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USE OF INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES FOR PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated the uses of Institutional Repositories for promoting knowledge sharing practices in Federal University Libraries in North-Central Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used for this study. A total of 116 questionnaires were purposefully distributed to respondents in four(4) Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria who have functional institutional repositories. Data were analyzed using Arithmetic Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) (with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)). It was found There are 3 Federal University Libraries in North-Central who don't have functional Institutional Repository, whereas 4 of the them have functional Institutional Repositories. The study also found that databases, preprint, post-print, patent and standards, internship/industrial attachment reports, books, book chapters, journals articles, reference materials, monographs, conference papers, research progress reports, technical papers, theses and dissertations among others are the recourses shared on repositories platforms. Promoting open access to knowledge and information by all, centralization and storage of all types of institutional output, overcoming small budgetary allocation to libraries, increasing visibility and productivity of authors/institutions are some of the roles and benefits institutional repositories found by the study. Lastly, the research revealed that all the roles of for institutional repository have contributed to knowledge sharing on a very high level with an overall mean range of between 3.86 and 3.75. The study concludes that the empirical evidence in this paper should encourage Federal University Libraries in North-Central Nigeria and beyond to build institutional repositories if they are ready to partake in the benefits of repositories.

Key words: Federal University Libraries; Institutional Repositories; Knowledge Sharing

Introduction:

The Federal Government have the mandate to build the nation's manpower and to establish its political, economic and social growth. This process is made possible through formal and non-formal

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education. As such, education is very essential since citizens' standard of education determines the level of development of such a nation. Therefore, in an attempt to build manpower and fulfill other mandates, the Nigerian government have established a good number of schools ranging from higher institutions of learning to secondary schools across the country. Higher institutions such as Federal Universities (which is our concern in this study) are found in each state. The North-Central zone alone has about Seven (7) Federal Universities and each has a library that helps the parent University in fulfilling its vision and mission to the University community and the society at large. It is these libraries that spearhead the building of institutional repositories to enhance effective knowledge and information sharing.

On the other hand, knowledge is information that has been combined with user's experience and ability to use it in solving problems or creating new/more knowledge. When knowledge is created, it is shared/disseminated among individuals, groups, organizations and globally. Knowledge sharing is concern with dissemination of information from one person to another or from one place to another. Globally, there has been a paradigm shift from industry society to information society where attention is focused on creation and dissemination of knowledge other than production and distribution of goods and services. Therefore, libraries as major hubs of information creation and dissemination are in the forefront of knowledge sharing and innovations in the present information society.

However, the challenge of small budgetary allocation from parent institutions, coupled with escalating prices of commercially scholarly publications have poised serious threat to effective knowledge sharing and access, not only in libraries but other information organizations. Faced with this scenario, libraries have device new methods of knowledge creation and dissemination to enhance free flow of information and easy access to knowledge. One of such modern strategies is the development of institutional repositories (IR). These institutional repositories are innovations in libraries for achieving up-to-date sharing of knowledge and managing of digital scholarship of institutions and their communities. They are engines for knowledge sharing as they enhance free-flow of knowledge and unrestricted access to information and knowledge. Institutional repositories are

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founded on Open Access Initiative (OAI), whose aim is to promote free access to research output devoid of any permission barriers and unnecessary legal restraints. This paper seeks to established the use of institutional repositories for promoting knowledge sharing practices in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem:

Institutional repository is an essential innovation that has numerous benefits for libraries, authors, institutions and researchers; however, lack of proper understanding of their roles and benefits have made some authors, management of institutions, stakeholders and even government to shy away from supporting the development and sustenance of institutional repositories - even though they are very crucial in knowledge creation and sharing. In fact, knowledge sharing is one of the ultimate pursuit of libraries including Federal University Libraries. Generally, University libraries have a primary purpose of supporting teaching, learning and research through acquisition, organization, preservation and dissemination of information resources in different formats; and since the advent of modern ICTs, library users have been found to have preference for electronic resources rather than printed ones. As a result, libraries globally (including Federal University Libraries) are adopting the use of ICTs in library services especially in the areas of knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, knowledge sharing and information dissemination.

This knowledge sharing and information dissemination requires acquisition, storage and dissemination of authentic and standard scholarly outputs in digital formats using different channels of dissemination such as emails, websites, online databases, phone calls, and other social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, LinkIn, Twitter among others. However, libraries (including Federal University Libraries) are faced with the challenge of small budgetary provision from either government or parent institutions, couple with the ever increasing legal barriers caused by commercial scholarly publishers that makes knowledge sharing and access to research output difficult (even the scholarly output emanating from library's parent institutions). Faced with this scenario, libraries have taken decisive steps in building institutional repository (IR) as a modern tool

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for managing digital scholarship of institutions and for easy sharing of knowledge and to enhance unrestricted/timely access to information resources by all. As such, Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria have also developed institutional repositories that serves as engines of knowledge sharing and information dissemination, including students' projects and other grey literatures.

