



## Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories

UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> and  
ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja - Nigeria

[Ozioma.umer@uniabuja.edu.ng](mailto:Ozioma.umer@uniabuja.edu.ng)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3114-7433>

<sup>2</sup> Abubakar Gimba Library, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria

[fatimayl@ibb.edu.ng](mailto:fatimayl@ibb.edu.ng)

<sup>3</sup> University Library Services, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

[mohd.adamu@futminna.edu.ng](mailto:mohd.adamu@futminna.edu.ng),

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9586-9157>

Corresponding Author: [mohd.adamu@futminna.edu.ng](mailto:mohd.adamu@futminna.edu.ng) +23407037769819

### ABSTRACT

*Institutional repositories (IRs) have emerged as pivotal infrastructure for the preservation, management, and global dissemination of academic scholarship. Librarians, as principal custodians of information in higher education institutions, occupy a central and strategic position in the development, administration, and promotion of these repositories. This theoretical study aims to: examine the conceptual foundations of institutional repositories within the scholarly communication ecosystem; identify and analyse key roles played by librarians in managing these repositories; assess promotional strategies employed by IR librarians; interrogate theoretical frameworks governing librarian engagement with IRs; and identify challenges confronting librarians and propose strategies to address them. The study is grounded in the Change Agent Theory (Katayoon & Abrizah, 2017), the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962), and Social Capital Theory as complementary lenses for understanding librarian agency in IR ecosystems. The study adopts a theoretical research design, relying on documentary analysis and critical review of existing literature published between 2020 and 2026. Findings reveal that while librarians are well positioned to serve as change agents for institutional repositories, they face significant challenges including inadequate training, insufficient institutional support, low faculty awareness and participation, copyright complexities, and resource constraints. The paper concludes with recommendations for strengthening the capacity of librarians to fulfil their IR management and promotion roles, with implications for library policy, professional development, and institutional governance.*

**Keywords:** Digital Preservation, Institutional Repositories, Librarians, Open Access, Scholarly Communication and Faculty Engagement.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology and the global open access movement have fundamentally transformed the culture of scholarly communication. In response to concerns

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>:** *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.*



about restricted access to publicly funded research, rising journal subscription costs, and the urgent need to preserve and disseminate the intellectual output of academic institutions, institutional repositories (IRs) have been established as cornerstone infrastructure of modern academic libraries. An institutional repository is broadly defined as a digital system that captures, preserves, and provides access to the intellectual output of a university or research organisation, encompassing peer-reviewed articles, theses, dissertations, conference papers, datasets, and other forms of scholarly work (Lynch, 2003, as cited in Otu, 2023).

Librarians have been at the forefront of the institutional repository movement since its inception. Their expertise in information organisation, metadata standards, digital preservation, copyright management, and scholarly communication positions them uniquely to manage and promote these complex digital infrastructures. Despite the widespread proliferation of IRs globally, evidence continues to suggest that many repositories suffer from low deposit rates, inadequate promotion, insufficient faculty engagement, and persistent technical and organisational challenges (Rothfritz et al., 2026; Butterfield et al., 2022). These challenges raise fundamental questions about how effectively librarians are fulfilling their IR roles, and what theoretical frameworks and practical strategies can better equip them to do so.

A significant knowledge gap exists in the literature: while numerous empirical studies have examined specific aspects of IR development and use in various national contexts, few theoretical works have comprehensively assessed the librarian's role across all key dimensions of IR management and promotion, particularly within developing country contexts such as Nigeria. Furthermore, the absence of an explicit theoretical anchor in much of the existing literature limits its explanatory power and practical utility. This study fills this gap by synthesising current scholarship through the complementary lenses of Change Agent Theory, Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and Social Capital Theory frameworks that together capture the institutional, interpersonal, and systemic dimensions of IR librarianship.

This study therefore addresses these questions through a theoretical lens, synthesising existing scholarship to construct a comprehensive assessment of the librarian's role in managing and promoting institutional repositories. By examining this role across multiple dimensions from content management and metadata creation to faculty outreach and policy advocacy, this paper contributes to the growing body of theoretical knowledge on IR librarianship and offers a foundation for future empirical investigations.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the proliferation of institutional repositories across academic institutions worldwide, a persistent and troubling gap exists between the theoretical potential of these repositories and their actual performance on the ground. Many IRs continue to suffer from chronically low deposit rates, inadequate promotional reach, insufficient faculty engagement, and unresolved

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



technical and policy challenges that collectively undermine their capacity to serve as effective vehicles for open access and scholarly communication (Rothfritz et al., 2026; Butterfield et al., 2022). Librarians, who are widely regarded as the primary custodians and managers of IRs, find themselves at the centre of this performance deficit, confronting an array of professional, institutional, and systemic challenges for which neither the theoretical literature nor professional training has yet offered comprehensive solutions.

