



## The need to equipped academy libraries in some tertiary institution/college of education

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### Abstract

Academic libraries are essential components of tertiary institutions and Colleges of Education, serving as the backbone of teaching, learning, and research. This study examines the urgent need to equip academic libraries in some Nigerian tertiary institutions, focusing on their role in enhancing student learning outcomes, supporting academic staff, and promoting digital literacy. This study used a systematic review design to examine literature published between 2020 and 2025. Relevant peer-reviewed articles, reports, and grey literature were sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, ResearchGate, and AJOL, using specific keywords. After screening for relevance and quality, eligible studies were reviewed by two independent evaluators. Results reveal persistent challenges, including inadequate funding, outdated resources, insufficient digital infrastructure, and a shortage of trained personnel. These deficiencies significantly hinder the effectiveness of academic libraries and compromise educational quality. The study further explores the implications of these challenges and highlights the necessity for government and institutional support, public-private partnerships, digital library initiatives, and continuous capacity building for library staff. It concludes that equipping academic libraries is not only a strategic investment in higher education but also a critical step toward achieving sustainable development and global competitiveness. The study recommends robust policy interventions and multi-stakeholder collaboration to reposition academic libraries as modern, resource-rich learning environments capable of meeting 21st-century academic demands.

Keywords: academic libraries; tertiary institutions; digital literacy; higher education; library development

### Introduction

Academic libraries are the intellectual backbone of any tertiary institution. They are crucial in supporting the teaching, learning, and research missions of colleges of education and other higher institutions. Equipping academic libraries in tertiary institutions is essential for fostering effective learning and research. An academic library is widely recognized as a vital component of higher

education institutions, serving as the intellectual hub for learning, teaching, and research. According to Oyedokun (2025), an academic library is a repository of knowledge that provides essential support for instructional and research activities within colleges and universities. They emphasize that academic libraries are not merely storage spaces for books, but dynamic environments that contribute to the intellectual development of students and faculty. In view of Tzanova (2020), an academic library is a structured facility designed to collect, organize, preserve, and disseminate information resources to support the academic goals of tertiary institutions. They argue that such libraries play a fundamental role in curriculum development and the academic success of learners by ensuring access to current and relevant materials.

Similarly, Sheikh et al. (2025) describe academic libraries as service-oriented institutions that provide scholarly resources and user-centered services tailored to meet the informational and research needs of the academic community. Their definition highlights the evolving role of libraries in a digital age, stressing the importance of both physical and electronic resources in supporting academic excellence. These libraries serve as key centers for accessing information, supporting both students and faculty in their academic pursuits. Modernizing them with updated resources and technology ensures their continued relevance in today's rapidly evolving academic environment. According to Fyasi, the advancement of science and technology has significantly influenced society, making information a powerful force. Yang et al. (2024) defines information as knowledge transferred or prepared for transfer, highlighting its critical role in individual and national development. To meet academic demands, libraries strive to acquire diverse and relevant resources that support learning, writing, and research. These materials are essential for students working on assignments, projects, and key academic tasks.

However, in many Nigerian tertiary institutions, particularly Colleges of Education, academic libraries remain under-equipped, underfunded, and undervalued. Despite the critical role of libraries in advancing knowledge and academic achievement, many academic libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions lack up-to-date resources, digital infrastructure, and qualified staff (Okoye et al, 2023). Usiedo et al. (2022) noted that libraries in several Nigerian institutions suffer from neglect, affecting students' access to learning materials and researchers' productivity. Consequently, there is an urgent need to re-equip academic libraries to meet the demands of modern higher education. Library is referred to as a services unit set up to cater information and research needs of its special clientele. This library since its inception has been functioning as a documentation centre for use of schools and researchers to support research through some adopted unique methods of information dissemination, such as, the use of library catalogue, preparations of accessions list, compilation of bibliographies, display of current periodicals, selective, disseminations of information.

