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EFFICACY OF ETHICS EDUCATION IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

In Library and Information Science (LIS) studies, training on ethics and deontology of information requires continuous efforts by teachers and investigators to adapt the content of training programs to two fundamental aspects: the future professional needs of students and the beliefs of the students in this field of study. A student's training in ethics must take into account, on one hand, the moral considerations that affect information as a resource, product, or objective in a specific informational context (Floridi, 2006). On the other hand, it must also acknowledge the different theories and models of ethical reasoning. The objective of this is to develop critical thinking regarding individual and professional ethical values that the student will face in the future. It is thus to be expected that in the practice of ethics teaching, students show individual values that may or may not coincide with those that they will assume in their professional life. Therefore, in the ethics teaching-learning process, deontological theories help understand ethical behavior in a professional environment, and the theories of responsibility help the student develop moral values and an individual sense of ethics that match universal values according to the student's personal and professional environment.

From a methodological point of view, the study of this adaptation of individual and professional values of students for future application has traditionally been achieved through the use of quantitative-qualitative research techniques based on case studies or questionnaires, and through the use of tests and pre-tests or scales.

This study is based on the hypothesis that, after an effective training period, there is a change in the attitude of students regarding the values that will shape their professional ethics, starting from their individual principles. It is of interest to determine how this change takes place. For this purpose, the following objectives were established: first, to confirm that the student training methodology used is effective for achieving this change of attitude. Second, the use of a purely qualitative technique, such as the vignettes technique (Urquhart, 1999), was tested because it will provide additional information on the ethical reasoning of the students during their change of attitude towards professional ethical values.

BACKGROUND

Ethics investigation, given the multidisciplinary characteristics of LIS, relies on importing techniques and methodology from other disciplines (Carlin, 2003). University students receive ethics training for future professional careers using disciplines related to LIS, such as Business ethics for future management professionals, or Information technology ethics for those responsible for information and communications systems. These two ethics education fields related to LIS both address decision-making regarding ethics and are based on theories that make this possible from a sociological, psychological, or philosophical perspective (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005, Craft, 2013, Walker, 2013, Mulhearn et al., 2017, Wang, Wang & Wang, 2020), as well as on educational methodologies and evaluating the impact of such education. Among the variables managed, the deontological code is used as a tool for decision-making. However, Lau (2010) suggests that ethical decisions should be made based on a model of moral reasoning. This author hypothesizes that university students with adequate ethics training are better equipped to make decisions, and he proves this hypothesis using vignettes and a quantitative analysis of the results. This author's work is valuable because it provides a review of the literature investigating how ethics education is affected by the technique used (tests, scenarios, questionnaires, interviews, vignettes, measures such as scales, reasoning stages, lists of values) and the pre-post analysis of all referenced works. On the other hand, Carlson and Burke (1998) demonstrate the flexibility of the ethical behavior of students, who change attitude after starting from a rigid point of view at the beginning of the course. This study is based on a qualitative strategy, namely, a single case study in which they apply content analysis.

Regarding Information Technology ethics, Stahl (2011) developed an ethical and moral conceptual frame for information systems students that demonstrates the complexity of ethical reflection and the need to develop adequate training programs. The works of Chang (2011, 2018) in the field of information technology are of interest because they use the ethics theory and the model of ethical reasoning of Kohlberg to measure the impact of e-learning on specific values in students, such as privacy, accessibility, intellectual property, and respect for rules. Other authors, such as Cohen and Cornwell (1989), Granitz and Loewy (2007), or Strittmatter and Bratton (2014), observe a change in the students' attitudes after completing training in specific values such as intellectual property using a pre-test and post-test design or the multidimensional MES scale, using scenarios based on different ethical theories.

In the context of LIS, ethical training has also been observed empirically. Countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK, and the rest of Europe integrate ethics into LIS programs in very different manners. Nevertheless, the social, legal, and ethical content is predominantly linked to a theoretical basis of ethical content, although it is highly oriented towards professional practice (Pérez Pulido, 2004). Winston (2007) states that the literature on LIS includes few mentions of ethical decision making. Smith (2009) highlights the need for training in ethical analysis. Walther (2016) focuses on this theoretical component in addition to the practical aspect.

