

Influence of Preservation Practices on Durability of Information Resources in State-Owned University Libraries in Rivers State

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Abstract

Durability of information resources is a fundamental requirement for effective library service delivery, as it ensures that knowledge materials remain accessible, usable, and relevant over time. This study examined preservation practices and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. Two specific objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population consisted of 85 library staff from Rivers State University Central Library and Dame Patience Jonathan Automated Library, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. A sample size of 41 library staff was selected using the judgmental sampling technique, comprising professionals and paraprofessionals. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Preservation Practices and Durability of Information Resources Questionnaire (PPDIRQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant and positive relationship between digitization and housekeeping activities and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. The study concluded that preservation practices significantly enhance the durability and accessibility of library information resources. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that university management board should provide adequate funding and digital infrastructure such as scanners, servers, and digital repositories as this will support effective digitization processes and improve the durability of library collections.

Keywords: Preservation, Preservation Practices, Information Resources, Durability of Information Resources, University Libraries

Introduction

Durability of information resources is a critical concern in libraries because information materials are expected to remain accessible, usable, and relevant for a long period of time. Information resources such as books, journals, manuscripts, newspapers, audiovisual materials, maps, and electronic records constitute the intellectual assets of libraries and serve as the foundation for teaching, learning, research, and cultural preservation (Ibeh & Usiedi, 2024). The durability of these resources refers to their ability to withstand deterioration and damage over time despite frequent use and environmental conditions. In the absence of durable information resources, libraries may fail in their responsibility of preserving knowledge for present and future generations. According to Stanescu (2020), the durability of library materials determines the continuity of access to knowledge and the sustainability of library services in any society.

Libraries are established not only to select, acquire and organise information resources but also to ensure their long-term preservation and accessibility. Omehia et al. (2024) affirmed that many library materials are constantly exposed to factors that threaten their physical and intellectual lifespan. Environmental conditions such as excessive heat, humidity, dust, light exposure, poor ventilation, and biological agents like insects and rodents contribute significantly to the deterioration of library resources (Ibeh & Usiedi, 2024). Human factors including mishandling of materials, theft, mutilation and improper shelving reduces the lifespan of information materials. Makwae and Ogoti (2018) noted that the deterioration of information resources is a major challenge confronting libraries, particularly in developing countries where preservation facilities and funding are often inadequate. As a result, many valuable resources become damaged and inaccessible to users.

Preservation is a practice that ensures that information and the materials containing them survive in useable forms for as long as they are needed (Akanwa & Udo-Anyanwu, 2017). Preservation

practices therefore become essential strategies for ensuring the durability of information resources in libraries. Obi (2024) described preservation practices as the policies, techniques, procedures, and actions adopted by libraries to prevent deterioration and extend the lifespan of information materials. These practices include proper storage, environmental control, binding, temperature control, fumigation, digitization, disaster preparedness and regular cleaning. Preservation practices are proactive measures aimed at maintaining the resources of the library resources. Osunride and Adetunla (2017) opined that preservation involves every managerial and technical effort directed toward safeguarding library collections against decay and destruction. Effective preservation practices help libraries maintain quality collections capable of supporting users' informational needs over time. By preserving the unique and original materials in the library's collections, we are guaranteeing the safekeeping and continuation of our resources and cultural heritage (Osunrinde & Obatikun, 2018).

Preservation practices remain an essential responsibility of libraries because the durability of information resources determines the continuity of knowledge access and effective library service delivery (Hendrikus, 2019). Through proper preservation measures, libraries are able to maintain the physical and intellectual value of their collections for long-term use by researchers, students, and other users. Duncan and Mnjama (2020) avowed that effective preservation practices enhance the lifespan, accessibility, and usability of information resources, thereby ensuring that valuable knowledge resources remain available for present and future generations. It is on this basis that this study sought to examine preservation practices and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State, with a view to understanding how preservation measures contribute to the sustainability and continued relevance of library collections.

Statement of the Problem

Information resources are the backbone of every library because they support teaching, learning, research, and knowledge preservation. The ability of these resources to remain available and usable over time depends largely on their durability. However, the durability of information resources has become a major concern in many libraries as materials gradually lose their physical and intellectual quality with continuous use and exposure to environmental conditions. Library resources such as books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts, and digital materials are expected to serve users for long periods, but without proper preservation attention, their lifespan may be reduced. Since libraries exist to preserve and disseminate knowledge for present and future generations, the inability of information resources to remain durable can affect the quality of information services rendered to users and weaken the library's role as a custodian of knowledge.

