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MANAGEMENT OF AUDIO-VISUAL RECORDS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF NAMIBIA

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the role that the National Archives of Namibia plays in the management of audio visuals in an attempt to curtail the deterioration of audio-visual archives which are kept in various organisations, some of which are unknown to the National Archives of Namibia. A qualitative method was applied in the study. The case study used the interpretive paradigm which enabled the researcher to triangulate the data collection instruments. Interviews, questionnaires and observation checklists were used to collect data. Content analysis was carried out to analyse data from interviews, document review and the observations. While Excel software provided descriptive statistics on graphs. The results indicated that AV materials were created and stored by various organisations, including the National Archives of Namibia, which oversees the management of all records. The Archives Act (Act 12 of 1992), section 4(1), gives a mandate to the National Archives of Namibia for control over records and archives of all formats in government offices, offices of local authorities and statutory institutions. Nonetheless, there are instances where AV materials are not deposited or stored in appropriate conditions. It is also apparent that different cataloguing and classification systems are used by different organisations. It is clear that most of the organisations manage AV materials in the same way as paper formats records. There is also an inadequately skilled workforce who were given a responsibility to manage AV materials. The study was limited to the Khomas region. Since there are 14 regions in Namibia, the findings cannot be generalized to other regions. Future studies should cover other regions. The results point to the need for the National Archives of Namibia to adopt an integrated approach to the management of AV records. This will require the NAN to work in cooperation with public sector institutions and empower them to preserve AV materials while, at the same time, they continue to deposit copies with the National Archives of Namibia. Unlike previous studies on management of audio visual archives in Namibia, this study included other organisations. The results give a clear picture of the role the National Archives plays in the management of audio visual records and archives.

Key words: archives, audio-visual records, National Archives of Namibia, regulatory framework

Introduction

This study mainly focused on the management audio-visual records in public sector institutions with the aim of providing a strategy for good practices. Audio-visual (AV) records are a national asset, but are fragile and vulnerable sources of information that documents an important heritage for current and future generations. According to Casey (2015:14), AV records connect the past with the future, unearth cultures, educates, and

provide history of a people. Furthermore, AV records preserve the identities and aspirations of societies, thus serve as the tangible source of outlining evidence that can be heard or seen as though the past is reconstructed. Edmondson (2002) and UNESCO declared that AV records are part of the documentary heritage that charts the evolution of thought and is the inheritance of the world. There would be nothing left behind if the major risks of deterioration and obsolescence defeat the efforts of archivists in providing the utmost protection (Breen & Flam 2014). For this reason, Ncala (2017) provides that preservation of AV records should not be delayed because the content carried in physical carriers is at the peril of deterioration, disappearing or becoming inaccessible.

Schüller (2008) argues that no adequate understanding of the past is possible without audio-visual documents. Protection of AV records against degradation is one of the activities that is covered by preservation. An apt milieu on the argument about the significance of preserving and giving access to AV records is captured by the quotation of Arthur, G. Doughty, an archivist from Canada from 1906 to 1935, who believed in the preservation of AV collections for access and use by the public (Drew et al, 2017; Nicholson 2008). His assumptions were that if AV records were stored but inaccessible, it was the same as being non-existent. Abankwah (2008) notes that some ESARBICA member states (Namibia included) were not managing audio-visual records properly due to a weak legislative framework, a shortage/lack of trained personnel in the management of audio visual records, harsh climatic conditions and poor infrastructure. These observations were later supported by several authors such as Nghiliwa (2016), Mapiye (2012), Maseko (2010) and Mnjama (2010).

Audio-visual records in Namibia are commonly found in various institutions countrywide. Some of the audio-visual materials are captured for business purposes while others are captured for private, religious and educational purposes and for posterity. Since the National Archives of Namibia (NAN) plays an overarching role in the management of records in Namibia, it is expected to have a firm grip on the regulatory framework which controls the creation, use, storage and disposal of all archival records, audio-visual formats included.

Background to the National Archives of Namibia

Recordkeeping in Namibia dates back to 1806 when the missionaries arrived in the country and introduced the indigenous people to the skills of reading and writing, which also resulted in the creation of records, including AV records. (Namhila, 2015; Steinmetz, 2006). When the German administration claimed Namibia as a territory, they also created volumes of records. The South Africa administration added to the accumulated records when they took over power from the Germans in 1915. The audio-visual records form a sub-section of the National Archives' collection, and its purpose was to preserve and provide information and promote research to materials that reflect the identities and aspirations of the Namibian people (National Archives Film Register 1996). Access to most of the audio-visual materials is not restricted but they can only be viewed by members of the public in the archives building. Copies can be made, provided that copyright and other conditions are adhered to. Members of the public who wish to have a copy can pay all expenses involved (Film Register, 1996).

One of the earliest audio-visual records kept by the NAN is a 1932 video that gives a symbolic representation of the journeys and the works of the Catholic Missionaries in the Okavango (M142, 1932). Another of these records is a 1937 film that shows the culture of Kwanyama people. The film also depicts the work processes and procedures involved in the method of slaughtering an ox and the processing of making blankets from animal skin in 1932 (Film Register, 1996). This shows the value the NAN attaches to the preservation of audio-visual records.

