COMPLIANCE WITH COVID-19 GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS BY ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR SAFETY OPERATIONS IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract
This study was carried out to determine compliance with covid-19 guidelines and protocols by academic libraries for safety operations in niger state. The study showed that there is high level of compliance with NCDC guidelines in the operation of academic libraries in Niger State. Although it was discovered that much is not done on the aspects of training the library personnel on proactiveness to covid-19, and in-placing of proper channel of communication, consultation and reporting cases. On the basis of these findings, the study concluded that academic libraries in Niger State are proactive and taking appropriate actions aimed at mitigating the spread of covid-19 in the area. However, the study recommended that training and re-training of library personnel on proactive ways to covid-19 especially on first aids exercise, provision of more number of facilities to the libraries should be provided and library taskforce on covid-19 should be motivated to rise up to their responsibility of supervision.

Keywords: *Covid-19, Tertiary Institution, Academic Libraries and NCDC.*

Introduction
Safety strategy for reopening of tertiary institutions and learning facilities have generated much concern among stakeholders in education since pronouncement of new date of reopening tertiary institutions after the long closure of institutions as a result of covid-19 outbreak. Attesting to this concern in separate interviews and contributions to various radio links on reopening of academic institutions in Nigeria are Adamu (2020), Nura (2021), and Samuel (2021) among others. According to Medical Science digest (2020), Covid-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of

coronavirus, 'Co' for corona, 'Vi' for Virus, and 'D' for disease. It manifestation in the year 2019 made '19' to be added to it as COVID-19. No doubt, covid-19 pandemic poses great threat to the health and safety of human across the globe.

In particular, activities of learning institutions such as schools, libraries and religious organizations and groups are negatively impacted as a result of outbreak of covid-19. Indeed, the long closures of schools have affected lives of many individuals especially the young ones. More than 1.5 billion children and young people globally have been affected by school and university closures (UNICEF, 2020). The index case of covid-19 was first confirmed in Nigeria in February, 27th 2020 as result of an Italian that came with it to Nigeria via Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos. This development, and for the fast and mass spread of it within the region and some part of the country led to the indefinite closure of all schools and learning facilities (including libraries) in Nigeria in March, 2020. This situation, as lamented by Arzika (2020) is dangerous to human existence due to the fact that schools and libraries are not only places of learning but also places of discovery for individual actualization of goals of existence. They also provide opportunities and support for the growth and development of individuals. As such, there is no individual or society that can effectively function without appropriate and adequate knowledge needed hence the need for schools and libraries services is apparent, and their closure is disastrous (Ogbeha (2020).

Thus, it is expected that the longer schools are closed, the more learning loss, the greater the exacerbation of inequalities, the deeper the learning crisis and the greater the exposure of the most vulnerable children to risk of exploitation (NSUBEB, 2020). In line with this, Muazu (2020) argued that continuation in closure of schools and learning facilities would have serious negative impact on learners, their right to learn, and realization of sustainable development goal 4 on inclusive and quality education. Similarly, a renowned philosopher – Plato as reported by Christopher (2006) long ago supposed that under this condition of restriction to opportunities for personal development, most people are prevented from achieving everything which they are capable of, and young people are also prevented from the rigors of intellectual pursuits. When talking intellectual pursuits, recognition is highly placed on tertiary institutions such as universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics also known as higher institutions. Libraries in these institutions are academic libraries established to support missions and visions of these institutions of high academic pursuits.

It is therefore apparently clear from the above that there is a strong need to reopen tertiary institutions and other learning facilities such as libraries to allow academic pursuits. The great challenge of reopening however lies on ensuring a safe environment that will safeguard the libraries against the spread of the deadly Corona Virus. Going by this, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) advanced guidelines for reopening of institutions and businesses in Nigeria. NCDC has rollout guidelines for reopening institutions and businesses in the country.

