TITLE: LIBRARIES TRANSFORMATION IN THE PHASE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The library was mostly focused on preventing the disruption of regular library services, ensuring the safety of both staff and patrons, preserving social distance, creating new protocols, cleaning the library, and enhancing online library access during the early stages of the pandemic. The aim of the study is to understand the transformation of the libraries during the Covid-19 pandemic, the change in the services and the challenges faced. Research objective is to understand service, challenges and emergence after pandemic. The research focused on to get with the method of Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which will be the core qualitative method of studying the research work, identifying on the core library working, evolution of services, and the challenges to get with the study and lead authenticate outcomes. An unexpected development in various industries, including academic libraries, has been brought about by the emergence of Covid-19. The adjustments have made it necessary to eliminate the barriers lower in-person interactions between people and easier access to library resources (Mageto, 2021). In this age of information and communication technologies that support social networks, library employees are force to adapt to changing circumstances. The value of social media applications in library settings. Libraries can now respond to inquiries utilizing a range of social media platforms thanks to this breakthrough of pandemic to bring newer technologies in the ways libraries operate (Weng and Lund, 2020). Libraries gave up on their previous methods and, with the help of ICTs (information and communication technologies), devised new strategies to deal with the contemporary environment as the new normal. . Library development was taking on new responsibilities, including strengthening human capacity, awareness and wellbeing, accessibility and outreach, leadership and policy-making, and infrastructure. On the other hand, the favoured means of communication were micro blogging, social media, streaming video apps, emails, and phones. The issues posed by the COVID-19 pandemic can be more effectively addresses with these adaptable change methods. University libraries make every effort to assist users and remain a vital part of users' lives and academic pursuits despite the always-evolving path of opportunities to grow.

KEYWORDS: Library transformation, Library services, Covid-19 pandemic, Digital transformation, Emerging role, Library challenges

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has bought an evolutionary change in the world, the way economies operate and the disruptions in the business landscape. Covid-19 has instigated technical advancements for numerous institutions, libraries among them. Academic librarians and users are adopting and using technology in academic libraries more quickly thanks to Covid-19. Educational institutions were compelled to shut down their physical library services in order to stop the Covid-19 pandemic's spread, and they had to quickly transition to online environments in order to serve distant library patrons. Also identified, is the fact that the global pandemic has had a significant impact on library personnel, patrons, and facilities. The leadership of libraries during the first pandemic era made decisions while experiencing fear and uncertainty. The leadership of the library was mostly focuses on preventing the disruption of regular library services, ensuring the safety of both staff and patrons, preserving social distance, creating new protocols, cleaning the library, and enhancing online library access during the early stages of the pandemic.

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study is to understand the transformation of the libraries during the Covid-19 pandemic, the change in the services and the challenges faced.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research will be addressing on the following objectives as:
- To understand the services of libraries during Covid-19 pandemic.
- To identify the challenges faced by the libraries during pandemic.
- To study the emergence of libraries after pandemic.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will work to answer following questions as:

- What services did libraries offered during Covid-19 pandemic?
- What were the core the challenges faced by the libraries during pandemic?
- How did the libraries emerge after pandemic?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Dube and Jacobs, (2022), the core emphasize that while these innovations were specific to each university, there are parallels in the methods that academic librarians sought to increase service delivery to library patrons based on the information requirements and academic culture of those particular organizations. Academic librarians implemented book pickup services and book delivery at regional offices to support teaching, learning, and research, which is in line with the results of other researches.

Some academic librarians increased the range of services available through the use of increasingly sophisticated technological tools. These included providing online access to Library Guides, extra website information, and even the use of artificial intelligence technologies like bots to help and attend to the requirements of library customers (Dube and Jacobs, 2022). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic period brought about a change in the way academic librarians had to meet user needs, necessitating the exhibition of sophisticated skill sets of technology use, creativity, and online service provision.

