

**USING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IN SERVICE DELIVERY DURING COVID-19
PANDEMIC SITUATION: A CASE STUDY OF GOOD-LUCK EBELE JONATHAN LIBRARY,
YOBE STATE UNIVERSITY, DAMATURU**

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ABSTRACT

The article highlights the roles of libraries and the library personnel played during the emergency circumstances of the community spread of the virus of Corona Virus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19) worldwide. The study suggests that libraries cannot afford to close down their formal duties of providing information to their clientele. During the situation of lockdown, the libraries can provide the relevant information and knowledge sources to the information seekers including lecturers/teachers, students and researchers through various online and web sources. Besides performing these formal roles, Good-luck Ebele Jonathan library have the social roles to play which includes the roles of disseminating awareness about the precautions to be taken for prevention of the spread of COVID-19, dispersal of the guidelines of government in community and playing motivational role in boosting the morale of the people. The paper also discussed some challenges faced by Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan library and librarians in terms of using appropriate ICT gadgets for dissemination of information during COVID-19 as various social media platforms were discussed. On the other hand, problems associated with using these platforms which includes funds, manpower, electricity among others were also discussed and finally recommendations were drawn on the use of these platforms.

Key-words; Social Media, COVID 19, Library, Online-resources, E-Learning

INTRODUCTION

Mankind has faced many tough pandemic situations throughout history where some of them were more dangerous for the whole community of humans. This time once again every country is faced` a very tough situation, fighting with a hidden enemy called corona virus (COVID-19). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Covid-19 as an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus (World Health Organization, 2020). Corona virus is a new virus which is spreading all over the world very rapidly. In most of the cases, people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience illness and recover without requiring special treatment. People of higher age groups and those with underlying medical treatments like dialysis, diabetes, respiratory diseases, cancer etc. are more likely to develop serious problems. All over the world, Library Professionals are facing different challenges which services to offer and how to handle these situations of lockdown in times of a given pandemic like COVID 19 ranging from minimal restrictions to full closure. Many reputed Libraries all over the world are affected due to lockdown conditions and it is affecting the whole community of researchers, students, scholars, readers, etc.

American writer and producer Mr. Sidney Sheldon once said, "Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore, achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life." In this pandemic situation of COVID 19, the physical library systems are totally stuck due to maintaining the rules of social distancing and also helps to overcome the spread of virus infection. Corona virus refers to a family of viruses. In this situation, the role of the Library Professionals is the important to serve the whole community through a digital platform. Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library is one of the best places that anybody can go and gain knowledge, libraries in general also serve as a lifeline for school and college students, researchers, Professionals and community within our society.

Objectives of the Study

- To discuss the importance of Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel in this pandemic situation, and also to know the types of resources and services provided by the libraries during the lockdown period.
- To discuss the various traditional roles of Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel in this current situation of COVID19.
- To discuss the various available digital platforms used for information dissemination in library during COVID19
- To discuss the various challenges and how Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library and the personnel are dealing with the challenges in this pandemic situation of COVID 19.

Challenges and how Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel are Dealing with these Challenges during Pandemic Situation of COVID 19.

The closure of physical libraries due to the COVID-19 pandemic presented a number of opportunities and challenges which affected service provision in academic libraries. It is stated that the library's purpose is to serve students and faculty needs at the same time ensuring that the campus community is protected (University of Illinois, 2020). The Federal Government of Nigeria announced an indefinite lockdown which led to the closure of institutions of higher learning and all their services, including library services. There was a shift from face to face to online learning in some institutions and in-person gatherings were cancelled. Students were barred from accessing all campuses and were supposed to learn from home. Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel were forced to work from home to ensure that library services were not affected in support of teaching and learning.

The COVID-19 situation has without doubt been a driver for change, namely providing library services virtually. Provided that the pandemic continues to exist, and access to the physical collection remains impaired, the need to go digital in the sense of e-book acquisition will continue to be a priority. It is against this background, the "[Handbook of Research on Library Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic 'Opens external'](#)" edited and compiled by Barbara Holland, has brought together the various experiences of libraries across the world exploring how in their own ways rose to the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, a study done by Hinchliffe and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020) showed that libraries were putting in place preventive measures of cancelling public events, providing hand sanitizers for patrons and thorough cleaning of libraries to deal with the effects of COVID-19.

