ETHICAL DILEMMAS CONFRONTING INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A ZIMBABWEAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Library and information professionals the world over are confronted by ethical issues that affect the way they execute their duties. The digital revolution of the 21st century has brought new ethical dilemmas for information professionals. Whilst the issue of information ethics is becoming more complex and elusive, little attention has been made on ethical issues affecting Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals in Zimbabwe. Since ethics are context specific. This study sought to understand ethical issues affecting LIS professionals in Zimbabwe today. The study also looked at the challengesaffecting LIS professionals in enforcing ethical principles. A descriptive survey methodology was used to gather data from LIS professionals across Zimbabwe. Snowball sampling was used and 58 practising LIS professionals participated in the study. An online questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings reveal that the issue of privacy and access to resources were the major ethical issues affecting LIS professionals. Other ethical issues emanate from accuracy of information and protection of privacy. LIS professionals generally supported all the ethical principles that relate to information provision. However, the major challenges stifling the application of ethical principles include lack of resources, lack of locally drafted ethical codes, conflict of interest, and complexity of certain ethical codes. Therefore, there is need for locally relevant ethical codes, marketing of the codes and training on professional ethics.

Keywords

Ethics, Information professionals, 21st century, Zimbabwe

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2012) asserts that the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession "...is, in its very essence, an ethical activity embodying a value-rich approach to professional work with information". Sturges (2009) also contends that LIS research has shifted from technical aspects towards engagement with a range of issues such as intellectual property, user privacy, and serving the socially excluded.He also argues that the new focus on ethics is a

sign that library and information work is indicating increasing levels of professional maturity. Therefore, library and information science professionals, as providers of information in the 21st century, require awareness of the growing complexity in legal and ethical issues and values manifested through the relationship between professional duties and society.

Information service in the interest of social, cultural and economic well-being is at the heart of librarianship and therefore librarians have social responsibility towards their clients (IFLA, 2012). Furthermore, the belief in the human necessity of sharing information and ideas implies the recognition of information rights and respect of human dignity. Zimbabwe's constitution guarantees all human rights and civil liberties enshrined in the UN Charter, including the right to "Seek, receive and impart information and ideas in any media and regardless of frontiers" (Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

The advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has transformed society and how people manage and access information. As a result, the role of information professionals is becoming more than complex. Mason (nd) argues that the complexity of today's society and advancement in ICTs has raised a lot of ethical dilemmas for information professionals. Bailey (2004) also concluded that a promulgation of the current use of digital rights management has the potential to seriously undermine society's fundamental public commitments to personal privacy and freedom of expression.

However, the concept of information ethics is both complex and elusive. As a result, there are a lot of grey areas and points of conflict regarding the application of ethical principles and propositions in society. One of the conflicts arises from the application of conflicting ethical theories. The Virtue theory, for example, concentrates on the moral character of the agent performing an act, the Denteological theory concentrates on the act being

performed, while the Consequentialist theories focus on the consequences brought about by certain acts or behaviour. It is therefore important to carry out studies that determine the attitudes of information professionals towards certain ethical propositions that relate to information provision. This study gathered information on the various ethical issues that confront librarians and their attitudes toward the ethical propositions.

Several studies have been carried out in the field of information ethics (McGraw, 2004; Mather, 2007; Kokabi, 2009; Fuchs, 2011). However, among these, there are few studies in Africa that focus on the ethics and information professionals. Moreover, these studies tend to focus on ethical issues that relate to the use of online resources and not other ethical issues that will be covered by this study. As illustrated in the conceptual framework, (see section 1.2) this study reviews the various legal, individual, organisational, societal dimensions of ethical issues that relate to information provision.

A similar study was carried out by Mbofung and Popoola (2014) on the relationship between legal and ethical issues and information service delivery of library and information science professionals in university libraries in Nigeria. However, Hellriegel and Slocum (1992) and McGraw (2004) argue that ethics are context specific. What may be ethical in one society may not be ethical in another. Therefore, this study focuses on ethical aspects affecting library and information professionals in Zimbabwean libraries.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Zwass (2012) defines ethics as "...a study of the principles of right and wrong that ought to guide human conduct". The word ethics is derived from the Greek work "*ethikos*", meaning "arising from habit". It is a major branch of philosophy, covering the analysis and employment of concepts such as right, wrong, good, evil, and responsibility.