Problem statement

The internal physics and chemistry of AV records make the majority of them vulnerable to an inappropriate environment (Edmondson 2004:45). Ngulube and Tafor (2006) blame the majority of the archival institutions for not providing total preservation care. Edmondson (2004:45) thus warns that the AV carriers are at circumstantial risk of survival. Wright (2012:5) and Schüller (2008:6) observes that AV carriers eventually are bound to deteriorate so much that their contents cannot be retrieved. This study was motivated by Hillebrecht's (2010) outcry about Namibia's rich cultural heritage in AV format, which was in danger of dissipation. Although Hillebrecht (2010) conceded that all scripts of television and English news bulletins were transferred to the NAN, he argued that the NAN was unable to address the challenges of managing sound archives. Hillebrecht's (2010) assertion was included in some studies, including Phuthologo and Abankwah (2015) who compare the broadcasting migration process at the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and Botswana Television Service (BTV), Nghiliwa (2016) who examined the storage and retrieval methods of NBC Library and Archives Services and Mapiye (2012) who compared the management of audio-visual materials at the NAN and media organisations.

Audio-visual records are machine and technology dependent (Ncala, 2017); thus, an absence of migration strategies and replay equipment may hinder access to the contents (Mnjama 2010:144). According to Edmondson (2004:45) and Garaba (2010:22), recording and playback technology faces rapid obsolescence (Garaba 2010:22; Edmondson 2004:45). Inevitably, the risk of loss of the AV record's stability, value, usefulness, access, and evidence emerges gradually. Forde (2007) sees access as secondary because without the right facilities and system software, no service can be rendered at the archives. A challenge is to find the means to minimise the risk of this unacceptable loss. Wright (2012:5) and Forde (2009) recognise that archivists in archival institutions face questions of establishing strategy, which could allow them to remain relevant in less than perfect circumstances or deal with a sudden emergency. Some efforts are made to raise awareness of the fact that, "unless action is swiftly taken, the loss of AV material is inevitable" (Schuller, 2008:6)". Echoing Casey (2015:14), "the problem can be effectively summarised with a few keywords: large numbers, obsolescence, degradation, high research value, and short time window". In other words, archives hold very large numbers of analogue and physical digital recordings on obsolete audio and video formats that are actively degrading, some of which contain content with high research value. However, Mapiye's (2012) findings did not address the problem stated. There is therefore a need for a study to investigate the role the NAN plays in the management of audio-visual archives in Namibia.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish the role of the NAN in the management of audio-visual archives country-wide. The specific objectives were to: determine the policies and regulatory framework that guide the management of audio-visual archives in Namibia; determine the role the NAN plays in the management and preservation of audio-visual archives; identify organisations that create audio-visual materials in Namibia; investigate the storage areas where audio-visual materials are kept; identify skills and experience the staff possess regarding the preservation of AV records; establish strategies which the NAN applies to the management of AV materials and recommend ways of improving the management of AV materials.

Literature review

The pressing need to manage and preserve AV materials stems from their fragile and fugitive nature (Library and Archives Canada 2005; Ncala 2017). The Library and Archives Canada (2005) believes that “the first step towards managing the audio-visual records in any government institution is a good understanding of these records”. There is a need to understand that AV materials differ from traditional textual records in format, nature and use. AV records capture more information than the written word. Not only do AV materials differ from textual records in usage, they also differ in format. Various authors, including Abankwah (2008), Bereijo (2004), Mapiye (2012), Maseko (2010) and Paton (1999), note their vulnerability to loss and destruction due to their fragile nature. Nonetheless, audio-visual records add value to recorded speeches of events by capturing intricate details such as personality traits, including gestures and tone of voice. Thus, audio-visual records render an invaluable service to government, private institutions and the general public. The literature review is organised into the following sections: composition of AV carriers, storage conditions, arrangement and description, archival policies, legislation, acquisition practices, surveys and appraisal standards.

The composition of AV carriers

The chemical nature of audio-visual carriers makes them susceptible to damage, destruction and loss (Edmondson 2016; Schüller 2004). The composition of the formats differs. For instance, magnetic tapes that were manufactured in the mid-1930s are layered with cellulose acetate (which is highly flammable when exposed to high temperatures), tapes manufactured between 1944 and 1972 have a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) layer, while tapes manufactured in the 1950s have a polyester (PE) base (Edmondson 2016). Moreover, some audiotapes are made out of acetate/polyester material coated with iron oxide, while some are made out of ferric oxide, coated with chromium dioxide (Edmondson 2016). Magnetic tape contains magnetic particles, binder, lubricant, head cleaning agents and other lubricants. These coatings render magnetic tape and other audio-visual formats susceptible to damage, hence their life span cannot be easily predicted (Edmondson 2009; Lyons 2016). Paton (1999) earlier concluded that audiotapes are short-lived and unsuitable for long-term storage of historical information. This explains Wheeler’s (2002) observation that tape manufacturers use special magnetic particles, which are not publicised to customers. This is why Ray Edmondson, the champion of audio-visual archiving, cautioned that the replay of AV carriers might affect their integrity. For instance, the polyester – urethane (PEU) binder is prone to hydrolysis, which is caused by humidity, air pollution and other environmental hazards (Edmondson 2016). This results in a deposit of oxide, which clogs the tape heads, resulting in a breakdown of the playback equipment.