However, the absence of empirical evidence has hampered full understanding of the extent to which these institutional repositories are used for promoting knowledge sharing, thereby filling the gap between knowledge creation, preservation, dissemination and access to the knowledge created through scholarly output of institutions. Many research works have been conducted on: "what institutional repositories are", "the need for institutional repositories in high institutions of learning" etc; however, as at the time of this research work, the researcher found no empirical records that investigated the use of institutional repositories for promoting knowledge sharing practices in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria. This gap in literature necessitates this research work, as it showcases empirical evidence on the use of institutional repositories for promoting knowledge sharing practices in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the Federal University Libraries in North-Central Nigeria that has functional institutional repository?
2. What kinds of knowledge and information resources are shared through institutional repository platforms among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria?
3. What are the uses and extent of benefits of institutional repository in knowledge sharing among Federal

University Libraries in North Central Nigeria?

4. What is the level of contribution of institutional repository to knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

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Review of Literature:

In contemporary times, libraries have evolved from books housing rooms and static digital archives into dynamic systems that drive knowledge creation, knowledge management and sharing in forms of scholarly communications. Libraries are devising new methods of knowledge and information management and one of such is institutional repositories. Halder and Chandra (2012) defined an institutional repository as a set of services offered by a university or group of universities to members of its community for the management and dissemination of scholarly materials in digital format created by the institution and its community members, such as e-prints, technical reports, theses and dissertations, datasets, and teaching materials. In agreement, Jain, Bentle and Oladiran in Akune (2021) viewed an institutional repository as a digital research archive consisting of accessible collections of scholarly work that represent the intellectual capital of an institution. They added that institutional repository is a means for institutions to manage the digital scholarship their communities produce, maximize access to research outputs both before and after publication and to also increase the visibility and academic prestige of both institutions and authors.

Institutional repositories (IRs) have evolved from static digital archives into dynamic systems that drive knowledge management and scholarly communication. Bankier and Gleason (2014) posited that repositories quickly evolved into platforms for libraries to publish and showcase the entire breadth of an institution's scholarship including articles, books, theses, dissertations, and journals. Recent scholarship positions the IR as a vital component of an institution's knowledge-sharing architecture that bridges the gap between explicit knowledge (formal journal publications, books, and theses) and tacit institutional memory (conference presentations, working papers, and grey literature). According to Anene, Ozor, and Baro (2020), academic institutions in developing nations increasingly rely on digital open-access platforms to showcase local research, counter high journal subscription costs, and boost global citation impact.

Institutional repositories house knowledge and information resources in unique forms such as images, videos, audios, audiovisuals, preprints, e-books, e-journals. A research work by Enenche, Izah, and Aliyu (2025) investigated metadata quality and resource retrieval in North-Central Federal

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University Libraries and findings reveals that repository collections are heavily dominated by traditional, peer-reviewed papers and print substitutes. According to Akune (2021), theses, dissertations, journal offprints, University Senate/inaugural lecture series, preprints, patents, software codes, raw research datasets, conference proceedings, public lecture series, students' projects and internship/industrial attachment reports, technical papers, flyers and bulletins, newsletters, lecture and practical notes, government documents, laboratory and field note, patent and standards, databases, examination question papers, student electronic portfolios, computer programs, photographs, art works and other grey literatures that has been digitize.

However, some resources are more populated in IRs, while other resources are scanty. Studies attribute this disparity to a lack of institutional self-archiving policies, author hesitation regarding copyright permissions, and limited awareness among academic staff regarding open-access licensing frameworks. Empirical surveys by Idiedo et al. (2024) and Salahudeen & Obinyan (2023) show that while platforms exist at institutions but full-text availability varies widely, with journal offprints and post-graduate theses comprising the vast majority of IRs indexed contents. The unique nature of repository contents, the digitization and open sharing is its cutting edge as it allows libraries to freely share institutions' scholarly output locally and globally, devoid of any locational or publishers' barriers.

There are many other benefits that are wooing institutions to opt for development of repository such as convenient collection, long term preservation of knowledge, immediate access to knowledge and information resources, global distribution of knowledge and innovations amongst others. Harpreet (2017) outlined some primary objectives for development of institutional repositories to include: building institutional profile and increasing institution image; long time preservation of intellectual output and institutional information of the institution in digital format for the next generation; collection of all intellectual output of institution on single platform; to avoid duplication of research efforts and promotion of research works; and to create global visibility or free distribution of an institution's research publications.

