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Information Ethics Compliance and Service Delivery by Librarians in Universities: A Review

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the level of information ethics compliance and service delivery by librarians in universities. It explains what Information ethics compliance is essentially concerned with, the question of who should have access to what information. It addresses the functions, which are intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, information privacy, and intellectual property. In today's world, information plays a crucial role in deciding day-to-day activities and society's progress and development. It investigates the ethical issues and challenges arising from the generation, preservation, management, and information use, including inequitable access to library materials, inaccuracy of the information provided, and protection of intellectual property and confidentiality. However, it was recommended that for libraries to deliver services to their users fully, library personnel must comply with information ethics. Such ethics must guide their service delivery, funding, acquisition of information materials, internet subscriptions, staff training, emolument, and maintenance.

Keywords: Information ethics, Librarians, Service delivery, Information, University libraries

Introduction

University libraries are globally recognised as custodians of information and knowledge. Okwoli (2015) stated that university libraries' primary purpose is to support university functions of teaching, learning, research, and community services in ways consistent with and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. Service delivery by library personnel in university libraries is fundamental to the quality of university education. And so, service delivery in university libraries ensures that users' information needs are met through effective and efficient provision of information services and resources in the library for research, learning, and teaching.

Mbofung and Popoola (2014) described library service delivery as the services provided to library users by library professionals. It shows how they relate and behave towards the users, colleagues, organisations, and society. In the practice of librarianship, service delivery is determined from the types of services rendered in the library and how it is rendered. The unprecedented explosion of information in all branches of knowledge had raised fundamental

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questions about privacy, freedom of expression, right to information and accessibility, among other issues. Such raises the issue of information ethics compliance on service delivered by librarians in university libraries.

According to Fallis (2017), information ethics compliance is essentially concerned with who should access what information. Information ethics functions to address intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, information privacy, and intellectual property. In today's world, information plays a crucial role in deciding our day-to-day activities and society's progress and development. It investigates the ethical issues arising from the generation, processing, preservation, management, and information use. Advances in information technology have made the general population more aware of these issues. As the Internet has evolved into a more social and communicative tool and venue, the ethical issues have shifted from pure data-driven to more human-centred. Providing people with their desired information is the first and foremost duty of information professionals in any university library through equitable access to information. It does not contradict the most fundamental ethical principles long-held by human beings like honesty, mutual respect, social good, etc. Hence, various legal aspects, existing rules and procedures also will have to be taken into consideration. Library and information professionals must deliver services to users. However, they must find ways to strike a balance between upholding intellectual property rights and ensuring access to information by the maximum number of users. This study, therefore, has reviewed information ethics compliance and service delivery by librarians in universities.

Objective of the study

This study's main objective is to review the level of information ethics compliance by librarians and the impact on services delivered in university libraries.

Methodology

The paper is based on a review. The review was done by searching and reviewing the extant literature on the research topic's keywords. The keywords used include ethics, information ethics, service delivery, librarians, the university library, library services, etc. Google Scholar, Google Search and other notable databases were searched using the keywords. The review was also situated in a notable but related theory which is the deontology theory of ethics.

Review of related literature

Attempts were made here to peruse related works of other authors on information ethics compliance and service delivery by librarians in universities. This section is however broken into sub-sections.

Theoretical framework- Deontology Theory of Ethics

Immanuel Kant introduced the deontological class of ethical theories in 1785. It states that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when engaged in decision-making when ethics are in play. It means that a person will follow their responsibilities to another individual or society because upholding one's commitment is considered ethically correct. For instance, a deontologist will always keep his promises to a friend and will follow the law. Deontological ethics is about following universal norms that prescribe what people ought to do, how they should behave, and what is right or wrong. It is a morality of principles, not of consequences. Moreover, deontology resides in reason, not in utility-providing feelings. Reason is considered to be the source of moral rules, expressed through the human will. In deontological ethics, the moral problem is considered to be a rational problem that involves finding the right moral rule. A person who adheres to deontological theory will produce very consistent decisions since they will be based on the individual's set duties. Its relevance to this study can be drawn from explaining the ideas on ethics which has to do with information ethics compliance. It is argued that information ethics compliance can help solve our day to day problem and serves as a guide in using the information in a just way which improves service delivery in the university libraries.

