evidence is not presented in a reliable, authentic and timely manner. Expressing the value of legal records to litigations, Thurston (2005) remarked that lack of evidence in the form of records can lead to failure of the judiciary system to bring justice to the citizens. This leads to loss of faith in the administration of justice. The administration of justice and the whole of the work done by judges, magistrates and the court generally would have no meaning if their decisions, orders and judgements were not properly documented, implemented or carried out (DFID) (n d). It is as a result of this that Ropper and Millar (1999) documented that the trustworthiness of legal institutions depends on the good care of their records.

The importance of legal records to the dispensation of justice cannot be overemphasised as it is seen as daily records of court process and proceedings. With the modern technologies legal records are no longer limited to print form but also in electronic form or digital form. The term



electronic record is not defined in our Evidence Act, 2011. The lawmakers tactically avoided defining the concept to avoid misinterpretations and wrongful application by scholars and legal practitioners in the course of research and legal proceedings. Ajileye (2019) opined that lawmakers may have avoided the task of having to define a term that runs the risk of becoming obsolete within a short time, given the rapidity with which information technology changes in this modern age. Ujournunna, Stobo and Ahiauzu (2021) see it as data or information that has been captured and fixed for storage and manipulation in an automated system and that requires the use of the system to render it intelligible by a person can be called a digital record. Electronic evidences are now admissible in Nigerian courts by the virtue of Nigerian Evidence Act 2011. Section 34 of the Nigerian Evidence Act 2011, states;

- (a) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, any information contained in electronic record which is printed on a paper, stored, recorded or copied in optical or magnetic media produced by a computer (hereinafter referred to as the computer output) shall be deemed to be also a document. If the conditions mentioned in this section are satisfied in relation to the information and computer in question and shall be admissible in any proceedings, without further proof or production of the original, as evidence of any contents of the original, as evidence of any contents of the original or any fact stated therein of which direct evidence would be admissible.

In this context, legal admissibility refers whether the court would accept digital files as a valid piece of evidence in a legal proceeding in a court depends on its relevance to the matter and mode of creation; it is in lieu of this that Ajileye (2019) documented that, even though records can be admissible (i.e. accepted as evidence) the opposing party and their legal counsel may call the evidential weight into questions if there are any doubts as to the records, veracity or integrity. Ajileye (2019) maintained that once electronic evidence is admitted, the court, ultimately, has to decide what evidential weight to be attached, Section 34(1)(b) of the Evidence Act, 2011 provides a guide on what a court should do in ascribing weight to statements contained in a document produced by a computer. This section provides that the court in estimating the weight to be attached to such a statement, regard shall be had to “all the circumstances from which any inference can reasonably be drawn as to the accuracy or otherwise of the statement.

Ujournunna, Stobo and Ahiauzu (2021) stated that before digital evidence must be admitted the following conditions must be satisfied. These are that digital files must be accurate, (i.e. unaltered representations of the information); authentic (i.e. what it purports to be); and not have been tampered with (i.e. Digital files must be stored in a system that is secured throughout the files lifetime). That if the digital files fall short of these conditions the files evidential weight can be severally called into question in a case of fact under dispute. Abankwah and Hamutumwa (2017) opined that the significance of proper records management system is for effective court administration. Their research highlights that accurate, authentic records are essential for upholding justice and ensuring that citizens' rights are protected. They also emphasize the need for reliable electronic records, especially as courts transition to digital formats, to ensure that the integrity and admissibility of records in legal proceedings are maintained. Thus, the admissibility of legal records



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depends on the relevancy, authenticity and integrity of such records, these determine the value and weight that court attached to record in the legal proceeding.

**Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to ascertain the role of legal records in justice dispensation in high courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

- i. ascertain the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria;
- ii. examine the effect and failure of the court to provide legal records relating to a certain trial in courts, Nigeria;
- iii. identify the sources of legal records in both Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria; and
- iv. find out the challenges affecting the organisations and utilisations of legal records in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**Review of Related Literature**

Studies have shown that a substantial number of efforts have been put in by scholars in this area of research. International Records Management Trust (IRMT) posited that court records are created and received to aid in the process of the case hearing and court refers to the case file as the case proceeds. Motsaathebe and Mnjama (2009) underscores the critical role of court records in legal decision-making, emphasizing that such records often serve as precedents and are essential for case retrieval and appeals. To buttress this claim, Mafu (2014) opined that to pass judgment, magistrates depend on the availability of records with accurate information from different sources and from precedent cases especially in countries where common law is used. Meyer (2024) expressed that the proper management of court records is essential for maintaining trust in the legal system, as it ensures transparency, accountability, and fair access to justice. The author further explained that modern technology is improving court operations and ensuring that records are accurate, reliable, and accessible when needed, transforming court operations by enhancing case management, improving the accuracy of records, and ensuring that they are readily available for legal processes, including appeals and precedents.