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In another tune, Adeyemi, Appah, Akinlade, and Bribena (2017) stated that the different goals of institutional repository are: creating global visibility for an institution's scholarly research; storing and preserving other institution's output, including unpublished or otherwise earlier lost 'grey' literature; satisfying the desire for centrally storing and preserving institutional output in one database amongst others. Visibility and citation count are other benefits and impact of IRs to both institutions, authors, and the libraries. In an era marked by reduced Federal funding for higher education and inflating database subscription fees, open-access repositories allow libraries to maximize resource sharing using open-source platforms like DSpace and EPrints. Kari and Orji (2022) note that IRs significantly increase the web visibility and citation counts of scholars, thereby elevating the overall webometrics rankings of host Universities. IR also preserves local scholarship and grey literature which otherwise would remain rotten in faculty buildings and without proper abstracting and archiving by libraries.

Aside from that, one core benefit of building institutional repository is overcoming the challenges of small budgetary provision to libraries from parent institutions as well as having competitive advantage over the ever increasing legal barriers caused by commercial scholarly publishers and other limitations/inadequacies that hinders timely access to knowledge and innovations. Scholarly contributions from Ukachi and Ezema (2025), Abubakar and Kabir (2022) clearly maintained that traditional acquisition models are unsustainable for libraries operating on small operational incomes. Apart from that, there is a general need for libraries to re-design their modes of knowledge sharing and information services in order to meet the demands of users and to remain relevant in the present technology age. This is vital because any knowledge that is not shared is wasted.

Knowledge sharing has to do with dissemination of professional expertise and skills from one person or group of persons to another. According to Ike (2023), knowledge sharing is an aspect of knowledge management which is an activity of conveying proficiencies such as skills, abilities, experiences and perception between individuals, groups and organizations. Other researchers see knowledge sharing as a process of transferring knowledge such as skills, experiences and

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understandings between individuals, groups and organizations; or a process where individuals mutually exchange their knowledge, ideas and jointly create new knowledge (Abubakar & Kabir, 2022; Akparobore, 2015). Knowledge sharing helps workers learn new things from one another, increase understanding, solve problems and are more productive, thereby surviving longer on their jobs that other works who do not share knowledge.

IRs are used to freely share knowledge, exchange expertise, insights, and data across institutional boundaries. Knowledge sharing is central to the mission of modern libraries. In Federal University Libraries across Nigeria, the adoption of IRs has transformed how librarians collect, organize, and disseminate knowledge. Abubakar and Kabir (2022) in their work on "Information dissemination patterns and open access uptake in contemporary Nigerian universities" emphasize that, open access IRs serve as democratic platforms that eliminate traditional geographic and economic barriers to academic research, enabling scholars across Universities to access and build upon each other's work without financial hindrance. According to Akune, (2021), while low-cost, real-time collaboration tools such as Google Workspace, cloud-based platforms, social media platforms like LinkIn and WhatsApp facilitate immediate communication among libraries and institutions, institutional repositories serve as the formal foundation for permanent scholarly exchange.

The impacts and benefits of IRs have pushed Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria to build IRs. The North Central Nigeria has about 7 Federal Universities in the region and each Federal University has a University Library. These Federal Universities are: Federal University of Abuja library, Gwagwalada, State Capital; Federal University of Technology Library Minna, Niger state; Federal University Library Lokoja, Kogi state; Federal University Library Lafia, Nasarawa state; Federal University Library Jos, Plateau state; Federal University Ilorin, and Federal University of Agriculture Library Makurdi, Benue state (UNC, 2020). These Federal Universities embarked on IR project at different times. For instance: The Federal University Ilorin Library set up Online Institutional Repository in 2014 using DSpace software (Eromosele, 2019); Eromosele asserted that the University embarked on building its institutional repository because of the immense benefits to improve effective service delivery in addition to its global visibility and high webometric rankings.

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According to Akintunde (2011), the University of Jos launched its Institutional Repository - http://dspace.unijos.edu.ng - in June 2009 as an open access IR and it is serving the information needs of both staff, students and entire university community in addition to creating global visibility. Again, on 21 July, 2016 the Library at Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUT Minna) kick started it repository services using DSpace software with over 350 computers with internet connectivity to provide access to their resources for use by the university community and across the globe (FUTMINNA, 2020; ROAR 2019). Likewise, Ogbemudia (2019) revealed that in 2007, the University of Abuja Library embarked on a repository project using DSpace and later combined EPrint software to enhance effective service delivery. The University Library also provides link to many online databases (both paid and open access) such as AGORA, EBSCOHOST, HINARI, Ebrary, Ebook Central, Science Direct, etc. all in attempt to furnish users with global needed information resources.