Storage conditions

Storage conditions include good house-keeping, maintenance of ideal climatic, environmental conditions, proper handling and general security of the repositories where archival materials are stored (Abankwah, 2017). Matangira (2003:46) notes that the majority of the audio-visual materials in archival institutions in ESARBICA “were kept under very inadequate conditions... most institutions lack the resources and skills required for managing audio-visual materials.” These observations were later confirmed by Abankwah (2008) in the case where the National Archives of Namibia, Botswana Television Services, and National Archives of Swaziland (now National Archives of Eswatini. Mnjama (2005:465) opined that “a lack of adequate storage facilities is one of the major hindrances to the growth of archival services in the region.” This is because archival materials, particularly audio-visual records have peculiar “physical characteristics that require the provision of special conditions within

that storage and handling space” (Roper & Millar 1999a:81). Maseko (2010) made similar observations about Swaziland Television Authority (STVA).

Arrangement and description

The organisation of AV materials requires that records are arranged and clearly described for ease access and retrieval. The process of arranging archival documents requires archivists to have knowledge of why and how the records were created and used, hence the application of the principle of provenance (Abankwah and Kamatula 2014). It is therefore important to note that the archival principles of provenance and original order apply to all formats of records AVs included. Davidson and Lukow (1997) realised the need to maintain the internal and external order for documenting AV records.

Processes for accessing audio-visual records

One of the main functions of all archival institutions is to preserve valuable records of all formats and make them available for use by the public (Ncala 2017:34). Deterioration and obsolescence are some of the threats that hinder access to records stored in audio-visual records (Casey 2015:14; Wright 2012:5; Matangira 2010; Mnjama 2010:139). In this regard, the ability to access and use information stored in audio-visual records depends on increased lifespan of the records. Ncala (2017) points out that audio-visual records that are well organized and managed are easy to access. The processes for accessing AV records rest on the premise that archival institutions avail their collection for consultation by researchers, learners and the public. Accessing such records is based on the assumption that all processes involved in preserving AV records such as appraisals, classification, and description have taken place at an institutional level before the records were transferred to the National Archives for permanent preservation. Wright (2012) contends that processes for accessing AV records include the legal authorisation to consult records and archives. The means of accessing AV records include elements such as the availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs), adequate viewing/listening room, useable playback machines, the screens, playing tables, computers, headsets and copying machines (Ncala 2017:22).

Archival legislation

Archival legislation “provides the legal framework under which national archives operate” (Mnjama 2005:464). Abankwa (2011:97) stresses that a legal framework gives AV archives a mandate to function, regardless of whether or not an archive is “integrated into a state archive or exists as an independent institution”. Lukileni-Iipingene and Mnjama’s (2017) study revealed that the organisation of audio-visual archives varied from country to country and from institution to institution. The above author argued that it was inappropriate to have multiple institutions in a single country with inadequate resources. In 1992, Derges (1992) reported that Namibia was the only country in the region where legislation fully covered AV materials. However, studies that followed (Abankwah 2007; Mapiye 2015; Matangira 2003) reported inadequate preservation facilities for AV records at the NAN.

Policies that govern the management of AV materials

Suderman (2005) explains that policies and procedures can make a significant contribution in the management of AV records. This has been supported by Parer (2002) who points out that policies provide the essential framework that enables institutions to operate with authority in managing records regardless of their formats. They ensure that information is managed properly and made available when needed. Abankwah (2007); Rakemane and Moseu (2020)

report that the lack of a preservation policy poses a negative impact to the management audio-visual records.

Skills of staff managing AV records

The preservation of records, irrespective of format and media on which they were captured, hinges on skills and knowledge of staff who deal with them at every stage of their lifecycle Patkus (2003:10). On a similar note, (Abankwa 2011), indicate that preservation is the function that requires skilled staff capacity. Harrison (2004) shares the same sentiments and observes that education is the key ingredient for the development of sound, film and television archives. Abankwah (2008:1) responded to the growing concern about the deteriorating state of AV records in the region of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). This adds up to the shortage of expertise observed in earlier studies by Matangira (2003:47), Ngulube (2003:134) and Moyo (2000:10). Mnjama (2010:144) states that limited technical expertise in the restoration of AV records hinders staff from repairing damaged materials. In the case of the study done by Ncala (2017:37), it is apparent that there is a lack of trained personnel who were supposed to manage AV records at the Radio Botswana Music Library.

Similarly, the findings by the Research-Focus in South Africa (2010:86) observed that the library and information services (LIS) sector had challenges with respect to trained and experienced staff capacity. This insufficiency could be addressed by education and training (Wamukoy and Mutula 2005).

