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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND INFORMATION PRESERVATION IN DONALD EKONG LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT.

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Abstract
This study investigated disaster preparedness and information preservation in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The study focused on the level of awareness, prevention policies, and digitization policies employed in the library to safeguard information resources. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and the entire population of 32 library staff, comprising 18 professional and 14 para-professional librarians, was used for the study through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Disaster Preparedness and Information Preservation Questionnaire (DPIPQ) and analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a criterion mean of 2.50 set for decision-making. The findings revealed a high level of awareness of disaster preparedness and information preservation among staff, effective implementation of prevention policies, and a high level of digitization policies in preserving information resources in Donald Ekong Library. The study concluded that disaster preparedness and information preservation are crucial for maintaining the longevity and accessibility of library resources, as they minimize loss, enhance sustainability, and ensure continued access to information. Based on the findings, the study recommended regular policy implementation and review, continuous staff training on disaster management, adequate funding for preservation infrastructure, and improved digitization initiatives to ensure the safety and accessibility of information resources in the library.

Keywords: disaster, preparedness, information, preservation, university.

Introduction

The preservation of information resources has become an essential component of modern library management, particularly within academic institutions that serve as hubs for teaching, learning, and research. The rapid expansion of knowledge, coupled with the increasing volume of printed and digital materials, has heightened the need for libraries to adopt deliberate strategies to safeguard their collections. Academic libraries, especially in developing countries, frequently operate under conditions of limited funding, infrastructural constraints, and environmental risks, making information preservation an urgent

priority. According to Ogar (2020), preservation encompasses all deliberate measures undertaken to prolong the life and usability of information resources, ensuring that they remain legible, reliable, and accessible for present and future users. Preservation therefore goes beyond physical maintenance; it includes establishing policies, environmental control, developing staff capacity, and implementing both preventive and remedial measures tailored to the nature and value of library materials.

Preservation also involves a deep understanding of the fragile nature of library collections. Books, manuscripts, audiovisual materials, and digital files are vulnerable to deterioration resulting from environmental fluctuations, poor storage practices, biological agents such as mold and pests, and chemical degradation. Olubiyo (2023) notes that preservation requires not only maintaining materials in their current formats but also creating an environment conducive to their long-term survival. This includes monitoring temperature, humidity, light levels, dust accumulation, and other factors that accelerate deterioration. Preservation is thus an ongoing process that demands structured planning, continuous evaluation, and institutional commitment. The objective is to minimize risks, extend the lifespan of materials, and ensure that knowledge resources remain accessible for research, administrative functions, historical referencing, and institutional memory.

A critical dimension of preservation is disaster preparedness. Libraries are increasingly exposed to various forms of disaster, natural, environmental, and human-induced. Floods, fires, roof leakages, electrical faults, power surges, civil disturbances, and technological failures can lead to irreversible loss of library materials. Disaster preparedness involves anticipating potential threats, identifying vulnerable areas within the library, and developing comprehensive plans for prevention, response, and recovery. It also requires equipping staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to act swiftly and effectively when emergencies occur. Awareness plays a fundamental role in this process. Suleiman, Rajeev, and Hassana (2018) describe awareness as the understanding or realization of potential risks based on knowledge and experience. In the context of library management, awareness enables librarians to recognize hazards early, implement preventive measures, and respond appropriately when emergencies arise. Ani and Ahiazu (2008) emphasize that preparedness is dependent on awareness; without adequate awareness, institutions remain vulnerable and unprepared for events that threaten collections.

An important strategy in contemporary preservation efforts is the development and implementation of preventive policies. Prevention, widely regarded as more effective and economical than recovery, involves reducing the likelihood of disaster and minimizing damage if disasters occur. Preventive measures include regular collection maintenance, fire-safety protocols, installation of smoke detectors, staff training, appropriate shelving practices, environmental monitoring, and security controls. Libraries that adopt clear preservation and prevention policies are more likely to protect their collections effectively and sustain their mission. One preventive strategy that has gained prominence is digitization. With many users turning to digital platforms for information access, libraries are increasingly converting fragile or high-demand materials into digital formats. Digitization not only enhances access but also reduces physical handling, thereby extending the life of original materials. As noted by Pandey and Misra (2014), digitization serves as a vital preservation technique, bridging the gap between traditional collections and modern information use patterns while offering protection against environmental and physical threats.

