Assessing the Appraisal, Disposal and Transfer of Records from 1994 to 2014: The Case of Mpumalanga Provincial Government in South Africa

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Abstract

This study was conceptualised in order to assess the appraisal, disposal and transfer of archival records from the Mpumalanga Provincial Government (MPG) to the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives (MPA) for the period from 1994 to 2013. The study's specific objective was to investigate the transfer process of archival records in terms of the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998. The study used a qualitative method through document analysis, interviews and observation. The sample for the study comprised the MPG and municipality records managers. The Mpumalanga provincial archivists were also interviewed as the custodians of the MPA. The key findings revealed that the MPG and the municipality did not comply with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 in terms of transferring records with archival value to the MPA as stipulated by the act. This has adverse implications for efficient administration of records in the country.

Keywords: Mpumalanga Provincial Archives; records management; archives

Introduction

This study explored the transfer and disposal of records from the Mpumalanga Provincial Government (MPG) to the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives (MPA) with the view to assess procedures followed by the departments. The objective of this study was to investigate the state of appraisal and records transferral practices in the MPG from 1994 to 2013. To this end, the macro-appraisal theory was used to analyse the transfer processes. According to Yusuf and Chell (2005, 89), the process of transfer and disposal determines the value of records which in turn determines which records are to be retained and which are to be disposed of. The results showed that the provincial archives failed to comply with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 (Province of

Mpumalanga 1998) with regards to the transfer of records with archival value to an archival repository after 20 years.

The study is organised as follows: first some background is provided, followed by a discussion on the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA). Thereafter a literature review is given which clarifies conceptual issues and discusses the Records Management Programme (RMP). An overview of the theoretical framework employed during the study is then presented along with the research methods. Lastly an analysis of the findings of the study is provided and the conclusion.

Background

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 (Province of Mpumalanga 1998) requires of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government that its municipalities' public records with archival value be transferred to the MPA for permanent preservation and accessibility after 20 years. According to Yusuf and Chell (2005, 89), archival value refers to records' historical, informational and cultural significance to society. The transfer process is applicable to MPG which was formed in 1994 after the first democracy in South Africa was instituted.

There are nine provincial governments in South Africa, formed after 1994, of which Mpumalanga is one. Provinces in South Africa are entitled to promulgate their own archival legislation. This led the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to enact the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 that applies to the MPG and its municipalities (Archival Platform 2015, 53). Although the provincial archives services are autonomous, their services are aligned with the standards set by the National Archives of South Africa (NARSSA) (Research Focus and Content at Work 2010).

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government and municipalities records managers are expected to play roles in the appraisal, disposal and transfer of public records. Beside the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, they are guided by National Archives of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996). The act serves as a framework law, meaning that its practical implementations are open for interpretation (Klareld 2015, 168). The national legislation must be guided by established records management policies and procedures created by the governmental institutions. Provincial policies serve as guides for government management in developing their rules, regulations and schedules of governmental bodies' records. This is determined by internal factors such as the operational functions of each department, storage facilities and available space and the level of information and communication technologies. Communities require the availability of governmental bodies' records for varying periods of time. Despite the importance of appraising records, little research has been done to evaluate the status of appraisal and records transfer practices from MPG and its municipalities to the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives (MPA) in South Africa.

This article aims to help address this knowledge gap by presenting an empirical study designed to assess the appraisal and transfer of records from the MPG to the MPA.

NARSSA

In South Africa, there are two types of public archives authorities: national and provincial. NARSSA controls national departments and each province has its own provincial archives and its related legislation. Although NARSSA has no authority over provincial and municipal archives, many provincial departments follow NARSSA guidelines. In practice, provincial departments apply the National Archives of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996, in systematic disposal and transfer of records (Ngoepe and Nkwe 2018).

The NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996, and the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, obliged MPG and its municipalities to keep records for a period of 20 years in their custody before they are transferred to the MPA. Provincial departments are responsible for their records until an archival authority formally assumes responsibility (Klareld 2015, 168).

