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CREATION AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES IN SELLECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the creation and use of institutional repositories in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria. Irrespective of the numerous benefits and importance of IR, researchers have observed that challenges exist in creation and use of institutional repositories. The study was guided by two research questions. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 343 academic staff and 329 respondents drawn proportionately from the total population. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that the mean scores for items such as the creation of links for published works, the availability of textbooks, students' research projects, foreign and local journals, newspapers, magazines, and book chapters in electronic or soft copy for easy online access were all above the cut-off mean of 2.50. This indicates agreement that these are the ways in which IRs are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria. It is concluded that institutional repositories are created and used to promote teaching, research and development. The results of the study revealed that IRs are created and used in selected tertiary institutions in south-east Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the university management should organise IRs-related conferences, workshops and seminars for the library staff to gain new insights and update their knowledge of creation of IR.

Keywords: Creation, Use, Institutional repositories, Tertiary institutions

Introduction

Academic libraries are the heart of information in tertiary institutions. The academic libraries play a central role in sourcing, organising, preserving and disseminating information and scholarly works in tertiary institutions. In the past decades, some of the research works produced by tertiary institutions were organised, preserved and managed through manual systems peculiar to each institution, which often limit the retrieval and accessibility of the works. The students, staff and people outside the institution have limited access to scholarly work due to the manual mode of managing academic research. Most of the students and staff's research work is kept in the institution library and they get destroyed within a short time. Ukwoma and Dike (2017) noted that some of these academic works get lost due to fire outbreaks, floods and are being attacked by insects without being accessed and consulted by scholars. Technology advancement has contributed to the transformation of scholarly works and information into digital forms in the tertiary institution libraries. IRs is digital archives that collect, preserve, and disseminate the scholarly output of a specific institution. Creating an institutional repository involves several key steps such as defining a policy, selecting a platform, ensuring infrastructure and training, populating the repository with content, and promoting its usage.

Universities and research organisations worldwide are increasingly focusing on the creation and use of digital documents, such as text, graphics, photographs, archival material, websites, blogs and vlogs, video and audio content, and television and radio broadcasts that are stored and transmitted electronically. Most scholarly outputs tend to bypass traditional libraries and publishers in favor of the Internet. Over the years, institutions have been exploring ways to capture and reuse the intellectual output of teaching and research. The IR is a collective intellectual output of an institution, recorded, preserved and utilised, by the staff, students and researchers. Otu (2023) note that IR is a way through which institutions manage their digital scholarship created by its community members, before, during, and after publication, while raising the visibility of the institution and the scholarly standing of its writers.

Mohammed (2013) averred that the rapid invasion of ICTs into libraries has created platforms and opportunities for scholars to work collaboratively through access to resources and knowledge services in borderless environments. Adeyemo and Jamogha (2021) noted that the libraries are moving from their traditional mode of operations (where access to information resources is within the walls of the building) to a mode where library collections can be accessed remotely by users without necessarily being physically present in the library. The authors added that one platform that allows information access to publications/documents from any location in the world as well as enhancing the visibility of a university is IR. The use of IR is a great way for institutions and their libraries to gain prominence and make impactful contributions to the body of knowledge.

However, some of the scholars in tertiary institutions in Nigeria seem to be unwilling to voluntarily deposit their work in IRs. To buttress this, Adeyemo and Jamogha (2021) asserted that Nigeria has a great number of universities and research institutes who produces a high volume of scholarly work which is mostly not visible to information users because of the absence, reluctance and value placed on IR. Chukwudi and Chukwuemeka (2021) observed that not all Nigerian universities are effectively engaged in IRs in such a way that it supports the research activities of their academic staff. Furthermore, Onwubiko (2020) reported that the daily research outputs of universities in southeastern Nigeria, such as research papers, thesis and papers, projects and other important library information resources from Nigeria, are probably not widely distributed to users and researchers all over the world, possibly due to the poor state of IR which has hampered the visibility and accessibility of academic works. In the same vein, Egbe (2020) reported that scholars in Nigerian tertiary institutions and other research institutes carry out research frequently, but the research outputs are inaccessible and lie dormant without being utilised to solve the problems which are intended to solve probably due to poor creation and usage of institutional repositories. It is based on this problem that the researchers investigated the creation and use of IRs in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Ways Institutional Repositories are Created in Tertiary Institutions

The IR is a set of web-based services concerned with the dissemination of digital materials or information created by the institution to its community members. According to Itiola, Iwasokun and Adetooto (2021) IRs are electronic systems that capture, preserve, and provide access to digital scholarly works. Institutional repositories are electronic systems that source, create, preserve, manage and disseminate scholarly works in digital forms to the members of the university community. Oni, Odaro-Ekhaguebo and Momoh (2019) defined IRs as online resources for the storing in digital form of scholarly or academic publications such as research articles, dissertations and theses on behalf of the institution. It is a web-based archive that collects preserves and disseminates digital copies of academic works of academic institutions. Ukwoma and Dike (2017) asserted that IR is a platform for archiving research publications to increase citation and visibility and to preserve scholarly communication. Chukwudi and Chukwuemeka (2021) defined IRs as simply online platforms for collecting, archiving, preserving and making available in digitised form, the various intellectual, the administrative and scholarly output of an academic, research for present use and future reference.

