



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION PRACTICES INFLUENCING SERVICE DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

University libraries offer access to diverse collections of books, journals, databases, multimedia and other resources, as well as render relevant service delivery to meet the varying needs of their users. It has however been observed that many services provided in most university libraries are below the requirement of users. This may be as a result of poor preservation and conservation practices in university libraries. This study thus examined preservation and conservation practices influencing service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all 207 library personnel in six (6) university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria, and the study adopted a total enumeration technique due to the manageable population size for the researchers. The finding showed that the prominent services delivered in the university libraries are cataloguing and classification services ($\bar{x} = 3.69$), circulation/readers services ($\bar{x} = 3.63$) and internet services ($\bar{x} = 3.69$; Std.). The level of preservation and conservation practices of the university libraries is high ($\bar{x} = 3.04$). The findings revealed a positive significant relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery ($r = .411$, $P < 0.05$). It was recommended that university libraries should encourage and train library personnel to maintain their willingness to ensure user satisfaction.

Keywords: Conservation, Conservation Practices, Preservation, Service Delivery

Introduction

A university library is a library attached to a university, established, funded and managed by the university to meet the information, research and curriculum needs of students, faculty as well as other staff members a university library performs functions related to the mission of its parent institution, which are in the areas of teaching, learning and research. According to American Library Association (2011), service delivery involves providing users with

access to information and telecommunications services, such as Internet connectivity, e-books and virtual reference. It also entails ensuring the efficiency, reliability and user satisfaction of library services, as well as addressing the challenges of user delinquency, staff attitude and resource availability (Ogunmodede et al., 2018; Oyewusi and Oyeboade, 2009). Service delivery in university libraries is essential for supporting the teaching and learning process in the university as well as advancing the academic excellence of the universities.

Preservation is the practice of protecting library materials to prolong their life and ensure continued access to the information they contain, this involves preventive strategies like environmental controls, proper storage, and user education, as well as reformatting techniques like digitization to reduce handling of delicate originals. Conservation is a set of practices aimed at preserving library materials from decay and damage, ensuring their accessibility for future generations. This involves a combination of preservation, which includes preventative measures like environmental control and proper handling, and conservation, which focuses on direct intervention and repair of individual items. Preservation is the overarching strategy to prevent damage and ensure the long-term survival of all materials, while conservation is a more specific, hands-on intervention to repair physically damaged items. Preservation involves preventative measures like environmental control, proper handling, and security, whereas conservation is the active treatment of individual, already damaged items to stabilize and restore them. Preservation and conservation practices are crucial for guaranteeing the durability and availability of library resources in university libraries. These practices involve various measures to prevent or minimize the deterioration of library resources caused by deterioration factors such as dust, pests, pollution, fire, flood, humidity, light and poor handling

Some of the common preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries include: library security, dusting, cleaning, proper shelving, binding, digitization, migration and technology preservation (Osunride and Adetunla, n.d.; Rachman and Ratnasari, 2022). These practices help to protect the intellectual and cultural heritage of the academic community and the society at large (IFLA, 2018). However, this study will consider the following preservation and conservation practices namely: housekeeping practices, monitoring, security management, proper handling, binding/repair and digitization. Housekeeping practices are essential in maintaining the condition of library materials. They encompass routine tasks like: dusting, cleaning and organizing materials on shelves to prevent the accumulation of dust, dirt, mold and pests that could harm the collection. Security management is another vital aspect of preservation and conservation in libraries. It encompasses safeguarding library materials from theft, vandalism and potential disasters like fire or flooding. Deploying security measures such as locks, alarms, security cameras and fire extinguishers is essential. Training staff and users on security protocols and developing emergency contingency plans are also part of preservation and conservation practice. Proper handling of library materials is fundamental to their preservation, it involves adhering to best practices to prevent physical stress or damage. This

includes using gloves, tongs or spatulas when handling fragile or sensitive items, providing proper support to book spines and covers when opening them, using bookmarks or paper clips instead of folding pages as well as avoiding placing heavy objects on top of materials (IFLA-PAC China Centre, 2006; Walker, 2013).

