
Assessment of Library and Information Professionals' Perception of COVID-19 and Its Impacts on Libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Library and Information (LI) professionals in Nigeria and the impact of COVID-19 on libraries, librarians and library services, were studied. The significance of demographic factors on LI professionals' perception of COVID-19 and its impact on libraries was tested. Descriptive survey design and Purpose sampling technique were adopted. LIS professionals in Nigeria constituted the population, and an online questionnaire designed by the researchers through Microsoft Forms was used. Descriptive analysis of respondents' demographic data and their covid-19 perception were presented in frequencies and percentages using tables while multivariate regression technique was used to test the significance of relationship between variables at $P < 0.05$. Findings revealed that many (61.4%) of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 is real but have personal reservations. However, 47.5% indicated that COVID-19 is a scientific invention. On the impacts of COVID-19 on libraries, the study found that COVID-19 is a game changer that will enhance the creation of new services by libraries, cause the reconfiguration of library space for safe operations in post-COVID, establishment of new rules and regulations, and more reliance on e-resources. On the test of association, educational qualification of respondents had a significant impact on respondents' perceptions that COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources (P -value = 0.005, B : 0.38, [95% CI: 0.115 - 0.646]) and that library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19. Also, educational qualification of respondents significantly influenced respondents' perception that COVID-19 is real. The study recommends that libraries should take advantage of the season to innovate, and that public health institutions should continually educate people on corona virus to disabuse people's mind of conspiracy theories.

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1. Introduction

The corona virus induced pandemic otherwise known as COVID-19 pandemic has in no small measure disrupted life as we used to know and live it across the world. From academic activities to economic endeavors, the pandemic has maintained a biting effect on virtually every aspect of human life. This has warranted significant challenges for world economies and global health (Conti & Younes, 2020). Breaking out in “Wuhan” city of the Hubei region of China in December 2019, the corona virus, scientifically referred to as CoV19/SARS-CoV-2, an extremely pathogenic organism, is responsible for the disease condition known as Corona Virus Disease 2019 or COVID-19. This highly contagious severe acute respiratory disease with high morbidity and mortality rates has so far, January 18, 2021 at 10:38pm CET, affected 93,805,612 people out of which 2,026,093 deaths have been recorded globally (World Health Organisation, 2021).

Notwithstanding the harsh reality of the pandemic, there seem to be differing opinions as per the outbreak and spread of the virus. In fact, little did many know what was initially thought to be a Chinese epidemic could become the pandemic that it has become. Yet, the disease seems to be perceived in various ways by different people across different professional, societal and cultural settings. This is further aggravated by the novelty of the corona virus of which little is known in the scientific community. In the same vein, scientific claims and counter claims have emerged from established authorities such as the WHO and many national governments and scientific institutions on the management of the virus especially in relation to its mode of transmission. Even among the generality of the populace, people seem to have divergent opinions on the pandemic and its disruptive impact on the society and communities of practice, including libraries, and library professionals in Nigeria. This explains the rise of misinformation which falls into the realm of COVID-19 conspiracies (Allington, et al., 2020).

In line with the rise of misinformation, libraries were affected and reshaped in many ways. According to Martzoukou (2020), the pandemic has become a catalyst for resifting priorities and change for libraries. Connaway (2020) asserted that this change and adaptations for information, services, and resources provision in libraries, lead to OCLC’s identification of a new model library. However, assessment of information professional’s perception of COVID-19 and its impact on library is an area that has not been sufficiently researched. Thus, this study therefore finds it imperative to assess the self-reported perception of LI professionals on COVID-19 so as to ascertain what LI professionals feel about the pandemic, and its effect on libraries.

1.1 Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- (a) Find out the perception of LIS professionals of COVID-19.
 - (b) Assess LIS professionals’ perception of the impact of COVID-19 on libraries, librarians and library services.
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- (c) Ascertain the relationship between the demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of COVID-19.
- (d) Find out the relationship between the demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on libraries, librarians and library services.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- (a) How do LIS professionals in Nigeria perceive the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (b) What are the perceptions of LIS professionals of the impacts of COVID-19 on libraries, librarians and library services in Nigeria?
- (c) What is the relationship between the demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of COVID-19?
- (d) What is the relationship between the demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on libraries?

