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Faculty Acceptance to Archive in Nigerian Institutional Repositories: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Institutional repositories (IRs) are gaining popularity globally. This paper examined the trend in a developing country—Nigeria. It reviewed and outlined the historical development of IRs and noted their low level implementation in the country. It also reviewed the role of faculty (authors) in IRs implementation. The paper identified faculty unwillingness to archive their publications in their IRs as a major inhibition to the growth of IRs in Nigeria. It therefore examined factors that influence faculty acceptance to archive in IRs with a view of ameliorating the challenge and encouraging IRs growth in the country. The paper also recommended awareness creation, advocacy programs, training on copyrights and correct referencing and citation formats, as well introduction of incentives geared towards motivating faculty to archive their publications in IRs.

Introduction

Higher institutions of learning especially universities are known to be knowledge creators and disseminators. Their academic staff (also known as faculty) engage in research and scholarly writings with the aim of solving societal problems, discovering new phenomenon, and creating knowledge. New discoveries, findings from research and reviews of literature are disseminated through various academic and professional platforms. With the emergence of open access electronic archiving systems, institutional repositories (IRs) have become major channels through which faculty disseminate their scholarly writings. The major factor that gave rise to IRs was the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) which began in 1999.[1] The initiative emphasized open access publishing with a view to creating visibility for scholarly writings and the need for scholarly literature to be freely available and accessible to all in the face of continuous rise in price of essential journals and the shrinking budget of libraries.[2,3]

According to Lynch[4] IR can be defined "as a set of services that a university offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members." It is an institution-based online archiving platform that collects, preserves, and disseminates digital copies of the scholarly works of members of a particular academic community. Similarly, Foster and Gibbons[5] defined IR as "an electronic system that captures, preserves, and provides access to the digital work of a community." Generally, IRs are internet-based open access platforms concerned with archiving and dissemination of scholarly works of members of an academic community for the purpose of educational, socio-political, and economic development.[6] Establishment of IRs are parts of effort aimed at achieving institutional control over research output and "reforming scholarly communication by breaking the monopoly of journal publishers."[7] The content of repositories includes journal articles, theses, dissertations, research data, conference proceedings, and others. They could be managed with open source or commercial software. Grundmann[8] opined that IRs offer some advantages; these include "increasing visibility, preservation of the institution's research output and the provision of broad, free access to published research emanating from the university."

Institutional repositories are relatively very few in Nigeria. Ifijeh et al.[9] stated that there were only 13 IRs in Nigeria as at 2016, the figure increased to 20 in 2018. The aforementioned authors emphasized the important role of faculty in the management of IRs. Academic staff (faculty) are very important in the management of IRs, since they are the authors of the scholarly works that would be archived in the repositories. Faculty willingness to participate in the repository project is a major factor that determines the success or failure of the project. Authors' apathy towards archiving their scholarly works have been identified as a major challenge of IRs in Nigeria.[10] An exploration of the factors that influence authors' willingness to archive in IRs will help institutions and repository administrators to take better decisions and come up with policies that would increase and enhance content creation and management for repositories. This paper intends to achieve this purpose.

Statement of the problem

Universities and research institutes produce large volume of research outputs which are of benefit to the academic and scholarly community. Most often, these outputs in the form of theses, projects and publications (journal articles, book chapters, and so on) are not maximally accessed and consulted by scholars and researchers due to poor global visibility, and other

archiving challenges. Also, libraries and other information centers are finding it difficult to acquire subscribed journals, textbooks, and online databases due to rise in price of these materials and low budgetary allocation. Institutional repositories (IRs) which are open access electronic platforms have great potentials to create visibility for research and scholarly outputs, as well as provide open access to vital information resources. However, the faculty (who are the authors of the content to be archived in repositories) need to participate for the success of the repository project. Authors' apathy towards archiving their scholarly works is a major challenge of IRs. There is therefore the need to identify factors that influence faculty (author)'s acceptance to archive their publications in IRs. This paper addresses the Nigerian situation.

