Ethical Practices in Information Service Provision at Makerere University Business School Library Uganda

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Abstract:

Ethical practice in information service provision involves choice of material, access, equality of treatment, copyright, intellectual freedom, protecting user's rights, confidentiality, and, avoiding concealment of information, misinforming clients and divulging private information. The rationale of this study was to find out whether MUBS librarians are aware of these ethical practices and apply them in the performance of services' provision to their clients.

The study examined librarians' ethical practices in the provision of information services at Makerere University Business School library. It was guided by the following specific objectives: i) (i) To identify the range of information services provided by MUBS library. ii) To explore the core principles and ideals that underpins ethical practices in MUBS library. iii) To determine the implications of ethical dilemmas on provision of information services in MUBS library. iv) To suggest an ethical model of practice for delivering information services in MUBS library, Uganda.

Descriptive research design was adopted with a qualitative research approach. A purposive sampling technique was preferred. The sample size comprised of 54 informants including MUBS Library staff, MBA students, Administrative staff and lecturers. Document review, observation, face to face interviews and self-administered questionnaires were the methods used in the collection of data.

Services provided were photocopy, printing and scanning (67.6%); direct personal assistance to readers seeking information (64.8%); printed books long term loan (1-2 weeks) (64.7%) and user education (55.9%). Reading and discussion space (58.8%) available were satisfactory environmental conditions .Information ethics was integrated in library professional practice in MUBS library especially from the scope of PAPA model. The implications of ethical dilemmas on provision of information services: there were several factors beyond those in the PAPA model and WSIS Action Line 10 that influence information ethical practice by library professionals in MUBS library. These factors included; limited number of qualified staff in MUBS Library; inequalities in internet access; lack of awareness and interest in having the code; lack of locally developed code of ethics and challenge of implementing international codes of ethics; low level of enforcement of ethical conducts by library management; unpopularity of ethical code;

high level of complexity of the existing code of ethics and existence of outdated information resources especially text books.

An ethical model of practice for delivering information: the library model to follow is 'KE' whereby 'K' stands for knowledge acquisitions and 'E' for enforcements and re-enforcements.

Library management has to facilitate librarians in doing their professional work by providing enough space for users and the internet, especially WIFI; following users when given information sources for photocopying, using of ICT applications, and, availing up-to-date textbooks. Publicity of the code of ethics has to be done as way of sensitizing the librarians about it through the use of social media, social links, mobile phones and other digital era systems. Implications of ethical dilemmas have to be critically considered.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Professional ethics are general principles of professional behavior which should be followed by members of the profession in order to act in an appropriate moral way and to avoid the risk of misconduct (IFLA, 2012). It relates to moral rules that influence a professional's actions or behavior in the discharge of her professional responsibilities (Onoyeyan, et al., 2014). It helps professionals to choose what to do when faced with problems at work. Also, it is a set of rules of conduct for specific situations (Kaddu, 2007).

Ethical practice in information service provision involves many perspectives including; choice of material (selection), access, equality of treatment, copy right, intellectual freedom, protecting user's rights and confidentiality. In a negative sense, it includes concealment of information, misinforming clients and divulging private information (Adebayo & Mabawonku, 2017). It is evident that practice of information ethics is better understood with focus on principles of information service delivery which involves professionals who are knowledgeable on how to behave towards the users' in their libraries.

Ethical principles enable normative judgments, guiding thinking by providing a basis for determining how to act when an ethical issue arises. They do not provide definitive answers; but, answers that can be justified by way of argument depending on the ethical viewpoints adopted and the decision-making models and processes employed (Matingwina, 2015).

The Uganda Library and Information professional association has not yet promulgated ethical codes to guide the library and information professionals in the roles as intermediaries between the information services they provide and their clients. In the absence of a specific code for library professionals, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) library adopted the Public Service code of conduct and ethics for Uganda Public Service (2005) to handle ethical proposition and guide librarians' in the provision of library services (Makerere University Business School Council, 2016). This code of ethics is for the general public servants of Uganda and does not cater for the ethical issues that the information workers are supposed to observe. It appears there are still some elements of unethical practices such as respect for users and inaccessibility to some information resources (MUBS, 2016). Therefore, this study investigated the librarians' ethical practices in the provision of information services at Makerere University Business School library.

