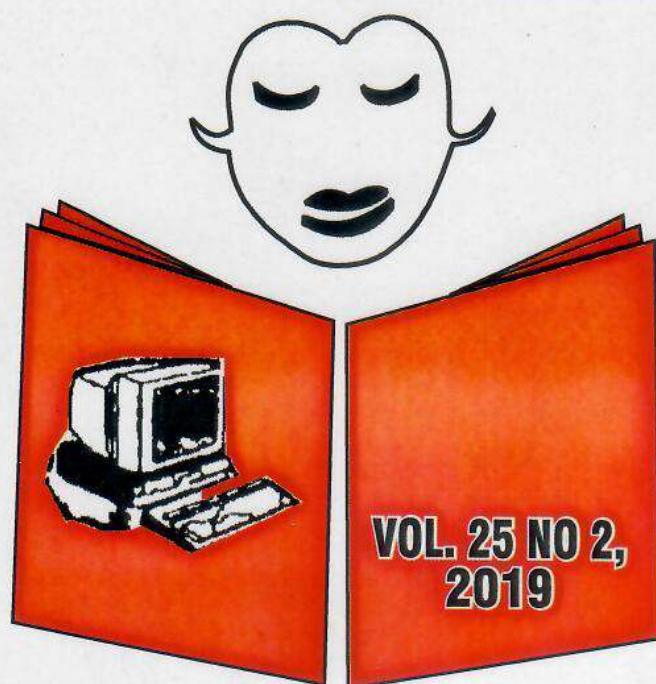
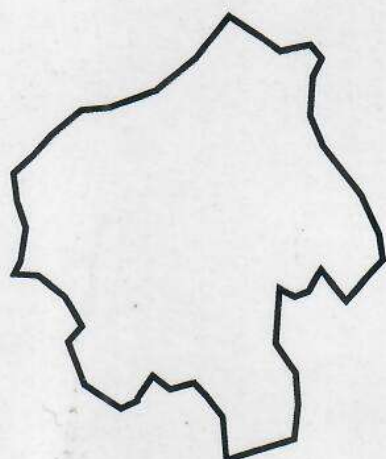


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Institutional Support, Preservation and Conservation Practices in Academic Libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Preservation and conservation is the maintenance of library information materials to exist as close as possible to their original condition. In Nigeria however, mutilation, theft, vandalism and deterioration of library resources impede the longevity and usability of information materials. These impediment may be as a result of poor institution support given to the libraries by the institution. Institutional support is the provision of better working condition and administrative services to employees including funding, infrastructure and facilities to drive effective library operation. However, the extent of investigation among librarians in Kwara may not have been determined. This study examined the influence of institutional support on preservation and conservation practices of library materials among library personnel in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of 173 library personnel in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. A validated structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings revealed that Institutional support had a positive significant relationship with preservation and conservation of library information resources ($R = 0.392, p < 0.05$). The findings also showed that the respondents agree that there is some form of institutional support given to the library for the preservation and conservation practices in the library (Average Mean score = 2.76 on a four point scale). The study concluded that, contrary to the observation that the low level of preservation and conservation practices observed in the academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria is as a result of poor institutional support given to the library personnel. It is deduced however that institutional support influenced preservation and conservation practices in libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria which must be maintained.

Keywords

Institutional support, Preservation and Conservation practices Academic libraries.
Kwara State, Nigeria

Introduction

The significance of an academic library cannot be over emphasized especially in the area of preservation and conserving information

materials for posterity. The concept of preservation is viewed as an area of librarianship that deals with the prevention of disintegrating

library resources. Every library faces different dimension and stages of deterioration of both print and non-print resources including, maps, photographs, audio visuals, films and video tapes. Library information materials are unique and constitute an essential resource which is indispensable. Therefore, preserving this intellectual heritage becomes the professional mandate of librarians. The concept of preservation of deteriorating information resources has become a universal phenomenon in which there is an effort towards making sure the mandate of the library is not lost as a result of decaying library materials.

The concept of preservation and conservation of information materials can be traced to the history of libraries. Hence, it is concerned with the organisation and practical techniques such as binding, restoration and material technology including other relevant understanding crucial to the preservation of resources. International Federation of Library Association Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Material (2010) views preservation as the managerial and financial considerations including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques and methods involved in preserving library and archival materials and the information contained in them. Preservation and conservation also entails safeguarding library information resources from deterioration. The practice of safeguarding the library materials deal also with the actions taken to checkmate the progression of information materials from wear and tear. Oyishu and Nkanu (2013) posit that preservation is the maintenance of library information materials as close as possible to the original condition.

