



The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on LIS Education and Library and Information Services in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on learning and academic libraries in Nigeria. Objective of the study was to examine the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on student academic performance, use of libraries and academic innovation in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The study used a well-structured e-questionnaire to obtain data from 246 respondents from fifteen (15) tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 was used for data analysis. Findings from the study disclosed that Covid-19 pandemic have not only affected the functionality of Nigerian school system, but also had a great impact on students mental wellbeing. It showed that there is a significant relationship between the pandemic and learning and use of libraries. Furthermore, finding disclosed the low and negligence in technological academic aids, innovations in Nigerian schools which have long impact on learning. It was recommended among others that the use of online learning should be introduced to schools. This will enable both schools and students in remote environment to have access to educational materials at their convenient and also to appreciate technological advancement and be globally competitive.

Keyword: Covid-19 pandemic, LIS Education Library & Information Services, Nigeria.

1.1 Introduction

The novel nature of the covid-19 has caused so much panic with the world just getting improved, understanding the virus. The paucity of information about the spread, prevention, symptoms, treatments led to an infodemic – an excessive amount of information-about a problem, which is sometimes incorrect and can have a negative impact/effect on hiding a solution.

The first case of covid-19 was

discovered in Nigeria on February 27, 2020, in Lagos state from an Italian who came to work in Ogun State but operates from Lagos state. From that day, the fear of covid-19 escalated into a palpable fear, towards the end of March with more cases confirmed, millions of Nigerians were scared to leave the-homes which led to the closure of public functions, offices, markets and other activities. The first lockdown was announced by president Buhari in Lagos, Ogun and federal capital Territory,

Abuja. This was followed by nationwide lockdown, all roads leading from one state to another and schools nationwide were all put on indefinite lockdown by the president. The reason given by the federal government of Nigeria was that it is a necessary measure to help curb the spread of the corona virus pandemic. At critical moments like the covid-19 pandemic, when virtually all human activities are at stand still, it is the time to let the society know the importance of librarians and the role of librarians in the organization and dissemination of information. Library is an organized collection of books and other electronic information resources kept for reading and consultation. Public libraries amongst others could be generally referred to as a democratically organized information resource centers, hence its nature is to serve every citizen irrespective of their age, academic and religious affiliations.

The world has experienced a massive change as a result of the novel, Covid-19. These changes are not without an accompanying and associated risk. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected different sectors of the economy in diverse ways. The pandemic have affected humans irrespective of nationality, level of education, income or gender. However its consequences have more impact on the most vulnerable than others. The educational sector is no exception to this. Most students from wealthy homes, however was able to cope within this period by finding their way past closed school doors to alternative learning opportunities. Unlike those from less-privileged homes, majority of the students from deprived backgrounds were mostly shut as a result of their institution shut down. A pandemic is an outbreak of a disease which spread over a wide area cutting across countries or continents. It affects more people and takes more live faster than an epidemic (Nagarka, 2020).

Covid-19 pandemic have uncovered countless inadequacies in education systems,

ranging from access to the broad band and computers needed for online education and the accommodating environments that will facilitate learning, up the misalignment between the resources and needs. The lockdown preventive in response to Covid-19 have interrupted conventional schooling nationwide. To remain relevant, in this current dispensation, there is need for tertiary institutes to reinvent their learning environments that enables digitalization which will aid in expanding and complementing student-teacher and other relationships so as to achieve educational goal.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Educational sector is severely affected by this global crisis. Besides, it will be active to remain affected if preventive measures are not taken to resuscitate and digitize learning. The number of people using academic libraries for learning and research purposes within the couple of months is declining drastically and this have the tendency to pose a great threat to both research and innovation of any country given its role in national development. There has been a continuous disruption in learning method, as students are finding it difficult to cope with the new disposition of using software application such as zoom in learning, especially those in deprived and remote areas in the city. Most students are beginning to be worried about their academic performances as the zeal to read, have decreased also.

While some students are mentally fatigued, most librarians in schools have been forced to be redundant during this period, thus, creating a lacuna in the system. Furthermore, given the urgent need of higher education institutions to shift to online learning platform, the major challenges is on the issue of weakness of quality assurance of such educational deliveries, as most staff are not properly equipped for such exercise. It is based on this background that the researcher set to investigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic

on learning and academic libraries in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following are objectives of this study.

