

**Repositioning Nigerian Education and Healthcare System Using Quality Library and Information Services**

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**Abstract**

This work examined repositioning Nigerian education and healthcare system using quality library and information services. Library and information service (LIS) programme and policies are timeless catalyst of development that play crucial roles in enhancing the educational and healthcare system.. Descriptive survey design was used in the study. The population comprised of 35 librarians in polytechnic libraries in Rivers State. Census sampling technique was adopted to select all the 35 librarians as sample of the study. A 4-point scales structured questionnaire titled “Repositioning education and healthcare through quality library and information services scale” (REHQLISS) was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument as 0.96. All the 35 copies of the administered questionnaire were successfully retrieved and found valid for the analysis indicating a 100% return rate. It was concluded that LIS is playing important roles in repositioning educational and healthcare, especially in providing access to quality educational materials. Findings of the study revealed that quality library and information services such as library supported open education resources, access to digital transformation, information literacy among others can reposition the education and healthcare system. It was also discovered that the challenges militating against LIS efforts to realize these achievements include poor funding, poor digital transformation in library, lack of training opportunities for staff. The study therefore, recommended that government should improve funding for libraries and rapidly invest in library digital transformation among others.

*Keywords:* education, healthcare system, library, information, services, repositioning

**Introduction**

The interplay between quality education, healthcare, and information services is the driving force for a holistic development of any society. Quality library and information services present a viable pathway to mitigating these challenges and fostering a more robust and effective educational and healthcare infrastructure. Omeluzor et al. (2013) sees information as the live wire of societal development as no citizen can develop beyond the extent of information available to them. Also, information has been marked as the indices for determining a developed nation, such that developed nations can provide basic amenities and proper healthcare services, while underdeveloped nations are struggling to provide same.

Education and healthcare are universally recognized as fundamental pillars of national development. Education empowers individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary for personal and societal advancement. Healthcare ensures a healthy population capable of contributing to economic and social progress. However, both education and healthcare in Nigeria face substantial challenges. The education sector grapples with issues such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, poor teacher training, and high dropout rates (Ololube, 2016). Similarly, the healthcare system is hindered by inadequate

facilities, insufficient medical personnel, and limited access to essential services, particularly in rural areas (WHO, 2018). Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, with quality library and information services playing a pivotal role.

Libraries and information services are viable catalyst that can reposition education and healthcare through provision of access to information, support research, facilitate learning, and promote informed decision-making. Polytechnic libraries, in particular, are instrumental in supporting technical and vocational education, which is essential for Nigeria's economic development. By providing up-to-date textbooks, journals, and digital resources, these libraries enhance the quality of education and help bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills. Moreover, libraries foster a culture of reading and lifelong learning. They serve as hubs for intellectual engagement, where students can explore diverse subjects, conduct research, and develop critical thinking skills. In Nigeria, where educational resources are often limited, libraries can play a transformation roles by ensuring that all students have access to high-quality information and learning materials (Novignon et al., 2021).

In the healthcare sector, libraries and information services are equally crucial. Medical libraries provide healthcare professionals with access to the latest research, clinical guidelines, and evidence-based practices. All this is essential for maintaining high standards of patient care and ensuring that healthcare providers are well-informed about the latest developments in their fields.

Library and information service provisions have gone beyond mere organization and preservation of books to include other innovative services to promote teaching, learning, research information literacy and internalizing the idea of global citizen through giving wider visibility to scholars works as well as promoting the quest for open education resources. Modern academic libraries in the world today give access to quality educational resources that directly influence the value of education. In order to improve the quality and reposition education to greater height, many countries have invested heavily in the development of open education resources (OER). According to Ogunbodede et al. (2021), OER gives staff and students access to some of the best materials available around the world, helping them to adapt and suit them to local conditions and save money on materials and course production. Open educational resources are recent innovation that aims to close the educational gap by making high-quality learning resources available for free.

Zaid and Alabi (2020) see open educational resources as a direct avenue to make education available to everyone who wants to learn, and teachers who would like to improve their teaching skills. OER is described by Karipi (2020) as any educational resources made available online for free to students, teachers, lecturers, and the general public without the need to apply for a copyright license. OER are digitized materials that are freely and publicly accessible for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning, and research. These include courseware, lecture notes, textbooks, lecture videos, tests, assignments, software, project reports, conference reports, journal articles, technical papers, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to bring knowledge closer to all learners. Libraries all over the world are trying to make this project to the reach of all hence need to be encouraged in all ramifications (Jones & Brown, 2021).

