



Research Article

Rethinking Institutional Repositories at Nigerian Universities: A Competitive Intelligence and No-Code Approach

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Abstract

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Institutional repositories (IRs) support the preservation, accessibility, and visibility of scholarly outputs in universities. However, their development in Nigerian universities remains inconsistent, with activities often driven by accreditation requirements and policy directives. Challenges include irregular content updating, limited faculty participation, usability constraints, and weak integration with academic processes. This study examines issues affecting the sustainability and usability of institutional repositories, explores the application of competitive intelligence (CI) to repository development, and proposes a CI-driven approach incorporating no-code processes. An exploratory qualitative approach was adopted using secondary literature and policy documents on competitive intelligence, institutional repositories, digital libraries, and open-access systems. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring issues and develop the proposed framework. The analysis identified environmental scanning, benchmarking, continuous content development, faculty participation, usability, and policy alignment as key areas for sustainable repository development. A four-layer CI-driven framework comprising strategic input, repository development, research visibility and accessibility, and institutional alignment was proposed. No-code workflows were identified as a potential means of simplifying content submission and supporting continuous repository updating. Competitive intelligence provides a strategic basis for repositioning institutional repositories beyond accreditation and compliance towards continuous knowledge management. Integrating CI with simplified repository workflows may strengthen scholarly visibility, accessibility, and sustainability in Nigerian universities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Besides the physical setting, modern libraries also offer virtual access to huge digital databases from where one can gain access to information in a remote manner. Knowledge preservation has always been the bedrock of statecraft, intelligence continuity, and policy formulation. Countries with good knowledge preservation capabilities will be well-placed to foresee any threat that might come their way, develop appropriate policy, and handle the situation with ease (Jimoh & Adejobi, 2026; Ajani & Oladokun, 2026). Academically, libraries have been at the forefront of embracing new technology in enhancing how things are done. Throughout the years, there have been a lot of digital technologies that have been embraced by academic libraries. Some of the technological advancements currently transforming the role played by academic libraries include institutional repositories (IR) (Ayinde *et al.*, 2026).

Institutional repositories play an important role in improving research visibility, preservation, and access to scholarly outputs in universities. However, the development and sustainability of institutional repositories in many Nigerian universities remain inconsistent and poorly supported. In most cases, repository activities are intensified mainly during government directives and accreditation exercises, resulting in irregular content updates, weak faculty participation, and poor integration of repositories into routine academic processes. This reactive approach limits the ability of repositories to reflect current institutional research outputs and function as sustainable knowledge systems.

Recent policy developments surrounding the Nigeria Education Repository and Databank (NERD) have further increased the urgency for effective institutional repository systems in Nigerian universities. The NERD policy, which became mandatory in 2025, requires students to upload

academic outputs such as projects, theses, dissertations, and other scholarly works as part of the verification process for NYSC mobilisation and academic credential validation (Ozibo, 2025). The policy also positions repositories as tools for quality assurance, academic accountability, and long-term preservation of scholarly records.

Despite these developments, many university libraries still face technical and infrastructural challenges in repository implementation. Although DSpace remains one of the most recommended repository platforms, its deployment often requires technical expertise in database management, hosting infrastructure, and backend configuration, which many institutions lack. This creates barriers to wider adoption and continuous repository management. From a competitive intelligence perspective, no-code approaches may help reduce these challenges through simplified workflows and easier content submission processes for librarians and academics.

In this light, competitive intelligence emerges as a helpful theoretical concept, as universities now find themselves in systems of competition because of their involvement in common knowledge systems and their digital presence (Ezema, 2013; Adenekan, Diyaolu & Rahman, 2024). Competitive intelligence will enable university libraries to understand the impact of external environments, peer actions, and policies on repository systems.

