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The Role of Libraries in Promoting Educational Advancement and Enhancing Digital Literacy in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of libraries in promoting educational advancement and enhancing digital literacy in Nigeria, with emphasis on their evolving functions within an increasingly technology-driven educational environment. The study adopted a desk research strategy, based on a systematic review and synthesis of secondary sources, including scholarly journal articles, books, conference proceedings, institutional publications, policy documents, and relevant reports. The reviewed literature indicates that libraries remain critical educational infrastructures that facilitate equitable access to information resources, support teaching and learning, promote lifelong learning, and strengthen research and knowledge creation. Increasingly, Nigerian libraries are also assuming expanded responsibilities as digital learning centres by providing access to computers, internet services, electronic databases, digital repositories, online reference services, and digital skills training. Evidence further suggests that librarians contribute significantly to users' abilities to locate, evaluate, create, communicate, and ethically use digital information. These functions are particularly relevant to Nigeria's efforts to address the digital divide and develop competencies required for participation in the knowledge economy. Nigeria's National Digital Literacy Framework identifies information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, problem solving, and device and software operation as core competence areas, providing a useful policy context for library-led digital literacy initiatives. However, the review identifies persistent barriers, including inadequate funding, unreliable electricity supply, limited internet connectivity, obsolete technological infrastructure, insufficient digital competencies among some library personnel, and weak policy implementation. The study concludes that strengthening library infrastructure, investing in continuous professional development, expanding digital literacy programmes, and fostering partnerships among libraries, educational institutions, government agencies, and technology stakeholders are essential for maximizing libraries' contributions to educational advancement and digital inclusion in Nigeria. Recent systematic evidence also reinforces the importance of sustained investment and collaborative approaches to library-led digital literacy development.

Keywords: Libraries; Educational Advancement; Digital Literacy; Information Literacy; Library Services; Digital Skills; Educational Development; ICT; E-Learning; Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Education remains a fundamental instrument for individual empowerment, social transformation, economic development, and national advancement. In the contemporary knowledge society, educational advancement depends not only on schools and qualified teachers but also on access to reliable information, relevant learning resources, technological infrastructure, and the skills required to locate,

evaluate, and use information effectively. Libraries occupy a strategic position in this process by supporting teaching, learning, research, lifelong learning, and knowledge dissemination. The traditional role of libraries as repositories of printed materials has increasingly evolved into that of dynamic learning, information, research, and digital-resource centres. This transformation is particularly relevant to Nigeria, where educational institutions are progressively integrating digital technologies into teaching, learning, and research.

The changing information environment has expanded the responsibilities of libraries to include access to e-books, e-journals, online databases, institutional repositories, digital archives, internet services, multimedia resources, and virtual reference services. Oguedoihu (2023) notes that academic libraries must continually engage with emerging technologies as users' expectations for information access become increasingly digital. Thus, contemporary library effectiveness depends not only on physical collections but also on the capacity to provide equitable access to relevant digital information and learning resources. In Nigeria, students, lecturers, and researchers increasingly depend on digital resources for academic assignments, research, communication, and online learning. UNESCO (2024) emphasises the importance of libraries in supporting media and information literacy, particularly in helping users search for, evaluate, and appropriately use information.

Educational advancement encompasses more than academic achievement; it includes knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, research competence, creativity, independent learning, problem-solving, and lifelong learning. Libraries contribute to these dimensions through orientation programmes, reference services, research assistance, information-literacy instruction, and access to scholarly resources. Olawale and Kehinde (2024) found that academic libraries in North-Central Nigeria provide programmes such as library orientation, digital-literacy workshops, and research-skills training, although inadequate promotion and limited digital access constrain participation. The increasing volume of digital information has therefore made digital literacy an essential component of contemporary education. Learners must be able to search effectively, evaluate information credibility, distinguish authoritative sources from misinformation, communicate responsibly, and create and use digital content ethically.

NITDA (2023) identifies device and software operation, information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, and problem-solving as key dimensions of digital literacy. These competencies closely align with the emerging functions of libraries as centres for digital learning and information skills development. Libraries can help students acquire these competencies through database training, electronic-resource orientation, digital research support, information-evaluation instruction, and user education. However, De Simone and Manolio (2025) identify inadequate digital infrastructure and limited access to technological equipment as continuing challenges to digital-skills development in Nigeria. These challenges also affect the ability of libraries to provide effective technology-based educational services.