Binding and repair are another crucial action that can be taken to restore damaged or deteriorated library materials. This process aims to improve the appearance and functionality of items. Finally, digitization has become an increasingly important practice in modern libraries. It involves converting analogue library materials into digital formats to enhance accessibility and preservation of information resources that are once in print formats. This process includes scanning or photographing materials, creating metadata and indexes, securely storing digital files in servers or cloud platforms and providing online access to users (IFLA-PAC China Centre, 2006; Walker, 2013). Implementing effective preservation and conservation practices in academic libraries demands adequate resources, skilled personnel and well-defined policies. These practices collectively ensure that library collections remain accessible and in good condition for the benefit of current and future generations of scholars and researchers. However, to ensure that university libraries deliver needed information services, preservation and conservation practices in the university library must be put in place to ensure the continuous availability of university library resources to serve users' needs. Hence, the preoccupation of this study to examine personnel attitude, preservation and conservation practices and service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria. University libraries render relevant services to meet the varying needs of their users. This entails providing assistance to users in search of information, offering access to various types of resources, both physical and digital and maintaining a conducive environment for learning and research. However, Poor preservation and conservation practices in university libraries can also account for poor services delivered in university libraries, as information resources are the main instrument used to deliver services in university libraries. It will be difficult to provide information services if these resources are not well preserved and conserved through good house-keeping practices, as it will impede services delivered in the university libraries. It is on this premise that this study seeks to examine preservation and conservation practices influencing service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

University libraries are vital to academic excellence, serving as repositories of knowledge and centers for scholarly activities. They provide essential services including cataloguing, circulation, reference assistance, user education, and digital resource access to support teaching, learning, and research. The effectiveness of these services depends significantly on the quality and availability of library resources. However, the deterioration of library materials poses a significant threat to service delivery in university libraries. Library

resources are constantly exposed to various deterioration factors including dust, pests, pollution, humidity, improper handling, fire hazards, and flooding. Without adequate preservation and conservation measures, these materials deteriorate rapidly, reducing their lifespan and limiting their availability to users. In Edo State, Nigeria, preliminary observations suggest that many university libraries may be experiencing challenges in maintaining their collections. Worn-out books, damaged materials, inadequate environmental controls, and insufficient security measures appear to be common issues. These preservation challenges potentially compromise the libraries' ability to deliver quality services to their users, as deteriorated or inaccessible materials cannot effectively support academic activities.

Despite the critical importance of preservation and conservation practices to library service delivery, there appears to be limited empirical evidence on the relationship between these practices and the quality of services provided by university libraries in Edo State. Questions remain about the extent to which these libraries implement preservation and conservation measures such as housekeeping practices, security management, proper handling protocols, binding and repair services, and digitization initiatives, and how these practices influence their capacity to deliver effective services. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine preservation and conservation practices and their influence on service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria, with a view to providing empirical evidence that could inform policy and practice in library management.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate preservation and conservation practices influencing service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the services delivered in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria;
- ii. find out the level of service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria;
- iii. determine the preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria;

Research questions

The study will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the services delivered in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The conceptual foundation of this study rests on understanding the distinct yet complementary practices of preservation and conservation in library management. According to Eden and Feather (n.d.), preservation encompasses preventive measures designed to delay or prevent the deterioration of library materials, thereby extending their lifespan and ensuring continued accessibility. These measures include maintaining appropriate environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity control, implementing security protocols, and establishing handling guidelines to protect materials from physical damage or loss. Conservation, conversely, involves interventive actions taken to repair or restore materials that have already suffered deterioration or damage (Eden and Feather, n.d.). Conservation techniques range from basic book and paper repair to sophisticated restoration processes using specialized materials and equipment to return damaged items to their original or near-original state. While preservation is proactive and preventive, conservation is reactive and restorative. Together, these practices form a comprehensive strategy for safeguarding library collections. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2018) emphasizes that preservation and conservation practices are fundamental to protecting the intellectual and cultural heritage housed in academic libraries. These practices ensure that scholarly resources remain accessible not only to current users but also to future generations of researchers and learners. The long-term viability of library collections directly impacts the academic mission of universities, making preservation and conservation critical components of library management (Eden and Feather, n.d.).

