

## **PRESERVATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH EAST STATES OF NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study was aimed at examining the preservation of information sources in polytechnic libraries in South Eastern States of Nigeria. The entire population of 33 academic libraries was used for the study. A questionnaire was used to gather data and the results showed among others that there were problems of preservation of information sources in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. These polytechnic libraries use ineffective methods to combat the problems of preservation. It was recommended that adoption of digital technology in preservation among others could help these libraries preserve their materials effectively.*

**Keywords:** *Preservation, Information sources, Libraries, Southeast*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Polytechnic libraries hold a very important and large proportion of the polytechnic's literary wealth and resources. They represent the polytechnic's sole instrument capable of infecting the totality of knowledge and the institutions major purpose and relationships and interdependency of its many departments and faculties. The basic purpose of a polytechnic library is to serve the need of its students, academic staff and the polytechnic community. Therefore the library should have a comprehensive and functional collections to serve the information needs of its users. However, most of the vast collections of the library are made of paper based materials. These paper based materials are subject to deterioration within a space of time (Harvey, 1993). It becomes necessary that the librarians having been aware of the problems of preservation should be concerned with the protection of these materials.

According to Madu (2004) libraries help to preserve for those who follow us our thoughts intellectual and artistic creations and man's historic records. Therefore all the efforts may come to naught if materials are lost as a result of problems of preservation (Ngulube (2005). It is necessary, therefore that the library should do everything they could reasonably do to avoid or lessen the impact of disaster, by planning ahead of time since it would be worth the time, effort and resources (Wise, 2003). Aina (2007) defines preservation as a means of taking care of library materials to avoid deterioration. While the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2009) defines preservation as a process that effectively extends the life or useful life of a living or non-living collection, the individual items or entities included in a collection, or structure, building or site by reducing the likelihood or speed of deterioration.

Preservation actions include planning, conservation treatment and prevention action to improve the environment or otherwise reduce risk of damage or loss. It also deals with formation and reformatting to provide access without physical use of original object. Information sources can be in print or in electronic version, and they are vital and delicate. The way they are handled can affect the life span of the records contained in them. These records must be preserved for future purposes (Feather 1997). Information sources on the other hand are materials consulted for knowledge about a topic, a theme, an event, a date, a number, a place or even a ward (Aina, 2002).

Other types of information sources are reference sources, journals, official publications, internet sources, non-book materials like cartographic materials, sound recording motion pictures. All these information sources are stored in the library to provide information and users need (Obi, 2007). There are a number of studies on preservation of information sources in University Libraries. For instance Alegbeleye (1996) in a study of book deterioration in University of Ibadan library and its implication for preservation and conservation in African University libraries, survey the African collection of the University library.

The findings revealed that the library not only had acid book problems but also brittle book problem as well. He recommended deacidification for acid book problem and reformatting for brittle book problem and improvement of storage environment for books that are still in good condition. Similarly, Olatokun (2008) surveyed preservation and conservation practices and techniques in Nigerian University Libraries. He investigated the techniques used in preservation and conservation of library materials, causes and nature of deterioration. The findings revealed that: preservation and conservation techniques though adopted in the libraries but were not effectively used in all the libraries. That there were incidences of book deterioration and that some of the libraries adopted digital preservation technique but the techniques were not effectively used.

Available evidence indicates that preservation problems in many polytechnic libraries may have worsened since these libraries have many constraints to content with (Lincoln J. and Lincoln C. 1987, Harvey 1993, Fadaha 2009). The preservation of polytechnic librarians in South East States need to be studied because many studies are focusing on the University libraries leaving the polytechnic libraries and other institutions alike understudied. To guide the study, the following probing questions were raised.

1. What are the problems of preservation of information sources in polytechnic libraries in South East States of Nigeria?
2. What methods of preservation of information sources are adopted in these polytechnic libraries?
3. What are the constraints to preservation of information sources in the polytechnic?

4. What are the strategies adopted for effective preservation of information sources in polytechnic libraries in Southeastern States.

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is descriptive survey. This study sought out the opinions held by the population by collating and analyzing data from librarians in polytechnic libraries in the South East States of Nigeria. The only instrument used to collect data for the study was a questionnaire tagged "Preservation of Information Sources in Polytechnic Library (PISPL)" developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A of the questionnaire sought the demographic information and the name of the polytechnic library.

