



## Transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection in Dodoma City Council, Tanzania: challenges encountered

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### ABSTRACT

The adoption of a Human Capital Management Information System (HCMIS) is a strategy to enhance workflow efficiency, accountability, and transparency. However, human resource management (HRM) practices still face challenges in transparency and accountability, which can lead to unethical behaviour. While studies have shed light on HCMIS, a gap persists in understanding how its application in recruitment and selection, as well as training mechanisms, enhances transparency and accountability in Tanzania's public services. Thus, this study intended to examine the challenges of the HCMIS in promoting transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection at Dodoma City Council. It applied socio-technical theory and social capital theory as its theoretical framework. Primary data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with 14 respondents, along with a secondary data review. A qualitative research design was employed, drawing on insights from 14 respondents selected for their direct engagement with the health care management information system (HCMIS). In this research, we examined the experiences of 14 individuals who have actively used the HCMIS. To gather rich insights, we conducted in-depth interviews, organised FGDs, and reviewed relevant documents. By analysing the collected data, we aimed to uncover recurring themes and patterns that highlight the challenges people face when using the HCMIS. The findings indicate several barriers to the effective utilisation of HCMIS in promoting transparency and accountability, including inadequate top management support, unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient ICT expertise, limited financial capacity, and limited integration with other stakeholders. Hence, there is a need to raise top management support for HCMIS, strengthen integration with external stakeholders to improve transparency and accountability in the hiring process, invest in IT infrastructure and improve internet connectivity to address technical challenges, enhance staff ICT skills through training and support, and develop a change management strategy to overcome resistance to change. The study contributes to the limited literature on the challenges HCMIS faces in supporting recruitment and selection. It also advances the application of theories (i.e., social-technical theory and social capital theory) to e-government studies. Given the study's findings, policymakers need to place strong emphasis on management support to ensure the successful implementation of the HCMIS. It includes dedicating funds to essential IT infrastructure, ensuring reliable internet access, and providing the necessary hardware and software to enable system interoperability. Additionally, investing in training for ICT staff is crucial to promote transparency and accountability in Tanzania's public services and to foster ethical recruitment practices.

**Keywords:** Dodoma City Council, Human Capital Management Information Systems, Tanzania, Transparency and Accountability Challenges

### I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the spotlight on effective human resource management (HRM) in public services has intensified, particularly regarding transparency and accountability (Phuangsuwan et al., 2025). The urge to meet stakeholder demands led to the implementation of ICT-supported operations, in particular the Human Capital Management Information System (HCMIS) (Lugaimukamu & Semlambo, 2025). HCMIS was launched as part of these efforts, designed to enhance managerial competence, improve decision-making by making data more accessible, and ultimately foster transparency and accountability within the recruitment process. These two elements form the cornerstone of good governance and are pivotal for building trust between government institutions and the citizens they serve (Lukman, 2022). By emphasising transparency and accountability, public institutions can mitigate risks associated with corruption and unethical practices, thereby enhancing service delivery. As public sector organisations face increasing demands for ethical practices and public trust, the integration of HCMIS emerges as a crucial strategy to improve workflow efficiency and foster transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection (Assal, 2026; Phuangsuwan et al., 2025). Lack of transparency in the recruitment process can lead to biases, whether conscious or unconscious, affecting decision-making. If candidates do not know how hiring criteria are applied, there is a risk of



unintentional discrimination, which can harm the organisation's reputation and create a non-inclusive work environment.

Tanzania is committed to using e-government services (Tefurukwa, 2022). These efforts include, but are not limited to, various initiatives, such as the ICT Policy 2016, the e-Government Act no. 10 of 2019, and the e-Government regulation no. 37 of 2020, the e-Government Agency (e-GA) in 2016, the e-government strategy of 2022, and the e-government guidelines of 2017. Ideally, such initiatives improve transparency and accountability in HRM (Ngulugulu et al., 2023). However, HCMIS is yet to achieve adequate, transparent, and accountable HRMIS practices, leading to unchecked decision-making, inadequate accountability (Mkongo & Macha, 2022), eroding trust through opacity and increased susceptibility to corruption and unethical practices (Chinyuka, 2018; Njau et al., 2020). Consequently, this has created an uncertain situation and raised doubts about what hinders the implementation of HCMIS in Tanzania to positively impact good governance (Lukman, 2022), particularly transparency and accountability (Ngulugulu et al., 2023). Without clear accountability measures, hiring processes can vary widely across different government departments. Inconsistencies in how candidates are evaluated and selected can lead to perceptions of favouritism or unfair practices, affecting morale and the organisation's brand.