In the Nigerian context, and across many developing-country academic environments, these challenges are compounded by inadequate ICT infrastructure, the absence of institutional IR policies, limited awareness among academic staff and administrators, and chronic underfunding of library services (Oberhiri-Orumah& Baro, 2023; Posigha&Idjai, 2022). The result is that the potential of IRs to enhance the global visibility of indigenous African scholarship remains largely unrealised, at considerable cost to the internationalisation of research from these institutions.

A further dimension of the problem lies in the theoretical underdevelopment of IR librarianship as a field. Much of the existing scholarship on librarians and institutional repositories is either narrowly empirical, focused on specific institutional cases or descriptive, cataloguing roles and challenges without situating them within established theoretical frameworks that could illuminate the deeper structural and relational dynamics at play. This theoretical lacuna limits the ability of library administrators, policy makers, and LIS educators to design evidence-informed interventions that address the root causes of IR underperformance.

This study therefore addresses the following central problem: the roles, challenges, and strategies of librarians in managing and promoting institutional repositories remain theoretically underspecified and empirically underexplored, particularly within developing country contexts, limiting both the scholarly understanding of IR librarianship and the practical capacity of institutions to support librarians in fulfilling these roles effectively.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the conceptual foundations of institutional repositories and their place within the scholarly communication ecosystem;
2. identify and analyse the key roles played by librarians in the management of institutional repositories;
3. assess the strategies employed by librarians in promoting institutional repositories to academic communities;
4. examine the theoretical frameworks applicable to librarian engagement with institutional repositories; and

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



5. identify the challenges confronting librarians in managing and promoting institutional repositories and to propose theoretical strategies for addressing these challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Foundations of Institutional Repositories**

The institutional repository is a multidimensional concept that sits at the intersection of digital library science, scholarly communication theory, and knowledge management. The most widely cited definition of an IR, formulated by Lynch (2003) and reproduced in contemporary scholarship, characterises it 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. This definition is notable for its service orientation; it emphasises not merely the technological infrastructure of the repository but the human-mediated services that make it functional and meaningful for academic communities.

Otu (2023), in a study of institutional repositories and library services in Nigerian universities, affirmed that in the modern era of electronic publishing, universities and other academic institutions have come to recognise the importance of IRs as part of their intellectual dissemination infrastructure. The study noted that an IR serves as an online repository of academic resources, functioning as a repository for the intellectual capital of a university or organisation, and as a mechanism to manage the digital scholarship created by its community members before, during, and after publication. This framing places IRs squarely within the broader framework of knowledge management and institutional intellectual capital theory.

The open access movement, which provides the ideological and political foundation for institutional repositories, has been extensively theorised in the scholarly communication literature. Pampel (2023), in a systematic analysis of open access promotion strategies in research-performing organisations, noted that as of March 2023, OpenDOAR listed 6,005 repositories worldwide, and that repositories play an essential role in promoting the open access transformation. The authors identified 22 distinct spheres of activity available to research-performing organisations in shaping this transformation, underscoring the complexity of the IR ecosystem within which librarians operate. Similarly, Adamu and Umera (2026), in a systematic review of the role of LIS professionals in promoting information equity, observed that LIS professionals, including IR librarians function as community connectors, digital equity advocates, and information literacy educators whose work extends well beyond the technical to encompass advocacy and social justice dimensions of information provision. This observation resonates strongly with the expanded conception of IR librarianship articulated in the present study.

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



### **Roles of Librarians in Managing Institutional Repositories**

The literature consistently identifies librarians as the principal actors in the development, operation, and maintenance of institutional repositories. Butterfield, Galbraith, and Martin (2022), writing in *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, described the evolving practice of librarians working with faculty to expand their IR, documenting a transition from a self-deposit model to a librarian-mediated model in which IR staff performed all necessary rights-checking and uploading on behalf of faculty. This mediated approach, though more resource-intensive, significantly improved deposit rates and demonstrates the active managerial role that librarians play in sustaining repository content.

