

ETHICAL PRACTICES IN INFORMATION SERVICE PROVISION, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL, UGANDA

Olivia Nambobi ¹ Sarah Kaddu¹

¹Department of Management, Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology

Corresponding Author's Email : onambobi@gmail.com

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) 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.

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