Existing empirical studies (e.g., Bhuiyan et al., 2014; Kapoor, 2022; Mkongo & Macha, 2022; Matimbwa *et al.*, 2021; Ngulugulu et al., 2023; Diani et al., 2024) reveal that HCMIS can enhance transparency and accountability, among other benefits, in recruitment and selection. Additionally, studies identified challenges such as financial constraints, insufficient numbers of ICT experts, and infrastructure maintenance, which undermine e-government in general and, specifically, the application of HCMIS in support of HRM functions (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2024). While extant studies cover general challenges, issues concerning transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection remain underexplored. There is a need to understand the challenges HCMIS faces in facilitating HRM recruitment and selection functions, given that the massive investment in e-government projects must yield significant results to justify continued funding. Secondly, remedial measures to improve the HCMIS in support of recruitment and selection depend on understanding the challenges hindering greater transparency and accountability (Redson & Tefurukwa, 2026). Thirdly, the overall benefit of effective recruitment and selection in public organisations is the employment of the best candidates, with skills, knowledge, and competence that match the job requirements.

### 1.1 Research Objective

The following objective guided the study:

- (i) Examination of the challenges encountered during the implementation of an HCMIS to enhance transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection at the Dodoma City Council.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Like other fields of public administration and management, e-government studies also deserve a relevant theoretical framework. Two theories provide a theoretical premise for analysis in this study. The social-technical and human capital theories explain the bureaucrat's relationships, interactions, and interference, as well as the information systems they use to manage human resources. Hereunder, we provide comprehensive descriptions of theories to help understand the challenges encountered in managing human resources, striving to improve transparency and accountability, and provide explanations. First, we apply social technical theory to explain social and technical phenomena. We then complement this approach with the social capital theory, aiming to position human beings (in this study, recruited and selected individuals) appropriately within organisations.

#### 2.1.1 Social Technical Theory

The Social Technical Theory (STT) is often rooted in the idea that organisations are both technological and social systems (Diaconescu & Pitt, 2016). Furthermore, the theory posits that the success of any system hinges on the seamless integration of its technical and social aspects. Thus, when applied to HCMIS, this theory enhances transparency and accountability (Wicander, 2011). Moreover, the STT emphasises aligning technology with human and organisational needs (Bwaki & Tefurukwa, 2022). In the context of HCMIS, this means developing systems that efficiently manage human capital data and foster a culture of openness and collaboration. By considering the technical and social aspects, organisations can design HCMIS that encourages transparency in performance evaluations, promotions, and compensation (Adriaensen *et al.*, 2022; Sony & Naik, 2020). Employees are more likely to trust and engage with systems they perceive as fair and transparent, leading to increased accountability as decision-making becomes more visible and understandable (Diaconescu & Pitt, 2016; Abbas & Michael, 2023). In addition, STT recognises that social systems within organisations play a crucial role in shaping the adoption and effectiveness of



technology (Harshith et al., 2022). When implementing HCMIS, organisations leverage the Social-Technical Theory to ensure employees are involved in the process, address concerns, and provide input. This participation not only enhances the system's usability but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among employees; as individuals become active stakeholders in the HCMIS, they are more likely to be accountable for their data and actions, thereby contributing to the overall accountability and reliability of the system. The STT promotes the idea that effective HCMIS should not only be technically sound but also socially embedded to enhance transparency and accountability within an organisation (Abbas & Michael, 2023)

According to the STT, technology has an intricate relationship with human and social characteristics rather than functioning as a neutral instrument (Deogratias & Tefurukwa, 2025). The STT provides insight into how the technological elements of Human Capital Management Information Systems (HCMIS) can determine their efficacy in fostering accountability and transparency (Abbas & Michael, 2023). The complex relationships between these systems and the social dynamics within an organisation heavily impact it (Diaconescu & Pitt, 2016). The STT emphasises that the larger organisational context is crucial to understanding HCMIS and should not be viewed as inactive. How well these systems integrate and fit into an organisation's current social structures and procedures will determine the success of HCMIS implementation. Social variables, such as organisational power dynamics, organisational culture, and employee resistance to change (Chowdhury & Shil, 2022), may significantly influence the adoption and use of HCMIS. For example, employee resistance to HCMIS installation could hinder its capacity to improve accountability and transparency if workers believe it poses a danger to their job security or autonomy.

On the other hand, employees may be more open to adopting an HCMIS if it is perceived as a tool that increases productivity and streamlines procedures. It is essential to understand the social dynamics at play to ensure the HCMIS is implemented and utilised effectively (Harshith et al., 2022), thereby enhancing accountability and transparency in HRM operations. Despite the valuable insights provided by the Social Technical Theory (STT) regarding the interplay between technological systems and social factors in organisations, it has limitations in fully capturing the complex social dynamics in recruitment and selection processes. The STT may not adequately address external relationships, power dynamics, trust-building, informal networks, and cultural factors that significantly influence the implementation and effectiveness of systems like HCMIS. This gap is addressed by Social Capital Theory, which emphasises the value of social networks, relationships, and the resources embedded within them.