Hellriegel and Slocum (1992) proposed a conceptual framework for ethics with four dimensions as shown in Figure 1. They argued that behaviour is/or ought to be influenced by individual perception, organisational views, societal definitions and legal interpretations. This study is guided by this framework because it looks at ethics from a broader perspective. The dimensions proposed by Hellriegel and Slocum (1992) are elaborated below:

a) *Individual perception: -* Despite prevailing societal, legal and organizational interpretations of what are ethical, individuals have their own values and sense of what is right and wrong. All these factors mould ethical behaviour.

b) *Organisational views: -* Also the organization itself can determine whether behaviour within its walls is ethical or unethical. The most fundamental organizational influence is top-level managers' commitment to ethical conduct. They may communicate this commitment through directives for example memos, policy

statements, speeches, publications, and most importantly, actions, and codes of ethics.

c) *Societal definitions: -* A large part of any definition of what is considered ethical comes from the society in which the behaviour occurs. What a society interprets as ethical frequently ends up being expressed through court decisions and the passage of law within that society.

d) *Legal interpretations: -*According to the natural law theory, there is a symbiotic relationship between law and ethics. Law happens to reflect or intends to reflect morality, which is an important ethical dimension. In some systems, the lack of morality of the individual can also be a sufficient cause for punishment, or can be an element for the grading of the punishment. Law-makers seeking to enact new laws to regulate human conduct usually convert into law their deeply held moral convictions. Therefore ethics or morality is the bedrock of law (Madhuku, 2010)
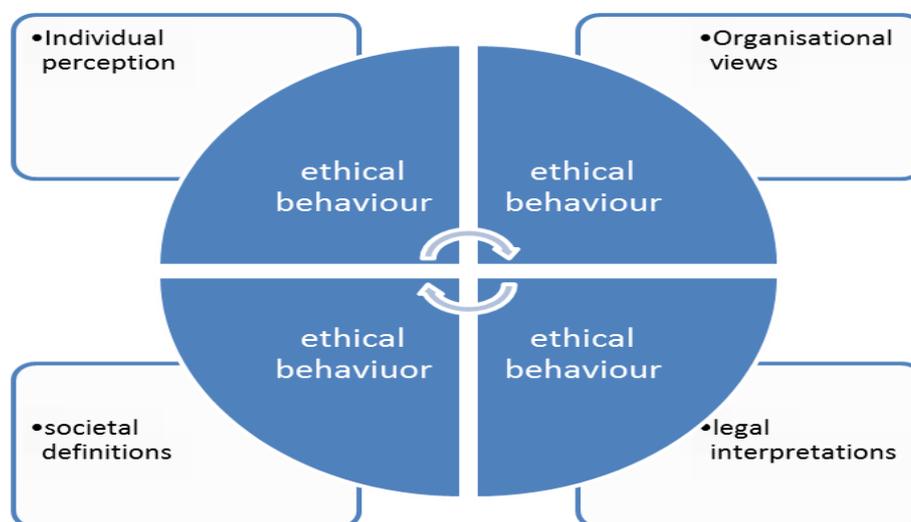

Figure 1: Factors influencing ethical behaviour (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1992)

Professional ethics concerns the moral issue that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professionals attain and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the

public. Each professional discipline has its own code of conduct, guidelines for practice and philosophy of care to direct practice within its professional remit. Like any other profession, the field of Library

and Information Science is confronted by a number of ethical issues that are discussed below. The issues are further interrogated in the literature review section (Smith, 2011).

3.   PROPOSED   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mason's (1986) ethical issues of concern for the information age are *property, accuracy,   privacy,*   and   *access* (PAPA).The PAPA framework has been dominant in the LIS field. Studies that have been carried out by Gorman (2000); Rubin and Froehlich (2000); Koehler and Pemberton (2009); and Zwass (2012) used the PAPA framework in interrogating ethical issued in the LIS field. A study by Woodward, Martin, and Imboden, (2010), also validated the PAPA framework.

However, the PAPA framework has it shortcomings. The framework does not cater for the recent trends and developments in the LIS field. The LIS field has transformed at a tremendous pace and, therefore, there is need to add other ethical dimensions. In 1995, Conger, Loch, and Helft (1995) offered a more complex view of ethical issues and categorized them into five subject areas: *ownership,   access,   motivation, responsibility*, and *privacy*. Woodward, Martin, and Imboden, (2010) felt that the PAPA framework is too broad and therefore does not address specific issues related to this information age. The authors suggested that ethics in today's digital era should cover *low risk property misuse,   high   risk   property   misuse, personal   responsibility,   and   privacy*. Therefore, there is need for theoretical frameworks that provide specific focus for the analytic lens of particular studies.