According to Kang, et al., (2022), In China, 92% of academic library services have transitioned from in-person to online access to information resources. This suggests that in order to guarantee online access, information resources needed to be made available, either through digitalization or online purchasing. During the early stages of the pandemic, COVID-19 caused the temporary closure of the majority of library buildings. Libraries changed from offering in-person, on-site services to offering digital service delivery, which curtails the virus's transmission (Kang, et al., 2022). A wide range of procedures are used, ranging from total closure to reopening. Examples include relocating or rearranging furniture and restricting access to group study spaces in order to comply with social distance laws.

According to Rafiq, et al., (2021), during this pandemic, most university libraries remained open to users despite being physically shuttered to visitors. Redesigned websites, resource reallocations, and extensive online programming were all done by libraries. Communication options utilized less frequently during the pandemic were the university portal and other social media platforms. Due to constant connectivity and the lack of a defined working policy addressing changing work patterns, library staff members felt overworked when working remotely from home(Rafiq, et al., 2022). Academic librarians observed that a lack of digital literacy, the digital divide, and sluggish internet speeds were the main obstacles to their shift from a physical to an online format as well as a decrease in the utilization of the online resources and web portals available through their libraries. In these uncertain times, libraries recognize their roles as individual and collective social and educational spaces.

According to Chigwada, (2021), the challenges of human resource, such as a lack of a culture and expertise in remote work, accessibility challenges with technology, the digital divide, problems with internet connectivity, digitization, and copyright stays out and remain the greatest obstacle. An insufficient amount of funds and resources exacerbates the problem. Along with affecting the general public, libraries and their patrons were also impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Uncertainty, tension, and unfavourable emotional sentiments have been brought about by workplace anxiety and stress, which has become a significant concern for libraries.

In addition to a great deal of misinformation, fake news, social media outlets, trolling, and stress, the abrupt outbreak of the pandemic caused a great deal of uncertainty and worry (Naeen and Bhatti, 2020). As given by Ameen, (2021), library staff—especially those with limited digital literacy skills—as well as patrons themselves face challenges due to the fast-evolving information-seeking behaviour of library users, library closures, and the switching from physical to online library services.

According to Bashorun, et al., (2021), In many organizations, including library services, everyday activities are still dominated by technology trends that have been sparked by the Covid-19. The use and deployment of technology in academic libraries is being driven by Covid-19. In the Covid-19 era in particular, ICT uptake and use for providing clients with high-quality services in university libraries is critical (Bashorun, et al., 2021). Libraries around the world have closed their doors to patrons as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, despite the fact that it is their duty to supply unfettered access to information and resources at all times. In the context of COVID-19, this study looks at how university libraries are changing their services to better serve information consumers.

After many years of undergoing the shift from analogy to automated driven services, the current circumstances have made it mandatory for the quick use of ICT-related solutions. To enable smooth service delivery, libraries have

incorporated new technology, modified their service model, and integrated automated retrieval collection (Kamgar, n.a.). ICT integration into library services has been forced to happen quickly since the establishment of COVID-19. To the point that our new way of operating has become the "new normal," libraries are, therefore, quickly adopting technology and the service model (Bashorun, et al., 2021).

The implementation and utilization of automated door opening in libraries is expected to decrease the number of in-person interactions between patrons. To address the cry for help that the Covid-19 epidemic has issued, this is imperative. Voice instructions in elevators: To stop the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic, voice commands in elevators should be promoted as a way to decrease human interaction (Bakti, et al. 2020). According to Bakti, et al. (2020), the elevator, the catalogue cabinet, and other appropriate locations where voice instructions are applicable should all accept their use in academic libraries. Model of at-home work: Contacts with other library staff members and patrons will be less frequent when working from home. Services provided by libraries using telephone applications are known as tele-libraries.

