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Factors Influencing Commitment to Professional Ethics among Librarians: Effective Drivers and Persistent Barriers

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العوامل المؤثرة في الالتزام بالأخلاقيات المهنية بين أمناء

المكتبات: الدوافع الفعالة والعوائق المستمرة

دلال البديوي

شهنار خادمي زادة

ملخص

هدف الدراسة: تبحث هذه الدراسة في العوامل والعقبات التي تؤثر في الالتزام بأخلاقيات المهنة بين أمناء مكتبات العلوم الصحية في إيران. **المنهجية:** أُجريت الدراسة كبحث تطبيقي ونوعي في أعقاب ظواهر موستكاس، واستهدفت جميع أمناء مكتبات العلوم الصحية الإيرانية، بمشاركة 14 من أمناء المكتبات، مسترشدة بمبدأ تشبع البيانات النظرية. تم استخدام المقابلات شبه المنظمة كطريقة أولية لجمع البيانات. ومن خلال تحليل إجابات المقابلات، تم استخلاص 250 رمزاً أساسياً. **النتائج:** حددت النتائج العديد من العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر بشكل إيجابي في الالتزام بأخلاقيات المهنة بين أمناء مكتبات العلوم الصحية الإيرانية. وتشمل هذه العوامل الأبعاد الفردية، والتنظيمية والعملية، والاجتماعية. وفي المقابل، كشفت الدراسة أيضاً وجود عدة عوائق مهمة، بما في ذلك العوائق الإدارية، والشخصية، والثقافية، والاجتماعية، التي تحول دون الالتزام بأخلاقيات المهنة داخل هذه المجموعة المهنية. **الخلاصة:** يقدم هذا البحث رؤى قيمة حول الديناميات متعددة الأوجه التي تشكل السلوك الأخلاقي بين أمناء مكتبات العلوم الصحية الإيرانيين، ويركز الضوء على العوامل والعوائق التي تسهل سعيهم إلى تحقيق التميز الأخلاقي.

المصطلحات الأساسية: أخلاقيات المهنة، مبادئ أخلاقيات المهنة، أمناء مكتبات العلوم الصحية الإيرانية، الالتزام بأخلاقيات المهنة.

Factors Influencing Commitment to Professional Ethics among Librarians: Effective Drivers and Persistent Barriers

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Abstract

Objective: This study investigates the influential factors and hurdles impacting the adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians in Iran. **Methodology:** this study was conducted as an applied and qualitative research following Moustakas phenomenology, and it targeted the entire population of Iranian health sciences librarians, with 14 librarians participating, guided by theoretical data saturation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method. Through the analysis of interview responses, 250 basic codes were derived. **Results:** the study identified several key factors that positively affect the commitment to professional ethics among Iranian health sciences librarians. These factors encompass individual, organizational, processual, and social dimensions. In contrast, the study also reveals several significant barriers, including administrative, personal, cultural, and social obstacles, that inhibit commitment to professional ethics within this professional group. **Conclusion:** This research provides valuable insights into the multifaceted dynamics that shape ethical conduct among Iranian health sciences librarians, shedding light on facilitative factors and impediments in their pursuit of ethical excellence.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Principles of Professional Ethics, Iranian Health Sciences Librarians, Commitment to Professional Ethics.

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Introduction

The global economic landscape is marked by considerable uncertainty, perpetually driven by ongoing technological advancements and intense competitive forces. In response to this challenging economic context, numerous organizations have found themselves compelled to take substantive measures and actively engage in innovation as a means of ensuring their survival. Regrettably, the prevailing economic conditions have resulted in the insolvency of numerous promising industrial and commercial enterprises. Consequently, contemporary organizations must find ways to stand out and maintain their viability in an increasingly volatile market.

To avert such volatility and maintain their relevance, organizations are instituting decisive actions. Among the pivotal measures undertaken, the development, adaptation, meticulous oversight, and application of ethical principles emerge as central tenets. Morality, in this context, pertains to the behavioral norms embraced by individuals and how they perceive and endorse their conduct. This collective behavior encompasses various entities, whether they are communities, institutional corporations, or professional associations. Ethics, on the other hand, encapsulates a set of moral principles and beliefs concerning notions of good and evil.

