

METHODS OF PRESERVING AND PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES BY LIBRARIANS IN KENNETH DIKE E-LIBRARY, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth Dike state central e-library, Awka. A survey research design was adopted for the study and the population consists of 51 respondents which consisted of 15 librarians and 36 non-librarians. Observation checklist and questionnaire were the instrument used to collect data. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages and mean scores were used in analyzing the data collected. From the data analysis, it was gathered that there are various cultural

heritage resources available in the Kenneth-Dike state central e-library, and there are few available methods of preserving cultural heritage resources in the library. The study showed that, inadequate funding, absence of preservation policies, ignorance of the importance of cultural heritage resources and low level of awareness of the existing cultural heritage resources are the major problems militating against effective preservation and documentation of cultural heritage resources. It was recommended that the library should create awareness of cultural heritage resources through organizing heritage walk and heritage awards events. There is a need for inclusion of diverse cultural heritage resources of other tribes in the library. The challenges militating against effective preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in public libraries should be given utmost attention by the government and other stakeholders of these public libraries.

Keywords: Preservation, Promotion, Cultural Heritage, Kenneth Dike E-Library

Background of the Study

The way of life and the heritage of a given society are critical to its existence because it is their distinctive way of life that distinguishes them from one another (Dümcke and Gnedovsky, 2013). Culture serves as the identity, pride and significance of their existence as a society. The past few years there is an increase in the interest and understanding of managing and preserving Cultural Heritage both on regional, national, as well as international level. The need has emerged even more intense since the increasing rampage of man-provoked and/or natural catastrophes such as wars, tsunamis, earthquakes, and fire disasters. Hence, it is apparent now more than ever, to designate authorities at all levels that cultural heritage is important and therefore, all needed

measures need to be taken in order to ensure its preservation for future generations (Karekar, and Mudhol, 2014).

This way of life is known as culture. A critical assessment reveals that culture as a way of life is acquired within the society and transmitted through generations, while Cultural Heritage is “the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that is inherited from past generations” (Ola and Adegboire, 2015). According to Nwofor (2019), culture consists of both material and non-material aspects. Material culture is all the concrete realities made and utilized by man in society. This includes the products of industry, technology, arts among others. Non-material culture deals with aesthetics of all nature, belief systems, and cultural expressions appropriate to roles, rules and norms.

Heritages refer to the riches of extinct and extant aspects of societies which are of historic, educational, recreational and economic importance, preserved and handed over from one generation to another. Heritages are categorized into two based on their sources namely ecological/natural heritages and cultural heritages. The focus of this study is on the cultural heritages (Onyima, 2016).

Cultural heritage can be defined as the legacy of physical artifacts (cultural property) and intangible attributes of a group or society inherited from the past. Cultural Heritage is a concept which offers a bridge between the past and the future with the application of particular approaches in the present (Ola and Adegboire, 2015).

Preservation and promotion are essential for cultural heritage resources, because without preservation and promotion, there will be nothing left to be called cultural heritage resources and

also, the generation yet to come will have nothing about the past (Onajite, 2019). Preserving the cultural heritage of various world nations had been a long-term commitment of library and information centres (Chinaka, 2015). The major task of these institutions has been collecting, documenting and dissemination of information on the cultural heritage of their communities. According to Dümcke and Gnedovsky (2013), in most communities, the public library is the only neutral public institution accessible on equal basis to everyone in a society regardless of their status, race, nationality, religion, gender, sex, language and educational qualification. According to Ezenagu and Iwuagwu (2016), the public library is a library that provides information resources, services and recreational outlets for the generality of the citizenry namely the young, the old, literate and illiterate.

The public library serves as one of the custodians of the cultural heritage of the host community by preserving the intangible cultural resources of the community and ethnicity by organizing and participating in some cultural activities. One of such activities is the commemoration of World African Heritage Day celebrated on 5th of May every year as mapped out by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Major stakeholders come together to foster the growth and continuity of the cultural uniqueness of Igbo land, especially the Igbo language, which faces a threat of extinction, giving rise to “Preservation of Asusu Igbo”, been championed by southeast libraries such as Kenneth-Dike e-Library at Awka in Anambra State. This also features some rich cultural display by participating staff, students and pupils. There are also print and e-copies of oral history research records emanating

from the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (Nwofor, 2019).