According to Fasae, et al., (2021), Since everyone has been ordered to leave campus due to a lockdown, not a single student is there. As to the report, Nigerian libraries implemented various safety protocols, such as closing the library entirely (59.3%), giving out hand sanitizer (55.6%), and encouraging patrons to wear face masks and nose covers (31.9%). Additionally, the results show that social distancing measures include communication through social media (59.3%), in-person interactions with customers (51.9%), class or lecture (51.9%), training/conferences (37%), and cancelled paper presentations (37%), among other ways. In terms of patron access to library materials, the vast majority (87.96%) of academic libraries in Nigeria only offer online resources, with the remaining 9.26% offering both print and online resources.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research focused on to get with the method of Systematic Literature Review (SLR) which will be the core qualitative method of studying the research work, identifying on the core library working, evolution of services, and the challenges to get with the study, and lead authenticate outcomes. The study focused on to lead with the methods of search strategy in which the first screening was done using the core key terms for the research including, "Libraries in Covid-19", "Pandemic hitting the libraries", "library services", "change in library services after pandemic", "Libraries", "Impact of Covid-19", and "Library services". This search strategy helped the researcher in successfully identifying 21 papers in relevant to the study, and then get with the systematic review analysis of each of them.

The second screening for the selected papers was done on the basis of the years the papers were published in to get with authentic, real, and latest information to work on the paper. The year filters will be given on for the latest 5 years, and giving the final papers for the study at 13 most relevant papers. The reviewed articles published and listed on Google Scholar will be taken to conduct the research and work strategically to gain the valuable insights from the study.

Findings
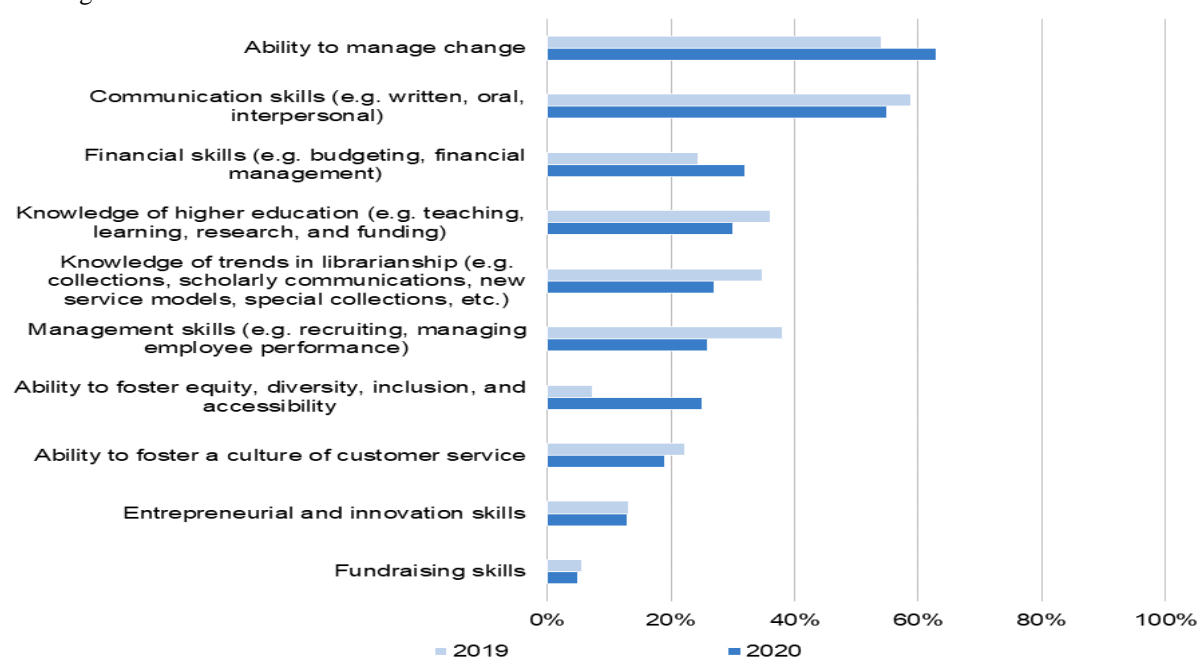
Figure 1: Library strategy and budgeting during pandemic
Source: (Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020)