Omehia and Lulu-Pokubo (2020) revealed in their study that the availability of information for use by judicial officers so as to adjudicate judicial cases depends on the way records have been physically and intellectually organised, that the information which the judicial officers in the courts need for judgments, proceedings and decision making is embedded in internally generated and externally received records. They maintained that the proliferation of records generation/creation is the major headache confronting judicial institutions in Nigeria. Meyer (2024) advocated that for a court to properly manage its records, ICT infrastructure is needed. The author maintained that technologies such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing are needed that such systems in place ensure co-ordination amongst all the key players in the life of case record. It is in the light of this that Ujoununna, Stobo and Ahiauzu (2021) argued that in managing digital law records, technology ought to be considered in that records become effective, efficient and consistent part of business



activities by evaluating the types of software systems for managing digital law records over time and analysis of approaches to integrating digital law records management in our day-to-day life.

Discussing the problems confronting the management of legal records, Omehia and Lulu-Pokubo (2020) opined that lack of adequate and well-trained staff, they added that the staff of these records are not trained in the area of records management, that some of the staff engages in unethical practices like hiding of files and misfiling, as a result cannot manage legal records professionally. It is in view of this that the authors further submitted that the unorganised nature of records in Nigerian institutions has been greatly influenced by near lack of awareness and nonchalant attitude of organisations to records management training. Omehia and Lulu-Pokubo (2020) in their study revealed that all records surveyed were generally in a bad deplorable condition and very chaotic. Abioye (2007) in a separate study depicted that a major problem in Nigeria archives and record centres and for the majority of African archives is infrastructure. The paper has been able to explore the meaning of legal records, the value and the guiding principles for admissibility of legal record as evidence in legal proceeding, the problem of record keeping. Despite the crucial role of legal records in ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the dispensation of justice, the Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, face significant challenges in managing, preserving, and accessing these records, which hinders timely and fair judicial outcomes.

### **Methodology**

Survey research design was used for the study. Data collection was done using structured questionnaire titled “Legal Records and Dispensation of Justice” (LRDJ). The questionnaire contained 28 items and the response was structured to modified Likert 4-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The population include 239 legal professionals including federal and state judges as well as legal practitioners and academic lawyers (See Table 1: Population distribution). Due to the relatively few number of persons that constitute the population, the study utilised census sampling technique to sample all members of the population. A total of 239 copies of the questionnaire were administered to judges of Federal and State High Court in Port Harcourt as well as legal practitioners and academic lawyers of both University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University. Out of the total sample (239), 211 correctly filled the questionnaire and returned, indicating 88.3% return rate. The data collected were analysed and presented in tables using descriptive statistics of mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (sd).

**Table 1:** Study Population and Sample

S/N	Group	Population	Percentage
1	Federal Judges	6	2.5
2	State Judges	32	13.4
3	Legal Practitioners and Academic lawyers	201	84.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100</b>

N= 201



### Data Analysis

What is the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt?

**Table 2:** Usefulness of Legal Records in Court Proceedings in the Federal and State High Courts

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	mean	±	Decision
1	Legal records provide comprehensive documentation of case details, evidence, and proceedings.	113	82	8	8	3.43	2.4	Agree
2	Access to legal records enhances transparency and accountability within the judicial system.	78	82	20	31	2.98	2.0	Agree
3	Legal records serve as valuable references for legal professionals, aiding in case preparation and analysis.	66	78	31	35	2.83	3.1	Agree
4	The availability of accurate and up-to-date legal records facilitates fair and impartial adjudication of cases.	74	82	31	23	2.98	2.7	Agree
5	Legal records contribute to the establishment of legal precedents and assist in the interpretation of laws.	59	90	47	16	2.91	0.7	Agree
6	Efficient management and organisation of legal records streamline court proceedings and reduce delays.	39	66	78	27	2.56	2.6	Agree
7	Electronic access to legal records enhances accessibility and promotes efficiency in legal research and case management.	27	66	27	90	2.15	3.8	Disagree