Strategies for preserving audio-visual records

Preservation is one of the responsibilities of archival institutions which ensure the increased lifespan of records throughout their life cycle. In contrast, strategies for preserving AV materials are aimed at mitigating challenges and risks facing AV records. According to guidelines of IASA-TC 03 (2005), and Schüller and Häfner (2014), the preservation threats of AV records can be minimised by establishing clear strategies and guidelines for handling and storing audio and video carriers. The preservation strategies should address, for example, environmental factors such as handling, temperature, storage space and facilities, climatic conditions; mechanical deformation, dust, foreign matter, air pollution; light, ultra-violet radiation; and stray magnetic fields. According to Mnjama (2010:140), preservation strategy “involves three aspects: assessment, planning, and action”. Preservation activities can explicitly be categorised into four sections: maintenance, examination, conservation, and restoration. The two streams of preservation can either be preventative and remedial or renewal.

Casey (2015:14), Louko (2012:73) and Wright (2012:5) provide that the problems of deterioration and obsolescence are commonly known. The assumptions are that institutions should establish specific strategies which may hinder the challenges associated AV records. Ideally, the development of strategies and procedure is the starting point for formalising the activities and all processes needed for the management of AV records (Casey 2015:14)

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach that invokes the interpretive paradigm and allows the researcher to triangulate data collection instruments. The paradigm recognises that there are many different ways of interpreting the world and that in undertaking research, there is no single point of view that can give an entire picture of a phenomenon since there may be multiple realities (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019; Creswell 2007). Thus, the researchers

triangulated the data collection methods which included questionnaires, interviews, observations and document review. These methods enabled the researchers to combine interviews, observation and document reviews. Questionnaires with open-ended and closed ended questions were given to sixty records management officials since there were many. This is in response to Saunders et al. (2018) who point that unlike interviews, questionnaires enable the collection of massive amounts of information from a large number of people in a relative short period of time. Interviews were therefore administered to archivists since they consisted of only 10 respondents, the total response number consisted of 70 respondents. Document reviews of relevant documents such as the Archives Code and the Archives Act 12 of 1992 complemented information gathered from interviews and questionnaires. Taking such an investigative approach enabled the researchers to extract meaning from data gathered in the questionnaires, the explanations given by respondents through interviews and information gathered from the documents reviewed. A sample of 70 respondents was drawn from seven institutions using non-probability sampling method which enabled the researchers to purposively select participants from institutions that manage AV records as it was believed that they would provide the right information about AV materials in public sector institutions.

Presentation and discussion of findings

The findings that are presented in this study relate to the data collected from the National Archives of Namibia, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Namibian Broadcasting Co-operation, Bank of Namibia, University of Namibia and Document Warehouse. The identities of the informants have been concealed to ensure anonymity. The presentation of the results is organised under various sub-themes guided by the study's research objectives.

Types and formats of audio-visual collection in Namibia

Respondents were asked to indicate the different types and formats of records in their collections. The findings show that most of the institutions preserve phonographic recordings (acetate, shellac and vinyl discs), compact discs, replicated CDs, DVDs, recordable and rewritable CDs and DVDs, microgroove discs (LPs), Namibian music recorded by South West African Broadcasting Corporation (SWABC) in the 1980's on LPs, tapes, open reel magnetic tapes, realia, shellac ("78") records, slides, photographic negatives, photographic prints, transparencies, maps, drawings, art works, films, and video tapes.

Record storage and condition of the audio-visual collections

Fortson (1992) argues that the condition of buildings and equipment affects the condition of AV materials. In support of the above, Roper and Millar (1999c) note that the selection of good quality equipment in repositories results in good service to the users of archival materials and it minimises damage to the AV equipment. The respondents were asked to indicate where the records are stored. Out of 70 respondents who answered this question, 47 (67%) indicated that the records were stored on metal shelves and cabinets, while the remaining 23 (33%) respondents said that the records were stored in wooden shelves and drawers. The researchers' observations revealed that some of the AV records were stored in metal shelves and mobile cabinets as well as wooden shelves in some registries that are not locked, thus compromising the security of audio-visual records. These results are somewhat similar to Abankwah's (2008) study which revealed that one of the surveyed national archives in ESARBICA used shelving, three national archives used cabinets and one of the archives stored AV materials in vaults. Nonetheless, storing AV materials on wooden shelves is not advisable as they can easily be damaged in the event of a fire.

The respondents were also asked if the record storage conditions were adequate for preservation of records. Ten (15%) of the respondents said the records were kept in very good conditions, 15 (21%) said records were kept in an acceptable area with few problems, and 45 (64%) respondents said the storage facilities are not suitable for keeping records. They further said that the records were kept in deteriorating condition; one respondent noted that the records were kept in a basement fitted with sewage pipes. The respondent further mentioned that at some point, a pipe had exploded living paper and audio-visual records in water and the place was uncomfortable for workers who manage records. This is in line with the findings of a study by Nengomasha (2009) and Matongo (2015) that alluded to the fact that most institutions in the Public Service of Namibia did not provide adequate space for the management of records. The observations from this study also revealed that most institutions did not avail adequate space for managing audio-visual records and that some records were kept in unfavourable environment conditions; the records rooms are very hot, and there were no cooling systems to control or regulate the temperature. In one institution, the AV materials were mixed with paper records. Figure 2 below captures the above findings.