Apart from IRs saving Federal University Libraries from the challenge of small budgetary provision, becoming remedies to the ever increasing legal barriers caused by commercial scholarly publishers and increasing institutional visibility, these IRs are granting open access to knowledge and information materials locally and globally. However, despite the well-documented advantages, recent literature highlights persistent structural bottlenecks that prevent institutional repositories from reaching their full potential, particularly within the North-Central geopolitical zone. A consensus among researchers (Kari & Orji, 2022; Enenche et al., 2025) identifies the challenges hindering adoption of IRs such as infrastructural deficits (unreliable electrical power supply and high internet bandwidth costs consistently hamper digital repository accessibility and server uptime), lack of institutional mandates and incentives where many universities lack formal open-access policies requiring researchers to deposit their work. In the same tune, Enenche et al. (2025) note that inconsistent metadata tagging often reduces the effectiveness of search and retrieval functions, diminishing the user experience for researchers seeking specific digital items

Methodology:

The study adopted descriptive survey design. A total sample population of 116 librarians were purposefully selected from the four Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria – Federal

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University of Technology Minna 32, Federal University of Jos 27, Federal University of Ilorin 40 and Federal University of Abuja 17. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and checklist. Data were analyzed using Arithmetic Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) (with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to generate appropriate Frequencies, Percentages, Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) for answering research questions and for decision making.

Results and Discussion:

Q.1 What are the Federal University Libraries in North-Central Nigeria that has functional institutional repository?

Table 1: Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria has Functional Institutional Repositories.

Name of Institution	IR AV	IR NAV
Federal University of Technology Library, Minna	✓	
Federal University Library, Ilorin	✓	
Federal University Library, Jos	✓	
Federal University Library, Abuja	✓	
Federal University of Agriculture Library, Makurdi		x
Federal University Library, Lafia		x
Federal University Library, Lokoja		x

Key: IR AV – Institutional Repository Available; **IR NAV**- Institutional Repository Not Available

Table 1 shows at a glance available institutional repository in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria. From the table it is clear that Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Federal University Library, Ilorin, Federal University Library, Jos and Federal University Library, Abuja all have functional institutional repositories. On the other hand, Federal University of Agriculture Library, Makurdi, Federal University Library, Lafia and Federal University Library, Lokoja do not have functional institutional repositories as at the time of this research work. This could either be that the building of institutional repositories is ongoing in the other three Universities and they are yet to register with the Directorate of Open Access Repositories; or, they are docile about it. This calls for another research to ascertain the exact state of affairs in those Federal Universities as regards building of institutional repositories.

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This finding supports a research by Ifeanyi and Jacintha (2024) who established that many universities in Nigeria are yet to explore the opportunities of institutional repositories for increased visibility of institutional based research outputs to the international scholarly community. It also concurred with their reports that as at November 9, 2023, Nigeria has 31 repositories registered with Directory of Open Access Repositories distributed across the six geopolitical zones of the country; where South-West contribute 12 (38.7 %) followed by North-Central with 8(25.8 %); South-East with 5(16.1 %); North West with 4(12.9 %); while South-South and North-East has 1(3.2 %) each. Other researchers like Posigha and Idjai (2022), Saliu et al. (2022), Aghoghovwia and Ekereuche (2023) amongst others also agreed that there is a continuous but slow implementation of institutional repository across Nigeria.

Q.2 What kinds of knowledge and information resources are shared through institutional repository platforms among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages for the kinds of knowledge and information resources shared through institutional repository platforms in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria:

Kinds of knowledge and information resources shared through institutional repository platforms	FUT Minna		Uni Ilorin		Uni Jos		Uni Abuja		Overall		Rank	Decision
	Frequency (%)		Frequency (%)		Frequency (%)		Frequency (%)		Frequency (%)			
	AV	NAV	AV	NAV	AV	NAV	AV	NAV	AV	NAV		
Books	✓		✓		✓		✓		4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Book Chapters	✓		✓		✓		✓		4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Journals Articles	✓		✓		✓		✓		4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Ref. Mats.	✓		✓		✓		✓		4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Monographs	✓		✓		✓		✓		4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Preprint	✓		✓		✓			x	3(75 %)	1(25 %)	2nd	AV
Post-print	✓		✓		✓			x	3(75	1(25	2nd	AV

