Performance assessment of electronic theses and dissertations initiatives in Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to investigate the performance of electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) initiatives in the repositories of federal government-owned universities due to the poor global visibility of ETDs from Nigeria.

Design/methodology/approach – An explanatory case study empirical research method was adopted for the study. Using an adapted methodology of Ghosh (2009) and multiple data gathering techniques, data was collected based on the three domains of the network of excellence on digital libraries (DELOS) digital library reference model.

Findings – The ETD initiatives in repositories of Nigerian federal universities have not made remarkable progress as digital libraries based on policy, content and system architecture. The specificity of ETDs is not clearly stated in the policies where available. The repositories housing the ETDs are also not compliant with the open archive initiative-protocol for metadata harvesting framework.

Research limitations/implications – The study focussed on ETD initiatives in federal government-owned universities. Although the findings of the study are relevant to other institutions in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. It cannot be used as a basis for the generalisation based on other performance metrics.

Practical implications – This research study concluded that electronic theses and dissertations in Nigerian institutional repositories are not well managed for effective service delivery and long-term accessibility. The ill-management of the ETD initiatives is the reason for the poor global visibility and accessibility of these research output from this part of Africa.

Originality/value – The study assessed ETD initiatives using constructs from a theoretical framework.

Keywords ETDs, University libraries, Repositories, Electronic theses and dissertations, Performance assessment, DELOS digital library model

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Theses and dissertations are useful sources of research information for prospective graduate students, researchers, policymakers and other practitioners (Alan and Pandey, 2012). These valuable research outputs are churned out of the Nigerian universities every year by post-degree candidates. Not only do these "intellectual core" of universities represent the significant research and scholarship of the universities they represent but they are also a valuable historical record of the research and teaching community (Middleton *et al.*, 2015). Theses contain crucial research findings which can be used and implemented in industries