Disaster preparedness planning further strengthens preservation by ensuring that libraries have structured and coordinated responses when emergencies occur. A disaster preparedness plan outlines responsibilities, communication channels, salvage priorities, evacuation procedures, and recovery strategies. Such plans reduce confusion during emergencies, facilitate quick decision-making, and ensure that vital resources are saved. McIlwaine (2005) highlights that disaster preparedness aims to minimize risks and enhance

institutional resilience by integrating prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery into library operations. Ensuring the safety and longevity of its information resources is essential for sustaining academic excellence and institutional continuity. Information preservation and disaster preparedness are intertwined responsibilities central to the effective functioning of academic libraries. As repositories of knowledge and cultural heritage, libraries must adopt holistic strategies that combine preventive measures, modern preservation tools such as digitization, staff awareness, and disaster planning. In environments like Nigeria, where infrastructural challenges and environmental risks are prevalent, proactive preservation and preparedness strategies are crucial for safeguarding valuable information resources and ensuring their continued relevance in the academic ecosystem.

Statement of the Problem

Information preservation is fundamental to the mandate of academic libraries, as it ensures that information resources remain accessible, usable, and protected for future reference. The relevance of a library's collection and the investment committed to acquiring it depends largely on the effectiveness of preservation measures put in place. However, academic libraries in Nigeria increasingly operate in a harsh economic environment characterized by shrinking budgetary allocations, inadequate facilities, and the high cost of replacing damaged or lost materials. These constraints heighten the urgency for libraries to adopt proactive disaster preparedness measures to safeguard their collections. Despite the vulnerability of library resources, observations show that disaster preparedness in many academic libraries remains weak and poorly coordinated. Several university libraries are aware of potential hazards but lack formal disaster preparedness plans, clear response strategies, or established preservation policies. Instead, they often rely on reactive, fire-brigade approaches that address problems only after damage has occurred. Compounding this challenge is the limited training provided to library staff on disaster prevention, handling of emergency equipment, and recovery procedures. Without proper capacity building and structured planning, libraries remain exposed to severe and unpredictable losses when disasters strike. These gaps insufficient preparedness, inadequate preventive strategies, lack of staff training, and weak institutional commitment pose significant threats to the preservation of information resources. It is against this backdrop that the present study investigates disaster preparedness and information preservation practices in the Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt, with the aim of identifying existing challenges and proposing strategies for improvement.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are to guide the study:

1. To examine the level of awareness of disasters preparedness in Donald Ekong Library.
2. To evaluate the prevention policy employed by Donald Ekong Library in the preservation of information resource.
3. To determine the digitization policy employed by Donald Ekong Library in information preservation.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of disasters preparedness and information preservation in Donald Ekong library?
2. What are the prevention policies employed in the preservation of information resource in Donald Ekong Library?

3. What are the digitization policies employed by Donald Ekong Library in information preservation?

Literature Review

Information is a foundational concept in library and information science and underpins the very existence of libraries. It is the raw material that fuels decision-making, supports learning, and facilitates communication in society. Ashikuzzaman (2023) describes information as the building block of knowledge, without which individuals would struggle to make sense of their environment. In contemporary contexts, information manifests in multiple formats including text, images, audio, video, and is disseminated through diverse channels such as books, electronic databases, the Internet, and social media. The rise of digital technologies has transformed how information is produced, stored, shared, and consumed, allowing users global access to vast volumes of data. Conceptually, information may be viewed as data that has been processed, structured, or organized in a meaningful way to convey knowledge, ideas, or instructions. Prytherch (2016) similarly defines information as an assemblage of data in a comprehensible form, capable of communication, whether embodied in print, electronic media, or the tacit knowledge of organizational staff. Because decisions and societal outcomes depend heavily on the quality of information, rigorous attention to its accuracy, reliability, and long-term accessibility becomes essential.

