

Informative Roles of Librarians to Their Patrons during Covid-19 Lockdown in Nigeria

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Abstract: *Many people have been misled since the start of this pandemic, primarily via social media. Fake news is widely available on the radio, in the newspaper, on television, and on social media. The librarian is required to gather, assess, organize, package, and transmit information, especially to the information-poor society that has put a great deal of pressure on it to act in urgent situations like the COVID-19 pandemic era. Librarians are already recognizing the possibilities of social media in offering up-to-date information to their voluminous user base in their responsibility of ensuring that patrons are properly informed about Covid 19. The study concluded that librarians are tasked with reaching user populations during the COVID-19 shutdown and improving their access to current, pertinent information. Librarians are required to gather, organize, store, and sort out the accurate information for their clients in this age of information explosion when thousands of bits of information are chunked out every day to prevent misinformation. It was recommended in the study that librarian should emphasize preventive measures in the health information posted on Covid 19 such as not shaking hands, keeping up with proper cleanliness, using a face mask, and avoiding close contact with others.*

Keywords: Covid 19, WHO, Librarians, Nigeria

Introduction

Poor health information has contributed to a number of illnesses and viral infections that have spread over the world, including the Ebola virus, avian flu, and the most recent worldwide pandemic known as Corona Virus (Covid 19). (WHO, 2020). An infectious condition known as coronavirus disease is brought on by the recently identified SARS-CoV-2 novel coronavirus strain (WHO, 2020). It spreads from person to person using the same method as other common cold or influenza viruses, i.e., through direct contact with sneezes, coughs, or secretions of infected individuals (WHO, 2020). According to the global infection rate, by the end of July 2020, there will likely be confirmed over 15 million cases and 600,000 fatalities (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) (ECDC, 2020). Numerous medical professionals have attempted to offer a treatment and preventative measures for this epidemic, but it is evident that the instances, as recorded by WHO (2020), occur on a regular basis are quite alarming.

Many people have been misled since the start of this pandemic, primarily via social media. Fake news is widely available on the radio, in the newspaper, on television, and on social media. Such information spreads panic, anxiety, and misinformation about the pandemic during the lockdown. According to Boberg, Quandt, Schatto-Eckrodt, and Frischlich (2020) and Ashrafi-rizi and Kazempour (2020). Various information professionals are constantly working to correct this false and inaccurate information about Covid 19. According to this theory, the librarian should take part in this movement.

The librarian is required to gather, assess, organize, package, and transmit information, especially to the information-poor society that has put a great deal of pressure on it to act in urgent situations like the COVID-19 pandemic era (Ladan, Haruna&Madu, 2020). The librarian wants to make sure that customers have access to the most recent information about this issue. Additionally, it is required of librarians to disseminate and make accessible health information via social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, and Google+. This is due to the fact that more effective information dissemination through appropriate social media platforms continues to significantly stimulate positive health behaviors (Sokey, Adjei&Ankrah, 2018).

Librarians are already recognizing the possibilities of social media in offering up-to-date information to their voluminous user base in their responsibility of ensuring that patrons are properly informed about Covid 19. Librarians too can fill this gap of disinformation by providing selective dissemination of information (SDI), and customer services in general (Sahu, 2013). However, patrons in both urban and rural locations struggle to get reliable information from librarians through email, text messages, social media, and other online channels because of low levels of education and a lack of information technology. This theoretical article will explore the librarian and their educational responsibilities to clients in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of these flaws.

Information Dissemination

Wu, Yang, and Li (2016) defined information distribution as the process of getting information to the intended audience while meeting criteria including reliability, timeliness, and latency. Information dissemination, according to Dhawan (2018), is a proactive information service created to inform and educate diverse user groups about social, economic, and educational challenges, difficulties, problems, and opportunities that are relevant to them. Information must be carefully planned, gathered, organized, and stored before being delivered to the target. Information dissemination. According to Chhiato (2018), is the act of exchanging thoughts and messages, such as through symbols, signs, speeches, pictures, signals, writing, or conduct. It involves a meaningful flow of information between two parties or between several parties. Information Dissemination denotes the process of communicating information through stated channels and media in order to reach various groups as indicated.

Coronavirus Disease (Covid 19)

The infectious condition known as coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is brought on by the recently identified novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (WHO, 2020). It first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan, and it has since quickly spread to practically every nation on earth. The coronavirus is a member of a group of viruses that can cause a number of symptoms, including pneumonia, fever, difficulty breathing, and lung infection (WMHC, 2020). Although these viruses are widespread among animals worldwide, very few human infections have been reported. The World Health Organization (WHO) referred to the coronavirus that infected patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China, on December 29, 2019, by the label "2019 novel coronavirus" (Li, Guan, Wu, Wang, Zhou & Tong, 2020). The WHO declared that the 2019 novel coronavirus is officially known as coronavirus illness (COVID-19) (WHO, 2020). Additionally, the virus's current scientific name is severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. (SARS-CoV-2). A small Huanan South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China was reportedly connected to a cluster of people with pneumonia of unclear cause in December 2019. (Zhu, Zhang, Wang, Li, Yang & Song, 2020).