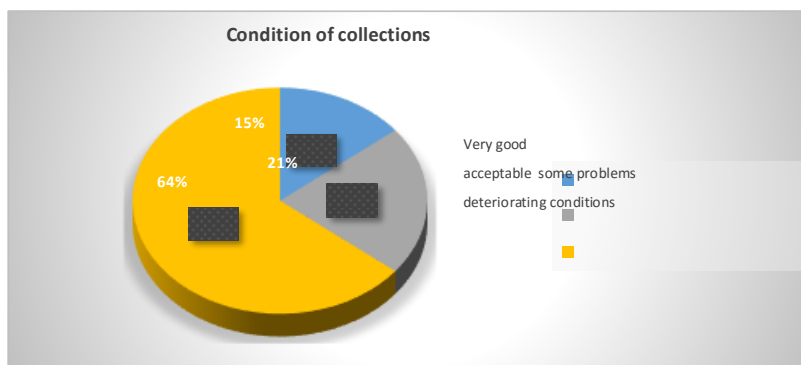


Figure 1: Storage places for AV collections

The results from the observations revealed that among the seven organisations covered by the study, four kept audio-visual records in basements fitted with water and sewerage pipes. However, when 40 (57%) respondents from four organisations were asked to explain why the record rooms were located in basements, they indicated that the basements provided favourable temperature, albeit with some challenges caused by bursts, resulting in leakages. These results showed that some of the AV materials are predisposed to water damage and environmental pollutants.

Records protection

Audio-visual records are important sources of information. Motsaathebe and Mnjama (2009) assert that the major part of every organisation's responsibility is to safeguard records from damage and destruction. The respondents were therefore asked to state if the records were protected against any hazards. Out of 70 respondents who answered this question, 28 (40%) said records were adequately protected from damage and destructions, while 42 (60%) said that the records were not protected from destructions and possible damages. An inspection of the security measures revealed that records were not sufficiently protected by most institutions. In some institutions, measures used to protect records such as fire detectors, security guards and fire alarms were not in place. The observation results also revealed that even though there are fire extinguishers in some storage areas, the officers responsible for managing AV records were not trained to use them. One respondent said: "In our

organization, archivists were neither aware of the types of AV materials in their custody, nor could they tell whether or not the storage conditions were adequate". In that particular organisation, observations revealed that one of the repositories had a smoke detector and controlled temperature although relative humidity was not controlled. There was a big chest of drawers that contained maps. The drawer was located in the study area. There was another repository in the same organisation which was used to store different formats of records but the temperature was not appropriate for AV records. This implies that AV records were kept haphazardly with no particular person charged with the responsibility of managing them.

The researchers also observed that many institutions lacked a disaster preparedness programme as only four out seven institutions involved in the study had lockable doors. Kavari (2017:18) emphasises that "the security of archival materials is not only important to the institution that keep these materials or the owners of the records, but it is important to the users as well". The results from this study suggested that AV materials could be in danger of loss, theft and vandalism; meaning that users could be denied access to some historical content.

Legislation

All (70) respondents were asked about the existence and relevance of the legislation for management and preservation of records and they all agreed that the Archives Act (Act 12 of 1992) provides guidelines for acquisition, management and preservation of records and that the NAN uses the same law for donations and legal deposit. However, one respondent pointed out that although this law is in place, it is outdated and not aligned to the current realities which require institutions not only to create and preserve paper records but also records in electronic formats. Barata, Bennett, Cain and Routledge (2001) held similar sentiments when they state that the legal framework for records and archives in Namibia was outdated and did not provide procedures for managing records in different formats. Abankwah (2008) reports that in most cases, the policies that governed the management of archival materials were not applied to AV materials. For instance, none of the national archives in Abankwah's (2008) study applied a disposal or digitization policy to AV materials. These observations paint a gloomy picture of how AV materials are managed by national archives and other institutions which create keep AV materials in Namibia.

Policies and regulatory framework that guide the management of audio-visual archives in Namibia

In order to obtain maximum benefits for the management AV records, organisations rely on policies and procedures to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the practices. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) note that policies and procedures are useful in providing clear guidelines for preservation and management of records, standardizing procedures, establishing responsibility assisting in employees training, and ensuring regular updated. For this reason, 70 respondents from selected organisations were asked to indicate if they had policies and procedures for the management and preservation of audio-visual records in their respective institutions. Twenty (29%) of the respondents indicated that a preservation policy existed in their institutions, 14 (20%) indicated that they were not aware, while 36 (51%) indicated that a preservation policy did not exist. This could mean that those organisations were not involved in preservation activities. Despite the above responses, observations revealed that among the seven institutions visited, only one had a specific policy for the preservation AV records. The observation also revealed that the National Archives did not have a national records management policy which institutions could have used to establish specific guidelines for their institutions.

