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## TIME CONTROL, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND PREVENTION OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC BY LIBRARIANS IN NIGERIA

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**TIME CONTROL, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND  
PREVENTION OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC BY LIBRARIANS IN  
NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated time control, information dissemination and prevention of Covid 19 pandemic by librarians in Nigeria. Some of the objectives formulated for the study are: to ascertain if librarians have enough time to disseminate COVID 19 information to users, to find out how librarians in Nigeria truly disseminate information to patrons on COVID 19, to investigate the media in which librarians are currently providing information to users on COVID 19 and to find out how librarians in Nigeria currently partner with their government in order to tackle the COVID 19. The research method adopted for this work was survey method otherwise known as survey monkey. Nigerian librarians were the focus as constructed online questionnaire was circulated through social media (especially whatsapp) to elicit responses from respondents. 113 respondents completed the online questionnaire and 100 responses were used for the analysis using bar chart and pie chart. Total enumeration sampling technique was also invoked for the study. Some of the findings are as follows: respondent librarians have adequate time for sharing information in this Covid 19 period, in this period of Covid 19, Librarian share information both online and manually, frequently used media for*

*disseminating information by librarians this season of covid 19 are social media, telephone and telephone messages, radio and TV programmes and face to face and respondents signified that they mainly assist government in disseminating authentic information about Covid 19, financial assistance to the vulnerable, monitoring fair distribution of relief materials provided by government and through contact tracing.*

**Keywords:** *Time management, Covid 19, Corona virus, Covid 19 prevention, Librarians' role, information dissemination*

## **Introduction**

Librarians are by the nature of their job very busy and hardworking group of professionals. According to Bradbury (2018), library personnel involve in many routine activities which make their itinerary to be very occupied and tight. He noted some of such activities to include but certainly not limited to attending to students and other users' needs, expanding outreach programmes to accommodate larger users on topical issues, combining many tasks by way of multitasking, expanding the frontiers of research etc. As commonly known, librarians are people who work professionally in an information centre ensuring that information is granted access by different seekers or users, they also provide adequate instruction on the concept of information literacy. Citing Dey (2015), a 21<sup>st</sup> century librarian ought to provide and maintain information in various formats, including books, magazines, manuscripts, maps, bibliographic databases, web-based resources and others. This according to the author makes a librarian's job quite tedious and continually evolving. In order to meet some social and technological demands of patrons irrespective of their demanding

jobs and very busy schedule at home, librarians are expected to sit in the driver's seat in all fronts. This may be in bad and good times as this may be time of economic boom or the time of global pandemic such as Ebola virus or Corona virus otherwise known as COVID 19. This was substantiated by Rowling (2020) when he noted that when in doubt or down, go to the library. Ideally, libraries and librarians are solution and care givers in difficult time, and reference points in the time of boom.

The above submissions were further made clear when a great philosopher Albert Einstein correctly averred that in the times of hardship, “the only thing that you absolutely need to know, is the location of the library”.

This brings us to the dreaded scourge termed Corona virus otherwise known as COVID 19. Globally, COVID 19 is yet to have a cure as at today 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020. It has brought sorrow and agony to different homes across the world irrespective of sex, religion, affluence, influence, position etc. The question remains that what are librarians doing? What have they done and how have they managed their time in order to still have time for their esteemed users/patrons? Though many governments are shutting down institutions including the libraries, IFLA (2020) is of the strong opinion that the best way to get out of this pandemic is for libraries to be active in order to sensitise and inform people about the deadly virus. To this end, librarians ought to manage their time very well to ensure that effective services are rendered using appropriate medium in a bid to curing the ugly menace. IFLA also suggests that

