Ethics in Library Sciences

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Abstract:

In this paper, the values of morality in professional field has been discussed. It's termed as Ethics. The term Ethics is derived from Greek word Ethikos with actually meaning custom or habit. The following paper will aid to determine the fundamental concepts behind ethics in professional field of Library and Information Sciences. It will deal with attempts were previously made to understand and to find out the answers to basic questions such as is it right, is it good, is it bad, is it humane or not etc. Our indulgence towards library ethics has evolved along with the time and development of librarianship itself as it seems to be much evolved than the earlier and primitive times of the foundation course. The basic ethics are majorly categorized as ethics, issue, identity, access, future and funding universally but with the course of time it has changed from contextual point of view. The alterations are indeed necessary to project the correct and precise agenda of ethics in library sciences, the way they were meant to project at the first place. Individuals should explore the ethics near the start of the course so that every single dimension of librarianship like attitude to social issue, interpreting admittance, how can one seek funding etc. can be observed through ethical end. Ethics is not same as good customer service or efficient management. Librarianship shares ethical values with other professions as well as with concern to maintain custody of confidentiality and to avoid any sort of conflicts. This paper has tried to aid on how the application of ethical values can be centralized in context to library (Preer, 2008).

Keywords: *Librarianship, Ethics, Information Science, Professionals, Values, Morals.*

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Introduction

Library professionals are composed of an extremely vital role in society. Their agenda is principally to provide members of society with admittance to the information that they need. Like other professionals doctors, lawyers, library professionals would like to transmit out their motto in an ethical manner as well. And, like these other professionals, they frequently face ethical dilemmas also (**Fallis, 2007**).The specific nature of the decisions involved at every level of dilemma and can be seen practically in actual situations. Information access issues are anxious with ethical dimensions and provide a useful vehicle to exemplify ethical dilemmas at each levels.

At the organizational level, the ethical dimensions of decision making come into play when selection decisions are made. Decision makers must make certain that the standards and procedures that are recognized to make selection choices that do not distinguish against certain writers nor points of view nor on the basis of inappropriate factors such as race, sex, or religious inclination of either the author or selector. Self-censorship of controversial materials is also a relentless problem that must be addressed.

At the system level, ethical questions relate to information propagation. How does information arrangement affect access? Who has access to information and at what price? Who is responsible for distributing information for those who have limited skills to acquire it? These kinds of questions are established through the public policy process and the eventual outcome is reflected in laws and regulations related to information access at local, state, and federal levels. Various levels of decision making and the ethical issues must be relevant to each level although potential clashes exist at all levels. Institutional policy may need to have decision makers to go against his or her own ethical standards, creating important internal conflict for one so involved. Institutional policy may not always imitate the ethical standards of the society at large, which may force society to advance laws and regulations to bring about change in institutional conduct.

Ethics enters into a decision to hire at the individual level in borderline or exceptional cases where relating the policy in a mechanical fashion does not seem reasonable. Like as if any applicant does not have an ALA-accredited degree, should he or she be rejected by default without looking at other information like previous work experience or any other academic credentials? These kind of decisions may not seem rational given the subjective nature of the hiring procedure in general. Also if, a candidate with previous work experience, but is without an ALA degree, is barely rejected for an academic library position and another candidate with an ALA accredited degree, but no work experience, is believed right for a position. Fair decisions should consider work skill, practice and academic credentials with equivalent values.

What Should a Manager in Librarianship Should Consider For Ethical Decision Making?

Librarians as managers are continually making ethical decisions whether they know it or not. They are continuously guiding people toward or away from information capitals that may directly influence their skill to improve their lives or the life of others as well. They are making the future for their organizations, for their users, for their employees and for those who fund the service, and also for society as a whole. Decisions about information access can affect human wellbeing and social welfare, having ethical influences that are important for all those moved by the decisions. The suggestion is made that access to information capitals must now be counted as a foundation of world power. As the ability to access information across the sphere becomes possible through the use of technology, librarians will have more and more chances to influence decision making on a worldwide scale through appropriate information provision. This is a grand responsibility and one that calls for ethical consideration of the highest order. Librarians must be stimulated to think more broadly and highly of their job. They must identify that libraries are multiple purpose institutions that have many influences besides cultural supplementation or recreation. Moral leadership of such institutes means knowing information agencies as part of an ethical system having numerous values that are vital to human welfare. The challenge to librarians is to integrate these values into predictable decision making and develop methods of scrutiny that are appropriate to identifying suitable goals for themselves and their organizations.