Also, it is adigital leans for collection and preservation of intellectual outputs for accessibility and usage by scholars. According to Chanai (2019), IRs are digital platforms for the collection, management, dissemination, and preservation of academic works by learning institutions. IRs are digital platforms for preserving and facilitating free access to research outputs such as working papers, journal articles, institutional newsletters and annual reports among others. Henok and Yule (2019) asserted that IRs provide different scholarly materials such as free peer-reviewed journal articles or links to the full texts of materials. Other materials available in IRs could be course materials, staff publications, technical reports, faculty/department, journals, inaugural lectures, theses, dissertations and conference proceedings.

Prabhakar and Rani (2018) noted that the contents of institutional repositories are: pre-prints of articles or research reports submitted for publication, the text of journal articles accepted for publication, conference papers, teaching materials, students' projects, technical

documentation committee reports and memoranda, among others. Most tertiary institutions create their repositories using ePrints and DSpace, Digital Information Archive System (DIAS), PANDORA Digital Archiving System (PANDAS) and OCLC Digital Archive, among others. IRs have enhanced the availability, visibility and accessibility of scholarly work in digital forms to many users. Scholars download published articles of their colleagues from institutional repositories, from which they review the literature to identify new findings or gaps in knowledge (Ukwoma & Dike, 2017). The lecturers can use IRs to access information for teaching students as well as conducting their research.

Uses of Institutional Repositories in Tertiary Institutions

Institutional repositories act as a complete database of publications, aiding in the efficient management of research knowledge and enhancing visibility and accessibility for a larger audience. IRs makes scholar outputs openly and freely available and accessible for use by a wide range of academicians. Nwachi and Idoko (2021) reported that members of staff of tertiary institutions to great extent make use of IRs in the university libraries. Adekunjo *et al.* (2025) conducted research on perception of researchers on the impact of IR on webometric ranking of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria and found that the creation and efficient usage of IRs is one of the key factors that contribute to increased webometric presence. More also, digital archives which is also IRs, gather, store, and distribute an organisation's intellectual output, particularly research articles, theses, dissertations, and other academic materials. Among the many purposes of IRs are promoting free dissemination of knowledge, the long-term conservation of scholarly works, and raising the university's prominence in research. In recent years, IRs have become key instruments for academic institutions looking to improve their competitive edge in web-based rankings and global visibility.

In the word of Igboechesi *et al.* (2023), IRs are a key component of academia, universities and institutions included. They play a pertinent role in the enhancement of the reputation of an institution, because one of the primary objectives of any academic institution is its ability to create or develop, disseminate and preserve knowledge. In the recent past, prior to the advent of ICT/Internet, academic libraries/institutions grappled with how to manage intellectual output they produce like journal articles, conference papers, reports, theses and dissertations, teaching materials, artworks, research notes, and research data which were all in print. Publishers and academic societies dominate scholarly communication. Researchers channeled their research output solely through authoritative publishers and academic societies. At that time, research works were mainly domesticated in institutions/universities, states and countries of origin more. The probabilities for the visibility of these intellectual discoveries were very low. Even when it happens, it is usually slow because of the rigid nature of information dissemination then.

Today, in this Internet and IT age, academic libraries now manage hybrid resources-print and electronic. Of these hybrid resources, EIRs are gradually monopolising the sole access point to information resources. Advancing the fact that technology has clearly made it easy to create, store and access digital material. One of the means of accessing these electronic resources is through IRs. It is simply a means to make research results of published and certified academic works freely available online to the whole research community. Adding to the many advantages that IRs brought to institutions, it improves increased visibility and impact of research output, interoperability and availability of technical support (Igboechesi *et al.*, 2023). According to Adbul *et. al.* (2024), IRs are digital archives maintained by academic institutions to capture, preserve, and disseminate the scholarly output of their community.