The role of librarians in research data management (RDM), which is increasingly integrated with IR management, has been theorised extensively in recent studies. Mwinami et al (2024, as cited in *Library Management*, 2025) noted that academic libraries have developed policies on RDM to ensure that research data is stored, preserved, retained, and made accessible for use and reuse by researchers. Ho et al (2026) confirmed in a systematic review of RDM services in academic libraries that while RDM services are generally effective in increasing awareness among researchers, competition for jurisdiction over RDM within institutions means that librarians must carefully manage their relationships with other units to provide effective RDM support.

The management of metadata is one of the most technically demanding and professionally significant roles that librarians fulfil in relation to institutional repositories. The American Library Association's revised Core Competencies for Cataloging and Metadata Professional Librarians (2023) updated its competency framework to incorporate skills relating to artificial intelligence and large language models, emphasising the need for metadata librarians to be conversant with emerging technologies in the organisation of knowledge. Bolin (2024), writing in *The International Journal of Librarianship*, argued that metadata librarians focused on open access resources can work with a range of positions, including repository managers and digital asset management professionals, to ensure that open access resources are properly ingested and managed, and that metadata practices are aligned with best practices for preservation and long-term access.

### **Strategies for Promoting Institutional Repositories**

The promotion of institutional repositories to academic communities is widely recognised in the literature as one of the most challenging and strategically important aspects of the librarian's IR role. Turner and Sauer (2022), in a study of faculty awareness and use of an institutional repository at a Master's-granting university, found that despite the availability of a well-developed IR, a significant proportion of faculty members remained unaware that their institution had a repository or had deposited any materials in it. This finding echoes a consistent pattern in the international literature and underscores the urgency of effective IR promotion strategies.

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



Pampel (2023) identified a range of promotional strategies available to research-performing organisations, including strategy and communication initiatives, the development of services and infrastructure, and collaborative advocacy efforts. They emphasised that open access is a cross-cutting issue in these organisations, requiring coordinated action across multiple institutional units, with librarians serving as natural coordinators of this effort. The ACRL Insider (2023) documented an important evolution in IR promotion strategy, noting that early IR development was premised on the assumption that faculty would directly contribute their publications if repositories were made available. When this expectation proved largely unfounded giving rise to the adage that librarians-built IRs and faculty did not come, IR managers were compelled to develop more proactive and diversified promotion strategies, including mediated deposit programmes, targeted outreach to specific academic departments, and integration of IR submission with research reporting systems.

Rafiq (2022), in a survey of Pakistani universities followed by focus group discussions with librarians, identified a lack of conceptual understanding and commitment by institutional administration as one of the major challenges for librarians in the development of IRs, and argued that effective promotion must therefore target not only individual faculty members but also institutional leadership. This multi-level approach to IR advocacy encompassing top-down policy advocacy and bottom-up faculty engagement is consistent with the change agent model of IR librarianship articulated by Katayoon and Abrizah (2017).

### **Theoretical Frameworks for IR Librarianship**

Several theoretical frameworks have been applied in the literature to conceptualise the role of librarians in institutional repository management and promotion. The Change Agent Theory, derived from organisational sociology and applied to library science by Katayoon and Abrizah (2017), posits that librarians must function as proactive agents of institutional transformation, actively promoting the adoption of IRs as a new mode of scholarly communication rather than passively waiting for faculty to engage with them. This framework positions the librarian not merely as a service provider but as an institutional advocate and change leader.

Social Capital Theory, which emphasises the importance of networks, trust, and reciprocal relationships in the production of collective goods, has also been applied to IR management. The librarian's effectiveness in promoting faculty deposit is theorised, within this framework, as a function of the social capital that librarians accumulate through sustained engagement with academic communities, participation in departmental meetings, collaboration on research projects, and the development of personalised services that respond to faculty needs. Studies have consistently found that when faculty understand the advantages of IRs, such as increased visibility and accessibility of their work, their participation increases (Rothfritz et al., 2026), suggesting that relationship-based approaches to IR promotion are more effective than generic publicity campaigns.

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, originally proposed by Rogers (1962) and widely applied in information science, provides another useful theoretical lens for understanding IR adoption. Within this framework, IRs are positioned as innovations that diffuse through academic communities at different rates, with early adopters playing a critical role in demonstrating the benefits of the IR to more cautious potential contributors. Librarians, within this theoretical model, serve as innovation champions who facilitate the diffusion process by providing information, reducing barriers to adoption, and connecting early adopters with potential new users.