According to Sawant, (2014) conservation and preservation are the processes of ensuring that library information resources are kept from becoming deteriorated or damaged through regular maintenance and curative treatments. Popoola (2003) defined conservation as policies and operations embarked upon by the managers of libraries and with the aim of increasing the life span of their information resources by preventing damage. He further explained that it may also be seen as direct physical intervention arresting or slowing down deterioration of library resources. Libraries are faced with high rate of information material deterioration. This is because the composition of library materials is organic in nature making them subject to natural wear. Most information resources are on book or paper including modern library information materials as sound tapes and electronically stored information such as Compact Disc, read-only-memory (CD ROMs) which are subject to destruction according to National Library of Australia, (2004). Since library information materials are used by patron constantly they cannot be conserved, stored or secure in an enclosed environment to arrest their deterioration. Hence, consistent practices must be put in place to ensure they are not destroyed as a result of regular use.

In academic libraries in developing countries especially countries in Africa including Nigeria, preservation and conservation is a major issue. Ogunmodede and Ebijuwa, (2013) posit that a large portion of audio and video files of information materials are routinely wiped out. Also, Olatokun, (2008) reports that information materials in many libraries are still housed in conditions that leave

much to be desired leading to continual deterioration. Observations by the researcher show that most academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria do not have mechanisms set up for the preservation and conservation of library materials regardless of the fact that preservation is a core function of any library. The question remains if there is a high level of institutional support given to the libraries to take care of library materials from deterioration.

According to Blackmore and Kuntz (2011) institutional support is an expression of employees' belief that the organization values their contribution and provides for their welfare. Institutional support is tilted towards boosting employees' moral through involvement and commitment, which eventually impact the work they perform do. This paper therefore investigates the influence of institutional support on preservation and conservation practices in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Literature relevant to this study was reviewed to make a more understanding of the variables in this study. The concept of preservation and conservation of information materials takes its root in the history of libraries. Libraries have been viewed as a collection of materials arranged and organized, carded and made available for use. United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization manifesto on libraries (UNESCO, 1994) states that the library is an organized collection of published books and periodical and of other reading and audio-visual materials, and the service of staff able to prove and interpret such materials as required to meet the informational research, educational or

recreational needs of the user's. The library is a place where the information seeker communicates with authors both living and dead.

Preservation and conservation are essential library activities which when properly implemented have the capability of sustaining library operations for a very long time. Preservation is often used interchangeably with conservation. However, there are differences between the two concepts. Preservation suggests that natural resources will be left undisturbed, while conservation usually indicates some resource management. Zintah, Dangwaran and Oyinloye (2017) stress that the words "preservation and conservation" are often used to mean: the process of keeping an object safe from harm or loss, damage, destruction and maintaining it in a reasonably sound condition for present and future use. Therefore, the process of preservation and conservation is applied to safeguard the library materials from further decay and deterioration. In furtherance, the concept preservation of library materials refers to the activities associated with maintaining library materials for use, either in their original physical format which includes control mechanism to take care of the environment, conservation on the other hand deals with the treatment of library materials to stabilize their physical structure in order to sustain their survival. Preservation of library materials has been conceptualized to mean the totality of the steps necessary to ensure the permanent accessibility of a particular material. Preservation of information material is practiced by a librarian, archivist when they observe a material is decaying or deteriorating.

Institutional support means the

perception of individuals working in an organization concerning their well-being in that organization as it relates to work. Abigail and Oluwatobi (2015) state that institutional support is one of the most important organizational concepts that keeps employees in the institution. The level of perceived institutional support result to a mandatory sense and obligation of staff to be committed to the organization. Perceived institutional support is positively related to conscientiousness, commitment and innovation in carrying out job responsibilities in an organization. According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) as cited by Chinomona and Moloi (2014) employees perceive that the institution supports them if resources are provided voluntarily rather than with pressure. The support given to employees might come in form of funding and provision of facilities to enable them carry out their job effectively.

