

Problems of Preservation of Information Resources in Libraries of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria

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Citation: Olusoji, O. E. (2026). Problems of Preservation of Information Resources in Libraries of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria. *Equity Journal of Innovative Research in Education*, 3(1), 67-79: ISSN 2814-2187

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges of preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. The study aims to find out the type of library resources available; methods being used in preserving information resources as well as problems facing preservation of information resources in the tertiary institution libraries in Kebbi State. Quantitative research methodology was adopted for the study using narrative-based design. Purposive sampling method was also employed in selecting nine librarians from the tertiary institutions studied. Checklist were used for data collection. Findings of study revealed that two broad categories of information resources i.e. print and non-print resources which include: books, journal, pamphlets, computers and CD ROMs were available in the libraries studied. It was also found that various preservation practices such as user's education, cleaning, dusting, lamination and fumigation were adopted by the libraries. The study also revealed the problems facing preserving information resources by the libraries which include: Lack of funds, lack of bindery unit, lack of well-trained personnel, inadequate power supply, lack of preservation policy. The study concluded that, the library and information resources are very important because without information resources there will be no library. As such, they require proper and effective preservation to maintain their values and relevance. Recommendation was made based on the finding of the study that include among others: the need for government to equip the libraries with necessary resources such as stand-by generators, adequate photocopying machine as well as provision of trained personnel in area of preservation practices.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 21 March 2026

Accepted 3 May 2026

KEYWORDS:

Libraries, Preservation, Preservation Practices, preservation problem, Information Resources, Tertiary Institutions

1. Introduction

Libraries remain central to the intellectual, educational, and cultural development of societies because they preserve and disseminate recorded knowledge for present and future generations. Academic

libraries, in particular, occupy a strategic position within tertiary institutions because they support teaching, learning, research, and community service through the provision of relevant information resources. These resources include books, journals, manuscripts, newspapers, audiovisual materials, electronic databases, archives, and digital collections. The survival and accessibility of such resources are essential for sustaining scholarship, innovation, and institutional memory. Consequently, the preservation of library and information resources has become a major concern for librarians, information professionals, researchers, and educational administrators globally. Contemporary studies have emphasized that academic libraries are no longer viewed merely as storehouses of books but as knowledge centres that safeguard intellectual heritage and ensure long-term access to information resources (Matusiak & Johnston, 2021; Ibrahim & Musa, 2023).

Preservation refers to all managerial, technical, financial, and policy-related measures adopted to prolong the lifespan of information resources and protect them from deterioration, damage, or total loss. Modern preservation practices involve preventive conservation, environmental control, digitization, disaster preparedness, restoration, and proper handling of library materials. According to recent scholarship, preservation is a continuous and systematic process designed to maintain both print and digital resources in usable condition for future access (Corrado & Moulaison Sandy, 2022). The importance of preservation has become more pronounced in developing countries where academic libraries face severe environmental and infrastructural challenges that threaten the longevity of collections.

Academic libraries in Nigeria continue to rely heavily on paper-based materials despite the growing adoption of digital resources. Unfortunately, paper-based collections are highly vulnerable to deterioration caused by humidity, excessive temperature, dust, poor ventilation, insects, fungi, flooding, poor handling, acidic paper, and inadequate storage facilities. Studies have shown that tropical climatic conditions in many African countries accelerate the deterioration of library materials, especially where preservation infrastructures are weak (Adeniran, 2020; Chisita & Raju, 2021). The preservation challenge is therefore more severe in developing countries where inadequate funding, irregular electricity supply, shortage of skilled personnel, and weak institutional policies limit effective preservation programmes.

The issue of preservation has attracted increasing scholarly attention because the deterioration of information resources threatens the continuity of research and learning in higher institutions. According to Issa, Uzuegbu, and Nwosu (2020), the inability of academic libraries to preserve their collections effectively contributes to information loss, reduction in service quality, and declining access to scholarly materials. Similarly, Eze and Shonhe (2022) observed that many university libraries in sub-Saharan Africa operate without comprehensive preservation policies, thereby exposing valuable collections to avoidable damage. This situation undermines the capacity of libraries to fulfil their educational responsibilities and preserve institutional heritage.