Librarians are central to this transformation because of their expertise in information organisation, retrieval, evaluation, preservation, and dissemination. Sambo et al. (2022) found that Nigerian librarians possess various digital-literacy competencies but face challenges in acquiring and maintaining relevant skills. Similarly, Atchrimi and Ogunbodede (2024) reported that librarians in South-South Nigerian university libraries demonstrated basic digital competence, although inadequate ICT facilities, unstable electricity, limited training opportunities, and training costs constituted major barriers. Idhalama et al. (2025) further emphasise that digital-literacy practices among library personnel and users can contribute to improved library-service quality and user satisfaction, while Elewode and Olawale-Jimoh (2025) stress the importance of digital competencies, ICT infrastructure, accessibility tools, and user education for inclusive library services.

Libraries can also contribute to reducing the digital divide by providing shared access to computers, internet connectivity, electronic resources, and digital learning facilities, particularly for learners in underserved communities. Nevertheless, inadequate funding, obsolete ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, poor connectivity, limited electronic resources, and insufficient professional-development

opportunities continue to constrain their effectiveness. Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment in infrastructure, human-capacity development, supportive policies, and user-centred services. Consequently, the contemporary Nigerian library should be viewed not merely as a repository of books but as an educational, research, information, and digital-literacy hub. Against this background, this article examines the role of libraries in promoting educational advancement and enhancing digital literacy in Nigeria. It focuses on their contributions to teaching and learning, research, information access, digital-skills development, digital inclusion, and lifelong learning, while examining the challenges that limit effective service delivery. The article argues that adequately funded, technologically equipped, and professionally competent libraries can significantly contribute to improving educational opportunities and developing digitally literate citizens capable of participating effectively in Nigeria's emerging knowledge economy.

Certainly. For the article "The Role of Libraries in Promoting Educational Advancement and Enhancing Digital Literacy in Nigeria," the major conceptual variables can be briefly clarified as follows. The definitions are supported with recent literature and presented in an academic style.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Libraries

Libraries are organised institutions that acquire, process, preserve, and provide access to information resources and services to support education, research, knowledge creation, and lifelong learning. In the contemporary digital environment, libraries have expanded beyond traditional print collections to provide electronic resources, digital platforms, internet access, research support, and technology-enabled services. Oguedoihu (2023) emphasises the need for academic libraries to continually adapt to emerging technologies and changing information needs. More recently, Idhalama et al. (2025) describe libraries as institutions that increasingly need to strategise their services around users' changing needs in an era of rapid technological advancement.

Concept of Educational Advancement

Educational advancement refers to the improvement and expansion of teaching, learning, research, knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, academic achievement, and lifelong learning opportunities. Libraries promote educational advancement by providing learners and researchers with relevant information resources, conducive learning environments, research assistance, reference services, and opportunities for independent learning. In this regard, libraries function as important complements to formal classroom instruction by facilitating access to diverse and current educational materials.

Concept of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively and critically access, understand, evaluate, create, communicate, and share information through digital technologies. Mbandje et al. (2024) distinguish digital competence from information literacy while recognising their close relationship, particularly in the effective use and evaluation of information within digital environments. In the Nigerian library context, Idhalama et al. (2025) identify digital literacy as an important set of skills for both library personnel and users to maximise the potential of digital resources.

Concept of Information Literacy

Information literacy is the ability to recognise an information need, locate relevant information, evaluate its credibility, and use it appropriately and ethically. It is closely associated with digital literacy because learners increasingly obtain information through digital platforms. Haruna et al. (2025) note that information fluency involves evaluating and using information ethically, while digital literacy encompasses the ability to manage digital tools, data, online communication, and digital safety. Libraries can therefore strengthen information literacy through user education, database instruction, research guidance, and information-evaluation programmes.

Concept of Digital Skills

Digital skills refer to the practical abilities required to use digital devices, software, online platforms, information systems, and digital resources effectively. They include searching electronic databases, using

productivity software, communicating online, creating digital content, evaluating online information, and applying appropriate digital-security practices. Recent Nigerian research by Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024) found that university librarians demonstrated considerable competence in social networking, online bibliographic instruction, software, and other digital tools, highlighting the importance of such skills in contemporary library practice.