This paper proposes the amalgamation of the PAPA framework with the concept of wellbeing. The Oxford dictionary (2015) defines well being as "The state of being comfortable,   healthy,   or   happy..." Achieving   well-being   has   been   the concern   of   philosophers   since   Aristotle, and is, in many respects the essence of human   existence   (Grover,   2015).   In recent years, well-being has moved from the realm of philosophy to that of science. Therefore, the contention of this paper is that like any other profession, the field of LIS   needs   to   provide   healthy   and conducive environments and services that protect   clients   from   physical   and emotional harm.

The PAPA framework tends to focus on the   information   being   disseminated   or managed,   at   ignoring   library   and information services. However, there are a number of ethical issues that may arise from the facilities and services that are provided to library clients. There are a number of ergonomic aspects that may potentially harm library clients. These aspects include computer screens, library equipment, furniture, space, and proper ventilation. Therefore LIS professionals have an obligation to provide services that promote the general wellbeing of their clients and as such, should provide conducive environments for their clients. Therefore, this study proposes that ethical concerns in the information age should focus   on   *property,   accuracy, privacy,access*and   *wellbeing*   (PAPAW) (see Figure 2 below).
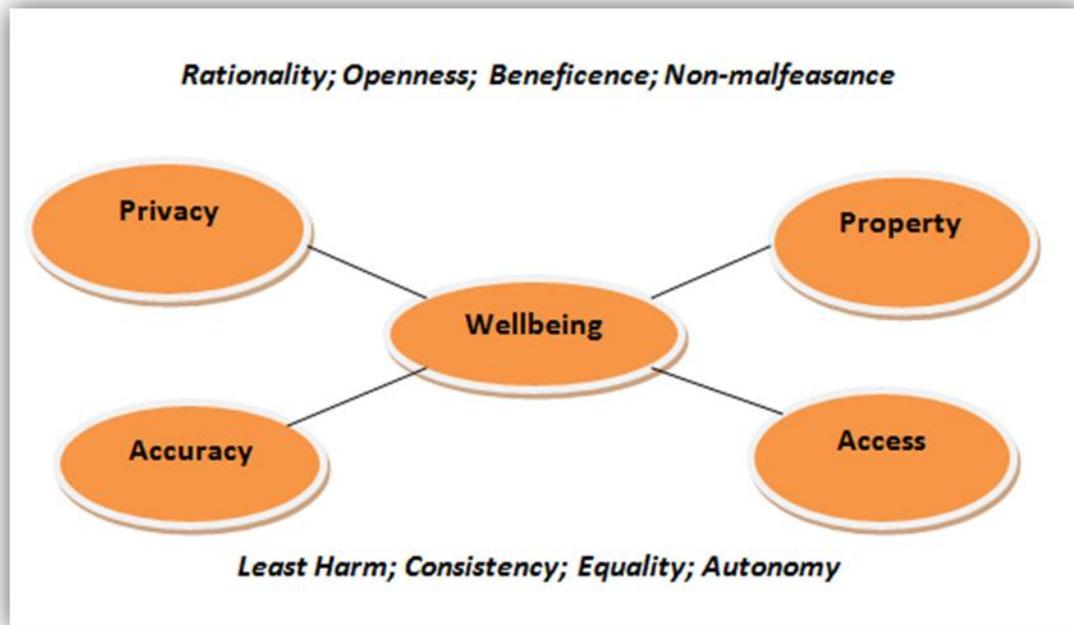
Figure 2: The Proposed PAPAW Framework

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study reviews literature based on the PAPAW framework of information ethics (Privacy, Accuracy, Property, Access, and Wellbeing). The following is a review of the major ethical issues that relate to information provision.

4.1 Privacy

Zwass (2012) argues that privacy is the most important issue in the 21st century. Privacy is the right of individuals to withhold information about themselves without disclosure and to have any information collected about them with their consent protected against unauthorised access. In Zimbabwe, privacy is protected by the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) Chapter 10.27, which was enacted in 2002. The Act guards against unauthorised disclosure of personal information by public bodies, the mass media and individuals. Invasion of personal privacy often leads to negative and sometimes detrimental consequences that include loss of dignity, conflicts, embarrassment, and loss or control over lives.