The appraisal process requires the implementation of a systematic disposal programme to enable MPG and its municipalities to dispose of their records regularly either by transferring the archival records to the MPA or destroying the records. MPG and its municipalities are required to create records in a way that will allow archival institutions to function as a guarantee of legal certainty (Klareld 2015, 175).

According to the Public Service Act, 1994 (Republic of South Africa 1994), the following MPG departments were established:

- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Land and Environmental Affairs
- Community Safety
- Security and Liaison
- Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
- Culture, Sport and Recreation
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Health and Human Settlements
- Public Works, Roads and Transport
- Social Development and Provincial Treasury

The MPG was formed under the premiership of Mr Nakedi Mathews Phosa. He was elected as the first premier of Mpumalanga Province. He was succeeded by Premier Ndaweni Mahlangu who served from 1999 to 2004, then Premier Thabang Makwetla who served from 2004 to 2009, who was followed by Premier David Mabuza. The following MPG departments were split in 1999:

- The Office of the Premier

- Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, Finance and Economic Affairs

- Education

- Health

- Housing and Land Administration

- Local Government and Traffic

- Public Works, Roads and Transport

- Safety and Security

- Social Services and Population Development

Even though there was a merger and split of some of departments, in terms of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996, it was essential for all Mpumalanga provincial government departments and municipalities to be managed in terms of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996), which states that the national archivists "shall be charged with the proper management and care of public records in the custody of government bodies." For the task to be accomplished, each department should designate or appoint a records manager to be in charge of records management.

The MPA was concerned about archival appraisal practices of MPG and its municipalities. This is in recognition of concerns associated with the appraisal of records in the province. Most records created by the MPG and its municipalities are destroyed before they can be transferred to archives. This is alluded to by Harris (2002), who witnessed massive destruction of records in May 1994, when the new democratically-elected government took office.

Most of the MPG departments were not transferring their records to archival institutions because they were afraid of the confidential records stored in their departments. Some of the records were not arranged and described properly to guarantee the transfer and disposal of records.

Conceptual Issues

The concepts discussed in this section have informed the study as will be seen in the next sections. In Africa, there was a lack of appraisal standards as attested by Nengomasha (2013, 4). There are ineffective appraisal programmes in Botswana,

Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Botswana. Archivists of developed countries have attempted to formulate records management standards by which to judge the value of records. For example, in Canada, generic appraisal consists of examining multiple administrative records (Giesbrecht and Smith 2017, 39). The generic approach involves appraising the functional records of an institution.

The appraisal standards serve as a guideline to appraise records for their permanent preservation. Archivists should be first concerned with the preservation of evidence of how records are preserved. The information obtained by an archivist in applying the test of archival value is essential to understand the significance of records from every point of view. The archivist should understand how the records were created by organisations (Schellenberg 1956, 141). They should be able to judge the value of records. The appraisal of records can be achieved through an analysis of records.

The archival value is judged by the position of each MPG department and municipality, the functions performed by each department and the activities carried out by each department in executing a given function (Schellenberg 1956, 142). Archivists are to understand the functions, policies, procedures and operations of each organisation to assess their records. However, the creator-driven approach to determining value might lead to serious abuse of records (Cook 2011, 177). For example, during the transition from the apartheid system to the democratic system of governance in South Africa, officials tried in many ways to cover up grievous human rights violations and crimes, including hiding or destroying some records. The illegal destruction of records by their creators was brought to light by archival and historical scholarship.

Records Management Programme (RMP)

A literature review is presented on the appraisal of records before organisations transferred archival records to the provincial archives. This is in line with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, and the National Archives of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996, Section 11 (2), which stipulates that "[p]ublic records identified in a disposal authority as having enduring value shall be transferred to an archives repository when they have been in existence for 20 years" (Republic of South Africa 1996). MPG and municipalities should ensure that all records with enduring value are preserved before these are transferred to the MPA. Only records with historical and archival value should be transferred to provincial archives. The quality of the archive holdings depends on the effectiveness of the department's records management programme responsible for the records before they are transferred to archives (Deserno and Kynaston 2005, 60).