This centrality of information underscores the importance of information preservation as a core responsibility of libraries. Preservation of resources in the library allowed continued access, use and easy retrieval of library resources for present, future use and to protect them against threats for as long as passable (David-West 2024).. The IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Material, as cited in Ogar (2020), conceive preservation broadly to include managerial and financial considerations, storage and accommodation, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods necessary for safeguarding library and archival materials and the information contained in them. Oluwaseun, Ottong and Ottong (2017) in Ogar (2020) view preservation as the appropriate housing, protection, care, and maintenance of records, archives, and manuscripts. These perspectives highlight that preservation is not a single activity but an integrated programme that ranges from policy formulation to daily handling practices.

Preservation in libraries cuts across different categories of information resources: printed materials such as books, maps and journals; non-book media such as audio and video tapes, CD-ROMs, and photographs; and electronic resources including databases, hard drives, and library software (Alex-Nmecha & Owate, 2019). All these formats are vulnerable to physical, chemical, biological, and environmental agents of deterioration. Lakshminarasimhappa and Veena (2014) in Usiedo et al. (2022) frame preservation as a component of conservation involving repair, fumigation, de-acidification, binding, lamination, and air-conditioning, as well as appropriate storage of manuscripts, films, disks, and optical media. Murray (2005) in Usiedo et al. (2022) further emphasizes environmental control, including stabilization and monitoring of temperature, humidity, light exposure, air quality, and the presence of dust or mound. Preservation, therefore, includes not only technical interventions on damaged items but also preventive measures aimed at creating a stable and secure environment that slows down deterioration.

From a broader institutional perspective, information preservation is about safeguarding records and collections so that they retain their legibility, integrity, and evidential value over time. It involves preventive conservation activities that minimize risk and physical change, while allowing continued access with as little intrusive treatment as possible. Etebu and Ogbo (2023) describe preservation as retaining materials in

a state close to their original condition for future use and controlling human, biological, and environmental factors such as rodents, insects, excessive light, temperature fluctuations, and high humidity that accelerate decay. Muboful (2020) extends the concept to include storage conditions, accommodation, staffing, and financial provisions, emphasizing that preservation requires conscious managerial commitments rather than ad hoc actions. For university libraries, these responsibilities are particularly critical because they hold the intellectual output of past and present scholars and are expected to transmit this knowledge to future generations.

The benefits of effective information preservation are multifaceted. Akussah (2013) in Amankwah, Bilson and Atisoe (2022) notes that information resources are vital to the daily functioning and long-term survival of organizations, hence they must be protected from deterioration if they are to remain useful. Sound preservation practices save costs by reducing the need to frequently replace expensive materials, ensure efficiency by guaranteeing continued access to important documents, protect organizational memory by maintaining records that can be consulted for decision-making, and safeguard cultural heritage by conserving materials that embody a community's history, traditions, languages, and values. Ashikuzzaman (2023) equally stresses that preserving information resources sustains culture, education, research, and collective memory, enabling present and future generations to benefit from accumulated human knowledge and creativity.

However, the success of preservation efforts is closely tied to how libraries anticipate and manage disasters. Disasters are severe disruptions that exceed the coping capacity of affected communities, resulting in significant human, material, and environmental losses (UNISDR, 2011). For libraries, disasters may arise from both natural and human-made causes and can devastate collections, facilities, equipment, and services. Eden and Matthews (2016) in Abdullahi, Ibrahim and Haruna (2022) describe any incident that endangers human safety and damages or threatens to destroy library resources as a disaster. Rehman (2014) in Olubiyo (2023) adds that disasters are often unexpected and may have serious financial implications as well as service disruptions. Libraries are thus not exempt from risks such as floods, fires, storms, structural failures, vandalism, theft, and technological failures; instead, their largely flammable and organic collections make them highly vulnerable.

