



Competitive Scramble is an Evil Ingenuity: Proceedings from the International Conference on the Biography and Songs of Alhaji Abubakar Kassu Zurmi in Heroic Poetry

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DIGITAL ARCHIVING PRACTICES IN MEDIA LIBRARIES FOR EFFECTIVE PRESERVATION, ACCESS AND USE OF HEROIC SONGS OF KASSU ZURMI

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Abstract

Over the years, the value of Hausa songs as historical and cultural heritage materials is widely recognized and appreciated within small communities and larger society. However, digital preservation of audio recordings of Hausa songs have undergone series of transformations due to technological obsolescence and breakdowns, human errors in contents migrations, natural disaster challenges, and other economic, social and political issues. This paper therefore, aims at investigating digital archiving practices in media libraries, focusing on enhancing preservations, access and use of heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi. Ten (10) participants from selected media libraries in Sokoto and Zamfara States participated in in-depth interviews for the data collection. The interviews provide some insights into current digital archiving practices of audio recordings of songs and challenges faced by researchers and other stakeholders in accessing and using audio recordings, particularly the heroic songs by Kassu Zurmi. The findings of the study reveals that, media libraries face challenges in digital archiving for preservations of audio recordings of songs including the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi. The specific challenges are limited technological expertise coupled with rapid advances in the technology, and financial resources. Furthermore, the study reveals the significant contributions of digital archiving in the preservations and enhancement of researchers' access and use of Kassu Zurmi's heroic songs as valuable cultural heritage materials. Thus, the study conclude that long – term preservations and facilitated access to heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi are necessary in providing research supports services and educating present and future generations about Hausa cultural heritage materials. Hence, in order to avoid gradual extinction or diminishing their values, some useful recommendations were made towards long-term preservations of the audio collections in media libraries. The recommendations include capacity building for staff managing audio collections, collaborations for partnership and exchange arrangements among media libraries, institutional supports in terms of policies, funding, and archiving guidelines.

Keywords: Digital Archiving, Media Libraries, Audio Collections, Digital Preservations, Heroic Songs, Kassu Zurmi

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Introduction

Hausa oral songs are integral parts of African oral literatures. Songs are part of indigenous knowledge of African Societies which is generally transmitted from generation to generation in form of oral literatures (Sotunsa, 2017). Heroic songs therefore, are among the major genres of folklore. According to Bichi (2018) oral songs were developed over the years and transmitted from one generation to another. It is also important to note that the production of oral songs has been continuous, reflecting the contemporary happenings in the society. Thus, the songs are reflections of ancient and culture-bound practices that has existed for several years in different societies including the Hausa people. The practice of oral songs varies from one society to another in line with its social, historical and cultural heritage (Furfuri, 2024). This paper therefore, attempts to discuss digital preservation of audio collections in media libraries in Sokoto and Zamfara States, with particular emphasis on heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi. This paper aims at investigating digital archiving practices in media libraries, focusing on enhancing preservations, access and use of oral songs. The study is to provide insights into current digital archiving practices, challenges of access and use of audio collections with main focus on the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi. The study focuses on digital preservation within media libraries found in radio houses in Sokoto and Zamfara States. The study will examines how these organizations manage digital preservation practices, including the tools and strategies employed to enhanced access and use of the audio collections.

Today every society appreciates and encourages the creativity and performance of its oral songs. The society recognizes that oral songs are collective memory of cultural heritage which is being transmitted from one generation to another. The preservation of cultural heritage inform of audio collection is crucial for maintaining collective memory and promoting cultural identity of Hausa people. According to Yakasai (2014), Hausa is very rich in both cultural and linguistic values which continued to develop from traditional up to modern times. Yakasai noted that, the traditional patterns of preserving Hausa language and its cultural heritage are embedded in its material and immaterial culture in form of oral performance (songs), tangible or philosophical activities. Hence, the traditional methods of preserving Hausa culture include the Hausa oral songs.