Preservation practices therefore play a significant role in ensuring the durability of information resources in libraries. Practices such as proper storage, environmental control, binding and repair, digitization, fumigation, and careful handling of materials are necessary for extending the lifespan of library collections. Despite the importance of these practices, there is still growing concern about the condition and sustainability of information resources in many libraries. Some materials deteriorate quickly, become inaccessible, or lose their usefulness over time, thereby limiting users' access to reliable information. This situation creates the need to examine preservation practices and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State in order to determine how preservation measures contribute to maintaining the quality, accessibility, and long-term survival of library collections.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship that exist between preservation practices and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. Specifically, the researcher sought to:

- i Ascertain the influence of digitization on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.
- ii Investigate the influence of housekeeping activities on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

- i What is the influence of digitization on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State?
- ii What is the influence of housekeeping activities on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The research was guided by the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between digitization and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

Review of Related Literature

Durability of Information Resources

Durability of information resources refers to the ability of library materials to remain physically stable, accessible, and useful over a long period of time despite continuous handling and

environmental exposure (Makwae & Ogoti, 2018). Information resources such as books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts, audiovisual materials, and digital records are expected to maintain their quality and relevance for present and future use. Omehia et al. (2024) asserted that the durability of these resources depends on factors such as the quality of materials used in production, frequency of use, storage conditions, and the level of preservation attention given to them. Durable information resources enable libraries to provide uninterrupted access to knowledge and support educational, research, and informational needs effectively. According to Stanescu (2020), the durability of library materials determines the extent to which libraries can continuously satisfy the information needs of users without frequent replacement of resources.

The durability of information resources is very important because libraries serve as custodians of knowledge and cultural heritage. When information resources remain durable, libraries are able to preserve valuable intellectual content and ensure long-term accessibility for users (Akanwa & Udo-Anyanwu, 2017). Durable resources also reduce the cost of constant replacement and contribute to the sustainability of library collections. Obi (2024) mentioned that the durability of information resources can be influenced by several conditions, including environmental factors, handling practices, and preservation measures adopted by libraries. Proper storage, careful handling, environmental control, and regular maintenance are therefore necessary for extending the lifespan of library materials (Osunride & Adetunla, 2017). In this regard, durability is not only about the physical survival of resources but also about maintaining their usability, readability, and informational value over time.

Preservation Practices

Preservation practices refer to the various policies, procedures, techniques, and activities adopted by libraries to protect information resources from deterioration, damage, and loss in order to ensure their long-term accessibility and usability (Duncan & Mnjama, 2020). These practices involve measures such as proper storage, environmental control, repair and binding of damaged materials, fumigation, digitization, and careful handling of library resources to maintain their physical and intellectual value over time. Hendrikus (2019) stated that the importance of preservation practices has increased in recent years due to the rapid growth of information resources and the changing nature of information storage formats. Modern libraries now manage both print and digital resources, each requiring different preservation approaches. While printed materials suffer from physical deterioration, digital resources are threatened by technological obsolescence, data corruption, hardware failure, and cyber-related risks.

Libraries that neglect preservation practices risk losing valuable intellectual heritage and weakening their ability to support education and research activities. Duncan and Mnjama (2020) are of the view that preservation practices also contribute significantly to the effectiveness and sustainability of library services. When information resources are properly preserved, users can consistently access reliable and high-quality materials for learning, teaching, and research. Osunrinde and Obatikun (2018) stated that durable resources reduce the cost of constant replacement and help libraries maintain comprehensive collections despite financial limitations.

Digitization and Durability of Information Resources

Digitization is an important preservation practice used in libraries to improve the durability of information resources. Stanescu (2020) expressed that, it involves converting printed and analogue materials such as books, journals, manuscripts, photographs, and audio recordings into electronic or digital formats that can be stored and accessed through computers and other digital devices.

