

# **Describing the Preservation Practices of Subanen Collection Resources: Basis for Online Union Catalog**

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## **Abstract**

The study describes the preservation practices of Subanen collection resources basis for the online union catalog. This study utilized qualitative research methods, particularly a case study design using Merriam's Approach. Four Librarians participated in an interview, and their responses serve as initial data that draws for thematic analysis. The study result showed four categories: acquired Subanen resources, strategies in collecting Subanen resources, preservation practices, and difficulties in collection and digitization. The Librarians' practice in preserving the Subanen resources involves repairing Subanen collection and limiting Borrowed Subanen materials. They encountered difficulties preserving the Subanen resources, including the rarity of Subanen material and lacking digitization practices of Subanen material. To address these challenges, the Subanen Collection Catalog (SCC) was developed, allowing librarians to manage bibliographic records and providing library users with easy online access. The SCC serves as a central platform for preservation and accessibility, ensuring the sustainability of Subanen indigenous knowledge.

**Keywords:** Bibliographic record, digitization, online union catalog, preservation practices, Subanen resources

## **1. Introduction**

A library is a living institution of information that consists of services, sections, organizational structures, and preservation and conservation of resources. It is a facility that stores various collections, both printed materials, non-printed materials, digital materials, and electronic formats, accessible on the internet. It is a logical cultural heritage that collects, stores, and preserves information and ideas (Sharma, 2022). Librarians have the initiative to acquire library materials for selecting, collecting, and preserving resources based on the patron's needs.

Academic and research libraries become more involved in supporting research and responding to open science, open access, and open data initiatives, librarians must understand all research concerns (Chiware & Becker, 2018). Thus, services offered in the library have many sections, such as circulation of services, reference services, online reservation of books, recommendation of library materials, current awareness services, inter-library loan services, photocopying or printing services, orientation and information sessions, selective dissemination of information, audio visual services, and multimedia section.

Preserving collection resources provides access to information to the needs of the library users to be selected, obtained, stored, organized, and available for learning and teaching, research, and consultancy purposes. Preservation awareness is needed to reduce the deteriorating library materials accessible for future use (Ishola, 2017). Thus, preservation practices are crucial for effectively using library collection in the academic library (Dare & Ikegune, 2018).

However, the deterioration of information resources is a major challenge (Mubofu et al., 2020; Ogar, 2020). Losing valuable information endangers academic libraries if the problem is not addressed (Masenya & Ngulube, 2019). With the advent of digital technologies, many users prefer online searching, which urges academic libraries to adapt from analog to digital preservation.

Digitization is considered a key strategy for sustaining indigenous knowledge and cultural resources. In this context, Subanen information resources require preservation through an online union catalog. This study therefore focuses on developing an Online Union Catalog in selected academic libraries in Zamboanga del Sur to ingest and store Subanen information resources and bibliographic records. The purpose is to ensure accessibility, preservation, and sustainability of Subanen indigenous knowledge.

## **2. Literature Review**

The library collection is a bridge for librarians to assist users in selecting resources relevant to research. Collections may be general, subject-specific, or unique, including archives, manuscripts, rare books, and theses. As collections grow, librarians face difficulties in organizing and managing them, especially in sustaining their preservation (Hoffman, 2019). Libraries may set objectives for preservation policy, implementing procedures, and staff training (McGowan & Harede, 2018).

Some preservation barriers are due to lack of funds (Mitra & Benerjee, 2019). Preservation requires collaboration with technical experts to ensure accessibility. Digital preservation is a global necessity for durability, usability, and integrity of resources (Hazarika, 2020). In South Africa, libraries encounter resource shortages, minimal training, weak preservation programs, and lack of collaboration (Masenya & Ngulube, 2019). Obsolescence of technology further endangers access (Roy, 2020). Sustainability requires budgets, ICT infrastructure, trained staff, and government support (Goddard, 2020; Umana, 2019).

Academic libraries extend preservation services through institutional repositories (Saini, 2018). Repositories enhance global visibility, scholarly content marketing, and institutional development (Hani & Ostlundh, 2021). Effective leadership, ICT infrastructure, and collaboration are enabling factors (Ndlovu & Matingwina, 2018; Rachman, 2019). Staff training and designation of competent personnel are essential (Masenya & Ngulube, 2021).

Philippine libraries also experience deterioration and technology obsolescence. Many depend on external experts and partnerships for digitization (David & Alayon, 2016). Issues include reliance on commercial services, high costs, sustainability, and staff shortages.

Indigenous resources are vital in promoting nature, identity, and cultural heritage (Lazarus et al., 2020). Digitization safeguards indigenous resources for continuous access. The DepEd Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) framework integrates indigenous knowledge into curriculum and preservation (DO 62, S. 2011; DO 43, S. 2013). Subanen communities in the Zamboanga Peninsula preserve knowledge traditionally, requiring documentation, digitization, and institutional repositories for sustainability (Abayo, 2005; Botangen et al; 2018).