1. To examine the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on students use of libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
2. To examine the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on students use of libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
3. To investigate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on academic innovations in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tested:

Ho¹: Covid-19 has no significance impact on students' academic performances in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Ho²: There is no significance relationship between Covid-19 and student use of libraries in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Ho³: Covid-19 has no effect on academic innovation in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

2.1 Literature Review

With the whole world currently under the strangle hold of the dreaded virus disease outbreak, public libraries are burdened with frontline functions as health workers, researchers and pharmaceutical companies. This is because of the infodemic that resulted from the flip flop of governments and agencies as regards to information dissemination regarding the virus outbreak. Chuks-Ibe et al, (2022) note that pandemics have always been challenging times in every society. However, response and recovery periods are crucial times that every member of the society must come together to work as one. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new reality and upended the norm that we have become used to. Recovery periods are

associated with general uncertainty with people eager to get quality, relevant and timely information from the government and other relevant agencies.

Libraries as major information resource centers are expected to be at the center of the dissemination of reliable and timely information to citizens which the WHO termed critical. Leveraging on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), public libraries and other relevant agencies at this time should take up the responsibility of ensuring that the citizens are well informed about the state of the nation using every medium at their disposal. The Nigerian response to the corona virus at best can be described as a calamity. The country displayed high level of negligence, unpreparedness and unwillingness to deliver quality healthcare.

Life in rural communities across Nigeria was nasty, brush and short because of the paucity of social amenities and vulnerabilities of lives in the grassroots and COVID-19 has aggravated the fault lines between rural/urban dwellers. Establishing this claim as a fact before legislators in the National Assembly, Mr. Boss Mustapha, Chairman of presidential task force (PTF) on Covid-19, lamented that he never know that Nigeria's health care infrastructure and delivery was in total ruins". Capacity to test for the virus very low, with a paltry 350 ventilators and 350 ICU beds available to the entire population of about 200 million people (Dixit, Oqundeji, and Onwujekwu, 2020), Measures and policies so far taken by the government have not been commensurate with the magnitude of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the directives from the government, public libraries were shut completely without the ability to support government policies on the Covid-19 pandemic. This has totally shut out the information dissemination role public libraries were supposed to play. So much of the policies of the government seem to have stemmed from ignorance of the functions of

libraries in general and public libraries in particular. This has stifled any meaningful impact that public libraries in these times would have made.

Many libraries in had managed to provide virtually to support their users which includes; reference services, document delivery, literature searches and systematic reviews, and that some of the libraries have also initiated online webinar sessions to keep in touch with their users using some web platforms like the Google classroom, Google handouts, Skype or zoom during the recent lockdown. Public libraries strive to make the necessary information resources available through the provision of free online homework and help students with access to a wide range of e-books, audio books, newsites magazines, school assignments, and streaming videos to help people get through the covid-19 pandemic.

There are many strategies to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Ali and Gatiti (2020) explain in their work, “international perspectives and initiatives” that social distancing can help to prevent the spread of COVID-19, yet the role of the librarian is the key to support public health awareness and in supporting research teams, to provide routine services to regular library users. He limited his work to Pakistan librarians and explained the librarian's responsibility in following the guidelines provided by the government during the pandemic situation.

In their survey, Aristovnik et al (2020), found out that higher education students' lives have been impacted, leaving them confused about their prospects. Students found it difficult to adjust to the digital transition of the academic curriculum due to lack of preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic; with their studies, their personal and emotional behavior was influenced. According to Asif and Singh (2020), the pandemic has affected the users in finding the

information they need from the libraries due to the worldwide lockdown. Preventive measures such as using the sanitizer, maintaining social distancing, wearing of mask at all times, making use of online platforms for resource sharing are to be taken by the libraries. By following health and Hygiene habits, keeping the surface clean and tidy, including library computer desks, switches, doornobs, advising sick people to stay at home, and limiting the library users in the reading rooms could curb the spread of COVID-19.