Other Reviewed Literature

Ethics: An etymological overview

Ethics is etymologically derived from the Greek word 'ethos,' which means 'way of living. It is a branch of philosophy concerned with human conduct, precisely the behaviour of individuals in society. It is concerned with how humans act and why they act the way they do. Ethics refers to the ethical requirements of professional practice, which are requirements over and above those of ordinary morality, applying specifically to professionals in the conduct of their professions. It examines the rational justification for our moral judgments; it studies what is morally right and wrong, just or unjust. It leads to a set of rules of conduct for specific situations; basic ethical principles guide the development of standards for specific professions and groups (Kaddu, 2017).

Ethics, as a philosophical discipline involves the study of values and guidelines by which we live and the justification for these values and guidelines. Rather than simply accepting the customs or guidelines used by one particular group or culture, philosophical ethics analyzes and evaluates these guidelines in light of accepted universal principles and concerns. More importantly, ethics is a way of life. It involves active engagement in the pursuit of the good life, a life consistent with a coherent set of moral values.

Information ethics compliance by university librarians

Adebayo and Mabawonku (2017) see information ethics as the fields that ethical issues arising from the development and application of information technology for effective service delivery. Information ethics by librarians is guided by professional conduct as contained in codes of ethics. According to Adam (2005), information ethics is the field that investigates the ethical issues arising from the development and application of information technologies and working in line with the laydown ethics for effective service delivery. Information ethics is essentially concerned with who should have access to what information, and advances in information technology have made the general population more aware of these issues. But library professionals have been concerned with these issues for centuries.

Information ethic compliance refers to librarians' ability to adhere to the ethical issues within the library and library profession's confinement as a whole. Mabawonku (2010) described information ethics compliance as moral assessment or guidelines that judge what is right or wrong in professional practices. Meanwhile, every profession has ethical codes of conduct for its professionals.

According to Paapa and Boakye (2017), Information ethics compliance depends on an individual's firm understanding of concepts such as plagiarism, copyright, fair use, computer ethics, information literacy, proper referencing, and so on. For Onoyeyan (2014), the code of ethics compliance is a list of guiding ethical behaviour principles. Mbofung and Popoola (2014) opined that the use of the regulations includes: providing guidance for dealing with ethical issues that are not addressed by the domain of codified law but that should not be left to the realm of free choice, getting legal support intended to protect the profession, individual practitioners and their clients, and supporting personal self-development.

The role of university librarians in information ethics compliance

Over the years, university librarians have been generally concerned with information ethics compliance. Fallis (2017) notes that questions such as 'who should have access to what information, intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, information privacy, and intellectual property are primary concerns of university librarians. The emergence of an 'Information Society', driven by advancements in Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), has added a new dimension to this age-old debate on 'right' and 'wrong'. Like many other individuals, library and information professionals are now burdened with this fundamental question: how would we determine whether what we are doing is right or wrong, ethical or unethical? The rational use of information for solving our day-to-day problems is becoming increasingly challenging. It is argued that information ethics compliance can help solve this problem and guide in using the information justly. Information ethics deals with information users moral conduct based on their responsibility and accountability (Mathiesen, 2014). It investigates the ethical issues arising from the generation, processing, preservation, management and use of information.