With regards to effective records management, there is a need for archivists and records managers to identify records of archival value. This can be achieved through the elimination of records with short-term value. For that to happen, MPG should develop

retention schedules to specify required retention periods and dispose of records based on the assessment of records.

Pertaining to the classification system, the organisation of records according to their active and semi-active phases facilitates the classification of records in the archives. Organisations experience problems with classifying records because some records are not captured from the onset in a way that allows organisations to view their available content. Records should be correctly classified for use as a preliminary to their accurate identification in disposition documents (Schellenberg 1956, 104). Records should be classified and filed in such a way that they can be readily removed for destruction after they have served their current uses. Classification has a direct bearing on disposal practices. Records should be classified primarily to facilitate their current use and only secondarily to facilitate their removal and disposal. If records are properly classified in relation to function, they can be eliminated on the same basis. Classification can assist to help identify what information is eligible for transfer to the archives (Léveillé and Timms 2015, 173). Proper classification of records is the basis for analysing records.

With regard to training, a records management programme should be staffed by personnel with appropriate skills to ensure that it is effective, efficient, transparent and accountable (Department of Arts and Culture 2007, 45; Manewe-Sisa, Mooko, Mnjama 2016, 156). However, the training of archivists and records managers has never been prioritised in South Africa (Garaba 2007, 61). The number of records managers with skills in records management was inadequate, and even those available were not suited to handle records management-related tasks because they lacked appropriate training (Munge, Wamukoya, and Rotich 2014, 22). Hence, it is through training that employees can develop an understanding of proper management of records (Garaba 2015, 217).

In terms of compliance monitoring, a records management programme should be regularly monitored to ensure that it is effective and that it meets the requirements of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996 (Department of Arts and Culture 2007, 47). Compliance monitoring should be regularly undertaken to ensure that records systems, policies, procedures and processes are properly implemented. Compliance can be improved through the management division collaborating with internal auditors to determine what needs to be audited and what constitutes compliance (Richardson 2014, 40).

Records management policies provide a framework according to which employees are expected to operate (Richardson 2014, 38). The policies provide guidelines on the management of appraisal and selection decisions. According to Anderson, Eaton and Schwartz (2015, 9), appraisal and selection decisions must be informed by legal requirements and policies. Policies should be in place to ensure that MPG complies with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No.14 of 1998, and the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996. Organisations should work according to established records management standards to

ensure that the appraisal criteria serve to provide either authority to destroy records or preserve them in an archive (Garaba 2007, 62).

RMP is driven by the records retention schedule (Snyder 2016, 24). Setting minimum retention periods and periodically reviewing records are essential for the preparation of the transfer of records (Taylor 2015, 44). A retention schedule should be designed to obtain authorisation to destroy recurrent types of records (Oweghoro 2015, 70). A retention schedule should describe records in a manner that will facilitate their disposal. A disposal schedule should identify records in relation to circumstances and conditions that are reasonable and stable and should be prepared in relation to departmental functions rather than in relation to organisational units.

A disposal schedule should identify records in terms of the physical units that are to be eliminated (Schellenberg 1956, 102). Whenever records lose evidential role and administrative value, such records should be disposed of.

Records retention schedules provide the basis for the orderly removal and disposal of large quantities of ephemeral records from current filing systems. The decision to destroy records should be based on a thorough analysis of records and on the basis of records reviews.

The challenges of records appraisal and preservation management are a concern in the operation of archives (Segaetsho 2014, 175). Abioye (2014, 35) attests that records appraisal constitutes an activity in any records disposal programme. Procedures and standards for the appraisal of records are essential to retain historical and cultural records created by the departments. What constitutes permanent records is decided through the effective appraisal of records. If the appraisal procedure is not followed in line with legislation it can lead to the loss of institutional memory and place the organisation at risk during litigation if records are not found. Garaba (2007, 59) asserts that if archival processes are not conducted in a professional manner it will threaten the future of historical research and corporate memory. The quality of the appraisal of records can be a barrier to researchers' assessment of archives. It is up to a department to develop effective methods of appraising records, as elaborated by Garaba (2015, 221).