The LIS literature includes mostly studies investigating professional values (Yerkey, 1998, Kirk & Poston-Anderson, 1992, Branch, 1998, Dole & Hurych, 2001, Horvat, 2003, Cancho et al., 2004, SEDIC ethics working group, 2011, Pacios Lozano & Fernández y Fernández-Cuesta, 2019), programs aimed at understanding these values in specific training programs or courses (Buchanan, 2004), the application of the professional deontological code to specific cases (Ferguson et al., 2005, Jefferson & Contreras, 2006, Morrisey, 2008, Schöpfel, 2016), or case studies as traditional methodology in ethical teaching-learning processes (Froehlich, 1997, McMenemy, Poulter & Burton, 2007, Buchanan & Henderson, 2009, Vallotton, Rösch & Stückelberger, 2014, Brander de la Iglesia & García López, 2015). However, other authors (Fallis, 2007, Morán-Reyes, 2019) advocate for education on ethical theories and how to apply these to specific cases or analyze different ethical reasoning models that are used in LIS to propose their own model (Carbo, 2004, Ridi, 2011).

ALISE published the Position Statement on Information Ethics in LIS Education (2010), which states that although ethics should be included as a specific subject, it should also be part of the academic curriculum as a discussion topic; it should provide basic knowledge about ethics theories and concepts related to ethics decision making, as well as instill a sense of individual, institutional, and social responsibility. Similarly, training courses in ethics should be organized for professionals, and research should be promoted.

In Spain, the White Book of guidelines to assign the title of Information and Documentation Degree (ANECA, 2005) highlights the importance of ethics and deontology in the training of LIS students and in the introduction of specific and transversal skills that the students need to acquire during their studies. This results in the inclusion of an ethics and deontology of information subject in the LIS study plan of Spanish universities, either as a specific subject or as content linked to legal subjects (Mateos Sánchez, 2017), and also as the subject of specialized courses and seminars.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Methods

This study was the second part of a previous study (Pérez Pulido & González-Teruel, in press) that used the same methodological design, but with only two hours of training. Although there were some differences, these were minimal; therefore, the training hours were extended considerably to allow a more precise evaluation of the results.

In the present study, the exploratory investigation was performed in the context of the subject “Ethics and deontology of information” for a degree in Information and Documentation from Universidad de Extremadura. This is a fourth year optional subject with six ECTS theoretical and practical credits. It includes a theoretical section, which explains ethics, deontology, and moral concepts, the different ethics theories, ethics reasoning models, the principles, values, and obligations of information professionals, the deontological codes, and other ethics rules for organizations, in addition to the study of the legal aspects of information management. In the practical section, news and specific cases related to information management and organizations in general are discussed; there are four compulsory practice sessions in which the ethics reasoning model of Mason, Mason and Culnan (1995) is applied to a specific case, and the deontological codes of the profession are applied as well as other ethics and legal regulations and documents.

The study population consisted of 11 students who were in the last year of the degree and who were attending classes during the first semester of 2020-2021.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a questionnaire with nine vignettes or brief stories about different situations representing ethical conflicts related to the profession were distributed to obtain direct information about the students’ attitudes. At this point, it was assumed that the students had not taken any specific courses on ethics, and they nevertheless were required to answer two questions regarding the situations presented in the vignettes, namely, to evaluate the situation from the perspective of the professional and from their own perspective.

In the second phase of the study, the students received a second questionnaire containing nine vignettes with situations similar to those of the first one. In this case, the students had already completed the training period and were about to finish the course.

Table 1. Professional ethical values included in vignettes 1 and 2 of the analyzed cases

EthicalValues	C1v1y2*	C2v1y2	C3v1y2	C4v1y2	C5v1y2	C6v1y2	C7v1y2	C8v1y2	C9v1y2
Intellectual freedom	x	x							
Access to information	x	x				x	x	x	x
Professionalism	x		x	x		x		x	x
Loyalty to the organization		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Quality			x						
Intellectual property				x					
Privacy and confidentiality					x				x
Respect for cultural diversity									
Respect for the environment							x	x	
Conservation and preservation								x	x

*C=Case; V= Vignettes

Source: (The Authors, 2022)

The vignettes (V) in both questionnaires corresponded to nine situations similar to those that we will designate as Cases(C). Therefore, there were nine cases of similar situations represented by one vignette in each of the two questionnaires distributed, resulting in 18 vignettes for nine cases as the objective of the analysis. A complete description of each vignette is provided in the Appendix. Each vignette is related to one of more professional ethical values, which are listed in Table 1. These are the values that are traditionally considered for the profession and are present in the deontological codes included in the study subject, such as the FESABID (2013) and IFLA (2012) codes, those of the ICA (1996), ECIA (1999), and EUSIDIC (1994), as well as the ISO 26000 social responsibility guide for organizations (UNE_ISO, 2012) and other norms or declaration of a moral character.

Once all the information is collected, it is transcribed and analyzed using content analysis techniques.

Issues, Controversies, problems

The methodology described was used to obtain information on different situations with a high moral and ethical component that are commonly encountered in the profession and that are related to technical processes, services, and information products, in addition to the behavior of professionals as members of a specific organization.

