

6-2012

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Njeze, Miracle Eka, "Preservation and Conservation Issues in Selected Private Universities in South-West Nigeria" (2012). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 761.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/761>

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Library Philosophy and Practice 2012

ISSN 1522-0222

Preservation and Conservation Issues in Selected Private Universities in South-West Nigeria

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Introduction

Librarians the world over are tasked with the responsibility of acquiring, processing, disseminating this information to users, and due to constant exposure of clients to these materials the rate of degradation increases. Every library is prone to two kinds of deterioration: biological deterioration caused by insect attack/fungi growth or environmental deterioration caused by extreme dampness, wide fluctuations of relative humidity, variations in temperatures, light and atmospheric pollutants (Maravilla, 2008).

Library materials consist of media, non-book and non-print resources. Examples of media resources include computer hard-drive, databases, library software; non book materials include CD ROMs, audio and video tape, while print materials include pictures, magazines, books, maps & photographic materials etc. Library materials deteriorate faster when publishers use sub-standard materials, of very low quality like paper which changes colour when exposed to either internal or external light, or the wear of paper glue and thread for sewing the book. This is very rampant in our local publications. We know that books cannot last forever thus as librarians we are left with the option of preserving this materials for future generations.

Statement of Problem

Deterioration of information resources in Nigerian University libraries have been established in literature as a universal phenomenon. While these materials are negatively affected by natural and human factors, observations and experience have shown that they are more vulnerable to decay and damage by climatic and environmental factors. The deterioration of library materials, especially the print materials have been in existence for some decades but have escalated drastically. Librarians must declare a state of emergency on the rate of deterioration of their collections, in other to retard the level of deterioration. However, in spite of the awareness and technological advancement in the field of preservation and conservation there seems to be more books deteriorating. Consequently, the need

to find out preservation and conservation issues in selected private university libraries in Southwest Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

- i. To investigate the preservation and conservation techniques in use in the selected libraries.
- ii. To investigate if there is a policy applied by these libraries in preserving the library materials.
- iii. To find out the types of deterioration experienced in the selected private universities.
- iv. To investigate the level of degradation of resources experienced in the selected libraries
- v. To investigate the level of use of ICT in preservation and storage of materials
- vi. To discover possible challenges for effective preservation and conservation and to proffer solutions

Research Questions

In carrying out this study, the researcher intends to put forward the following questions, which will guide her in conducting the study. These include:

- i. What preservation and conservation techniques of print and non-print materials are used in the selected University libraries?
- ii. Are there written or un-written policies guiding the preservation of the library materials in the selected University libraries?
- iii. What are the noticeable types of deterioration of print and non-print materials in the libraries under study?
- iv. What is the extent of degradation of print and non print materials in the selected University libraries?
- v. What is the level of use of information technology (ICT) in the preservation and storage of materials in the selected University libraries?
- vi. What are the challenges for effective preservation and conservation of library materials in the libraries under study?

Significance of Study

This study will enhance preservation performance in libraries by enlightening librarians and non librarians on the importance of preserving their materials in the most suitable way for their libraries. It enables librarians make quick decisions on what to preserve immediately to reduce further deterioration and what can be postponed for future generations.

The expected benefit of preservation is the awareness of the need to adequately reduce the rate of deterioration of valuable information resources of the library, thus making the materials available for future use.

Literature Review

Deterioration of library materials is a challenge in most academic libraries. In most Nigerian libraries today, preservation is not taken seriously until most library materials starts showing traces of deterioration. According to Reed-Scott (2000), libraries currently face the intellectual problems of determining what should be preserved and what should deteriorate. Preservation problems are pushing collection managers into a more activist role, in which they must make crucial preservation decisions thus growing awareness in the past decade of the magnitude of preservation problems which has resulted in a steady increase of preservation programs within research, academic, and public libraries. Efforts must be made by librarians to ensure that these valuable resources are well preserved for future generations to avoid extinction.

Jordan (2003) describes preservation as an umbrella term for an array of activities; principles, practices, and organizations that ensure the usability, longevity, and accessibility of recorded knowledge. Activities currently defining the realm of preservation of library materials include conservation (general collections repair and special collections), reformatting (microfilming, photocopying, and digitization), selection for preservation, environmental monitoring and control, care and handling of materials, disaster preparedness and recovery, standards relating to materials, practice, and techniques, commercial binding, and preservation education and training .