Corona virus appears to travel from person to person via the same mechanism as other common cold or influenza viruses, namely by face-to-face contact with a sneeze or cough, or from contact with secretions of infected people, (World Health Organization (WHO). 2020). Fever, a dry cough, exhaustion, shortness of breath, aches and pains, and sore throat are among the usual symptoms. Very few people will experience diarrhoea, nausea, or a runny nose (WHO, 2020). Most COVID-19 infections result in mild-to-moderate fever and respiratory sickness, with no specific treatment options. The 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is currently the illness with the greatest social impact (Ryu and Chun, 2020) as a result of a number of factors, including related deaths, its geographic expansion, the global stock market crash, the cancellation of sporting and artistic events, a lack of goods in marketplaces, among others (Castro, 2020). The behavior of societies at various levels (micro and macro) is related to that in turn (VillegasChiroque, 2020)

Informative roles of the librarian to patrons on Covid 19 using various platform

The task of a librarian in providing information to its clients has been enormous in light of the Covid 19 pandemic's severe effects. However, this Covid 19 pandemic has created fresh chances for librarians to interact with their clients and curb the spread of false information. The advent and spread of the coronavirus are reportedly having an impact on libraries all over the world. This circumstance has prompted librarians all around the world to organize a collection of priceless information on the coronavirus and distribute it to those in need (IFLA, 2020). It is clear that fake news and misinformation have fostered confusion and made it more difficult to educate the public about the virus's spread.

Librarians can improve social media online services in this regard to increase access to their resources. Since the majority of these services are offered through the library social networking pages, most libraries have started creating specially designed collections of electronic resources for particular groups of students to aid the student community in the challenging situation arising out of the suspension of physical classes and closure of physical libraries arising out of COVID-19 lockdown (National Digital Library of India, 2020). In support of this initiative, Ladan, Haruna, and Madu (2020) assert that through their social networking pages on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, librarians can provide and share information quickly, effectively, and in real-time as strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, librarians can act as a platform for using the internet and blogs for information collection and dissemination in an effort to raise awareness of the current situation.

In order to complement their job as information providers to their clients, librarians can educate their clients on local concerns via social media-reliable platforms and raise worldwide awareness through online activism and campaigns. In addition, librarians can use links on library websites to other organizations that publish relevant content about Covid 19 online. Librarians can use these resources to build a blog to provide Covid 19 information because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) frequently post and update awareness and guidelines across a variety of online platforms (WHO, 2020).

Since there are reports that more than 2.9 billion people access social media frequently on mobile devices, academics have further established social media as the most practical, quick, and accessible medium for informing a large audience. It would be

advantageous for librarians to use this platform to spread information about Covid 19. Similar to what Brindha, Jayaseelan, and Kadeswara (2020) said, these sources of knowledge on Covid 19 include Facebook, Google Scholar, and Twitter. The WHO collaborates with Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Tencent, and TikTok to promptly deliver accurate information to the public and get rid of false and misleading material. By sharing these resources with their clients and customers, librarians may correlate the advancements made by various social media firms.

Platforms and Social media used by librarians to inform patrons on Covid 19

Social media is quickly affecting all facets of library and information services as a Web-based platform for information dissemination. Additionally, it has been noted that social media is quickly replacing other methods as the preferred way for librarians to form social and professional networks. It is also being used to connect with potential library users and to provide information services to other remote users, particularly in the academic community (Ganiyu & Oluwafemi, 2016). Bradley and McDonald (2011) defined social media as any web-based or mobile application that facilitates collaboration and enables users to connect, produce, comment on, watch, share, rate, find, profile, and exchange user-generated material. With the aforementioned, it is demonstrated that social media, when actively used by librarians, may play a crucial role in supplying customers with reliable information about Covid 19. Social media has been openly utilized to communicate, spread, and share knowledge (Sahu, 2013). The potential of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, and Google+, as well as other social technologies, are now being recognized by librarians, who are incorporating them into library services.

Additionally, there are several other channels that librarians might utilize to educate users about Covid 19. According to Shonhe (2017), libraries can reach their target audiences by utilizing a variety of information sharing strategies, including tailored collections, SMS/text notifications, QR codes, online reference services, social networks, websites, mailing lists, and OPACs. By using mobile devices to receive text notifications, information and multimedia materials like films, photos, and audio files can be distributed. With the use of this service, librarians can tell clients on the most recent developments surrounding COVID 19, safety tips, and other pertinent information. Again, quick response (QR) codes, which are two-dimensional barcodes that point users to specific websites on a given subject or topic, can be used by librarians. According to Verma and Verma (2014), QR codes are similar to mobile tagging.