Evidence from different contexts reveals the extent of disaster impacts on libraries. Chakrabarti and Pramanik (2017) in Olubiyo (2023) document incidents in which libraries and cultural institutions in Iraq and India lost manuscripts, rare books, and artifacts to militant attacks and vandalism. In Africa, Nwokedi, Panle and Samuel (2017) report repeated fire incidents at the University of Jos libraries that destroyed facilities and resources, while Chawinga and Majawa (2018) in Okoye and Echedom (2022) recount the fire that ravaged Mzuzu University Library in Malawi, destroying tens of thousands of books and computers. Iroeze and Iroeze (2021) note that fires, floods, heat, insects, and leakages remain common threats in academic libraries, with catastrophic consequences when preparedness is weak. Disasters not only burn or submerge collections; even materials not directly touched by flames or water may be severely damaged by smoke, soot, heat, and secondary effects such as swelling, ink bleeding, and pages sticking together. These realities underscore the close relationship between disaster risk and long-term information preservation.

Within this context, disaster preparedness emerges as a critical strategy to protect library collections and ensure continuity of services. Hanses (2019) defines a disaster preparedness plan as a written document detailing procedures designed to prevent and prepare for disasters and to guide response and recovery efforts when they occur. Such a plan clarifies priorities, identifies salvage targets, allocates responsibilities, and reduces confusion during emergencies. The International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC, 2021) in

Iroeze and Iroeze (2021) conceptualizes preparedness more broadly as measures aimed at predicting and, where possible, preventing disasters, mitigating their impact, and enabling effective coping and timely recovery. Disaster preparedness is therefore not a one-off activity but a continuous, integrated process that draws on training, logistics, institutional development, and risk reduction initiatives.

Disaster preparedness planning seeks to minimize the impact of losses and maximise the efficiency of response when hazards materialize. McIlwaine (2005) in Abdullahi, Nwachuku and Ahmad (2022) notes that preparedness plans are designed to reduce risks and enhance the ability of libraries to respond swiftly. Solomon-Uwakwe (2019) describes disaster preparedness as organising systems to cope with disasters, enabling libraries to reduce damage, shorten recovery time, and provide a cushion for staff and users. Practical elements of preparedness include identifying disaster response teams, training emergency action teams, designating recovery areas, and ensuring that necessary equipment and materials such as fire extinguishers, alarms, smoke detectors, first-aid kits, water detectors and clear evacuation maps are available and functional (Newey, Lepschi & Croft, 2008 in Iroeze & Iroeze, 2021). Preparedness also entails staff awareness of their responsibilities, insurance of collections, backup of digital data, allocation of restoration priorities, and identification of alternative storage sites (Lyall, 2013 in Abdullahi, Nwachuku & Ahmad, 2022). Yet, as Buchanan (2013) in the same authors observes, many libraries still show a degree of indifference to disaster preparedness despite its importance for resource protection.

Digitization policy adds another layer to the preservation–preparedness nexus. As Sivankalai et al. (2021) explain, a digitization policy provides guidelines for converting physical materials into digital form, specifying selection criteria, workflows, file formats, metadata standards, copyright issues, and access conditions. It ensures that digitization initiatives are coherent, sustainable, and aligned with institutional goals. By reducing the physical handling of fragile materials and creating backup copies that can be stored off-site or in the cloud, digitization supports both preservation and disaster mitigation. It also signals a library's commitment to evolving from a purely print-based repository to a dynamic, digitally responsive institution. These conceptual discussions are reinforced by empirical studies that reveal the state of disaster preparedness and preservation practices in Nigerian academic libraries. Henry (2014) found very low levels of staff sensitization and awareness on disaster preparedness among heads of academic libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria, with major threats including insects, termites, rodents, and roof leakages, and a notable absence of insurance policies for library resources. Mahmood (2023) reported that although many librarians in North-East universities were aware of technologies for disaster management, significant gaps remained in implementation. Abdullahi, Ibrahim and Haruna (2022) identified prevalent disasters such as book mutilation, staff negligence, windstorms, biological agents, leaking roofs, fire outbreaks, and hot climate in Bauchi State academic libraries, concluding that many libraries lacked established disaster control practices despite having some basic facilities like fire extinguishers and CCTV. Abdullahi, Nwachuku and Ahmad (2022) further observed that effective preparedness strategies in North-East university libraries included providing funds, ensuring insurance, backing up data, and clarifying staff roles.