Muhammad (2006) states that light from incandescent source generate heat and must be kept a distance from library collections. Blinds and shutters completely block out light from the sun, thus aid in temperature control by minimizing heat loss and heat generated by sunlight during the day. Filters made of special plastics help control Ultra violet (UV) radiation, and the use of special low UV florescent tubes is very important.

Adcock (1998) states that pollution is important to librarians not only because of the physiological effect it has on users, but due to its deteriorating effects on library materials. Pollution from the atmosphere like common dust, particles of dirt or soot from industrial area settle on books and unless the materials are well protected degradation begins.

Olubanke (2010) submitted that paper identifies moulds as the most important biodeteriorating agents of library materials. In addition to destroying, disfiguring and staining books, the moulds have been linked to numerous adverse human health effects that fall into three categories: allergic, toxic and infectious. The other biological agents include bacteria, insects and rodents. The important insects in tropical environment are cockroaches and termites.

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey method was used to gather data on the causes of deterioration of print and non print materials of library materials in six universities Babcock, Bells, Crawford, Crescent, Covenant and Redeemers Universities. A questionnaire, observation and interview were the instrument used to collect data.

The population of this study covers 150 librarians and non librarians in academic libraries in south West Nigeria. Random sampling technique was used to select respondents from each of the libraries to represent the sample of the study.

Demographic Variables

This presents the demographic variables used in this study. All the variables selected and tested as independent and dependent variables were described in tables 1- 9.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	41	36.6
Female	71	63.4
Total	112	100

The analysis on table 1 depicts that 63.4% of the respondents are female while 36.6% are males. This is expected as there are more female librarians compared to their male counterparts.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30	40	35.7
31-40	54	48.2
41-50	15	13.4
51-60	3	2.7
Total	112	100

Table 2 indicates that the least age bracket falls between 51- 60 years representing 2.7% of the respondents while the age bracket of 41-50 represent 13.4% of the respondents and the ages of 31-40 which represent 48.2% of the respondent. This in actual fact constitutes the age bracket of the active labor force in Nigeria. (World Bank, 2000).

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Highest Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
BLS	34	30.3
MLS	19	17.0
PhD	1	0.9
Others	58	51.8
Total	112	100

The data above reveals that the highest respondents are non-librarians (Para-professionals) representing 51.8% (this constitute WAEC/NECO, OND, NCE, Diploma and B.sc holders), professionals- first degree Bachelor of Library Science (BLS) 30.3% , Masters in Library Science (MLS) 17.0% while the least 0.9% possess Doctorate degree.

Table 4: Respondents According to Years of Experience

Years of Experience (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	78	69.6
6-10	26	23.2
11-15	4	3.6
16 and above	4	3.6
Total	112	100

Table 4 shows that 3.6% of the respondents ranging between 11-16years have work experience in the field of research, 23.2% of the respondent representing 6-10 years and 69.6% representing 1-5years have experience in the field of study.

Table 5 Respondents According to Job Status

Job Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Library Assistant – Library Officer	73	65.1
Assistant Librarian – Librarian 11	31	27.7
Librarian1 – Senior Librarian	6	5.4
Principal Librarian – Deputy University Librarian	1	0.9
University Librarian	1	0.9
Total	112	100

From the classification of the respondents Library Assistant and Library Officer represents 65.1%, while Assistant Librarian and Librarian II represent 27.7%, Librarian 1 and Senior Librarian represent 5.4%, the Deputy University Librarian and University Librarian represent 0.9% of the respondents.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Institution

Universities	Frequency Distributed	Percentage (%) Distributed	Frequency Retrieved	Percentage (%) Retrieved
Babcock University (Bab)	35	23.3	26	23.2
Bells University (Bell)	20	13.4	12	10.7
Crawford University	15	10.0	9	8.0

(Craw)				
Crescent University (Cres)	15	10.0	8	7.2
Covenant University (Cov)	30	20.0	30	26.8
Redeemers University (Red)	35	23.3	27	24.1
Total	150	100	112	100

Table 6 represents completed and returned copies of questionnaire from the various Universities under study. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to various respondents in the universities. One hundred and twelve (112) representing 74.7% were duly completed, retrieved and used for the analysis.

Research Question 1: What preservation and conservation techniques of print and non-print materials are used in the selected University libraries?