These ethical guidelines, consequently, dictate the behavioral conduct of an individual within a particular group and inform their interactions with others, both within and outside the confines of the group. Ethical precepts serve as the bedrock for decision-making across diverse scenarios. As posited by Mabawonku (2010), professional ethics, in a broader sense, encompass the principles and regulations that offer guidance for the behavior of members, ensuring the maintenance of acceptable standards within their professional domain. A code of ethics, as described by Fallis (2005), constitutes a compendium of directives about ethical conduct. It is imperative to note that each industry fosters its unique set of ethical values, which not only delineate the appropriate conduct of its participants to safeguard the industry's reputation but also contribute to the broader societal welfare.

For instance, consider the medical profession, where practitioners routinely engage with individuals across various age groups, gender identities, and socioeconomic strata. Within this context, they shoulder the

profound responsibility of preserving human lives. This entails the judicious application of their extensive training and experience to diagnose ailments, recommend treatment strategies, and dispense medications, all with the overarching objective of advancing patient recovery and well-being.

The most crucial variable in any organization's position is ethics. Sarmadi & Shalbaf (2007) defined morality as identifying the right from the wrong and then doing the right and leaving the wrong. Sandra (1991) defined ethics as a set of principles and standards for the behavior of individuals. Shachaf (2005) considered morality as knowledge formed from human voluntary actions based on a rational course. In general, the main goal of ethics is to create behavioral principles that help people choose the correct behavior and action among different behaviors (Mont, 1991).

Every profession has its own rules for behavior and responsibilities from its legislation. In addition, professional ethics is described as having a broad understanding of society, being a model citizen, and attempting to address the moral dilemmas that arise in various vocations. According to the Qom Library Association, professional ethics can also be described as an organization's ethical obligations. This definition covers all aspects of professional ethics in an organization and is founded on the idea that the environment is correct, and the organization has responsibility. Carr gave a widely accepted concept of professional ethics as human rights (Carr, 1999).

The approach of today's world is a return to rationality and ethics. After various periods, humanity is trying to use a rational and moral approach to meet its material and spiritual needs. For this reason, ethics can be considered the center of current and future developments. This approach mainly affects the disciplines and professions that deal with providing services to human beings and protecting their privacy (Borhani et al., 2008). The profession of librarianship and information sciences, especially in the medical library and information sciences, is one of these professions. Ethics in this field is an interdisciplinary and shared knowledge with various fields such as information, philosophy, theology, and law, which studies the value and ethical aspects of professional knowledge of medical library and information sciences. Ethics has a special place in this field as a supplement.

For the first time, the codification of professional ethics for the librarianship and information sciences profession was proposed—similar

to those of physicians, lawyers, clergy, and university professors—by Marie Polmer, director of the Pratt Institute Library in the United States, in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, despite the extensive discussions occurring in the press and among professionals, no formal rules of professional ethics were enacted until 1938. It was only in 1939 that the American Library Association issued the first ethical code in the Library Bill of Rights, followed by the 1953 Freedom to Read Statement, both emphasizing intellectual freedom (Mousavizadeh, 2005; Orick, 2000). In Britain, librarians' attention to professional ethics led to the publishing of the British Librarians' Association statement about censorship in 1963. Subsequently, the British Library Association formulated the principles of professional ethics in 1983, which was revised in 2002. The ethical principles for librarians were later developed in other countries, such as Singapore, France, South Africa, Scandinavia, and Poland (Neshat, 2007).

Today in Iran, significant attention is devoted to professional ethics, marking a new phase of development in the field of librarianship. Arguably, the most important milestone in this area was the publication of the Professional Ethics of Librarians and Informationists by the Qom Library Association in 2007.

Professional ethics should be promoted by libraries, primarily academic and medical libraries, and medical librarians to keep certain matters confidential and job sensitivity in obtaining information (for the medical community). Adherence to professional ethical principles in these libraries ensures clients' access to accurate and reliable information, compliance with copyright, and the facilitation of information access. It also encourages libraries and their staff to safeguard user privacy and to uphold values such as discretion, fairness, justice, respect, and honesty in their interactions with clients.

Various studies have been conducted in this area, such as the one conducted by Malek Ahmadi and Parsa (2012), who developed ways for teaching library and information sciences ethics in medical universities. This study aimed to use the SWOT model to identify strengths and weaknesses (internal factors) and opportunities and threats (external variables). The results revealed that the strongest factor among the identified strengths was the availability of extensive Islamic and historical resources on information ethics. Conversely, the most heavily weighted weakness

was the insufficient integration of ethics education in librarianship and information science programs.