The purpose of this study was "to examine librarians' ethical practices in the provision of information services at Makerere University Business School library. The following research questions were addressed: (i) Which types of information services are provided by MUBS Library, Uganda? ;ii) What are the core principles and ideals that underpin ethical practices at MUBS Library, Uganda?; iii) What are the implications of ethical dilemmas on provision of information services to MUBS library, Uganda? and iv)

Which ethical model can be adopted for practice of delivering information services in MUBS library, Uganda?

In India, it was by few professionals like. Mukherjee (1966), Amitabh Chatterjee (1984) and Kumar et al (2005) who wrote about Code of Ethics in their books. Some seminars/conferences like IASLIC (1984) addressed the issue. However, these attempts were inadequate as the code of ethics can have validity if devised by national professional association. Unfortunately, no ethical code has so far been adopted by the library professionals in India though such a code has become all the more necessary.

The concept of information service has changed to embrace physical facilities, environment, and required information materials and services offered as well as professional assistance given to users by librarians. The library needs to be a dynamic and inviting place which has flexible, multifunctional spaces. This is where small and big groups can work, digital media can be used and created and the librarian can work collaboratively with teaching staff (Bolan, 2009; Erikson and Markuson, 2007). Libraries are no longer depositories of information but transformational spaces where information is not only accessed, shared and stored, but challenged and created. (Erikson &Markson, 2007).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Elements of an excitation system

Ethical practices possess many characteristics such as integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness (Trevino, Hartman, and Brown, 2000). The practices have a high regard for human worth and dignity, where they make decisions and take action in accordance with the deeply held beliefs. These beliefs, values, vision and action set the tone and the standard of the organization (Banerjiand Krishnan, 2000). Therefore, an ethical practice is a choice one makes when passion, authenticity, and credibility are aligned with a sound belief system.

Professionalism in library and information work assumes the awareness and practice of ethical standards (Hannabuss, 2005). Kathleen, Olawale and Olaide (2018) referred ethical practices as the branch of applied ethics that focuses on professionals like librarians while Onoyeyan, et al (2014) opined that ethical practices relate to moral rules that influence a professional's actions or behavior in the discharge of her professional responsibilities. Onoyeyan, et al (2014), also, noted that ethical practices help professionals and should be followed by members of the profession in order to act in an appropriate moral way and to avoid the risk of misconduct.

Adebayo, Akole & Salau (2016) revealed that, the core values of Librarianship to be observed by librarians include: protection of personal data; choice of materials; censorship; privacy and confidentiality; social responsibility of equal treatment of users and intellectual freedom.

Onoyeyan, et al (2014) assessment results showed that most of the respondents (93.2%) are aware that librarians are professionals and have a code of ethics they must follow. They identified the ethical issues faced by librarians in practice as intellectual property right issues, issues of information accuracy and selection decision. Their findings, further, revealed that most of the respondents (95.4%) had the perception that ethics could be learned like any other library skill.

CILIP (2014) highlighted some practices that should be of concern to information professionals. These are concern for the public good in all professional matters including respect for diversity within society and promoting equal opportunities and human rights; concern for the good reputation of the information profession; commitment to defend and the advancement of access to information, ideas and work of the imagination. Others include: provision of the best possible service with available resources; concern for

balancing the needs of actual and potential users and reasonable demands of employers; equitable treatment of all information users, impartiality, and avoidance of bias in acquiring and evaluating information; mediating it to other information users; respect of confidentiality and privacy in dealing with information users.

It is important to note that ethical practices impact to accessibility, translations, integration of textual and graphical formats involving repackaging of information (Britz, 2010). Consequence- based theory was developed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).According to Consequence-based theories, what distinguishes right actions from wrong actions is that they help better consequences. In order to do right thing, we should perform actions that have good consequences. Ndwandwe (2009:) questions how one would hold an argument if the intended consequence does not materialize? Or if the means of achieving the consequence is unethical and worse yet, who is in position to judge whether an outcome is best consequence, simply good or even bad?"

Virtue-based theory was developed by Aristotle. According to virtue based theory the right thing to do is what a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances. The Aristotelian virtue includes things like courage, temperance, friendliness and generosity. Philipps Foot (1978) and Alasdair Mac-Lntyre (1981) cited in Fallis (2007) assert that "virtues are clearly applicable to issues of information ethics. For example, library professionals often need courage to stand for principles of information ethics in the face of resistance. In addition, Virtue-based theory states that friendliness certainly makes it more likely that library professionals will succeed in their mission of providing people with access to information. Virtue-based theory is concerned with character and virtue, and not actor duty. It postulates that good people will naturally do the right thing. This theory is applicable to the study of information ethics to library professional practice as it gives an understanding of ethical reasoning in library practice.