Table 7: Preservation and conservation Techniques of print and non print materials

Print and non-print materials	Bab		Bells		Craw		Cres		Cov		Red		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lamination	21	68	4	13	5	16	-	-	-	-	1	3	31
Microfilming	-	-	-	-	2	6	7	-	-	-	1	3	3
Deacidification	-	-	-	-	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Binding	20	23	8	10	6	7	-	-	28	33	22	26	84
Cleaning and dusting	17	21	10	12	6	7	6	7	25	30	18	22	82
Photocopying	23	27	11	13	7	8	7	8	27	32	10	12	85
Shelving	24	28	11	13	6	7	6	7	27	32	11	13	85
Installing Air-conditioners	23	30	11	14	3	4	3	4	20	26	17	22	77
Adequate security	22	28	10	13	1	1	5	6	27	34	15	19	80
Use of Insecticide	11	26	3	7	2	5	3	7	13	31	10	24	42

From table 8, it noticeable that most of the respondents agree that the commonly used technique in preservation and conservation of library materials in their libraries are binding, photocopying, shelving of books for free flow of air, adequate security, cleaning and dusting representing a frequency of between 77-85 of the total respondents while a frequency of between 31-42 of the total respondents

favor the use of lamination and insecticide. Only frequencies of 1-3 of the total respondents claim to have used deacidification and microfilming. This shows that the rate degradation of library materials in the Universities under study is low.

Research Question 2: Are there written or un-written policies guiding the preservation of the library materials in the selected University libraries?

Table 8: written and unwritten policy

Policy issues	Yes	No	Percentage of Yes	Percentage of No
Does your library have a preservation policy?	89	23	79.64	20.54
Is the policy written?	60	52	53.57	46.43
Is the policy adhered to in the library?	80	31	71.43	27.68
Does it provide directions to staff?	81	29	72.32	25.90
Does the policy help in library security?	87	25	77.68	22.32
Does the policy address disaster?	63	48	56.25	42.86
Does the policy have positive impact on staff in handling library materials?	83	25	74.11	22.32
Does it provide restoration of degraded materials?	73	38	65.17	33.93
Does the policy enhance preservation positively?	83	29	74.11	25.89

Table 7 shows that there is a preservation policy guiding the use of library materials and the policy is written and adhered to in the library and it covers all section within the library, but the policy is not comprehensive enough, and as such does not make provisions for disaster management plans.

Research Question 3: What is the noticeable deterioration of print and non-print materials in the libraries under study?

Table 9a: represents deterioration of print materials

Print Materials	Bab		Bells		Craw		Cres		Cov		Red		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
High Acidity levels	-	-	2	29	1	14	-	-	-	-	4	57	7
Wear & tear due to photocopying	20	30	7	10	3	4	4	6	18	27	15	22	67
Air Pollution	-	-	-	-	1	33	-	-	-	-	2	67	3
High Temperature level	12	33	5	14	2	6	6	17	8	22	3	8	36

Mutilation of library materials	22	28	6	8	4	5	7	9	20	25	20	25	79
Vandalization of library materials	4	20	3	15	1	5	1	5	10	50	1	5	20
Brittle library materials	3	23	2	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	61	13
Broken Spine of library materials	25	36	7	10	6	9	5	7	17	24	10	14	70
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 10a shows that most common form of degradation of print materials in the university under study is mutilation of library materials with Babcock accounting for 28% while Covenant University and Redeemers University ranking 25% of mutilated materials. Another cause of degradation is broken spine of the materials with Babcock ranking 36% and Covenant University 24%. This could be as a result of excessive photocopying. Other form of degradation is vandalization and brittle books.

Table 10b represents extent of degradation of Non-print materials

Non Print Materials	Bab		Bells		Craw		Cres		Cov		Red		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Fading of disc Surface	7	18	6	15	1	3	1	3	11	28	13	33	39
Colour change	-	-	6	28	-	-	3	14	4	19	8	38	21
Deformation of sound disc	4	23	5	29	-	-	1	6	-	-	7	41	17
Cracking and scratching of sound disc	23	34	7	10	1	1	6	9	20	29	11	16	68
Distortion of sound quality	14	4	4	2	3	3	18	3	44				
Fungi on surface of disc	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	7	11			
Loss of data on disc	17	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	9	31			
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 10b shows that, cracking and scratching of sound disc form the highest form degradation of non-print materials with Babcock University accounting for 34% and Covenant University 29% of the total respondents. Next is distortion of sound quality with Covenant University ranking highest while fading of the surface blemishes Redeemers University takes the lead in degradation of non-print materials with 33%, and also in color change with 38%. Other forms of degradation of non-print materials are loss of data in magnetic media, fungi on the surface disc and deformation of sound disc.