In their study, Ashrafi Rizzi et al. (2020) designed a model for ethics in medical librarianship based on the rules of ethics for librarians of the American Library Association, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and the Medical Library Association. In their Delphi-based research, five practical and significant components of professional ethics for medical librarians were found, including Education Excellence, Performance Excellence, Communication Excellence, Research Excellence, and Professional Status Excellence.

In an exploratory study, Lacroix (2021) identified the reasons why Canadian librarians were satisfied with their profession. The study found that there needs to be more information about Canadian librarians in the Ethics Research Association. Librarians, especially health sciences librarians, have made substantial progress in research data management, research support, and scholarly communication, positioning them as essential contributors in these domains.

In his study, Eguavoen (2018) examined the impact of ethics in the workplace on the librarians' professional ethics in a library at the Kenneth Dike. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the work environment on the librarians' professional ethics. In this study, Eguavoen identified the levels of administrative effectiveness and professional ethics observed by librarians. This descriptive research was correlational in terms of research method. By analyzing 94 complete questionnaires, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between effectiveness in the workplace and professional ethics. Hence, it was recommended to create ethical rules and distribute them among all personnel to strengthen professional ethics.

Adejumo & Oye (2015) critically examined the ethical rules of the Library Registration Council in Nigeria. Their research made a comparison between the rules of the Librarians' Registration Council for the Ethics Code and the standard rules of ethics for librarians on the IFLA site, and they concluded that these two were in line and covered each other's ethical principles.

In a study, Brad, Devin, and Corcoran (2014) examined the knowledge, use, consultation, importance, challenges, and problems of the Medical

Library Association Ethics Code from the perspective of medical librarians. About 500 members responded to the survey form, more than 30 percent of whom did not recall when they last saw or read the statute. Most respondents agreed that: 1) all instructions are equally important, 2) none are complex or challenging, and 3) each code of ethics covers an ethical challenge in their professional work. According to the research and the importance of ethics in the librarianship profession, especially in health sciences librarians, the current research intends to examine the knowledge and adherence of Iranian medical librarians with a descriptive-exploratory study and extract external and internal factors affecting professional ethics. The results of this study can be helpful to improve the quality of services to the medical community in various aspects of the library and information sciences profession.

Research purpose

The purposes of this study are threefold: to identify the professional ethical principles valued by Iranian health sciences librarians; to investigate the factors that promote or influence their ethical commitment; and to analyze the barriers that impede their adherence to professional ethics.

Methods

Philosophical Framework and Approach

In this research, a philosophical framework rooted in phenomenology has been employed. The phenomenological approach serves as the foundational lens for investigating and understanding the lived experiences of Iranian health sciences librarians about professional ethics. Drawing from the teachings of Husserl, phenomenology involves the description, exploration, and analysis of phenomena. It not only aims to unveil the truth of mental phenomena but also strives to illuminate the intricate connections between these phenomena, the sensory organism, the body, and the environmental factors. Essentially, phenomenology acts as a means to explain both the mind itself and the content and subject of the mind, evaluating its existence and correspondence with the external world.

Purpose of Phenomenological Research

The overarching purpose of phenomenological research is to provide a clear and comprehensive description of the phenomena individuals perceive in a specific context. Phenomenology concerns two fundamental

inquiries: what has been experienced, and how has it been experienced? By adopting this approach, researchers endeavor to delve into the essence and nature of these experiences, striving to uncover the intricacies of human perception and interpretation.

Selection of Research Strategy

In this study, the phenomenological approach is translated into a systematic research strategy following Moustakas' model. The decision to embrace Moustakas' approach was made due to its reliability and the existence of a step-by-step procedure, making it well-suited for this investigation. The essential steps in Moustakas' phenomenological approach include discovering and defining the phenomenon under examination, gathering data from individuals with significant experience, distilling this information into essential statements or quotations, and synthesizing them into overarching themes. In this research, an interview protocol was initially designed for conducting interviews with medical librarians who are actively engaged in information resource access and are committed to upholding confidentiality principles. These steps ensure a systematic and rigorous exploration of the chosen phenomenon.

Sampling Method

The snowball sampling method was employed for participant selection. Given the need for insights from crucial information resources in the field, knowledgeable librarians were initially interviewed. Subsequently, these interviewees were asked for recommendations, thus creating a sample that expanded iteratively. This snowball sampling continued until the point of theoretical saturation, a critical indicator in qualitative studies, was reached. In total, 14 participants contributed to this research. The following table outlines the demographic characteristics of the study sample.