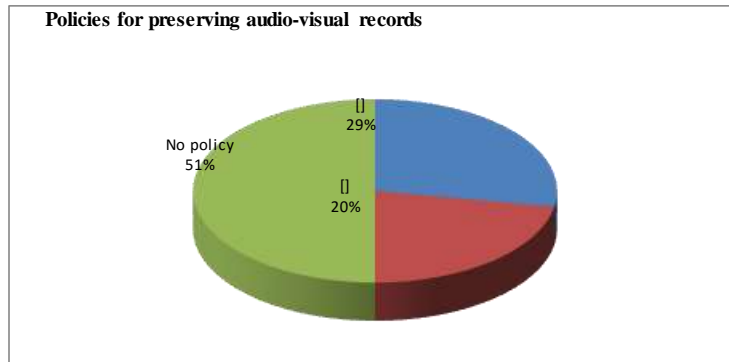


Figure 2: Policies for managing audio-visual records (N=70)

Skills of staff managing AV records

Ngulube (2003) makes the profound statement that in the preservation of records, irrespective of their format and media on which they were captured on, their management depends on essential skills to deal with them at every stage of their lifecycle. For this reason, respondents were asked whether they were trained in the management of AV records. Among the 70 respondents that were asked this question, 5 (7.14%) were trained in ICTs, 15 (21%) were trained in records and archives management, while 50 (71%) had no training in either of them. The respondents were further asked whether they were taken given induction training on managing AV records by the National Archives of Namibia. All respondents said they did not receive training in the management of AV records. The findings revealed that most officials who were entrusted with the management of AV records did not have appropriate training. This could mean that officials managed AV records based on experiences acquired from the colleagues who have served the institutions for long. Mnjama (2010:144) states that limited technical expertise in management of AV records could pose a threat as officials may not have the necessary skills, for instance, to preserve, restore or repair damaged materials.

Acquisition practices

The Legal Deposit Act (No. 54 of 1997) mandates the NAN to collect copies of all AV materials produced in all organisations in Namibia, and it applies to a large number of AV materials deposited at the NAN (Mapiye 2012). However, when 10 respondents from the NAN were asked to indicate how often they acquired materials to add to their collections, they indicated that AV materials were deposited regularly, and the institutions that deposit audio-visual materials more often were the NBC and the Ministry of Information. These results tend to differ from Schuurisma's (1997) observation that broadcasting organisations were "often reluctant to provide copies of their recordings for use outside their own premises." (Schuurisma 1997:84). In the case of sound recordings, the author advocated a national sound archive model, which ensures acquisition of materials from all countries located in one place. This arrangement prevails in South Africa at the National Film, Video and Sound Archives (NFVSA) (Abankwah 2008). In the case of the STVA, Maseko (2010) reported that "14 (100%) respondents acknowledged that no AV records were transferred either through Legal Deposit, purchase, or donation from STVA to the SNA for public use, permanent storage and long-term preservation". The respondents from the NAN were also asked whether institutions had a requirement for documenting all audio-visual materials transferred or received by the NAN.

All 10 respondents from the NAN agreed that the National Archives keeps a record of all materials deposited and/or received from institutions and individuals. Nonetheless, the legal deposit does not apply to AV materials. These results differ from Abankwah (2008) who revealed that the Botswana Television Service was required to deposit a copy of each production to the Botswana National Archives. Reflecting on the results from the current study in comparison with previous studies, it appears that the NAN, to a large extent, applies the legal deposit law to AV materials although the NAN staff seem to be ignorant of this requirement.

Appraisals practices

The 70 respondents were asked to indicate standards that guide the NAN in the appraisal of audio-visual materials. Ten (7%) respondents representing the NAN indicated that record appraisals are guided by retention and disposal guidelines established according to different values of records as well as the Treasury Instructions provided by the Ministry of Finance for the management of financial records.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether their institutions had strategies in place to appraise records so as to separate records of value from those with no foreseen value. A total of 23 (33%) respondents said they did not conduct any appraisal, 17 (24%) respondents said they did not know whether appraisals were ever conducted, and one respondent stated that “we just receive the donation”, while 30 (43%) respondents said that they base their decisions on their own experience as well as the records retention and disposal guidelines as it covers records of all formats. The findings from the questionnaires also revealed that some institutions have retention guidelines which they use to appraise all forms of records. However, there were some institutions that could not appraise records of all formats because they did not have approved file plans. This suggests that some of the institutions kept all their records, which could result in a shortage of storage capacity since storage area might be accumulated with volumes of all the records which might not have any value. These findings confirm Mnjama’s (2015) observation that AV records are usually neglected. Maseko’s (2010) study also supported this study’s findings. The author reported that “the appraisal of AV records at STVA is not well coordinated. Appraisal of AV records is hardly done, as the trend is to keep every copy of all broadcast content. The implication is that there is no codified policy on appraisal at STVA” (Maseko, 2010:104).

Types and formats of audio-visual materials managed

Respondents were asked to indicate the different types and formats of records in their collections. The findings show that most of the institutions preserve phonographic recordings (acetate, shellac and vinyl discs), compact discs, replicated CDs, DVDs, recordable and rewritable CDs and DVDs, and microgroove discs (LPs). Institutions also preserved Namibian music recorded by the SWABC (South West African Broadcasting Corporation) in the 1980s on LPs, tapes, open reel magnetic tapes, realia, shellac (“78”) records, slides, photographic negatives, photographic prints, transparencies, maps, drawings, art works, films, and video tapes. These results show that the NAN keeps a wide variety of AV archives.