In South-West Nigeria, Fatade, Ajiboye and Ogunjimi (2023) highlighted hacking and fire as major security and disaster threats in academic libraries, especially those with e-libraries, while Iroeze and Iroeze (2021) showed that academic libraries in South-East Nigeria face high risks of fire, flood, heat, insects, and leakages, yet most do not have disaster plans in place, indicating a very low level of preparedness. Within this body of literature, preservation theory, such as Ruskin's (1989) seven lamps, metaphorically underscores the ethical and aesthetic obligation to safeguard cultural and intellectual heritage through sacrifice, truth, beauty, and obedience to sound principles. Applied to libraries, it implies a conscious, disciplined commitment to maintain and preserve information resources for societal renewal.

Consequently, the insight from literature demonstrate that information preservation and disaster preparedness are deeply interconnected and that significant gaps still exist in Nigerian academic libraries. They provide a foundation for examining how a specific institution plans for, manages, and responds to disaster risks while striving to preserve its information resources for long-term access and use.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted at the Donald E. U. Ekong Library. The population of the study comprised all 32 staff members of the library, including 18 professional and 14 para-professional librarians. Due to the relatively small population size, the entire population was used as the study sample through a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire titled Disaster Preparedness and Information Preservation Questionnaire (DPIPQ). The instrument consisted of 31 items structured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). Items covered three main areas: awareness of disaster preparedness (13 items), preservation policies (11 items), and digitization policies (7 items). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in the field, after which their recommendations and corrections were incorporated. Reliability of the instrument was established using the test–retest method. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores and standard deviation. A decision rule of 2.50 was adopted as the criterion mean, whereby items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were considered accepted, while those below 2.50 were rejected.

Result and Discussions

Demographic Characteristic of Respondent

Respondents' demographic information considered for review include gender, age group, qualification, years of experience, section. The information collated on the study participants is statistically presented in the table below:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	14	43.8
	Female	18	56.2
Age group	20-29 years	0	0
	30-39 years	10	31.3
	40-49 years	10	31.3
	50 years and above	12	37.4
Highest Educational Qualification	OND/NCE	0	0
	HND/B.Sc/B.A/BLS	6	18.8
	PGD/MLS/M.Sc	14	43.8
	Ph.D	12	37.4
Years of Experience	1-5 years	4	12.5
	6-10 years	10	31.3
	More than 10 years	18	56.2
Section in the library	Readers	3	9.4
	Information service	13	40.6
	Acquisition	8	25.0
	Technical	4	12.4
	Bindery	2	6.3
	Medical	2	6.3

Source: Researchers Computation (2025)

The table presents the descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data shows that majority of the respondents (56.2%) are female, while 43.8% are Male. In terms of age group, none fall in the age group of 20-29, while 31.3% falls the age group of 30-39, 31.3% also falls in the age group of 40-49 and 37.4% falls in the age group of 50 years and above. Regarding the highest educational qualification, none of the participants have OND/NCE, were 18.8% has HND/B.Sc/B.A/BLS, were 43.8% has PGD/MLS/M.Sc and 37.4% has Ph.D. this indicates that majority of the respondents possess PGD/MLS/M.Sc.

Also, 12.5% has 1-5 years of experience, while 31.3% has 6-10 years of experience and majority of the respondents of 56.2% has more than 10years of experience.

Finally.in terms of the sections, 9.4% of the respondents works in the readers section, and majority of the respondents with 40.6% were in the information services, 25.0% of the respondents were in the acquisition, 12.4% were in technical section, 6.3 were in bindery section, and 6.3% were in medical 6.3% were in medical section.