Research Question 5: what is the level of use of information technology (ICT) in the preservation and storage of materials in the selected University libraries?

Table 11: represents storage device/equipments in the library

Storage Device	Bab		Bells		Craw		Cres		Cov		Red		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Microform	4	57	3	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
CD-ROM/DVDs	14	18	9	12	7	9	8	10	19	25	20	26	77
Computer hard-drive	22	30	6	8	3	4	8	11	23	31	12	16	74
Tape recorder	-	-	2	7	3	10	1	4	16	57	6	21	28
Flash drive	25	27	10	11	4	4	7	8	27	29	20	22	93
Database	25	27	5	5	3	3	4	4	28	31	26	29	91
Library Software	23	31	9	12	-	-	-	-	23	31	20	27	75
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 11 shows that, the most common storage device is flash drive. Covenant University ranks highest with 29%. They also top the list in the following areas database 31%, library software 31%, computer hard-drive 31%, and tape recorder 57%. Redeemers University tops the list in the use of CD-ROM/DVDS with 26%, database with 29%, library software with 27%, flash drive with 22%, tape recorder 21% and computer hard-drive 16%, while Crawford University ranks least in the list with no library software, database, computer hard-drive, and tape recorder.

Research Question 6: What are the hindrances for effective preservation and conservation of library materials in the libraries under study?

Table 12: Hindrance to effective preservation of library materials

Hindrance to effective preservation	Bab		Bells		Craw		Cres		Cov		Red		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lack of funding	8	14	11	19	15	26	13	23	4	7	6	11	57
Lack of competent manpower	21	37	4	7	5	9	5	9	15	26	8	14	58
Lack of preservation policy	23	31	7	9	2	3	4	5	26	35	13	17	75
Lack of infrastructure	10	28	7	19	2	6	5	14	7	19	5	14	36
Harsh environment conditions	-	-	2	13	1	7	1	7	4	27	7	47	15
Obsolete hardware & software	3	14	3	14	2	10	-	-	-	-	13	62	21

Table 12 shows that obsolete hardware & software is one of the major challenges of preservation policy. Redeemer University accounts for 62% of the respondents while Babcock accounts for 14% of the respondents in this regard. Lack of comprehensive preservation policy is another challenge affecting all the Universities. Trained manpower is another critical challenge affecting all the Universities under study. Funding is also a common challenge in all the Libraries which also affect the infrastructural development of the libraries and preservation policy.

Recommendations

Arising from the high rate of deterioration of print and non print materials in Babcock, Covenant and Redeemers universities respectively, it is as a result of the increased number of the population of their students and external users, however, it is expedient that at least five copies of a book with the same title must be purchased to avoid users scrambling for the few available copies, and books must not be renewed by users more than twice for a particular title within six months or within a year.

Copies of each book in the library must be placed on reserve for frequent consultation to enable users access to them, thus preventing photocopying which weakens the spine of books and making duplicate copy of a person's intellectual right (plagiarism).

Good house-keeping practice must be maintained to avoid invasion of pest into the library by clearing the grasses around the library for good aeration.

Finally, it is important that deteriorated materials are removed from the shelves and reading rooms as soon as they are noticed and taken to the bindery where they can be appropriately repaired, and taken back to the library as soon as they are fixed within one to three weeks.

Conclusion

It is a known fact that libraries are charged with the responsibility of collecting; organizing, interpreting and disseminating information. Significant materials of historical documents should be a strategic plan for long term preservation and as well as security and accessibility of the materials. Consequently, collections in their custody should be protected, secured, unencumbered, cared for and preserved.

Furthermore, the National library must at this point play a major role in educating and sensitizing libraries and their university on the preservation and conservation needs, they should also assist libraries to develop and monitor their preservation policy, liaise with the relevant authorities to ensure that paper manufacturing companies in the country produce acid-free papers (that is alkaline papers) which are durable for production of books and other library materials.

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