Concept of Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion refers to ensuring that individuals and communities have equitable access to digital technologies, connectivity, digital resources, and the skills required to participate meaningfully in the digital environment. Libraries can contribute to digital inclusion by providing shared access to computers, internet facilities, electronic resources, digital training, and inclusive information services. A recent systematic review by Adewojo (2026) found that public and academic libraries across Africa are well positioned to reduce digital disparities through digital-literacy initiatives, although inadequate funding, unreliable electricity, and sustainability challenges remain significant barriers.

Concept of Library Services

Library services encompass the range of activities and facilities provided by libraries to meet users' information, educational, research, and learning needs. These include reference services, circulation, electronic-resource access, research support, user education, digital literacy training, online information services, and digital-library services. Idhalama et al. (2025) found that digital-literacy practices are associated with the quality of library services and user satisfaction in Nigerian public university libraries.

Concept of Digital Learning

Digital learning refers to the use of digital technologies, electronic resources, online platforms, and internet-enabled environments to facilitate teaching, learning, knowledge acquisition, and collaboration. Libraries support digital learning by providing access to e-books, e-journals, databases, institutional repositories, internet facilities, and digital-learning platforms. Their role is increasingly important as students undertake academic activities both within and beyond the physical classroom.

Concept of Research Support

Research support refers to the assistance provided by libraries and librarians to help researchers identify, access, evaluate, organise, and ethically use scholarly information. It includes literature-search assistance, database training, reference management, citation guidance, research consultations, and access to scholarly publications. Digital competencies are particularly important because contemporary research increasingly depends on electronic databases and online scholarly resources.

Concept of Digital Transformation in Libraries

Digital transformation in libraries refers to the integration of digital technologies into library resources, operations, services, and user engagement. It involves the transition from predominantly print-based services to technology-supported and digitally accessible information services. Recent research on the National Library of Nigeria highlights the continuing evolution from print to digital services and recommends stronger digital-literacy training and inclusive infrastructure development.

The Evolution of Libraries in the Digital Age

The evolution of libraries in the digital age represents a significant transformation from traditional repositories of printed materials to dynamic centres for information access, digital learning, research, and knowledge creation. Traditionally, libraries focused primarily on acquiring, organising, preserving, and circulating printed books, journals, newspapers, and other physical resources. However, the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the internet, and digital publishing has fundamentally changed how information is produced, accessed, stored, and disseminated. Oguedoihu (2023) observes that academic libraries must continuously engage with emerging technologies to respond effectively to the changing information needs and expectations of contemporary users.

In Nigeria, this transformation has resulted in the increasing adoption of electronic books, electronic journals, online databases, institutional repositories, digital archives, automated library-management systems, internet services, and virtual reference services. These developments have expanded the

geographical and temporal boundaries of library services, enabling students and researchers to access educational resources beyond the traditional physical library. According to Idhalama et al. (2025), digital-literacy practices have become increasingly important to the quality of library services and users' satisfaction in Nigerian public university libraries. The contemporary library is therefore increasingly defined by its ability to integrate digital resources with traditional services.

The evolution has also transformed the role of librarians. Rather than functioning primarily as custodians of books, librarians now serve as information specialists, digital-literacy instructors, research-support providers, technology facilitators, and guides to electronic information resources. Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024) found that librarians in university libraries in Delta and Edo States possess digital competencies involving online bibliographic instruction, social networking, software applications, and other digital technologies. Such competencies enable librarians to assist users in navigating complex digital information environments and making effective use of electronic resources.

Another important dimension of this evolution is the emergence of digital libraries and institutional repositories. These platforms facilitate the preservation and dissemination of scholarly materials, including theses, dissertations, research publications, conference papers, and other institutional intellectual outputs. Digital collections also support remote learning and research, particularly where students and academics cannot regularly access physical library facilities. Consequently, libraries have become increasingly integrated into online and technology-supported educational systems.

The digital transformation of libraries, however, has not been without challenges. Inadequate funding, unreliable electricity, limited internet connectivity, insufficient ICT infrastructure, high costs of electronic resources, and gaps in digital competencies continue to affect Nigerian libraries. Haruna et al. (2025) identify digital-literacy and information-fluency gaps, alongside infrastructural limitations, as important concerns in Nigerian academic libraries. These challenges demonstrate that technological transformation requires not only the acquisition of equipment but also sustained investment in infrastructure, human capacity, digital resources, and institutional support.

The National Digital Literacy Framework developed by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA, 2023) provides an important policy context for this transformation. The framework identifies device and software operation, information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, and problem-solving as core digital competencies. These areas correspond closely with the emerging educational responsibilities of libraries and provide opportunities for libraries to become practical centres for digital-skills development.