Funding libraries in Nigeria has become a problem in which there seems to be a lack of sufficient allocation of funds to enable the provision and maintenance of libraries especially in the area of conservation of preservation. It is observed by scholars that large proportion of Nigerian libraries do not allocate sufficient funds in their annual budget for the conservation of information resources. This has caused the low priority given to the conservation of information resources by the management of such libraries. The management of library and the quality of services depends largely on the amount of fund available to the libraries. Apart from funding, good work condition is another factor that could aid or hinder preservation and conservation practices by library personnel. The environment of work has an impact on the way a job such as

preserving and conserving library information material is carried out. The extents to which academic libraries can maintain and preserve information resources for posterity depends largely on the conditions of the working environment available in the library including its facilities.

University libraries in developing countries such as Nigeria are facing major support issues especially in the area of funding. This may be due decreasing appropriations from the university administration. Olatokun (2008) agrees that the prominent inhibitors to effective and efficient conservation of information resources in libraries, archives and record centres are lack of funds. Almost no Nigeria libraries, allocate sufficient funds in their annual budget for the conservation of information resources in their holdings. The situation is worst in public libraries. Ogbodo (2011) examined the preservation of information sources in polytechnic libraries in South Eastern States of Nigeria. The study found out that the problem of preservation of information sources in the polytechnic libraries is inadequate funding. Njeze (2012) carried out a research on Preservation and Conservation Issues in Selected Private Universities in South-West Nigeria. It was discovered that the challenges facing all Universities studied is lack of funding. Popoola (2003) stated that inadequacy of equipment contributes significantly to the poor status of conservation and preservation practices of information materials in African libraries, archives and information centres.

Oluwaniyi (2015) investigate the preservation of information resources in selected school libraries in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The

results showed that lack of fund and inadequate infrastructure on the aspects of preservation of information resources was the major confrontations in the selected school libraries. In a study conducted by Alegbeleye (1999), he reported that 80 percent of the available books therein are in the brittle book category. This is as a result of poor institutional support for the preservation and conservation of library information resources. Librarians and the institutions within which they serve seem to have neglected the concept of preserving and conserving information materials. Osunride (2016) examined preservation and conservation of library materials in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. Dust and particulate matter are the greatest causes of deterioration to library materials. The study concluded that lack of proper preservation and conservation practices in the universities is as a result of poor institutional support leading to resource loss and deterioration.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study, which seeks to answer the extent to which institutional support influence preservation and conservation practices of library materials in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of this study was 173, which consisted of library personnel (both professional and para- professional) of different cadres in academic libraries in Kwara. The study used the entire population. This is because the population was not considered large enough to be sampled. The instrument used for data collection was structured titled: "Influence of Institutional support on Preservation and Conservation Practices. The researcher sought for permission and audience from the

management of the universities chosen as sample through formal letter of introduction. The respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and clarification was made on the importance of the study. The researcher ensured that the questionnaire were filled correctly through the help of two (2) research assistants that were trained to assist in data collection. The researcher spent three to four weeks in the field collecting the data from the respondents. Out of the eight (8) academic libraries under study, each of the research assistant administered the questionnaire in two (2) academic libraries while, the researcher administered the questionnaires in the remaining two (2) libraries. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations was used to analyze data to answer the research questions raised, while the research hypotheses was tested using inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis. The research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section presents the analysis of the respondent and demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Prevalence of Preservation and Conservation Practices in Academic Libraries in Kwara State.

