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A global perspective on library association codes of ethics

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Abstract

This study of 28 countries involves comparative content analysis of the English versions of codes of ethics proposed by professional associations. It yielded an empirically grounded typology of principles arranged in twenty categories. The most frequently identified principles were professional development, integrity, confidentiality or privacy, and free and equal access to information. While confidentiality and privacy, and equal access to information, appear in all existing typologies of library and information science ethics, other principles, such as copyright and intellectual property, democracy, and responsibility toward society, which appear in almost all other typologies, were evident in fewer than half of the codes. This empirical study provides a global perspective on library association code of ethics.

1. Introduction

Every profession has a complex body of knowledge, standards of admission to the profession, and a need for public confidence (Vanasco, 1994). Librarians, in particular, value their need for having a clear guiding philosophy as an important work value (Allen, 1998). To guide members' behaviors, professional associations and organizations establish codes of ethics. These codes aim to deal with ethical issues that are not addressed by the domain of codified law but that should not be left to the domain of free choice. A code of ethics is a formal statement of the profession's values regarding ethical behaviors. The code of ethics focuses on principles and values that govern the behavior of a person or group with respect to what is right or wrong. These codes support a more ethical work environment. They also set high standards against which individuals can measure their performance and express the value system of the profession to those outside the professional organization (Vanasco, 1994). Froehlich (1997), for example, realized the need for an ethical framework for the activities of librarians and information professionals, as well as the need to delineate shared values for library and information professionals worldwide due to globalization, the growth of national and international electronic networks, and the growing number of professionals.

Ethical considerations, as they have been for other professionals, have long been a concern for librarians (Vaagan, 2002). Scholarly and professional literature has focused attention on library and information science (LIS) ethics, committees of professional associations around the globe address professional values and ethical conduct, and LIS schools incorporate the topic into their curricula (Smith, 1997 and Vaagan, 2002). However, empirical research that focuses on librarians' ethics is insufficient. In particular, as Froehlich (1997) argued, it is necessary to explore and identify the common values librarians around the globe share. What are the common ethical principles in library associations' code of ethics? Are these principles corresponding to existing theoretical typologies of ethical principles? The aim of this study is to provide a global perspective on library associations' code of ethics. In addition, the study develops an empirically grounded typology of principles that appear in library association codes of ethics. Through a comparative analysis of codes of ethics from 28 countries around the globe, the frequent principles are identified, and the extent of guidelines given to each principle in these codes is described. This global typology of principles is then compared to other theoretical typologies of principles. Finally, differences between this empirical grounded typology of principles and other theoretical typologies are identified.

2. Literature review

This review first focuses on the purpose and types of professional code of ethics and then illustrates existing typologies of principles for librarians. Due to shortage of empirical studies on library association code of ethics, the review includes studies on code of ethics from other professions and organizations.

2.1. Codes of ethics

While *ethics* define what is right and wrong and provide ideals to aspire to, *morality* refers to the way things are actually done in real life. Morality and corruption are relative to specific cultures; what is right in one culture is not necessary right in another culture. Countries differ more in terms of morality and corruption than in terms of ethics. At the group level, ethics reflect shared values and beliefs. While each individual is a member of multiple groups and multiple cultures (e.g., a member of a particular nation and a particular profession, each with its set of values) within any particular group, certain values of right and wrong are shared. Codes of ethics reflect a profession's customs or standards. Professional ethics as well as culture and socioeconomic conditions influence ethical decisions (Vanasco, 1994). Although culture necessarily implies ethics, ethics do not necessarily imply culture (Hall, 1997).

Through the presence of a code of ethics, a professional association signals its members' competence and integrity, and it provides social legitimization to its members (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000 and Froehlich, 1997). Another function of a professional code of ethics is to serve as a means for professional socialization. One way to understand the function of a professional code of ethics is based on the social contract theory, manifested through the relationship between the profession and the society as a whole (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000). Each profession receives benefits from and has responsibilities to society, and the

code of ethics assures that the members of the profession are aware of this social contract and stick to it.

There are three types of codes of ethics: aspirational (inspirational), regulatory (prescriptive), and educational (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000, Frankel, 1989 and Froehlich, 1997). Inspirational codes are intended to empower individuals to be ethical; they present an ideal that individuals should attempt to reach. These codes address the values and principles that the group considers appropriate to apply when making ethical decisions. The authors of these codes assume that individuals are predisposed to be ethical. Thus, codes of this type provide merely an enunciation of values; they do not advance to the application stage, consider stakeholders' interests, or attempt to use a moral-philosophical rationale to derive ethical solutions such as rules or prescriptions. Inspirational codes of ethics provide the environment in which individuals are free to be ethical.

Unlike these codes, prescriptive codes of ethics provide detailed sets of rules for ethical behavior. These codes describe the behavioral outcomes required as a response to certain circumstances and apply a specific moral philosophy (utilitarian, individualistic, moral rights, or justice) to the set of values and principles. The rules in these codes are solutions to ethical dilemmas. Individuals are to select the stated group solution to ethical hazards and not to make their own ethical decisions, since the ethical issue is resolved by the rule.

The third type of code of ethics is called educational. While these codes may include inspirational or prescriptive elements, they also provide explanations and examples; they “substantiate their principles with commentary and interpretations” (Froehlich, 1997, p. 78).

Many library association codes of ethics are both inspirational and educational. Koehler and Pemberton's (2000) analyzed 37 codes of ethics in the information profession and found that 35% of them were inspirational, 35% were prescriptive, and 30% combined both. This is one of the few empirical studies that focus on LIS ethics. Empirical studies that focus on business ethics are much more common. While content analysis of corporate codes of ethics has attracted scholars, much less research has focused on professional codes of ethics. Farrell, Cobbin, and Farrel (2002) reviewed this body of knowledge on professional code of ethics and discussed the extent to which professional associations have codes of ethics.