Pertaining to electronic records management (ERM), the development of digital archives needs to be considered in relation to legal frameworks (Klareld 2015, 176). New technologies and uses pose challenges to the long-term preservation of records. Storage and format migration of digital records are not formally pre-defined (Delaney and De Jong 2015, 76). Many organisations lose their archival records because they are unable to preserve the electronic records in their organisation for a period of 20 years before they are transferred to provincial archives (Nsibirwa, Hoskins, and Stilwell 2014, 53). This is alluded to by Ngoepe and Marcia (2018) who state that 20 years is a long time for organisations to wait before they can transfer ERM records to provincial

archives. Sometimes technology becomes dysfunctional within a short period of time which leads to the loss of institutional records. This statement is alluded to by Majore, Yoo and Shon (2014, 60) who assert that organisations face challenges in their attempt to collect digital records because of the lifespan of information technology equipment. This is influenced by the fact that departments are not ready to manage digital or electronic information. Most of the authenticity and integrity of electronic records are lost because of a lack of records management. The stability of electronic records is at a greater risk in terms of loss of materials, reliability, authenticity, and security than paper records (Nsibirwa, Hoskins, and Stilwell 2014, 54). This is also acknowledged by Muchaonyerwa and Khayudi (2014, 41), who indicated that the long-term preservation of records is a challenge to government institutions.

The disposition plan should provide an overall view of and be related to the documentation produced by an organisation (Schellenberg 1956, 98). Organisational policies should include a section that addresses methods for the destruction and deletion of records (Richardson 2014, 39). Disposal plans should be effective after the appraisal of records. An appraisal of records for permanent disposition should take place when records cease to be useful to an organisation (Cohen 2016, 30). This documentation should consider the organisational structure and development projects. The disposal plan should analyse the organisation documentation in its entirety by showing the significance of groups of records created at various levels of administration in relation to major functions. It should show the various relationships of the records. Records should be described in relation to the functions to which they pertain and according to their types.

The disposal plan should be developed in cooperation with an archivist (Schellenberg 1956, 99). Archivists are aware of which records hold archival value. An archivist's role is to describe the general background information of departments and their documentation. The analysis of the relationships of records should be developed by records managers. Records with short-term value will be separated from records with an archival value.

In terms of the transfer of records, the disposition of records can be finalised through the transfer of records. Departments can transfer records with enduring value to their records centre before they are finally transferred to the MPA. According to Schellenberg (1956, 107), records centres serve to accommodate types of records that regularly accumulate in the government and must be held for a long period of time. Such records centres also serve to accommodate special accumulations of records of terminated activities and they serve as places for the concentration of all past accumulations of records—regular and special, valuable and valueless. Records centres are a means of cleaning government records (Snyder 2016, 24). The transfer of records of questionable value to centres is justified only if decisions cannot be made regarding them, as is the case in governments where records centres serve as a first step in RMP. Records centres should be used for the storage of certain types of records, e.g. large records series,

regulatory, investigative, litigative, personnel or other similar types of documentation (Schellenberg 1956, 108).

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, states that when records have been kept for 20 years, they should be transferred to the MPA. The transfer is applicable to records with enduring value. Departmental records should have secondary values that qualify them for permanent preservation (Schellenberg 1956, 110). The provincial archives should consider the following for the records to be transferred to their custody, as stipulated by Schellenberg (1956, 110):

- Their nature and value

- The facilities affecting use must be considered

- The physical conditions of the records

- The conditions of access

Pertaining to collaborations/interrelations, the successful implementation of appraisals and disposals of records requires collaboration between governmental bodies and national or provincial archives. Anderson, Eaton and Schwarts (2015, 09) state that developing a collaborative approach towards appraisal, selection and collection development is essential. Collaboration is especially essential to digital records (Delaney and De Jong 2015, 76). Forming collaborations and partnerships between institutions enhances the preservation of records (Allen 2017, 13).

Cooperation among government departments on archival matters was found to be rare over the period examined for this study (Klareld 2015, 167). There is a lack of service level agreements between government departments in South Africa. This happens despite the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, No. 13 of 2005. Collaborations and interrelations require skills in advocacy and collaboration, as alluded to by (Garaba 2015, 221). Archivists and records managers need to be trained on interrelations, communication, and products that can be used to market the archives.