Privacy is arguably the most critical ethical issue affecting information professionals (Zwass, 2012). Library and information practitioners have a responsibility to protect information and records about their patrons (IFLA, 2012). However, there are a number of ethical issues that arise in the LIS profession. These include monitoring patrons' internet usage, and disclosure of patron and circulation records. Rubin and Froehlich (2011) commented that "revealing such information would create a "chilling effect"on borrowers, who, if they believe their readinghabits were made public, would subject them to embarrassment".

The American Library Association (ALA) (2002) expressed a need for constant vigilance to protect the rights of patrons to use new and traditional sources of information without unnecessary surveillance. However, Rubin and Froehlich (2011) contends that libraries are public institutions, and as a result thereare those who would argue that such records are publicrecords, and the right of the citizenry to know what ishappening in

a public institution outweighs the privacyrights of individuals. This causes an ethical dilemma for librarians in terms of withholding or disclosure of information held by libraries as public bodies.

4.2 Property

Every individual has the right to property, including intellectual property. Library and information professionals have the responsibility to respect and protect intellectual property. Authors, editors, producers and distributors of databases have the legitimate right to benefit financially from their intellectual efforts. There are several pieces of legislation that seek to protect Intellectual Property in Zimbabwe. These are listed below:

   a) The Patents Act(Chapter 26:03)
   b) The Trade Mark Act (Chapter 26:04)
   c) Industrial Designs Act(Chapter 26:02)
   d) Copyright and Neighboring Act(Chapter 26:08)
   e) Geographical Indications (Chapter 26:06)
   f) Integrated Circuit Layout Design(Chapter 26:07)

Information professionals use a variety of sources that appear in a variety of formats and copying or transferring such information often arises as a necessity. However, there are several ethical issues that arise in using intellectual property. Ethical tensions arise whenthe information needed is difficult or impossible to obtainefficiently without violating copyright restrictions. Rubin and Froehlich (2011) observe that the digital environment further complicate the management of copyright, resulting in new treaties and laws including the WIPO treaty, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and the Teach Act.

Zwass (2012) argues that the intangibility of information is the source of many ethical dilemmas. Copyright laws protect the form of expression and not the idea itself. However, this is limited protection because the underlying solution is more valuable that its coded expression. Moreover, protection of digital content is difficult because it is not easy to differentiate digital products such as software programmes.

The ethical dilemmas discussed above have led to the need to balance the interests ofthe user or information intermediary, such as the librarianor information specialist, with the interest of the copyrightowner, through the concept of 'fair use' or 'fair dealing'. However the concept of fair dealing poses further ethical dilemmas because of its elusive, complex, and rigid nature (Brenncke, 2007).

4.3 Access

Access to information is a basic human right in an information society. There is no free-standing right to information set out in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, but Section 20(1) includes under freedom of expression "freedom to ... receive and impart ... information without interference" (Biti and Feltoe, nd). However the question that has been reeling since time immemorial is whether libraries should charge for access to information. The issue of free versus feehas been a bone of contention among information practitioners, with some advocating for the philosophy of open access, while some see information as a commodity that has economic value(Williams, 1989).

Libraries in the 21st century are no longer mere storehouses of information. They have an obligation to proactively provide access to their collections regardless of education, age, gender, location and economic status. This is a daunting task for information professional in light of economic challenges facing libraries. Moreover, there are certain limits that are imposed by governments through different laws and regulations. In Zimbabwe, acts such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), the Official Secrets Act (OSA) and the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act

have been used to systematically limit access to information that the government deems inappropriate.

Another ethical issue that has been raised by the current digital environment is that of the digital divide. Herman (2003) was concerned that many studies that have been carried out on the digital divide tended to look at the phenomenon from a conceptual, statistical, and policy perspective. He argues for studies that look at the ethical perspective of the digital divide. His study concluded that the concept of digital divide is indeed an ethical issue, and should be looked at from an ethical perspective. The new technological means for information storageand transmission exacerbate the differences of information"haves" and "have-nots" in the world (Rubin and Froehlich, 2011).

4.4 Accuracy

The utopia of the 21st century is the information society. The information society is characterised by a pervasive use of information in societal affairs. However, the information explosion, particularly on the internet, and its open publishing platform has compromised the accuracy and quality of information. There are several ethical issues that relate to quality of information in libraries.Inaccurate information may result in loss of opportunities, loss of money and resources or even loss of life (Zwass, 2012).