Cross-cultural studies of code of ethics focused on similarities and differences between countries (Eining & Lee, 1997, Farrell & Cobbin, 2000, Farrell et al., 2002 and Langlois & Schlegelmilch, 1990). For example, Eining and Lee (1997) focused on attitudes toward information ethics dilemmas of privacy, accuracy, access, and property. They found that students from China emphasized relationships, while students from the United States applied a rule-based perspective in their ethical decision-making process. However, Eining and Lee concluded that “while culture still has a strong influence, there are areas where views of information ethics seem to converge” (p. 1). Langlois and Schlegelmilch (1990) examined cultural elements in codes of ethics from European firms and found that some ethical issues are independent of culture: the concepts of fairness and honesty in the

firm's relations with the public, the use of accurate records, the provision of quality products and service at a fair price, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. Farrell et al. (2002), in their study, observed that country-specific items were concerned with employee relations and political issues and concluded that difficulties would be encountered in developing a code of ethics for multinational corporations. Multinational corporations and other professional organizations, however, have developed codes of ethics (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000).

2.2. Previous typologies of ethical principles in LIS

Ethical principles for librarians have been discussed in the LIS literature illustrating a number of typologies. Hauptman, 1988 and Hauptman, 2002 ethical principles in librarianship were professionalism, access services, selection and technical services, censorship, reference services and computers, consulting, and information brokering. Smith's typology of the principles discussed in information ethics literature involved privacy, ownership (property), access, accuracy, security, and democracy (as cited in Vaagan, 2003). Mason's (1986) typology included privacy, accuracy, property, and accessibility (PAPA). Froehlich (1997) proposed three main areas of concern: information production (copyright, moral rights, fair use, public lending rights, and related issues); information collection (issues of quality control and censorship); and information retrieval and dissemination (access, privacy, and confidentiality). Rubin and Froehlich (1996) suggested nine areas of ethical concerns: selection and censorship, privacy, reference, intellectual property rights, administration, access, technology, loyalties, and social issues. Based on these nine areas, Koehler and Pemberton (2000) proposed six major elements relevant to information profession codes of ethics: concern with the rights and privileges of patrons, selection, access, professional practices and relationships, responsibilities to employers, and social and legal responsibilities. Finally, Gorman (2000) suggested eight foundational values for librarianship: stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and learning, equity of access, privacy, and democracy. Hauptman (2002) claimed that these ideal values are discussed in conferences and in the literature, but that they are not often implemented or respected in practice.

Froehlich (1997) focused on the obligations of library and information professionals to themselves, to the organization, and to “the larger environment within which information professionals work: (a) social responsibility; (b) obligations between professionals and clients and third parties; (c) obligations between professionals and systems; (d) obligations to the profession; (e) obligations to community or cultural standards” (p. 16). Froehlich also claimed that within these obligations are sets of values that support and articulate them. He stressed that the interpretation, application, implementation, and prioritization of such principles may vary from culture to culture and from one nation to another.

The development of these typologies was not based on any empirical investigation. The only empirical study that focused attention on codes of ethics in the LIS profession relied on predefined categories (Koehler & Pemberton, 2000). The principles in their study have

not emerged in vivo. Koehler and Pemberton's (2000) effort to develop a model of codes of ethics involved codes mostly from English-speaking countries; only 10% were from non-English-speaking countries. This selection limited the findings to the Judeo-Christian approach to ethics. Koehler (2003) reports findings of a survey of ethical values of 1893 librarians around the globe that indicate similar values ranking. Again, this survey, although international in scope was dominated by librarians from English-speaking countries. Thus, there is a need for more global and empirical studies on library association codes of ethics. This paper aims to contribute to the empirical studies of LIS ethics and to provide a global perspective on library association code of ethics.

3. Methodology

A comparative content analysis of 28 codes of ethics from countries around the globe was conducted. This approach to study codes of ethics has been implemented previously to analyze professional codes of ethics of accountants (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000) and organizations (Robin, Giallourakis, David, & Moritz, 1989). Other examples of content analysis of organizational codes of ethics include studies of codes of ethics of organizations in Australia (Farrell & Cobbin, 1996), the United States (Pelfrey & Peacock, 1991), and the United Kingdom (Schlegelmilch & Houston, 1989). Comparative content analysis is utilized here in order to identify similarities and differences and to provide support for the creation of an empirically grounded typology.

3.1. Sample

The content analysis used the text of the codes of ethics of library associations in 28 different countries. The collection of codes of ethics written in English or translated into English used in this study is available on the Web site (<http://www.ifla.org/faife/ethics/codes.htm>) of the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Committee of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2004). This collection currently lists 30 countries whose national library associations have adopted codes of ethics or conduct. Yet, as Vaagan, 2002 and Vaagan, 2003 argued, the list omits countries that have codes of ethics, such as, Iceland and Norway. In order to increase the reliability of the English translations, the original translations of the sponsoring associations were included in the sample. Codes of ethics from countries that did not provide an English translation of their code were excluded from the sample (the codes of ethics from Chile and Switzerland, which are available in other languages on the Web site, were excluded).