Statement of the Problem
Since 2019 when Corona Virus broke out of the labourers of a company in Wuhan in Peoples' Republic of China which later manifested itself to the world at large, every human endeavour has been directly or indirectly negatively affected. This situation led to the closure of cities, institutions and businesses globally. Consequently, nations and institutions were left with a great

task of weighing measures that would guaranty their safety and that of their clients as normal businesses reopened. Libraries are therefore by their nature of dealing with numerous clients coming from varied locations and environments need to be in the forefront in weighing safety measures that would guard against the spread of this menace as they reopen for business. Fortunately, in Nigeria, the (NCDC) in collaboration with Presidential Task Force (PTF) on covid-19 and other allied agencies has mapped out safety guidelines for reopening of institutions and businesses. But what actually remained a question now is the level of proactiveness of institutions in compliance with these safety guidelines. However, in what may be a testimony of inadequate preparedness of some institutions in compliance with NCDC guidelines in reopening of businesses was the zeal shown by the staff of National Identity Card Management (NIMS) on 11th January, 2021 to embark on strike (i.e. closure of business) if adequate safety measures not taken for their lives against crowded citizens trooping out to get registered in order to meet up with the deadline earlier announced by the government for the closure of mobile lines of unregistered citizens with NIMS. Therefore, this research was undertaken to check the proactiveness of academic libraries in Niger State in compliance with NCDC guidelines for safety operation as institutions and libraries reopen.

Objectives of the Study

With specific consideration to NCDC guidelines, the primary concern of this study was to establish whether there is adequate preparation by academic libraries in Niger State for safety operation as institutions/libraries reopen in the event of Covid-19. Thus, to fully capture this, the following objectives mapped out to guide the study:

i. To find out whether Academic Libraries in Niger State have access to covid-19 guidelines and protocols by NCDC
ii. To find out the extent to which the academic libraries comply with the Covid-19 guidelines and protocols by NCDC
iii. To examine the proactive measures adopted by the academic libraries for proper monitoring of users compliance with the guidelines.

Research Questions

These research questions were postulated to guide the study:

i. Does Academic Libraries in Niger State have access to Covi-19 guidelines and protocols by NCDC?
ii. To which extent do academic libraries in Niger State comply with the Covid-19 guidelines and protocols by NCDC?
iii. What proactive measures for proper monitoring of users compliance with Covid-19 guidelines are adopted by academic libraries Inger State?

Review of Related Literature
Covid-19: Symptoms, Spread and Vulnerability

Covid-19 is a new virus disease with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and common cold associated with common symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath (Medical Science digest, 2020). Muyiwa (2020) pointed out that in severe cases, the infection is also attached with pneumonia or breathing difficulties which can be fatal. These symptoms according to Makunsidi (2021) are similar to the flu (influenza) or the common cold, and to him, that is

why testing is required to confirm if someone has COVID-19 or not when such symptoms exhibits.

Corona virus is majorly transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person as a result of coughing and sneezing (NCDC, 2020). Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus if they in turn touch any of their eyes, nose or mouth before/ without washing their hands or using sanitizer as this dangerous disease can survive on surfaces for several hours but easily killed by disinfectants (Medical Science digest, 2020). However, according to Patrick-Akpan (2020) the possibility of covid-19 been spread by air as air-bone disease is still agitation in the world though some findings have indicated it spread by air as air-borne disease.

The Virus can infect any person regardless of hos age, gender or social class. However, the most vulnerable group so far are the elderly people and those with chronic pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, heart diseases and related illness (Savannah Health Brief, 2021). The disease is still new and experts are still learning more about its symptoms, ways of transmission, prevalence and demography. As regards to children, there are relatively fewer reported cases even though the disease is still new and studies together with their various findings/results are still coming out as state earlier.

Curtailing Coronavirus and its Spread
Several clinical trials are being conducted to evaluate potential therapeutics for covid-19. Among these is vaccine developed by Pfizer Company which was to be procured by government of Nigeria (Emmanuel-Kutara, 2021). However, Patrick-Akpan (2021) noted that as the immunization is yet to get the country early care from health care provider can make the disease less dangerous. Similarly, according to AbdurRahman (2021) posited that as with other respiratory infections like the flu and common cold, public health measures are critical to prevent or slow the spread of corona Virus. In line with this assertion, health institutions particularly Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) enumerated the following public measures to curtail the spread of corona virus:
  i.   Self-isolation for the victims and two weeks of quarantine for persons arriving from abroad,
  ii. Proper hygiene practice such as wearing of facemasks, use of tissue or flexed elbow to cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, frequent washing of hands with disinfectant, and desistance from frequent touching of eyes, nose and mouth,
  iii. Frequent cleaning and disinfection of touched surfaces or objects,
  iv. Maintenance of physical distance of at least 2m apart with a partner where physical meeting warrants and,
  v.   Monitoring of psychological, emotional and health well-being of individual (such as diligent temperature checks with noncontact thermometers) in organizations.