1.3 Hypothesis

- (a) Ho1: There is no significant relationship between demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of COVID.
- (b) Ho2: There is no significant relationship between demographic information of LIS professionals and their perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 and libraries, librarians and library services.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perception of COVID-19 and Conspiracy Theories

Being novel, little was known of COVID-19 causing pathogen, the corona virus, during the early stages of the outbreak of the pandemic which has spiraled into one of the major public health crisis of all times. Only recently, were therapeutic breakthroughs made through the development and approval of coronavirus vaccines by leading pharmaceutical companies in the USA, UK, and other parts of the world. This has ignited a wide scale global vaccination program with significant leadership by developed countries. Globally, report has revealed that the virus is perceived by people differently leading “to conspiracy theories about its origin, seriousness, and attempts to stop its spread” (Cassese, Farhart, & Miller, 2020). However, the rate at which information is being circulated to curtail the COVID-19 infodemic or misinformation further justifies the prevalence of COVID-19 conspiracism otherwise known as conspiracy theories.

Conspiracism shows the propensity to conclude that “public events are covertly plotted by powerful and malevolent entities acting in concert” (Douglas, et al., 2019; Allington, et al., 2020). These

beliefs are held about COVID-19 and are widely circulated online through social media platforms (Allington, et al., 2020). In fact, Allington and his team found the prevalence of the COVID-19 conspiracy theories held mostly among younger people who are more tech savvy than their adult counterparts.

Some of the COVID-19 conspiracies theories have been listed in past studies (Cassese, Farhart, & Miller, 2020; Allington, et al., 2020). They opined that the source of the coronavirus as believed by some people was artificial and thus implied that it was a laboratory creation and that the coronavirus is not real. Others include the linking of the spread of the virus to the emergence and use of 5G telecommunication technologies and the belief that it was a biological weapon deliberately released in China, or economic leverage by some pharmaceutical companies and government agencies. Apart from these, misinformation is out there on various aspects of handling and managing the virus including claims on curative therapies and all.

2.2 Impact of Covid-19 on Libraries

Much like other sectors of the world, COVID-19 had exerted challenging impacts on the library. Library services had to be reimagined and librarians redeployed with new strategies of work. In some places, library doors were shut for several weeks or months when national, communal, organizational or institutional authorities adopted varying restriction techniques to ensure lockdown of states, towns and their national territories as a measure to combat the spread of the virus. The Chinese approach of total lockdown that was quickly adopted worldwide was followed by other non-pharmaceutical precautionary measures such as: wearing of face masks, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer, checking of temperature, hand washing, and social/physical distancing. All these in one way or the other had impacts on libraries, library services and librarians themselves. The impact of the virus on the mental and emotional state of people have been reported by multiple studies like: (Rubaltelli, et al., 2020; Grover, et al., 2020; Yıldırım & Güler, 2020; Kleinberg, van der Vegt, & Mozes, 2020). Corsillo (2020) reported librarians' anxiety and fatigue during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Notwithstanding, the experiences have been varied across libraries and in different parts of the world. The survey carried out by American Library Association in 2020 on libraries' reaction to COVID-19 revealed that the pandemic had effects on library services. In other words, the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic had both positive and perverse effects on the services and routines of libraries from March, 2020. Similarly, the president of the American Library Association (ALA) as reported by ALA (2020) revealed that the COVID-19 crisis challenged libraries to creatively work to adapt services while facilities were closed. Also, Connaway (2020) opined that the pandemic forced transformation of library operations and push into immediate innovation rather than "evolutionary" change.

Globally, libraries were physically closed but adopted different means such as online method of rendering crucial information services. In the view of Cox (2020), in March 2020, COVID-19 pandemic blind sided libraries with little or no time to plan as library facilities were shut and librarians shifted to only online services, working from home. Libraries globally were faced with

many situations in this COVID-19 pandemic ranging from managing complete services to closure of the library (IFLA, 2020). In support of this, Ashworth (2020) stated that Library of Congress announced closure of its facilities and other programs to users and other libraries globally followed suit. EBLIDA (2020) created a checklist for libraries and library associations during the COVID-19 crisis aimed at showcasing library efforts during the outbreak and post-pandemic era as well as financial escape route from the crisis.