Crow (2022) opined that raising awareness about institutional repository contents is a multifaceted endeavor, further stating that institutions can implement strategies such as

targeted marketing, outreach programmes, and workshops to inform faculty, students, and the broader academic community about the wealth of resources available in their repositories. By doing so, institutions not only enhance the visibility of their own scholarly output but also contribute to the global dissemination of knowledge. Moreover, academic productivity of IR contents is closely tied to open access principles. Awareness campaigns should emphasize the accessibility and openness of these repositories, aligning with the broader movement toward open science (Abdul *et. al.*, 2024). Open access repositories have been recognised for their role in breaking down barriers and promoting a more inclusive and collaborative research environment the authors stated. In the vein, Swan and Brown (2023) opine that open access enhances the global reach of scholarly works, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange on a global scale. Institutions must communicate the inclusive nature of their repositories, encouraging researchers worldwide to access and cite these resources

Statement of the Problem

Creations of Institutional repositories are growing efforts to store and protect scholarly materials, and if properly developed can achieve a number of goals and address impressive range of needs. It could be used for various purposes such as to locate current information, publish academic works, and downloading of resources from the web. It can support classroom teaching and research. Lack of IR or poor organisation may hinder growth in research, teaching and learning, lack of access to institution's local contents, lack of academic collaboration and lack of visibility and impact of institution's output to the world. Creation of IRs can be a means for researchers to access information and register their work in organised forum. However, researchers have observed that challenges exist especially in creation and use of IRs. It is against this backdrop that this study is designed to look at the creation and use of IRs in tertiary institutions mainly in South-east, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the creation and use of institutional repositories in selected Tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the ways IRs are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria; and
2. determine the use of IRs in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the ways institutional repositories are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria?
2. What are the various ways institutional repositories can be used by academic staff in selected tertiary institutions in south-east, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design and was conducted in South-Eastern Nigeria, focusing on the academic staff of tertiary institutions. A total of 343 academic staff members were selected using multistage sampling. Data was collected using a researcher-developed instrument, the "Creation and Use of Institutional Repositories Questionnaire (CUIRQ)," which consists of two sections: Section A (background information) and Section B (Creation and Use of IRs). Section B is further divided into BI (11 items on Creation) and BII (11 items on Use). The instrument's response format ranges from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was face-validated by three experts and tested for

internal consistency, yielding a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.82. Out of 343 copies administered, 329 copies representing 96% were completed, retrieved and used for data analysis. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation, with a mean rating of 2.50 and above, indicating agreement.

Data Analysis and Findings

The demographic data of respondents comprised gender, educational qualification and their academic ranks. Data collected showed that female respondents are more than the male while greater number of them has Ph.D. Senior lecturers have more respondents followed by those in the rank of Associate professor.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	147	44.7%
Female	182	55.3%
Total	329	100

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	92	28.0%
PhD	237	72.0%
Total	329	100

Table 3: Academic Rank of Respondents

Academic Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant Lecturer	38	11.6%
Lecturer 1	58	16.4%
Senior Lecturer	119	36.3%
Associate Professor	63	19.1%
Professor	55	16.7%
Total	329	100

RQ 1: What are the ways institutional repositories are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 4: Ways Institutional Repositories are created in the Institutions

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Links are created to serve as databases for published work	2.78	1.02	Agree
2	Textbooks are kept in electronic forms for access online	2.69	1.08	Agree
3	Staff and students' research projects are available in soft copy for online access	2.54	1.11	Agree
4	Written reports are documented for online access	2.43	1.10	Disagree
5	Foreign journals are housed in institutional sites	2.64	1.05	Agree
6	Newspapers are kept in electronic forms for access	2.54	1.02	Agree

	online			
7	Unpublished scholarly works are preserved in institutional repositories	2.47	1.15	Disagree
8	Local journals are housed in institutional sites	2.53	1.07	Agreed
9	Book chapters are created in soft copy for easy access	2.67	1.10	Agree
10	Soft copy of lecture notes is preserved in institutional site for online access	2.40	1.10	Disagree
11	Magazines are made available in soft copy for easy access	2.65	1.11	Agree
	Grand Mean	**2.58**	**1.08**	**Agree**

Data Analysis presented in Table 4 revealed that the academic staff mean scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11 are above the cut-off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the ways in which institutional repositories are created in their tertiary institutions. On the other hand, the mean scores of academic staff for items 4, 7 and 10 are below the cut-off mean of 2.50, indicating disagreement with the items. The overall standard deviation score of 1.08 is closer to the mean indicating similarity in their responses in each cluster. The grand mean of 2.58 indicated that institutional repositories are created in selected tertiary institutions in south-east.