Vaagan, 2002 and Vaagan, 2003 also claimed that another shortcoming of the list is the absence of country analyses explaining the appearance (or non-appearance) of ethical codes. In order to examine this claim that the appearance or non-appearance of codes of ethics is an indication of the country's ethical level, this investigation used data from the Internet Center for Corruption Research (2003); the Center provides a Corruption Perception Index that ranks the corruption level of 133 countries. This comparative assessment of integrity performance is based on subjective assessments by residents of each country and thus assumes relativism of ethics and corruption. In general,

associations from the least corrupt countries were more likely to have published codes of ethics on the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA; 2004) Web site. Approximately 50% of the 30 least corrupt countries had codes of ethics, about 30% of the countries ranked from 30 to 70 had codes of ethics, and only about 10% of the countries ranked from 71 to 133 (most corrupt countries) had codes of ethics on the Web site. Thus, the sample of codes includes more codes of ethics from countries that are least corrupted than from corrupted countries. Table 1 lists the countries studied as well as their sponsoring association and the date the code was adopted.

Table 1. List of codes of ethics

Country	Association	Date of adoption
Armenia	Armenian Library Association	Approved by the Association's Executive Board Meeting held in Yerevan 11 June 2003
Australia	The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)	Adopted 1986, revised November 1997
Canada	The Canadian Library Association (CLA)	Approved by Annual General Meeting, June 1976
Croatia	The Croatian Library Association	Adopted at the 28th General Assembly of the Croatian Library Association on 7th May 1992—updated on 4th of December 2002
Estonia	Estonian Librarians Association (ELA)	Approved by the Council of ELA on the 14th of February in 2001
France	Association des Bibliothécaires Français (ABF)	Adopted by the national council of the French librarians' association Association des Bibliothécaires Français (ABS) on March 23rd, 2003
Hong Kong	The Hong Kong Library Association	Adopted in 1995
Indonesia	The Association of Indonesian Librarians	N/A on IFLA Web site
Israel	The Israeli Center for Libraries	N/A on IFLA Web site
Italy	The Italian Library Association (AIB)	Approved by the Association's General Meeting held in Naples on 30 October 1997
Jamaica	The Jamaica Library Association	From the Jamaica Library Association's constitution rules, regulations and code of ethics (as revised 1991).
Japan	The Japan Library Association	Approved at the Annual General Conference of the Japan Library Association June 4, 1980
Korea	The Korean Library Association (KLA)	Proclaimed: October 30, 1997
Lithuania	The Lithuanian Librarians' Association (LLA)	Adopted 1998
Malaysia	Librarians Association of Malaysia	N/A on IFLA Web site
Mexico	El Colegio Nacional de Bibliotecarios (CNB)	Adopted by the Executive Board 1991–1992
Netherlands	Public Library Section of the Netherlands Association of Librarians	Utrecht, 13th of May 1993
New Zealand	The Library and Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA)	N/A on IFLA Web site
Philippines	The Professional Regulation Commission of the Republic of the Philippines	Approved by the Professional Regulation Commission of the Republic of the

		Philippines in the City of Manila the 14th of August, 1992
Portugal	Portuguese Association of Librarians, Archivists and Documentalists (BAD), Portuguese Association for the Development of Scientific and Technical Information (INCITE), Portuguese Association of Health Documentation (APDIS)	N/A on IFLA Web site
Russia	Russian Library Association	Approved on April 22, 1999, at the 4th Annual Session of the Conference of Russian Library Association
Singapore	The Library Association of Singapore (LAS)	N/A on IFLA Web site
Slovenia	The Slovenian Library Association	The code of ethics of Slovenian Librarians was adopted at the Library Association assembly at Bled, November 8, 1995
Sri Lanka	The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA)	Adopted by the Council of Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) December 6 1997
Sweden	The Librarians' Association (BF)	N/A on IFLA Web site
UK	The Library Association (LA)	This Code of Professional Conduct was approved by Library Association Council and the Annual General Meeting in 1983, in accordance with The Library Association's Bye-law 45(a).
Ukraine	The Ukranian Library Association	Approved by the Conference of Ukranian Library Association 30 May, 1996
US	The American Library Association (ALA)	N/A on IFLA Web site

The earliest codes of ethics are from Canada (1976), Japan (1980), the United Kingdom (1983), and Australia (1986). During the 1990s, most of the other codes were approved; only three were adopted after 2000 (Armenia, Croatia, and France). However, since data on the dates from eight of the 28 codes were not available on the Web site, conclusions should be drawn with caution.

3.2. Coding

Westbrook (1994) emphasizes that “whatever theory or working hypothesis eventually develops must grow naturally from the data analysis rather than standing to the side as an a priori statement that the data will find to be accurate or wanting” (p. 245). Accordingly, the initial coding schema was developed from the data and the theoretical literature. As the coding process began, additional codes were added and other codes were changed. Table 2 describes these new codes that emerged. The terminology used in the table for the codes is based on the terminology found in the text of the codes and not on the literature.