The academic library is a strategic component of tertiary education, serving as a repository of knowledge, a center for information literacy, and a support system for curriculum delivery. Kyaw et al. (2024) emphasized that the library enhances quality teaching and learning by providing access to textbooks, journals, digital databases, and other scholarly materials. In Colleges of Education, where the focus is on training future teachers, a well-equipped library is essential to instill academic discipline, promote reading culture, and build research skills. Libraries also contribute significantly to knowledge creation and dissemination. According to Soulen and Tedrow (2022), students who utilize library resources regularly tend to perform better

academically than those who do not. Hence, the state of the library can directly influence students' academic outcomes. Several studies have documented the challenges facing academic libraries in Nigeria. A major problem is inadequate funding. Bakrin and Liasu (2024) argue that budget allocations for libraries are often insufficient, resulting in poor acquisition of books, lack of maintenance, and inability to subscribe to essential databases.

This deficiency undermines productivity and innovation in higher education. As Mbuba (2022) emphasized, effective human capital development is driven by access to critical resources, including well-equipped libraries. Additionally, institutional inequalities in resource allocation, as discussed by Mbuba (2021a), hinder national development and educational equity. The inability to adequately equip academic libraries also reflects broader public administration challenges, including mismanagement and weak policy implementation (Mbuba, 2018). Organizational stagnation due to conflict, noted by Mbuba (2016), can further impede educational service delivery. Hence, a well-structured framework for library development, backed by ethical and accountable governance, is essential for progress (Mbuba, 2021b). In many colleges, libraries are stocked with outdated books that no longer reflect current knowledge or curriculum content.

Another significant challenge is the lack of ICT facilities and e-resources. As higher education globally shifts toward digital learning, the inability of Nigerian libraries to provide access to electronic books, journals, and online catalogues places students at a disadvantage (Su, 2022; Anaekwe et al., 2025). Furthermore, the shortage of trained librarians and library technologists affects the quality-of-service delivery and user experience. Physical infrastructure is also lacking. Many libraries have poor ventilation, insufficient reading space, and inadequate lighting, making them un conducive to serious academic work. Akande et al. (2024) pointed out that most academic libraries in Nigerian Colleges of Education are outdated in structure and design, lacking the architectural and technological features of modern libraries.

To remain relevant in today's knowledge economy, academic libraries must be equipped with both print and electronic resources. The importance of modern libraries in promoting academic excellence and institutional reputation cannot be overstated. Well-equipped libraries support accreditation processes, foster interdisciplinary research, and enhance student engagement. Tlili et al. (2024) suggested that investment in digital resources, such as e-books, online journals, and virtual learning environments, can revolutionize how students learn, and lecturers teach. The integration of technology into library services also aligns with global trends in educational innovation and open access learning. Equipping academic libraries also addresses educational equity. Students in under-resourced institutions often lack the learning tools available to their peers in better-funded schools. Upgrading library facilities can bridge this gap and promote inclusive access to quality education (Jayamma et al., 2023). Building on this, it is essential to recognize the specific ways well-equipped libraries contribute to teaching, learning, and research in tertiary institutions.

Well-equipped libraries play a vital role in supporting teaching, learning, and research in tertiary institutions. They provide diverse learning materials, including books, journals, and online databases, catering to various academic disciplines and learning styles. Libraries create conducive environments through quiet study areas, collaborative spaces, and access to digital tools (Anaekwe et al., 2025). They also assist students and faculty in developing research skills,

evaluating sources, and accessing scholarly information. With reliable technology infrastructure and digital resources like e-books and multimedia content, libraries support all stages of research, from literature review to data analysis and dissemination, ensuring relevance in today's digital academic landscape (Tenya et al., 2023). The motivation for studying the need to equip academic libraries in some tertiary institutions/Colleges of Education stems from the recognition that libraries are central to academic excellence, yet many in Nigeria remain grossly under-equipped. Academic libraries are meant to support teaching, learning, and research by providing timely access to relevant and diverse information resources. However, in many tertiary institutions, especially Colleges of Education, these libraries are often stocked with outdated books, lack internet access, and have poor infrastructure, which severely limits their effectiveness (Jacinta et al., 2024). This situation is further compounded by evidence showing the adverse impact of inadequate library resources on academic performance and research output.