Overall, the evolution of libraries in the digital age has changed both what libraries provide and how they serve their users. Nigerian libraries are increasingly moving from print-centred institutions towards hybrid and digitally enabled environments that support education, research, information literacy, digital inclusion, and lifelong learning. The continued success of this transformation will depend on sustainable funding, modern ICT infrastructure, reliable electricity and internet connectivity, continuous professional development, and effective implementation of digital-literacy policies. Thus, the modern library should be regarded not simply as a place where information is stored, but as a dynamic educational and digital-knowledge hub that equips individuals to participate effectively in an increasingly digital society.

Importance of Libraries in the Promotion of Educational Advancement and Enhancing Digital Literacy in Nigeria

Libraries are vital to educational advancement in Nigeria because they provide learners and researchers with access to relevant information resources, research materials, digital platforms, and supportive learning environments. Their importance has increased with the transition from print-based information services to digitally driven education. Idhalama et al. (2025) found that digital-literacy practices can improve the quality of library services and user satisfaction in Nigerian public university libraries, demonstrating that digitally competent libraries are better positioned to meet users' changing educational and information needs.

Libraries are equally important in developing digital literacy by providing access to computers, internet facilities, electronic databases, e-books, e-journals, and digital-learning resources, while librarians guide users in locating, evaluating, and ethically using digital information. Haruna et al. (2025) emphasise that digital literacy and information fluency are increasingly necessary for effective information use in Nigerian academic libraries, although inadequate ICT infrastructure and limited digital competencies remain challenges. Furthermore, Agboke and Oladokun (2025) note that emerging technologies are transforming Nigerian academic libraries by expanding access to digital resources, improving service efficiency, and promoting user engagement. More recent evidence also indicates that digital school libraries can contribute to information literacy and the development of 21st-century skills among Nigerian university students (Adeyemo, 2026). Therefore, strengthening library infrastructure, digital resources, professional competencies, and literacy programmes is essential for improving educational opportunities, reducing digital inequalities, and preparing Nigerian learners for meaningful participation in the knowledge and digital economy.

Libraries and Digital Literacy Development

Libraries play a significant role in developing digital literacy by providing access to digital technologies, electronic information resources, and structured learning opportunities. In the contemporary educational environment, libraries have moved beyond the provision of printed materials to become centres for digital information access, research support, technology training, and information-literacy development. Oguedoihu (2023) observes that academic libraries must continually adapt to emerging technologies in order to respond effectively to users' changing information needs.

In Nigeria, libraries support digital literacy by organising user education, database-searching instruction, digital-resource orientation, research-skills training, and technology-based learning programmes. These activities enable students and researchers to acquire competencies in searching, evaluating, organising, creating, and ethically using digital information. NITDA (2023) identifies information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, problem-solving, and device/software operation as key components of digital literacy. These competencies closely align with the emerging functions of modern libraries.

The digital competencies of librarians are equally important. Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024) report that university librarians in Delta and Edo States possess various digital skills that support electronic information services and research activities. Similarly, Haruna et al. (2025) emphasise the importance of digital literacy and information fluency among librarians and library users, particularly as artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies transform information environments. However, inadequate ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, limited internet access, insufficient training, and inadequate funding continue to restrict the effectiveness of digital-literacy initiatives in Nigerian libraries.

Therefore, libraries should be strengthened through modern ICT infrastructure, continuous training and retraining of librarians, reliable internet and electricity, accessible electronic resources, and regular digital-literacy programmes. When adequately supported, libraries can serve as effective platforms for developing digitally competent students, researchers, and citizens and thereby contribute significantly to educational advancement and Nigeria's digital transformation.

Relationship Between Libraries, Educational Advancement and Digital Literacy in Nigeria

Libraries, educational advancement, and digital literacy are closely interconnected components of contemporary education in Nigeria. Libraries provide the information resources, technological facilities, learning environments, and professional support required for effective teaching, learning, and research. As educational activities increasingly depend on digital resources, the ability of students and researchers to access, evaluate, and use information effectively has become essential. Thus, libraries serve as an important link between access to educational resources and the development of digital competencies.