Housekeeping practices constitute the foundational layer of preservation activities in university libraries. These routine maintenance activities, though often overlooked in scholarly discourse, play a crucial role in preventing material deterioration. Galm (2013) emphasizes that regular cleaning and dusting are not merely aesthetic concerns but critical interventions that remove harmful particles capable of damaging library materials over time. Dust and dirt accumulation can cause paper to deteriorate, promote mould growth, and attract pests that cause irreparable damage to collections. Hart (2011) extends this argument by highlighting the importance of systematic shelf maintenance, which involves proper arrangement of materials, regular inspection for damage, and prompt replacement of deteriorated items. Proper shelving practices not only facilitate material retrieval but also prevent physical stress on book spines and bindings that can result from overcrowding or improper support. Pest control represents another critical dimension of housekeeping practices. Lyons (2017) advocates for integrated pest management (IPM) approaches in libraries, arguing that prevention through

environmental control and regular monitoring is more effective than reactive treatments. Rodents, insects, and mould organisms can cause catastrophic damage to library collections, making proactive pest management essential. The Conservation Centre for Arts and Historical Artifacts (CCAHA, 2017) provides empirical guidelines for temperature and humidity control, recommending specific ranges that minimize paper degradation. Extreme temperature fluctuations and inappropriate humidity levels accelerate chemical reactions in paper, causing yellowing, brittleness, and structural failure. Harvey (2015) positions monitoring as an indispensable component of effective preservation programmes, arguing that systematic assessment enables librarians to identify potential risks before they result in irreversible damage. Harvey (2015) further contends that monitoring should not be viewed as an isolated activity but as an integral component of a comprehensive preservation strategy. Continuous monitoring enables libraries to detect emerging problems early, implement timely interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of preservation measures.

Hill (2017) argues that security management in university libraries extends beyond theft prevention to encompass comprehensive protection of valuable and irreplaceable resources. Effective security management involves multiple layers of protection, including restricted access to rare materials, user authentication protocols, surveillance technologies such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, and physical barriers to prevent unauthorized access. The human element of security management is equally important. Hill (2017) emphasizes that staff training and awareness programmes are essential for preventing security breaches and ensuring that employees understand their responsibilities in protecting library resources. Training should cover proper handling procedures, storage protocols, and security awareness to mitigate both accidental damage and deliberate theft or vandalism. Emergency preparedness planning, as outlined by the American Library Association (ALA, 2019), should address not only security threats but also natural disasters and other unexpected events that could damage or destroy library materials. Comprehensive emergency response plans enable libraries to respond effectively to crises, minimizing collection loss and facilitating rapid recovery. The Library of Congress (n.d.) recommends using book supports and protective enclosures when examining rare or fragile materials, providing proper support to book spines and covers, and storing materials in appropriate containers that offer adequate protection.

Idoko and Onwudinjo (2021) examined the preservation practices of library resources in academic libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. The research design was descriptive survey and the population consisted of 300 library personnel from all the academic libraries in the state. A sample of 250 library personnel was selected from the 11 academic libraries using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the preservation of serial materials involved binding of journals, newspapers and other periodicals, shelving them neatly, and keeping newsletters in special racks. The preservation of electronic resources involved storing them in tapes, DVDs,

fire-resistant cases, cleaning desktops regularly, keeping magnetic tapes/media away from magnetic fields, and consulting technical experts periodically. However, the libraries did not use remote storage for backup or conduct risk assessment of electronic resources. The study concluded that academic libraries in Delta state should improve their preservation of information