Libraries were comparatively ready to function remotely during the pandemic thanks to the availability of digital materials and services, which could be one explanation for this change. When it came to their library's digital presence before the COVID-19 epidemic, in fact, 70% of library directors concurred that it was strong enough and that other top executives at their institution were aware of its relative strength (Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). When it comes to library and library director value, only time will tell if this is the start of a permanent turn around or if it is just a transitory trend (Alajmi and Albudaiwi, 2021).
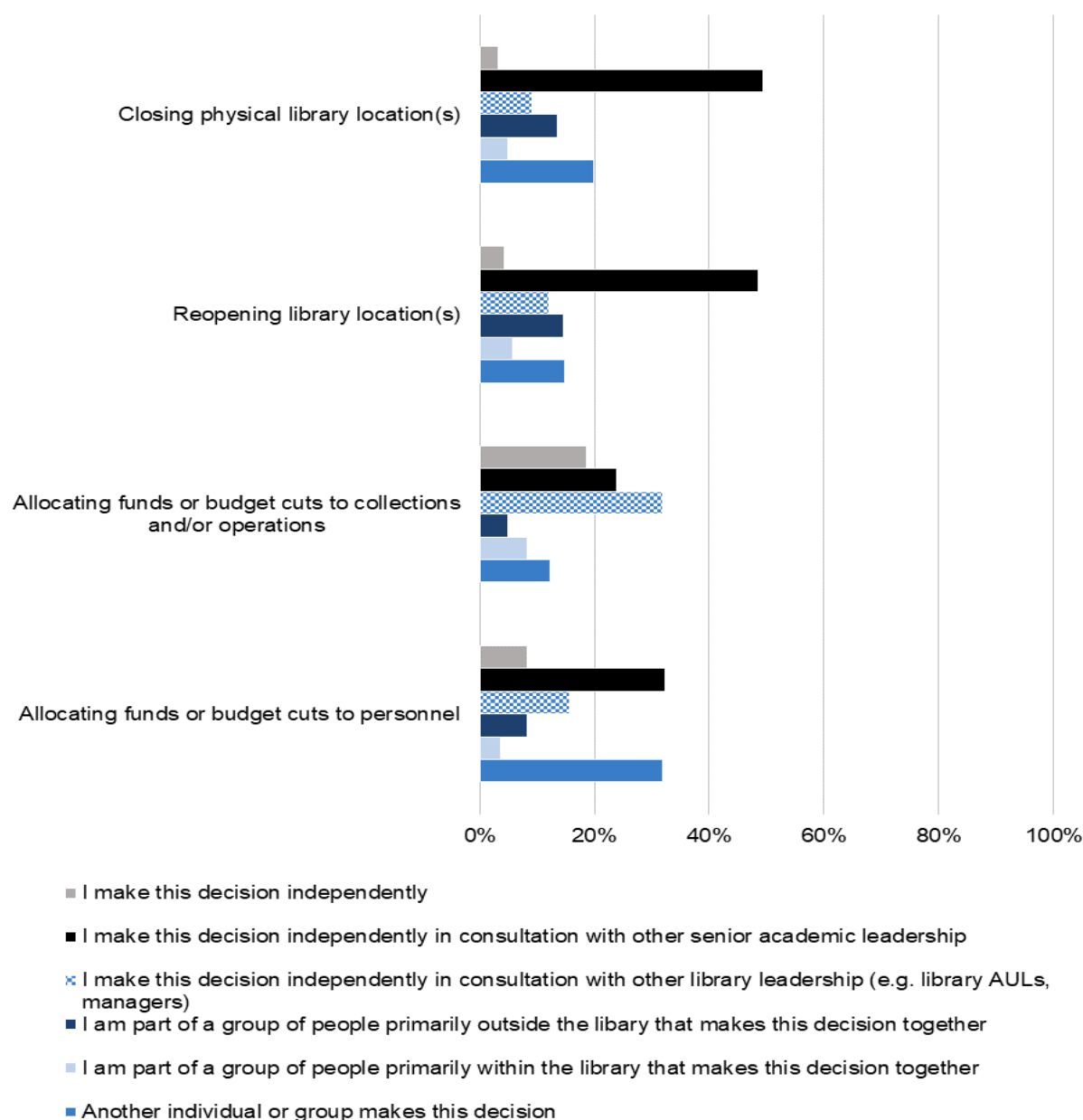
Figure 2: Library conditions for decision making during pandemic
Source: (Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020)