Guidelines for Reopening of School: An overview
The decision to close schools was relatively quick and easy to implement, often done overnight. However, the decision to reopen schools after the containment measure is more complex and more complicated to implement given the fact that the pandemic is still present with an unpredictable evolution. Such decision is highly sensitive and need to be made based on advice from health experts and in consultation with concerned actors (NSUBEB, 2020). The primary concern of school reopening when Covid-19 pandemic still present as postulated by Muyiwa (2020) is the safety and protection of physical, mental, psychosocial and health well-being of the

entire school population. Keeping this in this in mind and in line with NCDC guidelines, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) with consultative and collaborative initiative of development partners such as EIIWGN, NEG, UNICEF and federal Ministry of Health (FMH) developed a Nigeria Education Sector Covid-19 Response Strategy for safe reopening of academic institutions and learning facilities. This strategy according to Patrick-Akpan (2020) set out the framework for comprehensive and coordinated actions to mitigate, medium, and long-term impacts of Covid-19 pandemics on the nation's education sector. Following the notice issued by the ministry of education, all schools must meet the basic covid-19 prevention and control requirements to guarantee public safety.

It is also good to note that Education Sector Disaster Management Committees saddled with the responsibility of exploring strategies for mitigating effects of covid-19 and guidelines for safe reopening of schools in the event of covid-19 have been constituted by many states in Nigeria. In Niger state, the Education Sector Committee has been constituted by the Honorable Commissioner of Education, and a contingency plan has been developed and costed to curtail any effects the covid-19 is expected to have as a result of school closure and in the event of reopening of schools (Niger State Ministry of Education, 2020). These plans are in line with that of FME Covid-19 Response Strategy for safe reopening of schools which are enumerated below:

i. Establishment of Institutional Task Force on Covid-19 charged with ensuring that covid-19 prevention and control measures are strictly adhered to in places of work to minimize risk to staff and students.

ii. Educating and training of the personnel on mode of operation that safeguard the health of the stakeholders in school, and sensitization of the learners about covid-19 and proactive ways of responding to it.

iii. Fumigation and disinfection of school environment and facilities and ensuring of appropriate facilities for cleaning and often decontamination of frequent touched surfaces (doors, gates, bars, etc).

iv. Provision of protective measures and facilities (safe-water and sanitizers) in strategic places (entrances, exits, toilets, etc).

v. Provision of enough learning materials and spaces for learning to avoid sharing and congestion.

vi. Ensuring of conducive atmosphere in offices, halls and classrooms through increase air flow and ventilation.

vii. Ensuring of proper hygiene practice by personnel, learners and visitors (such as wearing of facemasks, use of tissue or flexed elbow to cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, frequent washing of hands with disinfectant).

viii. Monitory of psychological, emotional and health well-being of individual (such as diligent temperature checks with noncontact thermometers) in organizations. Also, identification and isolation of staff or student with high risk and special care provided to minimize the risk.

ix. Development of appropriate channel of communication, consultation, and report on covid-19.

ix. Establishment of Institutional temporary isolation centre for reporting/receiving cases and for quick response.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used because of its reliability in generating results and analysis. The target population for this study comprised all Heads of Departments/Units in academic libraries of six selected tertiary institutions in Niger state, Nigeria, namely; The Federal University of Technology, Minna, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Niger State College of Education, Minna, Federal Polytechnic, Bida, and Niger State Polytechnic, Zungeru. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from thirty (30) respondents using simple random sampling technique. However, the data collected were supplemented with unstructured field observation presentedin prose to support or refute the findings from the questionnaire. The research instrument was validated by three lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger state. Ina pilot study, T-test method was used to analyse the ten (10) administered copies of the questionnaires given to Heads of units in College of Agriculture, Mokwa and College of Nursing, Bida libraries. A coefficient reliability of 0.96 was obtained which indicate that the instrument is reliable. Thirty (30) pieces of thevalidated questionnaires were then administered to Heads of Department/Units with the assistance of heads of institutional libraries. All

thirty copies of questionnaire were filled and returned at response rate of 100%. The respondents comprised males and females with 70% and 30% respectively. Descriptive statistics (percentages and frequency distribution) was used to analyse the data. Which was presented in table format.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Access to Covid-19 Guidelines and NCDC Protocols

