

INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY AWARENESS AMONG INFORMATION SCIENTIST IN SA'ADU ZUNGUR UNIVERSITY GADAU, BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated institutional repository awareness among information scientist in Sa'adu Zungur university Gadau, Bauchi State, Nigeria . The study was guided by three (3) objectives and three (3) research questions. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional survey research design to elicit information from the respondents. The study population comprised 450 library and information science students in sa'adu zungur university Bauchi State, Nigeria. Romdon sampling was used to sample 150 respondents. Structured questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for the study. Out of 150 copies of questionnaire administered 121 copies were dully filled, returned and found usable. Data were analysed using descriptive statistic. The study revealed that the students are aware of institutional repository in university understudy. The finding showed that no functional repository in the university. Lack of awareness, lack of training, technical issues, poor design and lack of access. The study concludes that there is the need for universities in Nigeria particularly Library and information science department to inculcate into their curriculum courses on institutional repository and deploy and manage institutional repositories to support their teaching, learning and community development. The study recommended that university management should enhance IR operational practices by transitioning from analog to digital systems. should be inculcate into LIS curriculum so as to improve it awareness among library scientists, the challenges identified in the study should be addressed to enable the effective operation of institutional repositories in university.

Keyword: Awareness, institutional repository, information scientist

Background of the study

In a time when digital scholarship is growing quickly, institutional repositories (IRs) have become an essential part of university infrastructure. An institution's intellectual outputs, including theses, research articles, datasets, and conference papers, are gathered, preserved, and shared by centralised, open-access platforms. Expansion in technology make it possible to store and preserve human knowledge in digital form and numerous institutions and organisations are searching for less-expensive means of storing, preserving and disseminating their scholarly publications and internal knowledge as Institutional Repositories (Rahman, 2023). The preservation, dissemination and access to academic and scholarly researches have undergone a significant transformation. Institutional repositories (IRs) have emerged as vital platforms for archiving and providing open access to the intellectual outputs of academic institutions. These repositories house a variety of resources, including theses, dissertations, research articles, conference proceedings, and other scholarly materials (Rafiq, 2022). IRs play important role in supporting academic and research activities, promoting collaboration and global knowledge sharing.

Library and Information Science (LIS) students, as future custodians and managers of information systems, are uniquely positioned to understand and utilize institutional repositories effectively (Nasimiyu, 2024). As individuals who will potentially serve as intermediaries between repositories and their users, LIS students must not only be aware of the existence of IRs but also understand their purpose, functionalities, and benefits. Awareness among this demographic is essential for building a workforce that can advocate for and efficiently manage these repositories in the future.

Despite the increasing significance of institutional repositories, research indicates a gap in awareness and adoption, particularly among students in higher education institutions. Muchinga (2024) observed that while institutional repositories are widely discussed in academic and library circles, there is often limited awareness among key stakeholders, including students. This gap

poses a challenge to the adoption and effective utilization of IRs, as lack of awareness weakens their potential impact on academic research and scholarly communication.

This study seeks to investigate the level of awareness of institutional repositories among Library and Information Science students of Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau, Bauchi State. Understanding these dynamics is vital for designing targeted interventions and training programs to equip information scientist with the competencies needed to contribute to the advancement of institutional repositories in academic and research institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Institutional repositories (IRs) have become important platforms for storage, preservation, dissemination and openness of scholarly publications. These repositories provide open access to theses, dissertations, journal articles and other scholarly publications, promoting comprehensive knowledge sharing and collaboration. However, despite their importance, there is a growing concern about the awareness of institutional repositories among students of Library and Information Science (LIS), who are future custodians and managers of repositories.

Kalimashe, (2023) reveals that while institutional repositories are gaining traction globally, their awareness and deployment among LIS students remain inconsistent. This raises questions about the adoption of IR concepts into the LIS curriculum and the efforts made by academic institutions to promote their use. Factors such as limited exposure, inadequate training, misconceptions about the utility of IRs, and attitude of LIS students toward IRs may contribute to this problem leaving LIS students with inability to understand, utilise, and advocate for institutional repositories in their future careers.