Institutional repositories in Nigeria: The journey so far

As earlier alluded, IRs have continued to attract huge attention globally as a result of the many advantages they offer. These advantages vary but hold great benefits to the students, faculty and even the institution. As seen in literature, growth of open access IRs has been very remarkable in many developed countries. Developing countries are joining the bandwagon considering that they offer alternative ways of providing and bridging the wide information gap between the developed and developing countries of the world. IRs provide vital access to scholarly works that would otherwise have been out of reach to libraries in developing countries.[11]

Building IR is not a simple task, particularly in a developing country like Nigeria where there are interplay of several variables affecting the adoption and growth of IR. Starting from inadequate infrastructural facilities especially electricity, poor ICT and internet connectivity, huge financial requirements and trained staff for infrastructural support; the list could go on. Anenene et al.[12] traced the development of IRs in Nigeria to 2007 when the National Universities Commission in Nigeria advised academic libraries to embrace and adopt IRs by creating access to their internally generated print and electronic resources for enhancing the prestige and visibility of their institutions. As of 2008, there was no record of any functional open access IR in the country. The University of Jos was the first to heed the call by implementing IR using Dspace, an open source self-archiving software. It was followed closely by Covenant University, Ota and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria later in the same year. After this time, other universities joined the implementation, such as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Federal University of Technology, Akure. IR adoption in Nigerian universities is now experiencing a gradual and slow uphill climb despite the publicity and awareness campaigns through conferences, articles and many

promotional outlets.[13–16] Supporting the assertion above, OpenDOAR[17] reveals that the rate of adoption of IRs in Nigeria is insignificant. The poor level of progression was also noted by Oguche[18] who revealed that the country has about 20 IRs, a figure that is still very inadequate and pathetic, especially because the country has the highest number of higher institutions compared to any other country in Africa with more than 129 universities, 95 polytechnics, 63 colleges of education, and over 100 research institutes.[19,20] Academics, students, and researchers in these institutions are involved in scholarly writings. In the absence of IRs, some of these writings (especially those published in non-electronic platforms) lack recognition and global visibility. Dissertations and thesis are stocked in libraries with very limited usage. Thus, knowledge output in Nigeria are not made open and visible as only few scholars and students can access them.[14]

The few existing IRs are experiencing very poor growth rate. Prominent among the many factors responsible is content recruitment. The willingness of faculty to upload or submit their research content in IR contributes to a large extent in the success of IR implementation and sustainability. Findings from the literature revealed that the majority of the faculty in Nigeria have a negative disposition as regards to submitting their scholarly work in institution repositories. Bamigbola and Adetimirin[21] assert that faculty acceptance to archive in IRs is low and this stands as a huge hindrance to successful implementation of IRs. Similarly, Omeluzor[22] in his research on the level of faculty preparedness to deposit their research findings discovered that persuading faculty to deposit their scholarly works especially their pre-published works into IR is a challenge. Ukwoma and Dike[23] also perceive faculty unwillingness to submit their work to IR as a major issue. According to them, failure to submit content to IR will lead to inadequate quality content which will also affect the rate of use. From literature, faculty acceptance to archive is based on several factors. Ranging from the fear of copyrights infringement, fear of plagiarism to many more.[24] This assertion was also confirmed by Christian[14] and Nwokedi[25] whose research findings revealed that faculty members in University of Lagos and University of Jos expressed fear of depositing their research output citing, fear of copyright infringement and publisher policies, fear of plagiarism and technical barriers as some of the reasons why faculty were hesitant to submit their research content. According to Nwakaego,[26] the attitude of academics toward submission of contents to their IR depends on several factors which may be positive or negative. While advocating for a positive attitude by faculty, she suggests that the university management has a major role to play in influencing faculty attitude. The afore-mentioned factors shall be further examined in this paper.

Faculty and institutional repositories: What role?