The analysis of the questionnaire items aimed at ascertaining the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt reveals a generally positive perception among the respondents. Based on the results presented in the table, it is clear that the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings in the Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt is generally agreed upon by the respondents. The items that received a mean score above 2.50 indicate strong agreement, with the highest-rated items being those related to the role of legal records in providing comprehensive documentation (mean = 3.43), enhancing transparency and accountability (mean = 2.98), and serving as valuable references for case preparation (mean = 2.83).

These results reflect the significant contribution of legal records in improving the fairness, transparency, and efficiency of the judicial process. However, the item on electronic access to legal records received a mean score below 2.50 (mean = 2.15), indicating disagreement with the notion that electronic access enhances accessibility and efficiency in legal research and case management. This suggests that there might be challenges in fully adopting electronic records in the court system, possibly due to infrastructural or technical limitations. The findings highlight the critical role of legal records in supporting the judicial system but also point to areas where improvements can be made, especially in digital access and management.



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However, there were some reservations regarding the effectiveness of electronic access to legal records in enhancing accessibility and efficiency in legal research and case management. Despite this skepticism, the overall findings suggest a consensus on the significance of legal records in court proceedings, highlighting their importance in ensuring transparency, fairness, and effective case management. Therefore, while there may be areas for improvement, such as in electronic access systems, the majority of respondents affirm the value and usefulness of legal records in supporting the administration of justice in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt (Table 1).

What is the effect and failure of the court to provide legal records relating to a certain trial in courts?

**Table 3:** Effect and Failure of the Court to Provide Legal Records Relating to a Certain Trial in the Courts

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	mean	±	Decision
1	The unavailability of legal records pertaining to a trial significantly hinders the ability to review case details and evidence comprehensively.	109	47	39	16	3.19	40.0	Agree
2	Lack of access to legal records from a trial impedes transparency and accountability within the judicial system.	35	98	55	23	2.69	32.6	Agree
3	The failure to provide legal records adversely affects the fair and impartial adjudication of cases.	39	117	47	8	2.89	46.2	Agree
4	Incomplete or missing legal records contribute to uncertainty and challenges in establishing legal precedents and interpreting laws.	35	117	39	20	2.80	43.8	Agree
5	Court delays caused by the unavailability of legal records prolong the resolution of legal disputes and undermine the efficiency of the judicial process.	31	129	39	12	2.85	52.1	Agree
6	The absence of legal records impacts the ability of legal professionals to adequately represent clients and prepare legal strategies.	23	121	55	12	2.74	49.1	Agree
7	Electronic access to legal records is crucial for ensuring timely and equitable access to justice for all parties involved in legal proceedings.	43	125	31	12	2.94	49.9	Agree

The results from Table 3 highlight the significant consequences of the failure to provide legal records relating to trials in the courts. Respondents generally agreed with the assertion that the unavailability of legal records hinders the ability to review case details and evidence comprehensively (mean = 3.19), which is critical for fair decision-making. Furthermore, the lack of access to legal records impedes transparency and accountability in the judicial system (mean = 2.69), and the failure to provide such records affects the fair and impartial adjudication of cases (mean = 2.89). These findings indicate that missing or incomplete records contribute to a lack of clarity in legal proceedings, which could potentially undermine justice.



Court delays resulting from the unavailability of legal records prolong the resolution of legal disputes (mean = 2.85), further exacerbating inefficiency within the judicial process. The absence of legal records also affects legal professionals' ability to adequately represent their clients and prepare legal strategies (mean = 2.74). Moreover, respondents emphasized the importance of electronic access to legal records, which is seen as crucial for ensuring timely and equitable access to justice (mean = 2.94). Overall, these results underline the crucial role that the availability and proper management of legal records play in ensuring fairness, transparency, and efficiency within the judicial system.