Table 2. Coding schema

Category name	Description	Examples (Australia, Jamaica, Japan)
Integrity	Integrity, unbiased and objective, impartial and equitable, no discrimination	"...obligations for the maintenance of the highest level of personal integrity..." (Australia)
		"A Librarian should devote him/herself to maintaining a standard of unrestricted, impartial and active service in the provision of library materials..."(Japan)
Accuracy	Accuracy in service/information provided to users	"Must provide ... accurate and unbiased responses to all legitimate requests for assistance..." (Australia)
Free and equal access to information	Providing access to information and service to all users	"...explicitly committed to ... the freedom of access to information..." (Australia)
		"...and should not discriminate between or against library users on account of nationality, race, creed, sex, age, etc. (Japan)
Conflict of interest and personal gain	Personal gain, personal interests that conflict with the organization profession or user	"Must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues or the employing institution." (Australia)
Intellectual freedom	Intellectual freedom, freedom of expression.	"...explicitly committed to intellectual freedom ..." (Australia)
High level of service	Excellence or high level of service	"Must provide the highest level of service" (Australia)
Cooperation among libraries	Cooperation with other libraries and interlibrary loan	"Cooperation among Libraries"—heading (Japan)
		"Librarians should make it their aim to develop and maintain understanding and cooperation among libraries of all kinds." (Japan)
Collection development	Collection development, organization, and preservation.	"A Librarian should collect, organize, preserve and proffer library materials on the basis of professional knowledge and judgment..." (Japan)
Censorship	Avoiding censorship	"Should not exercise censorship in the selection, use or access to material by rejecting on moral, political, gender, sexual preference, racial or religious grounds alone material which is otherwise relevant to the purpose of the library and meets the standards which are appropriate to the library concerned." (Australia)
Confidentiality and privacy	Privacy and confidentiality of users' information and needs	"Must protect each user's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted..." (Australia)
		"A Librarian should respect the confidentiality of each library user." (Japan)
Competency	Librarians' competency	"...obligations for ... competence in the performance of their duties..." (Australia)
Copyright and intellectual	Information ownership,	"Must recognize and respect intellectual property rights..." (Australia)

property	copyright and intellectual property	
Responsibilities toward the user	Mostly indications of responsibilities towards the user as a subheading	“Responsibility for Users of the Library”—subheading (Japan)
Responsibilities toward the profession (organization/association and status of the profession)	Profession's status, professional association, professional publications and conferences	“The Profession”—subheading (Jamaica)
		“A Librarian should cooperate with other Librarians in efforts to develop group professional competencies.” (Japan)
		“The librarian should endeavor to build a strong, closely-knit professional association, in which the strength and activity of the group are enhanced by his/her own diligent and considered participation and promotion.” (Jamaica)
Responsibilities toward other professions (and organizations)	Relationships with other organizations, associations, and other professions	“Librarians should contribute to the development of local culture through close cooperation with educational, social and cultural groups and organizations in the Locality.” (Japan)
Responsibilities toward colleagues	Relationships with colleagues	“Must treat fellow workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness...” (Australia)
Responsibilities toward the employing library or organization	Relationships with the employing organization/library	“Responsibility as a Member of an Organization”—subheading (Japan)
Professional development	Professional training and continued updating of professional knowledge	“Must maintain and enhance their professional knowledge and skills to ensure excellence in the profession...” (Australia)
		“Responsibility in Training”—subheading (Japan)
Responsibilities toward society	Relationship to the state, the local community and society. Involve indications of democracy and culture	“Contribution to the Creation of Culture”—subheading (Japan)
		“Librarians should make due efforts, in association with others, to stimulate the development of the cultural environment in society and the community which they serve, by cooperating with local residents and with members of appropriate groups and organizations...” (Japan)
Administrative responsibilities	Policies, improvement, employment conditions.	“A Librarian should actively participate in the formulation of policy in the operation and service program of his library.” (Japan).
		“Librarians should make efforts to secure labor conditions that are appropriate for the development and pursuit of professional library services.” (Japan)

Once the codes were identified and coding was completed, typologies were examined in light of the codes. Then the extent of guidance contained in the categories of code content was identified for each category type. Four levels were assigned: not discussed, discussed, discussed in detail, and emphasized material, depending on the amount and quality of exposure given to the principles in the codes (Cressey & Moore, 1983, Farrell et al., 2002 and Robin et al., 1989). While the level *discussed in detail* was assigned to categories where more than one item was devoted to the principles, the level *emphasized* was assigned to categories that served as headings in the code or that appeared in the introduction. For example, one of the headings in the Israeli code of ethics is censorship; four paragraphs were devoted to this principle in the code. The extent of guidelines in the Israeli code for this principle, censorship, was *emphasized*. The French code of ethics discussed censorship under two subheadings and the extent of guidelines assigned to censorship in this code was *discussed in detail*. The Armenian code devoted one sentence to censorship “Fights against matters concerning the restriction of freedom and censorship of information”. The extent of guidelines for censorship assigned to this code was *discussed*. Finally, for the Estonian code the extent of guidelines *not discussed* was assigned for censorship. The Estonian code of ethics does not mention censorship at all.

In order to increase trustworthiness of the coding, code–recode approach was utilized. Once all the categories were developed the codes were recoded by the same coder. Agreement between the two coding iterations was 93% (number of agreements divided by total number of agreements and number of disagreements). Further, all the codes were coded by a second independent coder. This was done in a few phases, in each phase about 25% of the codes were coded, and discussions were followed in order to identify sources of disagreements. The first group of codes resulted in 74% agreement, the second in 89%, and 90% for the third and fourth groups. Therefore, the code–recode and the inter-coder reliability in both coding checks were very high. Miles and Huberman (2002, p. 64) claim that “eventually both intra- and inter-coder agreement should be up in the 90% range”.

4. Findings

Descriptive features of the codes were outlined in order to illuminate the context of the content principles of the codes. The outline included each code's name, length of the code, organization of the document, and content of the introduction to the code.

Twenty-three out of the 28 codes were called codes of ethics, and five were codes of conduct (one was a code of conduct and ethics). While 21 codes included *professional* or *librarian* in the name, just seven code titles indicated the country name.

Only three codes (Portugal, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom, 10% of those examined) referred to disciplinary procedures and to the consequences of misconduct. The disciplinary procedure was enforced by the professional association (Portugal) or by a disciplinary committee (United Kingdom and Sri Lanka). The codes of the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka outlined several possible results of misconduct. For example, the code of ethics of the United Kingdom listed the following consequences: expulsion, suspension, reprimand, admonition, and guidance.