Omehia and Anele (2021) investigated the preservation and conservation of old administrative records in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study had three objectives: to identify the techniques used in preserving and conserving old administrative records; to determine the causes of deterioration of these records in Etche and to examine the challenges faced in preserving and conserving these records. The study used a descriptive survey research design and involved 28 employees and management staff of the Etche Local Government Area. The findings showed that rodents, fire, floods, dampness, and moisture were the major causes of deterioration of old administrative records. Additionally, the study identified lack of record offices, lack of policy strategy, staff attitude, and funding as major challenges. Based on the findings, the study recommended the employment of professional staff, training and retraining of staff, good funding, and a policy statement in the area of disaster preparedness to reduce the loss or damage of old administrative records. However, Alex-Nmecha and Okoro (2020) also identified significant barriers to effective preservation, including inadequate preservation policies, insufficient staff training, limited funding, and lack of institutional commitment to preservation programmes. These findings suggest that while the theoretical relationship between preservation and service delivery is well-established, practical implementation faces substantial challenges in Nigerian university libraries. Tondo, Jembe, and Yankyar (2022) examined preservation practices at Francis Idachaba Library, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi, using a descriptive survey design with 150 library staff respondents. Their findings revealed that the library employed multiple preservation methods, including binding, photocopying, lamination, reformatting, microfilming, cleaning and dusting, air conditioning installation, digital imaging, insecticide use, proper shelving, and adequate security measures. The study concluded that conservation and preservation have become driving forces in modern library service platforms and have proven essential for improving service delivery in academic libraries.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of a total of 207 library personnel in six University Libraries in Edo state, Nigeria, which is a combination of a Federal University, State University and Private Universities namely; University of Benin(89), Ambrose Alli University(49), Benson Idahosa University(28), Igbiniedion University(23), Glorious Vision University(10), Well Spring University(8). Total enumeration technique was adopted due to the manageable

population size of the researchers. The instrument of collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Results And Discussion

Research question 1: What are the services delivered in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 1 presents the result of the prevailing quality of services delivered by university libraries in Edo State Nigeria.

Table 1: Services delivered in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	SERVICE DELIVERY The university library delivers:	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Acquisition and collection development services	102 (57.3%)	71 (39.9)	5 (2.8%)	0	3.54	.553
2	Cataloguing and classification services	122 (68.5%)	56 (31.5%)	0	0	3.69	.466
3	Circulation/readers services	117 (65.7%)	56 (31.5%)	5 (2.8%)	0	3.63	.540
4	Reference services	107 (60.1%)	66 (37.1%)	5 (2.8%)	0	3.57	.550
5	Serials services	108 (60.7%)	65 (36.5%)	5 (2.8%)	0	3.58	.549
6	Reprographic services	97 (54.5%)	55 (30.9%)	16 (9.0%)	10 (5.6%)	3.34	.864
7	User education	128 (71.9%)	30 (16.9%)	20 (11.2%)	0	3.61	.683
8	Current Awareness Services	82 (46.1%)	71 (39.9%)	10 (5.6%)	15 (8.4%)	3.24	.896
9	Electronic document delivery service	80 (44.9%)	40 (22.5%)	43 (24.2%)	15 (8.4%)	3.04	1.016
10	CD/DVD based service	50 (28.1%)	50 (28.1%)	63 (35.4%)	15 (8.4%)	2.76	.959
11	Web/OPAC services	101 (56.7%)	57 (32.0%)	15 (8.4%)	5 (2.8%)	3.43	.765
12	Internet services	108 (60.7%)	55 (30.9%)	15 (8.4%)	0	3.63	.538
13	Digitalisation of local resources	51 (28.7%)	60 (33.7%)	42 (23.6%)	25 (14.9%)	2.77	1.018
14	Inter library loan	81 (45.5%)	36 (20.2%)	46 (25.8%)	15 (8.4%)	3.03	1.027
15	Indexing and abstracting services	67	55	41	15	2.98	.974