Despite some reservations, particularly regarding electronic access to legal records, the overall consensus underscores the critical importance of addressing issues related to legal record availability and access. Ensuring timely access to accurate legal records is essential for upholding transparency, fairness, and efficiency within the judicial system, ultimately enhancing access to justice for all parties involved in legal proceedings. Therefore, the findings from Table 2 highlight the imperative for courts to prioritize effective record management practices to mitigate the adverse effects of legal record unavailability and ensure the integrity of the judicial process.

What are the sources of legal records in both Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt?

**Table 4:** Sources of Legal Records in the Federal and State High Courts

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	mean	±	Decision
1	Legal practitioners find the electronic databases provided by the Federal and State High Courts to be comprehensive and easily accessible for retrieving legal records.	94	66	23	27	3.07	3.5	Agree
2	The availability of physical archives and repositories within the Federal and State High Courts significantly aids in accessing historical legal records.	51	86	39	35	2.72	2.1	Agree
3	Legal professionals consider legal publishing companies and databases as valuable sources for accessing legal records from both Federal and State High Courts.	66	109	27	8	3.11	4.9	Agree
4	The cooperation and assistance provided by court personnel and staff facilitate the retrieval of legal records from both Federal and State High Courts.	59	90	39	23	2.87	2.6	Agree
5	Online portals and websites maintained by the Federal and State High Courts offer user-friendly interfaces and efficient search functionalities for accessing legal records.	55	109	27	20	2.94	4.7	Agree
6	Legal practitioners find that professional legal associations and organisations play a significant role in providing access to legal records from both Federal and State High Courts.	70	98	31	12	3.07	3.6	Agree
7	The availability of legal records from both Federal and State High Courts through third-party research institutions and libraries contributes to broader accessibility and research capabilities.	39	98	51	23	2.72	3.0	Agree





Table 3 indicates that respondents generally agree on the various sources of legal records in both Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt. Legal practitioners find the electronic databases provided by the courts to be comprehensive and easily accessible, with a mean score of 3.07. Similarly, respondents perceive legal publishing companies and databases as valuable sources for accessing legal records, highlighting their importance in legal research and case preparation (mean score=3.11). Furthermore, the cooperation and assistance provided by court personnel and staff are seen as facilitating the retrieval of legal records, underscoring the significance of internal court resources in supporting access to legal documentation (mean score=2.87).

Respondents acknowledge the role of physical archives and repositories within the courts in aiding access to historical legal records, although to a slightly lesser extent (mean score=2.72). Additionally, online portals and websites maintained by the courts are perceived as offering user-friendly interfaces and efficient search functionalities, further enhancing accessibility to legal records (mean score=2.94). Legal professionals also recognize the contribution of professional legal associations and organisations, as well as third-party research institutions and libraries, in providing access to legal records, highlighting the collaborative efforts across various sectors to support broader accessibility and research capabilities (mean scores=3.07 and 2.72, respectively).

The findings suggest that a diverse range of sources, including electronic databases, physical archives, legal publishing companies, court personnel, online portals, legal associations, and third-party institutions, play integral roles in providing access to legal records from both Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt. This indicates a multi-faceted approach to ensuring comprehensive access to legal documentation, thereby supporting legal research, case preparation, and broader research capabilities within the legal profession.



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What are the challenges affecting the organisations and utilisations of legal records in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt?

**Table 5:** Challenges Affecting the Organisations and Utilisations of Legal Records in the High Courts

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	±	Decision
1	Limited resources, including funding and personnel, hinder organisations' ability to implement efficient legal record management practices.	66	90	27	27	2.93	3.8	Agree
2	Inadequate technological infrastructure and outdated systems impede the digitization and electronic management of legal records within organisations.	39	94	47	31	2.67	2.1	Agree
3	Legal and regulatory complexities surrounding data privacy and security present challenges in ensuring compliance and safeguarding sensitive legal records.	47	106	35	23	2.83	3.4	Agree
4	The complexity of legal record management systems poses significant challenges to effectively organising and accessing legal records within organisations.	43	102	39	27	2.76	3.2	Agree
5	Resistance to change and lack of awareness among stakeholders hinder the adoption and utilisation of advanced legal record management technologies and practices.	66	113	8	23	3.06	4.4	Agree
6	Inefficient communication and collaboration among departments and personnel within organisations lead to fragmentation and duplication of legal record management efforts.	70	90	31	20	3.00	3.9	Agree
7	Insufficient training and education on legal record management best practices contribute to errors, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in the utilisation of legal records within organisations.	59	109	27	16	3.00	1.9	Agree