Online reference resources are very useful for promoting research. Barnhart and Pierce (2011) claim that by offering a 24/7 reference and information service through online platforms, librarians can strengthen their relationships with clients and increase their effectiveness. These services could take the shape of current affairs information on COVID 19. Libraries can use mailing lists to targeted users to receive individualized information at the same time as effectively using their websites to offer information, links, updates, and news (Okike, 2020)

Other information media that can be used by the librarians during the pandemic of COVID 19 to facilitate public health awareness are as summarized by Ali and Bhatti (2020) are:

Mobile Apps - used to educate the people to know about the early stage diagnosis symptoms of COVID-19 and to inform the general public about the disease. This can support the task of librarians in Covid 19 information sharing

Artificial Intelligence-Based Chatbots - Artificial intelligence-based chatbots are designed in different local and international languages by developers, and one can chat 24/7 and get information about coronavirus symptoms, diagnosis, and precautionary measures.

Video-Based Lecture - Video-based lectures on YouTube, Vimeo, and Dailymotion are other sources where infectious disease experts share video clips about coronavirus symptoms, cure, and possible measure to avoid this pandemic.

Electronic Resources- Medical researchers have been disseminating the latest developments regarding the vaccination, diagnosis kits, and latest literature published on the topic. Renowned publishers such Elsevier, Oxford, Wiley, BMJ, Nature, Sage, Emerald, Cambridge, and others, have provided free access to the latest literature on coronavirus (Agim, Obiekwe, & Eneh, 2020).

Factors that affects the informative roles of librarian in Covid 19 information sharing

It is significant that since the COVID-19 epidemic, librarians have been giving their clients timely and useful information. These generous efforts have greatly benefited many library users as well as other visitors, including patients of COVID-19 and other consumers of health information. Despite these accolades, there have been problems with some librarians' lack of awareness of the usefulness of social media in spreading information about COVID-19, poor infrastructure (such as phones and other enabling systems that can facilitate COVID-19 information sharing), low bandwidth, the librarians' lack of ICT and social media skills, and the librarians' individual beliefs about the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. These and other factors may have an impact on how librarians disseminate health information on Covid 19.

The majority of individuals regrettably do not follow the Covid 19 preventive measures since they frequently attend social and religious gatherings including weddings, funerals, protests, clubs, open marketplaces, and malls. Attendance at weddings, ignorance, and illiteracy will make it very challenging for the librarian to obtain compliance from this group of people who already disregard the preventive measures that have been established. Some rural residents of developing nations lack basic knowledge of how to use social media technologies to acquire covid-19 information and are illiterate. The use of social media by libraries to educate people about social distance, which is considered one of the key measures to stop the development of COVID-19, has been hindered by the high level of illiteracy.

The role of religious leaders is another element that influences how informative librarian jobs are shared in Covid 19. Some of them reject the truth of the coronavirus out of misinformation and self-interest. These leaders will be believed by their followers, who will then obey their instructions. This will be a challenge for librarians' information-sharing responsibilities under Covid 19.

The majority of people are less able to purchase phones and subscriptions for access to this Covid 19 health information due to the high level of poverty. Since libraries and other educational institutions are closed, how can the librarian still enlighten them in her duty as a librarian? Additionally, according to certain people's worldview, the COVID-19 epidemic is just another form of misinformation or politics. Since the majority of them have yet to account for the billions given to the poor as palliatives, some even think it's a way for the government to steal money.

In addition, the proliferation of lies, fabrications, and propaganda concerning COVID-19 has taken over the social media sphere, giving many information consumers and users conflicting notions and beliefs about COVID 19. The issue of conspiracy theories, which contend that this pandemic is unreal and preach that the preventive measures are false, has also spread dread and terror among a significant portion of the people. The majority of customers tend to think this, which is alarming. This presents a significant obstacle for the librarian's educational efforts to persuade people of the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, a lot of librarians have sided with some of these beliefs, which has made it impossible for them to accurately inform people about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Librarians are tasked with reaching user populations during the COVID-19 shutdown and improving their access to current, pertinent information. Librarians are required to gather, organize, store, and sort out the accurate information for their clients in this age of information explosion when thousands of bits of information are chunked out every day to prevent misinformation. In the current global COVID-19 epidemic, it is required that librarians operate autonomously to create service-oriented, researcher-centered apps, educational programmes, projects, and services that would improve their informing function to their clients. Suggestions for preventing COVID-19 exposure. During the lockdown phase, librarians can make these precautions effective by using popular social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Whatsapp, among others.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made, arising from the study;

1. Since traditional means of library use are restricted and insufficient for relating to customers, librarians should be proficient in the use of social media platforms covid-19 information
2. Similar to what has been done for other medical and health officers, palliatives should be made available to librarians to act as motivation. This will encourage them to increase their informational duties in relation to the people's sharing of covid19 information.
3. The librarian should emphasize preventive measures in the health information posted on Covid 19 such as not shaking hands, keeping up with proper cleanliness, using a face mask, and avoiding close contact with others.
4. Before sharing any Covid 19 material with their clients, librarians should thoroughly examine all of the data they have obtained from his sources to ensure that it is accurate and dependable.

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