Funding remains one of the most critical challenges confronting preservation activities in academic libraries. Preservation programmes require substantial financial commitment for the acquisition of preservation equipment, environmental monitoring systems, digitization technologies, binding materials, disaster recovery facilities, and staff training. However, many tertiary institutions in Nigeria allocate inadequate resources to library preservation activities. Recent empirical evidence indicates that poor funding significantly affects the implementation of preservation policies and the maintenance of library collections in Nigerian universities and polytechnics (Olatokun & Ayanbode,

2019; Abdullahi & Aliyu, 2024). Inadequate funding also affects the procurement of modern preservation technologies and limits the ability of libraries to adopt digital preservation strategies.

Another major challenge affecting preservation practices is the shortage of skilled manpower. Preservation and conservation require specialized knowledge in records management, environmental monitoring, digitization, restoration techniques, and disaster management. Nevertheless, many academic libraries in developing countries lack adequately trained personnel to manage preservation programmes effectively. Studies by Mutsagondo and Ngulube (2021) revealed that limited professional training and insufficient technical expertise continue to weaken preservation efforts in African academic libraries. Similarly, Adetunla and Fasae (2023) found that many librarians possess limited practical knowledge of modern preservation techniques, particularly digital preservation and disaster preparedness.

Environmental factors also constitute serious threats to library collections. High temperature, excessive humidity, poor ventilation, dust accumulation, water leakage, pests, rodents, and fungal attacks contribute significantly to the rapid deterioration of information resources. In tropical regions such as Nigeria, these environmental conditions are often intensified by inadequate infrastructure and unstable electricity supply. Research has shown that poor environmental management remains one of the leading causes of deterioration in African libraries and archives (Mnjama, 2020; Okezie & Onuoha, 2022). In many tertiary institutions, inadequate storage facilities and overcrowded shelves further expose library materials to physical damage and microbial attacks.

Poor handling of library resources by both users and staff is another challenge affecting preservation. Improper shelving, mutilation of books, careless photocopying, vandalism, theft, and negligence contribute significantly to the destruction of information materials. Contemporary studies indicate that user behaviour and lack of preservation awareness continue to undermine library conservation efforts in many developing countries (Alemna & Adjei, 2021). Effective user education and staff orientation programmes are therefore necessary to promote responsible handling of library resources.

Security-related issues also threaten the preservation of information resources in academic libraries. Theft, mutilation, vandalism, and unauthorized removal of library materials have become persistent problems in many tertiary institutions. According to Afolabi and Yusuf (2023), the increasing rate of theft and mutilation in Nigerian academic libraries has resulted in the loss of valuable scholarly resources and historical documents. Weak security systems, inadequate surveillance facilities, and unrestricted access to collections often worsen the situation. Consequently, libraries require stronger security measures, including electronic surveillance systems, access control mechanisms, and regular inventory monitoring.

Disaster management is another important aspect of preservation that has received considerable attention in recent literature. Libraries are vulnerable to both natural and human-induced disasters such as fire outbreaks, flooding, building collapse, civil unrest, and technological failures. Effective disaster preparedness plans are essential for minimizing losses and ensuring rapid recovery during emergencies. However, many academic libraries in developing countries operate without comprehensive disaster management plans. A study by Moyo and Chigwada (2021) found that the absence of disaster preparedness policies remains a major weakness in African library preservation programmes. Libraries without emergency response strategies are often unable to protect their collections adequately during disasters.

The emergence of digital technologies has also transformed preservation practices globally. Digital preservation strategies such as institutional repositories, cloud storage, digitization, and electronic archiving are increasingly being adopted to preserve scholarly resources and improve accessibility. Nevertheless, digital preservation in many Nigerian tertiary institutions is still constrained by inadequate technological infrastructure, unstable electricity, poor internet connectivity, and insufficient technical expertise (Nkanu & Eyo, 2022). Although digital preservation offers long-term opportunities for safeguarding information resources, many academic libraries in Nigeria have not fully integrated digital preservation into their operations.

Despite the growing body of literature on preservation challenges in libraries, most existing studies have concentrated on federal universities and national archives located in major urban centres. Relatively few empirical studies have specifically examined preservation challenges in tertiary institutions within Kebbi State, Nigeria. Existing studies have largely focused on broader issues of library management, information service delivery, and digitization without giving adequate attention to the peculiar environmental, financial, administrative, and infrastructural factors affecting preservation practices in the state. Furthermore, many previous studies were conducted outside the North-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria, thereby limiting the generalizability of their findings to Kebbi State. This creates a significant contextual and geographical gap in the literature.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the preservation challenges affecting library and information resources in tertiary institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The study is necessary because the survival of academic collections depends largely on the effectiveness of preservation strategies adopted by libraries. By investigating the specific challenges confronting preservation practices in the selected institutions, the study intends to contribute to existing literature and provide evidence-based recommendations that could strengthen preservation policies and practices in academic libraries within Kebbi State and beyond.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the types of library information resources available in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.
- ii. Assess the preservation practices employed for safeguarding information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State; and
- iii. Identify the challenges affecting the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study