Table 2 lists the cases analyzed and the replies of the students who participated in the study. Of 11 students (S) who assisted to classes, two did not provide answers to the second questionnaire and one was not present during the distribution of the first questionnaire.

The results are expressed according to the nine cases that address similar situations and are organized according to vignettes 1 and 2, which correspond to the two questionnaires. The following paragraphs describe the two possible responses to both documents: the opinion regarding the decision of the professional and what the respondent would have done in his place.

Table 2. Student responses to the distributed questionnaires and vignettes

S	C1 v1	C1 v2	C2 v1	C2 v2	C3 v1	C3 v2	C4 v1	C4 v2	C5 v1	C5 v2	C6 v1	C6 v2	C7 v1	C7 v2	C8 v1	C8 v2	C9 v1	C9 v2
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-
4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-
7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
11	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x

Source: (The Authors, 2022)

CASE 1 (C1v1 and C1v2)

The vignettes corresponding to case 1 (C1v1 and C1v2) pertain to a situation related to the technical selection and acquisition processes of works for the library, which involves the ethical value of intellectual liberty, including the two-fold objective of freedom of expression and protection against censorship, and the ethical values of access to information and professionalism.

In the analysis of C1v1, all students agreed that the librarian was wrong; one respondent said that he would have refused to include the book in the collection and two participants said that although they understood the position of the librarian, they did not agree with the action taken. The book should be accepted despite its ideological connotations, and the reason to include it in the collection was mainly for historical research purposes.

“according to my criteria, the professional, in this case the librarian, was wrong in refusing to include it in the collection. First, because the book was donated, and second, because it may contain data that although he may not agree with, could still be of value (S1, C1v1)”. He then adds *“in my place, I would accept it because it could be useful for research purposes”* (S1, C1v1).

In this first vignette, the students’ statements were not associated with any specific ethical values.

Regarding C1v2, all participants agreed that the councilman had acted erroneously because his actions had followed his personal beliefs, and the librarians had acted correctly in accordance with the Human Rights Declaration and with three specific ethical values included in the professional ethics code: freedom of expression and protection against censorship, access to information, and professionalism in the decision capacity of the librarian regarding the content of the collections,

“in this case, we are facing a censorship situation in which the councilman denies the entry of three works into the library. In the first place, I think that this decision must be made by the responsible librarians themselves and with respect for the principle of professionalism. If I had been in his place, I would have referred to the ethics code for library professionals and documentalists, which describes the principle of free access to information, thus providing

access to a heterogeneous collection and without allowing my own personal ethics to influence my decisions” (S5, C1v2).

CASE 2 (C2v1 and C2v2)

Case 2 (C2v1 and C2v2) refers to the respect for institutional policies regarding the use of social media. The two vignettes include material related to the values of loyalty to the organization, professionalism, and intellectual freedom.

In the analysis of case C2v1, six participants would have eliminated the image from the network, whereas two would not have done so, and one participant remained undecided. One interesting issue is the difference in opinion between the participants, on one hand, regarding the need to understand and respect the usage policies of the social network of the organization, given that there are precise instructions regarding these policies. On the other hand, the notion expressed by the participants that every individual can do as they please or the decision to upload the image despite knowing that it would be eliminated, or that it could be transferred to a different social network:

“The company is in its right to eliminate the photograph based on the fact that the policies regarding publication content do not allow this type of publication” (S9, C2v1). “If the policies allowed it, the photo should have been uploaded provided the user agreed to be shown as such on the Internet” (S9, C2v1).

Regarding the second case, C2v2, the participants were aware of the existence of institutional policies that needed to be respected to work in that institution. They established a clear difference between expressing an opinion in an institutional account, which can damage the institution, or doing so using a private account. Although they cite respect as a value, someone may have done so using a personal account. In this second case, in addition to considering the social network policies of the institution, the professional ethics code and the ISO 26000 rule regarding the social responsibility of organizations are mentioned.

“I do not agree with the decision of the worker, in my case, with reference to the regulation ISO 2600:2010 about the principles of the organization and the Human Rights Declaration regarding freedom of expression regardless of race, sex, religion, etc.” (S5, C2v2). “I would have decided not to publish my opinions in the company’s account because it affects the organization as well as the ethical principles of the profession” (S5, C2v2).

CASE 3 (C3v1 and C3v2)

Both vignettes in case 3 (C3v1 and C3v2) include the professional values of loyalty to the organization, professionalism, and quality.

Regarding case C3v1, although most of the participants agreed with the colleague’s accusation, they were against the decision of the institution because they considered it unfair and because it affected the entire staff. The students proposed two solutions to this dispute. First, the dialogue. Second, some of the participants believed that disciplinary measures were necessary, either against the person who committed the act, or imposing restrictions aimed at everyone for a certain period of time to disclose the incorrect use of the institution’s assets.