Information ethics compliance helps university librarians and other library staff adhere and comply with those ethical issues that would guide them in discharging their duties to enhance the quality of service they render to users (Carbo, 2008). Foster and McMenemy (2013) asserted that librarians should adhere and comply with the library profession's various information ethics, which would enhance effective service delivery. This information ethics includes access to information, employer and employee relationship, open access and intellectual property, and responsibilities towards individual and society. Also, access to information is the core mission of librarians and other information workers for personal development, education, cultural enrichment, leisure, economic activity, and informed participation in and enhancing democracy. Librarians reject the denial and restriction of access to information and ideas, most notably through censorship, whether by states, governments, or religious or civil society institutions. Colleague and employer/employee relationship is also a factor that enhances effective service delivery. Librarians treat each other fairly, respect and oppose discrimination in any aspect of employment because of age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender, marital status, origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. They promote equal pay and benefits for men and women holding comparable jobs and share their professional experience with colleagues. They help to guide a new employee in

entering the professional community and develop their skills. They contribute to the activities of their professional association and participate in research and publication on professional matters.

Furthermore, in enforcing information ethics compliance, a librarian has responsibilities towards individual and society. Such responsibility entails that librarians ensure the right to accessing information is not denied. Also, it stipulates that equitable services are provided for everyone whatever their age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender identity, heritage, education, income, immigration and asylum-seeking status, marital status, origin, race, religion or sexual orientation to promote inclusion and eradicate discrimination. So, open access and intellectual property include support for the principles of open access, open-source, and available licenses must be accessible. Librarians' interest here is to provide the best possible access for library users to information and ideas in any media or format. Library personnel aims to provide fair, swift, economic, and effective access to information for users. They have a professional duty to advocate for exceptions and limitations to copyright restrictions for libraries. They are partners of authors, publishers, and other creators of copyright-protected works and recognise authors' intellectual property rights and seek to ensure that their rights are respected.

Information professionals have been challenged to take responsibility and action for information policy in professional and public settings on information ethic compliance (Carbo and Smith, 2008). Fallis (2017) avert that library professionals need to have an excellent working knowledge of information ethics compliance. Doyle and Buckley (2014) validate this by emphasising the need to integrate ethics into the curriculum to develop ethical awareness for librarians' future generation. Ofre (2012) observed that a library's quality depends mainly on individual librarians' quality: individual members, by the way, practice, reflect the actual profession and adhere to their ethics. The author asserts that the library profession should have a greater interest in revising and developing its code of ethics. It should exercise more responsibilities in dealing with individuals, groups whose practices or actions reflect unfavourably on the profession as a whole. The subject of information ethics compliance is related to librarians, and library work appears in various issues of the Bulletin of the American Library Association and the Library Journal (Ofre, (2012).

Gorin (2014) surveyed how librarians practice codes of ethics compliance. The author reported that the debate on librarianship's core values focused on the individual librarian's role, social responsibility, and freedom of expression. The author also confirmed that sometimes

librarians have to choose between their loyalty to their institutions, superiors, and necessary critique from a professional point of view as articulated. So, librarians need to understand ethics, its implications on their actions, and how they should provide services. The International Federation of Library Association (IFLA's) focus on professional ethics compliance has led to the construction of a distinctive body of specialised knowledge and the production of a code of ethics that librarians can use to handle ethical dilemmas (International Federation of Library Associations, 2009). Librarianship ethics by the American Library Association (ALA) Council and amended January 22, 2008, contained the following, among others, as ethics of professional practice: Librarians provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and accessible organised resources, equitable access, protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality, respect intellectual property rights, and strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing librarians' knowledge.

On the African continent, an information ethics compliance code has been developed. It serves as a yardstick to maintain information professionals' standards. Such is practised widely by universities on the continent. To validate that, Paapa and Boakye (2017) conducted a study on information ethics compliance among the University of Ghana librarians. The author examined librarians' awareness, and perspectives about information ethics found out that librarians were adequately knowledgeable about information ethics and the majority of them complied with information ethics practices. Again, the study revealed a high consensus on what is deemed as ethical or unethical, acceptable or unacceptable use of information. Though librarians sometimes engaged in diverse information ethics violations, they knew they were indulging in unethical or very unethical use of data. The majority of the librarians indicated that access to the Internet, fear of failure, access to electronic databases, and the desire to obtain high marks were some of the motivating factors for violating information ethics. Also, Kaddu (2017), in a study on information ethics compliance in Uganda, discovered that information professionals, lecturers, students, and information workers had been identified as crucial players in violation of information ethics in Uganda in their diverse roles. As information professionals continue to develop, they face new challenges in balancing the many functions. The authors recommended that courses on information ethics be part of education professionals' education since the concept is new in Africa.