Records classification

Maseko (2010:127) states that ISO 15489-1:2001 points out that there are various ways of classifying and organizing records of all forms and documents. The important thing to note is that records should be classified in a manner that facilitates systematic storage and speedy

retrieval of information (Roper & Millar (1999). According to Hannabuss (2003), up to 10 per cent of staff time is usually spent looking for records and information when it is wrongly classified and filed.

For this reason, the respondents were asked to indicate the type of classification system that is used in their respective institutions; 37 (53%) revealed that they used a numeric system, while 19 (27%) did not know, 14 (20%) respondents indicated that they used an alphabetical system. Despite their responses, the finding of the observation indicates that although institutions organized their AV records differently, the most common classification scheme used throughout government was the alpha-numeric scheme.

Abankwah (2008) argues that AV records require different methods of arrangement. She suggested that “there should be some variation in the way the archival principle of provenance is applied to AV materials. For instance, with video cassettes or CDs, one is more interested in the content, the producer and date of production than the originating office. In this regard, Abankwah (2008) opines that the archival principle of provenance may not apply to all AV materials (Abankwah 2008). On the other hand, Nghiliwa (2006) reports that the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) uses the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (ACCR2). Music and other AV formats can also be described using IASA cataloguing rules (Abankwah 2008). However, Maseko’s (2010) study revealed that the videotape collections of the Swaziland Television Archives (STVA) are not properly catalogued and indexed to facilitate access and retrieval. “The collection is poorly arranged, described with very limited metadata” (Maseko 2010:127). Maseko (2010) further notes a lack of indexes, inventories, registers and guides which hampered access to AV materials. In contrast to the above, the NBC, which keeps a variety of AV formats, manages AV records through their radio archive, TV archive, and music library. Apart from having a backlog of unprocessed old shellac (“78”) records which are inaccessible due to a lack of needles for turntables or new turntables with needles, the rest of the AV formats at the NBC are accessible as most of the valuable materials have been transferred to another format to ensure that they remain accessible. Both the replica and the original formats are being preserved. These results indicated that the NBC (the largest media organization in Namibia) hosts AV materials in all formats, including some of the oldest shellac formats and they seem to manage them professionally. The only challenge is lack of professional audio-visual archivists.

Record storage and condition of the audio-visual collections

Fortson (1992) argues that the condition of buildings and equipment affects the condition of AV materials. In support of the above, Roper and Millar (1999c) note that the selection of good quality equipment in repositories results in good service to the users of archival materials and it minimises damage to the AV equipment. The respondents were asked to indicate where the records are stored. Out of 70 respondents who answered this question, 47 (67%) indicated that the records were stored on metal shelves and cabinets, while the remaining 23 (33%) said that the records were stored in wooden shelves and drawers. The researcher’s observations revealed that some of the AV records were stored on metal shelves and mobile cabinets as well as wooden shelves in some registries that are not locked, thus compromising the security of audio-visual records. These results are somewhat similar to Abankwah’s (2008) study which revealed that one of the surveyed national archives in ESARBICA used shelving, three national archives used cabinets and one of the archives stored AV materials in vaults. Nonetheless, storing AV materials on wooden shelves is not advisable as they can easily be damaged in the event of a fire disaster.

The respondents were also asked if the records storage conditions were adequate for preservation of records. Ten (15%) of the respondents said the records were kept in a very

good condition, 15 (21%) said records were kept in an acceptable area with few problems, and 45 (64%) said the storage facilities are not suitable for keeping records. They further said that the records were kept in deteriorating condition; one respondent noted that the records were kept in a basement fitted with sewage pipes. This respondent further mentioned that at some point, a pipe had exploded leaving paper and audio-visual records in water and the place was uncomfortable for workers who manage records. This is in line with the findings of a study by Nengomasha (2009) and Matongo (2015) that alluded to the fact that most institutions in the Public Service of Namibia did not provide adequate space for the management of records of all formats. The observations from this study also revealed that most institutions did not avail adequate space for managing audio-visual records and that some records were kept in unfavourable conditions, the record rooms are very hot, and there were no cooling systems which could control or regulate the temperature. In one institution, the AV materials were mixed with paper records. Figure 2 below captures the above findings.

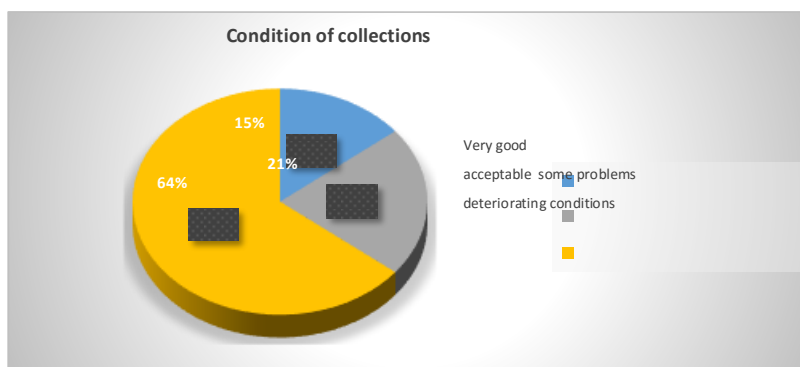


Figure 2: Storage places for AV collections

The results from the observations revealed that among the seven organisations covered by the study, four kept audio-visual records in basements fitted with water and sewerage pipes. However, when 40 (57%) respondents from four organisations were asked to explain why the record rooms were located in basements, they indicated that the basements provided favourable temperature, albeit with some challenges caused by bursts, resulting in leakages. These results show that some of the AV materials are predisposed to water damage and environmental pollutants.