1. What types of library information resources are available in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?
2. What preservation practices are employed for safeguarding information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

3. What challenges affect the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

2. Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research methodology with a narrative-based design to investigate the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. The population of the study comprised 9 professional librarians drawn from nine tertiary institutions in Kebbi State, namely Federal University Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Kebbi State Polytechnic, Adamu Augie College of Education, Federal University of Agriculture, College of Basic and Advanced Studies, College of Health Sciences, and School of Nursing Science. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents based on their relevance to the study, in line with the recommendation of the United State of America foresight (2015), which states that purposive sampling places participants in groups relevant to criteria that fit the research questions. Data were collected using a researcher-developed checklist titled Information Resources Checklist (IRC) to identify the types of library information resources available, preservation practices employed, and challenges affecting the preservation of information resources. The instrument was validated by experts for content adequacy, while a pilot study involving 30 respondents produced a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .73, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses were observed throughout the study. Data collected through check list was analyzed using descriptive. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the availability of library information resources, while mean and standard deviation were used to assess preservation practices and challenges affecting the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

3. Results

Check list was administered to nine participating institutions across Kebbi State. The response was 100%. This is presented as follows:

Demographic Information

This section presents the names of the tertiary institution's libraries studied; the individual participants, coding for data analysis, gender; position held by the participants; their years of working experiences as well as their educational qualification

Table 1. Demographic Information

SN	Institution	Gender	Qualification	Designation	Years of Experience
1.	Federal University, Birnin Kebbi	M	BLS	Reader Service Librarian	2
2.	Kebbi State University of Sciences & Technology, Aliero	M	Ph.D.	Librarian	20
3.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin kebbi	M	BLS	Reader Services Librarian	7

4.	Kebbi State Polytechnic Dakingari	F	HND	Reader Services Librarian	1
5.	Adamu Augie College of Education, Arugungu	M	MLS	College Librarian	33
6.	University of Agriculture, Zuru	M	MLS	Librarian	24
7.	College of Health Sciences Jega,	M	MLS	Librarian	9
8.	College of Basic Advanced Study Yauri	F	BLS	Chief Librarian	10
9.	College of Nursing Science Birnin Kebbi	M	BLS	Chief Librarian	32

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents drawn from nine tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. The table reveals that the majority of the respondents were male, accounting for seven (77.8%) of the participants, while two (22.2%) were female. This indicates that male librarians dominated the study population across the selected institutions. With respect to academic qualifications, the respondents possessed varying educational backgrounds. Four (44.4%) of the respondents held Bachelor of Library Science (BLS) qualifications, three (33.3%) possessed Master of Library Science (MLS) degrees, one (11.1%) held a Ph.D., while one (11.1%) had a Higher National Diploma (HND). This suggests that most of the respondents were professionally trained librarians with relevant academic qualifications required for library and information service delivery. In terms of designation, the respondents occupied different professional positions within their institutions. Three respondents served as Librarians, three as Reader Services Librarians, two as Chief Librarians, while one respondent occupied the position of College Librarian. This distribution indicates that the study captured responses from librarians occupying both administrative and operational positions in the libraries studied.

Regarding years of experience, the respondents had varying lengths of professional service ranging from 1 to 33 years. The findings show that some respondents had relatively few years of experience, such as 1 and 2 years, whereas others had extensive experience of over 20 years. Specifically, two respondents had over 30 years of experience, while several others had between 7 and 24 years of service. This implies that the respondents possessed substantial professional experience, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the information provided in the study.

Research Question Two: What types of library information resources are available in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

Table 2 below answers research question one

Table 2: Library Information Resources

SN	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Textbooks	9	100
2.	Journals	9	100

3. Newspapers	9	100
4. Magazines	7	77.8
5. Pamphlets	7	77.8
6. Reference Materials	9	100
7. CD-ROM Resources	8	88.9
8. Computers	9	100
9. Students' Projects	7	77.8
10. Non-print Materials	5	55.6
11. Electronic Resources (E-resources)	4	44.4
12. Internet Facilities	2	22.2

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The checklist data revealed that textbooks, journals, newspapers, reference materials, and computers were available in all the nine tertiary institution libraries studied, representing 100% availability respectively. CD-ROM resources were available in eight institutions representing 88.9%. Magazines, pamphlets, and students' projects were available in seven institutions each, accounting for 77.8% respectively. Non-print materials were available in five institutions representing 55.6%, while electronic resources were available in four institutions representing 44.4%. Internet facilities were the least available resource, found in only two institutions representing 22.2%. This indicates that conventional print resources were more available than electronic and internet-based resources in the libraries studied.