In Nigeria, the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) developed the code of ethics. The objectives are to guide librarians' in maintaining standards of ethical behaviour in the

profession. It does this by regulating registered librarians in their daily discharge of duties. It covers actions like the safeguarding of the community's interests served, in as much as they are engaged in the process of providing access to information. Also, it builds a solid moral, and ethical foundation for the actualisation of an information society as librarians occupy an essential position, which necessitates the need to balance conflicting demands in ethical issues that can adversely affect professional practices.

To justify the above, Igbeka and Okoroma (2013) conducted a study that focused on the awareness and practicability of librarianship ethics compliance among librarians in Nigeria. The authors reported that understanding the ethical values was relatively low and that many moral codes' practicability was questionable. Also, Fallis (2017) studied information ethics for 21st Century Library Professionals and submitted that to deal effectively with ethical dilemmas; librarians must have an excellent working knowledge of information ethics.

Service delivery in university libraries

Service delivery is all about customer service and effectiveness. The core of the establishment of libraries all over the world is to deliver effective service to users. Patrons must have access to information services that will assist them in meeting their various information needs. The focal motive of libraries is to provide the required knowledge base resources necessary for decision making. It arouses the intuitive information needs for patrons' research, teaching, leisure, pleasure, and learning conditions. To actualise this, libraries have improvised and utilise the combination of several operators. Such operators include the acquisition, cataloguing, classification, shelving, digitisation, information ethics compliance and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance service delivery in physical and virtual environments. Service delivery can be viewed as services as the operations, activities, and programs of libraries and information centres organised to ensure the libraries' smooth running and focus on the patrons to meet their information needs. The services rendered in libraries are determined by some criteria, which are: the type of library, available tools, technologies, resources and size of the library, the knowledge and competencies of the librarians, and the service policy in the library. University libraries support the academic activities of the staff and students within the academic environment by providing services geared towards their research and scholarship needs. Effective delivery of information services that meet citizens' needs and aspirations, decision-

makers, and life-long learners is a long-standing goal of the information profession. The role of librarians is to support, enrich and provide superb services in person and online.

Kudu (2011) examined the reference and information services delivery in universities libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Findings revealed that current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, indexing and abstracting were the primary reference services provided in these universities. Online catalogue was not available as part of the reference resources in the libraries. The study also revealed more funding, provision of sufficient facilities, acquisition of suitable reference materials, employment of professional reference staff, and compulsory user education strategies as strategies for improved service delivery.

Saini (2014) opined that document delivery service is helpful for users because of its ease of use and delivery factors. Saini recommended that to improve the quality of their services, librarians needed to collaborate with other neighbouring libraries and document delivery centres to provide access to the resources. Akpan-Atata and Enyene (2014) posited the facilities that will enhance effective service delivery include: computer system, the Internet fax machines, online public access catalogue (OPAC), Mobile phones with wireless application protocol (WAP), and reprographic devices. Onuoha, Omokoje, and Bamidele (2013) posited that providing services is an essential part of libraries that should not be taken for granted. According to them, libraries, most especially university libraries, have to ensure that the services provided are effective and satisfying to users to maintain patronage, especially in an electronic age when information can be acquired from various sources independent of the university library. Their study investigating the use, effectiveness and satisfaction with library services revealed that photocopying and reference services were the most utilised library services. Photocopying, reference, and circulation services were also considered effective services. However, most of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with library services to a small extent.