To drive the success implementation of IR, the role of members of the faculty cannot be overemphasized. This is because most of the intellectual output to be archived into the repository comes from the faculty. They serve as the authors of the publications to be archived in the repository. For the purpose of clarification, a faculty member is academic staff of a higher education institution (university, polytechnic, mono-technic, and college), charged with the responsibilities of teaching and research. Aside from providing content, the roles of faculty members could be diverse depending on the unique policy guiding the specific repository. These include:

- **Uploading of research output:** Faculty members are expected to upload their publications to the repository, but the final archiving is carried out by the digital curator, who authorizes the final deposition of the publication into the repository. This allows the digital curator to confirm that all the requirements are met and that the upload is error-free before the final archiving of the publication to the repository.[27] Ezema and Okafor[28] observed that the practice prevalent in Nigeria entails that each author provides an electronic copy of the author's final version of each article no later than 180 days after the date of its publication at no charge to the digital curator for archiving in the IR. The author also provides the digital curator with the name format desired to be maintained for archiving of subsequent publications or other intellectual output into the IR. This format is maintained regardless of the format on the individual article. This is to aggregate all the work of the faculty into a single folder in the IR. If different formats are adopted, then the author will end up having several folders based on the format in the repository.
- **Responding to questions and comments posted by readers:** When readers access an article from the repository, they are able to send request or questions/queries to the author. They may be seeking clarification and it behooves the author to respond to the requests of the readers.
- **Updating materials especially pre-print articles and work in progress:** It is possible for authors to upload a work-in-progress to the IR. But when the work is completed, especially when published, the author is expected to replace the work-in-progress copy with the completed version of the work. This will carry the bibliographic details that can be useful for citing the work/author.
- **Ensuring high quality and standards of materials:** The author is responsible for ensuring that the publication uploaded is of high

standard. This is because the reputation of both the author and the institution will be at stake for a sub-standard work archived in the IR.

- **Negotiating copyright issues with publishers. This should be done before publication of papers.** Each author is encouraged to retain ownership of the copyright of published papers where possible. The author should have negotiated this with the publisher before publication. It is crucial for the author to make the publisher understand that the IR is neither intended for commercialization nor for profit making, but rather strictly for academic and research purposes. This will enable the author to grant to the institution permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles. Each author grants the institution a non-exclusive, worldwide license to exercise any/ and all rights under copyright relating to each of his or her scholarly articles, in any medium, provided that the articles are not sold for a profit, and to authorize others to do the same, and authorship is fully credited.[29–31]

- **Avoid plagiarism/self-plagiarism:** Any form of plagiarism could dampen the integrity of the author and the institution. The IR, which is usually open access, would be accessible to the global community and any form of plagiarism could create crises for the author and the hosting institution.

Factors influencing faculty acceptance to archive

There are numerous factors that influence a faculty's acceptance to archive publications in IRs. Some of the perceived factors are discussed below.

Copyright awareness

Copyright awareness issues serve as a major factor influencing the process of self-archiving in Nigerian institutions today because a good number of faculty members are not knowledgeable on certain issues and in some instances are very careful not to sell off their copyright or go against the copyright agreement signed with the journal or publishing outlet. Prabhakar and Rani[32] specifically noted that some faculty and researchers are careful to avoid infringing on publishers' copyright and their own intellectual content hence they are reluctant about depositing their research outputs on the institution's repository. A study carried out by Ivwighreghweta[10] showed that a large percentage (84%) of the respondents acknowledged that copyright and intellectual property right issues were major factors affecting their use of IRs. In the same vein, Kim and Oh[33] reiterated that the concern on issues relating to copyright and its infringement significantly affects the level of articles deposited in IRs. They noted

that IRs do not have a standard mechanism to tackle the challenge of confusion in copyright issues as pertains to published articles.

The process of developing an institution's repository maybe affected by unresolved copyright issues.[10] He specifically noted that "the International Institute of tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria could not upload research output on the repository because the research works had been signed away to commercial journal publishers." Similarly Dawson and Yang[34] reiterate that information centers and libraries are bound to encounter challenges when they create repositories characterized by open access to full text publications. They also noted that as a result of the gravity of this challenge, some institutions inculcated the SHERPA/RoMEO database on publisher's copyright policies into their IR to curb the copyright challenge. The SHERPA/RoMEO database is a service run by SHERPA to show the copyright and open access self-arching policies of academic journals. It uses a color-coded system to classify publishers according to their archiving policies.

