

Title: Library ethics for professional practice in Academic libraries in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Ethics play a critical role in shaping librarians' professional conduct and ensuring integrity, equity, transparency, and confidentiality in the provision of information services. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Code of Ethics provides a global standard for guiding librarians in upholding core professional values such as intellectual freedom, access to information, privacy, and neutrality. In Uganda, understanding and strengthening ethical practice in academic libraries is essential for effective service delivery.

This study aimed to examine the role of ethical practice in the provision of information services in public academic libraries in Uganda, explore the impact of ethical practices on library service delivery in a selected public university library, identify ethical challenges faced by academic librarians, and recommend practical strategies for enhancing ethical conduct in library operations. A qualitative research approach was adopted, using census and convenience sampling to select participants. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. To ensure data quality, the instruments were piloted, triangulated, and submitted for ethical clearance to the Makerere University Research Ethics Committee (REC) and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

The findings indicate that strengthening ethical practices in Uganda's academic libraries requires coordinated institutional, professional, and systematic interventions. The study highlights the importance of ongoing professional development in ethics and emphasises the need for ethical leadership within library systems. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, lead the development of a national code of ethics tailored to academic librarians. It also suggests promoting adherence to ethical standards and formally integrating ethics into the library and information science curriculum at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Overall, this study contributes to the development of grounded ethical guidelines that can inform future policy, professional development initiatives, and the advancement of ethical practices in academic libraries in Uganda.

Keywords: Ethics, Academic Libraries, Library Services, Professional Conduct, Uganda, Library and Information Science (LIS), IFLA Code of Ethics