Plan of Action

The implementation of an ethical idea in librarianship needs action in numerous zones. An ethical outlook must be united into the workplace as well as into the program through which upcoming librarians are being educated. Following areas constitute what could be called an ethical itinerary for librarians in both of discussed settings.

A> In the educational setting, plan calls for a thorough incorporation of moral and ethical apprehensions into the library/ information science curriculum. Although separate courses in ethics may also be accessible,

integration of ethical concerns into basic courses such as Management or Reference is crucial to make ethics more directly related to the roles and accountabilities of information professionals.

B> Ongoing education programs is essential to develop parallel struggle and determinations to maintain the work initiated in the academic background. Queries about ethics and moral aspects of librarianship need to be continually addressed as professionals change through their occupations.

C> Trustees of Library boards of or board of advisory must validate an apprehension about ethics by raising ethical enquiries when applicable. The moral indications of decisions and actions must Boards can recognize the significance of ethical subjects by raising them in relation to objective setting and long-range preparation.

D> Information specialists at all levels must identify the important part they play in institutionalizing ethical accountability all over their organizations. Professional librarians have numerous channels open to them to outline the library/information center, including the setting of purposes for units and individuals, modifying organizational structure to accomplish goals, developing and implementing the reward structure of staff and developing and applying appropriate measures of performance. Professional staff not only have responsibility for resourceful and effective use of material and human capitals but also must be eager to produce a responsible organization that cares about and responds to the ethical and moral necessities of its policies and actions.

E> Information policy-making by several government figures must be reflected from an ethical point of view. Librarians have a part to play in the debate; they can make help to the discussion and provide understanding into the formation of regulations concerning the distribution of information. Librarians must be given the liberty to respond to information policy problems out of a sense of ethical charge; rules and regulations for governing information flow must be appraised as well as the inherent limitations of information propagation schemes.

F> More research must be considered by both library school faculty and professional librarians into the ethical aspects of decision making by librarians. In the profession of librarianship ethical issues are often ignored, not having a good considerate thought process of how such matters should be examined and discussed. Research into ethical and moral issues can aid to overcome this ignorance. Scholars in the field need to apply their skill to ethical demands and

combine this with the work of those from other specialized disciplines who have similar concerns.

This kind of action plan proposes that a reflection of ethical issues must become a familiar contented part of librarians' thought processes. Ethical uncertainties are always present because no one can frame policies that are going to be morally defensible in all situations and in all places and times. It is vital that those responsible for communicating, implementing, and evaluating policies should be made aware of these obscurities and be ethically aware so as to act in an answerable and moral manner. Ambiguity, it should be noted, does not reduce the implication of ethical issues, are universal in librarianship. In point of fact, the ethical element of librarianship represents a widespread concern for the development of quality of library service and professional behavior of librarians (**Mont, 1991**).

Review of Literature

Mont (1991), in her paper Ethics in Librarianship: A Management Model, stated ethical values as model that is a combination of individual variables with situational variables. According to her it's an exercise of moral judgment for performing any task or job whether it is in a family or in some corporate world. Her article examines the notion of social responsibility as an ethical issue. She expressed that the study of ethics in the information professions is a subdivision of the education of ethics in general. Problems in following the ethical path is not an easy task because they are marked up by multiple and non-comparable dimensions where the dimensions are the product of both pros and cons. There is no particular code to ethics that doing specific thing will lie always as wrongdoing and doing certain thing will always be defined as right although it has been generally codified as law but is a rational sets of rules for the welfare of society. She has further discussed the evolution of ethical concerns in information profession. She categorized the ethical orientation into different stages as Traditional i.e. before Stakeholders, Affirmative, and Affirmative. Besides all of these, the operation of an ethical vision in librarianship involves action in several areas. Ethical perspective must be incorporated into the workplace as well as in thought process and education of future librarians. In the end it was suggested that work and action plan covering the agenda of ethics is necessary for the implementation of ethics in profession where there is collaboration of information science.