		(37.6%)	(30.9%)	(23.0%)	(8.4%)		
16	Referral services	123 (69.1%)	30 (16.9%)	25 (14.9%)	0	3.55	.729
17	Translation services	50 (28.1%)	36 (20.2%)	57 (32.9%)	35 (19.7%)	2.57	1.099
18	Bibliographic services	86 (48.3%)	56 (31.5%)	21 (11.8%)	15 (8.4%)	3.20	.951
19	Selective Dissemination of Information service	82 (46.1%)	70 (39.3%)	16 (9.0%)	10 (5.6%)	3.26	.844
20	Multimedia services	113 (63.5%)	40 (22.5%)	15 (8.4%)	10 (5.6%)	3.44	.870
Weighted mean: 3.29 Criterion mean: 2.50							

The services delivered in the university libraries are shown in Table 1. The result revealed a weighted mean score of 3.29, which is higher than the criterion mean score of 2.50, implying that the examined services under this construct are delivered in the universities libraries under study. The prominent services delivered include: cataloguing and classification services ($\bar{x} = 3.69$; Std. dev.= 0.466), circulation/readers services ($\bar{x} = 3.63$; Std. dev.= 0.540), internet services ($\bar{x} = 3.69$; Std. dev.= 0.538), among other.

Research question 2: What is the level of service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria?

Presents result of the level of service delivered in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 2a: Level of service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	SERVICE DELIVERY The university library delivers:	VHD	HD	MD	ND	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Acquisition and collection development services	61 (34.3%)	101 (56.7%)	16 (9.0%)	0	3.25	.609
2	Cataloguing and classification services	72 (40.4%)	86 (48.3%)	20 (11.2%)	0	3.29	.659
3	Circulation/readers services	77 (43.3%)	76 (42.7%)	25 (14.0%)	0	3.29	.700
4	Reference services	66 (37.1%)	85 (47.8%)	27 (15.2%)	0	3.22	.691
5	Serials services	50 (28.1%)	98 (55.1%)	30 (16.9%)	0	3.11	.663
6	Reprographic services	46 (25.8%)	85 (47.8%)	37 (20.8%)	10 (5.6%)	2.94	.831

7	User education	72 (40.4%)	86 (48.3%)	20 (11.2%)	0	3.29	.659
8	Current Awareness Services	82 (46.1%)	70 (39.3%)	26 (14.6%)	0	3.31	.715
9	Electronic document delivery service	36 (20.2%)	65 (36.5%)	67 (37.6%)	10 (5/6%)	2.71	.852
10	CD/DVD based service	15 (8.4%)	70 (39.3%)	58 (32.6%)	35 (19.7%)	2.37	.893
11	Web/OPAC services	36 (20.2%)	101 (56.7%)	31 (17.4%)	10 (5.6%)	2.92	.773
12	Internet services	72 (40.4%)	96 (53.9%)	5 (2.8%)	5 (2.8%)	3.32	.667
13	Digitalisation of local resources	41 (23.0%)	65 (36.5%)	52 (29.2%)	20 (11.2%)	2.71	.946
14	Inter library loan	61 (34.3%)	56 (31.5%)	46 (25.8%)	15 (8.4%)	2.92	.968
15	Indexing and abstracting services	36 (20.2%)	86 (48.3%)	46 (25.8%)	10 (5.6%)	2.83	.813
16	Referral services	86 (48.3%)	61 (34.3%)	25 (14.0%)	6 (3.4%)	3.28	.829
17	Translation services	35 (19.7%)	56 (31.5%)	61 (34.3%)	26 (14.6%)	2.56	.968
18	Bibliographic services	46 (25.8%)	86 (48.3%)	25 (14.0%)	21 (11.8%)	2.88	.928
19	Selective Dissemination of Information service	66 (37.1%)	65 (36.5%)	37 (20.8%)	10 (5.6%)	3.05	.897
20	Multimedia services	72 (40.4%)	65 (36.5%)	31 (17.4%)	10 (5.6%)	3.12	.891
Weighted mean: 3.02 Criterion mean: 2.50 Grand mean: 60.37							

Table 2a shows the level of service delivery by the university libraries. The result revealed a weighted mean score of 3.02, which is higher than the criterion mean score of 2.50. This implies a moderately high level of service delivery by the university libraries under study.