### 2.1.2 Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory asserts that the networks and relationships within a community are essential for creating social capital. In the public sector, these social connections significantly enhance trust and cooperation between citizens and government institutions (Eriksson et al., 2020). The theory clearly indicates that higher levels of social capital result in greater civic engagement and participation, empowering an engaged and connected citizenry to monitor and demand accountability from public officials actively (Claridge, 2018; Eriksson et al., 2020). Furthermore, it posits that the strength of social ties influences the flow of information and resources, suggesting that well-connected communities are better at accessing and disseminating information about government actions, policies, and decision-making processes. This situation underscores the critical importance of social relationships and networks in promoting transparency and accountability within the public sector (Engbers et al., 2017).

Drawing from the theory, a community's social relationships, networks, and norms contribute to the development of social capital and the fostering of trust and cooperation. In the public sector, transparency is significant for building social capital by ensuring that information is accessible to employees, stakeholders, and the public, thereby promoting trust in governmental institutions (Poljašević et al., 2024). Additionally, accountability is reinforced through the social connections that enable individuals to monitor and hold public officials responsible for their actions (Claridge, 2018). Eriksson et al. (2020) argue that there is a positive correlation among social capital, transparency, and accountability, highlighting the importance of strong social ties in laying the foundation for effective governance. Societies with higher levels of social capital tend to exhibit greater civic engagement and trust in institutions (Poljašević et al., 2024). Social Capital Theory offers a robust framework for understanding and promoting transparency and accountability in the public sector. By incorporating Social Capital Theory alongside STT, the study achieved a more comprehensive understanding of the complex social dynamics, relationships, and cultural factors that influence the implementation and effectiveness of technological systems in public sector organisations. The combined approach provided deeper insights into how HCMIS might develop or transform social capital within the Dodoma City Council and into its interactions with job applicants and other stakeholders.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

The contemporary organisational landscape is characterised by continuous change and unpredictability in human resource management, necessitating adaptive strategies to address emerging challenges (Chowdhury & Shil, 2022; Taylor, 2019). A crucial aspect of navigating this dynamic environment is aligning the workforce with strategic



objectives (Diani et al., 2024). The literature underscores that organisational success heavily relies on an appropriate workforce, highlighting the importance of effective recruitment and selection processes (Eapen & Finkenstadt, 2024).

Recruitment and selection not only fulfil organisational needs but also significantly impact job seekers (Diani et al., 2024; Redson & Tefurukwa, 2026). The interplay between public and private institutions and job seekers underscores the demand for transparency and accountability in recruitment practices (World Population Review, 2025). Stakeholders are increasingly seeking clarity in recruitment decisions, reflecting a growing awareness of the ethical implications of these practices. Transparency and accountability are considered fundamental elements of good governance (Phuangsuwan et al., 2025). However, existing scholarly resources often lack a framework for organisations to foster trust with stakeholders while ensuring efficient and equitable recruitment.

Transparency in recruitment is defined as the openness and accessibility of information during decision-making (Lukman, 2022), ensuring that job seekers understand the hiring criteria and processes. Despite widespread endorsement of transparency, its practical application requires critical scrutiny, particularly regarding the relationship between transparency and accountability. This relationship is essential for cultivating a culture of responsibility within organisations. In public institutions, accountability ensures that officials are answerable for their recruitment decisions (Phuangsuwan et al., 2025). However, implementing accountability poses challenges, as many organisations struggle to maintain fairness amid institutional biases or competing interests.

The influence of information and communication technology (ICT) on recruitment and selection has been extensively examined; ICT systems are believed to enhance hiring efficiency (Hassanal, 2026; Tefurukwa, 2019). Nonetheless, the introduction of such technologies raises questions about their capability to promote transparency and accountability. While technology can streamline processes, it may obscure decision-making criteria, counteracting the transparency it seeks to achieve. Furthermore, relying solely on technology does not inherently resolve bias and fairness issues unless underlying organisational cultures and practices are critically evaluated.

Ideally, the use of information technology should bolster transparency and accountability in recruitment, supporting the selection of the best candidates. Effective organisations enhance information management by integrating technology into operations (Harshith et al., 2022) and by focusing on staff management information that significantly influences performance (Matimbwa et al., 2021). Emerging initiatives to integrate human resource management functions with ICT are becoming priorities in the public sector to improve workforce efficiency (Hassanal, 2026; Marcel & Tefurukwa, 2023). It includes initiatives such as USAJOBS, launched on 15th September 1996, which centralises job advertisements and enhances recruitment transparency (Eapen & Finkenstadt, 2024).

Nevertheless, despite the potential benefits of HRMIS, reports indicate that a persistent lack of accountability and transparency within human resources functions, particularly in recruitment and selection, is pervasive in African public organisations (Poljašević et al., 2024). Hence, many organisations face ongoing inefficiencies that hinder transparent recruitment (Deogratias & Tefurukwa, 2025). This scenario necessitates a critical examination of how such systems can genuinely enhance transparency and accountability in recruitment while addressing societal biases and ensuring fair practices.