“I think that the use of the telephone in this case is wrong, and the measures taken by the company are also wrong” (S10, C3v1). I would have asked the librarian to cover the cost outside of work and would have penalized the worker” (S10, C3v1).

In case C3v2, most of the participants thought that it was incorrect to copy the catalog records of other libraries because the records were similar, but not the same, and the cataloguing rules of the library should be followed or because they were not aware of the exact rules. When they talked about what they would do, they mentioned knowledge about the ethics code and the

implicit value of professionalism, legislation, and the regulations of the institution, as well as including the possibility of requesting information before doing it or consulting colleagues.

“The librarian’s decision was incorrect, as the listing codes state that the fields must be adapted to the registry records of the specific library” (S9, C3v2). “If Rebiun permits recording of its registries for other libraries, they should be collected and the titles should be adapted to the destination library” (S9, C3v2).

CASE 4 (C4v1 and C4v2)

The vignettes from case 4 (C4v1 and C4v2) present ethical conflicts related to providers. The values presented include intellectual property and author’s rights, professionalism, and loyalty to the organization.

Regarding the first case (C4v1), the participants expressed diverse opinions, as six participants indicated that the librarian had not acted correctly, whereas four participants thought that he had. Among the reasons given to support their claim that he had not acted well, they stated that it is not appropriate to select a provider based on friendship or family relations, or if the choice will negatively affect the organization. Regarding the positive opinion, the participants justified it by stating possible cost and time effectiveness, the potential for benefit, or the ability to change their mind if a problem arises. When asked to assume the librarian’s point of view, most of the participants insisted that providers should be assessed under equal conditions, and the provider who can best meet the needs of the library should be selected.

“It is not right to choose one provider based on friendship or another one because he lowers the cost or offers other help” (S6, C4v1). “However, I think that I may have done the same as they did in that department” (S6, C4v1).

Regarding the second case (C4v2), most of the participants felt that the behavior of the librarian was not correct, mostly because it went against the value of intellectual property. Other participants felt that it is important to remain loyal to the organization or to try to justify acquiring the program based on its efficacy.

“Piracy is illegal, and therefore using it to download programs even if the goal is to help colleagues is illicit, and thus, not very ethical” (S9, C4v2). “I would try to convince the library to acquire the program and explain why it would be valuable for the library” (S9, C4v2).

CASE 5 (C5v1 and C5v2)

The vignettes in case 5 (C5v1 and C5v2) address situations faced by a company’s documentalist and include the ethical value of data privacy and confidentiality, as well as loyalty to the organization.

Regarding case C5v1, the opinions were divided as to whether the documentalist acted in a correct manner. On one hand, the students justified his behavior by citing the possibility of losing his job, or that one must subject to the content of the confidentiality clause. On the other hand, some participants thought that he should be reported despite the non-disclosure agreement and the likelihood of losing his job, or else the issue needed to be brought to the attention of the bosses. From a personal perspective, the majority would have done the same despite the risk of losing their job or would have communicated anonymously.

“I think that it is wrong that nothing is done about it and that they allow the rest of the population to consume this type of meat, although I understand it because of the non-disclosure agreement and the risk of losing his job” (S8, C5v1). “It is risky to gamble with a job position, but I would not be able to continue to work there knowing that there are products that can be detrimental to the health of people; the lives of people are more important and I would ultimately report it” (S8, C5v1).

Unlike the first case, for C5v2, all participants agreed that the documentalist had acted incorrectly. Although they were open to understanding the position of the documentalist, they did not share it and mentioned the need to be faithful to the organization according to the deontological code, to protect the privacy of the users, to protect the company's data, and to conform to the ethics code of the company.

“Although the intention was good, the documentalist is not behaving in an ethical manner because he is offering personal private data to another person without the client's consent” (S5, C5v2). “In this case, I would respect the code of ethics of library professionals and documentalists regarding the obligation to keep the users' private information secret, as well as the principles of professionalism and confidentiality” (S5, C5v2).

CASE 6 (C6v1 and C6v2)

The vignettes in case 6 (C6v1 and C6v2) address the professional ethics of archivists. These include the values of access to information, professionalism, and loyalty to the organization.

Regarding the first case (C6v1), seven students felt that the behavior of the archivist was incorrect, whereas three students thought that it was correct. These three students later supported this in their personal opinion. The main reason they provided for their disagreement with the professional's actions was that he acted for personal gain and that he compromised his professional ethics in doing this intentionally.

“I think that he acted correctly, why not? If he's interested in the topic in addition to being part of his occupation” (S11, C6v1). “I would have done the same” (S11, C6v1).