Ashworth (2020) asserted that many libraries offered digital content to users with external internet access while the physical building was shut down. IFLA (2020) listed some impacts of COVID-19 pandemic to include: restrictions, full closure, minimal service, re-opening preparation, handling materials, staying safe at work and home, social distancing, and remote service provision. According to Corsillo (2020), most librarians complained that anxiety and fatigue during COVID-19 crisis which resulted to low work morale and perceptions of work during post COVID-19 pandemic and impact as stress, anxiety, economic impacts and lack of funds. In Nigeria, Abulade, Gbotoso and Abulude (2020) listed some impact of COVID-19 on libraries as restricted and reduced face-to-face assistance and media such as phone meetings, e-mail, zoom and virtual meetings, text, social media, library websites were applied.

It is obvious from some research that few scholars have seen and portrayed the COVID-19 impact on libraries from another dimension. Cox (2020) viewed it from a different perspective as provision of multiple opportunities for research interaction, increase web presence availability and robust development of search interfaces. Koscieljew (2020) supported this claim and added external collaboration, maintaining services, electronic service migration, pleasant cleanliness and healthy environment. ALA (2020) reported some positive impacts as increased usage of digital services and forecast of future users demand. Connaway (2020) viewed the positive impact of the pandemic as online services, developing new cooperation, provision of more equipment and technology in libraries and retraining of staff to function in an online environment. In Nigeria, Okike (2020) added that virtual tools are currently use by librarians to disseminate information and deliver services. Hunt (2020) mentioned that library goals shifted during the pandemic to more virtual library building, design of staff project and easy access to e-resources.

EBLIDA (2020) opined that the services of libraries were continuously re-designed during the pandemic such as practice from home, increased digital resources access and changes in human relation to another. Hunt (2020) focusing on Chambers County's Library stated some of the strategies adopted during COVID-19 pandemic ranged from webinars, emails, lectures, databases, ILS maintenance and reviewing voicemails.

Additionally, there was expectations for libraries post-pandemic. Cox (2020) tagged the post COVID-19 impact as "new normal". Connaway (2020) referred to the post pandemic as "The New Model Library", which is an opportunity for libraries to identify version based on changes to suit the new way. According to EBLIDA (2020) librarians will return to "new normals" rather than normal where in-person services and interactions may not be preferred, physical resources may be challenged to access and collaborative learning in libraries shunned. In addition, Cox (2020) listed the "new normal" as: technology shaping and reforms, new center stage of governance, unexplored economic region, increasingly social distancing and joint connectivity and opportunity threat.

3. Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The study population comprises Library and Information Professionals in Nigeria and sample size selected through purpose sampling technique given the peculiarities of the time when the survey was carried out. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed and administered online by the researchers using Microsoft Forms. The link to the questionnaire was circulated to Library and Information professionals in Nigeria through social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook (examples of professional platforms used are National Library Association, NALISE, etc.) and listserv for a period of 3 months, between May and August, 2020. A total response rate of 101 was recorded and data collected were analyzed using “Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23”. Descriptive analysis of demographic data of respondents and their perception of COVID-19 were presented in tables through frequencies and percentages while multivariate regression technique was used to test the significance of relationship between the independent variables: gender, educational qualification and type of library and respondents’ perception of Covid-19 at $P < 0.05$. The Multivariate regression was used based on its merit as a powerful test of significance when considering the effect of multiple variables simultaneously.

4. Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	43	42.6
Female	58	57.4
Total	101	100
Educational Qualification		
NCE	3	3
HND	6	5.9
BLI/B.S	13	12.9
MLI/M.S	51	50.5
PhD	28	27.7
Total	101	100
Library		
Academic	81	80.2
None	1	1
LI Educator	5	4.9

National	3	3
Publishing firm	1	1
School	4	4
Special	6	5.9
Total	101	100

A total of 101 LIS Professionals responded, out of which 42.6% were male while 57.4%

A total of 101 LIS Professionals responded, out of which 42.6% were male while 57.4% were female, giving a ratio of 0.7:1. Most respondents (50.5%) were Master’s degree holders and 27.7% Ph.D. holders in LIS respectively while 3% had National Certificate in Education (NCE). A large percent of the respondents were academic librarians (80.2%) followed by those who worked in special libraries (5.9%), LIS educators (4.9%), and school librarians (4%).

