

Digital Preservation of Records at Wazalendo and Umoja Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Tanzania

By

Erasto Gerald Luvanda

Department of Knowledge Management, Moshi Cooperative University

John Jackson Iwata

Department of Knowledge Management, Moshi Co-operative University

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Abstract

Cooperative societies in Tanzania face seemingly insurmountable challenges in transforming their hitherto largely paper-based records into electronic formats for preservation in this digital age, which negatively impacts on their operational efficiency. This study, therefore, aimed to determine practices for preserving cooperatives' records in electronic format and associated challenges, focusing on two institutions: Wazalendo and Umoja Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS) in Moshi municipality of Kilimanjaro region. The technology acceptance model served as the theoretical framework, supplemented by insights from archival science. The study adopted a qualitative approach and utilised face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations to collect data. The study population consisted of 35 staff from two SACCOS whereby 23 respondents were confined to the study through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The resultant qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis. The study found that the two SACCOS under review have yet to transform their records fully into electronic formats and face numerous challenges in fostering preservation. The major barriers to such electronic record presentation emerged to be dire financial constraints and a lack of skilled personnel to facilitate such a process. Significantly, it emerged that managerial commitment to adopting new technologies positively influenced the electronic preservation of SACCOS records. As such, SACCOS should invest in ICT infrastructure and offer comprehensive training for staff in addition to formulating and enforcing clearcut policies and guidelines for digital records preservation.

Keywords: Digital preservation, electronic record, electronic records preservation, electronic record-keeping systems, record-keeping practices, SACCOS, Tanzania