### **Challenges Confronting Librarians in IR Management and Promotion**

The challenges facing librarians in managing and promoting institutional repositories have been extensively documented in the recent international literature, spanning technical, institutional, and human dimensions. Rothfritz and et al (2026) identified inadequate institutional commitment as the most widely cited challenge in their systematic review, noting that 56% of the articles in their sample mentioned this issue. The authors observed that this lack of commitment manifests both as insufficient management and leadership support for IR development and as a systemic absence of awareness among decision-makers about why IRs should exist and what they offer.

Personnel inadequacy is another critical challenge. The same systematic review found that the lack of ICT personnel is a major challenge for IR development, particularly in developing countries. In a survey of Nigerian universities, 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the lack of ICT personnel was one of the main challenges facing IR development in Nigeria (Oberhiri-Orumah & Baro, 2023, as cited in Rothfritz et al., 2026). Copyright and intellectual property issues represent a particularly complex challenge for IR librarians. Rothfritz and et al (2026) noted that rights issues are very complicated and hard to understand for authors, and may discourage them from sharing their publications via an IR.

Ho et al (2026), in their systematic review of RDM services in academic libraries, noted that in Africa, the lack of mention of data management plan (DMP) advisory services was notable, largely because there are no formal RDM requirements or policies for research or funding applications in many African institutions. This absence of policy infrastructure creates a structural barrier to effective IR and RDM librarianship. The theoretical implication is that effective IR management in such contexts requires not only professional competence on the part of librarians but also systemic policy reform at the institutional and national levels.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a theoretical research design, which relies on the systematic review, analysis, and synthesis of existing scholarly literature rather than the primary collection of empirical data. Theoretical research is appropriate for this study because the primary objective is to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for assessing the role of librarians in managing and

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



promoting institutional repositories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To enhance methodological transparency and rigour, this study aligns its review process with the key principles of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Page et al., 2021), which calls for explicit documentation of search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening procedures, and synthesis approaches.

The principal method employed in this study is documentary analysis, supplemented by critical literature review. The literature was sourced from open access databases including Google Scholar, OpenDOAR, PLoS, JSTOR, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Library Philosophy and Practice, and the digital repositories of major library associations including the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

**Inclusion criteria:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, institutional reports, and professional documents published between 2020 and 2026 (with supplementary inclusion of seminal pre-2020 works where necessary for conceptual grounding); materials directly addressing institutional repositories, librarian roles, open access, scholarly communication, metadata management, digital preservation, or research data management; English-language sources published in journals indexed in recognised bibliographic databases.

**Exclusion criteria:** Sources published before 2020 that are not widely cited foundational works; materials lacking peer review or scholarly credibility; articles addressing repositories in non-academic or non-library contexts; sources unavailable in full text through the databases consulted.

Search keywords included: ‘institutional repositories’, ‘librarians and institutional repositories’, ‘open access’, ‘scholarly communication’, ‘metadata management’, ‘digital preservation’, ‘faculty engagement’, ‘IR promotion’, and ‘research data management’. All retrieved sources were independently screened at title and abstract level for relevance before full-text review. The analytical approach adopted is thematic synthesis, in which the literature is organised and analysed according to the key themes corresponding to the study’s objectives, allowing for the construction of a coherent and integrative theoretical account of the librarian’s IR role across diverse national contexts.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **The Librarian as IR Manager**

The synthesis of the literature confirms that librarians are the primary agents responsible for the operational management of institutional repositories in academic institutions. This management role encompasses a wide range of tasks, including the intake and processing of submissions, the creation and maintenance of metadata records, the implementation of quality control processes, the management of digital preservation workflows, and the administration of IR software platforms. The mediated deposit model documented by Butterfield and et al (2022) illustrates the

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



evolution of IR management from a passive, self-service model to an active, librarian-driven service, and suggests that the effectiveness of IR management is significantly enhanced when librarians take a proactive rather than reactive approach to content acquisition.

The findings also confirm that research data management is an increasingly important component of the librarian's IR management role. The integration of RDM services with institutional repositories, as documented by Mwinami and et al (2024) and Ho et al (2026), requires librarians to develop new competencies in data curation, data management planning, and researcher support. It is important to note, however, that the evidence base for RDM integration with IRs remains stronger in high-income institutional settings than in developing countries such as Nigeria, where the absence of formal RDM policies and infrastructure limits both the comparability of findings and the transferability of recommendations.

This pattern diverges from the experiences documented in institutions in the United States and United Kingdom, where funder mandates and established data management plan requirements have accelerated RDM integration into IR workflows (Ho et al., 2026). The implication is that theoretical frameworks developed from Western institutional contexts must be applied with caution to African settings, and that context-specific empirical studies are urgently needed to establish the actual scope of the librarian's RDM-IR role in African universities.