A large part of a librarian's work, especially in special libraries, requires researching information for users. The users expect that information to be accurate and reliable. However, this poses some ethical challenges for information professionals because they might not be specialists in the concerned field, and therefore may not be able to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate information (Smith,nd). Moreover, with an increase in technology comes the need for librarians to be aware of how to authenticate online resources and the limits of electronic resources as a whole (Diamond and Dragich, 2001).

4.5 Wellbeing

Library and information professionals are often faced with ethical dilemmas with regards to censorship of information and provision of quality services. In most cases LIS professionals end up resorting to the ethical principle of least harm. This ethical principle states that when one must choose between evils, should choose the least evil. In this case, a person should choose to do the least harm possible and to do harm to the fewest people.

However, library and information centres in the 21st century are expected to do more. It is high time that LIS professionals in Zimbabwe apply the ethical principles of beneficence and non-malfeasance to meet global standards. Beneficence is the duty to do good both individually and for all. This principle is also related to the ethical principle of utility, which states that we should attempt generate the largest ratio of good over evil possible in the world (Penslar, 1995). This principle stipulates that ethical theories should strive to achieve the greatest amount of good because people benefit from the most good.Non-malfeasance isthe duty to cause no harm, both individually and for all (Bailey, et. al. 2012).

New technologies are changing the face of information services and how those services are delivered. Thibodeau and Melamut (1995) contend that libraries spend a great deal of time planning the hardware and software implementations of electronic information services, but the human factors are often overlooked. A study by Chandra, Ghosh, and Chakravarti (2009) found that academic libraries in the survey did not meet modern ergonomic standards. Ergonomic issues cited include proper monitor placement, lighting, workstation setup, and seating prevent many of the common occupational problems associated with computers. Wu and Chen (2010) revealed that students in

an academic library reported visual discomfort when staring at a monitor.

Therefore, there is need to focus on general wellbeing when addressing ethical issues in library and information centres. As libraries are becoming more automated, there are a number of dangers posed by this new environment such as stress, fatigue, and cumulative trauma disorders.

5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is lack of scientific knowledge on the ethical issues affecting Library and Information professionals in Zimbabwe. Moreover, considering the elusiveness and complexity of ethics as a concept, there is a need to understand the perceptions of LIS professionals on certain ethical principles that have been used to inform information services.

6. STUDY OBJECTIVES

15.1 To establish the ethical aspects affecting information professionals.

1.5.2 To determine the attitudes of information professionals on property, access, privacy, accuracy, and wellbeing.

1.5.3 To assess the challenges in the application of ethical codes.

7. METHODS

The descriptive survey methodology was used for the study. The population consisted of practising library and information professionals in Zimbabwe. The study used snowball and convenience sampling to gather the data because the number of practising LIS professionals is unknown. An online questionnaire was used to collect from information professionals across the country using departmental mailing lists. A total of 58 questionnaires where returned. The instrument was analyzed using simple percentage count method under descriptive statistics. Qualitative and qualitative approaches were used to present the data.

8. FINDINGS

The findings of the study were analysed under four main categories, that is; demographic characteristics, the ethical aspects affecting information professionals, the attitudes of information professionals on certain ethical issues, and the challenges in the application of ethical codes.

8.1 Demographic characteristics

The results indicate that 56% of the respondents were female, while 44% were male. The majority of the respondents (56%) were from academic libraries, 17% were from public libraries, 5% were from special libraries, while 22% were from other institutions that include archives and consultancies. From the respondents, the majority (61%) were Assistant Librarians, 23% were Librarians, 7% were Library Assistants, and 9% occupied other positions. An analysis of the data revealed no significant relationship between demographic characteristics of respondents and ethical issues.