Through digitization, libraries are able to preserve the intellectual content of valuable materials while minimizing the frequent physical handling of original copies (Omehia et al., 2024). This process helps to protect fragile and aging resources from wear and tear, thereby extending their lifespan. Digitization also enhances easy access to information resources, as users can retrieve materials electronically without causing physical damage to the original documents (Makwae & Ogoti, 2018). Digitization of information resources has the ability to sustain information for long-term use. When information resources are digitized, libraries can create backup copies and store them securely in different locations, reducing the risk of total loss caused by disasters such as fire, flood, theft, or deterioration (Captain, 2020). Digitization also supports the continuous availability and usability of information resources by ensuring that valuable contents remain accessible even when the physical copies become weak or damaged.

Housekeeping Activities and Durability of Information Resources

Housekeeping activities are essential preservation practices that contribute significantly to the durability of information resources in libraries. Ogar (2020) avowed that these activities involve the routine cleaning, maintenance, arrangement, and care of library collections and facilities in order to maintain a safe and conducive environment for information resources. Housekeeping activities include dusting of shelves and books, proper shelving of materials, cleaning of library floors and furniture, monitoring temperature and humidity, waste disposal, and regular inspection of collections for signs of deterioration (Sawant, 2021). These activities help to protect library materials from dust, dirt, insects, and other environmental factors that can damage information resources over time (Captain, 2020). Through effective housekeeping practices, libraries are able to maintain the physical condition and usability of their collections for a longer period. Housekeeping activities contribute to the durability of information resources through proper

maintenance and care that help extend the lifespan of library materials (Sawant, 2021). Information resources that are regularly cleaned, properly arranged, and carefully handled are less likely to deteriorate quickly. Duncan and Mnjama (2020) stated that good housekeeping practices also reduce the risk of damage caused by poor storage conditions and environmental pollution, thereby preserving the quality and accessibility of library collections.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design which is suitable as the study. 85 library staff from both state-owned university libraries in Rivers State constitute the population of the study (Staff Record, RSU Central Library & IAUE Library 2026). 58 from Rivers State University Central Library (RSU Central Library) and 27 from Dame Patience Jonathan Automated Library, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt (IAUE Library). The sample of the study was 41 library staff (19 Professionals and 22 Paraprofessionals) from the both libraries mentioned above. The researcher adopted the judgmental sampling technique as consideration was only given to professional and paraprofessional librarians since they are the core service providers. The judgmental sampling technique was most suitable as it enables the researcher to select elements that constitute the sample from the population, based on certain attributes.

The instrument used for the collection of data was a structured questionnaire titled: Preservation Practices and Durability of Information Resources Questionnaire (LPPDIRQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis of Data and Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between digitization and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics on the influence of digitization on durability of information resources

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
1	Digitization helps to preserve old library materials	3.01	.901	Agree
2	Scanned library materials remain accessible even when the original copies are damaged	2.90	.887	Agree
3	Digitized information resources are easier to store for a long time	2.81	.795	Agree
4	Digital copies reduce frequent handling of printed library materials	2.82	.911	Agree
5	Digitization helps to protect information resources from physical deterioration	2.91	.823	Agree
Grand Mean ($\bar{x}$)		2.89		Agree

Source: Field Data, 2026

This shows the item-by-item analysis on the influence of digitization on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. The results indicate that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, showing a general trend of agreement among respondents. Specifically, the item on digitization helping to preserve old library materials ($\bar{x} = 3.01$) recorded the highest mean score, followed by digitization helping to protect information resources from physical deterioration ($\bar{x} = 2.91$), and scanned materials remaining accessible even when original copies are damaged ($\bar{x} = 2.90$). Similarly, digital copies reducing frequent handling of printed materials ($\bar{x} = 2.82$) and digitized resources being easier to store for a long time ($\bar{x} = 2.81$) also fall within the agreement range. The cluster of mean scores above 2.50 indicates that respondents perceive digitization as an important strategy for improving the durability and long-term preservation of information resources in university libraries.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of housekeeping activities on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics on the influence of housekeeping activities on durability of information resources

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
1	Regular cleaning of library shelves helps to preserve information resources	2.91	.860	Agree
2	Dusting of library materials reduces the rate of deterioration of information resources	2.63	.791	Agree
3	Proper arrangement of books on shelves improves the lifespan of library materials	2.69	.974	Agree
4	Routine inspection of library materials helps to identify damaged resources early	2.81	.821	Agree
5	Proper cleaning activities help to keep information resources in good condition for long-term use	2.69	.713	Agree
Grand Mean ($\bar{x}$)		2.74		Agree