Studies have shown that when students lack access to current learning materials, their academic performance and research output declines (Govindarajoo et al., 2022). Furthermore, the absence of modern digital resources and information and communication technology (ICT) tools widens the digital divide, leaving students and faculty disconnected from global scholarly networks (Ajani & Luthuli, 2025). Despite government policies promoting educational development, little progress has been made in updating library facilities (Bouaamri et al., 2022). These gaps motivate this study, which seeks to highlight the current state of academic libraries in selected institutions and advocate for strategic interventions. Equipping libraries with modern resources is no longer optional; it is essential for fostering innovation, quality education, and research competence in Nigeria's higher education sector.

## **Method**

This study employed a systematic review design to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing literature on the need to equip academic libraries in tertiary institutions and Colleges of Education. The review focused specifically on literature published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure that only current and relevant data reflecting contemporary challenges and developments in academic libraries were considered. Only studies that addressed academic libraries within Nigerian tertiary institutions or Colleges of Education were included. To maintain relevance and empirical value, only peer-reviewed journal articles, academic conference proceedings, institutional reports, and grey literature with documented research methods were selected. Opinion pieces, editorials, and publications unrelated to higher education or published before 2020 were excluded from the review.

To gather relevant materials, the researcher conducted a comprehensive search using multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, ResearchGate, ERIC, and African Journals Online (AJOL). Institutional repositories of selected Nigerian universities and colleges were also explored to access grey literature and unpublished but credible academic works. The search was guided by relevant keywords and Boolean operators such as "academic libraries," "tertiary institutions," "Colleges of Education," "library funding," "library resources," "ICT in libraries," and "library challenges in Nigeria." These terms were used individually and in combination to increase the breadth and depth of the search results. Manual screening of the reference lists of selected studies was also undertaken to uncover additional relevant materials.

Following the initial search, duplicate records were removed, and all titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to the research focus. Full-text versions of potentially eligible studies were then retrieved and reviewed in detail. To ensure objectivity and consistency in the selection process, two independent reviewers evaluated the studies, and any discrepancies in the selection decisions were resolved through discussion and consensus. A structured data extraction approach was used to collect pertinent information from each included study. Key elements extracted included the author(s) and year of publication, study objectives, methodology, key findings related to library resources, infrastructure, technological integration, funding, and identified challenges, as well as the recommendations offered by the authors. This structured extraction enabled the researcher to systematically compare and analyze data across studies.

Thematic synthesis was adopted to analyze and present the data. Through this approach, recurring themes such as inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, limited access to digital resources, outdated library collections, and insufficient staffing were identified and discussed. The analysis also considered divergent findings and recommendations, allowing the study to offer a well-rounded discussion of the state of academic libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions and Colleges of Education. To ensure the credibility and reliability of the review, the methodological quality of each selected study was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists appropriate for qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods studies. Studies that lacked a clear methodology, had insufficient data, or failed to meet basic standards of academic rigour were excluded from the final synthesis.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Current Challenges Facing Academic Libraries***

Academic libraries are foundational to the mission of tertiary institutions, playing a critical role in supporting learning, research, and the dissemination of knowledge. However, in many colleges of education and other higher institutions, especially in Nigeria and other developing countries, academic libraries face a myriad of persistent challenges that limit their effectiveness. Prominent among these are inadequate funding, outdated resources and technologies, a shortage of trained library personnel, and poor infrastructure as captured in Figure 1. One of the most prominent challenges facing academic libraries is the persistent issue of underfunding. Funding determines the capacity of a library to acquire resources, maintain infrastructure, and offer quality services. Several studies highlight that many academic libraries operate on budgets that are insufficient to meet even their basic operational needs (Ajani et al., 2022). The lack of adequate financial support from government and institutional management often results in poorly stocked collections, delayed subscription renewals, and inadequate maintenance of facilities.

