Collection Development Ethics in Self Financing Engineering College Libraries in Tamilnadu

S. Hariharan
Librarian, Bharathiar University Arts & Science College,, Valparai 642 127
E-Mail: msharilib@gmail.com

M. Tamizhchelvan
Deputy Librarian Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed University, Gandhigram -624 302,
E-Mail: tamizhchelvan@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper discusses ethical responsibilities of Librarians that guarantee effective collection development in Libraries The authors developed a questionnaire, which was based on the concepts of various national codes of professional ethics of Librarians then added related concepts to strengthen the questionnaire. Out of the universe of nearby 500 Engineering colleges, 406 self financing engineering college libraries were included in sample frame and copies of questionnaire were distributed to them. 95 responses were included in this pilot study. Rest of the Responses is being received. It was found that except a few elements, the proposed ethical concerns have been agreed by the professionals working in Engineering College Libraries in Tamilnadu.

Keywords

Librarianship Ethics, Engineering College, Librarian, Tamilnadu, Collection development..

Electronic access

The journal is available at www.jalis.in

Introduction

The concept 'ethics' is pluralistic. Individuals disagree among themselves about what is right and what is wrong, and even when they agree it can be for different reasons and it does not violate the rights of others. In some traditional societies there is greater agreement on ethics and social pressure to act in certain ways rather than others. In such societies culture and religion play a dominant role in determining ethical behaviour. Each and every profession has its own ethical policies which are being updated by professional associations. Librarianship has no exemption at this juncture.

Bhatia (2004) describes Ethics as a mass of moral principles or sets of values about what conduct taught to be. They give an idea what is right or wrong, true or false, fair or unfair, just or unjust, proper or improper, e.g. honesty, obedience, equality, fairness etc. and respect and then doing the right thing.

Need for the Study

Everyday updated information demands are emerging in engineering education environment. Collection development ethics leads librarians performing their duties well. Ethical conscience helps library professionals in improving the services being rendered to their users. Information professionals have to recast their roles as knowledge professional. This paper tries to highlight the importance of collection development ethics.

Objectives of the Study

> This paper aims to study the following:
> ➢ To bring awareness on global perspective on library associations' code of ethics.
> ➢ The study and develop an empirically grounded typology of principles that appear in global library associations' codes of ethics.
> ➢ To identify the important values on collection development.
> ➢ To find out the professional attitudes of library staff in self financing engineering college libraries in Tamilnadu towards collection development ethics.

Literature Review

Immroth (1981) stressed the immediate need for an ethical material selection policy in any school library.

The author concludes that standard selection policy remains school librarians' major responsibility. Miller (1982) explained briefly the librarian's ethical responsibility to select resources for the age group served and with the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights in mind. Strife (1994) pointed out ethical issues faced by special libraries concerning access to information and the needs of clients, the organization, and society. This paper includes collection development policies; physical access; user fees; organizational loyalty versus intellectual freedom; social responsibility; and personal values.

Morris and Larson (2006) stated that libraries are responding to customer preferences for electronic research materials through the acquisition and management of these products. Electronic resources have significantly different characteristics than print resources when it comes to technical services management. This paper addresses aspects of a corporate research library's evaluation of its collection. Hiott and Beasley (2005) stated that the development of the Internet and the online collections accessed by it has created major adjustments in all library functions, including collection management and budgeting. The authors share how two public libraries have come full circle in electronic collection management responsibility, beginning with early selection, followed by current weeding programs and developing plans for future collections.Lindsay (2008) highlighted various literatures covering a broad range of topics that are of interest to public services librarians, from collections and user services to one's own research and professional development. Although addressing many topics, these authors have all used or advocate for solid research methods and data analysis in their works, which can serve as inspiration for potential projects.

Bottorff (2011) stated that Wise and careful selection of materials remains among the most important and enduring duties of the librarian that is most difficult. The author has found this to be especially true in a specialized-subject library, where traditional collection development strategies do not always yield expected results. The author trusts that building a highly specialized collection is expected on commitment from the librarian to uncover the best resources.

Ethical Collection development

A democracy can exist only so long as community is contributing new ideas for the guidance of the government. In such environment librarians can have liberalized ethical policy on collection issues. Common principles are providing first consideration to the objectives and policies of the institution, trying to obtain the maximum vital value of each piece of expenditure, emphasizing honesty, truth, and fairness in buying and selling, and avoiding all forms of bribery, always declining personal gifts and gratuities even when it does not harm the institution and professionalism, using only by permission original ideas and designs devised by a vendor for competitive purchasing purposes, accepting a prompt and courteous welcome as conditions permit to all who call on genuine business aims, promoting fair, ethical, and legal trade practices, working consistently for knowledge of the publishing and bookselling industry, trying to ensure efficient methods for the behavior of subordinates toward vendors and lost but not least supporting and assisting fellow librarians in the performance of their acquisition duties, whenever occasion permits.