Items	SA 4 F (%)	A 3 F (%)	D 2 F (%)	SD 1 F (%)	x	SD	AM
Minimal Level							
Regular sweeping, dusting, mopping of the library are some of the preservation practices carried out in our library	104 (65.0)	37 (23.1)	7 (4.4)	12 (7.5)	3.46	0.689	Average Mean 3.38
Careful Handling of library materials is made compulsory for library staff and users	66 (42.3)	29 (18.1)	42 (26.3)	23 (14.4)	2.84	0.963	
Photocopying of library materials as a preservation method is available in our library	94 (58.8)	44 (27.5)	4 (2.5)	18 (11.3)	3.34	0.757	
Air Conditioners is available to serve as one of the preservation practices in our library	110 (68.8)	39 (24.4)	3 (1.9)	8 (5.0)	3.56	0.904	
Binding and minor repairs of damaged materials are done in our library	134 (83.6)	13 (8.1)	5 (3.1)	8 (5.0)	3.70	0.654	
Middling Level							
Digitization of library materials is one of the preservation practices in our library	49 (30.6)	72 (45.0)	19 (11.9)	20 (12.5)	2.93	0.346	Average Mean 3.16
Tools such as thermometers and hygrometer are regularly used in our library	79 (49.4)	64 (40.0)	10 (6.3)	7 (4.4)	3.43	0.886	
The use of pamphlet boxes and book end to support library materials is regularly practiced	134 (83.8)	20 (12.5)	3 (1.9)	3 (1.9)	3.78	0.774	
Fumigating/Disinfecting of materials are parts of the preservation practices in our library	64 (40.0)	55 (34.4)	18 (11.3)	23 (14.4)	2.70	0.746	
Use of backup and password for adequate security are the preservation practices in our library	63 (39.4)	47 (29.4)	8 (5.0)	63 (39.4)	2.95	0.612	
Optimal Level							
Our library uses mass de-acidification to preserve library materials	134 (83.8)	18 (11.3)	8 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	3.79	0.265	Average Mean 3.46
Our library uses of fire extinguishers and sand buckets for fire safety	110 (68.8)	39 (24.4)	3 (1.9)	8 (5.0)	3.57	0.566	
Our library strictly adheres to preservation policy to ensure that adequate preservation practice is achieved	115 (71.9)	34 (21.3)	3 (1.9)	8 (5.0)	3.60	0.689	
Preservation of intellectual content through digitisation, microfilming and encapsulation are the preservation practices in our library	109 (68.1)	40 (25.0)	3 (1.9)	8 (5.0)	3.21	0.531	
Regular training of staff to ensure proper preservation practices is carried out in our library	94 (58.8)	20 (12.5)	19 (11.9)	27 (16.9)	3.13	0.472	

Source: Researcher's Study, 2019

Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis of responses on the prevalent preservation and conservation practices in academic libraries in

Kwara State. The finding shows that the prevalent preservation and conservation practice is at the optimal level (Average mean=

3.46). On the minimal level of preservation, the findings revealed that 104 (65.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that regular sweeping, dusting, mopping of the library are some of the preservation practices carried out in our library. On the average, the respondents agree that regular sweeping, dusting and mopping of the library are some of the preservation practices carried out in our library ($\bar{x} = 3.46$, $STD = 0.689$). Further, 134 (83.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that binding and minor repairs of damaged materials are done in the libraries studied. On the average, the respondents agree that binding and minor repairs of damaged materials are done in the libraries ($\bar{x} = 3.70$, $STD = 0.654$).

On the middling level of preservation, 49 (30.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that digitization of library materials is one of the preservation practices in the libraries which is also observed from the average mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.93$, $STD = 0.346$). More so, 104 (56.0%) strongly agree that the use of pamphlet boxes and book end to support library materials is regularly used. On the average the respondents strongly agree that the use of pamphlet boxes and book end to support library materials is regularly used ($\bar{x} = 3.78$, $STD = 0.774$). Further, 63 (39.4%) of the respondents strongly agree that use of backup and password for adequate security are the preservation practices in their libraries. On the average, the respondents agree that the use of backup and password for adequate security is one of the preservation practices in the libraries ($\bar{x} = 2.95$, $STD = 0.612$).

On optimal level of preservation, the findings revealed that 134 (83.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that their library

uses de-acidification to preserve library materials. On the average, the respondents strongly agree that their libraries use de-acidification to preserve library materials ($\bar{x} = 3.79$, $STD = 0.265$). Further, 94 (58.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that regular training of staff to ensure proper preservation practices is carried out in their libraries. On the average, the respondents agree that regular training of staff to ensure proper preservation practices is carried out in their libraries ($\bar{x} = 3.13$, $STD = 0.472$). The results revealed that the most prominent among the prevalent practices are the binding and minor repairs of damaged materials, photocopying of library materials, and the use of pamphlet and boxes, as a preservation method, followed by the use of air conditioners.

The inferential statistics was carried on the collected data, using simple linear regression analysis, to confirm the hypothesis of the study which states thus:

H_0 : Institutional support received by library personnel will not have a significant influence on preservation and conservation practices of library materials in academic libraries in Kwara State.