According to Iwegbue (2025), academic libraries in Nigeria receive a disproportionately low percentage of educational budgets compared to other departments. This fiscal neglect leads to an inability to upgrade facilities, procure contemporary materials, or invest in digital resources. Consequently, students and researchers are denied access to up-to-date academic content, negatively impacting scholarship. In today's information-driven academic landscape, access to current and digital resources is crucial. However, a recurring issue across literature is the reliance on outdated and irrelevant library collections. Many academic libraries still depend on old books and journals, with limited access to electronic databases, open access repositories, or online academic journals (Nasidi & Jika, 2023). This deficiency undermines the relevance of the library

as a research support center. Furthermore, the inability to integrate modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) into library systems severely restricts the library’s usefulness in the digital age. As Agboke and Oladokun (2024) note, libraries that lack technological tools such as digital catalogues, online databases, and automated lending systems struggle to meet the expectations of today’s tech-savvy students. The absence of robust ICT infrastructure makes it difficult for libraries to deliver services remotely or to incorporate innovative solutions like virtual reference services or e-lending. These issues are summarized in Figure 1, “Current Challenges Facing Academic Libraries,” which illustrates the interconnected problems of inadequate funding, outdated collections, and insufficient ICT capacity.

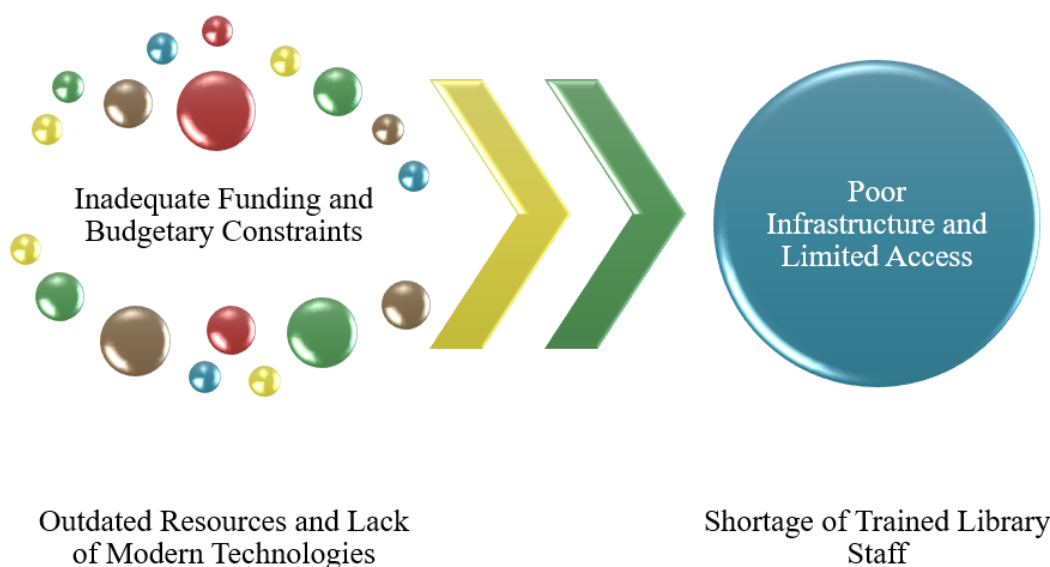


Figure 1. Current Challenges Facing Academic Libraries

Another challenge that appears consistently in the literature is the shortage of trained library personnel. Skilled librarians are essential for managing collections, supporting information literacy, and guiding users through the complexities of information retrieval. Unfortunately, many academic libraries operate with a skeleton staff, some of whom may not possess the qualifications or technical know-how required to manage 21st-century library systems (Akinola, 2022). The implications of this shortage are twofold. First, the quality of user support is compromised, as staff may lack the expertise to assist students with advanced research queries. Second, the absence of trained ICT staff impedes the integration of digital systems, further relegating academic libraries to a state of stagnation. Ajegbomogun (2022) emphasizes that human resources are as critical as physical collection; without the right personnel, even well-stocked libraries can become ineffective.