In developing countries, collection development should be harmony with Dewey's policy 'best reading materials for the largest number at the least cost'. International information supply should also be important element in our country. Hence establishing a National information treasury can be considered as an urgent issue. Budget restriction becomes a major cause which has impact on collection development process. The realism of the modern library environment is that all libraries face financial problems. When library budgets have been reduced on continuous basis, the volume of available informational items has increased and which means there are lack of variety of titles. This is because purchase of same copies offers high discount rate. Setting a boundary for budget can be done simply by avoiding some resources on random basis. If done so, it will not be a valid collection policy. Consequently, question arises about poor resource collection and concerned librarian easily escapes by denoting the existence of budgetary problem. Apart from this possibility of escapism, Librarians' ethical duty insists to spend more time to probe selection list so as to exclude resources reasonably. Choices must be made and not all publications can be offered by all libraries. Exclusive nature of many topics covered by independent and alternative resources are not requested at the desk. Because clientele in academic environment look for text books and match their examination purpose. This is due to ignorance of the existence of topics in the other resources, or due to confidentiality concerns. In other words, availability of famous resources within the collection does not

tell anything about the need for items not in the collection.

Relationship with the Vendors

Librarians deal with many different kinds of suppliers. They understand that building a good working relationship with suppliers encourages the flow of useful communication and the sharing of ideas. Such information can lead to innovative and cost-effective ways of using the supplier's products and services that the librarians may never have considered. For ensuring useful collection in library, it is necessary that librarians develop good relationship with suppliers by dealing fairly with them and not making unreasonable demands. Forcing to supply a vendor who can't deliver needed resources immediately, when there is no obsolete urgency, is aggressive behavior that does not help a working relationship. Vendors also strive to maintain positive relationships with librarians to make and increase his business. Sometimes, their actions to achieve this goal might be perceived as unethical. For example, they could offer librarian a gift that is actually intended as a bribe. Clearly, professionals should not accept a bribe from a vendor, but they must be careful in considering what constitutes a bribe. For example, accepting invitations to expensive dinners or payment of entry fees for a cultural event may seem innocent, but may be perceived as bribery by authorities of the institution. Libraries rely tremendously on large vendors. This is because of the nature of being given more advertising space and possibly even more favorable reviews than those from smaller vendors. A small vendor may offer better products at most reasonable cost and with long-range service and responsibility. In this case librarian should choose such vendors. Past purchasing history should not be reviewed and present requirement must be highlighted at all. Moreover all personal gratuities of Librarians should be avoided. An ethical librarian never involves business dealing on behalf of the library which will result in personal profit. All competing vendors must be given equal consideration. Having fair contracts with suppliers makes professional feel proud. Ethical norms stresses that personal interest does not slant for benefit from these contracts.

5.2 Outsourcing process of Acquisitions

The idea of acquisitions outsourcing also raises concerns about vendor bias. The most severe form of outsourcing takes up a particular vendor to undertake resource selection, acquisitions and processing works, with selection based on lists of preferred subjects and authors. Some important points to be noted with outsourcing are: How broad is the capacity of the vendor? How resources are selected for inclusion? Are resources offered by vendor-preferred publishers given greater prominence within the preference categories? Vendors need not require upholding the librarianship standards that a librarian is expected to uphold. If outsourcing considerably limits the range of sources from which library resources are selected

Providing circulation statistics as evidence for justifying outsourcing cannot be accepted. Library users may not know what they don't know. The controversial and distinctive nature of many topics covered by independent and alternative resources are unlikely to be requested at the circulation desk or via inter library loan, due to ignorance of their availability in the first place, or due to confidentiality concerns. The popularity of the resource within library collection does not tell anything about the demand for resources not in the collection.

Citation rates for collection development policy

Librarians are entrusted to differentiate magazine and journals for setting purchase policy. Importance of recreation oriented magazines cannot be evaluated easily. User feedback as diversified opinion makes resource selection a complex task in non-academic libraries. Using citation feedback will not solve selection problem. This is because feedback can be obtained for available resources only. On the contrary, Higher education institution focuses on particular subjects and it has less importance for such general magazines. Hence, librarians should give higher importance for journals with less importance for magazines.

Professionals spend their time on selecting journals in academic environment and they have less work on magazine selection. Here, Librarians' ethical responsibility is to use citation rates for the selection of periodicals in academic libraries. Librarians can get citation statistics by pasting a feedback form on front cover of each journal. This method involves using the rate at which available resources are cited in existing collection. Thus justification of acquisitions and weeding decisions can be performed. Use of citation rates can escort to a narrowing of library collections, for numerous reasons. The fewer frequently a title is held; the fewer available it is to be used for academic purpose. In this way, citation rates are like self-fulfilling predictions. Citation rates do not give a true clue of the quality of a particular

journal. An unnoticed new good journal may be omitted because of non availability of citation statistics. For example, an indexed periodical is not automatically of a higher quality than non-indexed titles, but it is surely more easily accessible. They are therefore more likely to be used for research and academic purpose, and to attain higher citation rates as a result. Further, a periodical that serve as an alternative journal has good value. Different user group utilize that particular periodical for various purpose. Its worth cannot be measured by the citation frequency. Librarian should not rely on mechanical decision making. It is ethical to have artificial degree of calculation while excluding resources from tentative selection list.