The literature review provided an overview of assessments of the appraisal and transfer of records. It outlined the records management programme adopted by an organisation as key to implementing the transfer of records. It also revealed gaps in the transfer process of digital records. Recognising this gap, this paper aims to contribute to a better process to transfer archival records from Mpumalanga Provincial Government to the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives.

Methodology

Research Objective

The aim of this study is to investigate the state of appraisal practice and the transfer of records of Mpumalanga Provincial Government and its municipalities from 1994 to 2013 with the intention to answer the following research questions:

- What processes were followed by MPG and its municipalities to transfer records to the Mpumalanga Provincial Archives?
- What is the level of MPG and its municipalities' compliance with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, in terms of the appraisal, disposal and transfer of records?

This study used a qualitative research approach to address the research questions and objectives. The decision to use a qualitative approach was based on the research question and the nature of the data that the researcher needed to collect and analyse in order to address the research question.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the macro-appraisal theory. This theory concerns a functional analysis of the organisation and its programmes (Cook 2011, 180). According to Cook (2011, 5), the theory encompasses a strategy and methodology for conducting records appraisal. This theory was adopted at the National Archives of Canada in the 1990s. The theory was developed in the context of the challenges of voluminous paper records of national and provincial governments and the challenges of preserving electronic records. The emphasis of macro-appraisal is on preserving the context of records which facilitates both scientific and humanistic reuse (Anderson, Eaton, and Schwartz 2015, 5).

This theory entails an analysis of functional organisations (Cook 2004, 5). This is alluded to by Anderson, Eaton and Schwartz (2015, 7) who state that the appraisal of government records must include an assessment of the creative functions of and processes used by the government.

This reflects its central theoretical assumptions about the value of records. The value determines the types of records to be preserved and which records are of no value to the organisation. According to Cook (2011, 6), a macro-appraisal is based on the following principles:

- A planned process to identify records that have archival value;
- Archivists should play an important role in identifying records with enduring or archival value;

- Archivists should not appraise records as much as appraise their varying contexts of creation and contemporary use: the records' virtual or functional provenance;

- It requires extensive research by archivists into organisational culture and institutional functionality;

- Appraisal is inevitably a subjective process, and any "values" animating it will differ with time, place, government structure/positioning and societal culture;

- Because of the complexity of appraisal, its societal importance and its subjectivity, archivists and their institutions should be held accountable for their decisions through full and transparent documentation of their contextual research.

The researcher chose the macro-appraisal theory because it puts the context of records creation at the core of the appraisal, disposal and transfer of records for permanent preservation.

Sampling

A purposive sample was used for this study. The researcher selected a sample that contained the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population that served the purpose of the study. The sample for this study were provincial archivists and MPG records managers. Purposive sampling was used to identify key records personnel from the provincial departments through selecting participants who can best help understand the problem and the research question.

Participants from the MPA were selected purposively by looking at their roles of managing the transfer of all records by the provincial departments, based on their role in managing provincial archives, which includes inspecting all government department records. The MPG and municipalities' records managers were selected because they create public records of which appraisals should be done in order to select records with enduring value to the provincial archives.

The reason for the researcher choosing non-probability (purposive) sampling rather than probability sampling was to gain insight into the transfer of records with archival value to the provincial archives. The interviews were carried out at the MPA, the MPG and the municipalities (See Table 1).

Table 1: Details of interviews

Name of institution	Number of interviewees	Position	Date of interview
Department of Social Development (DSD)	1	Records Officer	27 February 2018
Department of Agriculture (DA)	2	Records Manager	27 February 2018
Dr JS Moroka Municipality (DRMM)	1	Records Officer	27 February 2018
Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (PWRT)	1	Records Manager	27 February 2018
Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM)	1	Records Manager	27 February 2018
Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR)	4	Records Manager	5 March 2018
Mpumalanga Provincial Archives (MPA)	3	Archivists	5 March 2018

Furthermore, data were analysed using various archive materials and related documents. The analysis was done based on the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996, the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, and records management policies. The units of analysis for this study were selected MPG, municipalities and provincial archives. An interview guide was developed before the interviews took place to ensure that the relevant themes of the research would be covered, while still allowing for unexpected themes to emerge during the interview. Due to their understanding of the business of their units, the researcher purposively selected the officials to take part in this study. The number of units at these institutions was considered to be manageable. The total number of personnel targeted for interview purposes was 15. However, 13 records managers were interviewed.