Research Question Three: What preservation practices are employed for safeguarding information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

Table 3 below answers research question two

Table 3: Preservation Practices of Library Information Resources

SN	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Regular cleaning of library	5	55.6
2.	Dusting of library materials	8	88.9
3.	Proper shelving of materials	8	88.9
4.	Binding of damaged materials	7	77.8
5.	Fumigation of library materials	9	100
6.	Photocopying/duplication of materials	9	100
7.	Proper house-keeping practices	4	44.4
8.	Orientation for library students and staff	4	44.4
9.	Lamination of materials	6	66.7
10.	Digitalization/Digitization of materials	5	55.6
11.	Window-cutting/ventilation practices	5	55.6
12.	Temperature control using air-conditioners	5	55.6
13.	Education on proper handling of library resources	6	66.7
14.	User education programmes	2	22.2
15.	Use of fire extinguishers	2	22.2

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The checklist data revealed that fumigation and photocopying/duplication of materials were practiced in all the nine tertiary institution libraries studied, representing 100% respectively. Dusting of library materials and proper shelving of materials were practiced in eight institutions each, accounting for 88.9% respectively. Binding of damaged materials was practiced in seven institutions representing 77.8%. Lamination of materials and education on proper handling of library resources were practiced in six institutions each, accounting for 66.7%. Regular cleaning of libraries, digitalization/digitization of materials, window-cutting/ventilation practices, and temperature control using air-conditioners were practiced in five institutions each, representing 55.6%. Proper house-keeping practices and orientation for library students and staff were practiced in four institutions each, accounting for 44.4%. User education programmes and use of fire extinguishers were the least practiced preservation measures; each recorded in two institutions representing 22.2%. The findings indicate that conventional preservation practices such as fumigation, photocopying, dusting, and shelving were more commonly employed than advanced and safety-related preservation practices.

Research Question Four: What challenges affect the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

Table 4 below answers research question Three

Table 4: Preservation Challenges

SN	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Lack of bindery unit	8	88.9
2.	Inadequate funds	9	100
3.	Lack of technical expertise in preservation	3	33.3
4.	Lack of well-trained manpower/personnel	7	77.8
5.	Lack of qualified personnel in preservation	2	22.2
6.	Lack of preservation equipment	4	44.4
7.	Harsh environmental conditions	7	77.8
8.	Lack of preservation policy	4	44.4
9.	Inadequate power supply	3	33.3
10.	Lack of computer systems	2	22.2

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The checklist data revealed that inadequate funds constituted the most common challenge affecting the preservation of library and information resources in all the nine tertiary institution libraries studied, representing 100%. Lack of bindery unit was identified in eight institutions representing 88.9%. Lack of well-trained manpower/personnel and harsh environmental conditions were identified in seven institutions each, accounting for 77.8% respectively. Lack of preservation equipment and lack of preservation policy were identified in four institutions each, representing 44.4%. Lack of technical expertise in preservation and inadequate power supply were identified in three institutions each, accounting for 33.3% respectively. Lack of qualified personnel in preservation and lack of computer systems were the least identified challenges, occurring in two institutions each, representing 22.2%. The findings indicate that financial constraints, inadequate bindery facilities, shortage of trained personnel, and unfavorable environmental conditions were

the major challenges confronting effective preservation of library and information resources in tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

4. Discussion

The findings from table two revealed that all the tertiary institution libraries studied possessed basic print and academic resources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, and reference materials. The availability of computers across the institutions further indicated the presence of basic information technology facilities within the libraries. The study also found that instructional and supplementary resources such as magazines, pamphlets, and students' research projects were available in most of the institutions, showing a moderate level of resource diversity in the libraries. The findings further indicated that electronic and non-print resources were not adequately available in many of the libraries studied. Similarly, internet facilities were poorly represented, suggesting limited access to online information services and digital library operations. Generally, the study established that the libraries relied more on conventional print-based resources than modern electronic and internet-based information resources. The finding is in line with the study by Otolu and Saibakumo (2025), who reported that textbooks, periodicals, computers, CD-ROMs, and electronic materials constituted the major information resources available in academic libraries.