In his study on “Role of library professionals in a pandemic situation like COVID-19”, Bhati (2020), depicts that library professionals have many challenges to face and to overcome these challenges, a librarian should have very good knowledge about everything, service-oriented mentality, presentation skill, understanding, and cultural diversity, managerial skills along with technical and communication skills. The current situation of pandemics demands the librarian to play a multi-dimensional role to meet the demands of the users. Social distancing and other approaches in maintaining hygiene premises can promote better use of library resources. The impacts are on the declined economic circle, employment reduction, and restriction of travelling to important places. This has made necessary to support online users with the help of social media and government aided information sources. The lockdown period has made it clear the importance of using digital resources.

From the study “Reopening libraries in COVID-19 pandemic, challenges and recommendations”, Metri (2020) has suggested that the libraries have to adopt new methods to prevent the spreading of COVID - 19 until the virus is part of human life. The author suggested different steps to breaking the chain from the virus to spread in library premises. Formulated four levels of library functioning based on the number of active cases of COVID-19 in the place, they are more

or less usual, few restrictions, minimum service, and the complete closure of the library at places where the number of COVID-19 cases is above 5,000. The author connoted certain approaches while running the library, such as formulating library policy, handling materials, maintenance of social distancing, staff safety, limitations on user's entry, etc.

Federick and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020), in their study in the field of budgeting and the strategy of the academic library during COVID-19 pandemic stated that the pandemonium situation and the lockdown redirected the library investment towards digital resources and services. Most of the libraries were confident about supporting remote research and learning. Pandemic had a budgetary impact on the libraries, and the most affected were public institution, staff well-being was given priority while making crucial decisions.

2.2 Role of Academic and Public Libraries During a Pandemic

Academic libraries are established to provide educational resources that support teaching/learning, research and community service. Public libraries were established to carry out certain functions to improve disseminating initial and timely information to the general public which it services. Functions of public libraries can also be classified as roles of public libraries. Folorunso and Folorunso (2010) highlight the major roles of public libraries which include: Provision of information for planning; Providing political and economic information; Providing educational information and facilities; Undertaking researches; Organizing enlightenment programs; Promoting culture; Providing recreational services; Serves as the engine room for national development. These functions highlight how public libraries have

been construed by the society to act in every spare of society. The roles are further heightened when emergencies occur, emergencies like the COVID-19 outbreak. Pandemics are periods of emergencies where people and government need adequate and timely information disseminated. Aabo, (2004) in buttressing how libraries can function during periods of emergencies stated that a key purpose of public libraries was to promote enlightenment, education and other cultural activities through information dissemination and by making books and other suitable information materials available and free of charge.

Pandemics are never a period devoid of tension and so much information flying around albeit with a mix of fake and authentic information. There are confusion, panic and anxiety about the uncertainty surrounding this period. The public libraries in themselves are not able to be anything, but the libraries and information specialists using the plat form to help the society to cope with the circumstances. According to (Ali and Gatiti, 2020) there are three dimensions to the roles that library and information professionals play or can play during pandemics, they include:

1. Promoting public health awareness by creating and disseminating timely information relating to preventive measures. Liberians need to engage the community on all available platforms by sharing evidence based information about this pandemic. Also, providing other useful information on histories of those recovering from the corona virus, nutrition and lifestyle choices that could aid the prevention and management of the virus when infected.
2. Supporting search teams, researchers and faculty working on solutions by providing information regarding latest developments, research and literature. As

experts at information provision, libraries could support medical staff, academics battling to find solutions and research teams by providing access to relevant studies and well-known databases relating to the covid-19

- Meeting the core needs of regular library users seeking all kind of information Liberians and information experts from the public Liberians still need to continue providing services to its traditional users based albeit leveraging on other platform outside the physical space of the library provision of virtual support document delivery, literature search, systematic reviews and webinars on a number of key to pies via zoom. Google meet, Skype, webex, and so on. Covide-19 roles of library and information professionals provide traditional services to library users in spite of lockdowns. Provide researches, faculty, etc. with latest research and evidence, provide public health awareness on preventive measures

3.1 Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design and a well-structured questionnaire to obtain data from 165 students, 60 librarians and 60 academic staff from four (4) tertiary institutions in Nigeria (ABSU, EBSU, IMSU and FUTO), via

WhatsApp platform and Facebook platform. However, due to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, a convenient sampling technique was used to select a sample of 19 respondents' from each of the institutions. However, only 246 respondents were found useful for further analysis which also constituted the sample use of the study. The questionnaire sent online through the two platforms was structured in 5 sectors (section A.E). Section A, contained demographical variables of the respondents. Section B contained five (5) vital questions on Covid-19 pandemic, Section C contained major questions on students' academic performances. Section D composes of pertinent questions on the use of libraries, E contains suitable questions on academic innovations. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation movement with the help of SPSS 23.0. Descriptive analysis was adopted to analyze the demographic features of the respondents.