The existing literature provides valuable insights into the phenomenon under study. According to Ngulugulu et al. (2023), implementing Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in Mwanza has streamlined HR functions, underscoring the need for HRIS adoption in Tanzanian public organisations to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Kiwango and Omar (2021) emphasised the transformative potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public administration. Additionally, Matimbwa et al. (2021) identified critical user traits, such as IT proficiency and employee commitment, as significant factors influencing HRIS effectiveness in terms of timeliness, completeness, and data accuracy. Furthermore, Hassanal (2026) covered issues of recruitment and selection, service delivery, and data driven decision making Temeke Municipality in Dar es Salaam. However, the role of Human Capital Management Information Systems (HCMIS) in enhancing transparency and accountability during recruitment and training processes in Tanzania's public sector remains underexplored. This study aims to investigate the challenges associated with HCMIS implementation at Dodoma City Council, focusing on promoting transparency and fairness in recruitment and selection processes and providing essential guidance for policymakers and administrators.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research design

This study examined the challenges encountered during the implementation of an HCMIS to enhance transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection at the Dodoma City Council, drawing on deep contextual and human experiences. Therefore, through a qualitative research design, the study brought to light the lived experiences of transparency and accountability in recruitment.



### 3.2 Study Area

The location was determined based on the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) reports, which consistently indicate that the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs and Local government Authorities (LGAs) experienced poor use of ICT systems, hindering the nation's transformation initiatives. Additionally, reports indicate missing modules and inadequate interoperability between MDAs and LGAs, which paralyse government operations. While some MDAs and LGAs receive clean audit reports other do not.

### 3.3 Sampling

A total of 14 respondents were purposively and conveniently selected based on their direct involvement with HCMIS to provide a comprehensive understanding of the hindrances in its administration at Dodoma City Council.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and documentary review, allowing for flexibility and clarification of the research questions. The semi-structured interview was conducted with five key informants, while unstructured questions were used in three groups of nine respondents. Not only that, but also specific organisational documents, academic journals, and government reports, which facilitated users' in-depth exploration of HCMIS issues.

During data collection, the authors created a supportive environment in which respondents could freely and thoroughly describe their experiences and perspectives on the hindrances to using HCMIS to promote transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection. Data from interviews, FGDs, and documentary reviews were analysed using content analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the hindrances to applying HCMIS to promote transparency and accountability. The interview and FGD guides were reviewed by academic colleagues for content and clarity, to assess their effectiveness and identify any potential issues to address before actual use. The interview and FGD guides were refined by adding or revising some questions and language to encourage interviewees and informants to provide actual responses. All this ensured the validity of the information collected during the interview process phase. The documentary review primarily focused on CAG reports on the subject matter, from which we extracted the content. This approach produced more accurate and consistent answers by reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation among respondents. All results are presented in quotations verbatim in section IV below.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The choice to employ content-based analysis in this study is rooted in its scientific rationale. Content analysis is a systematic and rigorous research method that enables the transformation of qualitative data, such as interview and FGD transcripts, documentary review responses, and other qualitative materials, into a structured and meaningful format aligned with the research objectives. By systematically interpreting and coding the collected data from interviews, FGDs and documentary review, it facilitates the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and insights within the responses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered during the implementation of an HCMIS to enhance transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection at the Dodoma City Council. This method not only enhances the rigour and objectivity of the study but also allows for a clear presentation of findings, making it particularly valuable for uncovering nuanced insights from diverse research participant responses. Furthermore, content analysis enables researchers to draw evidence-based conclusions and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in a systematic and scientifically robust manner.

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical considerations from its design through completion of writing. Writing conforms to the academic writing skill requirements. The relevant authorities approved data collection. The interviews and informants consented to participate fully and could withdraw at any time before publication of the study. Presentations of data are anonymous with respect to the interviews and informants.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Top Management Support

Top management support is important for any organisation's operations. Regarding the focused group discussions on issues concerning the support from the top management in support of the usage of HCMIS in promoting transparency and accountability, the following was revealed:

*"...When leadership fails to champion HCMIS implementation and use, it creates a ripple effect throughout the organisation. Staff may perceive the system as optional or unimportant, leading to inconsistent adoption and data entry. This fragmented approach undermines the system's ability to*



*provide a comprehensive, transparent view of the recruitment and selection process. Moreover, without strong backing from the top, necessary resources for training, maintenance, and upgrades are often lacking, further diminishing HCMIS's potential to enhance accountability in our hiring practices.”* (FGDs "A", 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024).

The findings reveal that inadequate leadership endorsement manifests in inconsistent system utilisation, compromised data integrity through incomplete records, and underutilised transparency features. Consequently, the ability to demonstrate accountability within the recruitment process is significantly weakened. Empirical studies (i.e. Kiwango & Omar, 2021; Tefurukwa, 2019; Matimbwa & Masue, 2019) underscore similar findings. Kiwango and Omar's (2021) analysis of the technical, organisational, and regulatory (environmental) challenges faced by HCMIS in Zanzibar highlights that management support is crucial to its success. Decisions on e-government, including technology choices, infrastructure, and funding, heavily rely on management support (Tefurukwa, 2019; Matimbwa & Masue, 2019; Redson & Tefurukwa, 2026). Significant investment is essential (Matimbwa & Masue, 2019), but requires management commitment amid competing priorities (Tefurukwa, 2019). Developing policies, rules, and regulations for human capital management requires top management's commitment to enforce them, which, in turn, fosters transparency and accountability (Poljašević et al., 2024; Tefurukwa, 2019).