Roles of Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library and Library Personnel during the Pandemic of COVID-19

Michael Mabe and Emily A. Ashley in their book titled "The Developing role of public libraries in emergency management: Emerging research and opportunities" have discussed in detail the role of libraries in the situation of emergency (Mabe & Ashley, 2017). They have mainly highlighted a number of roles of libraries during emergency which are discussed in brief as follows.

Being a Safe Haven: Libraries due to the architect and the safety measures taken during the process of the constructions of their buildings are comparatively very safe. Therefore, whenever any natural calamities such as earthquake, hurricanes or floods etc. Occur, libraries can be used as the shelters for the nearby community. The basic facility such as shelter, water, toilets and electricity can be provided within the premises of libraries.

Offering Normal Services: During the situations of crisis, libraries should endeavour to provide the consistent services to the clients or users, without any fluctuations or delays. The teachers, students and especially researchers should be provided maximum support so that they can accomplish their assignments without any hindrances.

Operating as Information Hubs: Libraries have an important role of disseminating information during the times of emergency. Library staff is always trained and hence, expert in accumulating relevant information and communicating the same to various seekers of the information. In the

case of emergency, the library staff can spread out in public the information about adopting various precautions to prevent the ill-effects of emergency. In case of getting struck in any emergency situation, the escape routes and the remedies can also be disseminated by the library staff.

Improvising: The library staffs have a formal training as well as availability of sources in keeping the community engaged in positive activities. In case of emergency, the library staff can contribute in boosting the morale of vulnerable and effected groups and communities by sharing with them positive case studies, stories and motivational talks through various online and web sources.

To provide maximum service to its users Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library constitute an important component of a library(E-library), by making important contribution to the academic community. Potential library users have positive attitudes towards technology; they have competent skills to use mobile technology and they access information daily using mobile technology. It is observed that changes in user information needs have put more pressure on the delivery of library services. Text notifications via the use of mobile devices can disseminate information and multimedia content such as videos, images and audio files. Librarians can use this service to alert patrons regarding the latest information happenings around COVID 19, on how to stay safe or other related information.

Furthermore, librarians should serve as catalysts for the effective dissemination of information to promote true knowledge. Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel arranged motivational talks of experts and disseminate these talks in community to uplift the morale of people during the times of emergency, for accurate health-related information resources in an ever-increasing digital environment, as stated by Okike, 2020, "libraries should establish working relationships with health agencies and communication organizations with the objective of cooperative developments of collections, referrals and information shared and learning for users and a new breed of re-imagined librarians". Thus, libraries as social institutions, are responsible for ensuring awareness and the provision of up to date information to the users.

However, in the age of multiple information sources and diverse communication channels users do not always access most valid information. It is estimated that there are 11 different types of information sources ranging from valid information to untrusted or doubtful information (Ashrafi-Rizi & Kazempour, 2019). Even, Google Trends has become a useful tool for monitoring awareness about health at both national and international levels (Hu & et, al, 2020). However, strategies require social acceptance of measures such as school closures, remote working, and home isolation, monitoring the health of symptomatic individuals using telephone or online health consultations (Heymann & Shindo, 2020). Additionally, quarantine is one of the oldest and most effective tools of controlling communicable disease outbreak. Quarantine was used as an effective step during the pandemic

Social Role of Libraries during the COVID-19

Besides playing the formal and official roles during the crisis of COVID-19, libraries have the choice of playing the social role by contributing in the community programs such as disease control, prevention and awareness programs. Libraries can mainly perform the leading roles by providing information to people to take preventive measures to successfully countering the chances of the spread of COVID-19. There are several methods which were adopted by Good-Luck Ebele Jonathan Library personnel in disseminating awareness among people about the virus. People can be informed about the benefits of the social distancing, and the awareness about the positive results of wearing masks in public are shared with people. The library publicises to people about taking several other preventive measures such as washing hands regularly, using sanitizers where there is no possibility of washing hands and preventing going to the rush areas. During the situations of lockdown and curfews, people while sitting at their homes have started getting panic. Moreover, the increasing magnitude of the number of deaths due to the COVID-19 has created a psychological threat among people and it has further resulted into mental stress among people. The mental stress further results into weak immunity which may aggravate the chances of getting affected from the virus of COVID-19. In these

circumstances, the library personnel played an important role, by making availabilities of the methods and channels of sharing the positive case studies, stories of survival with people. Besides that, the library staff also disseminate useful information to the community to uplift the morale of people during the times of emergency.