Libraries in advanced countries are repositioning the entire system through Digital Transformation and information literacy. Digitization of resources, including books, journals, and research papers, has been pivotal in making information accessible to a broader audience (Smith, 2020). Digital repositories also play a crucial role in preserving academic and healthcare-related documents, facilitating long-term access to knowledge.

Information Literacy in Libraries also has become a fundamental skill in the digital age, and libraries are at the forefront of promoting this literacy. Libraries conduct workshops and training programs to help users develop skills in locating, navigating digital resources and databases efficiently evaluating, and using information effectively (Miller & Bartlett, 2019; Thompson, 2020; Clark, 2021).

Access to up-to-date information ensures that educators and students stay informed about the latest developments in their fields (Williams et al., 2019). In healthcare, libraries support evidence-based practice by providing access to current medical research and clinical guidelines (Jones & Brown, 2021). Clark (2021) and WHO (2018) revealed that patient education initiatives offered by libraries help improve health literacy, leading to better health outcomes, continuous access to the latest research and medical information also aids in the ongoing professional development of healthcare workers (Johnson & Wagner, 2018).

Many polytechnic libraries in Nigeria suffer from inadequate resources and outdated infrastructure. This includes insufficient collections of textbooks, journals, and electronic resources, as well as a lack of modern facilities and technology. Okoye and Ejikeme (2010) opined that addressing these deficiencies requires substantial investment in library collections, infrastructure, and information technology. Improving the capacity of polytechnic libraries also involves training and professional development for library staff (Anderson et al., 2020; Smith, 2020).

In a related work, Ololube (2016) posited that one of the most significant challenges facing libraries in Nigeria is funding. Many libraries operate with limited budgets which restrict their ability to acquire new resources, upgrade infrastructure, and implement innovative programs. Addressing funding constraints requires advocacy for increased government investment in libraries, as well as exploring alternative funding sources such as grants, donations, and partnerships with private organizations.

Access to technology is another critical challenge for libraries in Nigeria. Many libraries lack the necessary infrastructure and equipment to support digital services, such as computers, internet access, and digital databases. Enhancing access to technology involves investing in digital infrastructure, as well as providing training for library staff and users on how to effectively utilize digital resources.

Nigeria's education and healthcare systems are critical to the country's development, yet both face significant challenges that impede their effectiveness. The education sector is plagued by inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, poor teacher training, and high dropout rates. Concurrently, the healthcare system struggles with inadequate facilities, shortage of medical personnel, and limited access to essential services. This study examined how quality library and information services can address these challenges.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are library and information services that can reposition the educational and health care systems in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges militating against libraries effort in repositioning the educational and healthcare system in Nigeria?
3. What are the solutions to mitigate the identified challenges?

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey design was used in the study. The population of the study comprised 35 librarians in three polytechnic libraries in Rivers State. Census sampling technique was used to select all the 35 librarians that serve as sample for the study. A 4-point scale structured questionnaire titled "Repositioning education and healthcare through quality

library and information services scale” (REHQLISS) was used for data collection. A trial testing technique was adopted to ensure reliability of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the data and a coefficient of 0.96 was obtained. Thirty-five copies of the administered questionnaire were successfully retrieved and found valid for the analysis. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering research questions.

**Presentation of Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are library and information services that can reposition the educational and health care system in Nigeria?

**Table1:** How library and information services can reposition the educational and health care system

ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	REMARKS
1 Open educational resources	22	11	1	1	3.5	0.53	Accepted
2 Digital transformation and information literacy	20	11	4	0	3.4	0.51	Accepted
3 Access to health information resources	21	10	2	2	3.5	0.50	Accepted
4 Preservation of intellectual property and wider visibility to research outputs	18	16	1	0	3.4	0.54	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.45</b>		

Table 1, shows how library and information services can reposition the educational and health care system. All the items 1-4 have mean scores above the weighted mean of 2.50. Item 1 has a mean score of 3.5 with a standard deviation of 0.53. This means that respondents agreed that open educational resources. Item 2, has a mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of 0.51. This shows that respondents accepted that Digital transformation and information literacy can help to reposition the system. In item 3, mean score is 3.5 and SD 0.50, this means that accepted that access to health information resources will be very useful. Item 4 showed a mean score of 3.4 and SD of 0.54. This means that respondents agreed that libraries ability to preservation of intellectual property and wider visibility to research outputs.