Table 3 presents descriptive information about the structure of the codes, involving the length of the code, introduction, and headings. The average number of words per code was 633, an introduction appeared in 86% of the codes, and 46% of the codes were organized by headings (ranging from 3 to 11 headings in one code). The mean of the codes' lengths, 633 words, was shorter than the mean length of the accountants' codes of ethics, which is 10,183 words (Farrell & Cobbin, 2000), and shorter than the mean length of the Australian organizations' codes of ethics, which is 1982 words (Farrell & Cobbin, 1996).

Table 3. Descriptive characteristics of the codes

Country	Introduction	Length (No. of words)	Headings (No.)
Armenia	Y	242	–
Australia	Y	365	–
Canada	N	80	–
Croatia	Y	311	–
Estonia	N	233	–
France	Y	784	4
Hong Kong	Y	192	–
Indonesia	Y	382	3
Israel	Y	426	7
Italy	Y	458	3
Jamaica	Y	438	7
Japan	Y (long)	2638	8
Korea	Y	1035	7
Lithuania	Y	307	–
Malaysia	Y	380	–
Mexico	Y	576	11
Netherlands	Y	1190	6
New Zealand	N	222	–
Philippines	Y	942	7
Portugal	Y (long)	1604	5
Russia	N	179	–
Singapore	Y	876	8
Slovenia	Y	467	–
Sri Lanka	Y (long)	1183	4
Sweden	Y	313	–
UK	Y	1121	–
Ukraine	Y	421	–
US	Y	367	–

In general, the introductions articulated the profession's values (42%) and the goals (57%) of the respective codes. In addition, several codes included an outline of the code's history (18%) and a description of the context of the country or the professional organization (28%).

Several goals appeared frequently in the introductions to the codes; the most frequently mentioned goals were to remind librarians of their responsibilities and to assure the public of the profession's responsibilities. All codes with declared goals (16) emphasized that their goal was to establish guidelines, define principles, and clarify responsibilities that help in making ethical decisions (57% of the total number of codes). Half of the codes with goals stated in the introduction made an effort to provide a clear message to the public to assure their trust in the profession (eight codes, 28% of the total number). Five codes declared that the code also aimed at enhancing the professional image of librarians by legitimizing it and raising its profile (18% of the total number of codes).

Only 42% of the codes outlined professional values in the introduction. The values mentioned in the introductions involved free and equal access to information (21% of all codes sampled), intellectual freedom (28%), free and uncensored flow of information to present and future generations (21%), and personal integrity and competence (7%; Fig. 1).

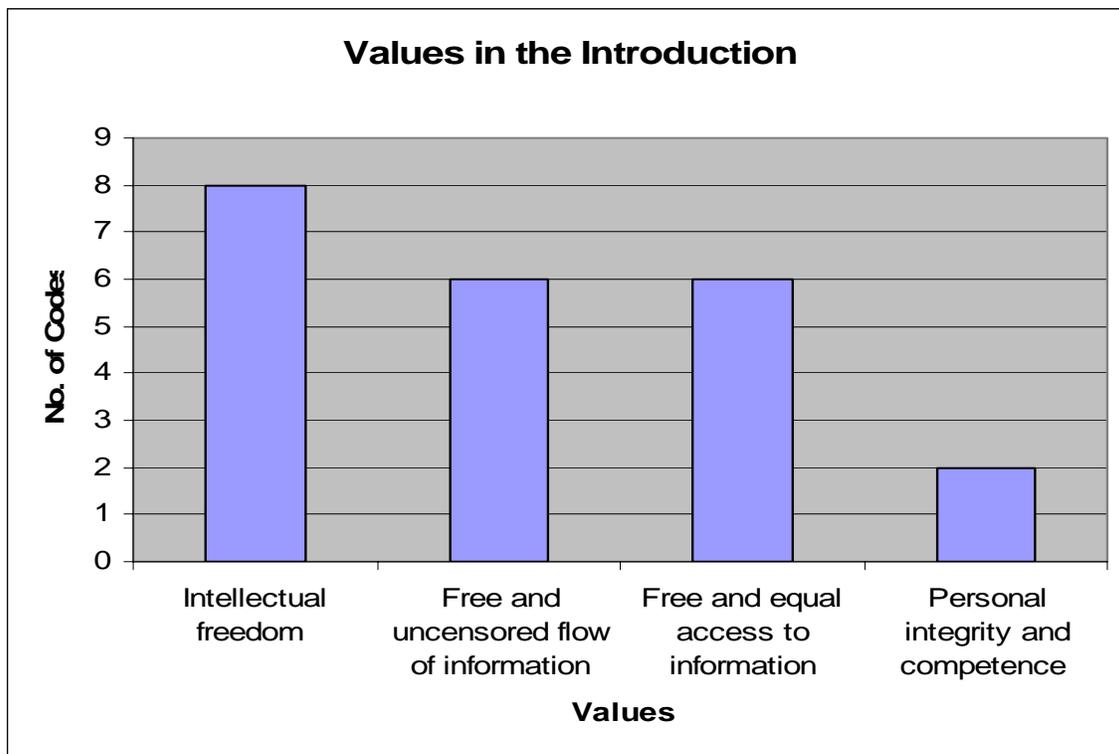


Fig. 1. Professional values in the introduction.

Organization of the code by use of headings was common to 46% of the codes (France, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, and Sri Lanka). Most of these 13 codes were also relatively long in terms of number of words. The majority of the codes with headings (nine codes) were

organized by headings that indicated the responsibilities of librarians (France, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka). Four codes were organized according to other criteria; these included headings indicating principles of professional values or declaration of principles, professionalism, accountability, level of service, censorship, bias, impartiality and objectivity, confidentiality, copyright, cooperation, service, dignity, access to information, intellectual freedom, and privacy. Fig. 2 illustrates the most common categories headings that referred to social responsibilities.