The heroic songs, as very important segment of Hausa oral literature, plays a very significant role in showcasing the cultural practices, history, values and norms in typical Hausa communities. So the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi, a renowned singer, are valuable cultural asset that deserves preservation and promotion in all our educational, historical, and cultural institutions including the media libraries. Media libraries in this paper refers to the type of library found in a radio house and charged with responsibility of collecting and managing audio collections of songs for easy access and retrieval by programme producers, researchers, and other interest groups as permitted by the authority. Digital archiving practices in media libraries provide opportunities for effective preservation, access, and use of oral songs including that of Kassu Zurmi.

Statement of the Problem

In the digital age, archiving of print and digital information materials including audio recordings of Hausa songs have undergone series of transformations due to technological obsolescence, human errors in contents migrations, natural disasters, and other related issues. Therefore, enhancing digital archiving practices has become necessary in order to ensure long-term preservation, and facilitated access and use of Hausa songs by media practitioners, researchers, and other users. Specifically, digital archiving of Hausa songs can contribute significantly towards enhancement of access and use by providing research supports services and educating present and future generations about Hausa cultural heritage materials. In order to avoid gradual extinction or diminishing their values, this qualitative study will investigate digital archiving practices for preservation, access and use of Hausa songs, focusing on the heroic songs of KASSU ZURMI in selected media libraries in Sokoto and Zamfara States.

Research Questions

This study was guided by four research questions as follows:

1. What are the digital archiving practices used for effective preservation of Hausa songs in media libraries in Sokoto and Zamfara States?
2. How does archiving practices affect preservation, access and use of heroic songs of KASSU ZURMI in the selected media libraries?
3. What are the challenges of digital preservation, access and use of Hausa songs in the selected media libraries?
4. How can digital archiving practices be enhanced for effective preservation, access and use of Hausa songs in the selected media libraries?

Literature Review

In the context song, oral implied singing an unwritten poetry with or without music. Chamo (2013) describes oral song as poetry that is performed live within oral cultures. Thus, concept of 'oral song' is usually used interchangeably with 'oral poetry'. However, Chamo further noted that, Hausa oral songs are also performed by used of talking drums, or even such songs are accompanied by dances. In other words, oral songs are integral component of Hausa culture. Generally, oral songs are part everyday life activities in Hausa society. According to Jangebe (2014), there are many singers in Hausa society that performs oral songs. These songs include court songs, work songs, praise songs, royal songs, heroic songs, spirit songs, love songs, and so on.

The historical origin of Hausa oral songs, according to Gusau (2003) as cited in Jangebe (2014), was associated the time when man was engaged in hunting as a means of livelihood in Hausa communities. However, with civilizations and development of human societies, the practices of Hausa oral songs was done in accordance with activities and ways of life in different Hausa communities.

Heroic songs are the type that celebrate the deeds or actionable behaviours of legendary or historical heroes in the society or community. Heroic songs are usually characterized by actions and adventure in forms of fighting or facing challenges that test the heroes' mettle. According to Okpewho (1992), heroic songs are "a form of oral literature that

celebrates the exploits of legendary or historical heroes". This category of songs are usually associated with cultural values and history of particular people. Okome (2015) asserts that heroic oral songs encode the cultural values and histories of a people. This means heroic songs are very significant in the society. Specifically, the roles of Kassu Zurmi's songs in the society can be highlighted as follows:

- i. His songs portray heroes who demonstrate bravery during hunting or other difficult situations. Example, include songs titled *Danjijji Mazan Jiran Maza, Labbo na Magaji, Auta Baban Ila* (Magaji, p. 83. 2016). These songs emphasizes bravery and perseverance by narrating heroic stories in terms of fearlessness, courage and determination in the face of danger or challenges during hunting in the bush and the conflicts that usually follows afterwards.
- ii. Enlightenment. The songs of Kassu Zurmi are sources of enlightenment and awakening for self-determination and deeper understanding of spiritual and other cultural values in the Hausa society. Examples include the songs titled *Shayi dan Gidan Labbo, and Nomau na Magarya*. These songs narrates the culture of invulnerability in Hausa society. The two characters; Shayi and Nomau were portrayed as people with super natural powers whose magic protects them against harm or danger. Thus, the songs educate people about the culture of traditional medicines and other spiritual powers.
- iii. Preservation of lexical words. According to Foley (2002), oral songs play important role in preserving cultural knowledge, lexical words and archaic language. This is generally important for studies in historical linguistics and language development in a particular period of time.
- iv. Preservation of Hausa material culture. Preservation of material culture can be highlighted from the perspective of oral songs and media library services. Ekwelem, Okafor and Ukwoma (2019) asserts that library and information professionals in the South East Nigeria plays strategic roles in the preservation of cultural heritage materials. The oral songs are equally important medium through which Hausa material culture is preserved. Examples of material culture items in Kassu Zurmi's songs include *Walki, Barandami*, and so on. Through Kassu's songs, Hausa material culture is preserved, and this will helps towards maintaining the identity and cultural heritage of the Hausa society (Glassie, 1999).
- v. Entertainment. Kassu Zurmi's songs are source of entertainment because of its cultural significance, artistic expressions and community engagement during live performance and otherwise.

In fact, heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi are contextually full of reflections of Hausa norms and values. Therefore, it is not in doubt that, heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi are part of the Hausa cultural heritage materials. Hausa cultural heritage serve as lesson plan that lead us towards comprehending the relevance of our societal norms and values (Bunza, 2024, p.1).

Adoption of digital technologies for archiving in media libraries presented opportunities and challenges long-term preservation and easy access to audio collections. Yakasai (20) argued that the growing dominance of writings and digital technologies are not as reliable as the traditional pattern of preserving Hausa language and its culture. This implied that efforts should be made to sustain the Hausa oral songs in its traditional forms. As such the importance of digital preservation in media libraries can help to ensure long-term

usability and access to original Hausa cultural heritage materials as valuable digital data and assets. Library website and institutional repository (IR) are part of the modern preservation practices in Nigerian University libraries (Ogunbodede & Onah, 2024). This library faced challenges of adopting advanced preservation techniques due to financial constraints and lack of administrative support. This challenge is not different from that of the media libraries. There is lack of dedicated source of funding that has been a common problem affecting digital preservations in memory institutions across the globe (Ahmad, Rafi & Arif, 2025). Through a systematic literature review on digital preservation studies, these researchers further reveals that memory institutions including media libraries rely largely on their recurrent budgets to meet the funding needs of digital preservation practices.

According to Johnson and Oguntoye (2024), institutional support has significant influence towards preservation and conservation of information resources in electronic formats. These researchers asserts that without the needed support from its parent institution, the library cannot harness the full potential of digital preservation and conservation. Similarly, a study by Shehata and Mkadmi (2024), also identified technological challenges as major factors that could support or hinder the long-term sustainability of digital preservation capabilities in organizations. This implied that digital archiving should give priority to long-term sustainability, access and use of the audio by its actual and potential users. The best digital archiving practices involved planning, metadata standards, robust storage systems, and ethical consideration for copyrights and ownership issues (Caplan, 2019).

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate digital archiving practices in media libraries for preserving audio collections, with focus on the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi. The population of this study consist of professionals managing audio collections in media libraries of eight (8) radio Houses in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Ten (10) respondents (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10) were purposively selected based on their professional works in managing the audio collections in their media libraries. Data was collected using structured interview guidelines. Two research assistants who have relevant experience help in the data collection. Thematic analysis was the primary method of grouping and searching for patterns used with the transcripts of the interviews. Qualitative analysis method is used in the social sciences to identify and present recurring patterns or themes in data (Shehata & Mkadmi, 2024)). It involves careful reading and interpretation of the material to extract meaning and understand different subjects and interpretations.

Limitations of the Study

Interviews were conducted with professionals working in specific radio house, therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other organizations. However, this study provides useful insights into the current digital preservation, accessibility, and use practices in media libraries and offers a starting point for further research.