Table 2. Respondents’ Perception of COVID-19

Frequency (percent)						
Variable	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagreed	Neutral	Total
COVID-19 is not real, it is a mere power play by world political forces	6 (5.9)	7 (6.9)	47 (46.5)	33 (32.7)	8 (7.9)	101 (100)
COVID-19 is not caused by a natural virus, it is scientific invention	29 (28.7)	19 (18.8)	19 (18.8)	10 (9.9)	24 (23.8)	101 (100)
COVID-19 is real but I have personal reservations	38 (37.6)	24 (23.8)	17 (16.8)	8 (7.9)	14 (13.9)	101 (100)

The results reported combined the Agree and Strongly Agree and Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses in percentages. This approach was used in a past study (Nwakaego, 2017). The result shows that most respondents (79.2%) disagreed that COVID-19 was a mere power play by world political forces while some respondents (61.4%) agreed that COVID-19 is real but have their personal reservations. Interestingly, 28.7% and 18.8% accounted for aggregate of 47.5% that both agreed and strongly agreed that COVID-19 is a scientific invention.

Table 3. Respondents’ Perception of the Impact of COVID-19 on Libraries, Librarians and Library Services

Frequency (percent)						
Variable	Agree N (%)	Strongly agree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Strongly disagreed N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Total N (%)
COVID-19 is the game changer and will greatly change the way librarianship will be practiced in the coming years	49 (48.5)	24 (23.8)	10 (9.9)	4 (4)	14 (13.9)	101 (100)
COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources	43 (42.6)	15 (14.9)	30 (29.7)	2 (2)	11 (10.9)	101 (100)

COVID-19 will negatively affect library patronage	45 (44.6)	16 (15.8)	23 (22.8)	5 (5)	12 (11.9)	101 (100)
Library budget will rise significantly as a result of COVID-19	40 (39.6)	15 (14.9)	25 (24.8)	3 (3)	18 (17.8)	101 (100)
Library will rely more on e-resources to stay relevant post- COVID-19	50 (49.5)	41 (40.6)	2 (2)	1 (1)	7 (6.9)	101 (100)
Library space will need to be reconfigured to safely operate post- COVID-19	46 (45.5)	40 (39.6)	7 (6.9)	1 (1)	7 (6.9)	101 (100)
Rules and regulations guiding the use of Library will change post-COVID-19	45 (44.6)	39 (38.6)	6 (5.9)	3 (3)	8 (7.9)	101 (100)
Library will lay off staff to adjust to life after COVID-19	14 (13.9)	5 (5)	44 (43.6)	13 (12.9)	25 (24.8)	101 (100)
Library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19	61 (60.4)	33 (32.7)	2 (2)	0 (0)	5 (5)	101 (100)

Finding above shows that 72.3% of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 is a game changer and will greatly change the practice of librarianship in the coming years, 57.9% agreed that COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources while 60.4% agreed that COVID-19 will negatively affect library patronage and 54.5% agreed that library budget will rise significantly as a result of COVID-19. Also, 90.1% agreed that library will rely more on e-resources to stay relevant in post COVID-19 and 85.1% agreed that library space will be reconfigured to safely operate in post COVID-19. Moreover, 83.2% agreed that library rules and regulations will change in post COVID-19 and 93.1% agreed that library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19. However, 56.5% disagreed that library will lay off staff to adjust to life after COVID-19 a perception to which 24.8% of the respondent were neutral.

4.1 Hypotheses Testing

Before the test of significance, the dataset was examined for multi-collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) diagnostic check. The results showed that multi-collinearity was absent among the independent variables with VIF equal to 1.058, 1.074 and 1.037 for gender, educational qualification and type of library, respectively. Hence the three variables were qualified for the test of significance.

The Multivariate regression model was used to test the hypotheses based on its merit as a powerful test of significance when considering multiple dependent and independent variables simultaneously.

Table 4. Respondents Demographic Information and their perceptions of COVID-19

Variables	B	P value	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
<i>COVID-19 is a just a power Parody by global leaders, is not real,</i>				
Gender	0.028	0.907	-0.451	0.507

Educational Qualification	0.151	0.235	-0.1	0.401
Type of Library	-0.03	0.507	-0.121	0.06
<i>COVID-19 is not caused by a natural virus, COVID-19 is a scientific invention</i>				
Gender	0.034	0.915	-0.604	0.673
Educational Qualification	0.1	0.552	-0.233	0.434
Type of Library	0.064	0.295	-0.057	0.186
<i>COVID-19 is real but I have personal reservations</i>				
Gender	0	0.999	-0.576	0.575
Educational Qualification	0.335	0.03*	0.034	0.636
Type of Library	0.049	0.371	-0.06	0.159

B: Coefficient of regression; *: p value < 0.05; 95% CI: 95% Confidence Interval Hypothesis 1

H_0 : The demographic information of LI professionals does not have a significant influence on their perceptions of COVID-19

The level of significance) is set at 0.05. The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) for each construct when the P-value indicating significance.