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Conference Papers	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
R. Progress Reports	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Technical Papers	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Theses and Dissertation	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Flyers and Bulletins	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Newsletters	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Lecture & Practical Notes	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Govt. Documents	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Lab & Field Notes	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Inaugural Lec. Notes	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Patent and Standards	✓	✓		x	✓	3(75 %)	1(25 %)	2nd	AV
Examination Question Papers	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Senate Publications	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Annual Reports	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Internship/IT Reports,	✓	✓		x	✓	3(75 %)	1(25 %)	2nd	AV
Students & Inst. News Magazines	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
VC's Address(es)	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Multimedia & Audio–Visual Mats.	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Statistical Reports	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV
Online Databases	✓	✓	✓		✓	4(100 %)	0(00 %)	1st	AV

Key: AV – Available; **NAV**- Not Available

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In table 2, the overall frequencies and percentages of kinds of knowledge and information resources shared through institutional repository platforms in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria are computed. The table indicated that Books, Book Chapters, Journals Articles, Reference Materials like Dictionaries, Maps, Encyclopedia, Atlas, Directories etc, Monographs, Conference Papers, Research Progress Reports, Technical Papers, Theses and Dissertations, Flyers and Bulletins, Newsletters, Lecture and Practical Notes, Government Documents, Laboratory and Field Notes, Inaugural Lecture Notes, Examination Question Papers, Senate Publications, Institutional Annual Reports, Students and Institutions' News Magazines, Vice-Chancellor's Address(es), Multimedia and Audio–Visual Materials, Statistical Reports, Online Databases with an overall frequency of 4(100%) each are the kinds of knowledge and information materials shared on institutional repository platforms among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria. More so, Preprint, Post-print, Patent and Standards, Internship/Industrial Attachment Reports, each with an overall frequency of 3(75%) and ranking 2nd are other kinds of repositories among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

One outstanding feature of institutional repository is the uniqueness of its contents. Unlike other types of archives and databases, institutional repositories are all-embracing in nature of their contents and methods of dissemination/sharing. This study identified preprint, post-print, patent and standards, multimedia and audio–visual materials, statistical reports amongst others as kinds knowledge and information resources shared though institutional repository platforms among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

The findings agreed with Prafulla (2022) who found in his research that the types of documents digitized by the college libraries in Assam are question paper, magazine, digitized prospectus, digitized books, conference proceeding, photo gallery, journals, dissertation, leaflet, thesis, etc. The findings also aligned with Hakeemat and Obinyan (2020) whose study on "an appraisal of open access institutional repositories use by academic staff in federal universities in north central states of Nigeria" found that journal articles, theses and dissertations, inaugural lectures, conference papers,

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seminar papers course materials, lecture notes students' projects, committee papers, computer software, works of art, photographs, video recordings are some of the content of institutional repositories which academics staff are satisfied with in Federal Universities in North Central States of Nigeria.

Q.3 What are the roles and extent of benefits of institutional repository in knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation(SD) for the Roles and Extent of Benefits of Institutional Repository in Knowledge Sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Role & Benefits of Institutional Repository in Knowledge Sharing	FUT Minna		Uni Ilorin		Uni Jos		Uni Abuja		Overall			
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank	Decision
Promoting open access to knowledge & information by all	2.79	1.10	3.10	.89	3.38	.62	3.25	.71	3.05	.93	7th	GE
Centralization & storage of all types of institutional output, including unpublished literature.	2.64	.99	2.90	.70	3.31	.48	3.00	.54	2.90	.80	13th	GE
Overcoming small budgetary allocation to libraries	2.93	.72	3.00	.78	3.38	.50	3.13	.84	3.07	.71	6th	GE
Overcoming of publishers' costs & permissions barriers	2.89	.83	3.10	.70	3.38	.50	3.00	.76	3.07	.73	6th	GE
Ensuring greater security for institution's research output	2.93	.86	3.10	.83	3.25	.58	3.00	.76	3.05	.78	7th	GE
Maximizing public access to research findings online	2.86	.65	3.19	.75	3.44	.51	3.00	.76	3.10	.69	5th	GE
Increasing visibility & productivity of authors/institutions	2.75	.70	3.00	.71	3.25	.68	2.63	.92	2.92	.74	12th	GE
Increasing readership,	2.96	.84	3.10	.77	3.25	.58	3.00	.93	3.07	.77		GE

