Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Academic Library Management

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Abstract

The Coronavirus pandemic led to the death of various individuals. This has also led to the closure of businesses and establishments. New normal was applied and people had no choice but to adjust. Due to the massive adverse impacts of COVID on people, libraries also made some adjustments. The way services were managed was completely transformed. This article presents the changes and adjustments in the academic library's management.

Keywords: libraries, pandemic, management, coronavirus, COVID

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem

The unique coronavirus year of 2020 will go down in history (COVID-19). Many individuals perished from the sickness, schools and companies closed, people wore masks and the numbers of unemployment skyrocketed over the globe. Libraries were no exception to the rule, as everyone and everything evolved in a variety of ways. An important aspect of the formal school system, academic libraries assist the education programs of their affiliated colleges and universities. It is common for academic libraries to be broken down into three main categories: school, university, and college. In order to support the goals of the parent corporation, university libraries provide relevant papers and always attempt to bring in the most up-to-date information for their specific subject areas. Scholarly libraries rely on librarians to serve as the go-betweens, bringing together users and materials.

Students, researchers, and professors all rely on academic libraries, which are located at colleges and universities. Students in every field of study may depend on libraries to find the most relevant and reputable sources of knowledge. Libraries have a large collection of books and magazines to meet the demands of their customers. As an additional resource for those seeking knowledge, publications such as reports, and dissertations may be found in addition to books and journals (Evans & Baker, 2011). Libraries provide newspapers, magazines, and booklets that are ready to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information publicly. Changes in the world have occurred recently. There have been several recent advances in scientific knowledge (Nicolson, 2017). It is no longer enough to just provide information to the public. The popularity of new sources and technologies for disseminating knowledge has grown. In spite of this, libraries have remained as relevant and genuine as they have always been for millennia.

1.2 Importance of the Problem

Named COVID 19, the invasive coronavirus was originally discovered in China. COVID-19 differs from the previously known coronavirus in that it is far more deadly than typical (Rai et al., 2020). COVID-19 is a far more dangerous virus than the ordinary coronavirus, which causes cough, cold, and moderate fever. In certain situations, it may even lead to death. Experts have established that the COVID-19 virus is spreadable. When a person's saliva or mucus travels from his or her mouth to another person or individuals through speaking, coughing, or sneezing, it spreads. When a person who has been infected with the virus touches the saliva or mucus of an infected person, there is a high probability of transmission of the virus.

As soon as all public locations were closed indefinitely, the libraries likewise shut down in a flurry of activity. It was impossible for the library staff to prepare for the problems of the times since they had no previous knowledge of the temporary but imminent closure. After a certain period of time, the books could no longer be returned to the library. Items such as newspapers and books remained to be arranged. The libraries could no longer be kept clean or sanitary as a result of the sudden and extended shutdown. Even more concerning is the possibility that libraries might be misunderstood as nonexistent in times of pandemic because of the inability to meet the informational demands of patrons. Until now, it has been a major effort for librarians as well as other library employees to keep libraries relevant during these difficult times.

1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship

In every academic library, there are a certain number of people looking for information who are both nominally linked with the libraries and practically routinely associated with them. In academic libraries, the people who utilize the resources to find information are referred to as "users" in a variety of ways. Academic libraries cater to a wide range of patrons (Mensah and Onyancha, 2021). Many students go to the library on a regular basis in order to get relevant books and other educational materials. Researchers make up the majority of people who go to libraries on a regular basis to get their hands on books, magazines, manuscripts, and dissertations, among other sources of knowledge. Library resources are often used by teachers to prepare notes and do research, as well as for other purposes, such as meeting deadlines.

Students make up the biggest and most defenseless segment of the population during the COVID-19 crisis. When the lockdown was proclaimed, students had no time to arrange for other sources of information and knowledge, therefore they were unable to do so while they were in the lockdown period (Zhang, 2016). Libraries are a major source of support for students. The library pass-books of students are given with the necessary volumes for additional readings. Reading rooms at libraries are also used by students. When schools throughout the globe are under lockdown or even curfew, children are missing out on the most trustworthy and common information source. The librarians and library personnel have a critical role to play in addressing the informational demands of students attached to particular libraries in this unexpected and unwanted environment (Borah et al., 2020). Currently, we live in an information technology-driven world. The vast majority of libraries have created a variety of web-based and online resources to keep up with the rapid growth of information science. In the current circumstances,

students may obtain e-books for free. This may be done by creating a database of library-affiliated students. Once students' email addresses or Whatsapp numbers have been obtained, information regarding the internet or websites for accessing data relevant to their studies may be sent to those individuals.

Because the COVID-19 virus is on the verge of spreading, the second-largest group of formal and deliberate information seekers who are denied access to library resources is researchers. Particularly those working on a Ph.D. or serving in a post-doctoral capacity have strict deadlines for completing their research projects. As a result of the lockout, researchers have either relocated to their homes or fled their research institutions (Wada et al., 2021). Because they are still living on campus or near research facilities, many researchers have no access to the libraries they are linked with. As a result, their time is being squandered. Researchers benefit from the expertise of library staff when it comes to ensuring that their research projects operate smoothly and predictably. From their departments, you may get information on e-mail addresses and phone numbers. It is possible to learn about electronic resources that may be useful to scholars via the use of these sites. Many publishing companies and individuals have made their newspapers and magazines freely available to the public, especially in light of the current shutdown. The librarians can help researchers keep on track with their work by making these resources available to them and instructing them on how to utilize them.