What is the level of awareness of disasters preparedness and information preservation in Donald Ekong library?

Table 2: Awareness of Disaster Preparedness

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	±	Decision
1.	I am aware of the library's official disaster preparedness plan	8	16	6	2	2.94	0.84	Agreed
2.	I am aware of potential types of disasters that could affect the library	12	20	0	0	3.38	0.49	Agreed
3.	I understand my role and responsibilities during a library disaster	10	20	2	0	3.25	0.57	Agreed
4.	I am aware of methods used to preserve physical library materials	13	17	2	0	3.34	0.60	Agreed
5.	I am aware of methods used to preserve digital information	8	22	2	0	3.19	0.54	Agreed
6.	The library has adequate storage conditions to protect materials from damage (e.g., temperature, humidity control).	13	19	0	0	3.40	0.50	Agreed
7.	The library has a clear policy for the preservation of its collections.	13	14	5	0	3.25	0.72	Agreed
8.	I am knowledgeable about the best practices for handling fragile or valuable library materials.	18	10	4	0	3.43	0.71	Agreed
9.	I have received training on disaster preparedness (e.g., evacuation procedures, first aid)	7	11	10	4	2.66	0.97	Agreed
10.	I know who to contact in case of an emergency in the library.	7	22	0	3	3.03	0.78	Agreed
11.	I understand the importance of preserving library materials	17	13	2	0	3.47	0.62	Agreed
12.	There are clear communication channels in place during an emergency.	14	13	4	1	3.25	0.80	Agreed

13.	The library has adequate safety equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers, smoke detectors).	9	21	2	0	3.22	0.55	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN ($\bar{x}$): 3.22 ≥ 2.5							

Mean range: 1.0 – 1.99 very low level, 2.0 – 2.49 low level, 2.5 – 3.5 high level, 3.51 – above very high level.

The analysis of staff awareness of disaster preparedness and information preservation in the Donald Ekong Library shows that respondents demonstrated a generally high level of awareness across all thirteen items assessed. The mean scores ranged from 2.66 to 3.47, producing a grand mean of 3.22, which falls within the *high-level awareness* category based on the decision benchmark (2.50–3.50).

Respondents expressed particularly strong awareness regarding the importance of preserving library materials ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47), best practices for handling fragile or valuable information resources ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43), and the adequacy of the library's storage conditions in protecting materials from environmental damage ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40). These indicators, which are close to the upper boundary of the high-awareness range, suggest that preservation consciousness is well established among the library staff. This aligns with Nwegbu & Okoro (2002), who emphasize that effective preservation culture depends heavily on staff awareness and proper handling practices.

Awareness of potential disaster types ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38), methods for preserving physical materials ($\bar{x}$ = 3.34), and existing communication channels during emergencies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25) also recorded high mean scores, confirming that respondents possess a clear understanding of disaster risks and the strategies required to mitigate them. Awareness of the library's official preservation policy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25) and knowledge of emergency roles and responsibilities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25) further indicate that disaster-related procedures are reasonably well disseminated within the institution.

Some items, however, recorded comparatively lower mean scores, though still within the high-awareness category. Awareness of the library's official disaster preparedness plan ($\bar{x}$ = 2.94) and knowledge of whom to contact during emergencies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.03) indicate areas where internal communication could be strengthened. The lowest mean score was observed for disaster-preparedness training ($\bar{x}$ = 2.66), suggesting that although staff are aware of disaster risks, formal training opportunities remain limited. This reflects the observations of Ifidon & Ifidon (2007), who noted that many Nigerian academic libraries provide minimal disaster-preparedness training due to funding and infrastructural limitations. The findings indicate that staff of the Donald Ekong Library possess a high level of awareness of both disaster preparedness and information preservation practices. The strong awareness of preservation methods, material handling, and environmental control underscores a solid preservation culture within the library, although gaps in structured training and communication procedures suggest the need for greater institutional investment in capacity building.