Analysis

Techniques for Preservation of Audio Collections (Hausa Songs) in media libraries

Regarding identifying the techniques for preservation of audio collections in the media libraries, most respondents were well aware of the need for digital preservation and the

necessity to deploy modern techniques for easy management, retrieval, and use when the needs arise. This is because most of the respondents have experience in collecting and managing archives of audio recordings, and they consider digital preservation as part of their responsibilities.

All the respondents confirmed that, the techniques that were used in the past for preservation of Hausa songs in their organization were audio cassette tape, while very few mentioned magnetic tapes and cartridge tapes. However, regarding the modern techniques for digital preservations, the responses from P1, P3, P6, P8, P9 and P10 indicated Flash drive as the tool used in their organizations while 90% of the respondents indicated using both internal hard disk of their computers as well as external storage devices inform of hard disk.

Access and Use of Audio Collections (Hausa Songs) in media libraries

The respondents were also asked how the preservation methods currently use in their organizations affect accessibility and use of heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi and collections of other Hausa songs. Their responses reveals that generally, the current preservation methods affects the availability, access and use of Kassu Zurmi's oral songs as well as other collections. For instance, P1 mentioned that, "we have 50% of Kassu Zurmi's songs in our library". P2 and indicates that, "we have some but not all of them can be used", and P8 made similar response also. However, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9 and P10 reported they have some of Kassu Zurmi's collections. Specifically P5 responded that, "we have a lot because we converted most of his songs from cassette and magnetic tape into modern storage they are available but not 100 percent".

Furthermore, the respondents reveals that the current approach to preservation has made the audio collections easy to access. However, P1 reveals that "The songs are accessible but easily attack by virus especially those on CD and Flash Drive". Additionally, P10 made similar statement, while P7 mentioned that, "there are delays and frustrations sometimes" in accessing the collections. The opinion of P7 could be due to lack of needed training or technology related issues.

In terms of usage of the audio collections on heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi, the respondents reveals that different user groups are visiting their organizations to access and use the resources. The users of the songs include researchers, historians, lecturers from universities, students of higher educational institutions, and the general public. For instance, P1 indicate that, "University students, lecturers as well as other people who need to be listening to a particular Hausa song [visit their organization to access it]". P9 also mentioned that, "There are different users for different purposes, may be entertainment, to play jingles in preparing adverts or public announcements, teaching and research, history, and other educational needs. Groups of users include the university students, lecturers and other people who need to listen to certain songs personally".

Challenges to Preservation of Audio Collections (Hausa Songs) in media libraries

One of the major challenges reveals by the respondents was the absence of standard for digital preservation of audio collections in these media libraries under the study. However, P7 mentioned that "There is in-house meeting occasionally to handle such issues of policies or standard ways of managing audio collections. This is done only when the need arise". Virus attacks was another serious challenge mentioned by 100% of the

respondents. In addition, P1, P8 and P9 mentioned lack of enough modern storage devices. Furthermore, P3 and P10 responded that there is “lack of serious commitment to preserve the Hausa songs”. “Error of deleting (files) by staff on duty, limited human and material resources including finance” were other challenges reveals by P7.

In addition, P9 narrated his experience as follows:

There is gradual loss of quality due to migrating contents from one device to another. Funding is a major issue in almost all the media Houses. Training and retraining has been a serious challenge also. Hence, there is inadequate number of expert staff. Facilities are mostly scanty or outdated, and everybody wants to be a radio journalist with or without proper qualifications or on the job training. Widespread of Social media platforms is also a serious job threat. The public and those expected to finance our programme gives more recognition to social media content creators while we in the conventional media houses have to be proactive otherwise they will not patronize us as in the past. Internet and robust website to be used is also a challenge. We can no longer meet the demands and expectations of our listeners and general public if we remain largely traditional.