Fallis (2007), shared that his main motto in the paper was to provide an introduction to concepts and resources that will be useful to library professionals learning about information ethics. He worked on importance of information ethics to 21st century

library professionals by describing various author's saying about the application of information ethics to the ethical dilemmas faced by library professionals. His findings were described as that, library professionals must have a good working information of information ethics. Codes of professional ethics can help to provide such knowledge, but they are not adequate. Curriculum on information ethics must be part of the education of information professional and such courses should provide library professionals with a considerate knowledge of ethical theories and application of knowledge to practical cases. Such courses should also make explicit the construction between information ethics and the mission of the library professionals.

Garnar (2016), majorly worked on the importance of understanding principles and values, including professional ethics that are being taught in library and information science programs. The studied for determining the current state of ethics education in graduate programs through survey of all accredited LIS programs and compare it to historical approaches, and learn about how the committee can best use its resources to maintain the consistency of teaching of ethics to the future librarians. He concluded his findings for elective courses with a definite focus on professional ethics and principles at the master's level, 18 of the responding institutions showed the existence of such a course, with another 13 recognized from the non-responding institutions, for a total of 31 out of 97 institutions (31.96%). Courses that include professional principles and ethics as part of the learning objectives, 30 of the responding institutions listed qualifying courses at the master's level, with another 42 non-responding institutions acknowledged as having courses in this category. Additionally, 4 of the responding institutions reporting a required core class that was later judged by the author to be in the wrong category did not give an answer for this question, so those courses will be included here, leading to a final total of 76 out of 97 institutions (78.35%). For the programs offering a doctorate degree, only 1 out of 24 (4.17%) has a required course on professional principles and ethics, while another 10 (41.7%) have elective courses on these topics. With such findings he established that the majority of doctoral programs (54.17%, or 13 out of 24) have no identifiable courses with professional principles and ethics as a core point. He suggested in the end that lack of importance regarding professional ethics and principles is an indicator of their importance within the curriculum and also that in order for these values and ethical responsibilities to be accepted and followed by future generations of library workers, they must be a central learning outcome of any library education program.

Hansson (2016), stated that ethical standards is the key formulation of establishment of any profession. The agenda of his paper was to focus on codes of ethics in terms of practical implementation in the professional field rather than mere set of documents. Later in the paper Charles Knowles Bolton's ethical code for librarians and its later versions was also discussed. His study has examined a general development of ethical codes through one example, the ALA Code of Ethics, and tried to formulate how the code works in the library organization and in relation to librarianship as a profession. It has been suggested that ethical codes demonstrates a performativity documentarily in that it transmutes in relation to practical considerations on how to tackle environmental and social fluctuations upsetting the profession.

Hansson (2017), worked on documents that seems to be ethically self-regulation within modern librarianship and plays a primarily legitimizing role in conditions where new types of libraries emerge or when libraries adapt to change on social level. The motto of this paper was twofold: first, to make an influence to the theoretical understanding of documents and documentary agency in society through examples from a defined institutional and professional setting; and second, to create an understanding and acceptance for the role of ethical codes in the course of describing and developing contemporary librarianship. Through his study, it was suggested that findings of this study suggest that documents pronouncing ethical self-regulation within librarianship plays primarily legitimizing role in situations where new types of libraries appear or when libraries adapt to social changes, thus improving the established understanding of the perception.

Conclusion

As a concept, the determination of ethics is to establish principles of behavior that aid people make choices among alternative modes of action. Making such choices of ten involves ethical & dilemmas, they are marked up by multiple and non-comparable dimensions where the dimensions are the product of both pros and cons. There is no particular code to ethics that doing certain things will always be defined as "right" or always be "wrong" only although it has been generally codified as law but is a rational sets of rules for the welfare of society **(Mont,1991).** Library professionals regularly face ethical dilemmas that fall within the scope of information ethics. In order to tackle efficiently with ethical dilemmas, library professionals must have a good working knowledge of information ethics because codes of professional ethics can assist to provide such knowledge, but they are not satisfactory therefore, courses on information

ethics must be part of the education of information professionals and such courses should certainly consider its practical implication into the field. For example, they should make use of case studies. And also, such courses should provide library professionals with the tools to study these cases. In other words, they should give library professionals an understanding of ethical theories. A number of authors have shown how these theories can be applied to the ethical dilemmas faced by library professionals (**Fallis, 2007).** Whether it is the wider topic of professional ethics in library and information science or the narrower subject of information ethics, the literature demonstrates that most programs have been taking a distributive tactic to ethics in the curriculum, though a handful of programs continue to highlight ethics through dedicated regular classes (**Garnar, 2016)**

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