Table 2b: Test of norms for the level of services delivery

Interval	Level of service delivery	Mean
1-26	Low	
27-53	Moderate	
54-80	High	60.37

Table 2b shows the result of the test of norm conducted to determine the level of services delivery by the university libraries. The result showed that scale between 1- 26 is low, 27- 53 is moderate, while 54 - 80 is high. The grand mean scores for the level service delivery by the selected universities falls between the scale of “54- 80”. It can therefore be concluded that the level of service delivery by the university libraries is high.

Table 3: Preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION PRACTICES	VHP	HP	MP	NP	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Cleaning and dusting of library resources and book shelves	91 (51.1%)	50 (28.1%)	32 (18.0%)	5 (2.8%)	3.28	.855
2	Proper shelving of library materials to allow for free flow of air.	76 (42.7%)	65 (36.5%)	27 (15.2%)	10 (5.6%)	3.16	.884
3	Use of insecticide and insect repellent for library materials.	86 (48.3%)	61 (34.3%)	26 (14.6%)	5 (2.8%)	3.28	.816
4	Provision of adequate security system to prevent theft mutilation and defacing of paper-based materials	76 (42.7%)	65 (36.5%)	32 (18.0%)	5 (2.8%)	3.19	.829
5	Enforcement of proper handling of library materials to prevent wear and tear.	76 (42.7%)	65 (36.5%)	32 (18.0%)	5 (2.8%)	3.19	.829
6	Monitoring of library users to ensure proper usage of library materials.	61 (34.3%)	85 (47.8%)	32 (18.0%)	0	3.16	.706
7	Binding and repair of deteriorated library materials to enable reuse.	61 (34.3%)	70 (39.3%)	31 (17.4%)	16 (9.0%)	2.99	.939
8	Photocopying of library to ensure availability of multi copies of library materials	60 (33.7%)	72 (40.4%)	41 (23.0%)	5 (2.8%)	3.05	.825
9	Deacidification of paper-based materials	25 (14.0%)	65 (36.5%)	62 (34.8%)	26 (14.6%)	2.50	.910
10	Digitisation of paper-based materials	20 (11.2%)	82 (46.1%)	66 (37.1%)	10 (5.6%)	2.63	.757
Weighted mean: 3.04 Criterion mean: 2.50 Grand mean: 30.43							

Table 3a shows the level of preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria. The result revealed a weighted mean score of 3.04, which is higher than the criterion mean score of 2.50, indicating a moderately high level of preservation and conservation practices undertaken in the university libraries. The prominent preservation and conservation practices undertaken in the university libraries include: cleaning and dusting of library materials ($\bar{x} = 3.28$; Std. dev.= 0.855), use of insecticide ($\bar{x} = 3.28$; Std. dev.= 0.816), provision of adequate security system to prevent theft, mutilation and defacing of paper-based materials ($\bar{x} = 3.19$; Std. dev.= 0.829), enforcement of proper handling of library materials to prevent wear and tear ($\bar{x} = 3.19$; Std. dev.= 0.829), among others.