Duty- (1785).According to this theory, consequences are not necessarily all that matters in determining what the right thing to do is. Another duty based theory was developed by W.D. Rossin 1930. This theory has been widely applied. One reason for the greater applicability of Ross's theory is that (unlike Kantor Mill) he does not try to distinguish between right actions and wrong actions using a single unified principle. Ross instead presents a whole list of duties that are each supposed to follow directly from our moral intuition. This list includes a duty to keep our promises, distribute goods justly (justice), improve the lot of others with respect to virtue, intelligence, and happiness (beneficence) and avoid injury to others. The duty to justice and beneficence are especially important for library professionals. In addition, Ross's list of duties (possibly a duty to provide access to information are directly relevant to library professionals). Duty-based theory is applied in this study as it provides general understanding of information ethics to library professional practice. Right-based theory on the other hand was developed by Locke (1689). This theory suggests that, we have some rights merely by virtue of being human beings. This theory insists that every individual has the right to read, write, and think whatever she or he wishes. But can we honestly say that what every one reads writes and thinks will always lead to the right thought and right speech in all cases? (Ndwandwe, 2009). Therefore, Right based theory was not used in this study because the theory is generic and does not specify other duties that professional librarian should perform but rather insists on user's rights.

The literature reviewed revealed limited studies on information ethics especially from the developing country context because the field is still in infancy compared to North America and Europe. This is exacerbated by the limited awareness about information ethics, lack of institutional policy, lack of resources, and others. Furthermore information ethics, being a new field, does not have well developed

theoretical frames and therefore investigating research phenomenon in this field has to rely largely on classical western ethical theories to explain emerging and complex issues occasioned by revolution in information technology. Finally, limited studies on information ethics from developing country context are narrow in scope and have not delved critically into complex issues of information society enunciated by World Summit on Information Society Declaration of Principles.

Many technologies like mobile phones and applications like Facebook are now being used to deliver information from libraries to clients. Information professionals may find it difficult to control the information flow which they are required to do if they are to perform their duties ethically. As shown in the conceptual framework, ethical implications on these librarians' practices and strategies to avert them remain a gap to be filled and, therefore, a need for this study to fill this gap. The model for ethical practices by librarians is also yet to be found.

III.   METHODOLOGY

A. System under study

The study adopted analytical research design and used qualitative research technique to examine the practices of ethics in the provision of library services in Makerere University Business School. The study was carried out at Makerere University Business School (MUBS) library MUBS library was preferred because the researcher learnt from MUBS Library (2016) that there were untimely library services, lack of respect for user's privacy, negative attitude towards clients, inaccessibility to some information resources and poorly enforced library policies. The researcher used a total population of 150 respondents including 46 Library staff at Makerere University Business School library; 10 Administrative Assistants (MUBS Library and Self-Assessment Analysis Report, 2015/16), and, 94 MBA students (Makerere University Postgraduate Students Admission List 2018/2019). Master of Business Administration Programme students were considered because this programme had the biggest number of students enrolled every year in MUBS and students of this programme were the majority users of MUBS library since they were actively involved in research works. MUBS Library had active and dormant clients. Undergraduate students and administrative staff are dormant users of the library and could be very difficult to find them in the library so that they could be requested to join in the study as respondents. MBAs students are active users of the library since they are involved in research works. The study population of 150 was from about 3000 MUBS population.

The researcher visited MUBS' campus, and, starting with MBA students, she consulted and enrolled those who were present in the library at that time and the ones who agreed to participate in the study. She carried out the same procedure with the other categories of respondents (see table 1.1). The technique was found to be inexpensive and it also allowed the researcher to enroll only those who were interested in the study and ready to provide information requested from them.

Table 1.1 Study sample n=54

Category	Male	Female	Total
Library staff	20	12	32
Administrative staff	1	1	2
MBA students	10	10	20
Total	31	23	54

Only those respondents who had the following criteria were enrolled for the study.

1. Respondents who possessed adequate knowledge about the topic under study.
2. Respondents who were willing to share the information they knew about the topic under study.
3. Respondents who were still active civil servant in MUBS University.
4. Finally, respondents who were reliable and could accept to give their time for the study.