4.1 Data Presentation and Interpretation Hypothesis one

Ho1: Covid-19 has no significance impact on student's academic performances in Nigerian tertiary institutions
The objective was to exercise the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on student academic performance in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Table 1: Correlations

		Covid-19 Pandemic	Students' academic performance
Covid-19	Pearson Correlation	1	486
	Sig (2-tailed)		020
	N	246	246
Student Academic Performance	Pearson	486	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	020	
	N	246	246

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 Level (2-tailed)

Table 1.0 above reveals the result of the correlation analysis performed to verify the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on student's academic performance. The result reveals that there is a moderate relationship between Covid-19 pandemic and student's academic performances with r value 0.486 (48.696) and p value of 0.020 which is less than 0.05 level of significant. The implication of this is less than 0.05 level of significant. The implication of this is that there is a positive relationship between Covid-19 pandemic and student academic performance, though the relationship is moderate, but it is significant since P value is 0.020 which is less than the 0.05 level of significant. The decision will be to reject the null hypothesis that states that Covid-19 has no significant impact on student's academic performances in Nigeria

tertiary institutions. This also suggests that student's performances in terms of innovation, presentation, reasoning, test and examination, covid-19 have contributed 48.6% to the fall in student's performances. This is because most students have been rendered mentally fatigued, as most finds it difficult to read and comprehend due to the poor learning environment at home, and also not conversant and unable to adapt with most alternative means of learning introduced in most institutions.

Hypothesis Two

Restatement of hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between covid-19 pandemic and student's use of libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 2: Correlations:

		Covid-19 Pandemic	Students' academic performance
Covid-19	Pearson Correlation	1	522
	Sig (2-tailed)		002
	N	264	246
Student Academic performance	Pearson	522	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	002	
	N	246	246

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2, above explains the results of the expression analysis on the influence of covid-19 pandemic on academic innovations. The analysis revealed that covid-19 pandemic has a significant influence on academic innovations.

This suggests that Covid-19 pandemic can predict and explain variations in academic innovations. For any variation or changes that

may have occurred in Academic innovations, covid-19 pandemic accounted for 31.8% ($R^2=0.318$) while the remaining 68.2% can be explained by other factors that are not captured in the model. Also, the significant at (Sig level=0.000; $P < 0.05$). The effect of covid-19 pandemic on academic innovations is 0.05. The decision will be to reject the null hypothesis that states that covid-19 pandemic

has no effect on academic innovations in Nigeria tertiary institutions. From line, it can be stated that through the emergence of covid-19 pandemic which truncated and disrupted academic activities. Institutions were able to revolutionize academic world by developing new system educational technology that enhances learning and replaced the conventional learning method.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic and its distributions have affected not only the school system, but also the entire library system. However, the pandemic also exposed the weakness in our educational system and created opportunities for restructuring and adopting an innovative form of education. From the analysis above, we conclude that the pandemic had a great impact on learning as it created mental stress, demoralized students and halt educational system. However, it created window for advancement of learning and technologies.

Furthermore, it is concluded that it rendered the library structure ineffective, as the imposition of the lock-down in virtually all tertiary institutions deprived and restrained users and librarians from effective utilization of both library resources and facilities.

Recommendations

From the findings, for tertiary institutions to survive in the past covid-19 period, schools need to adopt the following;

1. The use of online learning should be introduced to schools. This will enable both schools and students to appreciate technological advancement and be globally competitive.
2. As a measure to encourage learners, tuition fees should be subsidized, an

awarding of scholarship to students to help them withstand the economic effect of the covid-19 pandemic.

3. Libraries should be reformed, restructured and installation of e-libraries in all schools. By granting all eligible students and researchers internet access to the central libraries, this will make the libraries easy to access even from a remote area.

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