Ehigiator (2000) posited that library and information service delivery required careful planning, implementation, promising financial support, and highly trained staff to ensure effective service delivery. Ehigiator added that information service should aim to satisfy all patrons' needs and give the unsatisfied readers appropriate referral services. Kavulya (2004) examined the challenges in the provision of library services for distance education. The results revealed that various techniques had been employed in Kenyan universities to provide library services to distance communities. It was also observed that public universities' inadequate funding and its

accompanying effects of poor facilities, equipment, and resources were a significant hindrance towards providing access and timely library services for distance learners. The author recommended that university libraries develop information access and delivery mechanisms that favour distance learners' peculiar circumstances.

Ridwan (2015) stated that invention in Information and Communication Technologies has resulted in critical changes in library functions and services and managing information in different offices and organisation, such as circulation reference services, cataloguing and classification, collection development. According to Ridwan, hundreds of thousands of monographic materials, journals, learning resources, databases, etc., are now available in electronic formats. These materials can directly be accessed from the remote corner of any country, thereby increasing information and literature and the efficiency of information services in Nigerian universities.

Younus (2014) observed that many university libraries worldwide have designed and developed DRS (digital reference service) to fulfil the reference and information needs of users in a digital environment. According to him, university libraries in developing countries have also started to embrace new technologies to redesign and improve their reference services to fulfil users' information needs in the web environment. It is recommended that the librarians and library staff should create awareness about the communication services such as discussion forums, bulletin boards, and system-based services like information literacy, institutional repository, and interlibrary loan. In this context, the benefits mentioned above will help maximise library resources, services and share among other users.

Challenges to service delivery in university libraries

Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) asserted that some challenges confront librarians' ineffective service delivery to users. These challenges inhibit library personnel's effectiveness and efficiency and, consequently, affect most significantly higher institution students. These challenges include incompetent librarians, lack of internet access, lack of technical know-how, inadequate fund, and unstable power supply.

Incompetency by some librarians who are not used to technology and perceive computers' application to library work as an aberration. It being the case, they are reluctant to embrace new technology. Tanawade (2011) alludes that many librarians lack confidence in the face of increasing information technology. It slows service delivery and retards productivity.

Chigbu and Dim (2012) reiterate that there is no efficient telecommunication and power supply base to serve as a springboard to develop internet services in Africa. Where they are available, the expensive nature of the services is another important factor that inhibits most users' ability to afford the service for use. Chigbu and Dim (2012) also, asserts that some professional librarians lack the requisite technological literacy needed for library services. Technological literacy refers to the ability to responsibly use appropriate technology to communicate, solve problems, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, design, and create information to improve learning in all subject areas and acquire lifelong knowledge and skills.

Edem (2008) posits that the library's primary challenge is not underfunding but the poor performance of librarians and information professionals in developing countries due to poor library ethical skills. Lack of basic skills needed in the use of information has become a chock to better library services. Anyira (2011) added that librarians without a well-developed library skill could not render effective library services, which constitute a significant obstacle to service delivery to students, which could inhibit their academic work. For effective service delivery in the university library, money is very pertinent. Money is needed to acquire information and communication technology equipment for internet subscriptions, staff training, compensation, and maintenance. The strength of a library lies in its information resources, both print and online. Funds are needed to cater for a whole range of services in the library, yet government subventions in the education sector are not adequate. Nwalo (2000) notes that one of the problems inhibiting African libraries' IT applications is apathy and inadequate government funding. Funding is essential to excellent library services. However, scarcity of funds has always been a primary hindrance to several noble pursuits.

Another challenge is the insufficient power supply that is common in virtually every part of the country. It is widely known that the power situation in Nigeria is in appalling condition. There is constant power outage which has frustrated the adequate provision of information services. Most libraries rely on alternative sources of electricity such as power generating machines to function. However, these machines are fraught with problems of maintenance, high cost of diesel and petrol. The resultant effect has been the provision of epileptic services. The country's power supply crisis's challenges have found expression in the expenditure profile, as most organisations expend a vast amount of money providing alternative power supply. These alternatives include generators, solar systems, green technology, turbine gas, among others. The library as an organisation is not

divorced from this anomaly. Effective information service delivery cannot thrive in a country where the power supply is in a deplorable state.