The researcher was able to collect enough data required for the study within a short time when she followed the criteria.

Primary data was collected through document review, face to face interview and questionnaire.

Qualitative data analysis involved categorizing data. In this case, data from interview schedules and questionnaires were codified and written down on separate sheets of paper according to questions which were asked per the objectives of the study. Answers which were more than one were tallied and in the end after going through all the questions, themes emerged. These were used for the data categories reported either verbatim or by listing. Therefore, data was analyzed according to themes derived.

Limitations of the study included unavailability of respondents, failure to complete questionnaires timely, unethical and suspicious behavior.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A. Synchronous generators under manual excitation control

A total of 54 respondents, 32librarians, 20MBA students, 1administrative staff and 1 lecturer were interviewed. Questionnaires were issued to MBA students. There was also use of documents reviews and observation checklists. The findings from the open ended interview questions are presented using thematic analysis from which strong conclusions have been drawn from comments made by more than one respondent.

MUBS Library services provision

The researcher was able to achieve this objective by conducting an interview with all the 54 respondents. Table 1.2 in the appendix shows the services provided in relation to ethical practices.

The table shows that photocopy, printing and scanning (67.6%); direct personal assistance to readers seeking information (64.8%) ;printed books long term loan (1-2 weeks) (64.7%) and user Education (55.9%) were the services which satisfied the users. reading and Discussion Space (58.8%) were the two satisfactory services provided.

The respondents who comprised of MBA students were asked to provide an assessment of the availability and adequacy of information resources in MUBS library. The table 1.2 is shown in the appendix.

The study reveals that 65% of the respondents agreed that books were either available or adequate or available and very adequate, 33% agreed that books were available but they were not adequate while 2% said that books were not available at all. Some services that were lacking according to the respondents were Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), interlibrary loan/cooperation, current awareness services (CAS), indexing and abstracting services, loan services and photocopying services). About 41% of the respondents said that though SDI service was available, it was not adequate, while 12% said that the SDI service was not available at all. For interlibrary loan/cooperation, 29% agreed that it was available but not adequate, while 35% said it was not available at all. The respondents who reported that loan services and photocopying services were not available were 23% and 30% respectively, the staff members whose views were presented here were library staff and the library administrators. Through face to face interview, they were asked to state the way they feel about the adequacy of information resources and the

services provided by the library. The results show that answering users' queries (54%), User education i.e. teaching user show best to exploit library resources (57%), library display and publicity (51%) and online public access catalogue (50%) were the services or resources that had more than50% of the staff members agreeing that they were available and very adequate. The rest of the library resources were either available but not adequate or not available at all. In particular, books, journals, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and interlibrary loan/cooperation were the least available services or resources. For the satisfaction of the services, show that. toilet facilities offered the least level of satisfaction with (27%) reporting that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the toilet facilities. Library building, lighting system and silence in the library had the highest numbers of respondents reporting that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with them, (70%), (68%) and (74%) respectively.

The researcher obtained the results for the ethical practices by MUBS Librarians when rendering services to their clients by interviewing the MBA students and the lecturers. Some of the respondents agreed that MUBS Library staff adhere to the ethical practices when providing information services to the library users. These were in instances like client's access internet services in some parts of MUBS campus (5%); MUBS librarians observe intellectual freedom, confidentiality with respect to information sought or received (10%); no library materials being excluded from the library because of race, nationality or political, social, moral or religious views of their author, hence, transparency in the library,(10%) and lastly, research reports are provided to clients to aid them in their research (50%).and others. The core principles and ideals to be observed most by library staff are treating library users with fairness and respect (95%); support for Open Access and Intellectual Property (90 %); personal integrity and professional skills (90 %); shunning corruption and other vices in the public interest (85%) and protection of personal data necessarily shared between individuals and institutions (85%).

V.   CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of the study, it was established that photocopy, printing and scanning (67.6%); direct personal assistance to readers seeking information (64.8%); printed books long term loan (1-2 weeks) (64.7%) and user education (55.9%) were the services which satisfied the users. reading and discussion space (58.8%) available were satisfactory services Findings from the study, also, revealed that information ethics was integrated in library professional practice in MUBS library especially from the scope of PAPA model. However, the extent of integration of information ethics in library professional practice was limited by several challenges such as financial constraints, lack of code of ethics, lack of awareness about information ethics by users and librarians, inadequate facilities, and small number of professional library staff. Nevertheless, the respondents acknowledged the importance of integrating information ethics in professional practice in their quest to provide information services in an ethical manner.