Literature shows that digital preservation is crucial in academic libraries, but challenges persist in funding, staffing, ICT infrastructure, and policy. While global and national studies exist, limited attention has been given to indigenous knowledge preservation, particularly Subanen resources in Mindanao.

This study addresses this gap by utilizing Librarika for an Online Union Catalog, a cloud-based library system, to preserve and provide access to Subanen information resources for students, researchers, and communities.

### **3. Methodology**

This study presents the method used to gather and collected data from research participants, anchored in the 5S Theory (Goncalves et al., 2004) and qualitative research principles of Merriam (1998).

#### **3.1. Research Design**

A qualitative case study approach was employed to describe the preservation practices of Subanen collection resources as the basis for an online union catalog. A case study systematically investigates a single phenomenon, allowing an in-depth understanding through interviews and document analysis (Merriam, 1998). Since this study focuses on Subanen resources, bibliographic entities were ingested, stored, and managed in a cataloging system to provide access to library patrons.

#### **3.2. Research Environment and Participants**

The study was conducted in selected academic libraries in Zamboanga del Sur, specifically J.H. Cerilles State College and Saint Columban College in Pagadian City, the only academic school in the province offering Library Science courses. Both institutions have Subanen collections in their library holdings. Four licensed librarians, selected through purposive sampling, served as participants. Inclusion criteria were: (1) being a licensed librarian, (2) having Subanen collections in their library, and (3) possessing at least a background library in library automation.

#### **3.3. Research Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by an interview guide to gather data. Interviews with librarians, supplemented by inputs from library staff and instructors for triangulation, explore the acquisition, collection strategies, preservation practices, and challenges in digitizing Subanen resources. Bibliographic records (cover pages, abstracts, accession numbers, and call numbers) were also captured and later stored in Librarika, an open-source integrated library system that provides OPAC functions and bibliographic integration on cloud servers. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with consented audio recording for accuracy

#### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed through Merriam's (1998) case study framework, using content analysis to categorize information and establish patterns and themes. Thematic analysis further identified commonalities and connections in participant's responses, enabling the development of meaningful themes to answer the research questions.

#### **3.5. Ethical Consideration**

Ethical standards were observed following NCIP Administrative Order No.1, Series of 2012, on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs). Principles of informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly followed (Flemming & Zegwaard, 2018). Participants informed of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw, and the measures to protect their identity and data.

#### **4. Result and Discussion**

This study examined the preservation practices of Subanen collection resources as a basis for developing an online union catalog. Four categories emerged: (1) acquired Subanen resources, (2) strategies in collecting Subanen resources, (3) preservation practices, (4) difficulties in collection and digitization, and (5) online union catalog for Subanen resources.

##### **4.1. Acquired Subanen Resources**

Two themes were identified: Printed Subanen Materials and Organization of Collections. Most resources were books and theses, though their numbers were limited.

*“So, as to the Subanen collection resources that we have in our library, we do have a book, and we do also have a thesis.” -P1*

The researcher’s observation confirmed this scarcity, with only a few items scattered across Dissertation, Filipiniana, Periodical, Reference, and Thesis sections. The collections were listed in Librarika for online access (Stephen, 2017).

In terms of organization, librarians used Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) for books, while theses were listed separately, often with Excel records.

*“Usually, we catalog the thesis... for books, we catalog using the DDC. But the thesis, we make use of Excel.” -P1*

This reliance of manual systems shows a gap in digitization, echoing Hoffman (2019), who stressed that effective organization enhances discoverability.

##### **4.2. Strategies in Collecting Subanen Resources**

Four strategies were employed:

1. Requiring Thesis copies – students were mandated to deposit theses in the library.
2. Orienting Subanen people – librarians encouraged students and community members to share resources.

*“I ask them if they have materials... para maka share pud ta sa ubannga mga researcher.” -P2*

3. Accepting Donations – contributions from Subanen individuals were acknowledge formally.
4. Purchasing Subanen Materials – libraries occasionally bought resources through publishers or online, though limited by budget.

These strategies align with Chiware & Becker (2018), who observed that indigenous collection growth depends on institutional policy, community participation, and funding.

##### **4.3. Preservation Practices**

Two approaches were evident:

- Repairing Damaged Materials – using cleaning and minor repairs to prolong material life.
- Limiting Borrowing – theses and rare materials were restricted to in-library use only.

Such practices reflect Ishola (2017) and Dare & Ikugene (2018), who emphasized physical care and controlled access as key to preserving fragile collections.