some countries where there are low cases of COVID 19, where library physical services are still on, such libraries are to: ensure that staff and patrons have access to soap and water, make provision for hand sanitizers, keep surfaces and computers clean, make sure that sick staff and users are encouraged to stay at home and also providing pages and links with useful information about coronavirus. In this period where all and sundry (including librarians) are engrossed with providing basic amenities for their wards and also ensuring the safety of same, it therefore becomes a bit cumbersome for librarians as humans to render all expected professional services as required. To this end, Cooperman (2016) stated that librarians do not need to find time management confusing, confining and restrictive; rather they should see it as the process of drafting a schedule that makes it possible to attend to all daily routines adequately or partially. This was further supported by WHO (2020) as part of recommendations that irrespective of the busy schedule of librarians and information professionals, they must assist government in curbing and managing the dreaded COVID 19. This they say librarians and government must as a matter of urgency fully inform the public on the seriousness of Coronavirus and the various preventive measures.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following specific objectives will guide this study:

1. To ascertain if librarians have enough time to disseminate COVID 19 information to users.

2. To find out how librarians in Nigeria truly disseminate information to patrons on COVID 19.
3. To investigate the media in which librarians are currently providing information to users on COVID 19.
4. To find out how librarians in Nigeria currently partner with their government in order to tackle the COVID 19.
5. To determine various personal preventive measures applied by Nigerian librarians.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of COVID 19**

The term Corona virus disease 2019 simply known as COVID-19 according to Cennimo (2020) is said to be a sickness caused by a strange virus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-COV-2; formerly called 2019-n cov), which was first discovered in the middle of an outbreak of respiratory infection cases in a city called Wuhan, Hubei Province in China. It was formally reported to World Health Organisation WHO on December 31, in 2019. On January 30, 2020, in her wisdom, the WHO declared the scourge a great health challenge. In early March 2020, the WHO further declared COVID 19 a global pandemic. The New York Times (2020) puts it that the COVID-19 is derived from Corona Virus Disease 2019 and the name was chosen in order to avoid stigmatizing the virus's cosmology in area of populations, associations, geography or animals. On her part, IFLA (2020) noted that there are a number

of symptoms one with COVID-19 may exhibit which are fever, difficulty breathing, muscle pain, tiredness and dry cough. Some preventive measures as enumerated by IFLA are: avoiding contact with sick people, wash your hands with soap and water regularly, if you sneeze frequently or you develop cough; visit the hospital, try use medical face mask, do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with dirty hands.

### **Librarians' Time Control for information dissemination on Covid 19 to users**

As has been stated in the foregoing, corona virus disease has been seen by the World Health Organisation to be a deadly, dreaded and pandemic global disease. To this end, the role of librarians becomes much more valuable and appreciated irrespective of other family engagements that may steal their time in this period where quite a number of librarians are lockdown at home. Ordinarily, there is a common saying that time waits for no one, therefore, even if librarians are currently locked at home in this period of COVID 19, if appropriate time management is not given a priority, there may still not be time to provide and disseminate information to prospective library users either online or through other platforms. To this end, Dronen (2020) sees time control or time management as one's practice to use the time that you have at your disposal in a requisite useful and effective way, in order to be productive at place of work. Furthermore, Dronen went on to state that being good at the management of time or time control is to deliberately and intentionally prioritize activities that

efficiently improve you towards your targets. There are views that some librarians even work better while working remotely. This Mac Author (2020) states that the common issue that arises when the topic of working from home is brought up is how will various heads monitor their employees in order not to abuse the system; but MacAuthor quickly noted that some employees do not waste their time while at home as they tend to work more hours than they did in the office. There is no doubting the fact that we are grabbing with strange and new challenges and navigating to create normalcy in this uncertain time. People, including librarians are carried away by taking care/monitoring their kids and doing other house chores. To Mac Author (2020) on the other hand, time, if not properly planned for can be misused or not properly utilized.