Michalak (2012) notes that transforming an institution with a long tradition is arduous. Many university library characteristics have tremendous power to resist change, such as volumes print collections, ageing and inflexible buildings, state and private institutional governance structures that include outdated personnel and financial regulations, etc. In a study conducted by Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013), the authors highlight the challenges to effective information services delivery. These include lack of competency, lack of technology literacy, poor internet connectivity, inadequate power supply, and insufficient funding.

Fagbola, Uzoigwe, and Ajegbomogun (2011) believe that despite the tremendous development associated with the birth of ICT, there are fundamental challenges that tend to hinder access to service delivery by libraries, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. These include insufficient power supply, inadequate human resources, apathy on the part of the staff, lack of maintenance and inadequate funding. Okore and Ekere (2008) posits that the unprecedented explosion of information in all branches of knowledge posed some challenges to librarians. Such challenges include: increase in the number of published materials and coping with these developments. There is a need for information professionals to develop specialised skills and competencies to manage information effectively in this electronic age. Abubakar (2011) posits that the present-day university library services focus more on digital, virtual, or libraries without borders, all of which have transformed the university library environment. The changes are accompanied by sophistication in the changing pattern in users' information needs, which is growing rapidly.

Eze and Uzoigwe (2013) noted that university libraries are now expected to provide users with a range of e-resources necessary to retrieve information quickly from both local and remote databases and create a need for library cooperation consortium initiatives. University libraries in Nigeria are faced with enormous problems, notably the lack of proper funding. Despite that, they must, against all odds, try to measure up with their contemporaries elsewhere. Such is corroborated by the findings of Eze and Uzoigwe (2013). They found that certain factors pose problems to these university libraries, such as inadequate funding of the libraries and others with a bearing on it - poor infrastructure (especially electronic facilities) and high cost of maintaining the facilities.

Information ethics compliance, service delivery and librarians in university libraries

Onoyeyan, Ajayi, Adesina, and Bamidele (2014) studied the ethical concerns of practising librarians in federal, state, and private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The studying population consisted of 50 professional librarians. The authors found that intellectual property rights issues are the highest ethical issue confronting librarians as this affects the quality of service delivered. Abuse of confidential information and using an official position for personal advantage are perceived as high unethical behaviour among librarians. The results added that most librarians do not have a copy of the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria Code of Ethics as this makes them not comply with the profession's ethics.

Mbofung and Popoola (2014) studied the legal and ethical issues of service delivery and library information science professionals in university libraries in Nigeria. The authors used a questionnaire for data collection from 429 practising professionals in 24 federal universities in Nigeria. The instrument used for the study was prepared using experts from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions/Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (IFLA/FAIFE) Intellectual Freedom Statements. The findings showed that most of the respondents were aware of the ethical principles related to the enforcement of restriction permitted by law. They were also mindful of the selection of library materials representing all points of view, individual taste and void of interest, restriction of access or censorship involving the use of filtering software, confidentiality, privacy, and response to queries as this enhances quality service delivery. Others include excluding materials because of race, nationality, political, social, moral, religious view, adherence to institutional policies and professional development. For libraries to fully deliver services to their users, library personnel must comply with information ethics that guide their service delivery.

Likewise, a similar study conducted by Matingwina (2015) study titled; "ethical dilemmas confronting information professionals in the 21st century: A Zimbabwean perspective, correlated the above position. Here, the author used 58 practising librarians as the study sample to find out the ethical issues they faced. The author cited the major ethical problems: equitable access to library materials, accuracy of information provided, protection of intellectual property, and personal privacy and confidentiality protection. The respondents indicated that the most prevalent ethical issues confronting the information professionals were protecting individual privacy and confidentiality (94%) and equitable access to library materials (94%). On the challenges in

applying ethical principles, most of the respondents (78%) identified a lack of local policies as a challenge. Other prominent challenges include; conflicting interests between key information stakeholders, lack of reading resources, and ethical codes' complexity. The author concluded that lack of information ethic compliance by information professionals could inhibit their service delivery. Ethical compliance policies must be in place to guide information professionals to improve on service delivery in the library.