What are the prevention policies employed in the preservation of information resource in Donald Ekong library?

Table 3. Prevention Policy in Information Preservation

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	±	Decision
1.	Environmental controls (temperature, humidity, light) in storage areas.	14	18	0	0	3.34	0.50	Agreed
2.	Regular cleaning and pest management programs.	16	14	2	0	3.44	0.62	Agreed

3.	Proper shelving and storage practices for physical materials.	22	10	0	0	3.69	0.27	Agreed
4.	Security measures to prevent theft and vandalism of materials.	18	12	2	0	3.50	0.62	Agreed
5.	User education on proper handling of library materials.	22	10	0	0	3.69	0.47	Agreed
6.	Regular inspection and repair of damaged materials	22	10	0	0	3.69	4.07	Agreed
7.	Use of acid-free materials for repairs and storage.	18	14	0	0	3.56	0.50	Agreed
8.	Offsite storage for valuable or unique physical collections.	11	17	4	0	3.22	0.66	Agreed
9.	Regular backup and redundancy for digital information resources.	11	18	2	1	3.22	0.71	Agreed
10.	Water detection systems in sensitive areas.	11	16	1	4	3.06	0.95	Agreed
11.	Implementation of fire suppression systems (e.g., sprinklers, gas suppression).	14	14	4	0	3.31	0.69	Agreed

Mean range: 1.0 – 1.99 very low level, 2.0 – 2.49 low level, 2.5 – 3.5 high level, 3.51 – above very high level.

The findings on the prevention policies adopted in Donald Ekong Library show that all the listed preventive measures were accepted by respondents, with mean scores ranging from 3.06 to 3.69. The grand mean of 3.10 falls within the high-level range (2.50–3.50), indicating that the library has established effective prevention strategies aimed at safeguarding its information resources.

The highest-rated prevention practices were proper shelving and storage of materials ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69), user education on the correct handling of library resources ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69), and regular inspection and repair of damaged items ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69). These practices fall within the very high-level category, suggesting that the library places significant emphasis on traditional preservation procedures that directly reduce material deterioration and promote responsible use among patrons. This aligns with Alegbeleye's (1996) assertion that shelving, handling, and routine maintenance are among the most fundamental elements of preservation in academic libraries.

Other highly rated preventive measures include security controls to prevent theft and vandalism ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50), the use of acid-free materials for repairs and storage ($\bar{x}$ = 3.56), environmental controls such as regulating temperature, humidity, and light ($\bar{x}$ = 3.34), as well as regular cleaning and pest management programs ($\bar{x}$ = 3.44). These results show that the library has implemented substantial environmental and security-related strategies, which are essential for reducing the risk of deterioration from biological agents, environmental instability, and human interference.

Some preventive strategies were rated slightly lower, though still within the high-level category. These include offsite storage for unique or valuable collections ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22), regular backup and redundancy for digital information ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22), the presence of water detection systems ($\bar{x}$ = 3.06), and fire suppression systems such as sprinklers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31). Although these measures are acknowledged, their comparatively lower mean scores suggest that they may not be as consistently implemented as the more traditional practices. This supports the observation of Ifidon & Ifidon (2007), who noted that many Nigerian academic libraries face financial and infrastructural limitations that hinder the adoption of advanced disaster-prevention technologies. The results indicate that Donald Ekong Library has instituted a broad range of

effective prevention policies aimed at protecting both physical and digital information resources. While foundational practices such as shelving, inspection, environmental control, and user education are strongly established, advanced technological measures appear to require further strengthening to ensure comprehensive preservation and risk mitigation.

What are the digitization policies employed by Donald Ekong library in information preservation?