The relationship is particularly evident in the way libraries integrate digital resources and literacy programmes into their services. Idhalama et al. (2025) established that digital-literacy practices contribute

to improved library-service quality and user satisfaction in Nigerian public university libraries, indicating that users with stronger digital competencies are better positioned to utilise available electronic resources effectively. Similarly, Haruna et al. (2025) emphasised that digital literacy and information fluency are essential for navigating digital information environments, although inadequate ICT infrastructure and limited digital skills continue to constrain effective library services in Nigeria.

Libraries therefore contribute to educational advancement by providing students with access to e-books, e-journals, databases, digital repositories, internet facilities, and research-support services, while librarians help users develop the skills necessary to exploit these resources. Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024) found that university librarians in Delta and Edo States possessed substantial digital competencies, including the use of online bibliographic tools and digital technologies. More recent evidence also shows that digital school libraries can enhance information literacy and 21st-century skills among Nigerian university students (Adeyemo, 2026). Consequently, effective libraries facilitate access to educational resources, digital literacy enhances the ability to use those resources, and both ultimately contribute to improved learning, research, and educational advancement in Nigeria.

Review of Existing Literature

The literature on libraries, educational advancement, and digital literacy in Nigeria demonstrates that libraries have moved beyond their traditional role as repositories of printed materials to become important centres for information access, research, digital learning, and skills development. The increasing integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into education has made digital literacy an essential competency for students, researchers, teachers, and librarians. Consequently, contemporary libraries are expected to provide both physical and digital resources while helping users develop the competencies required to access, evaluate, and use information effectively.

Oguedoihu (2023) observes that academic libraries must continuously adapt to emerging technologies in response to changing users' information needs. This transformation has resulted in the expansion of library services to include electronic books, electronic journals, online databases, digital repositories, internet services, virtual reference, and technology-supported research assistance. The implication is that libraries now play a more direct role in supporting educational advancement by providing learners with timely and diverse information resources. Similarly, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA, 2023), through the National Digital Literacy Framework (NDLF), identifies information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, problem-solving, and device and software operation as major components of digital literacy. These competencies closely correspond with the emerging educational functions of libraries.

Recent literature further establishes the relationship between digital literacy and the effectiveness of library services. Idhalama et al. (2025) examined digital-literacy practices in public university libraries in Nigeria and found that investment in digital literacy contributes to improved service delivery and user satisfaction. Their review indicates that digitally literate library personnel and users are better positioned to exploit electronic resources, conduct literature searches, and engage effectively with digital library services. The authors therefore recommend that Nigerian university libraries integrate comprehensive digital-literacy programmes into their services and provide continuous training for both staff and users.

The availability and accessibility of digital resources also constitute important factors in educational advancement. Idhalama et al. (2025) found that although Nigerian public university libraries are increasingly developing digital collections and services, their effective utilisation remains constrained by inadequate funding, inconsistent internet connectivity, infrastructural limitations, and insufficient digital literacy among users. The authors argue that improving infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring sustainable funding are necessary for libraries to maximise their contribution to education and research. This finding suggests that merely providing electronic resources is insufficient; users must also possess the digital competencies required to locate, evaluate, and utilise such resources effectively.

Haruna et al. (2025) reviewed artificial intelligence literacy, digital literacy, and information fluency in Nigerian academic libraries. Their findings indicate that digital literacy encompasses the ability to

manage digital tools and data, communicate online, and maintain safety in digital environments, while information fluency involves evaluating and using information ethically. However, inadequate ICT infrastructure, ineffective online access, and insufficient digital and information-searching skills among some library staff and users remain barriers to effective literacy programmes. The authors consequently advocate stronger collaboration among libraries, policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to promote digital and information literacy.

Evidence from Nigerian university libraries also suggests that librarians' own digital competencies influence their ability to support education and research. Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024), in a study of university libraries in Delta and Edo States, found that librarians possessed relatively high levels of digital skills, including the use of social networking, online bibliographic instruction, software, and other digital tools. Their findings further indicated a relationship between librarians' digital capabilities and research productivity. This finding is particularly relevant to educational advancement because librarians with stronger digital competencies are better equipped to provide research assistance, facilitate electronic-resource use, and support students and academics in navigating contemporary information environments.

The literature also highlights the role of libraries in developing information literacy and twenty-first-century skills. Recent evidence from the Nigerian school-library context identifies information literacy, critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital citizenship as increasingly important competencies for learners. School libraries and professionally trained librarians can support these competencies through curriculum-linked instruction, guided information searching, credibility evaluation, and ethical use of digital information. However, funding limitations, inadequate staffing, infrastructure deficits, and policy-implementation gaps continue to limit the development and utilisation of school libraries in Nigeria.