Strategies for effective Preservation of Audio Collections (Hausa Songs) in media libraries

Adoption of modern technologies was reported by the respondents as the major strategies to ensure effective digital preservation of audio collections of Hausa songs in the media libraries. The specific strategies mentioned include use of zipping folder, online storage tools like Google drive and drop box, cloud storage and other internet based tools. For instance, P1 mentioned some strategies as follows: “provision of enough storage facilities, zipping folder, using Google drive, creating cloud storage and drop box with Gmail account of a radio station. Migrating to a website transmission and use of Social Media to complement the conventional way of Radio transmission that we inherit from the past”. However, P9 narrated his opinion as follows:

There is need to Provide enough modern storage facilities, to give training on how to be zipping folders, how to use Google Drives, how to create cloud storage and use of Drop box, by making effective use of gmail account of a radio station. So the station should have its domain name and official email account for the workers concerned, Just like foreign media stations and other ones in other parts of Nigeria. We have to migrate and be using website transmission system. The use of Social Media to support the conventional or traditional way of Radio transmission cannot be avoided for us to succeed in the digital Preservation system. With rapid advancement in the technology, one day everything will become obsolete and the cultural heritage materials will gradually vanished along with those managing the system now. We also need special budget to go round the country and even abroad to collect what we lost through natural disasters and human errors. There should also be exchange of staff and audio collections to support each other among stations as a usual practice in the past. In fact, audio collections Librarian is necessary in each station.

Discussion

As it emerges from the results of this digital preservation is indispensable in our radio organization. This is particularly important for the sustainability of Hausa cultural heritage materials. Okome (2015) noted that heroic oral songs encode the cultural values

and histories of a people. As such the society cannot ignore this valuable asset that could lead to destroying the culture and history as well. The oral songs are important medium through which Hausa material culture is preserved. Therefore, library and information professionals should working media libraries should play key roles in ensuring effective preservation of cultural heritage materials (Ekwelem, Okafor & Ukwoma, 2019). The study reveals that traditional ways of preserving audio collections are no longer in used. However, the media libraries are still lagging behind in terms of deploying modern technologies to ensure effective digital preservation techniques and facilitate access and use of Hausa oral songs. Thus, their opinion corroborate the finding of Shehata and Mkadmi (2024), who identified technological challenges as factors that could support or hinder the long-term sustainability of digital preservation capabilities of audio collections in organizations.

The current digital archiving practices have showed that Kassu Zurmis' heroic songs like other audio collections are available to some extent in the media libraries involved in the study. However, the findings further showed that different users groups patronizes the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi as well as other collection. This implied that, further efforts need to be made in order to provide access to comprehensive collections of these historical and legacy materials from one generation to another. As pointed out by Caplan (2019), the best digital archiving practices should involve planning, metadata standards, robust storage systems, and ethical consideration for copyrights and ownership issues.

Additionally, this study reveals the major challenges that affect effective digital preservation, access and use of audio collection in the media libraries under the study. These challenges are largely technology related which include lack of adoption of efficient storage facilities, and non-effective utilization of internet based tools. There is virus attacks, limited human and financial resources, inadequate training and retraining opportunities, absence of standard for digital preservations, and so on. These findings are in line with the finding of Ahmad, Rafi and Arif (2025) who asserts that lack of dedicated source of funding has been a common problem affecting digital preservations in memory institutions across the globe. Additionally, these researchers asserts that, memory organizations including media libraries rely largely on their recurrent budgets to meet the funding needs of digital preservation practices. Similarly, Johnson and Oguntoye (2024), reported in their study that, institutional support has significant influence towards preservation and conservation of information resources in electronic formats.

Conclusion

The potential benefits of digital preservation of audio collections including the heroic songs of Kassu Zurmi cannot be overemphasized. As such the strategic importance of digital preservation in our media libraries is not a topic of debate. The situations of digital archiving practices of audio collections have been identified through interviews conducted in eight media libraries in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Based on the findings of this study, it was established that there is a gap in terms of modern technology facilities, expert personnel, and funding of media libraries to enable them provide effective preservation of Hausa cultural heritage materials. Therefore, issues of technological obsolescence, training and retraining, funding, and other related challenges call for careful consideration of the management of the media libraries. Generally, there is the need for broadcast media organizations in Sokoto and Zamfara States to develop and implement strategies for digital preservation to realize the potential benefits and overcome the challenges posed by digital preservation.

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