“What the archivist does is wrong, and it affects his professional ethics.” (S7, C6v1). “I would appraise it correctly and would not participate in the auction” (S7, C6v1).

Regarding the second case (C6v2), all the participants except one would not have withdrawn the document from the pool, citing the responsibility towards the organization and professionalism, as well as access to information according to the archive professionals' ethics code. Regarding what they would do, the arguments of three of the participants mention interest in examining the historical background of the document; although one participant maintained his position, that he would do it even if it is incorrect, the other two students would have asked for permission from the organization.

“The archivist must respect the document he found and report it immediately, thereby respecting the ethical values of his profession, which in this case he failed to do” (S11, C6v2). “In his place, I would show respect and request permission from the corresponding unit to study the document; in this way, the professional credit goes to the archivist under supervision of the institution or organization” (S11, C6v2).

CASE 7 (C7v1 and C7v2)

The vignettes in case 7 (C7v1 and C7v2) address ethical conflicts that occur in the institution in relation to services provided and include the ethical values of access to information, loyalty to the organization, and respect for cultural diversity and the environment.

Regarding the first vignette (C7v1), all the participants agreed that the librarian had acted correctly since the regulations of the institution need to be followed. They all stated that they would have acted in a similar manner because the information was the most important issue and the user could have obtained it through different means, such as by printing it or by going to a different library.

“The professional acted correctly in informing the user about the policies, and he was going to provide the documents even if they were not in the desired format” (S9, C7v1). “I would have acted in the same manner as the institution” (S9, C7v1).

Regarding vignette C7v2, most of the participants (7) prioritized access to information as opposed to two students who indicated that the rules and regulations must be followed even if one does not agree with them and they go against personal ethics. The participants appreciated freedom of expression, service to all citizens without discrimination, and the prevalence of access to information as a way to respect the professional labor despite breaking the law. In reference to their own actions, they cited the IFLA code, article 20 of the Constitution, and the Human Rights Declaration. They offered alternative actions to avoid breaking the rules of the institution or losing their job.

“The director must comply with the legislation, and although her personal ethics tell her to give them access, this could have serious consequences, such as if the library is subject to a crime and the guilty party cannot be identified because they are covered” (S7, C7v2). “I would not let them in, but I would offer solutions such as accessing the material online” (S7, C7v2).

CASE 8 (C8v1 and C8v2)

The vignettes in Case 8 (C8v1 and C8v2) are related to the conditions established in agreements signed by libraries with companies or individuals. In these cases, the professional values that appear include loyalty to the organization, access to information, conservation and preservation, and respect for the environment or professionalism.

Regarding the first case (C8v1), seven students would not have signed the agreement with the company, whereas three would have done so because, in their opinion, it would help promote the library. In any case, this would depend on the legal services of the company or the users. Those who disagreed stated that the company used the library to clean its image, that the library was merely attracting the public, or that not protecting the environment was not correct.

“The library should not have accepted an agreement with a company that, despite not being associated with the spillage, is advertising with a company that acts against the environment” (S9, C8v1). “I would have avoided a collaboration with the manufacturing firm” (S9, C8v1).

Regarding the second case (C8v2), all the students agreed that the actions were incorrect because the integrity of the collection must be maintained, or the provisions of the donation contract must be respected, or free access to information must be ensured, as limiting information goes against professional responsibilities. The students felt that professionalism, respecting the provisions of the contract, and following the normal process were important issues, but ultimately, it was the library’s decision and the superiors could have been contacted to reach an agreement with the family.

“The librarian should have considered the requirement to maintain the integrity of the personal library and should not have excluded those books according to her own criteria” (S1, C8v2). “I would not have done the same, and I would have prioritized my professionalism” (S1, C8v2).

CASE 9 (C9v1 and C9v2)

Case 9 (C9v1 and C9v2) presents two situations, one in an archive and one in a library, which involve the values of privacy and confidentiality of user data, access to information, conservation and preservation, and professionalism.

Regarding vignette C9v1, half of the students (5) agreed that the document should not have been removed, whereas the other five students thought that it should have been removed. The arguments in favor of removing the file were based mostly on its content including personal information about the user and the fact that he did not wish to make them public. The other half

felt that it should not be removed because it was a public document that should be conserved because of its historical importance.

“The institution should remove the document if the person involved requests it or at least reach an agreement with them to keep the document anonymous” (S9, C9v1).

Regarding the second vignette (C9v2), all the students felt that the librarian could not provide the data to the professor, as the confidentiality of the loan data needed to be maintained and could not be disclosed. They cited the values of professionalism and privacy, as well as data confidentiality according to the deontological code and the Human Rights Act.