Infrastructure-related limitations are another major barrier to effective library service delivery. Many academic libraries lack adequate physical space, comfortable reading areas, lighting, air conditioning, and security for valuable materials. According to Akinlade et al. (2022), poor physical conditions in Nigerian academic libraries discourage users and diminish the library's role as a center for study and research. Limited access, both in terms of opening hours and availability of materials, is also highlighted. Some libraries operate on restricted schedules due to erratic power supply, lack of staff, or security concerns. Moreover, in institutions where digital

infrastructure is available, limited bandwidth, poor internet connectivity, and frequent power outages hinder the use of electronic resources (Abdullahi & Lawan, 2025). These infrastructural gaps further alienate students who require round-the-clock access to academic resources.

### ***The Need for Equipping Academic Libraries***

Equipping academic libraries is essential for the advancement of education in tertiary institutions and colleges of education. A growing body of literature strongly supports the assertion that well-equipped academic libraries significantly enhance teaching, learning, and research capabilities. Academic libraries are no longer just repositories of printed books; they have transformed into vibrant hubs of digital access, scholarly engagement, and lifelong learning. This discussion synthesizes scholarly perspectives on four key dimensions of this need as captured in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The Need for Equipping Academic Libraries

Enhancing student learning outcomes is one of the most frequently cited justifications for equipping academic libraries. According to Ezeanya et al, (2024), access to up-to-date, relevant, and diverse resources enhances students’ academic engagement and deepens their understanding of course content. Libraries equipped with current textbooks, academic journals, and multimedia resources facilitate independent learning and critical thinking among students. Su (2022) further argue that students perform better academically when they have access to sufficient and relevant materials, especially when preparing for examinations, completing assignments, or conducting research. The provision of learning spaces that cater to diverse study preferences, such as quiet reading zones and collaborative learning areas, also positively impacts academic outcomes (Bakrin & Liasu, 2024). In essence, libraries serve as environments where students cultivate the habits of inquiry, reflection, and synthesis, which are fundamental to academic success.

In terms of supporting academic staff and research, literature underscores the pivotal role of academic libraries in enabling scholarly productivity. Soulen and Tedrow (2022) highlight that

academic staff rely heavily on access to credible, peer-reviewed information for research, curriculum design, and classroom instruction. Without well-equipped libraries, academic staff are constrained in their ability to stay abreast of developments in their fields, hindering innovation and relevance in pedagogy. Moreover, academic libraries offer vital services such as research consultations, access to subscription-based academic journals, and institutional repositories that support the dissemination of scholarly output. According to Kyaw et al, (2024), inadequate library support can significantly reduce research output and lower the quality of education in institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the availability of comprehensive and current library collections, combined with digital research tools, is critical to academic excellence and institutional reputation.

Promoting digital literacy and 21st-century skills is another crucial dimension addressed by the literature. In a rapidly evolving digital era, it is no longer sufficient for students to rely solely on printed materials. Digital literacy, the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use digital information, is now a core academic and employability skill. According to Usiedo et al. (2022), academic libraries that are equipped with digital resources such as electronic databases, e-books, and virtual learning environments play a critical role in fostering these competencies. Additionally, access to computer labs, internet-enabled study areas, and training workshops offered through libraries prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce. These digital tools not only make information more accessible but also encourage self-directed learning and creativity. As Ojobor et al. (2025) note, investing in modern library technologies empowers students with the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Bridging the educational resource gap remains a central focus in discussions about the need to equip academic libraries. The disparity in educational opportunities between urban and rural tertiary institutions is often reinforced by unequal access to learning resources. Equipping libraries in underserved institutions is a strategic intervention to reduce this inequality. According to Ehimen (2024), academic libraries in many Nigerian colleges of education suffer from chronic underfunding, leading to outdated collections and insufficient technological infrastructure. This limits students' ability to compete with their peers in more privileged institutions. As Oyedokun (2025) argue, investing in library resources across all institutions ensures a more equitable distribution of knowledge and supports national goals for inclusive and quality education.