Other social services by the library personnel include, assisting the users in looking for new jobs, providing assistance for unemployed people, and even sometimes libraries distribute food to the needy were made possible in the pandemic.

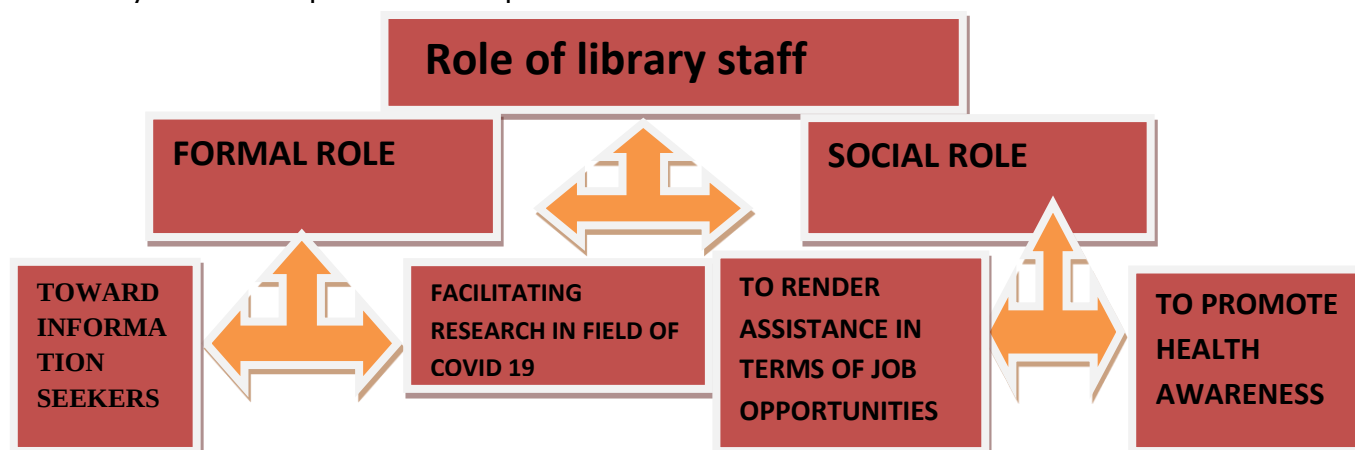


Diagram indicating roles of Library / librarian during COVID 19

Various Types of Digital Platforms Available around the World

Despite the uncertain challenges facing libraries of all types during the COVID-19 pandemic, new best practices and innovative ways of approaching services have emerged. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a rapid leveraging of digital skills, platforms, expertise, and models of service delivery to continue in providing exceptional and transformative experiences. Digital literacy is a great tool for advancement especially in the Covid-19 pandemic era. Working, teaching and learning from home was forced upon the society to be safe at this crucial period social networking sites created a pathway for communication. It helps the library professionals to develop a collaborative network with the library clientele. Social networking sites have made possible creating, connecting, conversing, contributing and sharing information a much simpler and quicker process. Numerous e-learning platforms, e-databases and e-resources aided in enhancing the knowledge of the librarians who in turn were more efficient in satisfying information seeking behaviour of the library patrons.

Smart Technology:

Bower (2019) define smart technology as a technology that uses artificial intelligence, machine learning, and large-data processing to bring cognitive knowledge to items that were previously considered inanimate. Poslad (2009) had explained that smart technology is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via various wireless protocols, such as Bluetooth, Zigbee, Wi-Fi, LiFi, 3G, 4G network which can operate interactively and autonomously to some extent. In this study, smart devices are all modern artefacts that are made smart with computing power and linked to the Internet to form the Internet of Things (IoT). They range from small devices to wearable asset tracking devices that can be deployed to library services such as acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, reference services and other library operations.