“In this case, the librarian should deny the request of the professor, as it refers to the students’ personal and confidential information, and the values of professionalism and confidentiality should be respected; in addition, the ethics code for library professionals, which specifies that the personal data and loan history of the users must be kept private, needs to be respected” (S5, C9v2).

SOLUTIONS, RECOMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The hypothesis of this study is that after a training period, students undergo a change in attitude regarding the principles that will shape their professional ethics on the basis of their own individual values. The main objectives of the study are to demonstrate that the methodology used to prove the hypothesis is adequate, as well as the use of a qualitative investigative strategy based on the use of vignettes.

The results of the study suggest that, after one semester of studies in the subject, there was a change in the attitude of students with regard to the ethical values for the future exercise of the profession. In the first place, there was a change in the ethical arguments about the cases analyzed. In this manner, for all the situations presented, there was a difference between the arguments provided by the students with regard to the first vignette and those of the second questionnaire; in the first case, most comments were of a general character, rooted in their own values, and influenced by the social context or their own experience based on the content of the courses to date. However, in the vignettes of the second questionnaire, there was evidence of indicators that the students did not show initially, such as ethical norms and professional values. This demonstrates the efficacy of applying the reasoning model of Mason, Mason, and Culnan (1995), which although it is considered a complex model (Carbo, 2004) because it requires prior knowledge of the ethical and legal norms, in this case, it helped students identify references and values inherent to the profession, and organize the language and the argumentation method from an ethical perspective. Authors such as Stahl (2011), Carbo (2004), Fallis (2007), or Lau et al. (2007) support the need to teach students these ethical reasoning models for decision making as theoretical-practical content of the training in ethics.

In the second place, with regard to the change in the attitude of the university students and the ethics training methodology, there is a need to apply ethics theories to ethics reasoning. In this case, deontological theories inherent to the ethics applied to their future profession were mostly revealed. In this manner, the students learned the values of the deontological codes of the profession and how to relate them to the different situations presented in the vignettes, which they did in response to the second questionnaire for all the cases analyzed, but not in response to the first questionnaire. It’s already mentioned the tradition in LIS to include works that rely on the practical application of the professional codes to specific cases that occur in the profession. In fact, there are numerous studies investigating the application of professional ethics to a specific aspect of technical processes, information services or products, archives, or organizational behavior (Koster, 1992, Kramer, 2011, Guimarães et al., 2008, Morrissey, 2008, Mai, 2013, Schöpfel, 2016, Hauke, Latimer & Ulrich, 2013, Gimenez-Chornet, 2017, Pérez Pulido, 2016, Suwarno, 2018, Dressler, 2018, Dressler, Rowan & Bakker, 2021).

Precisely this aspect of the adaptation of ethics to the professional environment was an interesting issue in this study, as some of the ethical arguments of the students were dependent on previous knowledge acquired in other courses, as is the case in processes of selection, acquisition, and management of collections (C1v1, C1v2, C8v2), cataloguing (C3v2), or management of documents in archives (C9v1). This suggests that combining the different strategies for learning ethics presented by ALISE (2008) or the White Book for the title in Information and Documentation Degree in Spain (ANECA, 2005) could be advantageous. On the other hand, in general and in Spain specifically, ethical content is linked to legal content in study plans, explaining why in their arguments, students referred to the law in combination with or as substitute for ethics (C4v2, C5v1, C5v2, C6v2, C7v2, C8v2).

The third issue of interest based on the results obtained is related to the teaching of ethics theories to ensure the effective development of the ethical judgement of students. A predominance of individual ethics was observed in the assessment of the vignettes of the first questionnaire, which was also observed in the second questionnaire after the deontological theories were known and the ethical reasoning model was applied. This happened in cases C2v1, C2v2, C4v1, C4v2, C5v1, C6v1, and C8v1, in which the influence of the cultural component and the social context was also observed. Some of the participants maintained their position after going through this process of teaching-learning. This suggests an ethics formation methodology that, in addition to teaching deontological ethics, considers the ethical aspects of responsibility to allow each student to be open to other perspectives and points of view and to make a decision by assuming responsibility for their actions. Given the importance of differentiating between personal and professional ethics in the work environment, the objective would be to create a system of values among the students in which the two types of ethics do not conflict with each other.

Some authors state that the application of a professional code to an ethical conflict situation is sometimes insufficient (Craft, 2013), or that the codes are not up to date or need to be permanently revised to adapt to the changing environment (Ferguson, Thornley & Gibb, 2016). Others (Martínez Martín, Buxarrais Estrada & Esteban Bara, 2002, Dias de Figueiredo, 2009, Walker, 2013, Cortina & Martínez, 2015) support the use of responsibility theories to generate a system of values in the students that will be useful, not only for their professional lives, but also as citizens. In this case, the application of Kohlberg's moral dilemma theories and his ethical reasoning model could help students distinguish, in the moral behavior, between the rules of the community and universal principles (Chang, 2011, 2018).

