

Maintenance Culture of Information Resources among Librarians in Two Selected Private Higher Institutions in Anambra State of Nigeria

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Abstract

The research work was on maintenance culture of information resources among librarians in two selected private higher institutions in Anambra State of Nigeria. Descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. A simple random technique was also used. The population of the study are Librarians that work at the two university libraries. The institutions used are Paul University Awka and Madonna University Okija libraries. The major findings include: there are a lot of challenges facing both institutions in issues of maintenance culture, inadequate funding to carry out preservation activities in library yearly 2(33.33%), 3(25%), there is no preservation and conservation policy in our library 3(25%), lack of infrastructure facilities for preservation of resources, harsh/high environment condition, and both University Libraries lack professional staff in their library. The researchers proffer some solutions to higher institutions in Nigeria.

Keyword: Maintenance culture, Information, Resources, Preservation, Conservation, Librarians and Libraries.

Introduction

In this era of financial crisis all over the world and couple with management crises, political mischievous, misconception and paying little attention by some principal officers of higher institutions in Nigeria about the acquisition of information resources in library, which has adversely affected library budget or vote in drastically ways; adequate funding and maintenance of information resources in all formats become very difficult. According Ogunmodede and Ebijuwa (2013) opined that library plays a crucial role of protecting and preserving information-bearing materials from distortion, deterioration, and eventual loss because the materials are imperative. Academic libraries acquire information resources to meet the needs of their community. People use the collections as a result of increasing enrolments in higher education.

The major crises facing libraries throughout the world is the rate of deterioration of their collections. Since library materials are composed primarily of organic materials, they are subject to natural deterioration (National Library of Australia, 2004). Most libraries' collections today are based on paper – either in book or sheet form – bound volumes, newspapers, serials, manuscripts, maps, watercolours, prints and drawings. Some libraries have an important collection of oil paintings, a small collection of objects, and a large collection of photographic materials including negatives, prints, glass negatives and photographic albums.

To observe maintenance culture profitably in the library context, we should keep at the back of our minds and at the tip our fingers the adage that “A stitch in time saves nine”. By this we could correct or amend little or small mistakes, defects, tear or wear as soon as they are detected, not allowing them degenerate to major problem before we begin to think about solution (Awana, 1997). The concept of preservation and conservation of information resources in library is one the major debate among librarians in the 21st century many schools of thought argued that since there is digital or electronic library there is no need for traditional preservation or conservation in library context again. The main issues are that without traditional information resources, some of the e-resources today will not exist. Preservation as a collection management strategy has been relegated if not totally neglected by librarians and documentalists for a very long time in Africa, especially in Nigeria. This underscores the indispensability of preserving and conserving library materials to ensure their constant availability to library users. Therefore, knowledge of the causes of deterioration of library materials is essential for all librarians and others who are concerned about the preservation and conservation of information stored in books and non-books formats (Ogunniyi and Foluke, (2014)

The collections of modern materials such as sound tapes and electronically stored information such as CD ROMs, DVDs, flash drive is growing rapidly, and most libraries' collections are essentially impermanent (National Library of Australia, 2004). Unlike museum items that are rarely handled, library materials are meant to be used. They are vital sources of information which cannot be conserved and stored away in an ideal and

secure environment to arrest their decay. This is the dilemma of library preservation – to make information accessible, while still ensuring its ultimate survival.

Librarians therefore will resort to prudent management of the very little available resources and to maintain the already existing stock to the best of his ability, because the services the library is rendering must continue and be sustained. Library customers who are even much aware of the prevailing economic woes and disasters will still be looking forward to seeing a utopian situation where every bit of information they want is readily available in the library. They feel very disappointed to observe that the library collection is depleted, reduced or badly handled and managed where information needed by the people are not always met (Awana, 1997). Proper care for the existing library collection should be paramount in the mind of the librarian in any library to prevent them from deteriorating fast and reducing their life span. According to research carried out few decades shown that book if properly handled could last up to five hundred (500) years or more.

According to Ogunniyi and Foluke (2014) opined that many government academic libraries in Nigeria today face a lot of problems owing to the deterioration of their holdings at varying levels. Notably among these problems are the library collections, especially paper-based, which are acquired without allocation of adequate resources, (financial and human) to address their future deterioration, lack of proper recognition of the need for preservation and restoration of information resources. Most library managers fail to realize that preservation of information resources is a component of the issues they have to contend with. In addition, no training is given to library staff and there is a generally low awareness about preservation issues especially on the deteriorative tendencies of information materials and what could be done to prevent their deterioration. In some cases, libraries do not have preservation polices and as a result, there is neither preservation plan nor program to ensure safekeeping of library collections. Based on these challenges facing government/public higher institutions in Nigeria, therefore the researchers tried to restrict their study to private higher institutions so as to know the situation on maintenance culture of information resources among librarians in Anambra State of Nigeria.

The Purpose of the Study

Some of the specific objectives in this study include:

1. To know the maintenance culture of library materials in private higher institutions of both Paul University Awka and Madonna University, Okija libraries.
2. To determine the rate of mutilation among library users
3. To find out the strategies adopted by librarians to keep their information materials for a long period of time.
4. To find out the equipments they are using for preservation and conservation in the 21st century.