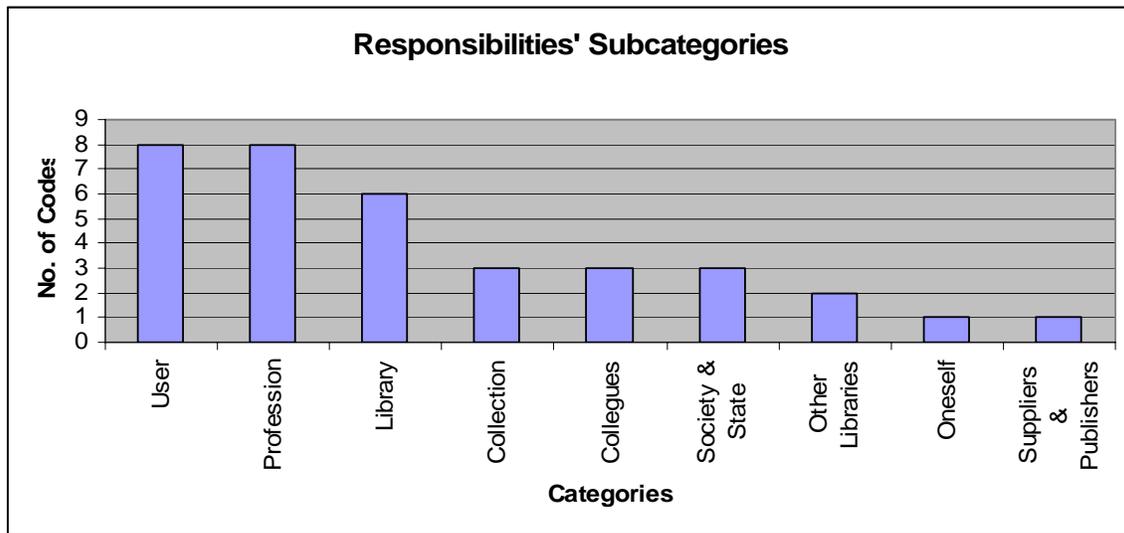


Fig. 2. Responsibilities headings.

Of the nine codes that were organized by headings indicating librarians' social responsibilities and relationships, eight dealt with the responsibilities toward the user and the profession (28% of the total number of codes) and six dealt with the responsibilities toward the library or the employing organization (21% the total number of codes). Only three codes indicated responsibilities toward the collection (10% of the total number of codes), three toward colleagues (10% of the total number of codes), and three toward society, culture, and state (10% of the total number of codes). Two codes mentioned responsibilities toward other libraries, one indicated responsibilities to oneself, and one indicated responsibilities toward suppliers and publishers.

All of the other four codes devoted at least one heading to professionalism. Throughout these four remaining codes, various headings that reflected ethical principles appeared only once; these included intellectual freedom, censorship, bias, confidentiality, privacy, dignity, and self-growth.

Content categories were identified according to the content analysis of the full text of the codes; these content categories were then assigned to sections in the text. On average, each code of ethics involved 11 content categories. The number of content categories per code ranged from three to 16. Fig. 3 illustrates the frequency of each content category.

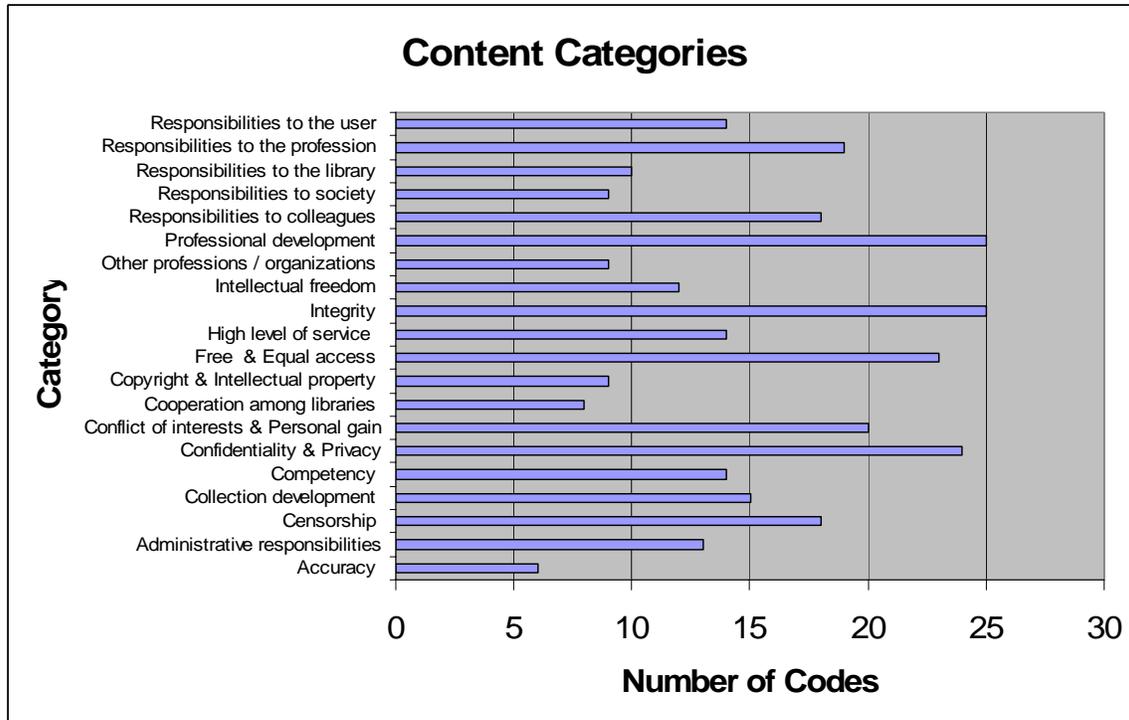


Fig. 3. Content categories.