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re-use and open access to research outputs.											6th	
Free sharing of scholarly outputs of institutions	3.57	.57	3.19	.75	3.56	.51	3.25	1.17	3.42	.71	1st	GE
Easy storage & retrieval of information resources	3.11	.69	3.38	.67	3.38	.62	2.88	.84	3.22	.69	3rd	GE
Quick access to knowledge, information and innovations	3.07	.47	3.10	.70	3.13	.62	2.75	1.17	3.05	.66	7th	GE
Unrestricted sharing of knowledge in digital formats	3.07	.77	2.76	.83	3.13	.72	2.50	.93	2.93	.81	11th	GE
Preservation of knowledge in digital form for posterity	2.96	.79	3.10	.70	3.44	.63	3.25	.89	3.14	.75	4th	GE
Building authors/institutions' profile & prestige	2.86	.89	2.95	.87	3.06	.77	2.88	.99	2.93	.86	11th	GE
Increasing access to research output in different formats	3.57	.63	3.14	.79	2.94	.68	3.13	1.13	3.26	.78	2nd	GE
Increasing visibility of institutions/authors	3.07	.77	2.95	.92	3.00	.73	2.88	.99	3.00	.82	8th	GE
Maximizing access to unpublished works	3.00	.77	2.90	.70	3.00	.82	2.63	.74	2.93	.75	11th	GE
Maximizing access to grey literature	3.29	.71	2.95	.74	3.44	.63	3.25	.89	3.22	.73	3rd	GE
Overcoming locational barriers	2.86	.71	2.86	.79	3.19	.66	2.38	.74	2.88	.74	14th	GE
Overcoming the challenge of access knowledge/information materials by all-ability-persons	2.71	.81	2.90	.83	3.13	.81	2.75	.46	2.86	.79	15th	GE
Enhancing collaboration among institutions	2.93	.77	2.86	.73	3.13	.81	2.88	.84	2.95	.76	10th	GE
Encourages staff to develop ICT skills	2.96	.79	3.05	.81	3.00	.73	2.88	.84	2.99	.77	9th	GE
Enhances research	2.86	.71	2.67	.80	3.00	.73	2.25	.89	2.77	.77	16th	

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productivity through free flow of knowledge & innovative ideas		GE

Key: $\bar{x}$ **-** Mean; **SD –** Standard Deviation; **VGE** - Very Great Extent; **GE** - Great Extent;

Results in Table 3 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the roles and extent of the benefits of institutional repositories in knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central. The result shows an overall mean range of between 3.42 (ranked 1st) and 2.77 (ranking 16th which is last). All these fall within the Real Limit of Number (RLN) for Great Extent (RLN: 2.50 – 3.49). This means that the roles and benefits of institutional repositories from: promoting open access to knowledge & information by all ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05), overcoming small budgetary allocation to libraries ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07), overcoming of publishers' costs & permissions barriers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07), ensuring greater security for institution's research output ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05), maximizing public access to research findings online ($\bar{x}$ = 3.10), increasing readership, re-use and open access to research outputs ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07), free sharing of scholarly outputs of institutions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42), easy storage and retrieval of information resources ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22), quick access to knowledge, information and innovations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05), increasing visibility of institutions/authors ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00), preservation of knowledge in digital form for posterity ($\bar{x}$ = 3.14), increasing access to research output in different formats ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26), maximizing access to grey literature ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22) are to a Great Extent the benefits and roles of institutional repositories in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Other roles and benefits of institutional repositories in knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central include: centralization & storage of all types of institutional output, including unpublished literature ($\bar{x}$ = 2.90), building authors/institutions' profile and prestige ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93), unrestricted sharing of knowledge in digital formats ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93), increasing visibility and productivity of authors/institutions ($\bar{x}$ = 2.92), maximizing access to unpublished works ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93), overcoming locational barriers ($\bar{x}$ = 2.88), overcoming the challenge of access knowledge/information materials by all-ability-persons ($\bar{x}$ = 2.86), enhancing collaboration among institutions ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95), encourages staff to develop ICT skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.99), to enhances research productivity through free flow

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of knowledge and innovative ideas ($\bar{x}$ = 2.77) are to a Great Extent the benefits and roles of institutional repositories in knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

As a knowledge management tool, institutional repository has a lot of benefits and roles it plays in knowledge sharing and information dissemination. The benefits are for libraries, institutions, authors and the entire global community. This means that building institutional repositories is a collective responsibility of everyone including government, if Nigerian community must maximize the benefits and opportunities that institutional repositories are offering. The findings of this study reveals the benefits that institutional repository has offered to a great extent to libraries, authors, institutions and their communities.