Table 4. Digitization Policy in Information Preservation

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	±	Decision
1.	Selection criteria for materials to be digitized.	16	16	0	0	3.50	0.51	Accepted
2.	Technical standards for digitization (e.g., resolution, file formats).	16	16	0	0	3.50	0.51	Accepted
3.	Quality control procedures for digitization.	12	20	0	0	3.38	0.49	Accepted
4.	Staff training and development for digitization workflows.	15	15	2	0	3.41	0.61	Accepted
5.	Long-term storage and access strategies for digitized content (e.g., digital repositories)	16	12	2	2	3.31	0.86	Accepted
6.	Disaster recovery plans for digital collections.	15	14	3	0	3.38	0.66	Accepted
7.	Review and update mechanisms for the digitization policy.	12	20	0	0	3.78	0.49	Accepted

Mean range: 1.0 – 1.99 very low level, 2.0 – 2.49 low level, 2.5 – 3.5 high level, 3.51 – above very high level.

The findings on digitization policies in Donald Ekong Library show that all seven items assessing digital preservation practices were accepted by respondents, with mean scores ranging from 3.31 to 3.78. The overall grand mean of 3.47, which falls within the high-level range (2.50–3.50), indicates that the library has instituted strong digitization policies to support information preservation.

The highest mean score was recorded for the library's mechanisms for reviewing and updating digitization policies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.78), placing this item in the very high-level category. This suggests that the institution prioritizes the continual evaluation and improvement of its digitization strategies to ensure that they remain relevant, aligned with emerging technologies, and responsive to preservation needs. This emphasis on regular policy updating corresponds with best practices identified in digital preservation literature, which emphasize iterative improvement for sustainability.

Selection criteria for materials to be digitized ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50) and adherence to technical standards for digitization, such as required resolution and file formats ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50), were also rated highly. These scores indicate that the library applies structured guidelines in identifying materials suitable for digitization and follows established technical norms to ensure high-quality digital surrogates. This reflects a deliberate and methodical approach to digital preservation.

Other items, such as quality control procedures for digitization ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38) and staff training for digitization workflows ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41), also recorded high mean scores. These findings suggest that the library values both procedural accuracy and human capacity development, recognizing that successful digitization depends on skilled personnel and standardized processes. The acceptance of disaster recovery plans for digital collections ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38) further demonstrates an awareness of the vulnerabilities associated with digital assets and the need for backup and recovery systems to mitigate data loss.

Long-term storage and access strategies for digitized content ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) were also accepted, though the mean score places this item at the lower end of the high-level range. This indicates that while the library acknowledges the importance of digital repositories and sustainable access systems, the implementation may still be developing, possibly due to infrastructural or technical limitations. These challenges are consistent with Echezona & Ugwuanyi (2010), who noted that although Nigerian academic libraries increasingly adopt digitization, inadequate infrastructure often limits the robustness and long-term stability of digital preservation initiatives. The findings show that Donald Ekong Library has established highly effective digitization policies, marked by clear selection guidelines, adherence to technical standards, consistent policy review, and strong staff engagement. However, infrastructural investments particularly those related to long-term storage and repository capacity may be necessary to further strengthen the sustainability of its digital preservation efforts.

Conclusion

Information preservation is an essential aspect for safety, access and consultation of particular material by our present and future users in libraries. Disaster preparedness is very important in libraries as it enables the library to save cost since information resources are very expensive when the library is buying it. The study investigated Disaster Preparedness and Information Preservation in Donald Ekong Library University of Port Harcourt. It revealed that the librarians in Donald Ekong library are aware of disaster preparedness and the various prevention policy in information preservation in Donald Ekong Library University of Port Harcourt, it also revealed that there is a digitization policy in information preservation in Donald Ekong Library University of Port Harcourt.

Recommendations

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

Policy Implementation and Review: The library administration should ensure that the existing policies with regard to disaster preparedness, and preserving information should be on a continuous policy review and implementation strategy to respond to emerging risks and technologies.

Continuous Staff Training: the library administration should provide important training and workshops should be provided for librarians and staff on disaster preparedness, risk management, and the current practices of preserving information. Staff capability is important to ensure that staff can respond to emergencies or disasters

Purchasing equipment and digitisation: The library administration should invest in purchasing more digitisation equipment and software so that digital collections can be developed. That would help preserve long-term information resources and enhance access to them.

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