Public libraries also contribute to literacy and educational development by providing free or affordable access to information resources and creating supportive learning environments. Abubakar Ado and Sani Ahmad (2025) emphasise that public libraries can promote literacy through relevant reading materials, information services, user-centred programmes, and learning opportunities. Their desk-based review further argues that public libraries can sustain literacy development in the digital era by incorporating information and digital-literacy initiatives into their services. This demonstrates that the contribution of libraries to educational advancement extends beyond formal educational institutions to the wider community.

Another important development is the growing recognition of professional development as a prerequisite for effective digital library services. Azeez and Chinwe (2024), reporting on the National Library of Nigeria's digital-literacy training initiative, noted that the programme was designed to strengthen the digital competencies of library and information professionals and improve their capacity to manage digital resources and engage users through digital platforms. The initiative reportedly attracted more than 3,500 applicants, with 750 professionals selected for training. This evidence reinforces the argument that continuous professional development is essential if librarians are to remain effective facilitators of digital learning and information access.

Overall, the existing literature indicates a strong conceptual relationship between libraries, educational advancement, and digital literacy. Libraries provide the resources and learning environments required for educational development, while digital literacy enables users to exploit those resources effectively. However, the literature also reveals persistent challenges involving inadequate funding, unreliable electricity, limited internet connectivity, insufficient ICT infrastructure, low user awareness, and gaps in professional digital competencies. Recent studies therefore advocate sustained investment in digital infrastructure, continuous staff training, user-oriented digital-literacy programmes, and stronger institutional and governmental support. The reviewed literature provides a strong basis for examining how Nigerian libraries can be repositioned as strategic educational and digital-literacy hubs capable of contributing to improved learning, research, digital inclusion, and lifelong education.

Strategies for Strengthening Libraries in Nigeria

Strengthening libraries in Nigeria requires a coordinated approach involving adequate funding, modern ICT infrastructure, reliable electricity, professional development, digital-resource provision, and supportive government policies. Oguedoihu (2023) argues that academic libraries must continuously adapt to emerging technologies and changing information needs by integrating digital resources and technology-driven services into their operations. Similarly, Avwioroko and Ogbomo (2024) emphasise the importance of librarians' digital competencies, noting that skills in digital technologies, online bibliographic tools, and electronic information services are increasingly essential for effective library and research services.

Another important strategy is the provision of continuous training and retraining for librarians and users. Haruna et al. (2025) recommend strengthening digital and information-literacy competencies to enable library professionals and users to effectively navigate emerging digital and artificial-intelligence environments. Furthermore, Idhalama et al. (2025) highlight the need for investment in digital infrastructure, electronic resources, staff competencies, and user-oriented digital-literacy programmes to improve library-service quality and user satisfaction in Nigerian universities. The implementation of the National Digital Literacy Framework should also be strengthened, as NITDA (2023) provides a structured framework covering device and software operation, information and data literacy, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, safety, and problem-solving.

Therefore, Nigerian libraries should prioritise sustainable funding, reliable electricity and internet connectivity, modern ICT facilities, continuous professional development, expanded electronic collections, digital-literacy programmes, and stronger collaboration with government, educational institutions, technology organisations, and development partners. These strategies will enable libraries to respond effectively to changing educational needs, reduce digital inequalities, and strengthen their contribution to educational advancement and digital literacy in Nigeria.

Challenges involved in the Role of Libraries in Promoting Educational Advancement and enhancing Digital Literacy in Nigeria

Despite the significant contributions of libraries to educational advancement and digital literacy, several challenges limit their effectiveness in Nigeria. Inadequate funding remains a major constraint, affecting the acquisition of current books, electronic resources, computers, internet services, and other modern library facilities. Poor ICT infrastructure and unreliable electricity supply also hinder the effective operation of digital library services and users' access to electronic resources (Atchrimi & Ogunbodede, 2024).

Another challenge is limited internet connectivity and the high cost of digital resources. In some Nigerian educational institutions, inadequate bandwidth, expensive subscription databases, and limited access to digital devices restrict students' and researchers' ability to exploit electronic information resources. De Simone and Manolio (2025) identify inadequate digital infrastructure and limited access to technological equipment as important barriers to digital-skills development in Nigeria.