In addition, it serves the host community by creating a cultural space tagged cultural heritage corner for works on oral tradition of the host communities, because these cultural heritages are threatened by various factors such as natural hazards, vandalism, urbanization, and aging. Their eternality cannot be guaranteed and each moment there is the danger of their loss (Ezenagu, N, & Iwuagwu, C., 2016).

One of the primary methods of preserving our cultural heritage resources especially the tangible moveable ones is dusting and cleaning. Dusting and cleaning is one of the good housekeeping activities which UNESCO (2017) referred to as element of minimal level of preservation in library and archives. It is the act of removing dirt, stain or dust particles from something. Dust accumulates quickly in our climate, so it is necessary to remove it regularly. Chinaka (2015) advocated that a team of cleaners who are trained to perform their duty should be employed for this purpose.

Another method for preserving fragile documents of history in public libraries is lamination which is the process in which a document is embedded between sheets of synthetic plastic film or tissue (IFLA, 2017). Shelving, also, is one of the preservation techniques seen as organizing library collections, both book and non-book materials by call numbers and placing them in their correct locations.

Installation of air conditioner in library space is another technique employed in preservation of cultural heritage resources in the library. Twinoburyo (2019) recommended that

air-conditioner should be installed in the library to check dust and its effect on the information materials. Air-conditioning equipment that is able to effectively cool and dehumidify the air must be chosen and installed in the cultural heritage resources space in the library.

Fumigation, this involves removing insects and rodents that might be harmful to the cultural heritage resources especially the tangible ones in the library with toxic chemicals in a gaseous form. The library should be fumigated from time to time in order to prevent rodents and insect infestation of the cultural heritage resources in the library. Microfilming, UNESCO (2017) defined microfilming as the continuous reproduction of roll of film containing photographs of documents at greatly reduced size. Microfilming is one of the essential techniques employed in preservation of image based cultural heritage resources in the library. Ebijuwa (2015) recommended security as another preservation option. De-acidification neutralizes acids on books and non-book materials.

Promotion of cultural heritage is one of the operational ways of providing the esteem of the cultural heritage to the public. On the other hand, cultural heritages are of importance for their environments. As a result of the increasing the promotion of cultural heritage, so many tourists will want to visit these places (Ezenagu and Iwuagwu, 2016). Again, in the cases where there is lack of enough consciousness for intangible cultural heritages, these intangible cultural heritages are on the risk of being extinct. When there is not sufficient promotion for tangible cultural assets, these assets could not be protected and threatened with possibility of being damaged (Dümcke and Gnedovsky, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Cultural heritage resources in the library seem to be seriously endangered with the rate of negligence and lukewarm attitude of librarians toward preservation and promotion of cultural heritages. This study intends to ascertain the pivotal role of public libraries, especially Kenneth Dike State central e-library, Awka as one of the institutions burdened with the responsibility of preserving and promoting these cultural heritages of the communities it serves. Therefore, it is on this bedrock that this study will thrive to examine the methods of preserving and promoting cultural heritage resources by librarians at Kenneth Dike e-library in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives are:

1. To identify the cultural heritage resources available in Kenneth Dike state central e-Library;
2. To determine the methods of preserving cultural heritage resources in Kenneth Dike state central e-Library;
3. To ascertain the methods of promoting cultural heritage resources in Kenneth Dike state central e-Library;
4. To identify the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth Dike state central e-Library; and
5. To identify solutions to the challenges hindering the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth Dike state central e-Library.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this research study:

1. What are the cultural heritage resources available at Kenneth Dike state central e-Library?
2. What are the methods of preserving cultural heritage resources at Kenneth Dike state central e-Library?
3. What are the methods of promoting cultural heritage resources at Kenneth Dike state central e-Library?
4. What are the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources at Kenneth Dike state central e-Library?
5. What are the solutions to the challenges hindering the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources at Kenneth Dike state central e-Library?