Although competitive intelligence offers a strategic framework for improving repository sustainability, benchmarking, and institutional visibility, its application within Nigerian university libraries remains limited. Consequently, there is limited knowledge on how competitive intelligence and no-code repository approaches can support sustainable institutional repository development in Nigerian universities. This study therefore examines how competitive intelligence can contribute to more sustainable, accessible, and intelligence-driven institutional repository systems.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this research is to evaluate the role of competitive intelligence in continuous and sustainable institutional repository development in Nigerian university libraries outside the scope of accreditation. In particular, the study aims to

1. Discuss issues surrounding usability, process, and participation associated with institutional repositories' implementation and sustainability.
2. Consider the potential use of competitive intelligence in the development of institutional repositories.
3. Present a model based on competitive intelligence for sustaining institutional repositories.
4. Highlight the importance of "no-code" institutional repositories in making submissions easier and more accessible.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of institutional repositories cannot be overemphasised because they facilitate research visibility and availability. However, the establishment of institutional repositories in most Nigerian universities is patchy and poorly supported. Although there have been policies encouraging the use of digital knowledge systems, repositories are not up-to-date due to infrequent updating, poor collaboration, and non-integration of the repositories with academic processes. This is usually because of the practice of accreditation, which makes library functions centred on evaluation cycles rather than operational cycles. More so, recent policy developments, including the mandatory compliance with the National Education Repository and Databank (NERD) for National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) mobilisation, further highlight the need for sustainable and well-managed institutional repositories in Nigerian universities. Although competitive intelligence represents an ideal strategy for decision-making, there has been little effort at applying the strategy in Nigerian university libraries. The knowledge required for integrating competitive intelligence strategies in the development of institutional repositories does not exist. Hence, this research explores how competitive intelligence could contribute to institutional repository development.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out through an exploratory approach using secondary data analysis. The study used secondary data obtained from articles published in reputable journals, policy papers released by the NUC and the NERD, and literature on digital libraries and open-access systems that were pertinent to the development of institutional repositories. Thematic analysis was used in the analysis of data collected, and the analysis helped the researcher to establish themes related to accreditation processes, difficulties encountered in the management of institutional repositories, and the use of competitive intelligence. The results enabled the formation of a theoretical framework.

A. Competitive Intelligence Strategies in Nigerian University Libraries

CI is an intelligence-gathering strategy, characterised by the process of collecting and analysing information from the outside world to facilitate strategic decision-making and positioning of the organisation. The strategy involves changing information into intelligence that improves competitiveness in complex environments (Olayemi *et al.*, 2022). Although initially applicable in the business world, CI has become pertinent in higher education, where libraries function within systems that are influenced by research visibility, digital presence, and policy considerations. In this case, CI provides libraries with information from other libraries to compete effectively (Haliso & Aina, 2012; Adesina *et al.*, 2022).

In the case of institutional repository creation within the Nigerian university libraries, CI plays an important role in the implementation of cutting-edge, technology-orientated solutions. Modern libraries make use of software applications like online public access catalogues (OPACs), websites, and social media channels like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to increase accessibility, create awareness, and facilitate information dissemination using Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and current awareness services (CAS) (Ambali *et al.*, 2022). Strategies like these help institutions position themselves by making the research products more visible and accessible. This is especially significant in Nigeria, where the repositories are also involved in organising and disseminating research products in order to facilitate their evaluation. The use of CI allows libraries to respond to such requirements and make their repository activities match institutional goals.

Recent work on digital library transformation in Nigeria also emphasises technological innovation, capacity building, and the adoption of appropriate digital practices as important components of library transformation (Sodipe, 2026). But the success of this implementation depends on competencies such as benchmarking, data analysis, and technological knowledge, which are still lacking in library studies. The incorporation of CI in IRM programmes, especially in Babcock University, is one of the strategies that have been adopted to tackle this challenge and has contributed to the general adoption of CI in other universities teaching information resource management in Africa. In this study, CI is considered a strategy for enhancing the development of institutional repositories.

B. Institutional Repositories, OER, and Library Competitiveness

The institutional repository (IR) is an information system that houses university research products for the purpose of preserving, providing access, and boosting visibility (Adewole-Odeshi & Ezechukwu, 2020; Ezema & Eze, 2024; Igboechesi *et al.*, 2023). Also, the value of institutional repositories to academic communities has also been demonstrated in relation to the preservation, access, and dissemination of institutional scholarly outputs (Ram Kumar & Srinivasa Ragavan, 2013). Operated by academic libraries, the establishment of institutional repositories is supported by the existence of national policies such as the Nigerian University System Open Educational Resources (NUSOER) platform, among other platforms like the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) and TERAS sponsored by TETFund (National Universities Commission, 2026). The effective management of electronic information resources within university libraries also depends on appropriate policy frameworks governing their acquisition and implementation (Ubogu, 2022). All this makes the repositories strategic tools in the battle for competitiveness between institutions. Library repositories have gained popularity in Nigeria as the libraries adapt to policy pressure as well as other pressures from similar libraries, thus forming a basis for competitive

intelligence (CI). Benchmarking and environmental scanning enable the implementation of popular tools like DSpace and OJS for better management of content and publications. This is evidenced by institutions such as those found in Ibadan, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello, Ilorin, FUT Minna, and Babcock University.