RQ 2: What are the various ways institutional repositories can be used by academic staff in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 5: Institutional Repositories used by the Respondents

S/N	**Statement**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Decision**
1	Academic staff access created links of published works for research	2.97	1.11	Agree
2	Academic staff consult textbooks in the institutional sites in preparing for examinations	2.66	1.10	Agree
3	Academic staff often make use of research projects in the institutional repositories to guide them in writing their thesis	2.77	1.13	Agree
4	Online written reports are accessed by lecturers in making references	2.38	1.10	Disagree
5	Foreign journals housed in institutional repositories are used by members of university community	2.55	1.01	Agree
6	Newspapers kept in electronic form are read by academic staff to gather current information.	2.52	1.11	Agree
7	Unpublished scholarly works preserved in institutional repositories are consulted by academic staff for research and teaching	2.41	1.06	Disagree
8	Local journals house in institutional sites are consulted by academic staff for research and studies	2.80	1.04	Agree
9	Book chapters created in soft copy for easy access are used by staff for teaching and research	2.79	1.08	Agree
10	Staff always refer to soft copy of lecture notes preserved in institutional sites in preparing students assignments	2.38	1.01	Disagree
11	Academicstaff often read the available magazines in institutional repositories to be updated with what is happening or happened globally.	2.72	1.12	Agree

	2.63	1.08	Agree
Grand Mean			

As shown on Table 5, the mean scores of academic staff for items 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 22 are above 2.50, indicating their agreement with the items. On the other hand, the mean scores of academic staff for items 15, 18 and 21 are below the cut-off mean of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items. The overall standard deviation score of 1.08 shows that their responses are close; and this indicates homogeneity in their responses. The grand mean of 2.63 indicated that IRs are used in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that institutional repositories are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria. This shows that the ways in which IRs are created in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria included creating links to serve as databases for published works, keeping textbooks in electronic forms for access online, making available soft copies of staff and students' research projects for online access, housing of foreign journals in IRs, keeping newspapers in electronic forms for access online, creating institutional sites to access local journals and making available soft copy of magazines for easy access. This is in line with the findings of Chukwudi and Chukwuemeka (2021) which reported that IRs are created from local journals, foreign journals, theses and dissertations, students' projects, students' projects, published Internet articles, conference works/papers, unpublished scholarly works and links to databases. The selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria probably create IRs to build and maintain intellectual materials or outputs to meet the teaching and research needs of staff and students.

IRs is a digital library archives, which help institutions make its intellectual assets readily accessible and provide a platform for disseminating research findings. According to Abdul *et al*. (2024), findings show that IRs are digital archives maintained by academic institutions to capture, preserve, and disseminate the scholarly output of their community; stating that open access repositories have been recognised for their role in breaking down barriers and promoting a more inclusive and collaborative research environment. IRs in selected tertiary institutions in South-east, Nigeria are created to improve visibility and provide global access to intellectual outputs. They help save physical space and reduced costs, which are associated with manual storage. The study found that these repositories are used in various ways, including staff accessing published works, students consulting textbooks and research projects for exams and thesis writing, using foreign and local journals, reading electronic newspapers, and accessing soft-copy book chapters for assignments.

Additionally, students often read magazines available in the repositories. This supported the findings of Nwachi and Idoko (2021), which reported that members of staff of tertiary institutions mostly make use of institutional repositories in the university libraries. Furthermore, Nwachi and Idoko (2021) revealed that the materials in the IRs mostly used by staff were journal articles, theses and dissertations, books, faculty and departmental journals and book chapters. The freely available and quickly accessible materials of institutional repositories could account for the usage by the academicians. The IRs created in selected tertiary institutions in the South-east, Nigeria are utilised by academic staff to enhance teaching, learning and to carry out their scholarly research works. The quest for expanding the frontier of knowledge at lower costs through the Internet rather than purchasing books at higher price could perhaps contribute to the use of institutional repositories in most tertiary institutions in the region.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that IRs such as Digital Information System (DIAS), Pandora Digital Archiving System (PANDAS), Digital Information Archive System (DIAS), among others, are created and used in some of the studied institutions. Some of the IRs created and used are links to serve as databases for published works, keeping textbooks in electronic forms for easy access online, making available soft copies of staff and students' research projects for online access, housing of journals, keeping newspapers in electronic forms for access online, creating institutional sites to access local journals and making available soft copy of magazines for easy access. Some of the institutions created IRs to preserve intellectual outputs make them available and accessible to the members of the university community. IRs portrays significant impact for both institutions and their members, by impacting visibility, research dissemination and long-term preservation of scholarly materials; even as they offer opportunity for institutions to showcase their intellectual ability, fostering collaboration and enhancing global recognition.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. The university management should organise IR-related conferences, workshops and seminars for the library staff to gain new insights and update their knowledge about the creation of IRs.
2. University management should organise annual orientation for staff to create an awareness of the potential benefits of using institutional repositories in teaching and research.
3. Library staff should carry out an annual outreach programmeme, which is geared towards enlightening and encouraging staff to utilise the available materials in institutional repositories while teaching, conducting research and giving assignments.

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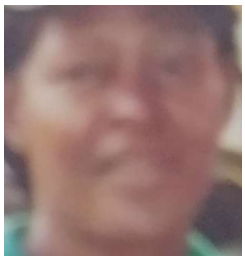
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