In Response to Worldwide Disaster: Academic Libraries' Functioning During COVID-19 Pandemic Without a Policy

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Abstract : As a pandemic, COVID-19 has impacted the whole world since November 2019. In other words, every organization, industry, and institution has been negatively affected by the Coronavirus. The uncertainty of how long the pandemic will last caused chaos at all levels. As with any other institution, public libraries were affected and transmitted into online services and resources. As internationally, have been witnessed that some public libraries were well-prepared for such disasters as the pandemic, and therefore, collections, users, services, technologies, staff, and budgets were all influenced. Public libraries' policies did not mention any plan regarding such a pandemic. Instead, there are several rules in the guidelines about disasters in general, such as natural disasters. In this pandemic situation, libraries have been involved in different uneasy circumstances. However, it has always been apparent to public libraries the role they play in serving their communities in excellent and critical times. It dwells into the traditional role public libraries play in providing information services and sources to satisfy their information-based community needs. Remarkably increasing people's awareness of the importance of informational enrichment and enhancing society's skills in dealing with information and information sources. Under critical circumstances, libraries play a different role. It goes beyond the traditional part of information providers to the untraditional role of being a social institution that serves the community with whatever capabilities they have. This study takes two significant directions. The first focuses on investigating how libraries have responded to COVID-19 and how they manage disasters within their organization. The second direction focuses on how libraries help their communities to act during disasters and how to recover from the consequences. The current study examines how libraries prepare for disasters and the role of public libraries during disasters. We will also propose "measures" to be a model that libraries can use to evaluate the effectiveness of their response to disasters. We intend to focus on how libraries responded to this new disaster. Therefore, this study aims to develop a comprehensive policy that includes responding to a crisis such as Covid-19. An analytical lens inside the libraries as an organization and outside the organization walls will be documented based on analyzing disaster-related literature published in the LIS publication. The study employs content analysis (CA) methodology. CA is widely used in the library and information science. The critical contribution of this work is to propose solutions it provides to libraries and planers to prepare crisis management plans/ policies, specifically to face a new global disaster such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the study will help library directors to evaluate their strategies and to improve them properly. The significance of this study lies in guiding libraries' directors to enhance the goals of the libraries to guarantee crucial issues such as: saving time, avoiding loss, saving budget, acting quickly during a crisis, maintaining libraries' role during pandemics, finding out the best response to disasters, and creating plan/policy as a sample for all libraries.

Keywords : Covid-19, policy, preparedness, public libraries