It has been observed that middle managers often play a crucial role in the operational success of Human Capital Management Information Systems (HCMIS), leading to greater engagement compared to their senior counterparts (Smith et al., 2020). The orchestra analogy highlights the disarray caused by this disconnect, where coordination across different leadership levels is essential for harmonious organisational performance. The involvement of top managers is crucial in fully leveraging HCMIS capabilities (Tefurukwa, 2019). Their strategic decisions and resource allocations are pivotal to enhancing transparency and efficiency in recruitment processes (Smith et al., 2020). Moreover, it aligns with Njau et al. (2020) observation that the physical environment in some Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) reflects inadequate support. Limited resources allocated to computer facilities and inadequate workspace for HCMIS operators illustrate a setting that could be more conducive to fully embracing technological advancements.

The finding concurs further with Deogratias and Tefurukwa (2025), who state that the socio-technical theory posits that technology and people are inseparable. They also examine the impact of inadequate management support. This theory suggests that technical and social factors are interdependent (Redson & Tefurukwa, 2026) and that changes in one area can affect others (Chowdhury & Shil, 2022). The interactions between management support and HCMIS services result in quality services (Matimbwa & Olatokun, 2024). However, Marcel and Tefurukwa (2023) identified a significant mismatch potentially linked to the age of managers and leaders in many public institutions in Tanzania, many of whom were born before the widespread use of computers in developing countries like Tanzania. From the institutional perspective, the management creates and enforces laws, rules, and regulations to ensure efficient HCMIS services. It implies that the top management support at Dodoma City Council was significantly required once HCMIS functionality was more advanced.

#### **4.2 Internet Connectivity**

In the field, poor internet connectivity was identified as a significant challenge for candidates and also impacted the HCMIS, resulting in a minimal operational pace. Below are the responses from P1.

*“... I can attest that unreliable internet connectivity is a major obstacle in our efforts to promote transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection processes through HCMIS. The system often displays errors, such as unfinished pages and broken links, due to poor connectivity, which significantly reduces productivity and efficiency. Despite the government's initiative to implement the National Information Technology Backbone Optic Fibre Cable, we face persistent connectivity issues. This situation forces us to resort to desperate measures, like using personal internet bundles, which are often slow and costly. The situation hampers our ability to update HR information in real-time, compromising the integrity of our recruitment and selection processes. When we cannot access the system reliably, we risk reverting to less transparent manual methods, undermining the very purpose of HCMIS in ensuring fair and accountable selection procedures. It is a frustrating situation that requires urgent attention if we are to fully leverage HCMIS to improve HR management in our public sector”* (Interview, Respondent P1, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

Apart from the interview comments, most respondents in the FGDs also commented on internet connectivity. As follows:

*“...The intermittent internet connection poses a significant challenge to maintaining real-time data accuracy in HCMIS. We often encounter synchronisation issues when updating candidate information or posting job openings, resulting in discrepancies between online and offline records. Lack of or insufficient consistency leads to misunderstandings and disputes during the recruitment and selection*



*process, ultimately eroding the credibility of our selection procedures. Moreover, the system's unreliability makes it difficult to generate comprehensive audit reports, hindering our ability to demonstrate transparency to oversight bodies” (FGDs "B", 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024).*

The responses reveal unreliable internet connectivity, hindering the smooth functioning of HRM. This scenario risks a reversion to manual, less transparent methods, undermining HCMIS's purpose of ensuring fair and accountable selection procedures. Additionally, focus group discussions echoed these concerns, noting that irregular internet connections cause synchronisation issues, leading to discrepancies between online and offline records and generating misunderstandings and disputes during recruitment. The findings are similar to those of previous studies. The findings of Matimbwa and Olatokun (2024), Marcel and Tefurukwa (2023), and Kisinga et al. (2025) revealed that unreliable internet connectivity in Tanzania results in reduced operational speeds in public organisations. The system frequently encounters errors, including unfinished pages and broken links, which significantly hamper productivity. The completion time for tasks loaded into the system is also prolonged, further affecting overall efficiency. According to the social-technical theory (STT), failed or inadequate systems are the cause of human behaviour in organisations (Tefurukwa, 2019; 2023).