Plagiarism issues

The objectives of any academic institution cover teaching, learning, and research; research involves mainly publishing academic findings in journal outlets, book chapters, etc. Most academic institutions reward academics based on the number of their research publications, hence, making the term, "*publish or perish*" very common in these institutions today. As a result of the publish or perish syndrome and intellectual laziness some faculty may go so far as plagiarizing an existing work and when this act is carried out, the individual may not want to deposit such in the IR as it will be visible for all to see and there is a strong possibility that he/she would be caught. This scenario is usually common when the publication has not gone through the proper peer review process to scrutinize and authenticate the content. Dawson and Yang[34] however allured that this problem has been curbed to an extent especially with Green Open Access publications because the publications are published in peer reviewed journals and they are given express permission by the publishers to deposit the articles in any open access repository.

Closely related to this is the scenario of archiving a recently completed doctoral thesis on the IR. The doctoral student who is chiefly responsible for the intellectual content of the thesis may not want to deposit it in the institution's repository for fear of theft of the intellectual content especially when no publication has been made from the research work. Depositing or self-archiving the thesis makes it easily accessible to anyone since the contents of the repository is usually placed on open access. Kim and Oh[33]

referred to this as perceived career risk, that is, the level to which a researcher/author believes that uploading his article on the repository would bring about threats such as copyright infringement. Similarly, the research finding of Gunasekera[35] showed that 3.7% of the faculty studied noted that they do not deposit their research output on the repository because they perceive that their works may be copied by someone without their permission.

Motivational factors

Some academic institutions make it mandatory for their academic staff to deposit their research outputs in the IR as this will help to boost the institution's visibility and in the long run the visibility of the author. With the increase in the number of publications archived on the repository, the level of citation increases for the respective authors and this leads to an increase in the level of visibility of the institution. Better visibility has a positive effect on the prestige of the institution and also could attract high quality faculty, staff and also affect their funding levels.[32]

Closely related to the advantage of increased visibility, Ivwighreghweta[10] expressed the opinion that archiving on the repository would make Nigerian researchers, academics and librarians become part of the international community of researchers. This is because the IR serves as a vehicle for broader dissemination of research output within and outside the country hence increasing usage. We can safely say that majority of academics are motivated to deposit into the institution's repository because of the positive effect it has on visibility and consequently citations.[36]

In some cases, depositing of research output is also part of the requirements for promotion to the next level and this motivates the academics in that institution to deposit regularly into the repository. This point was underscored in a research carried out by Kim[37] which revealed that a good number of academics (mean = 1.54) contributed to the contents of the IR because it would affect their tenure and promotion in the university.

Another motivating factor that could enhance the process of self-archiving is the ease of use and the repository interface. When the IR platform is user friendly, that is, users can easily navigate through without experiencing any form of technostress, this will increase the level of self-archiving but when the platform or software being used is not user friendly, the reverse is the case. This point was further corroborated by Prabhakar and Rani,[32] who stated that some individuals may experience challenges in the process of self-archiving, and sometimes due to these challenges, they are reluctant to upload their research findings on the IR.

A vital motivating factor influencing faculty acceptance of self-archiving is that it promotes the process of storage and retrieval of various types of academic publications like reports, theses, articles, book chapters, etc., from a central location. Besides the fact that it builds the author citation counts, it also serves as a source of retrieval for quality information resources during research.

Conclusion and recommendation

The application and widespread adoption of information technology (IT) have intensified digital transactions and communications in the academic world. Therefore, new windows have been created to enhance access to information materials for academics, students and researchers. Information and communication technologies have created many opportunities that have transformed conventional transactions and paved the way for the conception of IRs, globally. Institutional repositories are currently digital platforms developing countries like Nigeria can take advantage of for gaining global visibility and relevance in terms of its academic and scholarly outputs. Thus, the development of IRs helps create viable networks for advancing open access initiatives that which promote research activities in an academic environment. Though, Nigerian Universities are beginning to embrace this new trend, they have a long way to go. Unfortunately, persons including faculty who are stakeholders in the running of IRs are not playing the roles expected of them. However, it is hoped that relevant authorities like university management, managers of IRs and libraries would take necessary steps to ensure that the faculty and other authors archive their scholarly works in their IRs. Necessary steps to be taken include awareness creation, advocacy programs, training on copyright and correct referencing and citation formats, as well the introduction of incentives geared towards motivating faculty to archive their publications in IRs.

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