The third construct shows that educational qualification of respondents significantly influenced respondents' perception that COVID-19 is real but I have personal reservations (P-value = 0.03, B: 0.335, [95% CI: 0.034 - 0.636]).

Table 5. Respondents Demographic Information and their perceptions of the Impact of COVID-19 on Libraries, Librarians and Library Services

Variables	B	P value	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
<i>COVID-19 is the game changer and will greatly change the way librarianship will be practiced in the coming years</i>				
Gender	0.276	0.362	-0.323	0.875
Educational Qualification	-0.13	0.413	-0.443	0.184
Type of Library	-0.011	0.843	-0.125	0.102
<i>COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources</i>				
Gender	-0.506	0.051	-1.013	0.001
Educational Qualification	0.38	0.005*	0.115	0.646
Type of Library	-0.023	0.637	-0.119	0.073

COVID-19 will negatively affect library patronage

Gender	-0.082	0.773	-0.644	0.48
Educational Qualification	0.197	0.187	-0.097	0.491
Type of Library	0.052	0.335	-0.055	0.159

Library budget will rise significantly as a result of COVID-19

Gender	0.306	0.316	-0.296	0.908
Educational Qualification	0.158	0.323	-0.157	0.473
Type of Library	0.085	0.143	-0.029	0.199

Library will rely more on e-resources to stay relevant post-COVID-19

Gender	-0.101	0.698	-0.618	0.415
Educational Qualification	0.121	0.377	-0.149	0.391
Type of Library	0.052	0.293	-0.046	0.15

Library space will need to be reconfigured to safely operate post- COVID-19

Gender	0.034	0.895	-0.476	0.544
Educational Qualification	-0.074	0.581	-0.341	0.192
Type of Library	-0.011	0.816	-0.108	0.086

Rules and regulations guiding the use of Library will change post-COVID-19

Gender	0.054	0.836	-0.467	0.576
Educational Qualification	-0.056	0.685	-0.329	0.217
Type of Library	-0.095	0.06	-0.194	0.004

Library will lay off staff to adjust to life after COVID-19

Gender	-0.081	0.788	-0.681	0.518
Educational Qualification	0.056	0.721	-0.257	0.37
Type of Library	0.092	0.112	-0.022	0.206

Library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19

Gender	0.144	0.54	-0.321	0.61
Educational Qualification	0.302	0.016*	0.059	0.545
Type of Library	-0.049	0.275	-0.137	0.039

B: Coefficient of regression; *: “p value < 0.05; 95% CI: 95% Confidence Interval”

H₀: The demographic information of LI professionals doesn’t have a significant influence on their perceptions of COVID-19 on libraries, librarians and library services

The second and last constructs in **Table 5** show that educational qualification of respondents had a significant impact on respondents' perceptions that COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources (P-value = 0.005, B: 0.38, [95% CI: 0.115 - 0.646]) and that library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19 (P-value = 0.016, B: 0.302, [95% CI: 0.059 - 0.545]).

5. Discussion

The result reveals that females responded more than the males, giving a ratio of 1:0.7. According to Ikenwe, Adegbilero-Iwari and Adegbilero-Iwari (2021), in most research, females respond more than their male counterparts. Most respondents possess Master's degree followed by Ph.D. This corroborates the study of Ishtiaq, Sehar and Shahid in 2020, when they averred that 65.5% of their sampled population was Master's degree holders. More percentage of the respondents was devoted to academic librarians; preceded by special librarians and LIS educators while school LIPs had the lowest score.