### 4.3 Expertise in ICT and HCMIS

Inadequate expertise in ICT and HCMIS is the second most significant challenge to implementing HCMIS in Tanzania's public sector. It is widely acknowledged that acquiring advanced skills and knowledge through practice, education, and experience can positively impact system use. Given the system's extensive applications, it is essential to have Human Resource Officers (HROs) with ICT expertise to effectively install, manage, and operate the HCMIS. Reflection of this scenario, one of the respondents asserted the following:

*“...A critical challenge to ensuring transparency and accountability in Tanzanian public sector recruitment relies on Human Resources Officers' (HROs) inadequate ICT and HCMIS expertise. While HCMIS offers a comprehensive framework for managing recruitment, its effectiveness depends on user competency. However, in our office, only a few employees fully understand the system, particularly those selected and trained when the system was first implemented. These individuals have a higher competency than those trained in-house or after the initial rollout. This issue is prevalent in only two departments: HR and ICT. The lack of regular training contributes to this challenge, hindering the system's effective implementation and our ability to achieve our goals” (Interview, Respondent D1, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024).*

In addition to comments made by the interview, participants in Focus Group Discussion "B" noted that a lack of enough ICT literacy hampers the ability of the human capital management information System to enhance transparency and accountability during the recruitment and selection process. The comment from the majority of group opinions and experiences converged as the quotation portrays as follows:

*“...Our staff's inadequate ICT and HCMIS expertise severely hampers our ability to leverage these systems for transparent and accountable recruitment. Many of us struggle with basic data entry and report generation, leading to errors and inconsistencies in candidate information. It slows down our processes and raises questions about the fairness of our selection procedures. We urgently need comprehensive training programs to bridge this knowledge gap and ensure we can fully utilise HCMIS to its potential” (FGDs "B", 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024).*

The responses reveal a significant challenge in ensuring transparency and accountability in Tanzanian public-sector recruitment: the inadequate expertise of Human Resources Officers (HROs) in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and in the Human Capital Management Information System. This lack of adequate expertise leads to issues in effectively utilising the HCMIS system. Drawing from the documentary review, specifically from the Controller and Auditor General report<sup>1</sup> The HCMIS was reportedly not achieving its intended objectives due to expertise issues, as the passage below reveals:

*“...my audit of the HCMIS system revealed a lack of approval functionality for changing employees' date of birth and amending personal emoluments (PE) budgets. Only one user from PO-PSMGG can alter such details. This situation was caused by an insufficient system design, which failed to incorporate appropriate approval workflows. A single user performing critical human resources tasks increases the risk of undetected errors and unauthorised activities” ... (NAOT, 2024: xii).*

One of the key issues in managing information systems is ensuring data accuracy and accountability. However, the controller and auditor general's reports unveil the following:

<sup>1</sup> Annual General Report on Information Systems Audit for the Financial Year 2022/2023



*“...my review revealed that a principal computer system analyst, rather than a designated human resource officer, was updating personal user details in the Management Information System (MIS) database at the Roads Fund Board. The reason is likely due to an inadequate data migration plan or insufficient staff resources. This deviation from protocol raises concerns about data accuracy and accountability within the system” ... (NAOT, 2025: xii).*

The responses reveal that the ICT expertise deficit limits the ability to fully utilise the system's standardised processes, reporting features, and data management. Consequently, the situation arises for manual interventions and potential bias due to reliance on non-standardised procedures. The findings align with those of Njau et al. (2020), Chinyuka (2018), and Tefurukwa and Ahafiany (2025), who all highlight a significant knowledge gap among Human Resources Officers. Inadequate expertise and a conventional recruitment and selection mindset result in underutilising the system's potential. A similar situation was disclosed, showing that Mwanza Municipality had only tapped into 43.3% of HCMIS's capabilities (Njau et al., 2020). A lack of appreciation for ICT expertise and the scarcity of skilled personnel are critical factors in driving the country's digital transformation (Matimbwa & Olatokun, 2024). Compounding this issue is the reluctance of some organisations to invest in ICT skill development for their staff; according to Matimbwa et al. (2021), short-sightedness widens the knowledge gap even further. The consequences, HROs require assistance with basic tasks, such as data entry, and the use of critical forms, including PA21, PA34, allowances, and payroll (Njau et al., 2020). The installed systems should aim to increase transparency and accountability in the recruitment and selection process, primarily by providing complete, accurate, valid, and reliable data (Poljašević et al., 2024). Inadequate expertise results in chaotic management of management information systems due to technical failures in adhering to the principles to the letter (URT, 2024).

The HCMIS cannot be better than the experts behind it (Deogratias & Tefurukwa, 2025). Hence, the level of accountability and transparency of the HCMIS ought to be commensurate with the quality of management and the expertise of the expert. An inadequate number of ICT experts and limited competence impair transparency and accountability in the selection and recruitment of candidates in MDAs and LGAs. Dishonest employers cannot promote accountability, transparency and cooperation amongst themselves and other stakeholders (Claridge, 2018; Eriksson et al., 2020). However, critics of ICT-supported operations in MDAs and LGAs argue that some systems, by design, tend to obscure accountability and transparency (URT, 2024). In contrast, the social capital perspective emphasises the importance of social connections for greater civic engagement and trust in institutions (Poljašević et al., 2024). Unreliable internet connectivity is a social and technical issue that can be resolved by improving the required expertise and providing sufficient resources to ensure reliable connectivity.