Moreover, the smart technologies university libraries use to improve personal and interpersonal community interactions within the country and other countries are mobile phone, computers, handsets, cell phones, cellular phones. Mobile phones have various apps and can be used for personal, interpersonal, community and intergroup contact personally. To meet the information needs of users, the university library can use mobile phones and computers to reach their users wherever they are. First point of call of the library user is the library catalogue either physical or electronic. When the user finds online resources of his choice in the libraries via his smart phone,

laptop or desktop, the user can access all the information he or she needs that are available online. Equally through Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, G-mail and other social media handles, the library can go into advocacy provided they are embedded in the library and university websites.

Good-luck Ebele Jonathan library users could use smart technology to access social media such as in Facebook to quickly track current awareness services in university even without visiting the library physically. They could also use twitter apps for reference services, WhatsApp for lending and preservation services, and Skype for video conferencing and virtual meeting. In Odu and Omini (2017), they argued that university libraries in Nigeria are now sharing information resources, particularly in COVID-19, to accelerate work operations and foster cooperation between nations and states.

Social Media and Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library

Social media has been used for information resource collections and service delivery to users in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library and other university libraries for many years. Social media have different channels which librarians used to provide services to their users. Macintosh and Shawn (2015) suggested that some of the most popular social media platforms used in university libraries have websites, with far more than 100 million registered users. These include Facebook, Twitter, Google, WhatsApp, E-mail, YouTube, TikTok, WeChat, Instagram, Snapchat and others. Such social media channels are used to foster the understanding of public health through the development and distribution of information concerning COVID-19 pandemic preventive measures. To support research team, researcher and faculty, they are used to provide information regarding the latest research and literature developments. They are also used to develop effective communication strategies that provide and expose the most vulnerable countries and populations to the public with actionable information such as how to identify symptoms and clear guidance for treatment aimed at ensuring people's safety.

Over the years, university libraries have used these smart technologies via social media networks to provide users with virtual support such as providing information, searching for document delivery and systematic feedback. As a result, Good-luck Ebele Jonathan library have introduced online webinars and sessions to keep in contact with their users via Google classroom. Google Hangout, Skype, or Zoom to discover, compile, connect, and disseminate content, educate users, and perform online teaching/learning, customer service delivery in the university community, and library outreach programmes. However, by connecting their users to various social media channels or websites for efficient communication, the library personnel use these social media networks to communicate to their clientele.

In Nigeria, in partnership with libraries, leading publishers such as Elsevier, Oxford, Willy, Emerald, Harvard, BMJ and others give free access to the new literature on COVID-19 journal articles and papers, commentaries, case studies. The libraries subsequently share the information with faculty members, researchers, and students. WhatsApp and other related apps are technology applications that are used on social media sites to share knowledge about the Covid-19 pandemic, WhatsApp in particular is one of the information-sharing sites in social media in the ongoing crisis. Good-luck Ebele Jonathan library sharing the WhatsApp links such as (<https://www.who.int/news-room/features-stories/detail/who-health-alert-brings-covid-19-facts-to-billions-via-whatsapp>) to provide authentic news to avoid the spread of fake news about symptoms of corona virus, how to avoid being infected and spreading it. The required precautionary steps, such as washing of hands, use of hand sanitizer, covering of the nose and mouth with a facemask.

The Smart Technologies Used for Effective Service Delivery in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library

To access the library tools and facilities in the COVID-19 era, the use of Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Email and other mobile devices includes the provision of Wi-Fi network to access it. Accordingly, Good-luck Ebele Jonathan library is responding to the modern digital world. It has become imperative due to developments such as the growth of electronic guidance, globalization, the demand for knowledge of people, access to social media and public networks everywhere.

Through this development, library users are able to access the resources and services available in the library remotely via the library website, using the appropriate access points to support their users in this pandemic period. Even though Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library and most libraries in Nigeria are still in their teething stage.