The data were collected through interviews with the selected personnel from the provincial departments (see Table 1) and Mpumalanga Provincial Archives and through a review of government documents.

The one-on-one interviews were focused, open and brief, but allowed exploration of the participants' experiences through discussion.

Findings and Analysis

Primary data, in the form of reports collected by the researcher, were integrated to gain more in-depth insight into the transfer of provincial department records to the MPA. However, there were some gaps, especially when the researcher utilised document analysis because reports, statistical records and historical documents were often incomplete.

In terms of records management policies, records management should provide a suitable institutional framework that supports the effective management of records and therefore seeks to facilitate standardisation in the application of procedures and practices in the management of records.

An ineffective records management programme was demonstrated by the lack of records management policies and procedures observed in some of the provincial departments. The assessment indicated that policies were in place but were not followed. In some departments important aspects of records management policies, like the transfer of archival records and the systematic disposal of records, have not been taken care of in the policy. This is a serious shortcoming in the records management policies of some departments. Hence, the NARSSA endorses national standards that require government departments to put in place policies, strategies, procedures and systems which guide the management of records (Muchaonyerwa and Khayudi 2014, 42). Failure by the provincial departments to comply with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, was, of course, observed in the larger provincial departments, in which great quantities of records suddenly became due for transfer. According to this act, records with enduring value should be transferred to provincial archives after a period of 20 years.

With reference to classification systems, the MPG acknowledges that they have classification systems in place other than the correspondence system in the form of a file plan and schedule of records. However, there is non-compliance with the file plan. This means that there was no classification plan to manage current records. According to Abode (2014, 34), a good classification system is important in ensuring easy retrieval of records.

With regard to procedures concerning the retention and disposal/destruction of records, respondents were requested to indicate if the provincial departments had a procedure in place for the retention and disposal of records. The results of this question revealed that there is no standard guideline on policy or procedure for the retention, disposal and destruction of provincial governmental records. The absence of an RMP standard practice for the retention and disposal of records had led to the departments operating varying approaches to government records management practices, resulting in the non-

existence of standard policies and procedures for the retention, disposal and destruction of governmental records.

The departments observed retained records which led to the congestion of offices. This finding is not in line with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998, and the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996. Records with archival value kept in the governmental bodies should be transferred to the provincial archives after 20 years. The interviews with some of the records managers revealed inactive records ready for disposal were found among active records, a situation that made the transfer of records to the provincial archives very difficult. According to Abode (2014, 35), records of permanent value are retained and transferred to archives while those that have no value for permanent preservation are disposed of through implementation of the retention schedule.

In terms of the transfer of records to the MPA, the outcome of the study revealed that there was no coordinated transfer of records by the MPG. The review of documents shows that there was no framework in place to handle the processes of appraisal, transfer, and disposal of records by the MPG. Apart from NARSSA, there are provincial legislations on archives which can be utilised to arrange and classify records. A respondent who was a provincial archivist indicated that since 1994, regardless of what is stipulated by legislation, they have never received any transfer of records from MPG. The MPA were not capacitated to handle the transfer of records. The MPA is not enforcing the law in order to ensure that departments comply with the provincial archives act.

Based on the interviews with provincial archivists, the MPG records were not transferred to the MPA. This is because the prioritisation of the appraisal, disposal and transfer of records was not championed. This lack of compliance with the legislation may be influenced by the provincial departments' lack of an RMP.

Interviews conducted with some records managers revealed that government officials had no records centre. The study found that other offices were used to dump inactive records. The research found that the storage space and equipment were inadequate. In some other provincial departments, records were just dumped in the corridors.