Library professionals should regularly work with other discipline faculty in assessing the collections to ensure that they meet the needs of the institution. It is librarian's ethical responsibility to engage Non-library faculty in this process to assure good representation of all disciplines within the collection. Further, professionals should ensure that their libraries have resources in a variety of formats, both printed and electronic, to meet the information needs and learning styles of the students and faculty on campus. Other faculty can easily provide citation statistics to help librarian add good resources in the collection. These resources should be provided in multiple formats and served through multiple delivery methods with a goal to create easy access. Library faculty should have cordial relationship with other discipline faculty to make sure funding for the resources necessary to maintain proper subject and format representation within the collection.

ANALAYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Collection development issues were presented 11 individual elements. Likert type 5 point scale has been applied and Librarians point of view has been considered.

Table 1. Collection Development Ethics

Sl. No.	C-4 Collection development	SA	AG	NO	DA	SD	WAM	RANK	STD
1.	Professionals have cent percent freedom in resource selection.	34 (35.79%)	46 (48.42%)	14 (14.74%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.05%)	4.18	1	0.75
2.	Professional links help in selecting journals than depending on faculty members.	18 (18.95%)	56 (58.95%)	21 (22.11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.97	4	0.64
3.	Knowledge on Engineering subjects is mandatory for collection development.	18 (18.95%)	61 (64.21%)	11 (11.58%)	5 (5.26%)	0 (0%)	3.97	5	0.72
4.	Collection development policy of without empirical knowledge contradicts first law of library science.	34 (35.79%)	44 (46.32%)	11 (11.58%)	5 (5.26%)	1 (1.05%)	4.11	2	0.88
5.	Library collection should not stimulate interest on arts and literature.	22 (23.16%)	34 (35.79%)	23 (24.21%)	12 (12.63%)	4 (4.21%)	3.61	9	1.10
6.	Library users who want to read fictions should not expect to find them in the engineering college library as a matter of right.	25 (26.32%)	34 (35.79%)	29 (30.53%)	7 (7.37%)	0 (0%)	3.81	7	0.91
7.	It is proper to purchase resource which is acceptable under the law but which clientele may find offensive (graphic pictures in medical, war or horror issues).	13 (13.68%)	36 (37.89%)	33 (34.74%)	9 (9.47%)	4 (4.21%)	3.47	10	0.98

8.	Library collection may include resource which reflects the view of non-scientific principles. (e.g. religious principles, social believes).	7 (7.37%)	22 (23.16%)	52 (54.74%)	9 (9.47%)	5 (5.26%)	3.18	11	0.89
9.	Library collection may include resource which covers the scope out of syllabus (Resources which are unusual and unpopular with the majority users but supplies research ideas).	17 (17.89%)	40 (42.11%)	26 (27.37%)	8 (8.42%)	4 (4.21%)	3.61	8	1.01
10.	Collection development policy should be harmony to competitive institution.	15 (15.79%)	56 (58.95%)	23 (24.21%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.05%)	3.88	6	0.69
11.	Maintaining question bank (University Exam) is librarian's responsibility.	27 (28.42%)	50 (52.63%)	11 (11.58%)	6 (6.32%)	1 (1.05%)	4.01	3	0.86

Scale: SA= Strongly agree AG=Agree, MO= Moderate, DA=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, WAM=Weighted Arithmetic Mean, STD=Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows that the highest strongly agree option found on 'Professionals have cent percent freedom in resource selection' (35.79%) and it is lowest on 'Library collection may include resource which reflects the view of non-scientific principles. (e.g. religious principles, social believes)' (7.37%). The highest agree option found on 'Knowledge on Engineering subjects is mandatory for collection development' (64.21%) and it is lowest on 'Library collection may include resource which reflects the view of non-scientific principles (e.g. religious principles, social believes)' (23.16%).

Based on the WAM Values from the Table 1.16, the first five preferred elements of Collection Development Ethics are as follows:

Rank	Element	WAM
1	Professionals have cent percent freedom in resource selection	(4.18)
2	Collection development policy of without empirical knowledge contradicts first law of library science	(4.11)
3	Maintaining question bank (University Exam) is librarian's Responsibility	(4.01)
4	Professional links help in selecting journals than depending on faculty members	(3.97)
5	Knowledge on engineering subjects is mandatory for	(3.95)

collection development	

Conclusion

The selection of library materials and resources should transcend the individual values of library faculty, reflecting the wide variety of different cultural and ethnic groups, religious thoughts and beliefs, economic status, physical and learning disabilities, and political and philosophical ideologies that exist on campus. As part of this ethical responsibility, library faculty should confirm that the library has in place a process for responding to requests for exclusion or addition of library materials, services, or exhibits.

References:

[1]. Gorman M, Our enduring values: Librarianship in the 21st century, American Library Association, Chicago, 2000

[2]. Hauptman, Robert, *Ethics and librarianship*. McFarland: Jefferson, (2002).

[3]. Barbara F Immroth, Limiting what students read: Books and learning materials in our public schools, how they are selected and how they are removed, *Texas library Journal*, v 57 (Winter) p113, 1981

[4]. Bhatia S. K, Business ethics and management values. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 2009