### **How Librarians disseminate Information to Patrons During the Period of COVID 19**

Librarianship as a profession is by nature made up of a body of professionals with high level of intelligent quotient, always ready to taking bold steps and also thinking out of the box. According to IFLA (2020), Libraries in countries where the pandemic is severe can take the option of closing the library and providing information services to user online. Other services being provided by some libraries according to IFLA are online storytelling, increasing the number of ebooks that people can borrow online, online book requests, provision of free wifi for users, online public debates, open access to materials and others. In these trying times, librarians in some countries are assisting government in

contact tracing and providing information on the possible solution to the COVID-19 scourge. University of Washington Libraries (2020) states that as libraries remain closed, they shall continue to update users of libraries on recent information about COVID-19 and other educational information on their website. This was posted on their website: “while physical buildings are closed, libraries staff remain available to help students and faculty access online resources and support 24/7.

### **Librarians’ Partnership with Government in Curbing COVID-19**

The library is known to be a reputable institution therefore, librarians should make sure that they partner with others that have tall standing within the community, that will be respectful and courteous to all, and also organisations that are reliable and knowledgeable (CPGL, 2014).

Libraries are formidable institutions that assist the government in different areas. ALA (2020) for instance, noted that, the American libraries are perfect platforms for partnerships to assist in addressing the challenges faced by humanity. Libraries are known to be very trusted institutions and reliable collaborators. ALA continued by submitting that government at the local, state and national levels including policy makers should endeavour to partner libraries and librarians for prompt solution to problems in trying times.

In saner climes, the government and librarians can partner each other in various ways. It could be in the area of providing health information to government health workers, agricultural information to farmers, information to public school

teachers and also providing requisite information about different ailments and other terminal illnesses. To this end, Cabello and Butler (2017) noted that sectors such as health care, continually see the library especially the public library as a critical link to the government and the community by extension.

Libraries and Librarians can take a step further by organising webinars on important health issues in times of global lockdown which is the situation we currently find ourselves.

The unprecedented COVID 19 Pandemic has inflicted hardship on quite a number of people across the globe, most especially those that are daily income earners. The library is ideally expected to partner with government in order to cushion the effect of this dreadful and deadly virus. According to Deborah and Fallows (2020), some libraries in affected states are already assisting the government in feeding the hungry and providing shelter to the homeless.

IFLA (2020) reported that the Association of library practitioners in Puerto Rico has launched a campaign on the misinformation about Corona virus pandemic. This is absolutely a right step as there is too much fake news going around about the novel COVID 19. Some governments who are organising online teaching for their primary and secondary school students at home due to the lockdown are already partnering with libraries and librarians. ALIA (2020) also noted that the Australian libraries in responding to Corona virus pandemic are already putting finishing touches to a 'relief fund' which will be used to cater for the vulnerable library patrons and other library friends.

Apart from providing online information on COVID 19 otherwise known as Coronavirus disease to users, librarians and libraries are already thinking out of the box and assisting government in contact tracing, helping governments in monitoring fair distribution of relief materials and others (IFLA, 2020).

### **Personal Preventive Strategies Applied by Librarians**

Librarians in Nigeria also have blood flowing through their veins like other Nigerians. To this end, it should be their primary duty in order to ensure that they stay alive while rendering their official and other informal services in these trying times.

The common saying goes: prevention is better than cure. The COVID 19 which can be spread from person to person is said to be contracted through respiratory droplets (via coughing and sneezing). According to Jewell (2020), with symptoms like cough, stuffy nose, fever, headache, chills, fatigue, sneezing and body aches, it can therefore be prevented by regularly washing your hands, avoid touching your face, eyes and mouth with dirty hands, staying indoors by way of self isolation and social distancing, stay at least 1 meter from any person coughing and sneezing, cover mouth with elbow while coughing or sneezing, regularly clean various objects you touch a lot using disinfectants and use of nose mask.

WHO (2020) in detailing how students and staff could protect themselves in both schools and nurseries noted the following as preventive measures

- That students and staff should wash hands with soap and running water consistently.
- All accessible surfaces to be regularly cleaned.
- Staff and students to carefully watch out for common symptoms.
- Keep office and classrooms windows open for proper ventilation.
- Educate staff and students on how to sneeze and cough in public.
- Students and staff with symptoms to stay away from school.
- Discouraging kissing and hugging.
- And few others.