Methodology

The research design employed for this study was the survey research design. The area of study is Kenneth Dike e-centre Library, Awka.

The population of this study is 51, which was consisted of the 15 librarians and 36 non-librarians who work at Kenneth-Dike e-Centre Library, Awka as at November, 2023 (source: Kenneth-Dike Library management record). No sampling technique was adopted for the study. This is because the sample size is small, which would take no stress in collecting data from.

The instrument employed for collection of data are observation checklist and questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using the four-point rating scale. The mean

average of the individual score for response on a four-point rating scale would be assigned values as follows: Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Strongly Disagreed (2), and Disagreed (1). Also, the 4 likert scales of Highly Used - HU, Frequently Used - FU, Less Used - LU, and Not Used - NU, was also employed. Copies of the instrument was administered to the respondents personally by the researcher. No research assistant was required since the research sample size is 51. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly, the mean scores. However, a criterion mean (mid-point mean score) of 2.50 was used as the decision rule. The average of the individual score for response on a 4-point rating scale was assigned values as follows:

$$\frac{SA + A + D + SD}{SA}$$

Where: SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; and SD = 1.

$$\text{Thus, } \frac{SA + A + D + SD}{SA} = \frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = 2.50$$

Based on this, any mean score from 2.5 and above was regarded as positive and, consequently, accepted, while any mean score from 0 to 2.4 was regarded as negative, hence, rejected.

Results

Observation Checklist

Cultural heritage resources available in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library?

Table 1: Responses on available cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

S/N	RESOURCES	Available	Not Available
1	Songs	√	

2	Crafts	√	
3	Morals	√	
4	Artifacts	√	
5	Folklore	√	
6	Monographs	√	
7	Paintings.		√
8	Photographic albums.	√	
9	Household traditional cooking utensils (plates, earthenware, pots, mortar, pestle).	√	
10	Clothing.	√	
11	Farm tools (cutlass, hoes).	√	
12	Sculpture.		√
13	Books on various cultural topics.	√	
14	Journals on various cultural topics.		√
15	Images from various cultural books.	√	
16	Audio tapes and printed oral history research done by students.	√	
17	Videotapes of heritage festivals/day celebration.	√	
18	Realia	√	
19	Stories on traditional myths and legends.	√	
20	Recordings on traditional dance	√	
21	Drums	√	
22	Animal skin/hides	√	
23	Baskets	√	
24	Ichaka	√	
25	Hand fan	√	
26	Local carrier baskets	√	
27	Wine jar	√	

From table 1, it is indicated that the available cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library are songs, crafts, morals, artifacts, folklores, monographs, photographic albums, household traditional cooking utensils, clothing, farm tool, books on various cultural topics, images from various cultural books, audio tapes and printed oral history research done by students, videotapes of heritage festival/day celebrations, realia,

stories on traditional myths and legends, recordings on traditional dance, drums, animal skin/hides, baskets, ichaka, hand fan, local carrier baskets, and wine jar, which represent 88.8% of all the resources on the observation checklist. This implies that there are various cultural heritage resources available in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library, Awka.

Methods of preserving cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

Table 2: Percentage responses on the use of available methods of preserving cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

S/N	METHODS OF PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES	FRQ. OF USED	% OF USED	FRQ. OF NOT USED	% OF NOT USED
28	Dusting and cleaning.	44	97.77%	1	2.22%
29	Use of vacuum cleaner.	13	28.88%	32	71.11%
30	Lamination.	3	6.66%	42	93.33%
31	Shelving.	18	40%	27	60%
32	Installation of air-conditioner in cultural heritage resources space in the library.	6	13.33%	39	86.66%
33	Fumigation.	41	91.11%	4	8.88%
34	Microfilming.	19	42.22%	26	57.77%
35	De-acidification.	2	4.44%	43	95.55%
36	Curation	22	48.88%	23	51.11%
37	Conversation practices.	18	40%	27	60%
38	Securing	44	97.77%	1	2.22%