Source: Field Data, 2026

This shows the item-by-item analysis on the influence of housekeeping activities on durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. The findings reveal that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating a general agreement among respondents. Specifically, the item on regular cleaning of library shelves helping to preserve information resources ($\bar{x} = 2.91$) recorded the highest mean score, followed by routine inspection of library materials helping to identify damaged resources early ($\bar{x} = 2.81$). Similarly, proper arrangement of books on shelves improving the lifespan of library materials ($\bar{x} = 2.69$) and proper cleaning activities keeping information resources in good condition for long-term use ($\bar{x} = 2.69$) also fall within the agreement range. Dusting of library materials reducing the rate of

deterioration of information resources ($\bar{x} = 2.63$) recorded the lowest mean score, though still above the benchmark. The cluster of mean scores above 2.50 indicates that respondents perceive housekeeping activities as important measures for enhancing the durability and preservation of information resources in university libraries.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between digitization and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between digitization and durability of information resources

Variables		Digitization	Durability of Information Resources
Digitization	Pearson Correlation	1	.823**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
	Pearson Correlation	.823**	1
Durability of Information Resources	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

Source: Field Data, 2026

The result of hypothesis one in Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient (r) of .823, indicating a very strong positive relationship between digitization and durability of information resources. The p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, showing that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means there is a significant relationship between digitization and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources

Variables		Housekeeping Activities	Durability of Information Resources
Housekeeping Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.711**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
	Pearson Correlation	.711**	1
Durability of Information Resources	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

Source: Field Data, 2026

The result of hypothesis two in Table 4 shows a correlation coefficient (r) of .711, indicating a high positive relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources. The p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, showing that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis two is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means there is a significant relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Digitization and Durability of Information Resources

The result of hypothesis one shows that there is significant and positive relationship between digitization and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. This implies that digitization plays a crucial role in enhancing the durability of information resources in libraries. The finding highlights the importance of converting printed and analogue

materials into digital formats in order to safeguard valuable information resources from physical deterioration. This finding is consistent with Stanescu (2020), who avowed that digitization transforms books, journals, manuscripts, photographs, and other library materials into electronic formats that can be preserved and accessed digitally. Through this process, libraries are able to minimise the frequent handling of original materials, thereby reducing wear and tear on fragile resources. Omehia et al. (2024) further noted that digitization helps to preserve the intellectual content of information resources while protecting original copies from continuous physical use.

Housekeeping Activities and Durability of Information Resources

The result of hypothesis two shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between housekeeping activities and durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State. This surmises that housekeeping activities play an important role in preserving the physical condition and extending the lifespan of information resources in libraries. The finding highlights the importance of routine cleaning, maintenance, and proper arrangement of library materials in ensuring their long-term usability. This finding agrees with Ogar (2020), who avowed that housekeeping activities like: regular cleaning, maintenance, and care of library collections ensure safe and conducive environment for information resources. These activities include dusting of shelves and books, proper shelving of materials, cleaning of library surroundings, monitoring environmental conditions, and regular inspection of collections for signs of deterioration. Supporting this view, Sawant (2021) noted that effective housekeeping practices help to protect library materials from dust, dirt, insects, and other environmental factors capable of causing damage over time.

Conclusion

This study examined preservation practices and the durability of information resources in state-owned university libraries in Rivers State, with the understanding that libraries serve as custodians of knowledge resources that must be preserved to ensure continuous access, usability, and long-term academic value. It is evident that the way information resources are managed and preserved significantly determines their lifespan, physical condition, and continued relevance to users. Specifically, the study revealed that digitization and housekeeping activities are positively and significantly related to the durability of information resources in university libraries. The findings further indicate that preservation practices play a central role in protecting library materials from deterioration, loss, and damage, thereby ensuring their sustainability for present and future use.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The university management board should provide adequate funding and digital infrastructure such as scanners, servers, and digital repositories as this will support effective digitization processes and improve the durability of library collections.
2. Library management should assign trained library staff to carry out regular housekeeping activities such as cleaning, shelving, and inspection of materials because this will prevent deterioration and extend the lifespan of information resources.

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