Table 3a reveals the preservation and conservation practices undertaken in university libraries in Edo State, with a weighted mean of 3.04 exceeding the criterion mean of 2.50. Table 3b's test of norms shows a grand mean of 30.43, falling within the "high" range (28-40), confirming that preservation and conservation practices are implemented at a high level. The prominent practices include cleaning and dusting ($\bar{x} = 3.28$), use of insecticide ($\bar{x} = 3.28$), provision of adequate security systems ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), and enforcement of proper handling ($\bar{x} = 3.19$). These findings corroborate the work of Tondo, Jembe, and Yankyar (2022), who identified similar practices—including cleaning, dusting, use of insecticide, proper shelving, and adequate security—as prevalent methods for preservation in Nigerian university libraries. The emphasis on housekeeping practices (cleaning and dusting, proper shelving) reflects the recommendations of Galm (2013) and Hart (2011), who stressed the importance of routine maintenance in preventing deterioration of library materials.

Table 3b: Test of norms for the level of preservation and conservation practices

Interval	Level of service delivery	Mean
1-13	Low	
14-27	Moderate	
28-40	High	30.43

Table 3b shows the result of the test of norm conducted to determine the level of preservation and conservation practices of the university libraries. The result showed that scale between 1- 13 is low, 14-27 is moderate, while 28 - 40 is high. The grand mean scores for the level of preservation and conservation practices of the university libraries under study falls between the scale of “28 – 40”. It can therefore be concluded that the level of preservation and conservation practices of the university libraries is high.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery in university libraries in Edo State, Nigeria.

The relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery was determined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4: Relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery

Variables	N	Mean	Std.Dev	r	P	Remark
Preservation and conservation practices	178	3.04	.549	.411	.000	Sig
Service delivery	178	3.02	.473			

Table 4; shows the relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery. The result revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between preservation and conservation practices and service delivery ($r = .411$, $P < 0.05$). Hence, the Null Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

This finding strongly supports the work of Alex-Nmecha and Okoro (2020), who found that proper preservation of library resources leads to hinge-free service delivery, and that better conservation practices increase library service delivery effectiveness in South-South Nigerian universities. The moderate positive correlation ($r = .411$) suggests that approximately 16.9% of the variance in service delivery can be explained by preservation and conservation practices, indicating that while these practices are important, other factors also contribute to service delivery effectiveness. The significant relationship validates the theoretical framework that well-preserved resources are essential for effective service delivery, as articulated by Harvey (2015), who noted that the condition of information materials is crucial for quality service delivery. Tondo, Jembe, and Yankyar (2022) similarly concluded that conservation and preservation have become driving forces in new service platforms and are proven tools for improving service delivery in academic libraries.

Discussion of findings

Presented is a summary of the research findings based on the research questions and hypotheses. Based on the data collected and analyzed for this study, the following are the major findings:

- i. The major services delivered by the university libraries include: cataloging and classification, reference service, readers services, user education, among others.
- ii. The level of service delivered in the libraries is relatively high.
- iii. The study found that the level of preservation and conservation practices of the university libraries is high. The prominent preservation and conservation practices undertaken in the university libraries include: cleaning and dusting of library materials; use of insecticide; provision of adequate security system to prevent theft,

mutilation and defacing of paper-based materials; enforcement of proper handling of library materials to prevent wear and tear; among others.

Conclusion

University libraries play a crucial role in providing a wide range of services to their users. Notably, the study highlighted the impressive range of services offered by the libraries, underlining their commitment to meeting the diverse needs of their users. Furthermore, it was evident that the level of service delivery is commendably high, reflecting the dedication of library personnel, the robust preservation and conservation practices adopted by the university libraries ensure the long-term availability and integrity of their resources. These findings underscore the crucial role preservation and conservation practices play in maintaining the high standard of services in university libraries.

Recommendations

The following are recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. University libraries should invest in more advanced preservation and conservation practices, such as digitization of rare and fragile materials to reduce physical wear and tear.
2. University libraries should develop integrated training programs that combine these aspects. Train library staff to maintain a proactive preservation approach while delivering services with a positive attitude.
3. University libraries should embrace technology to enhance service delivery, by exploring the integration of library management systems, online catalogs and digital resources to streamline services and improve access for users

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