The findings from table three showed that routine preservation measures such as fumigation, photocopying, dusting, and proper shelving were widely practiced in the libraries studied. These practices constituted the major methods used for preserving library information resources. The study further revealed that binding of damaged materials was commonly practiced by most of the libraries as a way of prolonging the usefulness of information resources. The findings also indicated that some institutions adopted additional preservation measures such as lamination, digitization, ventilation practices, and temperature regulation through the use of air-conditioners. However, the study found that safety-oriented and user-centered preservation practices such as user education programmes and provision of fire extinguishers were less commonly practiced in the libraries. Overall, the findings revealed that the libraries employed mainly traditional preservation techniques with limited application of modern preservation technologies. The finding agrees with the work of Obiozor-Ekeze, (2022), who noted low adoption of advanced digitization practices in academic libraries. Similarly, Dada (2021), who observed inadequate preservation infrastructure and low technological preparedness in Nigerian libraries.

The findings revealed that inadequate funding was the most significant challenge affecting preservation activities in the libraries studied. The shortage of funds limited the acquisition of preservation equipment and the implementation of effective preservation programmes. The study also found that the absence of bindery units in most institutions posed serious challenges to effective preservation of damaged library materials. The findings further indicated that shortage of trained and qualified personnel negatively affected preservation practices in the libraries, particularly in the area of technical preservation activities. The study equally revealed that harsh environmental conditions such as dust, heat, and humidity constituted major threats to the preservation of library information resources. In addition, inadequate preservation equipment, absence of preservation policies, poor power supply, and insufficient computer systems were identified as factors hindering effective preservation practices in some of the institutions studied. Generally, the findings established that financial, environmental, infrastructural, and manpower-related problems were the major constraints to effective preservation of library and information

resources in tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. The finding of the study is consistent with the study of Sambo, Urhefe, & Ejitagha, (2017). who identified lack of funds as a major obstacle to digital preservation in Nigerian libraries. They further found lack of preservation policies and inadequate facilities among the major preservation challenges in Nigerian libraries.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the preservation of information resources in libraries of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria, with emphasis on the types of information resources available, preservation practices employed, and challenges affecting preservation activities. The findings revealed that the libraries possessed a wide range of conventional print-based resources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, and reference materials, while electronic resources and internet facilities were inadequately available in most of the institutions. This indicates that the libraries still depend largely on traditional information resources with limited integration of modern digital information systems. The study further established that the libraries adopted several preservation practices including fumigation, photocopying, dusting, shelving, binding, and lamination of materials. However, advanced preservation measures such as digitization, user education programmes, disaster preparedness, and safety practices were not adequately implemented in many of the libraries studied. The findings therefore suggest that preservation efforts in the institutions were largely based on conventional methods with minimal application of modern preservation technologies and strategies. The study also revealed that inadequate funding, lack of bindery units, shortage of trained manpower, and harsh environmental conditions constituted the major challenges affecting effective preservation of library information resources in tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. Other identified problems included inadequate preservation equipment, poor power supply, and absence of preservation policies. The study therefore concludes that although tertiary institution libraries in Kebbi State make efforts to preserve their information resources, the effectiveness of such efforts is constrained by financial, infrastructural, environmental, and manpower-related challenges. Consequently, there is need for stronger institutional commitment and improved preservation strategies to ensure the long-term survival and accessibility of library information resources.

6. Recommendations

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

1. Management of tertiary institutions and government agencies should provide adequate funding to libraries for the procurement of preservation equipment, establishment of bindery units, acquisition of digital preservation facilities, and maintenance of conducive storage environments for library resources.
2. Academic libraries should strengthen the adoption of modern preservation practices such as digitization of information resources, disaster preparedness planning, environmental monitoring, and user education programmes in order to improve the long-term preservation of library collections.
3. Tertiary institutions should organize regular training, workshops, and professional development programmes for librarians and library staff to improve their technical competence and knowledge in preservation and conservation practices.

4. Libraries should improve infrastructural facilities such as stable power supply, internet connectivity, ventilation systems, and security measures to support effective preservation and protection of information resources.
5. Library management should formulate and implement comprehensive preservation policies that will guide preservation activities, disaster response strategies, and proper handling of library materials within the institutions.

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