Similarly, it is interesting that when in doubt, the students turn to their superiors, although in some cases, they lean on colleagues (C3v2). In addition, there are conflicts of values once they are learned, in which the student's own personal ethics prevail in case of doubt (C4v2), which occurs frequently in the work environment. In the authors' opinion, in addition to the deontological theories, the responsibility theories help the student prioritize certain values over others as a function of the mission and vision of the future organization to which they belong, but also from the perspective of the consequences of their actions.

On the other hand, another interesting aspect was revealed, namely, providing alternatives to resolve a conflict (C4v2, C5v2, C7v2, C8v2). After undergoing the teaching-learning process, the students became used to searching for solutions or alternatives to a conflict as the culmination of an ethical reasoning process about a specific situation.

Finally, the use of the vignettes permits collecting rich and detailed information, and detecting expressions of the student's language in all the situations described, which guide towards an individual ethics, a change of attitude, or the existence of a conflict between individual and professional ethics. In other cases, there was a difference between the use of informal language in the vignettes from the first questionnaire and the use of one that is adapted to an ethical-type of argumentation in those of the second questionnaire. Similarly, identifying when there was a change and the possible factors involved allows us to follow the development of ethical

thinking. Traditionally, in LIS, case studies or value scales have been used as the methods for investigation and formation in ethics. The vignettes and scenarios are more commonly used in disciplines related to ours, in which a quantitative or mixed-type analysis predominates.

This highlights the importance of this study and the direction of future lines of investigation and training in ethics in LIS towards the application of a purely qualitative investigative strategy through the application of these techniques and a theoretical-practical teaching-learning methodology based on a combination of ethics theories and a model of ethical reasoning for the future exercise of the profession.

CONCLUSION

The present work demonstrated the long path taken by a university student in LIS, starting from the consideration of ethics as a matter of opinion (Woodward, 1989), and ending in the development of a new ethical critical thinking mode by attempting to modify his or her intuitive thoughts (Hare, 1999). This suggests a change in attitude caused by the impact of a teaching-learning process with an important theoretical component and based on knowledge gained about ethical theories and ethical reasoning models. Traditionally, in LIS, training mostly relied on practical teaching methods applied to specific professional situations and based on deontological codes. This study demonstrates that, although this method is useful for the ethics training of future professionals, in addition to the application of deontological ethics to the teaching-learning process, it is important to include the ethics of responsibility, as it contributes to creating a balanced combination of values in the student that reconciles his or her individual and professional ethics. A comparison of this study with a previous version (Pérez Pulido & González-Teruel, in press) indicates that time is a determining factor in the theoretical training of ethics, as in the previous study, the short duration of training sessions prevented a deeper understanding of this aspect, which affected the ethical argumentation of the students. Nevertheless, a change in attitude was observed regarding learning about normative references. Similarly, the prevalence of individual ethical values in these students suggested the importance of training from the perspective of ethics of responsibility, as commented before.

The purely qualitative strategy of this study, as well as that of the previous study, which were both based on the vignettes and the analysis of content as a methodology, was a determining factor for identifying the reasoning that helped the students reach an ethical decision and provide arguments before and after the training period. In addition, it helped determine whether the decision was made according to the individual ethical values or if it was influenced by knowledge about normative ethics, as well as to understand the degree of acceptance and deeper knowledge of a theoretical-practical model of ethics that is considered adequate to help the LIS student become a good professional and a good citizen in the future as something acquired and not imposed on.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Content analysis: The process of categorizing textual data into similar entities in order to identify particular patterns.

Deontology: duty-based ethical theory. Ethics applied to the profession.

Ethical Reasoning Model: process that guides ethical decisions according to an ethical theory.

Ethical theory: systematized model that studies morality according to moral principles, argumentation and the rules that govern these arguments.

Ethical value: in this context, the application of ethical principles to concrete actions of the profession.

Information Ethics: ethics applied to information management.

Responsibility Theory: ethical theory based on the responsibility to accept the consequences of actions.

Vignettes: brief descriptions of situations presented to subjects, who are asked to explain how they would react in those circumstances.

APPENDIX

C1v1A public library receives a donation that includes the book *Mein Kampf* written by Adolph Hitler in 1930. The librarian decides not to incorporate it into the collection because of its ideological connotations.

C1v2 A councilman of the municipality of Pamplona who belongs to a specific party refuses to sign the invoices for three acquisitions of the municipal library network. The acquired materials are as follows: a report on torture in Euskadi, a videotape of clowns speaking in the Basque language, and a movie about love between two adolescent girls that received a prize. The librarians from three libraries do not agree with the decision, and thus, bring it up to the councilman, claiming that it is up to them to decide regarding acquisition policies, and that, in addition, these are materials that are requested by the users.