The lack of awareness among LIS students is predominantly alarming because they are expected to serve as custodians of knowledge and information managers (Panda, 2021). If they are not informed in the functionalities, benefits, and challenges of institutional repositories, it could hinder their ability to promote open access, manage digital collections, and support educational institutions in their aims of knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, this knowledge gap may

result in underutilization of institutional repositories, limiting their potential to improve academic research and collaboration. In view of the above, there is need to investigate the current state of awareness and understanding of institutional repositories among LIS students of Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau, Bauchi State

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. identify the availability of an institutional repository in Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau
2. determine the awareness of LIS students of Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau, on institutional repositories
3. identify the Barriers to Utilisation of Institutional Repository in Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau,;

Literature Review

Institutional Repository

Institutional repositories (IRs) are among the platforms used to enhance the availability, accessibility, and visibility of content from Nigeria (Ukwoma and Onyebinama, 2021). Institutional repositories offer authors a global audience that surpasses even the most prestigious subscription-based journals. Regardless of a journal's renown, the reach and impact of research are significantly amplified through IRs. These repositories enhance a university's visibility and provide worldwide access to its publications and documents. An institutional repository according to Clark (2023) is a contemporary concept that digitizes and disseminates an institution's research output and other pertinent documents, making them accessible to users. However, for libraries and universities to benefit from the advantages of IRs, it is pertinent to take note of and control its operations. The operation of an institutional repository typically involves several key processes such as collection development, Metadata creation, content management, access and discovery, preservation, promotion outreach and evaluation and

assessment. Overall, the operation of an institutional repository requires coordination among various stakeholders, including library staff, IT professionals, administrators, and content creators, to guarantee the effective management and distribution of the institution's scholarly materials.

Repositories offer services for faculty and researchers seeking to archive research and historical materials. According to Safdar (2021), libraries globally are increasingly developing institutional repositories to support lecturers and researchers in meeting their instructional and research requirements. The establishment of institutional repositories represents a new strategy enabling universities to systematically accelerate advancements in academic communication and scholarship.

Tertiary institution's repository incorporates services delivered to its immediate community members for handling and disseminating online information resources produced by the institution and its immediate community. It signifies the university's commitment to preserving these digital resources, including long-lasting preservation when necessary, as well as organising and enabling access or dissemination. Institutional repositories are made to housed, preserve, and archive the digital assets, intellectual outputs, and historical records of institutions. They serve as digital collections housing the intellectual outputs produced within universities or research institutions (Chukwueke, *et al.*, 2020).

Awareness of Institutional Repository

Several studies have explored researchers' awareness and attitudes toward institutional repositories. A study conducted by Akparobore and Omosekejimi as cited by Ahmaduet *al*, (2024) surveyed faculty members in federal universities in South-South Nigeria, revealing a high level of awareness and a positive attitude towards IRs. Faculty members utilized IRs for accessing conference proceedings, technical reports, e-journal articles, e-books, and other scholarly publications for teaching, community services and research purposes. The study recommended that it is an institutional mandates to contributing to Institutional repositories and regular orientation programs to enhance awareness and effective usage of the repositories.

Conversely, a study by Baro and Nwabueze-Echedom (2023) at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, revealed that while faculty members were aware of the benefits of depositing in IRs and willing to submit content, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, lack of technical know-how, and fear of plagiarism hindered their participation. The study recommended that the management should provide incentives and consistent training sessions to motivate faculty members to deposit their research publications to the repository. Hamzat and Fadare (2024) studied law postgraduate students in two federal universities in Nigeria, finding revealed high level of awareness of IRs, primarily informed by colleagues, library websites, and lecturers. Students predominantly used IRs to aid their research project, accessing resources such as electronic theses and dissertations. However, challenges like inadequate internet connectivity and poor ICT skills were identified as barriers to effective utilization of the repositories.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. As it enable the researchers to deduce opinions of the randomly selected respondents within a relatively short period of time .A sample of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents was randomly selected from the population of the study (450), which comprised of students of Library and Information Science Department of Sa'adu Zungur University Gadau Bauchi State. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were self-administered on the one hundred and fifty (150) respondent's selected using simple random sampling method, but only one hundred and twenty one (121) copies were returned and the analysis and discussion of results were based on these. Data were analyzed by means of simple frequencies and percentages using SPSS and presented in tabular form.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Information of The Respondents

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender	Male	80	66.1
	Female	41	33.9
	Total	121	100.0
2. Level of Study	100level	20	16.5
	200level	23	19.0
	300level	26	21.5
	400level	52	43.0
	Total	121	100.0

Table revealed the demographic information of the respondents, which shows that majority of the respondents 80(66.1%) were male, the table also revealed that majority of the respondents were in 400level of their study.