Most frequently, library directors decided how much money to allocate and/or make budget cuts to collections and operations either totally alone or reasonably autonomously while consulting with other leaders inside and outside the library (74 percent total). Only almost half, or 56 percent combined, make choices involving personnel finances either unilaterally or independently after consulting with these groups. Indeed, for approximately three out of 10 directors, decisions about staffing levels and layoffs are made by a separate group (Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). Directors of doctoral universities have made many of these decisions relatively more independently, whereas directors of baccalaureate and master's institutions are more likely to have these decisions made for them, particularly when it comes to hiring.

Thus, from the conditions it can be stated that libraries have focused on working immensely towards sustaining their operations, sustain their existence and lead towards the new normal. Even the focus of the libraries is on to get with

new technologies after pandemic as it made the libraries to go online and on social media (Mageto, 2021). The few of the core integrated technological evolutions in the libraries includes as:

- Automation in its services with code scanning and door operations.
- Voice commands to be integrated making the libraries high-tech.
- Model for home working online.
- Tele-libraries system making advanced access and services.
- Improving the digital existence and content to stay updated and with the people across the media, and connect with readers on larger scale.
- Library automation to be improved with the applicability of Ai tech, bots and with the resources in a smarter way.
- Library has made its working on omnichannel making the safety as the foremost concern of its work structure for its employees and readers.
- Smart monitoring with the integration of MIS system to keep a track on work and evaluate the work of each person working.

Unexpected developments in various industries, including academic libraries, have been brought about by the emergence   of   Covid-19. The adjustments have made it necessary to eliminate the barriers lower in-person interactions between people and easier access to library resources (Mageto, 2021). In this age of information and communication technologies that support social networks, library employees are forced to adapt to changing circumstances. The value of social media applications in library settings. Libraries can now respond to inquiries utilizing a range of social media platforms thanks to this breakthrough of pandemic to bring newer technologies in the ways libraries operate (Weng and Lund, 2020).

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that has negatively impacted our lives, work habits, and in-person relationships. A significant transformation in the physical access to print collections, facilities, services, places, and operations of academic libraries as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has been anticipated by this modification. Libraries gave up on their previous methods and, with the help of ICTs (information and communication technologies), devised new strategies to deal with the contemporary environment as the new normal.

The core categories accounted for the library services provided during the COVID-19 pandemic: raising awareness during the actual closure of libraries, immediately changing the services provided, and embracing remote work as a recent trend. Aside from the infrastructure, there were also issues related to people and the infodemic, workplace stress and anxiety, leadership, and planning. Library development was taking on new responsibilities, including strengthening human capacity, awareness and wellbeing, accessibility and outreach, leadership and policy-making, and infrastructure. On the other hand, the favoured means of communication were micro blogging, social media, streaming video apps, emails, and phones.

Books are delivered to users by libraries, which facilitates the growth of digital collections and allows for the support of online sales of physical books. The library still offers services to its patrons, but the way those services are provided has changed significantly. For example, electronic textbooks are now available, printed books are strictly circulating, interlibrary loans and document delivery are improved, remote access is now possible, online and artificial intelligence reference services are available, online information literacy training is offered, and so forth. The issues posed by the COVID-19 pandemic can be more effectively addressed with these adaptable change methods. University libraries make every effort to assist users and remain a vital part of users' lives and academic pursuits despite the always evolving path of opportunities to grow.

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