Luo (2016) studied ethical issues in reference service through an online survey that yielded 212 valid responses from reference librarians in the United States of America. Results showed that more than 60% of the reference librarians indicated that they were either moderately or very familiar with the ALA's code of ethics. This level of awareness could be why they were able to recognise the ethical issues they faced, which included copyright issues and confidentiality and privacy issues, the two most common. The majority also noted that they became aware of these ethical issues through the MLIS courses they took on ethics. Other avenues of awareness are; continuing education on ethics, state training, self-learning, and professional influence of associations. Thus, it can be deduced from the review that the awareness of library service delivery's ethical issues has been improving over the years.

In another similar study was conducted by Adebayo and Mabawonku (2017) on the perception and practice of information ethics by librarians in four higher institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 47 librarians. The study results revealed both high positive and negative perceptions that, the activities of librarians in higher institutions are shaped by norms that include ethical and legal ones, ethical aspects of the information profession are to be considered for professional practice and information services by librarians. It was also found that there is no significant relationship between perception and practice of Information Ethics by librarians in four higher institutions in Oyo State (r = -0.243; p > 0.05). The authors recommended that the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) intensify its efforts to promote professional ethics compliance among librarians in Nigeria, which will improve information ethics compliance and service delivery among personnel in the university libraries.

Phillips, Oyewole, and Akinbo (2018) conducted a study on the awareness and perception of ethical issues in library service delivery by librarians in the polytechnic of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study focused on all librarians in the polytechnic of Ibadan. The result showed that awareness of the ethical issues in library service delivery through different sources of information. The authors

also found that compliance to the information ethics by librarians could enhance quality service delivery. The authors recommended that the management of polytechnic libraries build their staff's competence in-house on these ethical issues through regular staff meetings and constant reminders on the value of updating their knowledge on ethical issues in librarianship.

Ball and Oppenheim (2005) surveyed the attitudes of librarians and library science students in the United Kingdom to ethical issues in the profession. The questionnaire was the data collection instrument, and the practising librarians that participated in the study were 100. Results indicated that most of the respondents (74%) were aware of the CILIP's code of ethics. Also, (55.7%) of the practising librarians indicated that they had a positive perception of the principle of ethics. They agreed that their colleagues who violate the CILIP's code of ethics should be disciplined. The majority of them also agreed that personal attitude should not interfere with the provision of library service.

Conclusion

Librarians regularly face ethical dilemmas that fall within the scope of information ethics. To deal effectively with these moral dilemmas, library professionals need to have an excellent working knowledge of information ethics. Codes of professional ethics can help to provide such knowledge, but they are not sufficient. Courses on information ethics must be part of the education of information professionals. Such courses should certainly consider concrete, practical cases. But such courses should also provide library professionals with the tools to analyse these cases. In other words, they should give librarians an understanding of ethical theories. Several authors have shown how these theories can be applied to the ethical dilemmas faced by library professionals. Such courses should also make explicit the connection between information ethics and the mission of the library professional.

Recommendations

- Librarians in universities must find ways to strike a balance between upholding intellectual property rights and ensuring access to information by many users. Any failure on their part in this regard will put their role as 'information intermediaries' under question.
- Librarians need professional guidance, sharing of information and insights among themselves, and continuous soul-searching on ethics and morality to promote and uphold information ethics in the evolving knowledge society.

- Librarians have an essential role to play in the promotion of information ethics and the creation of a just and equitable society. But they need to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of ethics in general and information ethics in particular to play that role.

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