The most frequent content categories, which appeared in at least half of the codes, were professional development (89%), integrity (89%), confidentiality and privacy (85%), free and equal access to information (82%), conflict of interest and personal gain (71%), responsibilities toward the profession (67%), responsibilities toward colleagues (64%), censorship (64%), collection development (53%), competency (50%), high level of service (50%), and responsibilities toward the user (50%).

The least frequent content categories, which appeared in fewer than 50% of the codes, were accuracy (21%), cooperation among libraries (28%), relationships with other professions or organizations (32%), copyright and intellectual property (32%), responsibilities toward society (32%), responsibilities toward the library or organization (35%), intellectual freedom (42%), and administrative responsibilities (46%).

In addition, the extent of guidance contained in the categories of code content was identified for each category type. Four levels were assigned: not discussed, discussed, discussed in detail, and emphasized material, depending on the amount and quality of exposure given the principles in the codes. The following guidelines were applied. The level *not discussed* was assigned to a category that did not appear at all in the code. The level *discussed* was assigned to a category that appeared as an item (from one sentence up to one paragraph) or part of an item in the codes. The level *discussed in detail* was assigned when a category appeared in more than one item or more than one paragraph in the code. Finally, the level *emphasized* was assigned if a category had its own heading in

the code or appeared in the introduction of the code. Table 4 presents the matrix of categories by extent of guidelines given to each category.

Table 4. Extent of guidelines contained in each category

Category	Not discussed	Discussed	Discussed in detail	Emphasized
Accuracy	22	6	0	0
Administrative responsibilities	15	5	7	0
Censorship	10	15	1	2
Collection development	13	10	2	3
Competency	14	11	0	3
Confidentiality and privacy	4	24	0	3
Conflict of interests and personal gain	8	14	5	1
Cooperation among libraries	20	4	0	4
Copyright and intellectual property	19	8	0	1
Free and equal access	5	14	3	6
High level of service	14	11	1	2
Integrity	3	10	9	6
Intellectual freedom	16	8	0	8
Other professions/organizations	20	7	0	1
Professional development	3	19	4	2
Responsibilities toward colleagues	10	11	2	5
Responsibilities toward society	17	5	1	5
Responsibilities toward the library	18	5	0	5
Responsibilities toward the profession	6	12	3	7
Responsibilities toward the user	14	6	0	8

The following categories were emphasized in at least 20% of the codes: responsibilities toward the user and the profession, intellectual freedom, integrity, and free and equal access to information. Categories that were either emphasized or discussed in detail in at least 20% of the codes involved professional development, conflict of interest and personal gains, administrative responsibilities, and responsibilities toward colleagues and toward society. Only integrity was either emphasized or discussed in detail in more than 50% of the codes.

5. Discussion

The findings that librarians' codes of ethics are shorter than those of other professions could indicate that the former are less restrictive. Differences among countries in the number of words indicate that some of the longer codes are more restrictive than others. The sociocultural context of the countries provides a partial explanation to this variety. Countries differ from one another on several dimensions, one of which is the level of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1997). Uncertainty avoidance focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within a society. In a high uncertainty avoidance ranking country, there will be a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. One would expect that in countries characterized by high level of uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Japan, Portugal, Netherlands, Korea, and

France), professional associations will make the effort to provide more guidance and rules than associations in countries with low uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Canada, the United States, Sweden, New Zealand, and Hong Kong). The findings in regard to the length of the code in most cases reflect this cultural dimension. Codes from countries with high uncertainty avoidance generally provide longer codes of ethics than countries with lower uncertainty avoidance. Although longer codes may also come from lower uncertainty avoidance countries (e.g., the United Kingdom), these are exceptions to the norm.

The organization of each code also reflects cultural differences among countries. Associations from the following countries organized the content of the code according to social responsibilities toward a variety of stakeholders: France, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. Codes from the following countries were not organized according to relationships with stakeholders: Armenia, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Israel, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and the United States. It is clear that the first group is composed of countries with a high power distance ranking (characterized by inequalities of power), while the second group is composed of individualistic countries (Hofstede, 1997 and Ronen, 1986). The first group is composed of the Latin European (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Belgium and France) and the Far Eastern clusters (as defined by Ronen & Shenkar, 1985); these clusters are characterized by high power distance and collectivism. The second group is composed of Anglo countries, which are individualistic. Table 5 presents the clusters ranking on Hofstede's (1997) dimensions.