Records protection

Audio-visual records are important sources of information. Motsaathebe and Mnjama (2015) states that the major part of every organisation's responsibility is to safeguard records from damage and destruction. The respondents were therefore asked to state if the records were protected against hazards. Out of 70 respondents who answered this question, 28 (40%) said records were adequately protected from damage and destruction, while 42 (60%) said that the records were not protected from destruction and possible damages. An inspection of the security measures revealed that records were not sufficiently protected by most institutions. In some institutions, measures used to protect records such as fire detectors, security guards and fire alarms were not in place. The observation results also revealed that even though there are fire extinguishers in some storage areas, the officers responsible for managing AV records were not trained to use them. One respondent indicated: "In our organization, archivists were neither aware of the types of AV materials in their custody nor could they tell whether or not the storage conditions were adequate". In that particular organisation, observations revealed

that one of the repositories had a smoke detector and controlled temperature although relative humidity was not controlled. There was a big chest of drawers in the study area that contained maps. There was another repository in the same organisation that was used to store different formats of records, but the temperature was not appropriate for AV records. This implies that AV records were kept haphazardly with no particular person charged with the responsibility of managing them.

The researchers also observed that many institutions lacked a disaster preparedness programme as only four out of seven institutions involved in the study had lockable doors. Kavari (2017:18) emphasises that “the security of archival materials is not only important to the institution that keeps these materials or the owners of the records, but it is important to the users as well”. The results from this study suggest that AV materials could be in danger of loss, theft and vandalism; meaning that users could be denied access to some historical content.

Strategies for preserving audio-visual records

Strategies for preserving AV materials are aimed at mitigating challenges and risks facing AV records. According to guidelines of IASA-TC 03 (2005) and Schüller and Häfner (2014), the preservation threats of AV records can be minimised by establishing clear strategies and guidelines for handling and storing audio and video carriers. Respondents were therefore asked whether their institutions had a disaster preparedness plan aimed at recovering and salvaging AV records in the case of a disaster. Among the 70 respondents who responded to this question, 5 (7%) said their institutions had a disaster preparedness plan, 25 (36%) said they did not know whether a disaster preparedness plan existed in their institution, while 40 (57%) respondents said their institutions did not have a disaster preparedness plan. The findings of the observations revealed that only two out of the seven institutions visited had a disaster preparedness plan. This indicates that most of the AV records were prone to deterioration and loss, since there is no prior plan against disaster.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results from this study indicated that most institutions do not have specific policies, standards or guidelines for the management and preservation of audio-visual records. They rely on the Archives Act (Act 12 of 1992) which is outdated and does not provide specific instructions for managing AV records. The study also revealed that some institutions could not appraise AV records because they do not have approved file plans. This means that a lot of space is wasted due to a backlog of unappraised AV records. Moreover, the fact that the NAN does not seem to have a firm grip of the different AV materials that different institutions are keeping means that it cannot ensure adherence to regulatory framework in place. This could lead to dissipation and loss of valuable information that is captured in AV records. Based on the results from the study, the researchers make the following recommendations:

In its endeavour to preserve AV materials, it is important for institutions in the public sector and the National Archives to observe the following:

- Formulation and implementation of policies for preserving AV Archives
There is a need for the National Archives of Namibia to play a more proactive role in the management of AV records by developing and implementing a comprehensive policy which should provide guidelines for preserving AV records. This approach should be backed up by regular surveys and close monitoring of institutions which

create and store AV records as in the case of the National Film, Video and Sound Archives (NFVSA) in South Africa (Abankwah 2008).

- Security and control of environmental conditions in records storage facilities
This study recommends that institutions should ensure that there are adequate storage facilities for audio-visual records. They should ensure that they are kept under ideal temperatures and relative humidity.
- Acquisition of AV materials
The study identified that public sector institutions were not constantly depositing AV materials at the NAN as required by the Archives Act (Act 12 of 1992). Therefore, it is recommended that the NAN sensitizes organizations to their responsibility of legal deposit and transfers of semi-current AV materials. This can be achieved if the NAN organises workshops in partnership with associations/federations such as the Association of Moving Image Archives (AMIA), International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), and International Federation of Films Archives (FIAT).
- Appraisal of AV materials
This study revealed that most institutions did not conduct records appraisal and recommends that the NAN should work with organisations to develop records classification schemes which should be used to appraise and organizing AV materials.
- Staff skill for managing AV records
Another important finding was that most staff working audio-visual records lacked professional skills. In order to ensure sound management of AV records, the National Archives, ministries and departments should endeavour to identify skills gaps officials, and mount regular training programmes that will help strengthen the skills and competencies of records staff, especially the cadre who manages AV records.
- Strategies for preserving audio-visual records
Institutions of public service to establish disaster preparedness plan as a strategy for readiness in the case of a disaster.

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