From table 2, the most commonly used methods in preserving cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike-Centre Library as indicated by most respondents are cleaning and dusting, security, and fumigation, with cleaning and dusting recording a total of 97.77%

of the responses, fumigation recorded 91.11%, while securing recorded 97.77%. The rarely used methods for preserving cultural heritage resources in the library as indicated by some respondents are de-acidification (95.55%), lamination, (93.33%), installation of air conditioner (86.66%), use of vacuum cleaner (71.11%), shelving (60%), microfilming (57.77%), conservation practices (60%), and curation (51.11%).

Methods of promoting cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

Table 3: Percentage responses on the use of available methods of promoting cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

S/N	METHODS OF PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES	FRQ. OF USED	% OF USED	FRQ. OF NOT USED	% OF NOT USED
39	Through organizing Heritage Festivals/Day Celebration.	43	95.55%	2	4.44%
40	Through organizing Heritage Walk Awareness Campaign.	4	8.88%	41	91.11%
41	Through organizing Heritage Award events.	7	15.55%	38	84.44%
42	Through promotion of heritage in education by inclusion in school curriculum by the ministry of education.	40	88.88%	5	11.11%
43	Through organizing workshops, seminars and conferences in the library for cultural heritage sensitization.	44	97.77%	1	2.22%
44	Through mass media.	41	91.11%	4	8.88%

Table 3 shows that the most common methods of promoting cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library are through heritage festivals/day celebration (95.55%), through the promotion of heritage in education and inclusion in school curriculum by the Ministry of Education (88.88%), through Cultural Workshops, seminars and conferences (97.77%), and through mass media (91.11%), while the least ways of creating awareness of cultural heritage resources by librarians are through

heritage walk (91.11%) and through heritage award (84.44%).

Challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

Table 4: Mean responses on the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

S/N	Resources	Mean Score	Decision
45	Absence of preservation policy in the library.	3.54	Agreed
46	Ignorance and low level of awareness on cultural heritage resources.	3.76	Agreed
47	Lack of skilled and professional manpower in the library.	2.78	Agreed
48	Inadequate funding of the library.	3.92	Agreed
49	Lack of the technology for preserving heritage resources in the library.	3.22	Agreed
50	Lack of protection of intellectual property rights of owners of some intangible cultural heritage resources.	2.85	Agreed
51	Issues of taboo by communities who own some vital cultural heritage artifacts.	2.76	Agreed

The result presented in table 4 shows that the respondents agreed that the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library are absence of preservation policy in the library, ignorance and low level of awareness on cultural heritage resources, lack of skilled and professional manpower in the library, inadequate funding of the library, lack of the technology for preserving heritage resources in the library, lack of protection of intellectual property rights of owners of some intangible cultural heritage resources, and issues of taboo by communities who own some vital cultural heritage artefacts. However, resources 45, 46, 48 and 49 have the highest mean score ratings, which implies that they constitute the most of the challenges militating against effective preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State

Central e-Library, while resources 47, 50 and 51 with the least mean score ratings, are not the key challenges hindering the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library.

Solutions to the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library?

Table 5: Mean responses on the solutions to the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library

S/N	Solutions To The Challenges	Mean Score	Decision
57	Develop preservation policies and provide guidelines for preservation of cultural heritage resources.	3.82	Agreed
58	Librarians should create awareness of the cultural diversity and promote ways for cultural heritage resources information to reach communities.	3.44	Agreed
59	Workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized regularly to train and retrain librarians to develop on knowledge and management of cultural heritage resources.	3.10	Agreed
60	Ministry of Education should liaise with the National library of Nigeria, to ensure that libraries are adequately funded while librarians should devise innovative and creative sources for generating revenue internally to sustain the library.	3.64	Agreed
61	The library should help owners of cultural heritage resources to patent them to prevent the problem of intellectual property rights.	3.96	Agreed
62	Libraries should collaborate with traditional rulers, elders, women organizations and cultural organizations for approval on appropriate information gathering and prevent the problem of taboos.	3.00	Agreed

The data presented in table 5 above revealed that all the resources on research question 5 had an overall mean score of 3.49 and above which implies that the respondents agreed to all the resources in the table as the solutions that can be adopted to

ameliorate the challenges hindering the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library.