Educators must shoulder their fair part of the burden of ensuring that students and researchers have easy access to pertinent information and resources through COVID-19. Teachers are expected to assist students and their families with as many relevant and necessary resources as possible in order to ensure that regular studies continue. Libraries personnel at colleges and universities play an important role in educating instructors and students alike about the wide range of online resources that may be accessed by teachers and researchers alike.

1.4 Hypotheses

During the COVID-19 epidemic, university libraries play a crucial role. As the COVID-19 epidemic has spread around the globe, academic libraries have encountered various challenges in delivering information. Libraries have kept loyal to their mission as development agencies, working and adapting to this new situation by finding creative ways to serve their members as well as communities. The results will enable librarians in the future to deal with similar situations, and the libraries would be able to create correct policies and effective tactics to better serve their patrons, as a result.

2. Literature Review

Organizations throughout the globe have been brought to a standstill in an effort to control the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic. Considering the damage, the college library was able to continue providing high-quality data for the exchange of knowledge, coaching, and research investigations. The fact that a library is a generational platform makes it easier for people to communicate, interact, and connect. Balachander and Ramesh (2019) found that library materials may be accessed in any possible form or configuration because of the ICT's transformation of the

library from a repository to an information dispersal facility. A study conducted by Mandal and Dasgupta (2019) found that today's younger generation has changed their attitude about the library, and they only go to the library for information they can't obtain online. In addition, research by Bansode and Shinde (2019) found that information technology has transformed many aspects of daily life, including communication, working, interacting, and even the way people live. During this epidemic, kids have access to important knowledge resources through library resources.

The library needs more specialists, particularly in the technological field, who can better prepare it to provide cutting-edge resources. University libraries, according to Wang and Lund (2020), may play an essential role in remote education via the creation of virtual libraries, inquiry-based learning, correspondence, transformative learning, one-on-one instructor and student meetings, mastery platforms, and so on. Libraries should be used as a catalyst for social change, according to the authors. It was brought to our attention by Samantha (2020) that the library has a responsibility to make its services available electronically in an epidemic shutdown. People are worried concerning how technology will make it easier to get information during a pandemic lockdown. In the opinion of Ashrafi-Rizvi and Kazempour (2020), the COVID-19 difficulties might be fixed or decreased by supplying the appropriate information, since these problems are generated by people and organizations propagating inaccurate information. This demonstrates the importance of an academic library serving as the appropriate information supplier.

In the May/June edition of the journal Computers in Libraries, Breeding (2020) wrote an essay about some of the fundamental services provided by university libraries. As the epidemic arrived in colleges and universities, the reviewer was able to learn more about how libraries were able to adapt their services to support students while ensuring their own safety. Founder of Library Technology Guides (https://librarytechnology.org/), Marshall Breeding was an independent contractor, writer, as well as speaker at library conferences. For both academic and public libraries, the article described the ways they changed and adopted severe measures so that they could continue providing their critical services to their constituents. When libraries in the United States were forced to shut as a result of the coronavirus epidemic, Breeding (2020) provided insight into how these institutions were prepared to go on with their fundamental missions despite the disruption. Like Cox (2020) who wrote about the pandemic, Breeding said that university libraries were well-positioned to manage web-based learning as well as their fundamental goal even if their physical locations were shuttered. There's a chance it's because the epidemic was only beginning to hit universities as the spring semester was winding down, and libraries weren't sure what services to provide in its wake. Neither Breeding (2020) nor Cox (2020) went into depth in their literature on how online collaborative tools will offer library services to the students to supplement in-person learning. For libraries, this meant a quick shift to internet platforms with librarians, as both Breeding and Cox wrote about.

Conclusion

Despite the beneficial influence that public library facilities had on individuals who used them and the significant contributions that library employees made to the larger response of Covid-19,

it was generally believed that there were substantial gaps in how library personnel might serve their areas during the lockdown. There are three groups of reasons that contribute to these gaps: the limits of a digital form of service delivery; external and internal influences. In addition to the disadvantages listed above, digital distribution also had a negative influence on the capacity of service providers to offer quality engagement and assistance, as well as a loss of actual resources. Digital copies of in-person library services are notable because they were not even like substitutes or provided the same results as that offered in-person. The absence of a civic, initiatives venue where anybody may join without paying or requesting permission and have the opportunity, but not the duty, to engage in conversation and meet new people was particularly felt. Library services' capacity to provide a personalized social experience and more advantages to their communities was limited by these restrictions. Factors that could have an influence on service management and implementation that are not directly related to the library sector include money, local council behaviors to risk as well as an understanding of what the service does as well as how it contributes, and how much of a voice does the library service have in local council frameworks. Organizational culture, excellent policy communication and participation, readiness and emergency plans, collaborations, and digital skills are all part of the library sector's individual processes. Libraries were unable to serve as a security net for neighborhoods, the solitary or alienated, and "borderline" or "hidden" vulnerable persons before lockdown because of these numerous hurdles. Employees may have been unable to call on their significant expertise in order to help communities and local governments.

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