Variable	Access to Covid-19 Guidelines				Access to Covid-19 NCDC Protocols			
	Frequency		Percentage (%)		Frequency		Percentage (%)	
Institution	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library; Federal University of Technology, Minna	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0
Abubakar Gimba Library; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	04	01	80	20	05	00	100	0
Federal College of Education Library, Kontagora	04	01	80	20	05	00	100	0
Yahaya Madaki Library; Niger State College of Education, Minna	05	00	100	0	04	01	80	20
Federal Polytechnic Library, Bida	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0
Niger State Polytechnic Library, Zungeru	04	01	80	20	04	01	80	20
Total	**27**	**03**	**90**	**10**	**28**	**02**	**93**	**7**

Table 1 showed that 27(90%) of the respondents agreed to that they have access to covid-19 guidelines which is a clear indication that academic libraries in Niger State are well informed on all that is required to handle and keep safe from covid-19. With regard to having access covid-19 protocols by NCDC, the responses in the Table revealed that academic libraries in Niger State have such access as 28(93%) of the respondents agreed to this.

Table 2: Extent of Compliance with Covid-19 Guidelines and Protocols

	Establishment of Covid-19 Taskforce in the Library				Proper Monitoring of Users				Proper Hygiene Practice Adherence			
	Frequency		Percentage (%)		Frequency		Percentage (%)		Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library; Federal University of Technology, Minna	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0
Abubakar Gimba Library; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	04	01	80	20	04	01	80	20	05	00	100	0
Federal College of Education Library, Kontagora	05	00	100	000	03	02	60	40	05	00	100	0
Yahaya Madaki Library; Niger State College of Education, Minna	01	04	20	80	02	03	40	60	05	00	100	0
Federal Polytechnic Library, Bida	05	00	100	0	04	01	80	20	05	00	100	0
Niger State Polytechnic Library, Zungeru	03	02	60	40	03	02	60	40	05	00	100	0
Total	**23**	**07**	**77**	**23**	**21**	**09**	**70**	**30**	**30**	**00**	**100**	**0**

It is obvious from Table 2 above that majority 23(77%) of the respondents agreed to the existence of library taskforce on covid-19 charged with ensuring that covid-19 prevention and control measures were strictly adhered to in the libraries to minimize risk to library staff and users. However, few 7(23%) of the respondents disagree; this is attached to non-functionality of some taskforce especially in the state owned institutions. Prior to this, Adamu (2020) lamented poor functionality of school based taskforce in the country.

The Table equally showed that there is proper monitoring of users' compliance with the Covid-19 protocols as 21(70%) of the cumulative value of all responses agreed to this. Additionally, it was discovered from the observation that the common way deployed in doing this is diligent temperature checks with noncontact thermometers from the entrance of the libraries. Although it was also observed that some libraries depend on checking from gateway to the institution without specific checks when entering the library. This is not good enough because some users comr from hostels and quarters within the institution without passing through the gate. Thus, this particular group of users are not checked and can pose threat to other users and staff of the library. Niger State College of Education, Minna should be commended for identification and isolation of library users with high risk in inner corner of the reserve unit of the library to minimize risk and special services provided to them. This should be emulated by other libraries to safeguard the health of these particular users.

The Table also showed that the respondents' cumulative percentage score on the adherence to proper hygiene practice such as physical distancing, wearing of facemasks, use of tissue , and frequent washing of hands with sanitizers, in the academic libraries in Niger State is 100%. This

showed total compliance with this item in the area. However, some staff sighted during field observation not compling with this. This in line with Ibrahim (2021)'s affirmation of nonchalant attitudes of some staff in institutions in the State with regards to proper hygiene practice prior to this research.