Table 2: Simple Regression on Influence of Institutional Support Received by Library Personnel on Preservation and Conservation Practices of Library Materials

Variable	No	Mean	Std Deviation	R	P
Institutional support	160	22.08	4.60	0.392	0.000
preservation and Conservation	160	20.03	3.47		

Source: Researcher's Study, 2020

Table 2 shows the correlation between institutional support received by library personnel and Preservation and Conservation Practices based on 160 respondents. The data shows the absolute value is considered positive. This means that the two variables have strong tendency to vary together. This indicates that there is a significant correlation or relationship between institutional supports received by library Personnel and Preservation and conservation practices. From the Table 2, $r = 0.392$, and $P < 0.05$, therefore the finding is not consistent with the stated null hypothesis. This implies that institutional support received by library personnel has the capacity to influence preservation and conservation practice in academic libraries, therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Discussion

The finding shows that the prevalent preservation and conservation practice in libraries in Kwara State is at the Optimal level ($\bar{x} = 3.46$). On the minimal level of preservation, the findings revealed that 104 (65.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that regular sweeping, dusting, mopping of the library are some of the preservation practices carried out in our library ($\bar{x} = 3.46$, $STD = 0.689$). Further, 134 (83.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that binding and minor repairs of damaged materials are done in the libraries. On the average, the respondents agree that binding and minor

repairs of damaged materials are done in the libraries ($\bar{x} = 3.70$, $STD = 0.654$). It was discovered that binding and minor repairs of damaged materials, photocopying of library material and the availability of air-condition are the most carried out practices for preserving and conserving and library materials in academic libraries in Kwara State.

These findings agree with the report by Chinomona (2014) that specific practices taken on preservation explain all the managerial and financial considerations including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods involved in preserving library and archival materials and the information contained in them along with repairs, fumigation, proper storage, air conditioning among others are the preservation and conservation methods used in preserving the information materials in libraries. The findings of this study corroborates the study by Njeze (2012) who reported that regular building maintenance, previous maintenance history and level of repairs needed, dry and cool storage, adequate storage space, a boxing programme; good security procedures, disaster control programme, an integrated pest management programme, installation of blinds, neon light fighters, and film on glass where appropriate to reduce visible and ultraviolet light, installation of good quality shelving, cabinets and plan conservation budget identified for

employing external conservator among others are the best practices of preservation and conservation of library materials. Furthermore, preventive preservation techniques or procedures such as floor cleaning, shelf clearing, collection condition surveys, pest inspections, environmental monitoring and a plan for disaster preparedness and response plan are also relevant to the findings reported in this study.

Abubakar's (2016) reported the common methods of preservation of information resources in academic libraries in Niger State such as repairs, binding and environmental control, whereas digitization and migration were not adopted also lend a good credence to this current findings in this study. Olatokun (2008) revealed that cleaning and dusting of library materials was the most commonly used technique. The study established that there are indeed incidences of deterioration, the most prominent being books becoming torn and cracking and scratching of digital materials. Further results showed that though some of the libraries adopt and use some digital preservation techniques, they are still not yet effectively used. The result suggests that Institutional support is an important determinant of preservation and conservation practices. It further showed that institutional support had a positive significant influence on preservation and conservation practices. The most common support given by the school management for the preservation and conservation of library materials in Kwara State are fund allocation, organization of preservation of workshops and making sure that library materials are in good condition. The least common level of support revealed are making equipment available, power supply and security.

Ajie and Oluwatobi's (2015) position that institutional support is one of the most important organizational concepts that keep employees in the institution, since institutional support is regarded as a key factor in increasing job satisfaction and employees' commitment supports the finding of the current study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that institutional support have the capacity to influence preservation and conservation practices. The study found submits that the level of preservation and conservation practices in academic libraries in Kwara State is at the optimal level. This by implication means that libraries especially those of Kwara State academic are involved in preservation and conservation practices such as using photocopying, digitization facilities, lamination equipment, bindery, fumigation, cleaning and dusting of the library materials, reformatting amongst others. This study therefore finally concludes that based on the Hypotheses result showed that there was a strong positive correlation between Institutional support, preservation and conservation practices in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

This study recommends based on the findings of that, academic libraries should ensure that they establish policies that will help sustain the preservation and conservation practices in their respective libraries in Kwara State. There should be a strong institutional support in the area of preservation and conservation and that the institutions managing academic libraries should sustain the level of support already been provided in the area of preservation and conservation. The Nigerian

library association as well as the librarian registration council of Nigeria should as a matter of policy and implementation intensify the act of championing the preservation and conservation practices across libraries in Nigeria. This is to further maintain the intellectual heritage of mankind. Preservation and conservation practices such as binding, minor repairs of damaged materials, and availability of air conditioners stated as the most prevalent of preservation and conservation practices in most academic libraries be maintained.

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