Method

The study was restricted to two private higher institution libraries in Anambra State of Nigeria. The institutions are Paul University Awka and Madonna University Okija libraries. The researchers adopted observation interview and questionnaires methods for data collection. Descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. The population of the study are Librarians that work at the two university libraries. The total population of librarians in both schools are eighteen (18) and all were used for this study. Madonna University Okija library staff are (12) and while Paul University Library, Awka have six(6) librarians in whole.

Job Ranks/ Position of Librarians in the two Institution Libraries

Job Status	Paul University library		Madonna University library	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Library assistant/ attendants	2	33.33%	2	16.67%
Assistant Librarian/ Higher library officer	2	33.33%	8	66.67%
Librarian II	1	16.67%	-	-
Librarian I and Senior Librarian	-	-	-	-
Principal Librarian/ Deputy University Librarian	-	-	-	-
University Librarian	1	16.67%	1	8.33%
Total	6		12	100%

Table shows that Paul University Library at Awka has one university librarian 1(16.67%) and two each in position of assistant librarian and library assistant/attendants. They only have one librarian II through promotion. In Madonna University library, at Okija as it indicated in the table 8(66.67%) are in the position of Assistant/Higher Librarians and with one University Librarian. Therefore, the researchers may conclude that

both University Libraries lack professional staff in their library. These have affected the services rendering to users drastically.

Maintenance Culture Strategies to improve life span of Information Resources in libraries

Strategies	Paul University library		Madonna University library	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Lamination	1	16.67%	-	-
Deacidification	-	-	-	-
Binding activities daily	-	-	-	-
Cleaning and dusting daily	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Photocopying materials for users instead of borrowing limited copies.	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Shelving activities daily	1	16.67%	3	25%
Installing Air-conditioners in the open access/ close access sections of the library	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Adequate security at the entrance and all-parts of the library.	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Insecticide library once yearly			1	8.33%
Total	6	100%		100%

Table shows that the strategies Paul University Library use for preservation of information resources include Lamination, Photocopying machine, cleaning and dusting daily, cleaning and dusting daily, installing air-conditioners and adequate security which is 1(16.67%) each. While Madonna University Library Okija strategies are shelving activities daily 3(25%), cleaning and dusting daily, installing air-conditioners, photocopying materials and adequate security 2(16.67%) each. Both institutions do not have binding sections and this means that their information resources are repaired regularly.

Deterioration/Mutilation of Information resources in both libraries

Print Materials	Paul University Library		Madonna University Library	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
High Acidity levels	-	-	-	-
Wear & tear due to photocopying by staff.	1	16.67%	3	25%
Air Pollution	-	-	-	-
High Temperature level	-	-	-	-
Relative Humidity	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Excessive Light	-	-	3	25%
Dust and Particles	-	-	2	16.67%
Biological Agents	1	16.67%	-	-
Bad Shelving by staff	1	16.67%	1	8.33%
Writing on textbooks with biro by students	2	33.33%	2	16.67%
Total	6	100%		100%

Table indicated that Paul University Library rate of mutilation/deterioration are writing on textbooks with biro by students 2(33.33%), bad shelving by staff, biological agents, relative humidity and wear & tear due to photocopying by staff 1(16.67%) each. While Madonna University Library are excessive light 3(25%), relative humidity 2(16.67%), dust and particles 2 (16.67%) wear & tear 3(25%). These shown that the rate of mutilation/deterioration is very high in both institutions.

Modern equipments for maintenance culture in both Institutions

Storage Device	Paul University Library		Madonna University Library	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Microform	-	-	2	16.67%
Use CD-ROM/DVDs	3	50%	3	25%
Computer hard-drive	1	16.67%	1	8.33%
Tape recorder	-	-	-	-
Flash drive	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Database	1	16.67%	3	25%
Install good Software	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-
Total	6	100%	12	100%

Table shows that, the 21st century equipments for maintenance culture in both institutions are CD-ROM, / DVDs 3(50%), 3(25%) and microform 2(16.67%) computer hard-drive 1(16.67%) 1(8.33%) flash drive 2(16.67%) database 3(25%) 1(16.67%). The researchers may conclude that both institutions has some of the newly ICTs facilities in library. From the observation and interview gathered shows that most of the ICTs equipments where owned by individual librarians.

Challenges of Maintenance Culture in Information Resources in libraries

Challenges of maintenance culture	Paul University library		Madonna University Library	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Inadequate funding to carry out preservation activities in library yearly	2	33.33%	3	25%
There is no competent to do preservation activities in library	2	33.33%	3	25%
There is no preservation policy in our library	1	16.67%	3	25%
Lack of infrastructure facilities for preservation of resources	1	16.67%	2	16.67%
Harsh/high environment conditions	-	-	1	8.33%
Obsolete hardware & software	-	-	-	-
Total	6	100%	12	100%

Table shows that there are a lot of challenges facing both institutions in issues of maintenance culture are inadequate funding to carry out preservation activities in library yearly 2(33.33%), 3(25%) there is no preservation policy in our library 3(25%), lack of infrastructure facilities for preservation of resources, harsh/high environment conditions and There is no competent to do preservation activities in library. Therefore the researchers may conclude that there are lots problems with preservation and conservation information resources.