Discussion

The available cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library are songs, crafts, morals, artifacts, folklores, monographs, photographic albums, household traditional cooking utensils, clothing, farm tool, books on various cultural topics, images from various cultural books, audio tapes and printed oral history research done by students, videotapes of heritage festival/day celebrations, realia, stories on traditional myths and legends, recordings on traditional dance, drums, animal skin/hides, baskets, Ichaka, hand fan, local carrier baskets, and wine jar. However, other cultural heritage resources such as paintings, sculpture, and journals on various cultural topics, are not available at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library, Awka. This result is in line with the study of Ola and Adegboire (2015) which stated that songs, crafts, morals, artifacts, folklore, monographs, paintings, photographic albums, household traditional cooking utensils (plates earthen wares, pots, mortar, pestle), realia, traditional myths and legends, traditional dances, farm tools (hoe, cutlass), sculpture, clothing, books on various cultural topics, journals on various cultural topics, images from various cultural books, videotapes of heritage/day celebration are the usual cultural heritage resources found in public libraries.

There are few available methods of preserving cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library and they include cleaning and dusting, security, and

fumigation. However, there are other preservation methods which are rarely used in library. These methods include de-acidification, lamination, installation of air conditioner in cultural heritage resources space in the library, use of vacuum cleaner, shelving, microfilming, conservation practices, and curation.

The available methods of promoting cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library are through heritage festivals/day celebration, through the promotion of heritage in education and inclusion in school curriculum by the Ministry of Education, through cultural workshops, seminars and conferences, and through mass media. However, other methods such as heritage walk and heritage award events are not used in the library. This result agrees with the studies of Shimray and Ramaiah (2019), and Ezenagu and Iwuagwu (2016), which opined that to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage resources there is need for cultural education and awareness which could be achieved using the mass media, cultural seminars, workshops and conferences, and school curriculum.

Some of the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources at Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library include; absence of preservation policy in the library, ignorance and low level of awareness on cultural heritage resources, lack of skilled and professional manpower in the library and inadequate funding of the library among others. This result supports the studies conducted by Chinaka (2015), Onajite (2019), Ola and Adegboro (2015), and Twinoburyo (2019), who posited that inadequate funding, as well as lack of preservation policy in the library, and lack of intellectual property rights of owners

of some cultural heritage resources, are the key challenges bedeviling the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in public libraries.

The solutions to the challenges that hinder the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library include: the development of preservation policies and guidelines for preservation of cultural heritage resources and far-reaching awareness creation for cultural heritage resources information, organizing regular workshops, seminars and conferences for training and retraining of librarians to develop on knowledge and management of cultural heritage resources. These solutions highlighted are all in support of Anasi, Ibegwam & Oyediran-Tidings (2013), who opined that the problems militating against effective preservation of cultural heritages calls for developing appropriate strategies to confront them.

Conclusion

In line with the summary of the major findings of this research study, it can be concluded that with effective and efficient preservation and promotion methods, cultural heritage resources available in public libraries like Kenneth-Dike State Central e-Library, could be properly preserved and promoted. Also, a well designed funding and management plan can support public libraries in the campaign of preservation and promotion of cultural heritages resources. This will enhance their extent of availability and use in public libraries, and ensures they are transferred from one generation to another without losing value.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. The library should create awareness of cultural heritage resources through organizing heritage walk and heritage awards events.
2. The use of lamination, installation of air conditioners in cultural heritage resources space in the library, use of vacuum cleaner and de-acidification.
3. The challenges militating against effective preservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources in public libraries including inadequate funding, and lack of trained manpower to man the heritage resources, should be giving utmost attention by the government and other stakeholders of these public libraries.

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