CI also allows libraries to understand NUC standards and ensure the repository is in line with the demands for the visibility and accessibility of research. But limitations such as poor infrastructure, poor policy enforcement, and lack of academic engagement continue to pose problems (Ezema & Eze, 2024; Ifijeh *et al.*, 2018; Osisanwo, 2025). Tackling these issues needs continued strategic alignment. In this research, institutional repositories are understood as intelligent infrastructures for visibility and alignment with NUC accreditation standards.

C. Usability, Adoption, and No-Code Approaches to IR

The success of IRs can only be gauged through their ease of use, ease of integration into workflow processes, and level of user engagement, but not merely accessibility. Effective institutional repository management also depends on the technological competencies required to operate and sustain repository services. Evidence from federal universities in South-South Nigeria highlights the relationship between librarians' technological competencies and effective institutional repository management (Robinson & Ukaegbu, 2024). IRs that are neither accessible nor integrated within the academic workflows have experienced low levels of adoption despite the existence of appropriate infrastructure (Akidi, Benson, & Udensi, 2025). In Nigerian institutions of higher learning, adoption is inconsistent due to a lack of awareness, faculty involvement, and failure of IR systems to integrate with the academic process. Workflow incompatibility has been cited as the main problem in which the depositing of documents in IR is seen as an added responsibility. Therefore, users get motivated by promotion or accreditation issues (Doty *et al.*, 2015; Turner & Sauer, 2022).

Furthermore, usability issues create obstacles to adoption. The complexity of the system and the need for technical intermediaries hinder engagement, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Asadi *et al.*, 2019; Rothfritz *et al.*, 2026). In Africa, infrastructure inadequacies and the lack of technical skills continue to be important obstacles (Nyambi & Maynard, 2012). Hence, numerous academic publications, including journal articles, conference papers, and textbooks, are not available digitally.

These issues point out the necessity of moving away from an accreditation-based system towards an intelligent and continuous system. Competitive Intelligence (CI) offers grounds for the identification of deficiencies and implementation of strategies that can lead to success. One such strategy includes the use of no-code repository workflows, wherein librarians and faculty members are

encouraged to upload information using easy-to-use templates without any coding (for example, CSV files). Such a method ensures faster uploads, continuous updating, and integration of repositories into everyday academic activities.

D. From Accreditation to Intelligence-Led Repository Development

University library development in Nigeria is usually guided by accreditation processes, with increased efforts made during evaluation phases. The notion of Accreditation-Driven Acquisition (ADA) indicates that financial support and

acquisitions are done for the purpose of accreditation and not for planned development (Bakrin & Adeyeye, 2023). Even though this approach can yield immediate results, it contributes to the development of a reactive approach. Such a trend also influences institutional repositories (IRs). IRs should be maintained continuously, but if efforts are made only during accreditation phases, these repositories will become inconsistent and unable to represent the present research output, becoming nothing more than compliance tools (Adewole-Odeshi & Ezechukwu, 2020; Ezema & Eze, 2024).