Pertaining to the inspection of records, the data analysis demonstrates a lack of inspection of terminated records. It is the responsibility of the NARSSA to inspect public records to ensure that governmental departments comply with the requirements of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996, of South Africa.

From 1994, there were no officials appointed to the provincial departments to be in charge of records management. The Office of the Premier appointed a records manager for the MPG in 2000. Other MPG records managers were appointed after 2005. However, the appointed records managers are not responsible for all records within their

specific departments. This lack of processes and procedures led to inefficient records management. This demonstrates that records management was not a priority of the MPG. Even the records managers who were appointed by the MPG lack the necessary skills to manage records. The skills required to manage records include policy management, data curation and project management (Potnis et al. 2016, 190).

With regards to training, most government officials are not trained on the management of records. Records managers lack basic skills in RMP. Similarly, Mampe and Kalusopa (2012, 19) established inadequate training in RMP in government departments in Botswana.

In terms of compliance, the fact that none of the provincial departments transferred their records to the MPA demonstrated non-compliance with the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996, which indicates that records of archival value which have been kept for 20 years should be transferred to the MPA. The inability to let go of records means departments may not be in compliance with their records retention schedules. This contributes to related records management risks, such as congested offices and loss of institutional memory.

With regard to electronic records management, it was a challenge for the departments to manage digital records. Most of the government departments lack ERM. Some of the provincial government departments keep on acquiring electronic records without understanding   how to appraise and dispose of such records. This was also witnessed during the research conducted by the Archival Platform (2010, 15) where it was found that provincial archives of South Africa do not yet have the capacity to accept electronic records, and many MPG departments still have to develop capabilities to appraise and dispose of electronic records. The management of ERM was a challenge for the organisation (Muchaonyerwa and Khayundi 2014, 42). Some of the systems became obsolete which led to the loss of institutional memory.

Pertaining to collaboration, the systematic transfer of records requires effective collaboration between government departments. The analysis shows that there are no formal agreements regarding the transfer of records from the departments to the provincial archives. However, the fact that provincial archives is the directorate of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture posed a challenge for the transfer of records. It was observed that there is no political will by the heads of departments to develop and implement RMP. However, there is a Mpumalanga Provincial Records Management Forum which plays an essential role in sharing information regarding the management and transfer of records. Despite the forum, however, records were still not transferred to the provincial archives.

It is assumed that the neglect of the provincial department records was caused by a lack of understanding of the importance of archives by the government employees. This was alluded to by the Archival Platform (2010, 165), which concluded that governmental

departments' records were being disposed of without proper authorisation. The data analysis shows a lack of proper records management by the provincial government.

Recommendations

Provincial archives should be empowered to monitor and implement effective transfer of institutional records. This is alluded to by Harris (2002) who recommends that the government should take steps to ensure that the positioning of the NARSSA within the state supports its functions as the auditor of government record-keeping.

A collaboration to develop advanced technical infrastructures to enable long-term retention of higher technical quality content might be considered by provincial archives.

There should be inter-governmental relations between provincial archives and provincial governments.

For effective appraisal and transfer of records to happen requires departments to adopt and implement an integrated records management programme. There is a need for institutions to be funded by the Mpumalanga provincial treasurer to implement effective records and archives management.

The MPG and its municipalities are to be part of the process during the development of appraisal standards.

The provincial archives should not wait for the departments to transfer archival records. This is alluded to in a study conducted by Research Focus and Content at Work (2010, xxxiii) which recommended that provincial archives should re-examine its role with regard to records management in the public sector and should become more visible and proactive in the provision of guidelines and support.

Conclusion

The study examined the Mpumalanga Provincial Government's compliance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996, and the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998. The findings show the level of non-compliance of the MPG and its municipalities in terms of the appraisal, disposal and transfer of archival records. Even though other departments have policies and procedures in place, they are not followed. Some of the MPG departments and municipalities do not have guidelines on the retention, disposal and destruction of records. This resulted in records not being properly managed. Consequently, there is no standardised approach to the retention, disposal and destruction of records in the MPG and its municipalities.

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