C2v1An Instagram user uploads a photograph of herself taken by a well-known photographer in which she is naked. Instagram eliminates the image because it goes against its publication content policy. Although the user does not mind appearing on the internet in this manner, Instagram insists on eliminating the image.

C2v2A university library has a specific policy regarding the use of social networks in the institution. A worker posts an entry in the library's Facebook page commenting on the way the library students are dressed. Given the medium in which it was published, the post reaches all the followers of the account.

C3v1A librarian from the cataloguing service is organizing her upcoming wedding. For this reason, she performed certain tasks at work (restaurant, dressmaker). This caused an increase in the phone bill, which led to the placement of restrictions. This caused all librarians to lose outside phone access. One colleague who felt that this measure was unfair talked to the director of the service and told her that his colleague had abused the service by using the phone for personal matters.

C3v2A librarian from the cataloguing service incorporates catalog records from the Rebiun catalog into the catalog of her library. Rebiun uses the list of subjects of the Library of Congress, which is similar to the list of subject headings of the Ministry of Culture, which is used in her catalog. Therefore, to make the files more rapidly accessible to the users, she decides to incorporate them directly by maintaining the subjects according to list of the Library of Congress.

C4v1The acquisitions department of a university library is negotiating the electronic acquisition of a series of datasets. After hearing the offers of different providers under similar conditions, they chose one that was recommended by a family member of the director, since because of the friendship, they promise simultaneous access to a greater number of users than those stipulated in the contract without an additional cost.

C4v2A librarian found a program on the internet that facilitates cataloguing ancient collection of the library. Because the library does not authorize its purchase, he manages to download a copy, thereby optimizing the time spent on cataloguing these monographs, which allows him to help other librarians with different tasks such as helping users.

C5v1The documentalist of the center for documentation of a food safety laboratory gained access through his work to reports about the contamination of beef with spongiform encephalopathy. Therefore, he knows that meat that is not adequate for consumption is reaching the Spanish market. He avoids buying meat, but because of the non-disclosure agreement that he signed with the company, he does not take other measures such as reporting the case to the appropriate authority or providing the information to the media.

C5v2The documentalist of a company works in standardizing a database of clients. A colleague from the University has just started a company that provides documentation services, but is not doing well, as he only has two or three clients. The documentalist wants to help his colleague, and thus, provides him with five or six addresses of potential clients collected from the database that he is standardizing.

C6v1The archivist, an expert in appraisal of documents, goes to an auction in which several lots are being sold, including those comprising documents that he himself appraised at a low price. To take advantage of this opportunity, he bids on some of these lots for his personal collection and possibly also for his institution.

C6v2An archivist incidentally finds a letter that Isabel the Catholic sent to her husband telling him about her second pregnancy. The archivist is aware of the exceptional value of this document. He therefore removes it from the archive with the intention of investigating it and publishing the results of his research.

C7v1A A user of the university library goes to the service that provides primary copies of documents to request articles that she needs for her research. They tell her that they will send the documents by email as pdf files. She insists that she wants them in printed form. The professional who is helping her reminds her of the institutional policy regarding the protection of the environment through a reduction in the use of paper, and informs her that it is not possible to print the documents. She threatens to report the case to the Dean of the Faculty.

C7v2A A municipality issues rules regarding the use of the burka in public spaces because it is essential that all persons can be identified, in addition to the fact that the garment is demeaning to women. However, this prevents women library users who wear this garment from accessing the library, and thus the information that could be useful to their daily life. The director ignores the municipality rules and does not prevent the entry of women, even if they wear a burka.

C8v1A A librarian managed to establish an agreement with a company that produces chocolates, which as a marketing strategy, provided chocolate bars for free distribution among the users of the library. The company has recently had legal problems related to the spillage of untreated materials into the river Júcar.

C8v2 The librarian in charge of negotiating the donation of the Carmen Alborch collection to the University of Valencia is cataloguing it and incorporating it into the database of the University. The librarian determines that a series of books are obsolete and decides to exclude them. However, the donation contract signed by the University of Valencia and the family includes a clause that specifies that the integrity of the personal collection of this politician must be maintained.

C9v1A A person who was incarcerated during the Franco dictatorship because of homosexuality requests that his file be removed from the archive in which it is conserved, which can currently be accessed by the public. However, the archivist who receives the requests feels that the file should not be removed because it is an important document in the history of Spain.

C9v2A A professor asks the librarian to provide a list of the students who loaned a book from the library that was included in the bibliography of his subject and was written by him, to determine which students had read it before the exam.