8.2 Ethical issues affecting information professionals

The main objective of this study was to establish the ethical issues that affect information professionals in Zimbabwe. The findings presented in reveal that the major ethical issues cited include: Equitable access to library materials; Accuracy of information provided; Protection of intellectual property; and Protection of personal privacy and confidentiality. The respondents indicate that the most dominant ethical issues confronting the information professionals were protection of personal privacy and confidentiality (94%) and equitable access to library materials (94%).This corroborates the findings by Zwass (2012) who argues that privacy is the most important issue in the 21st century. It was interesting to note that protection of intellectual property as an ethical issue had the least number of respondents (64%).
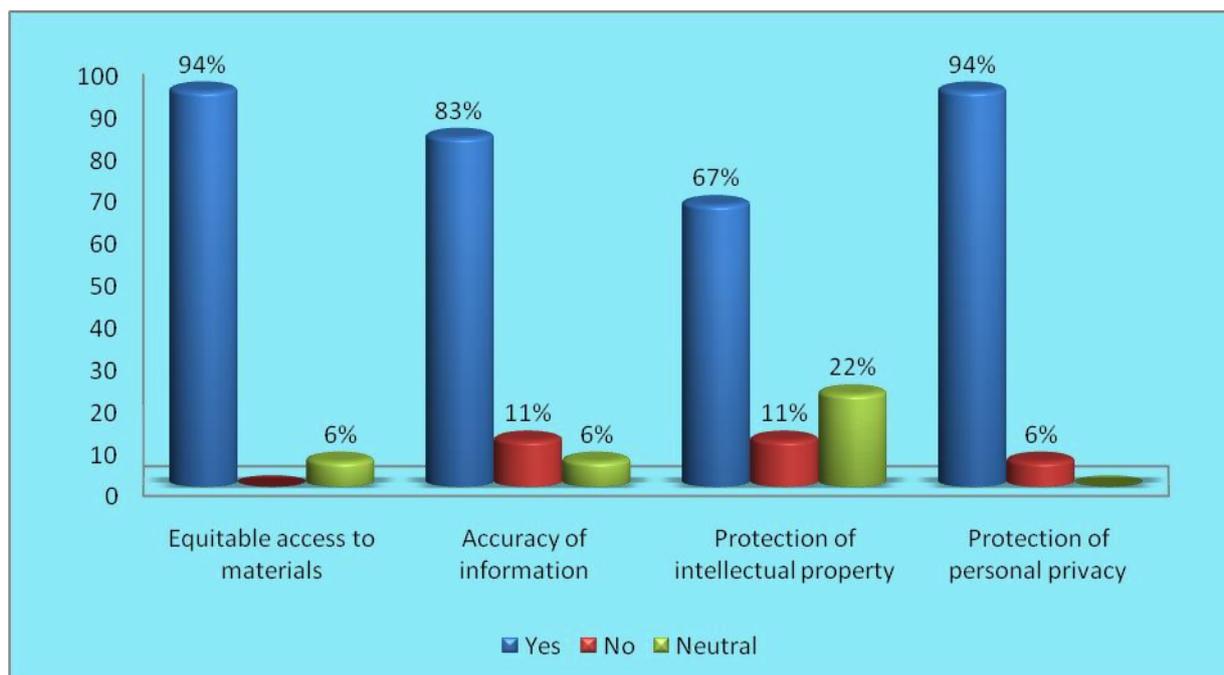
Figure 3: Ethical Issues Affecting Information Professionals

8.3   Attitudes   of   Information Professionals

The study sought to determine the attitudes of information professionals on certain ethical issues. The issues were categorised into Privacy, Access, Property, Accuracy and Wellbeing. These variables were informed by the proposed PAPAW framework. The research findings on these variables are presented below.

8.3.1 Privacy

On the issue of privacy, the majority of respondents (78%) believe that 'Librarians shall not divulge for any purpose any format or administrative record which has been entrusted to them in confidence'. Sixty one percent thought thatthey uphold and protect library users rightsto privacy and confidentiality with respectto information sought or received, acquiredor transmitted. Fifty six percent believe that libraries should enforce restriction on information when human right or privacy

of another personis violated. Table 1 presents the findings on privacy in more detail.

8.3.2 Access

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that an overwhelming majority of respondents (90%) believe that they provide access to information to everyone regardless of their skills, geographical location and access to the internet. This is a positive trend considering the financial challenges facing library and information centres in Zimbabwe. It was encouraging to note that all the information practitioners believe that libraries should consider each individual information query to be of equal merit regardless of the age, gender, ethnicity, status. The majority (89%) agreed to the notion that 'no library materials should be excluded from the libraries because of the race, nationality or political, social, moral or religious views of their author'. A few of the respondents (7%) disagreed with issue of excluding library materials on the basis of nationality or political, social, moral or religious views of the author.