The findings correspond with that of Sharma, Saha and Meichieo (2018) who found out that institutional repositories respond to a number of strategic issues facing academic institutions such as providing a central component in reforming scholarly communication, serving as tangible indicators of an institution's quality, increasing its visibility, prestige, and public value amongst others. The finding supports Genoni in Akune (2021) whose' findings reviewed that institutional repositories are well-suited and beneficial in preserving and sharing of various types of gray literature and other fugitive and unpublished materials. The finding also supports Chukwuemeka, Chizoba and Okafor (2020) whose study on "Enhancing academic visibility of faculty members in Nigerian university community: The role of institutional repositories" found visibility of institutions as a major benefit of institutional repositories.

When the benefits are not tap, the disadvantages are inevitable. For instance, the backward ranking of the nation in regards to contribution to knowledge and innovations as a result of failure of our Nigerian institutions to project every of their research output. It is clear that much of intellectual output and value of an institution's intellectual property is defused through thousands of scholarly journals. Again, IRs provide long-term solution to information access; improve scholarly communication; remedying the weakness of self-archiving i.e. lack of proper security, long-term preservation, and wasting faculty time; improve online teaching both on campus and via net, etc.

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Q.4 What is the level of contribution of institutional repository to knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4: Mean($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation(SD) for the Level of Contribution of Institutional Repository to Knowledge Sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Role & Benefits of Institutional Repository in Knowledge Sharing	FUT Minna		Uni Ilorin		Uni Jos		Uni Abuja		Overall			
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank	Decision
Promoting open access to knowledge & information by all	3.94	.236	3.86	.351	3.84	.374	3.83	.388	3.86	.353	1st	VHL
Centralization & storage of all types of institutional output, including unpublished literature.	3.94	.236	3.82	.395	3.77	.425	3.74	.449	3.81	.396	2nd	VHL
Overcoming small budgetary allocation to libraries	3.94	.236	3.82	.395	3.77	.425	3.74	.449	3.81	.396	2nd	VHL
Overcoming of publishers' costs & permissions barriers	3.94	.236	3.77	.429	3.77	.425	3.74	.449	3.80	.403	3rd	VHL
Ensuring greater security for institution's research output	3.83	.383	3.77	.429	3.77	.425	3.78	.422	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Maximizing public access to research findings online	3.83	.383	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.78	.422	3.78	.417	5th	VHL
Increasing visibility & productivity of authors/institutions	3.83	.383	3.82	.395	3.71	.461	3.78	.422	3.78	.417	5th	VHL
Increasing readership, re-use and open access to research outputs.	3.83	.383	3.82	.395	3.71	.461	3.78	.422	3.78	.417	5th	VHL
Free sharing of scholarly outputs of institutions	3.83	.383	3.82	.395	3.71	.461	3.78	.422	3.78	.417	5th	VHL
Easy storage & retrieval of information	3.83	.383	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.78	.422	3.78	.417	5th	VHL

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resources												
Quick access to knowledge, information and innovations	3.89	.323	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.78	.422	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Unrestricted sharing of knowledge in digital formats	3.89	.323	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.78	.422	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Preservation of knowledge in digital form for posterity	3.89	.323	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.78	.422	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Building authors/institutions' profile & prestige	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Increasing access to research output in different formats	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Increasing visibility of institutions/authors	3.83	.383	3.77	.429	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.77	.423	6th	VHL
Maximizing access to unpublished works	3.61	.698	3.77	.429	3.23	.845	3.70	.470	3.55	.681	8th	VHL
Maximizing access to grey literature	3.83	.383	3.77	.429	3.68	.541	3.74	.449	3.75	.457	7th	VHL
Overcoming locational barriers	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.61	.615	3.74	.449	3.75	.478	7th	VHL
Overcoming the challenge of access knowledge/information materials by all-ability-persons	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Enhancing collaboration among institutions	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Encourages staff to develop ICT skills	3.89	.323	3.82	.395	3.74	.445	3.74	.449	3.79	.410	4th	VHL
Enhances increase research productivity through free flow of knowledge & innovative ideas	3.94	.236	3.86	.351	3.84	.374	3.83	.388	3.86	.353	1st	VHL

Key: $\bar{x}$ **-** Mean; **SD –** Standard Deviation; **VHL** – Very High Level

