

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC RECORDS IN RECORDS CENTRES:
A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZIMBABWE, MUTARE RECORDS
CENTRE (NAZ/MRC)**

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ABSTRACT

To fulfill their mission Records Centres should provide secure low-cost storage of agency records, efficient retrieval systems and the systematic disposal of non current records. Records Centres act as filtration plants as they separate records of ephemeral nature from those of permanent value designated as archives. Disposal of public records in the Records Centre entails that records of ephemeral nature are destroyed according to standing instructions and records worthy permanent retention are transferred to the archives once their retention has elapsed as prescribed in the retention schedules. Disposal of public records, as highlighted in the Records Life Cycle, seeks to control and manage the accumulation of records by saving space through the destruction of records of ephemeral nature and identify archives before they are transferred to the archives. However the NAZ/MRC is misutilising valuable shelf space by retaining records overdue their retention therefore leading to backlog accumulations in the records centre. This compounded by insufficient funding made to National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) over the years to acquire adequate shelving space has led the records centre to become a clogged store of records. This research sought to identify the problems affecting the NAZ/MRC and find strategies which the NAZ/MRC could adopt to address the challenges faced in the disposal of their public records. The researcher used the case study research methodology for this research as it encourages close analyses of a single case thus the NAZ/MRC. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews from government department registry supervisors as well as from the records centre staff as both parties are affected by the phenomenon studied. Data was analysed using text, tables and figures and from the data gathered the researcher identified that the NAZ/MRC has seemingly suspended the disposal of public records due to challenges in staffing, resources, funding, public support, and motivation. The researcher recommended that there is need to inform the government, public, and other stakeholders on the importance of Records Management in the governance of the nation, so as to receive stakeholder support. The NAZ/MRC should also engage government to prioritise the retention of qualified staff through incentives to dissuade them from leaving the institution. The disposal of records should be given first priority to ensure that space is kept for only those records worthy preservation.