#### **4.4 Financial Capacity**

The study's findings revealed limited financial capacity, hindering the effective operation of the HCMIS and failing to promote transparency and accountability in public service recruitment and selection. HR1 reported the issue.

*“...We acknowledge the presence of a budget constraint, which hinders our efforts to upgrade our hardware, including computers, UPS systems, printers, and various software applications crucial for data management and processing. This limitation forces us to use outdated or inefficient equipment, thereby affecting productivity. Additionally, we sometimes need to bring in software experts from outside the city to collaborate with our local staff, ensuring that all software functions in line with the set objectives. This financial constraint not only limits the full utilisation of HCMIS but also hampers Human Resource Officers' (HROs) ability to leverage technology for transparent, accountable recruitment and selection practices, ultimately affecting the overall quality of human resource management in Tanzania's public sector” (Interview, Respondent HR1, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024)*

In addition to the interview comments, the focus group discussions echoed similar sentiments. The responses portray that the Dodoma Municipal Council faces budget constraints, hindering its ability to invest in technological infrastructure. This financial shortfall occasionally impedes the organisation's ability to execute some of its operations effectively. The focused discussions' opinions converged to portray that:

*“...Limited financial capacity hinders us from receiving adequate training on system operations because the effectiveness of HCMIS in promoting transparency and accountability largely depends on the users' proficiency. However, we cannot conduct regular training sessions or workshops without enough funds to ensure that all employees are well-versed in using the system. This training gap leads to underutilisation of HCMIS features, resulting in inconsistencies and potential errors in recruitment and selection processes, ultimately compromising transparency and accountability” (FGDs "B", 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024).*

The findings (section 4.4) confirm that financial constraints manifest in HCMIS operations in several ways, creating a cascading set of challenges that impair the system's effectiveness. The findings concurred with those of Matimbwa and Olatokun (2024), who provided a vivid picture of resource scarcity. A ratio of one computer to two



users hampers efficiency and introduces potential vulnerabilities in data handling and security. The shortage of resources transforms what should be a tool for transparency into a potential bottleneck, inadvertently creating opportunities for opacity in the recruitment process. Chinyuka (2018), in the Moshi District Council, observed that outdated technologies create a performance gap, contributing to inefficiencies in the HCMIS. This technological lag not only slows down processes but also compromises the integrity and accuracy of data crucial to fair and transparent recruitment. The software aspect presents another layer of complexity. As Matimbwa and Olatokun (2024) and Marcel and Tefurukwa (2023) point out, inadequate funding for system updates and maintenance leaves HCMIS vulnerable to technological obsolescence and security threats. In an era of ever-evolving cyber threats, financial constraints inadvertently expose sensitive recruitment and selection data to potential breaches, threatening transparency and accountability (Poljaševi'c et al., 2024). The lack of financial transparency resources transforms the system from a tool intended to promote accountability and transparency in recruitment and selection into an obstacle that fosters opacity, a situation noted by Chinyuka (2018) in his study. Therefore, a comprehensive redesign of the HCMIS that accounts for both social dynamics and technical requirements is necessary to enhance its effectiveness. Underinvestment in technology not only slows down processes but also limits user interaction with the system, creating a feedback loop that hinders effective utilisation of HCMIS and ultimately jeopardises the essence of accountability and transparency in recruitment and selection.

#### 4.5 Integration of HRMIS with Other Systems

The lack of comprehensive integration between the HCMIS and other key institutions, such as TCU, HESLB, and NECTA's online systems, hinders the system's ability to effectively communicate and share information with various departments, external agencies, and potential candidates. Consequently, the recruitment and selection processes may need to fully capitalise on the potential benefits of HCMIS, such as streamlined data sharing, real-time updates, and collaborative decision-making. This limitation results in information silos, reduced visibility into the hiring process, and potential inconsistencies in how recruitment and selection are conducted across different stakeholders. Reflecting on this scenario, one of the respondents asserted the following:

*"...without direct connections to systems such as TCU, HESLB, and various higher education institutions, we cannot verify candidates' information efficiently. This gap increases our workload, slows the recruitment and selection process, and creates opportunities for potential fraud. For instance, candidates might provide false information that we cannot immediately cross-check. The government's inability to connect these crucial systems has led to unnecessary costs and issues, including ghost workers. Until we achieve seamless data sharing across all relevant platforms, HCMIS cannot fully realise its potential in promoting transparency and accountability in public sector recruitment and selection. Four ways this limitation undermines our efforts to conduct thorough, fair, and efficient hiring processes"* (Interview, Respondent D1, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

Most group members shared similar comments about challenges HCMIS faces when verifying data due to interoperability issues with other government online systems, such as TCU. The group members' discussions centred on the following:

*"...without effective collaboration with key stakeholders such as government bodies, civil society organisations, and professional associations, the HCMIS lacks comprehensive oversight and diverse input. It leads to a narrow focus and potential biases in recruitment and selection. Stakeholder involvement ensures that recruitment policies and practices align with broader public interests, enhancing transparency and accountability. The absence of this integration results in a system that may not fully reflect the needs and expectations of all parties involved, undermining public trust"* (FGDs "C", 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

The findings from interviewees indicate that the disconnection between the HCMIS and external stakeholders' systems hinders efficient communication and data sharing, resulting in information silos and limited visibility into the hiring process. Furthermore, the findings from FGDs were consistent with those from the interviews, highlighting that verifying candidate information is efficient with these integrations but also increases the workload and the risk of fraudulent applications. The absence of seamless data sharing across platforms results in potential inconsistencies and opportunities for manipulation, undermining efforts to ensure thorough, fair, and efficient recruitment practices (Vivek, 2023). Consequently, the credibility and public trust in the recruitment and selection process are compromised, as the system fails to adhere to best practices and ethical standards due to a lack of stakeholder involvement and oversight (Poljaševi'c et al., 2024). This finding differs from the ideal, which emphasised that the primary goal of e-government extends beyond the use of automated devices (Hassanal, 2026; Tefurukwa, 2021). E-government integrates government functions with citizens, the public sector, private offices, and international entities. Previously, Tefurukwa's (2019) findings on online admissions and student loan systems revealed similar issues of limited interoperability among public organisations in handling students' online operations, which jeopardise the



efficiency of e-government and ultimately compromise the delivery of public services in Tanzania. The emergence of ghost workers on the payroll in Tanzania was also attributed to this factor (Tefurukwa, 2021). The government systems, which are not interoperable with other menaces, create fissures for fraud in organisations.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

One of the examined factors was top management support for Human Capital Management Information Systems (HCMIS). The findings indicate that strong leadership support is crucial to the success of Human Capital Management Information Systems (HCMIS). When management is not fully committed, it can lead to poor system usage, unreliable data, and a lack of transparency during recruitment. For these systems to work effectively, it is important that leaders at every level engage strategically, ensuring smooth operations and greater accountability. Findings indicate unreliable internet connectivity, which significantly hampers the functionality of the HCMIS. The situation can lead to potential setbacks in accountability and transparency during recruitment processes. Additionally, the analysis underscores the critical need for enhanced ICT expertise among Human Resources Officers to leverage digital systems in recruitment and selection processes fully. Resistance to change and inadequate skillsets compromise data integrity and operational efficiency, leading to reliance on outdated practices.

Regarding the effect of financial capacity, it was observed that financial constraints severely impact the effectiveness of the HCMIS, leading to inefficiencies and compromising data integrity. To address these challenges, a comprehensive redesign is essential that considers both social dynamics and technical requirements. Finally, the disconnection between the HCMIS and external systems makes it difficult for different parts of the government to communicate effectively and maintain reliable data. It not only creates inefficiencies but also increases the risk of fraud. Such issues can erode public confidence in recruitment processes and underscore the importance of better integrating government functions, as prior research has noted. In the end, improving how these systems work together is vital for delivering public services efficiently and maintaining ethical governance. Government systems that are not interoperable with other systems create vulnerabilities to fraud within organisations.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The findings reveal several drawbacks, including inadequate ICT experience, unreliable internet connectivity, limited financial capacity, limited integration with other stakeholders, and low support from top management at Dodoma City Council. They suggest several important policy implications for enhancing transparency and accountability in public service recruitment and selection. Based on the findings, the study recommends the following. Firstly, policymakers need to emphasise the importance of strong leadership and top management commitment in implementing HCMIS. This situation could involve training and workshops that raise awareness of the benefits of HCMIS and encourage active participation in its promotion and adoption. Secondly, there is a need to establish policies that allocate sufficient funding for upgrading the IT infrastructure. It includes ensuring reliable internet connectivity and the necessary hardware and software to facilitate the effective functioning of HCMIS. Thirdly, there is a need to invest in staff training programs in ICT, and HCMIS is crucial to these programs. Policies that mandate continuous professional development in these areas would help improve employees' skills and confidence, leading to better utilisation of the system.

Fourthly, it is crucial to establish and implement policies that foster collaboration and integration among various stakeholders involved in public service recruitment. It could include establishing protocols for information sharing and joint training initiatives to enhance the overall effectiveness of HCMIS. Fifthly, there is a need to implement structured change management strategies to address resistance to new technology. Policies should include clear communication plans and support systems to guide employees through the transition to HCMIS. Lastly, establishing a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of HCMIS effectiveness can provide valuable insights into its impact on transparency and accountability. It can facilitate timely adjustments and improvements to the system, ensuring its ongoing effectiveness. By addressing these policy implications, the government can enhance the effectiveness of HCMIS in promoting transparency and accountability in Tanzania's public services, ultimately leading to more ethical recruitment and selection practices.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.



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