Research Question 1:

Table: Frequency Counts and Percentage on awareness of Institutional Repository

S/N	Items	Yes	NO	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.	Are you aware of institutional repositories?	102 (84.3%)	19 (15.7%)	1.157 0	.36534	121

Table revealed the frequency counts and percentage on awareness of institutional repository among students of Saadu Zungur University, Gadau, Bauchi State. The table shows that the overall mean was 1.157 which is greater than the decision mean of 1.00. This signifies that the

students are aware of IR. The study agreed with the study of Saheed and Christianah (2024) on awareness and institutional repository use among Law postgraduate in two selected federal universities in Nigeria, the study indicated a high awareness of IRs among Law postgraduate students at Obafemi Awolowo University and the University of Ibadan. Most respondents learned about IRs through colleagues, the library website, and lecturers. They primarily utilized IRs to aid their research, accessing resources like e-dissertations, e-theses, and e-articles. Conversely, a study at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria by Ahmad, (2017) found low awareness and utilization of the Institutional Digital Repository among postgraduate science students.

Research question: 2

Table: Frequency Counts and Percentage on availability of Institutional Repository

S/N	Items	Yes	NO	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.	Did your institution has IR	17 (14.0%)	104 (86.0%)	1.140 5	.34895	121

Table revealed the frequency counts and percentage on the availability of institutional repository in Saadu Zungur University, Gadau, Bauchi State. The table shows that the respondents with no were 104 which is (86.0%) while 17 (14.0%) responded with yes, this implies that there is no functional institutional repository in Saadu Zungur University, Gadau, Bauchi State. The study agreed with that of Safdar (2021) which revealed that Nigeria universities were at different levels of implementation and operation of IR; only 26 % of the universities have fully implemented IR. Majority of the libraries are lacking repository. He added that universities with functional repositories tended to have better national and global rankings, underscoring the impact of IRs on institutional visibility.

Research question: 3

Table Barriers to Utilisation of Institutional Repository

S/N	Items	Yes	NO	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.	Lack of awareness	116 (95.9%)	5 (4.1%)	1.9587	.19986	121
2.	Lack of training	120 (99.2%)	1 (.8%)	1.9917	.09091	121
3.	Technical issues	118 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)	1.9752	.15614	121
4.	Poor design	121 (100.0%)	0 (0%)	2.0000	.00000	121
5.	Lack of access	121 (100.0%)	0 (0%)	2.0000	.00000	121

Table revealed the frequency counts and percentage on the barriers to utilisation of institutional repository among students of Saadu Zungur University, Gadau, Bauchi State. The table revealed that lack of awareness, lack of training, technical issues and poor designs were among the barriers to utilisation of institutional repository among the students with the overall mean of 1.98 which is greater than the individual items mean, this shows that serious barrier exists in the utilisation of institutional repository. This study aligns with Bashir *et al.* (2022) which noted that lack of awareness from the side of students significantly hinders the effective function and advancement of institutional repository in Nigerian universities. He also observed that the country's institutions particularly LIS departments were not doing enough to inform their students about institutional repositories and there importance, resulting in dysfunctional IR awareness. Additionally, this research concurs with Aneneet *al*, (2020) on the development of

institutional repositories in Nigerian universities, highlighting challenges such as the lack of access, poor design, technical issues, infrastructure for implementation and insufficient technological expertise as barriers to functional operation to IR. Moreover, it echoes Mahanta's findings (2021) on the implementation of institutional repositories in college libraries in Assam, where obstacles like lack of access, poor design, and limited high-speed internet facilities hinder implementation efforts of IR operations in Universities libraries.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is the need for universities in Nigeria particularly Library and information science department to inculcate into their curriculum courses on institutional repository and deploy and manage institutional repositories to support their teaching, learning and community development. The need for institutional repository cannot be overemphasised as repositories pave way for global visibility which is major requirement for world universities ranking and a means of verifying and replicating researches in future. Awareness, adoption and managing of repositories in universities will definitely make it possible to evaluate the university output in a situation where the research output from the institution or university can be accessed globally; this could also promote the dissemination of scholarly publications that can positively impact various regions globally.

Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. The university managements should deploy and sustain institutional repository
2. Institutional repository should be inculcate into LIS curriculum so as to improve it awareness among library scientists.
3. The university management should fix the challenges found from the research for appropriate operation of institution repository in the universities in Nigeria.

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