Table 4 reveals several challenges affecting the organisations and utilisation of legal records in the Federal and State High Courts to include limited resources, funding and personnel, hindering organisations' ability to implement efficient legal record management practices, indicating a need for increased support and investment in this area (mean score=2.93). Similarly, inadequate technological infrastructure and outdated systems are seen as barriers to the digitization and electronic management of legal records within organisations, highlighting the importance of upgrading technology to support modern record-keeping practices (mean score=2.67). Respondents perceive legal and regulatory complexities surrounding data privacy and security as presenting challenges in ensuring compliance and safeguarding sensitive legal records, underscoring the need for robust policies and procedures in this regard (mean score=2.83). The complexity of legal record management systems is perceived as posing significant challenges to effectively organising and



accessing legal records within organisations, indicating a need for streamlined and user-friendly systems (mean score=2.76).

Also, resistance to change and lack of awareness among stakeholders are identified as hindrances to the adoption and utilisation of advanced legal record management technologies and practices (mean score=3.06). Inefficient communication and collaboration among departments and personnel within organisations are also recognised as contributing to fragmentation and duplication of legal record management efforts, emphasizing the importance of improved coordination and cooperation (mean score=3.00). Additionally, respondents highlight insufficient training and education on legal record management best practices as contributing to errors, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in record utilisation, suggesting a need for enhanced training programmes (mean score=3.00). Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges facing organisations in the management and utilisation of legal records, highlighting the importance of addressing resource limitations, technological constraints, regulatory complexities, organisational communication, stakeholder engagement, and training deficiencies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of legal record management practices within Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The analysis reveals that limited resources, including funding and personnel, pose a significant challenge to the implementation of efficient legal record management practices in Federal and State High Courts in Port Harcourt. This finding resonates with existing literature, which emphasizes the critical role of adequate resources in supporting effective record management strategies (Mnjama & Onyancha, 2013). One implication of this challenge is the potential impact on the quality and accessibility of legal records, as organisations may struggle to invest in necessary infrastructure and personnel, leading to delays and inefficiencies in record management processes. Inadequate technological infrastructure and outdated systems were identified as barriers to the digitization and electronic management of legal records within these courts. This underscores the importance of modernizing technology to streamline record-keeping processes and improve accessibility, as highlighted in previous research (Ansong & Dei Mensah, 2018). An implication of this challenge is the risk of falling behind in the adoption of innovative record management practices, which could hinder organisational efficiency and competitiveness in the long run.

The complexity of legal and regulatory issues surrounding data privacy and security presents challenges in ensuring compliance and safeguarding sensitive legal records. This finding underscores the importance of addressing legal and regulatory concerns to mitigate risks associated with data management, as noted in previous studies (Davison & Ou, 2019). An implication of this challenge is the potential for legal liabilities and reputational damage if organisations fail to adequately protect sensitive information, highlighting the need for robust policies and procedures in this area.

Resistance to change and lack of awareness among stakeholders emerged as hindrances to the adoption of advanced record management technologies and practices. This finding underscores the importance of comprehensive change management strategies and stakeholder engagement



initiatives to promote acceptance and adoption of new practices, as supported by existing literature (Meyer, 2024; Wilson & Rosenbaum, 2017). An implication of this challenge is the risk of missed opportunities for innovation and efficiency gains if organisations fail to overcome resistance to change and foster a culture of continuous improvement in record management practices.

### **Conclusion**

This study established a positive perception among the respondents regarding the usefulness of legal records in court proceedings, emphasizing their significance in facilitating transparency, accountability, and fair adjudication of cases. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate technological infrastructure, legal and regulatory complexities, resistance to change, and insufficient training present obstacles to effective record management practices.

### **Recommendations**

1. The courts should secure adequate funding and personnel to enhance the efficiency of legal record management.
2. Modernizing technological infrastructure for record management will improve accessibility and organisational efficiency.
3. Robust data privacy and security policies should be implemented to protect sensitive legal records and ensure compliance. Change management strategies and stakeholder engagement are necessary to foster acceptance of new record management practices.

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