### **The Librarian as Promoter and Advocate**

The literature consistently identifies promotion and advocacy as among the most challenging and least effectively executed aspects of the librarian's IR role. The finding by Turner and Sauer (2022) that a significant proportion of faculty at a Master's-granting university were unaware of their institution's IR or had never deposited any materials in it illustrates the scale of the awareness deficit that IR librarians must address. This deficit cannot be attributed solely to inadequate promotion by librarians; it also reflects deeper structural issues, including the persistence of traditional scholarly communication norms, the inadequacy of incentive structures for faculty deposit, and the absence of mandatory deposit policies in many institutions.

These findings should, however, be contextualised within their institutional settings. Turner and Sauer's (2022) study was conducted at a single institution in the United States, and it is reasonable to expect that faculty awareness levels vary considerably across institution type, disciplinary culture, and national context. In Nigerian universities, for instance, the challenge of faculty engagement with IRs is compounded not only by low awareness but also by limited internet connectivity and the absence of departmental champions who could model IR deposit behaviour (Oberhiri-Orumah& Baro, 2023; Posigha&Idjai, 2022). This points to the need for promotional strategies that are culturally and institutionally differentiated, rather than generic interventions derived exclusively from high-income country evidence.

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: *Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.***



The Change Agent Theory (Katayoon & Abrizah, 2017) and the framework articulated by Adamu and Umera (2026) on the role of LIS professionals as community connectors and equity advocates together suggest that librarians possess significant potential to serve as effective IR advocates, provided they are supported by appropriate institutional structures and professional development opportunities. The change agent model, in particular, provides a powerful theoretical rationale for a more assertive and strategically oriented approach to IR promotion one that positions librarians as institutional leaders in the open access transformation rather than passive service providers.

### **Challenges and Theoretical Implications**

The findings from the literature reveal a complex matrix of challenges that collectively undermine the effectiveness of librarians in managing and promoting institutional repositories. Inadequate institutional commitment, insufficient technical and human resources, copyright complexity, low faculty awareness, and the absence of policy mandates are the most consistently documented challenges in the international literature. These challenges are particularly acute in developing country contexts, including Nigeria, where institutional, infrastructural, and policy deficits compound the professional challenges faced by IR librarians.

The theoretical implications of these findings are significant. They suggest that the effectiveness of librarians in managing and promoting IRs cannot be assessed in isolation from the institutional, policy, and resource environments within which they work. Theoretical frameworks that focus solely on the professional competencies of individual librarians while necessary are insufficient to account for the systemic barriers that constrain IR management and promotion in many academic environments. A more comprehensive theoretical account of the librarian's IR role must therefore integrate individual professional agency with structural and institutional analysis, as called for within the Diffusion of Innovations and Social Capital frameworks reviewed in this study.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This theoretical study has assessed the role of librarians in managing and promoting institutional repositories, synthesising a substantial body of contemporary scholarly literature to construct a comprehensive and nuanced theoretical account of this role. The study has established that librarians are indispensable agents in the IR ecosystem, performing critical functions across content acquisition, metadata management, digital preservation, research data management, faculty engagement, policy advocacy, and promotional outreach. However, the study has also demonstrated that these roles are consistently constrained by a range of institutional, technical, financial, and human resource challenges that limit the effectiveness of librarians as IR managers and promoters. These conclusions, while theoretically well-grounded, await empirical validation in diverse institutional contexts, particularly in developing countries where the IR settings differ substantially from that documented in the dominant Western literature. Future empirical

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.**



investigations employing mixed-methods designs, surveys of practising IR librarians, and institutional case studies across African universities are urgently needed to verify and contextualise the roles, challenges, and strategies identified in this theoretical synthesis.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis presented in this paper, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. Higher education institutions should develop and implement comprehensive IR policies that establish clear mandates for faculty deposit, articulate the library's central role in IR management, and provide dedicated financial and human resources for IR operations. Institutional leadership must treat IR development not as a peripheral library concern but as a strategic priority aligned with the institution's research visibility and open access commitments.
- ii. Library and information science education programmes should incorporate IR management, metadata for open access, research data management, and scholarly communication advocacy as core competencies in their curricula, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the professional skills needed to manage twenty-first-century repositories effectively.
- iii. Library associations and professional development organisations should develop targeted continuing education programmes for practising IR librarians, focusing on the skills most frequently identified as deficient in the literature, including copyright management, RDM, metadata for open access, and IR promotion strategy.
- iv. Further empirical research should be conducted, particularly in developing country contexts, to generate context-specific evidence about the roles, challenges, and strategies of IR librarians, and to test the theoretical frameworks proposed in this and related studies. Mixed-methods approaches combining surveys, interviews, and institutional case studies are particularly well suited to this purpose.
- v. Librarians should be supported to function as change agents and community connectors, as articulated in the frameworks of Katayoon and Abrizah (2017), and Adamu and Umera (2026), by being given dedicated time, institutional authority, and professional recognition for their IR advocacy and outreach activities.