## 4.4. Difficulties in Collecting and Digitizing

Two major challenges emerged:

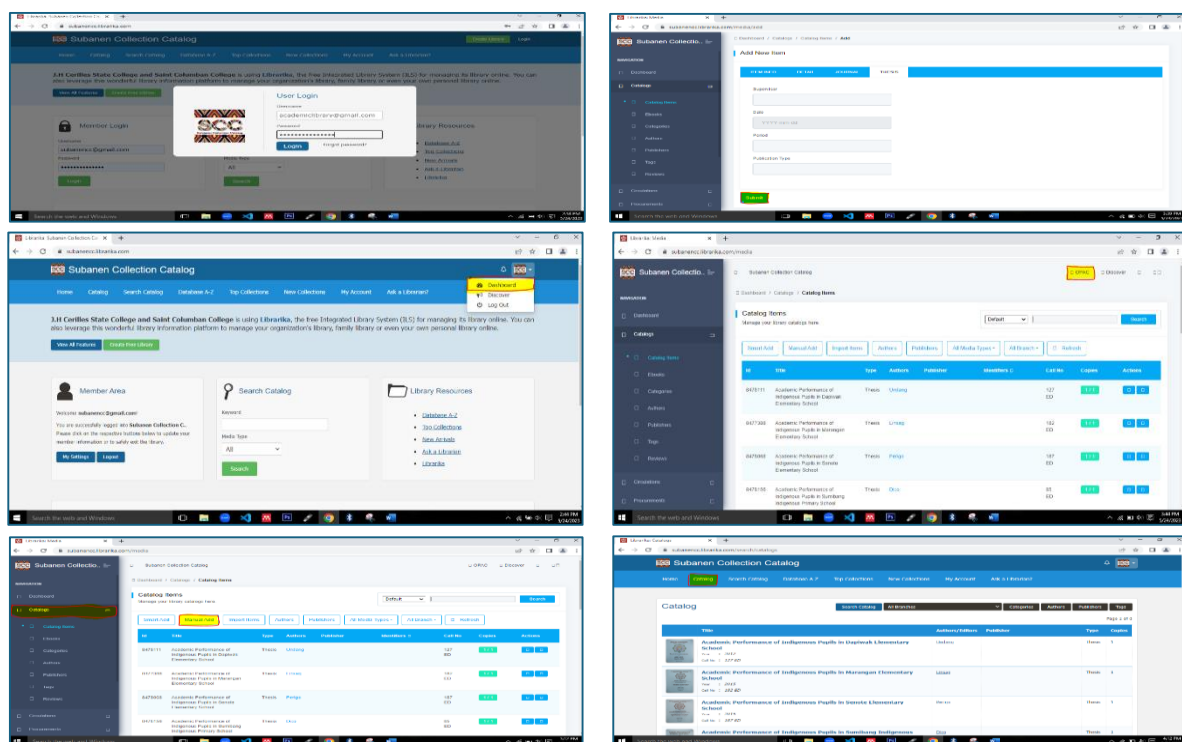
1. Rarity of Subanen Resources – few published works exist, making collection difficult.
2. Lack of Digitization – absence of equipment, expertise, and institutional support limited digitization efforts, echoing Sharma (2022).

Overall, Subanen resources are scarce, manually organized, and poorly digitized. While librarians sustain collections through student submissions, orientations, donations, and purchases, challenges of rarity, funding, and limited digitization persist.

The findings underscore the urgent need for an online union catalog and digitization initiatives to safeguard Subanen knowledge and make it accessible to academic communities and future generations.

## 4.5. Online Union Catalog for Subanen Resources

The Subanen Collection Catalog (SCC) was developed to preserve bibliographic records of Subanen collections and is accessible at <http://subanencclib.librarika.com>. Integrated into a library system, it allows librarians to manage and update records while library users can easily search and access resources. The SCC serves as a centralized platform to support the preservation, access, and promotion of Subanen materials across selected academic libraries.



**Figure 1** Testing output of Subanen Collection Catalog

Figure 1. Testing Output of the Subanen Collection Catalog: Librarians log in as administrator to manage and add Subanen resources through the dashboard. Items are entered with bibliographic details, submitted, and made accessible in the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). Library users can search records by catalog, authors, publishers, categories, branches, and tags. Guidance and tutorials are provided to ensure proper use and preservation of Subanen Collections.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study concludes the importance of preserving Subanen resources in academic libraries. Librarians acquire and manage printed types of Subanen collections, including books, journals, and theses, integrating their bibliographic data into an accessible library system. Strategies such as acquiring additional copies, orienting Subanen students on the value of their cultural materials, encouraging donations, and purchasing relevant publications support preservation. Despite these efforts, challenges remain due to the rarity of materials, limited production, and insufficient funding. To address this, the Subanen Collection Catalog was developed to consolidate and preserve bibliographic records. Institutions are encouraged to provide adequate budgets and human resources for collection and digitization. Librarians may utilize the catalog to manage resources, while users can access bibliographic records and locations. Future research may extend preservation practices, promote catalog use, and replicate similar studies in other academic and public institutions to expand Subanen collections and sustain cultural heritage.

## **Declarations**

### **Source of Funding**

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

### **Competing Interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing financial, professional, or personal interests related to this study.

### **Consent for Publication**

The authors confirm their consent for the publication of this research work.

### **Acknowledgment of AI Assistance**

The authors acknowledge the use of AI-based tools, specifically Grammarly for paraphrasing and for grammar and style refinement. All ideas, analyses, and conclusions presented in this work remain the sole responsibility of the authors, and no conflicts of interest arise from the use of these tools.



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