Review related Literature

Overview of Preservation and Conservation in Libraries

Njeze (2012) cited Jordan (2003) defined 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.

Ovowoh and Iwhiwu (2010) quoting Edhebe (2004), gives reasons why materials should be preserved and conserved in the academic libraries:

- There has been a drastic reduction in the allocation of funds for books, limiting the library's ability to acquire new material. Journals, which carry the latest findings by researchers, are the worst hit. This makes preservation of existing collections essential.
- More than 90 percent of library material is foreign publications. The high foreign exchange rate is a problem, and therefore librarians must preserve material they have already acquired.

Muhammad (2006) stated 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.

The library plays a crucial role of protecting and preserving information-bearing materials from distortion, deterioration, and eventual loss because the materials are imperative. Academic libraries acquire information resources to meet the needs of their community. People use the collections as a result of increasing enrolments in higher education. There are shortages and decline in book budgets arising from the poor funding of the institutions as well as the high cost of books and other information resources. As a result, the libraries are left with damaged books, distorted tapes, scratched CDs, etc (Popoola, 2003). The term ‘Conservation’ has been defined in the IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library materials (2010) as “specific practices taken to slow down deterioration and pro long the life span of an object by direct intervening in its physical or chemical make-up. The composition of some of the media of storing information makes deterioration inevitable. Deterioration may set in through the natural ageing process or as a result of other factors such as chemical composition of the media of information, biological agents, environmental factors, physical agents and improper handling. There is, therefore, the need to take certain conservation measure to slow down deterioration to avoid losing these library resources. Conservation involves taking protective measures to prevent decay and consequently, the loss of library resources. It also includes taking preventive measures against agents of deterioration of books and other library resources. Preservation has been defined in the same IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Material to include “all the managerial and financial considerations including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods involved in preserving library and archival material and the information contained in them.” While conservation is direct physical intervention arresting or slowing down deterioration of library materials, preservation involves both the direct and indirect action. In preservation consideration is given to every element that promotes the protection of the materials including the housing, storage system and security against such threats as theft, mutilation and poor handling.

Summary of Findings

The title of the research work is maintenance culture of information resources among librarians in two selected private higher institutions in Anambra State of Nigeria. There are some major findings in this work which include : The two University Libraries used for the study lack professional staff in their library. These have affected the services rendering to users drastically. Madonna University Library Okija strategies are shelving activities daily 3(25%), cleaning and dusting daily, installing air-conditioners, photocopying materials and adequate security 2(16.67%) each. Both institutions do not have binding sections and this means that their information resources are repaired regularly.

Another findings shows that there are a lot of challenges facing both institutions in issues of maintenance culture which are inadequate funding to carry out preservation activities in library yearly 2(33.33%), 3(25%) and there is no preservation policy in our library 3(25%), lack of infrastructure facilities for preservation of resources, harsh/high environment conditions and There is no competent to do preservation activities in library. This research work agreed with Ogunniyi and Foluke (2014) opined that many government academic libraries in Nigeria today face a lot of problems owing to the deterioration of their holdings at varying levels. Notably among these problems are the library collections, especially paper-based, which are acquired without allocation of adequate resources, (financial and human) to address their future deterioration, lack of proper recognition of the need for preservation and restoration of information resources. Most library managers fail to realize that preservation of information resources is a component of the issues they have to contend with. In addition, no training is given to library staff and there is a generally low awareness about preservation issues especially on the deteriorative tendencies of information materials and what could be done to prevent their deterioration.

Conclusively, another findings shows that 21st century equipments for maintenance culture in both institutions are CD- ROM,/ DVDs3(50%),3(25%) and microform 2(16.67%) computer hard-drive1(16.67) 1(8.33%) flash drive2(16.67%) database3(25%) 1(16.67%).

Conclusion/Recommendations

The major crises facing libraries throughout the world is the rate of deterioration of their collections. Since library materials are composed primarily of organic materials, they are subject to natural deterioration. The research work discusses issues related to preservation and conservation of information resources in private higher institutions in Nigeria. The maintenance cultures of most of librarians in Nigeria are very poor. The library plays a crucial role of protecting and preserving information-bearing materials from distortion, deterioration, and eventual loss because the materials are imperative. Academic libraries acquire information resources to meet the needs of their community. People use the collections as a result of increasing enrolments in higher education. There are shortages and decline in book budgets arising from the poor funding of the institutions as well as the high cost of books and other information resources. Based on the findings the researchers proffer the followings solution to higher institutions in Nigeria:

1. The higher institution libraries in Nigeria should include preservation and conservation policy.

2. Madonna University Okija and Paul University Awka management should try to solve the problems of inadequate funding to carry out preservation activities in library yearly and obsolete hardware and software.
3. They should also try to employ professional librarians in every sections of the library.
4. They should also carry out preservation and conservation activities daily among the staff
5. The 21st ICTs equipments should be acquired in the library.

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