As it stands today, COVID 19 has no cure and this is a pandemic that is capable of causing so much harm to our system and other sensitive body organs. Librarians cannot therefore afford to take the risk of contracting the disease. The common maxim remains the librarian's watchword: prevention is better than cure.

## **RESEACH DESIGN**

The research method adopted for this work was survey method otherwise known as survey monkey. Nigerian librarians were the focus as constructed online questionnaire was circulated through social media (especially whatsapp) to elicit responses from respondents. 113 respondents completed the online questionnaire and 100 responses were used for the analysis using bar chart and pie chart. Total enumeration sampling was also invoked for the study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1**

### Gender

**Answered: 100      Skipped: 0**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Male	47	47
Female	53	53

From the data presented in table 1 above, 47 (47%) of the respondents were male while 53 (53%) of the respondents were female. This shows that there were more female respondents than their male counterparts.

**Table 2**

### Educational background

**Answered: 100      Skipped: 0**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
Diploma	3	3
Bachelor	38	38
Masters	48	48
PhD	11	11

From table 2 above, 3 (3%) were diploma holders, 38 (38) were bachelor degree holders, 48 (48) were master degree holders and 11 (11) respondents were PhD degree holders. This implies that there were more of master degree holders.

**Table 3****Type of library****Answered: 100      Skipped: 0**

<b>Destination library</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
National library	2	2
Public library	8	8
Academic library	58	58
School library	5	5
Special library	8	8
Teaching librarian	13	13
Others (please specify)	6	6

From the above presentation in table 3, 2 respondents are from national library, 8 from public library, 58 respondents from academic library, 5 from school library, 8 respondents from special library, 13 (13) respondents from library school and 6 respondents chose other. This shows that majority of the respondents are from academic library.

**Table 4****I currently have enough time for information dissemination on Covid 19 pandemic****Answered: 100      Skipped: 0**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
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Strongly Agree	32	32
Agree	55	55
Strongly Disagree	9	9
Disagree	4	4

Table 4 above showed if librarians have enough time to disseminate information in this covid 19 stay at home period. 32 respondents strongly agreed that they have enough time, 55 agreed, 9 strongly disagreed and finally 4 disagreed. The implication is that majority are of the opinion that they have enough time for information dissemination this period.

**Table 5**

**How I disseminate information about Covid 19**

**Answered: 100      Skipped: 0**

<b>Dissemination of informatio</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>%</b>
Online	44	44	45	45	10	10	1	1
Physically (face to face)	14	14	49	49	20	20	17	17
I don't disseminate information at all	5	5	4	4	32	32	59	59

The presentation in table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents agreed that they share information about Covid 19 via online, followed by face to face. On the other hand, very few stated that they do not share information at all.

**Table 6****Frequently used media for Covid 19 information dissemination by librarians****Answered: 99****Skipped: 1**

<b>Frequently used media</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Face to face	23	23.23
Road side posters and sign board	27	7.07
Radio and TV programmes	25	25.25
Social media	88	88.89
Video Conferencing	8	8.08
Webinar	7	7.07
Email	16	16.16
Telephone and telephone messages	33	33.33
Daily newspapers	14	14.14
Others ( please specify)	2	22.02

Table 6 is for frequently used media for information dissemination by librarians in time of Covid 19 pandemic. 23 respondents ticked face to face, 27 went for road side posters, 25 of the respondents ticked Radio and TV programmes and a majority number of 88 ticked social media as a medium for frequent information dissemination in time of Covid 19 pandemic.

**Table 7**

**How Nigerian librarians/libraries partner with their government in this Covid 19 period**

**Answered: 96 Skipped: 4**

<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Through contact tracing of Covid 19 patients	12	12.5
Through monitoring fair distribution of relief materials	15	15.63
Providing shelter for the homeless	3	3.13
Disseminating current information about Covid 19	81	84.38
Financial assistance to the vulnerable citizens	15	15.63
Other (please specify)	5	5.21

Presentation in table 7 is on how Nigerian librarians presently partner their governments in this period of Covid 19. 12 respondents stated that they help through contact tracing of covid 19 patients, 15 of them noted that they assist through monitoring of fair distribution of relief material, 3 respondents ticked provision of shelter for homeless. Meanwhile majority of the respondents (81)

noted that they partner government by disseminating current information about Covid 19 pandemic.