In conclusion, institutional repositories represent one of the most important mechanisms through which academic libraries can contribute to the global open access movement and enhance the visibility and impact of institutional scholarship. Librarians are the key human resource that determines whether this potential is realised. Investing in the professional development, institutional support, and policy empowerment of IR librarians is therefore not merely a matter of library management but a strategic priority for any institution committed to advancing open access, knowledge equity, and the global visibility of its research.



## REFERENCES

- Adamu, M.S, &Umera, O. R., (2026). Investigating the role of library and information science (LIS) professionals in promoting information equity: A review. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20634276>.
- American Library Association (ALA). (2022). ALA's core competences of librarianship. <https://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences>.
- American Library Association (ALA), Core. (2024, January). Revised competencies for cataloging & metadata professional librarians. <https://alacorenews.org/2024/01/17/revised-competencies-for-cataloging-metadata-professional-librarians/>.
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). (2023). Rethinking institutional repositories: Innovations in management, collections, and inclusion. ACRL Insider. <https://acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/rethinking-institutional-repositories-innovations-in-management-collections-and-inclusion/>.
- Bolin, M. K. (2024). Metadata librarians for open access. *International Journal of Librarianship*, 8(4), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2024.vol8.4.351>.
- Butterfield, A. C., Galbraith, Q., & Martin, M. (2022). Expanding your institutional repository: Librarians working with faculty. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(6), Article 102628. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102628>.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ho, R. C. Y., Wong, S. N., Chia, P., Tang, C., & Ng, M. T. T. (2026). Research data management services in academic libraries to support the research data life cycle: A systematic review. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.70008>.
- Katayoon, K., &Abrizah, A. (2017). Librarians' role as change agents for institutional repositories: A case of Malaysian academic libraries. *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, 15(3), 121–133.
- Pampel, H. (2023). Promoting open access in research-performing organizations: Spheres of activity, challenges, and future action areas. *Publications*, 11(3), 44. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications11030044>.
- Library Management. (2025). Research data management in academic libraries: Institutional repositories as a reservoir for research data. Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-2024-0081>.

**UMERA, Ozioma Roseline (CLN)<sup>1</sup>, YUSUF, Fatima Ladan (CLN)<sup>2</sup> & ADAMU, Mohammed Saba PhD<sup>3</sup>: Assessing the Role of Librarians in Managing and Promoting Institutional Repositories.**



- Lynch, C. A. (2003). Institutional repositories: Essential infrastructure for scholarship in the digital age. *ARL: A Bimonthly Report*, 226, 1–7.
- Oberhiri-Orumah, G., & Baro, E. E. (2023). Challenges facing the development of institutional repositories in Nigerian universities. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>.
- Otu, G. (2023). Institutional repositories and library services in Nigerian universities. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>.
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>.
- Pal, M., & Pawar, D. (2025). Role of librarians in the era of digital transformation. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Multidisciplinary Trends (IJARMT)*, 2(1). <https://ijarmt.com/index.php/j/article/view/577>.
- Posigha, B. E., & Idjai, F. A. (2022). Institutional repositories in Nigerian universities: Status, challenges, and prospects. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>.
- Rafiq, M. (2022). Challenges and barriers in the development of institutional repositories in Pakistani universities. *Information Development*, 38(2), 200–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666920968200>.
- Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations*. Free Press.
- Rothfritz, L., Matthias, L., Pampel, H., & Wrzesinski, M.. (2026). Current challenges and future directions for institutional repositories: A systematic literature review. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.70016>.
- Snow, K., Evans, B. J., & Liss, J. A. (2022). Core competencies for cataloging and metadata professional librarians: Assessment of community use and recommendations for the future of the document. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 14(1). <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship>.
- Turner, M. E., & Sauer, J. (2022). Faculty awareness and use of an institutional repository at a Master's granting university. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 10(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.31274/jlsc.13875>.