Table 3: Proactive Measures Adopted

Variable	Fumigation and Disinfection of library Environment and Facilities				Placement of protective Measures and Facilities in Strategies Places in the Library				Training of Library Personnel on Covid-19 Protocols			
	Frequency		Percentage (%)		Frequency		Percentage (%)		Frequency		Percentage (%)	
Institution	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library; Federal University of Technology, Minna	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0	00	05	0	100
Abubakar Gimba Library; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	05	00	100	0	04	01	80	20	02	03	40	60
Federal College of Education Library, Kontagora	05	00	100	0	04	01	80	20	01	04	20	80
Yahaya Madaki Library; Niger State College of Education, Minna	05	00	100	0	03	02	60	40	00	05	0	100
Federal Polytechnic Library, Bida	05	00	100	0	05	00	100	0	02	03	40	60
Niger State Polytechnic Library, Zungeru	04	01	80	10	03	02	60	20	01	04	20	80
Total	**29**	**01**	**97**	**3**	**24**	**06**	**80**	**20**	**06**	**24**	**20**	**80**

Table 3 revealed that almost all respondents 29(97%) agreed to the fumigation and disinfection of their libraries' environment and facilities before reopening. This is in line with Makundisi (2021) that all institutions and facilities in Nige State were fumigated before reopening. This is also a clear indication that the institutions environments, including the environments of academic libraries in Niger State are safe for operation.

The Table also showed that 24(80%) of the respondents agreed to the availability of proactive measures and facilities such noncontact temperature thermometers, safety water and sanitizes in strategic places in the academic libraries in Niger State. This was also seen during field observation by the researchers, and it is in line with NCDC guidelines for public health measures to curtail the spread of corona virus.

The Table revealed further that there was no tangible training organized for library personnel on proactiveness to covi-19 prior to the reopening of academic libraries in Niger State as indicated by 80% of the respondents. From the field it was also learnt that training on covid-19 were organized in some institutions across the board (all staff) irrespective of offices. This to some respondents is not good enough especially to library staff that deals with many users in and out of the mother-institution.

Table 4: Establishment of appropriate channel of communication, consultation, and report for Proper Monitoring of Users Compliance with Convid-19 Guidelines and Protocols

S/N	Academic Libraries	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library; Federal University of Technology, Minna	00	05	0	100
2	Abubakar Gimba Library; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	02	03	40	60
3	Federal College of Education Library, Kontagora	03	02	60	40
4	Yahaya Madaki Library; Niger State College of Education, Minna	04	01	80	20
5	Federal Polytechnic Library, Bida	02	03	40	60
6	Niger State Polytechnic Library, Zungeru	03	02	60	40
	Total	**14**	**16**	**47**	**53**

It is obvious from Table 4 that Contrary to the expectation of the researchers, the cumulative percentage score on agreement to the establishment of appropriate channel of communication, consultation, and report on covid-19 in the academic libraries in Niger State falls below average. Only 14(47%) of the respondents agree while 16(53%) disagree. One may anticipate that since majority 23(77%) of the respondents agree to the existence of library taskforce on covid-19 in the Table 4, the appropriate channel of communications and report is already put in placed hence these bodies can serve as channels. But still not surprise , as the small percent 7(23%) of the respondents in the same Table4 that disagree attached it to non-functionality of some taskforce, and more so Adamu (2020) lamented poor fuctionality of school based taskforce, this might also be the reason behind adverse disagreement to the establishment of appropriate channel of communication, consultation, and report on covid-19 in the academic libraries in Niger State.

Conclusion

From the above data presentation, analysis and results and discussions, this study concluded that there is high level of compliance with Covid-19, guidelines and protocols by academic libraries in Niger State except in few cases with regards to training of library personnel on proactivess to covid-19 and proper channel of communication, consultation and reporting of cases.
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Recommendations

Based on the findings, results, discussions and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were postulated to proffer solution to the problems identified:

1. Academic libraries in Niger State should organise training and retraining of library personnel on proactive ways to covid-19 especially on first aid exercise.
2. Management of tertiary institutions in Niger State should provide more number of facilities such as noncontact temperature thermometers and sanitizers to the libraries as they are in short in some libraries.
3. Library taskforce on covid-19 should be motivated to raise up to their tasks of supervision and to serve channel of communication, consultation and reporting cases.
4. All library staff should be actively enrolled in insurance scheme to curtail unforeseen cases.

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