TABLE I SUMMARY TABLE OF LITERATURE

Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Method/Approach	Key Findings (Expanded)	Relevance
NUC (2026)	National repository policy	Policy report	Digital infrastructure supports open science, access, and reuse.	Policy
Ayinde <i>et al.</i> , (2026)	AI in libraries	Systematic review	AI improves automation, discovery, and service efficiency.	Supports digital transformation
Ajani & Oladokun (2026)	Intelligent technologies	Empirical	Intelligent technologies improve access and service effectiveness.	Supports innovation context
Jimoh & Adejobi (2026)	AI & knowledge systems	Conceptual	AI supports knowledge preservation and decision-making.	Adds strategic technology layer
Oyighan <i>et al.</i> , (2025)	Digital libraries & IR usage	Survey	Digital library and IR use remains uneven.	Shows usage disparity
Ilori & Haliso (2025)	CI & library marketing	Survey	CI and entrepreneurship skills improve marketing and services.	Shows CI effectiveness
Ezema & Eze (2024)	IR status & ranking	Mixed methods	IRs improve dissemination, access, and visibility.	Shows IR–ranking link
Adenekan <i>et al.</i> , (2024)	CI adoption	Empirical	CI supports innovation, benchmarking, and service delivery.	Shows CI application
Robinson & Ukaegbu (2024)	IR management & competencies	Empirical	Technological competencies support effective IR management.	Supports IR management and usability
Bakrin & Adeyeye (2023)	Accreditation & library development	Survey	Accreditation drives reactive library development.	Establishes accreditation-driven system (ADA)
Igboechesi <i>et al.</i> , (2023)	IR sustainability	Case study + SLR	Infrastructure, staffing, and faculty participation constrain IR sustainability.	Highlights the sustainability gap
Ubogu (2022)	Electronic-resource policy	Policy/implementation study	Effective electronic resource management requires appropriate policies.	Supports policy dimension
Adesina <i>et al.</i> , (2022)	CI & strategy	Review	CI involves environmental scanning, user analysis, and competitor monitoring.	Provides a CI theoretical base
Olayemi <i>et al.</i> , (2022)	CI theory	Conceptual	CI transforms information into actionable insights.	Provides CI definition
NUC (2022)	National repository policy	Policy report	Repository policy supports national academic resource sharing.	Provides policy driver
Diyaolu (2019)	CI & service quality	Conceptual	CI supports evidence-based decisions and service design.	Supports CI operational role
Asadi <i>et al.</i> , (2019)	Institutional repository development	Systematic literature review	Digital technologies support repository development and access.	Supports IR sustainability
Ifijeh <i>et al.</i> , (2018)	IR–library nexus	Conceptual	IR success depends on policy, institutional support, and participation.	Defines library–IR relationship
Ram Kumar & Srinivasa Ragavan (2013)	Institutional repository value	Study	IRs support preservation, access, and scholarly dissemination.	Supports IR value and purpose
Ezema (2013)	IR & local content	Survey	IRs improve dissemination, access, and visibility.	Validates IR importance
Nyambi & Maynard (2012)	IR infrastructure & adoption	Empirical study	IR development depends on institutional and technical support.	Supports infrastructure challenge

Competitive intelligence (CI) provides a framework for aligning library practices with this shift. Through environmental scanning and benchmarking, libraries can anticipate accreditation expectations and align repository development with ongoing institutional outputs. This

approach supports consistent content submission, improved metadata practices, and stronger faculty engagement, enabling repositories to function as active knowledge systems (Adenekan *et al.*, 2024; Ambali *et al.*, 2022).

In this case, CI overcomes the shortcomings of the accreditation process through CI's emphasis on developing IRs proactively and continually. In contrast to addressing accreditation processes, libraries are able to keep their repositories in constant evolution as an aid to research visibility and accessibility. As illustrated by the synthesis of literature in Table I, there is an obvious evolution that occurs where it becomes clear that the focus on research has moved from repository building as a foundation to intelligence-based library systems. Literature around the period 2013 highlights the significance of institutional repositories as means of preserving and sharing institutional scholarly works. By the period 2018–2020, the focus moves to the structure of libraries and the varying degrees of acceptance

of the repositories, pointing out shortcomings within the realm of policies, structures, and participation as well as the emerging recognition of the use of the repositories as instruments for institutional visibility. As it moves into the period of 2020, emphasis begins to be placed on competitive intelligence and digital transformation, stressing the need for scanning of the environment, benchmarking, and strategic decision-making in response to changing environments. Recent literature (2024–2026) reinforces this evolution through the association of repository success with institutional ranking, digital structure, and government policy directions, among other issues such as artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