Section B consisted of ten questions on the problems of preservation; while section C sought to find out the methods adopted by these libraries in preserving their information sources. Section D was on the constraints to preservation. Finally section E asked questions on the strategies for improving the preservation of information in these polytechnic libraries. The researcher and some trained assistants administered and collected the completed copies of the questionnaire. By assigning 1-4 to the likert's scale the mean and the standard deviation of each of the questions were computed. A midpoint mean of 2.50 was accepted as the criterion mean. Thus any mean score ranged from 2.50 and above was regarded as positive and accepted. While the mean below 2.50 was regarded as negative and rejected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Population of the study

Names of Polytechnic	Number of Librarians
Abia State Polytechnic Aba	7
Federal Polytechnic Uwana, Afikpo	11
Federal Polytechnic Oko Anambra State	5
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Imo State	6
Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu	4
Grand total	33

**Table 2:** Problem of Preservation of Information Sources

Problems of preservation	X	SD
Fire	1.64	.994
Flood	1.45	.754
Student riot	1.64	.742
Disintegration of books	2.64	.994
Insect attack	2.18	1.044
Fungus	1.91	.947
Dust	3.12	.960

Dryness	2.12	1.023
Rodent	1.97	.810
Ultraviolet-radiation	1.88	.893

Table 2 presents librarians responses to the questions that sought to find out problems of preservation in polytechnic libraries in south east states. From the table fire, flood student riot, insect attack, fungus, dryness rodents and ultraviolet-radiation are not problems of preservation in the libraries studied because each item scored less than 2.50, the criterion mean and are reflected as problems of preservation. While dust and disintegration of books are the problems to these libraries. This is so because each item scored above the criterion mean. This corroborate with Danladi and Haruna (2009), they found out that the level of deterioration in the libraries studied was very high.

**Table 3:** Method of preservation of information sources

<b>Method of preservation</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>
Repairs	4.45	.822
Fire fighting equipment	3.36	.992
Binding	3.33	.951
Fumigation	3.15	.870
Air conditioning	2.91	1.071
Proper storage	2.85	1.064
Photocopying/duplication	2.85	1.202
Use of insecticides	2.73	1.126
Storage of books away from light	2.61	1.144
Application of fungicides	2.45	1.092
Reformatting	2.12	.992
Digitization	1.64	.929
Microfilming	1.64	.929
Deacidification	1.58	.751
Lamination	1.58	.751
Encapsulation	1.55	.751
Insurance	1.45	.711

From table 3, it could be seen that the polytechnic libraries adopted repairs, the use of fire fighting equipment, binding, fumigation, air conditioning, proper storage, photocopying/duplication, use of insecticides and the storage of book away from light to preserve their information source. All the items scored above the criterion mean of 2.50. The table also showed that the application of fungicides, reformatting, digitization, microfilming, deacidification, lamination encapsulation and insurance were not adopted by the libraries. This is because the each item scores below 2.50 the criterion mean. These libraries did not adopt the use of modern technology in preserving their information sources. Jantz and Gialio (2005) in a study of digital preservation observed that digital technology offers unprecedented opportunities for library preservation.

**Table 4:** Constraint to preservation of information sources

<b>Constraints to preservation</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>
In adequate funding to libraries	3.61	.933
Harsh environmental condition	3.18	.882
Lack of preservation policy	2.96	1.156
Lack of competent man power	2.76	1.146

Table 4 showed that inadequate funding harsh environmental condition, lack of competent staff is a constraint to preservation in polytechnic libraries in the Southeastern States. Their mean scores ranged from 2.76 to 3.61. This finding is in consonance with Fadahan (2009), who strongly believe that these constraints should be addressed for effective preservation of information sources.

**Table 5:** Strategies for the improvement of preservation of information sources

<b>Strategies for improvement</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>
Proper funding	3.67	.777
Planned Housing/storage environment	3.58	.830
Capacity building	3.42	.969
Formulating preservation policy	3.39	1.156
Insurance	3.06	.711

Table 5 showed that the strategies for effective preservation are proper findings, planned housing/storage environment capacity building, formulating preservation policy and insurance. These strategies need to be implemented to improve the preservation of information sources Fadahan (2009).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study which aimed at examining the preservation of information sources found out that the problem of preservation of information sources in the polytechnic libraries in South-East States of Ngeria are dust and disintegration of books and that the libraries did not adopt the use of modern technology. The methods that these polytechnic libraries adopted in preserving their information sources are; repairs, use of firefighting equipments, binding, fumigation, air-conditioning, proper storage, and photocopy/duplication, use of insecticides and storage of books away from light modern technology were adopted. The constraints to preservation of information sources are; inadequate funding, harsh environmental condition, lack of good preservation policy and finally lack of competent manpower. The strategies for improvement of preservation of information sources are proper funding, planned housing/storage environment, capacity building formulation of preservation policy and insurance. Based on the above findings, it is recommended that: regular cleaning programmes should be designed for effective management of library materials; prompt binding and repairs of books that are disintegrating should be practised consistently; digital technology should be adopted for book preservation. Finally, library users should be adequately trained on proper handling of books and other library materials to enhance their productivity.

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