### ***Strategies for Improvement***

The transformation of academic libraries into vibrant hubs of learning, research, and innovation depends significantly on strategic interventions. Several scholars and policy-oriented studies have emphasized the critical need for comprehensive approaches to address the challenges facing academic libraries in tertiary institutions, particularly in developing nations such as Nigeria. Key strategies identified in the literature include government and institutional support, public-private partnerships, digital library initiatives, and capacity building for library personnel as shown in Figure 3.



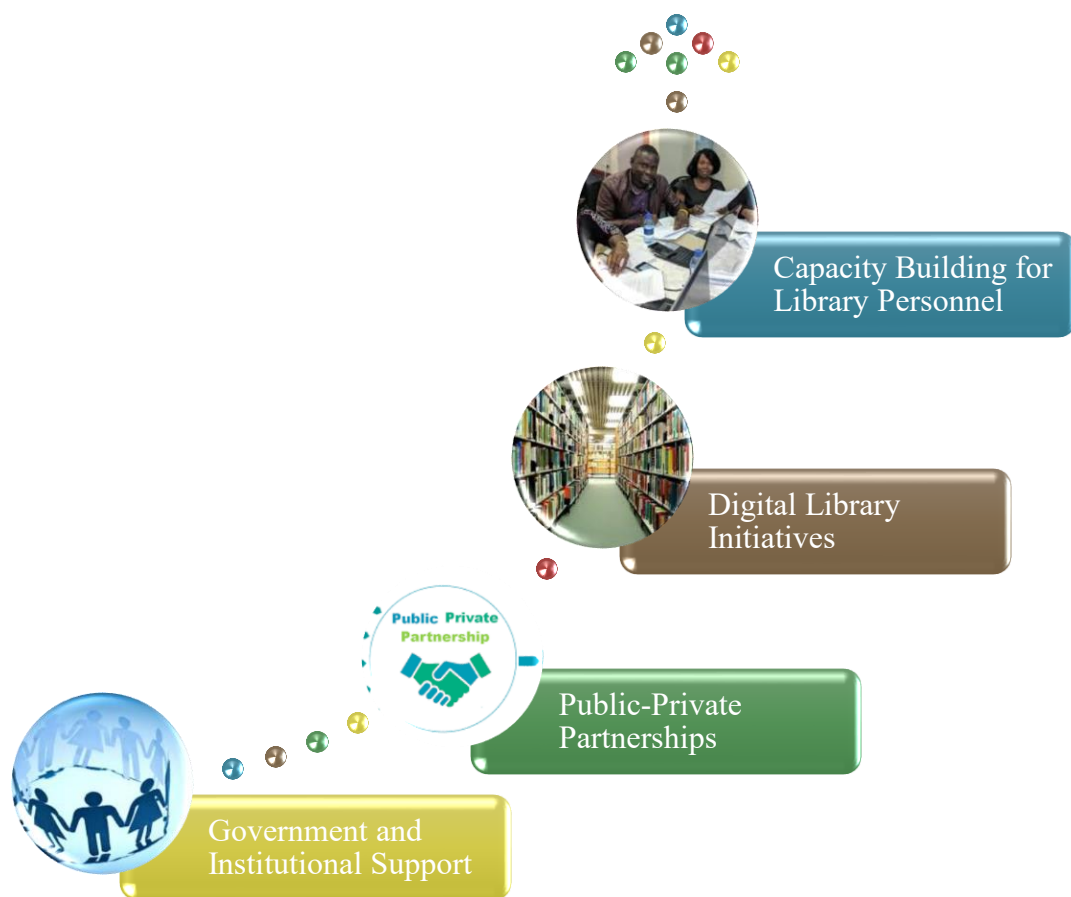


Figure 3. Strategies for Improvement

Government and institutional support is considered the bedrock of sustainable library development. According to Ezeanya et al. (2024), adequate funding and policy attention from governments are crucial for the acquisition of books, subscription to journals, procurement of digital resources, and maintenance of infrastructure. Most academic libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions suffer from systemic underfunding, which limits their ability to update resources and integrate technology (Abdullahi & Lawan, 2025). Institutional leadership also plays a vital role in prioritizing library needs within school budgets. When institutional heads value the role of libraries in achieving academic excellence, resources are more likely to be allocated effectively (Akinlade et al., 2022). Therefore, strategic alignment of library goals with institutional development plans is essential.