**Research Question 2:** What are the challenges militating against libraries effort in repositioning the educational and healthcare system in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Challenges against the library

Item	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	REMARKS
1 <b>Increase in funding and policy support</b>	22	12	1		3.6	0.55	Accepted
2 Capacity building opportunities	18	13	3	1	3.3	0.053	Accepted
3 Collaborations and Partnerships:	19	12	3	1	3.3	0.53	Accepted
4 Digital Transformation:	22	11	0	1	3.5	0.55	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.40</b>		

Table 2 shows the solutions to mitigate the identified challenges. Item 1 has a mean score of 3.6 with an SD of 0.55 indicating that respondents accepted that increase in funding and policy support can be a solution. Item 2 has a mean score of 3.3 and standard deviation of 0.53 showing that providing capacity building opportunities can help. In item 3, mean score is 3.3 and SD 0.53, also shows collaboration and partnership with individual and organization can serve as solution. Item 4 showed a mean score of 3.5 and SD of 0.55 indicating that respondents accepted digital transformation can reposition the educational and health sector.

**Research Question 3:** What are the solutions to mitigate the identified challenges?

**Table 3:** Solutions to mitigate the identified challenges

	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
1	Funding and Policy Support	21	11	1	2	3.4	0.054	Accepted
2	Lack Digital Transformation	23	11	1	0	3.6	0.055	Accepted
3	Poor capacity building opportunities	16	15	3	1	3.3	0.053	Accepted
4	Lack of Collaborations and Partnerships	21	11	1	2	3.4	0.054	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>3.42</b>		

**Source: Researcher’s Field Survey Data (2024).**

Table 3 shows the challenges militating against libraries ability to promote educational and healthcare enhancement. Item 1 has a mean score of 3.4 with a standard deviation of 0.054. Lack of funding and policy support is a challenge. Item 2 has a mean score of 3.6 and standard deviation of 0.055. This means lack of digital transformation is also a challenge. Item 3, mean score is 3.3 and SD 0.053 showing that poor capacity building opportunities is a challenge. Item 4 showed a mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of 0.054 for lack of lack of collaborative partnership.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study showed that library and information services can reposition the educational and health care system through programme such as Open Educational Resources (OER), digital transformation and information literacy. This result is consistent with the findings of Zaid and Alabi (2020); Ogunbodede, et al. (2021) whose see OER as opportunity to gives staff and students access to some of the best learning materials available around the world. This avenue if properly harnessed can help to close the educational gap in healthcare, libraries support evidence-based practice by providing access to current medical research and clinical guidelines (Jones & Brown, 2021). Findings also revealed the different challenges that militate against libraries ability to promote educational and healthcare system in Nigeria to include poor of funding and policy support, lack of digital transformation, poor capacity building opportunities, lack of collaborative partnership to support library development. This finding is in line with the studies of Okoye and Ejikeme (2010), Smith (2020) whose in earlier study found out that the problem of epileptic power supply and inadequate ICT infrastructure, poor internet service are perennial problems facing the different institutions in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

The emergence of library and information service such as Open Education Resources (OER), digitization and information literacy is playing important roles in repositioning educational

and healthcare, especially in Africa where access to quality educational materials are scarce and capital intensive. However, poor funds to improve on electricity supply, internet connectivity, and digital transformation in libraries were some of the major challenges militating against libraries efforts to reposition these critical sectors.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

5. **Funding and policy support:** There should be funding and supportive policies from government and stakeholders to address infrastructural and resource gaps.
6. **Digital Transformation:** Investing in digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet, digital libraries, and online learning platforms, can significantly improve access to educational and healthcare resources.
7. **Capacity Building:** Continuous professional development for librarians and staff is essential to keep up with evolving technologies and methodologies in information management.
8. **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Establishing partnerships with international libraries, educational institutions, and health organizations can bring in expertise, resources, and best practices.

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