Finding reveals that most respondents disagreed that COVID-19 was a mere power play by world political powers, while many of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 is real but have their personal reservations. In other words, most respondents perceived COVID-19 as real. However, 28.7% and 18.8% accounting on an aggregate of 47.5% for agreed and strongly agreed that COVID-19 is a scientific invention. This result lends credence to the fact that the pandemic was not perceived as real by some people, and resulted to the issue of conspiracy theories. This is progressively consistent with Uscinski, et al. (2020) who found that "31 per cent agree that coronavirus was intentionally created and spread", a claim they classified as conspiracy theory in their study and corroborated by other works. In fact, Allington, et al. (2020) reported that laboratory origin for the coronavirus as the most commonly held conspiracy perception. Studies have shown an inverse relationship between "COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs and health-protective behaviors intended to mitigate the spread of the virus" (Allington & Dhavan, 2020; Freeman et al., 2020).

On the impact of COVID-19 on libraries, the finding shows that most respondents agreed that COVID-19 is a game changer and will greatly change the practice of librarianship in the coming years; COVID-19 will negatively affect library patronage and reduce the use of library print resources. Also, libraries will rely more on e-resources to stay relevant in post-COVID-19 era, library space will be reconfigured to safely operate in post-COVID-19, library rules and regulations will change in post-COVID-19 and library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19 and library budget will rise significantly as a result of COVID-19. Although, reduced library budget has been going on for years, most library directors that took part in Scholarly Kitchen survey reported constrictions in their budget for year 2020 and potentially for 2021 (Frederick, Schonfeld & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). However, these cuts do not mean new expenses are not going to be incurred. Lisa Peet in a September 24, 2020 article in *Library Journal* reported the experiences of directors of public libraries on "unexpected expenses" associated with operations during COVID-19. For Multnomah County Library in Oregon, United States, Teet quoted the Library Director, Vailey

Oehlke, that “new expenses relating to the crisis have surfaced,” which involve “shifting in-person services to virtual, instituting a book mailing system, moving programs like summer lunch and computer labs outdoors, and supporting Portland’s largest school district, which will conduct all classes virtually at least through November”. This supports the perception of our respondents that libraries may have to spend more except budget control or cuts are implemented. It also corroborated the findings that new library services will be created to address the changes caused by COVID-19. The study of Fasae, Adekoya, and Adegbilero-Iwari (2020) confirmed that libraries in Nigeria modified their services in an attempt to comply with innovations brought about by the pandemic. Further corroborating the finding, Connaway (2020) referred to the post-pandemic era of library as “The New Model Library” where library in the next five years will discard more investment in print resources in favor of online materials, as reported by some library directors (Frederick, Schonfeld, & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020).

Finding shows that educational qualification of respondents significantly influenced respondents’ perception that COVID-19 is real (P-value = 0.03, B: 0.335, [95% CI: 0.034 – 0.636]). Although, the result does not show the kind of association, it does align with Prickles, et al. (2021) that found that misinformation is associated with low educational level. It however disagrees with previous works by Cassese, Farhart and Miller (2020) and Prickles, et al. (2021) which reported gender significance in particular, that “men are more likely to endorse COVID-19 conspiracy theories or misinformation than women”.

The study also found that educational qualification of respondents had a significant impact on respondents’ perceptions that COVID-19 will reduce the use of library print resources (P-value = 0.005, B: 0.38, [95% CI: 0.115 – 0.646]) and that library will create new services to address the changes caused by COVID-19 (P-value = 0.016, B: 0.302, [95% CI: 0.059 – 0.545]). Whereas no research was found to have been done in this regard, finding of this study consistently reveal the association of educational qualification with respondents’ perception of the impact of COVID-19 on libraries. Studies have reported that many libraries switched to more usage of digital resources while others created new services to meet their patrons’ needs during the restrictions occasioned by the pandemic (Peet, 2020; Connaway, 2020; Frederick, Schonfeld & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020).

6. Conclusions

In Nigeria, most Library and Information professionals as information disseminators and knowledge gatekeepers perceive COVID-19 as real though, some still have their reservations that it’s an invention. This is a pointer to conspiracy theory issues. In line with the findings in the study, educational qualification of respondents had impact on their COVID-19 perceptions, and COVID-19 has impact on libraries, and library services. Thus, the study concluded that COVID-19 will change library space and introduce new services as well as generate more reliance on e-resources. The study therefore recommends that libraries should take advantage of the present circumstance to innovate with new services. Also, public health institutions should continually educate people on corona virus to disabuse people’s mind of conspiracy theories. Future studies with larger sample size is

recommended. It is also recommended that new study be carried out on the perceptions of librarians since the invention of vaccines more so that the virus has stayed longer than when this study was conducted.

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