The results from the respondents together with reviewed documents showed that core principles and ideals underpinning ethical practices are treating library users with fairness and respect (95%); support for Open Access and Intellectual Property (90 %); personal integrity and professional skills (90 %); shunning corruption and other vices in the public interest (85%) and protection of personal data necessarily shared between individuals and institutions (85%).

Findings from the ethical dilemma revealed that there were several factors beyond those in the PAPA model and WSIS Action Line 10 that influence information ethical practice by library professionals in MUBS library. These factors included; limited number of qualified staff in MUBS Library; inequalities in internet access; lack of awareness and interest in having the code; lack of locally developed code of ethics

and challenge of implementing international codes of ethics; low level of enforcement of ethical conducts by library management; unpopularity of ethical code; high level of complexity of the existing code of ethics and existence of outdated information resources especially text books. These factors affect making appropriate decisions in order to provide effective, adequate and efficient services to library clients.

The study surveyed respondents who were both males and females and were of different age groups, level of education, work experiences, job designation and duration in the position.

The study confirmed that library professionals were aware about information ethics values such as privacy, accuracy, intellectual property, information access, and dignity of users; quality of library and information services. Attitude of library professionals towards information ethics was positive; however, this was affected by low level of awareness due to lack of policies, guidelines and regulations on information ethics education and training. Furthermore, the study found factors influencing information ethics practice by library professionals to include lack of awareness on information ethics, limited information, personal characteristics, lack of policies, guidelines and regulations on information ethics and more. In addition, the respondents acknowledged the role of integrating information ethics in Library and Information Science curriculum.

Overall, the results of the study revealed that while library professionals seem to understand the ethical values needed in the provision of information services, the field of information ethics in university libraries is not widely understood and practiced by all library professionals especially from the perspective of responsible use of technology. The research findings have shown that little has been done by Uganda Library Association concerning promotion of research and publications in the field of information ethics. This goes contrary to Uganda Library Association constitution (2005) which aspires among other things "to encourage and facilitate the study and research in library and information management." Hauptman (2002) in this regard notes that, ethical values discussed in literature and conferences are hardly implemented by library professional associations. The Uganda Library Association must therefore take a proactive and leadership role in ensuring current developments in the library and information science field which are known and brought to the attention of its members through continuous professional development.

There are no locally developed code/guidelines for information service provision. It is not surprising that users are complaining due to low standards of ethical practices by librarians because the librarians are not adequately guided in information service provision. Therefore, the recommendation is to adopt a proposal model in information service provision as a strategy to overcome the many challenges encountered in information service provision.

Management has to provide a conducive environment which can facilitate librarians in doing their professional work. The dilemmas have to be worked on one by one so that they are got rid of if the librarians were expected to render appropriate services to the clients.

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APPENDIX

Table 1.2: MBA students' perspective on the availability and adequacy of information resources and services (n=20)

Library resources and services	Available and very adequate	Available and adequate	Available but not adequate	Not available
Books	4(20%)	9(49%)	6(33%)	1(1%)
Journals	3(15%)	9(47%)	7(33%)	1(5%)
Reference sources such as encyclopedia, dictionary, year book,atlas,gazettes, etc.	2(14%)	9(43%)	8(40%)	1(3%)
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	1(7%)	8(40%)	9(41%)	2(12%)
Interlibrary loan/cooperation	1(8%)	6(28%)	6(29%)	7(35%)
Current awareness services (CAS)	2(10%)	10(50%)	6(30%)	2(10%)
Indexing and abstracting services	2(10%)	8(39%)	8(41%)	2(10%)
Answering users 'queries	3(15%)	8(43%)	7(37%)	1(6%)
User education i.e. Teaching users how best to exploit library resources	4(18%)	9(43%)	6(31%)	1(8%)
Library display and publicity (Bulletin boards)	4(18%)	9(44%)	6(32%)	1(6%)

Internet facilities	4(21%)	8(39%)	7(36%)	1(4%)

Loan services	2(10%)	6(29%)	5(23%)	7(38%)
Photocopying services	3(14%)	5(26%)	6(30%)	6(30%)
Reference services	3(18%)	9(43%)	6(30%)	2 (9%)
Online Public Access Catalogue	4 (24%)	7(33%)	7(33%)	2(9%)