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Table 4 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the level of contribution of institutional repository to knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central. The result shows an overall mean range of between 3.86 (ranked 1st) and 3.75 (ranking 7th which is last). All these fall within the Real Limit of Number (RLN) for Very High Level (RLN: 3.50 – 4.00). This implies that the level of contribution of institutional repository to knowledge sharing from: promoting open access to knowledge and information by all and enhances research productivity through free flow of knowledge and innovative ideas ($\bar{x}$ = 3.86), centralization and storage of all types of institutional output, including unpublished literature and overcoming small budgetary allocation to libraries ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81), overcoming of publishers' costs and permissions barriers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.80), ensuring greater security for institution's research output, quick access to knowledge, information and innovations, unrestricted sharing of knowledge in digital formats, preservation of knowledge in digital form for posterity, building authors/institutions' profile & prestige, increasing access to research output in different formats, overcoming the challenge of access knowledge/information materials by all-ability-persons, enhancing collaboration among institutions and encourages staff to develop ICT skills with an overall mean of 3.79, and maximizing public access to research findings online, increasing visibility and productivity of authors/institutions, increasing readership, re-use and open access to research outputs and the rest are to a very high level the contributions of institutional repositories to knowledge sharing among Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

There would be no need opting for institutional repository if it has no competitive advantage over other knowledge management tools. More so, if the impact of institutional repository is at the same level with archives and similar tools, then, there wouldn't be any need building them. However, studies have shown that institutional repository has a lot of benefits and contributions to knowledge sharing. This research revealed that all the roles of for institutional repository have contributed to a very highly level to knowledge sharing with an overall mean range of between 3.86 and 3.75 which fall within the Real Limit of Number (RLN) for Very High Level (RLN: 3.50 – 4.00). This implies that the level of contribution of institutional repository to knowledge sharing is to a very high level.

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This finding supported the findings of Chibueze and Chukwu (2021), Chukwuemeka, Chizoba, and Okarfo (2020), Chanai (2019) and many other researchers whose studies established that institutional repositories are contributing greatly to access to research output of institutions, enhances preservation of knowledge in digital form for posterity, building authors/institutions' profile and prestige and greatly increasing visibility and productivity of authors/institutions amongst others.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study which indicates that some Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria lack functional institutional repositories (IRs), while those with functional IRs are actively benefiting from enhanced knowledge sharing and research visibility, the researcher presents the following actionable, targeted recommendations:

1. To bridge the gap between Federal Universities with mature IRs and those without functional IR platforms, a regional knowledge-sharing initiatives should be established to help those Universities without functional IR platforms to leverage on the existing infrastructures to activate their IRs. That is, operational libraries can offer technical mentorship, server-sharing arrangements, or metadata harvesting protocols to support non-functional libraries.
2. Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria should establish clear, mandatory Institutional Repository policies that spells out initial setup infrastructure and regulations that require staff members and students to deposit final accepted manuscripts, conference proceedings, and theses as a prerequisite for academic promotion and graduation clearance.
3. IRs should be established as distinct, recurring line items in annual Federal University budgets rather than relying on temporary project grants. This will guarantee sustained server maintenance, high-speed internet bandwidth, and stable alternative power infrastructure. More so, Federal University administrations and Federal Interventions (such as TETFund) should prioritize IRs funding.
4. To maximize the knowledge-sharing potential of existing repositories and increase their contents, library administrators should implement targeted strategies to collect and archive more grey literature, inaugural lectures, inaugural addresses, local research datasets, patents,

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and technical research reports that document indigenous scholarship from North-Central Nigeria.

5. To encourage active involvement of staff and students in building IRs, Federal Universities can introduce annual recognition awards or citation-impact incentives for staff members and student faculties with high repository deposit rates.
6. Another research should be conducted to ascertain the exact state of affairs in the Federal Universities that have non-functional IRs.
7. Finally, another research should be conducted to ascertain the causes of low deposit of some information items in the IRs and to also find out if there are challenges associated with building and sustaining of IRs in Federal Universities in North Central and even other regions.

Conclusion

Building and sustaining of institutional repositories is the best option for libraries and their parent institutions in the present information age. Repositories are springboards in achieving cost-effective information dissemination to all. Institutional repositories and other open access initiatives have capacity to promote up-to-minute, free and open access to global research output devoid of any permission barriers and unnecessary legal restraints. Simply put, institutional repositories are engines of information and knowledge sharing. However, lack of proper understanding of their roles and benefits is militating against the building and sustaining of institutional repositories in some University libraries in North Central Nigeria and beyond. This could be one of the reasons why a number of Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria does not have functional institutional repositories at the time of this research.

Nevertheless, this empirical evidence is aimed to encourage libraries and institutions to rise up and build repositories to boost information and knowledge sharing among Nigerian institutions. This will help to breakaway the barriers of knowledge sharing placed on published information sources which turns to hinder access to useful “solution-giving” information hidden in research works published by commercial journals and “pay-before-access” databases. In addition, students’ projects and theses will no longer be dumped around faculties without their proper indexing and use. At the

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climax of it all, libraries struggle in achieve effective dissemination of information and knowledge sharing will come to an end, in addition to attaining global visibility.

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