With the use of smart technologies in university libraries, it is now easier for library users to access library services remotely through their laptops, desktops, mobile phones with Internet connectivity from the comfort of their homes during the pandemic lockdown. With the twitter, short communication bursts from one-on-one conversations into small news programs library users can tune in whenever news or information updates occur. Feedback can also flow in from library users in reaction to information on twitter.

Equally with the smart technology, Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library management have interacted with their users, book vendors, publishers and the general public within the state, through social media platforms such as Facebook, Gmail, WhatsApp to send and receive orders as and when due. Publishers and vendors can also send feedback on what information resources they have. Through this same media, approval for requests are also be conveyed. Health information about COVID-19 cases around the globe can be disseminated via Facebook and other social media platforms. Reference librarians in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library also provide answer to reference queries without interacting with the user physically. It has helped the librarians to interact with each other irrespective of geographic location.

Challenges of Using Smart Technology in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library under COVID- 19

Despite the inherent potential of using smart technologies during the COVID, Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library face some challenges in the use of these technologies. They include:

1. **Lack of Fund.** Adequate fund is lacking both for the purchase and maintenance of the smart facilities and manpower
2. **No Policy Guideline:** Butcher (2011) noted that lack of strategic policy formulation and lack of clear government support to advance the availability and usage of ICT present serious challenges for the successful use of smart technology in university libraries.
3. **Unsteady Power Supply.** Electricity supply from the national grid in Nigeria is unpredictable. This often times disrupts the use of smart technology in libraries.
4. **Shortage of Technical Manpower.** Most university libraries lack the technological expertise to use smart technology. It has contributed to low interest in the use of social media for library services among library staff.
5. **Poor Internet Connectivity and Bandwidth:** Nigeria's Internet connectivity and use Is still a privilege. In Nigeria, not everybody can afford it.
6. Weak ICT Infrastructure and Culture,
7. Inadequate Telecommunications Facilities
8. Poor Digital Literacy among library employees and users
9. Resistance to Change and inadequate library technical experts to deal with smart technology issues.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the role of Library Professionals in a Pandemic Situation like COVID-19 described the different roles played by librarians in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library during COVID 19 pandemic. The role which includes both formal and social role in the community. The study on the other hand postulated the various challenges experienced by Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library and its personnel which forced the Library to closed its doors, all face-to-face services and physical spaces were closed to the public. This affected the collections, services and staff. The study identified various digital platforms available around the globe. The study also promoted the use of various social media networks available for librarians. It mentioned that librarians can help the entire community in quest for scholarly content. Similarly, role of the library professionals to map down the information as required by the patron/clienteles of the library and should act as

disseminator of the knowledge. The librarians should show their expertise in using different ICT platforms. and make available different E-contents and information links. During emergencies such as Corona virus pandemic, the use of smart technologies such as telephones, tablets, webcams, video text, among others, can be used to disseminate information to library users. Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library explore the social media platforms such as the Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram to reach their users. The use of the smart technology is imperative in the light of the safety protocols recommended by the World Health Organization among which is avoidance of physical distance. However, despite the enormous advantages of the use of smart technology, the Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library is faced with many challenges. These include paucity of funds, lack of operational guideline, shortage of technical manpower, unsteady power supply, poor Internet access among others. Based on these challenges, recommendations were made to overcome these challenges.

RECOMMENDATION

The era of artificial intelligence in here and technology has come to stay. The application of smart technology is indispensable in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library, especially in this Covid-19 era. The following recommendations were made based on the challenges associated with using Smart technology in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library:

1. The government should increase the financial allocation to Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library to facilitate and encourage the use of smart technology in library operations. Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library should also source for viable internally generated revenue (IGR) to supplement what the government provides.
2. The government should make policies that will encourage legal use of smart technology in libraries.
3. The power supply should be adequate. The library should have solar panels, inverter and additional standby generator made available.
4. Suitable technical experts should be attached to the library on smart technology. There is need for training and retraining of library personnel on the use of smart technology in library.
5. Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library management should encourage librarians to receive on-the-job training on the skills acquisition of smart technology.
6. The Government should provide adequate infrastructure for use of smart technology in Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library.
7. Good-luck Ebele Jonathan Library management should provide robust Internet access for use of smart technology in the library.
8. Librarians should make bold step to embrace the use of smart technology in the library.

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