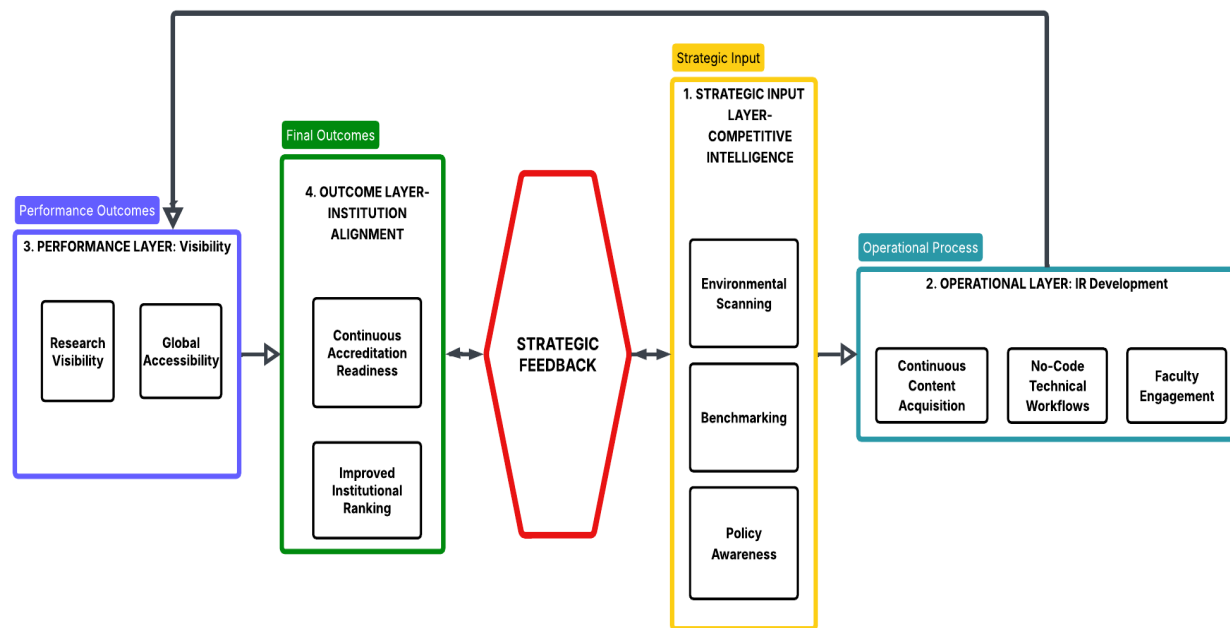


Fig.1 Proposed competitive intelligence-driven framework for sustainable repository development
Source: The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 was designed and visualised by the researcher using Lucidchart.

This paradigm is indicative of an important strategic change on the part of university libraries, as it moves away from the acquisition paradigm, known as ADA or Accreditation-Driven Acquisition, which frequently involves intermittent surges of activities, towards a more continuous form of knowledge management based on intelligence. This new model consists of four interacting layers connected by a feedback loop.

1. *Competitive Intelligence (Strategic Input Layer)*: The application of CI is the essence of the entire framework. The adoption of CI in its three dimensions, namely environmental scanning, benchmarking, and policy analysis, will help the library to comprehend external stimuli emanating from the regulatory agency, such as NUC and NERD. This way, librarians will be in a position to foresee changes in research visibility and open science standards.
2. *Repository Development (Operational Layer)*: The insights obtained at the CI level have direct bearing on the day-to-day operations of the Institutional

Repository (IR). In this phase, constant content sourcing and faculty involvement are key in addressing issues associated with infrequent updating and poor participation, as documented in existing literature. An important breakthrough that occurs here is the adoption of non-coding technical procedures, including creating CSV metadata files to facilitate bulk upload of research products into IR systems such as DSpace and Open Journal System (OJS).

3. *Research Visibility and Accessibility (Performance Layer)*: Once the repository continues to grow based on input received during continuous operation, the next stage is the performance stage. In this stage, emphasis is placed on achieving maximum visibility and distribution of scholarly works produced locally. Through compliance with international metadata standards, as well as the use of national infrastructures such as NgREN and TERAS, the library increases the institution's online presence.

4. *Institutional Alignment and Accreditation Readiness (Outcome Layer)*: This last stage of the model helps the university achieve its strategic objectives. Instead of focusing on the preparation of evaluation cycles, a repository that is constantly updated offers ready-to-go information about the outcomes of the research carried out at the institution. The model guarantees full compliance with the requirements set by NUC for accreditation and the NERD mandate for research projects to be published in the university's repository, which also plays a direct role in helping the institution rank highly among others.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is therefore an exploratory and conceptual study where there is very little existing evidence that can link competitive intelligence and the creation of institutional repositories in African academic libraries. The study does not adopt any experimental or empirical techniques; hence, it does not produce generalisable empirical evidence about the subject of discussion. This is a desk-based study where the proposed theoretical framework is not tested empirically; thus, more empirical or mixed-methods research needs to be undertaken to test the validity of the theory.

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The author(s) utilised generative AI technologies solely to improve language clarity and refine grammar. No images were generated, manipulated, or altered using AI-assisted technologies.

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