In response to dwindling public funds, scholars have highlighted the growing importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in revitalizing academic libraries. PPPs involve collaborative efforts between educational institutions and private organizations to mobilize resources, technology, and expertise. Ajegbomogun (2022) and Obi et al. (2024) argue that partnerships with telecom companies, publishing firms, and international donors can improve access to e-resources, fund infrastructural upgrades, and provide training for staff. For instance, the partnership between the Nigerian Universities Commission and MTN Foundation led to the provision of internet facilities in selected university libraries, thereby improving access to online research

tools. These collaborations not only inject much-needed capital but also promote innovation and accountability through shared ownership and mutual benefits.

In the digital age, library services must evolve to include electronic resources and virtual learning environments. Digital library initiatives offer a solution to physical space limitations, outdated print materials, and limited access. According to Akinola (2022), digital libraries democratize information access and allow users to retrieve scholarly resources remotely, facilitating lifelong learning. The adoption of institutional repositories, open access databases, and subscription-based academic journals has enhanced research visibility and promoted knowledge sharing. However, successful implementation of digital libraries requires investment in ICT infrastructure, reliable internet, and digital literacy among users (Agboke et al, 2025). The National Virtual Library Project (NVLP) in Nigeria, although initially well-intentioned, suffered from poor maintenance and inadequate funding, lessons which underscore the need for consistent policy and stakeholder commitment.

Equipping libraries with modern tools and resources is only effective if the human capital managing them is well-trained and motivated. Capacity building for librarians and support staff is a critical strategy for ensuring sustainability and innovation in library services. Ezema et al. (2025) emphasize that training in digital cataloguing, online information retrieval, data analytics, and user experience design enhances the relevance of librarians in contemporary academic settings. Furthermore, capacity building fosters professional development and aligns the workforce with global best practices. In-service training, workshops, and collaborations with foreign library associations can help local librarians stay abreast of emerging technologies and user expectations. Without such training, even the best-equipped libraries may remain underutilized or mismanaged.

## **Conclusions**

The findings from this study underscore the critical role academic libraries play in the educational ecosystem of tertiary institutions and Colleges of Education. Academic libraries are central to the delivery of quality education, fostering student learning, supporting research, promoting digital literacy, and bridging educational inequalities. However, the study reveals that many of these libraries remain underfunded, poorly equipped, and inadequately staffed. The absence of modern technologies, outdated materials, and poor infrastructural conditions further limit their relevance in the 21st-century academic environment. The literature strongly indicates that unless deliberate and sustained efforts are made to equip these libraries, students and academic staff will continue to experience significant limitations in accessing vital learning and research resources. Addressing these challenges is not merely an institutional obligation but a national priority in the quest to achieve quality and inclusive education as outlined in global educational development goals.

Based on the findings and synthesis of existing literature, several recommendations are proposed to improve and sustain the quality of academic libraries in tertiary institutions and Colleges of Education. Governments and institutional authorities should prioritize funding for academic libraries, ensuring that budgetary allocations cover not only the acquisition of books and journals but also investments in ICT infrastructure, internet access, and facility upgrades. Institutions are encouraged to adopt digital library initiatives such as online databases, e-books, institutional

repositories, and virtual research platforms to enhance access to information, particularly for students in remote or underserved areas. Library administrators should actively seek partnerships with private organizations, technology firms, publishing companies, and non-governmental bodies to mobilize resources, provide training, and secure donations of up-to-date materials and technologies. Regular training, workshops, and continuing education programs should be organized to strengthen the capacity of librarians and support staff, especially in digital literacy, research support, and user-centered services. Furthermore, institutions should establish mechanisms for periodic assessment of library services, infrastructure, and user satisfaction, using feedback from students and staff to guide policy and improve service delivery.

### **Data Availability**

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

All authors in this publication declare no conflict of interest regarding the title, data, location, and results of the research.

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### **Supplementary Materials**

This study does not include any supplementary materials.

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