Inadequate digital competencies among some librarians and users constitute another challenge. The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence, digital databases, online learning platforms, and other technologies requires continuous professional development. Haruna et al. (2025) observe that gaps in digital and information fluency can reduce the effective utilisation of digital library resources. Similarly, Sambo et al. (2022) emphasise the need for continuous development of librarians' digital-literacy competencies.

Other challenges include low awareness and utilisation of library services, inadequate institutional support, insufficient professional development opportunities, obsolete equipment, cybersecurity concerns, misinformation and disinformation, and weak implementation of library and digital-literacy policies. These challenges collectively reduce the capacity of libraries to function effectively as educational and digital-literacy centres.

Therefore, addressing these challenges requires sustainable funding, reliable electricity and internet infrastructure, regular training and retraining of librarians, provision of modern ICT facilities, improved

digital-resource subscriptions, stronger institutional policies, and collaboration between government, educational institutions, libraries, and technology stakeholders. Such measures would enable Nigerian libraries to maximise their contribution to educational advancement and the development of digitally competent citizens.

CONCLUSION

Libraries play a vital role in promoting educational advancement and enhancing digital literacy in Nigeria. Their traditional responsibility of providing access to books and other information resources has expanded to include electronic resources, digital databases, internet services, research support, information-literacy programmes, and digital-skills development. The reviewed literature demonstrates that libraries can significantly support teaching, learning, research, independent learning, digital inclusion, and lifelong education when they are adequately equipped and effectively managed.

The development of digital literacy has further strengthened the educational relevance of libraries. Through librarians' guidance and structured user-education programmes, learners can acquire essential skills for locating, evaluating, creating, communicating, and ethically using digital information. However, inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, limited internet connectivity, high costs of electronic resources, inadequate professional development, and insufficient digital competencies continue to constrain the effectiveness of Nigerian libraries. Addressing these challenges requires sustained government and institutional investment, continuous training and retraining of librarians, improved ICT infrastructure, reliable internet and electricity, and stronger implementation of digital-literacy policies.

In conclusion, libraries should be repositioned as strategic educational and digital-literacy hubs rather than merely repositories of books. Strengthening their technological capacity, human resources, digital collections, and user-centred services will enhance their ability to support educational advancement and bridge digital inequalities. Effective collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, libraries, librarians, technology providers, and other stakeholders is therefore essential for developing digitally literate learners and researchers capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's knowledge-driven and digital economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reviewed literature on the role of libraries in promoting educational advancement and enhancing digital literacy in Nigeria, the following nine recommendations are proposed:

1. Increase Sustainable Library Funding:

Government and educational institutions should provide adequate and sustainable funding for libraries to enable them to acquire current books, e-books, electronic journals, databases, computers, and other relevant digital resources.

2. Upgrade ICT Infrastructure:

Libraries should be equipped with modern computers, high-speed internet, digital databases, institutional repositories, adequate networking facilities, and other ICT infrastructure necessary for effective digital information services.

3. Provide Reliable Electricity Supply:

Educational institutions and government agencies should ensure reliable electricity for libraries. Alternative energy sources, such as solar power and backup systems, should be provided where necessary to sustain digital library operations.

4. Strengthen Digital Literacy Programmes:

Libraries should regularly organise digital-literacy training, workshops, and practical orientations to equip students, researchers, teachers, and other users with skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and ethically using digital information.

5. Continuous Training and Retraining of Librarians:
Librarians should be provided with regular professional-development opportunities in areas such as digital technologies, artificial intelligence, electronic-resource management, cybersecurity, information literacy, and emerging library technologies.

6. Improve Access to Electronic Resources:
Nigerian libraries should expand access to affordable and high-quality e-books, e-journals, scholarly databases, open educational resources, digital repositories, and other online learning materials to support teaching, learning, and research.

7. Promote Digital Inclusion:
Libraries, particularly public, school, and community libraries, should provide affordable or free access to computers, internet facilities, and digital-learning resources to reduce inequalities experienced by learners and communities with limited personal access to technology.

8. Strengthen Policy Implementation and Institutional Collaboration:
Government should strengthen the implementation of the National Digital Literacy Framework, while libraries should collaborate with educational institutions, NITDA, technology organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop sustainable digital-literacy initiatives.

9. Promote Information Evaluation and Ethical Digital Use:
Libraries should intensify programmes that teach users how to identify misinformation and disinformation, evaluate the credibility of online sources, protect personal information, avoid plagiarism, respect intellectual property, and use artificial intelligence and other digital technologies responsibly.

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