Table 1: Privacy

N=58	Always	Sometimes	Never	Neutral
Libraries shall enforce restriction on information when human right or privacy of another personare violated	56%	40%	-	5%
Librarians shall not divulge for any purpose any format or administrative record which has been entrusted to them in confidence.	78%	18%	7%	-
We uphold and protect library users rightsto privacy and confidentiality with respectto information sought or received, acquiredor transmitted.	61%	33%	-	6%

Table 2: Access

N=58	Always	Sometimes	Never	Neutral
No library materials should be excludedfrom the libraries because of the race,nationality or political, social, moral orreligious views of their author.	50%	39%	7%	5%
The libraries should consider eachindividual information query to be of equalmerit regardless of the age, gender,ethnicity, status.	61%	44%	-	-
We provide access to information to everyone regardless of their skills, geographical location and access to the internet	72%	18%	5%	6%

8.3.3 Property

On the issue of intellectual property, the results presented in Table 3 show that all the respondents agreed that libraries should respect the rights of authors. Fifty six percent stated that they abide by contractual obligations regarding copyrighted materials, while 44% thought that libraries should always not infringe copyright for the benefit of their users. It was interesting to note that 7% remained neutral on the issue of copyright infringement for the benefit of users and on abiding by contractual obligations.

Table 3: Property

N=58	Always	Sometimes	Never	Neutral
Libraries should respect the rights of authors	83%	17%	-	-
Libraries should not infringe copyright for the benefit of their users	44%	39%	-	6%
We abide by our contractual obligations regarding copyrighted materials	56%	39%	-	7%

8.3.4 Accuracy

Results presented in Table 4 show that all the respondents agree to the notion that libraries should seek toprovide users with complete, accurate answers to theirinformation queries regardlessof the complexity of thesequeries. Ninety for percent thought that library and information professionals should keep abreast of development inlibrarianship in those branches ofprofessional practice in which qualificationsand experience entitle them to engage, while 6% remained neutral. Eighty nine percent thought that information professionals should provide the highest level of service using the most appropriate resources.

Table 4: Accuracy

N=58	Always	Sometimes	Never	Neutral
The library shall seek toprovide users with complete, accurate answers to theirinformation queries regardlessof the complexity of thesequeries.	72%	28%	-	-
We provide the highest level of service using the most appropriate resources.	50%	39%	-	11%
We keep abreast of development inlibrarianship in those branches ofprofessional practice in which qualificationsand experience entitle us to engage.	50%	44%	-	6%

8.3.5 Wellbeing

On the issue of wellbeing in library and information centres, all the respondents felt that libraries should provide conducive environments for clients such as adequate space, proper temperature and ventilation. Eighty nine percent agreed that libraries should address ergonomic aspects for clients, 67% agreed to the idea that libraries should be held liable for any form of harm caused by using library facilities. On the issue of liability, 6% disagreed that libraries should be held liable for any form of harm caused by using library facilities. Table 5 presents the results on wellbeing.

Table 5: Wellbeing

N=58	Always	Sometimes	Never	Neutral
Libraries should provide conducive environments for clients (e.g space, temperature, ventilation)	78%	22%	-	-
Libraries should address ergonomic aspects for their clients.	50%	39%	-	11%
Libraries should be held liable for any form of harm caused by using library facilities	50%	17%	6%	27%