**Table 8**

**Librarians' personal preventive measures of Covid 19 pandemic**

**Answered: 100 Skipped: 0**

<b>Librarians' preventive measures</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Regularly washing my hands	75	75
I avoid touching my face, nose and eyes with dirty hands	56	56
I practice self isolation	45	45
I practice social distancing	63	63
I stay far from those coughing and sneezing	46	46
I regularly clean all surfaces with disinfectant	35	35
I use nose mask	35	35
Other (please specify)	5	5

From table 8 above, 75 of the respondents noted that they regularly wash their hands in order to prevent contracting the Covid 19 virus, 56 of them said they

avoid touching their face, nose and eyes with dirty hands, 45 practice self isolation, 63 practice social distancing, 46 respondents indicated that they stay far from those that are coughing and sneezing and others. In all, this table therefore shows that majority of Nigerian librarians regularly wash their hands as a way of personal hygiene towards preventing the spread of Corona virus.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Findings for objective one revealed this as 87 respondent librarians have adequate time for sharing information in this Covid 19 period. This is in contrary to the view of Kawata (2020) who noted that libraries and librarians are staying as busy as everyone in this period of Corona virus pandemic. This author hinged this submission on the fact that librarians are always very busy both at work and at home.

Findings for objective two showed that 89 Nigerian librarians disseminate information online in the current covid 19 period, 63 disseminate information in this covid 19 period physically and 91 disagreed that they do not share information at all. These responses correspond with the position of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) when they averred that the functions of 21<sup>st</sup> century librarians are enormous and critical. This they further said librarians ought to control information in both virtual and physical domains.

For objective three, frequently used media for disseminating information this season of covid 19 are social media (88), telephone and telephone messages (33), radio and TV programmes (25), face to face (23). Again, Akporhonor and Olise 2015 stated that a potent medium in which librarians can effectively optimize for their work and goals and also remain above board is through an effective medium such as social media.

Objective four is on current partnership strategy with Nigerian government by librarians during Covid 19 period. Respondents signified that they mainly assist government in disseminating authentic information about Covid 19, financial assistance to the vulnerable, monitoring fair distribution of relief materials provided by government and through contact tracing. This is linked with the study of Wang and Lung (2020) when they suggested that librarians may play a very vital role in disseminating accurate information about global pandemic like corona virus, using their ability in collecting, assessing and curating information for the public.

Finding for objective five showed that librarians personal preventive measures are regularly washing hands, social distancing, staying far from those coughing and sneezing and self isolation. This revelation is connected to the opinion of Cabello and Butler (2017) when then stated that other sectors such as the health sector now sees the public librarians as critical connections to a community. For example, the National library of medicine helps local librarians on health issues relating to prevention of killer diseases.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The summary of major findings is stated as follows:

1. Respondent librarians have adequate time for sharing information in this Covid 19 period.
2. In this period of Covid 19, Librarian share information both online and manually.
3. Frequently used media for disseminating information by librarians this season of covid 19 are social media, telephone and telephone messages, radio and TV programmes and face to face.

4. Respondents signified that they mainly assist government in disseminating authentic information about Covid 19, financial assistance to the vulnerable, monitoring fair distribution of relief materials provided by government and through contact tracing.

5. Librarians personal preventive measures are regularly washing hands, social distancing, staying far from those coughing and sneezing and self isolation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the major findings, it can be concluded that the Covid 19 is no doubt real and causing havoc to all nations in the world. To this end, all librarians are therefore advised to adhere to all the preventive measures outlined by World Health Organization (WHO). This is to ensure that they are alive to provide requisite assistance to library users and the government by extension.

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