Table 5. Countries' cluster rankings on Hofstede's (1997) dimensions

	Power distance	Individualism/ collectivism	Uncertainty avoidance	Masculine/ feminine
Nordic	6	2	6	6
Germanic	5	4	3	1
Anglo	4	1	5	2
Latin Europe	3	3	1	5
Latin America	2	6	2	3
Far East	1	5	4	4

The countries that organized their codes of ethics around social responsibilities that need to be maintained are countries that emphasize relationships over task achievement. These countries, which are characterized as collectivistic countries, also emphasize the needs of the group over individual needs. The individualistic–collectivistic dimension focuses on the degree the society reinforces individuality or collectivity in achievement and interpersonal relationships (Hofstede, 1997). In high individualism ranking countries, individuality and individual rights are dominant within the society. Individuals in these countries tend to form a larger number of looser relationships, while in collectivistic

countries closer ties between individuals are evident. These cultures reinforce collectives in which everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

In addition, the countries in the first group have been ranked high on power distance. The power distance dimension focuses on the degree of equality, or inequality, between people in a society. A high power distance ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. These societies are more likely to follow a caste system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens. One can expect that codes from countries with high power distance will express the social order in the code. One of the ways that stratification is reflected in the codes is by relationship to predefined sections of the society. These relationships are particularly stressed in the section of the Japanese code that explains the organization of the document, which “begins with the discipline for the individual librarian, then refers to the role of the librarian as a member of a professional organization, deals with cooperation among libraries and cooperation between librarians and people, and ends with the role of librarians in society” (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2004). Further, the introduction of the Japanese code indicates that a manager has more responsibility than any librarian, reflecting the high power distance ranking of the country.

While the organization and style of codes of ethics seem to be culturally embedded, the content of the codes is more global. The principles that appear in library association codes of ethics are common all over the world. These findings are similar to the findings of Langlois and Schlegelmilch (1990), who examined the reflection of national culture in corporate codes of ethics and found that most of the subject categories in the codes of ethics were culture-free; very few were culture-bound.

One principle that appears to transcend boundaries, in both the present study and Langlois and Schlegelmilch's (1990) study, is conflict of interest. This principle appeared in 20 codes of ethics and was not discussed as a principle by any of the typologies. Koehler and Pemberton (2000), in their typology of LIS ethical principles, suggested that integrity is a subcategory. It is intriguing that, although they found almost as high a frequency of mention of conflict of interest (61%) as were found in the present study (71%), the topic has not received full attention. However, this can be explained by the fact that they have used predefined categories for their analysis.

The principles that appeared most frequently (in at least 20, or 70%, of the codes) include professional development, integrity, confidentiality and privacy, and free and equal access to information. Only two categories, confidentiality and privacy and free and equal access to information, appear as categories in all previous typologies (Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of principles in codes of ethics

Category	Gorman (2000)	Froehlich (1997)	Mason (1986)	Smith (1997)	Rubin and Froehlich (1996)	Koehler and Pemberton (2000)
Accuracy			x	x		
Administrative responsibilities					x	
Censorship		x			x	
Collection development		x				
Competency						x
Confidentiality and privacy	x	x	x	x	x	x
Conflict of interests and personal gain						x [subcategory]
Cooperation among libraries						
Copyright and intellectual property		x	x	x	x	
Free and Equal access	x	x	x	x	x	x
High level of service	x					
Integrity		x				
Intellectual freedom	x					
Other professions/organizations						
Professional development					x	x
Responsibilities toward colleagues						x
Responsibilities toward society	x	x		x	x	x
Responsibilities toward the library/organization		x			x	x
Responsibilities toward the profession		x			x	x
Responsibilities toward the user/patron		x			x	x

Similar to this study and to the typologies, Milberg, Burke, Smith, and Kallman (1995) also found concern about privacy to be high in all nine countries they studied. Confidentiality and privacy, as well as free and equal access to information, seem to be the most global and common principles in the LIS profession and are stressed both by practitioners (as manifested through their codes of ethics) and by scholars (as manifested through the previous typologies).

Yet, integrity appears only in the present study, and professionalism appears only in the present study and in Koehler and Pemberton's (2000) study. Both studies, this study and Koehler and Pemberton's (2000) study, relied on empirical data found in the code of ethics. Similarly, in their study of professional business association codes of ethics, Tucker, Stathkopolous, and Patti (1999) also found that integrity was the most frequent

ethical construct. While frequency of integrity in their analysis was 52%, in the present study the frequency was 89%.

However, the second most frequent ethical construct in Tucker et al.'s (1999) study was economic efficiency (17%). The only principle that was related to library efficiency or effectiveness was accuracy. Accuracy was also a common principle in previous typologies, but it was the least frequent principle found in the codes (21%). This finding is similar to Tucker et al.'s results. Another principle that was common in several of the typologies, while its prominence in the codes was low and it was only mentioned in nine codes in the present study (32%), is copyright and intellectual property. It is possible that librarians are not assuming enough responsibility over the issues of accuracy and copyright and intellectual property.

Furthermore, the two principles that appeared most frequently and that were among the most emphasized in the codes are free and equal access to information and responsibilities toward the profession. While free and equal access reflects an ethical concern of librarians, the principle of responsibilities toward the profession reflects the concerns of the organizations that created the codes. It is interesting to note that responsibilities toward the profession and concern over professional development have been emphasized in the codes. These findings are similar to the content analyses of corporate codes of ethics, which repeatedly identified a lack of social responsibility and found that the codes were protective of the corporation rather than the interests of its clients and other stakeholders (Cressey & Moore, 1983, Lefebvre & Singh, 1992 and Robin et al., 1989).

6. Conclusion

This study did not take a universalist approach, which would have assumed only one way of doing things and might have reflected an ethnocentric view (Hall, 1997). The typology provided the set of values that are shared by the professional culture of librarians around the globe and that encompass that culture's shared values and sets of right behaviors. Future studies may further examine the relativism of the values and topics that appears in librarians' codes of ethics from various countries around the globe.

Professional library associations in many countries have developed and published codes of ethics, and future research should focus attention on the implementation of these codes by libraries and professional librarians. This research would address such questions as the following: To what extent are these codes known by professionals in each country? To what extent are new professionals educated and guided by these codes in different countries? How influential are these codes on practitioners around the globe? What types of ethical problems are not addressed by the codes? What makes a code effective? How can the effect of the codes of ethics on library performance be measured? Can substantial influences of the code be identified?

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