8.4 Challenges in applying ethical principles

One of the objectives of the study was to establish the challenges that are faced by library and information practitioners in upholding ethical principles. The results presented in Figure 4 shows that the major challenges were lack of local policies and conflicting interests between key information stakeholders. Sixty one percent of the respondents cited lack of reading resources and complexity of ethical codes, 56% indicated lack of knowledge of codes of ethics. It was interesting to note that the majority 60% thought that ethical principles that guide information services are consistent. One respondent cited that "Complex demands from users affect me in upholding ethical principles because I may not be able to meet such demands and will avoid such demands this affects my ethics".
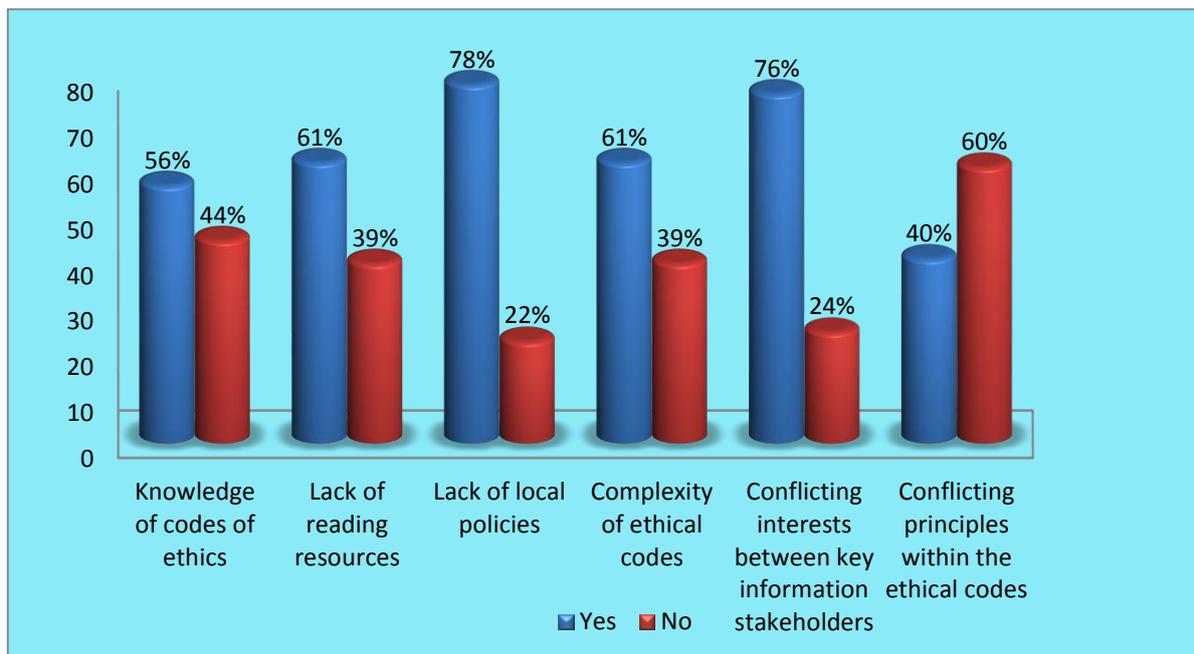

Figure 4: Challenges in Applying Ethical Principles

9. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that there are a number of ethical dilemmas confronting information professionals in Zimbabwe. The major ethical issues relate to protection of personal privacy and confidentiality and equitable access to materials. Other ethical issues that relate to provision of information services in Zimbabwe include accuracy of information provided and protection of intellectual property. However, it was interesting to note that protection of intellectual property was given the least prominence. This could because of the complexity of managing copyright in a digital environment (Rubin and Froehlich, 2011), or the challenges associated with understanding the concept of fair dealing (Brenncke, 2007).

Library and information professionals who participated in the study generally agreed with all the ethical principles that relate to privacy. The most popular principle was that librarians should not divulge for any purpose any format or administrative record which has been entrusted to them in confidence. This is in line with the assertion by IFLA that library and information practitioners have a responsibility to protect information and records about their patrons (IFLA, 2012).

Rubin and Froehlich (2011) were concerned with the aspect of the digital divide that affects information provision. This study concludes that LIS professionals in Zimbabwe are concerned with the issue of equitable access to information. All the respondents felt that libraries should consider eachindividual information query to be of equalmerit regardless of the age, gender, ethnicity, status and that they should provide access to information to everyone regardless of their skills, geographical location and access to the internet.

The issue of quality of services in libraries has been widely documented. This study found out that LIS professionals in Zimbabwe believe librariesshould provide the highest level of service using the most appropriate resources, regardlessof the

challenges facing the libraries. They also believe in professional development and subject specialisation to meet complex needs of clients.

The issue of conducive library environment was supported by the respondents. However, there seems to be a disparity of what the LIS professionals feel and what is on the ground. A study by Chandra, Ghosh, and Chakravarti (2009) found out that academic libraries in the survey do not meet modern ergonomic standards. A later study by Wu and Chen (2010) revealed that students in an academic library reported visual discomfort when using monitor. These issues need to be addressed in libraries for users to utilise library services comfortably.

It seems the problems that have been discussed on privacy, property, access, accuracy and wellbeing are caused by lack of library resources among other factors. Libraries in Zimbabwe are operating under stringent economic conditions due to the ailing economy. While LIS professionals strive to uphold and support ethical principles, they are affected by lack of resources, lack of locally drafted ethical codes, conflict of interest, and complexity of certain ethical codes.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

a. Development of locally relevant ethical codes
b. Funding and fundraising in library and information centres to improve quality of services
c. Training LIS professionals on professional ethics
d. Marketing of existing internationally recognised ethical codes

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