Reliability in qualitative research is achieved through Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability (Okeke & Wyk, 2015). In this research, the reliability of the results has been obtained through reviewing the data and recording the research details, accurate guidance of the interview process, and participation of members in coding the data. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed as content analysis by MAXQDA20 software and by inductive coding method.

Results

Based on the research findings, 250 basic codes have been identified from the interviews, 92 of which are related to the principles of professional ethics considered by Iranian health sciences librarians. They are categorized into six subcodes: self-responsibility; ethical responsibilities to colleagues and staff; to creators of scientific works; to library users; to the profession; and to society. Among the identified codes, 104 basic codes are related to the influential factors in adhering to professional ethics among Iranian health sciences librarians. These codes are classified into three subcodes (individual, organizational, processual, and social factors). Finally, regarding the practical barriers to commitment to professional ethics, 55 basic codes have been identified among Iranian health sciences librarians, classified as administrative, personal, cultural, and social barriers.

Quantitation Analysis

Factors influencing adherence to professional ethics among Health sciences librarians

Table 1

Ethical responsibility to colleagues and other library staff

Basic Code	Source
Being responsible	P2
Justice	P2
Making decisions in difficult situations	P10
Adherence to principles	P10
Good will	P2
Sincerity	P2
Inner insight	P6
Observe fairness in behavior	P6
Observe fairness in judging	P6
good behavior of librarians	P8
Study and keep up to date information	P9
Helping inexperienced members	P5

Cont. Table 1*Ethical responsibility to colleagues and other library staff*

Basic Code	Source
Pay attention to the situation of colleagues	P7
Ethical responsibility to colleagues and other library staff	P14
Treated with respect by colleagues and others	P2
Respect for the colleague's personality	P3
Respect colleagues and help them	P9
Respect for the colleague's personality	P14
Recognition of group activities	P5
Respect for freedom of thought	P6
Receive respectful treatment and behavior from colleagues	P13
Receive respectful treatment and behavior from colleagues	P5
Receive respectful treatment and behavior from colleagues	P6
A sense of empathy	P3
Having a sense of empathy and cooperation	P14
Technical knowledge sharing	P3
Specialized knowledge sharing	P14
Compliance with intellectual property rights	P2
Protecting the property rights of the owners of the works	P2
Respect the rights of producers and owners of information	P6
Protection of material and intellectual rights	P14
Intellectual property of creators	P14

Table 2

Ethical responsibility to library users

Basic Code	Source
Ethical responsibility to library users	P14
Customer appreciation	P2
Provide, organize, and disseminate health information	P2
Provide the information needed by the health team	P2
Meeting educational and research information needs	P3
Clients should know their rights in dealing with librarians	P10
Respect clients	P12
Honoring the clients	P6
Respect clients and users	P12
Provide customer satisfaction	P3
Meeting the needs of clients	P4
Pay attention to the needs of users	P12
Identify members' interest in how information is disseminated	P9
Efforts to identify users' information needs	P14
Pay attention to user comments	P14
Individuals' rights in indoor and outdoor environments	P10
Behavior appropriate to the type, gender, age, social status and to suit each user	P8
Adequate respect and proper treatment of users	P14
Creating a suitable physical environment	P14
Protect their privacy	P14
Availability of information and resources needed for them	P14
Provide quality information and resources to library users	P14
Ethical responsibility towards the profession	P14
Conscientiousness and discipline	P2
Defend the balance between the information interests of users	P2

Table 3*Ethical responsibility towards the profession*

Basic Code	Source
Information counseling	P2
Dissemination and use of generated information	P2
Increase knowledge and skills	P13
Encourage the professional development of colleagues	P13
Strengthening professional knowledge	P13
Attracting potential professional members	P13
Correctness and respect in duties	P5
Provide access to information resources	P1
Utilization of specialized abilities	P1
Avoid interfering with personal opinions in the implementation of the goals of the library organization	P1
Distinguish between personal beliefs and professional duties	P1

Table 4*Ethical responsibility of the medical librarian to the community*

Basic Code	Source
Ethical responsibility of the medical librarian to the community	P14
Serving the people	P2
Serve the people	P2
Community health status	P2
Promote community health literacy	P2
Striving for the excellence of the librarianship profession	P14
Social honor	P3
Creativity and respect for your country	P3
Moral excellence of society	P13
Health	P13

Cont. Table 4
Ethical responsibility of the medical librarian to the community

Basic Code	Source
Preservation of public property	P13
Gaining public trust and respect for the profession	P1
Adherence to human principles	P8
Exercising social responsibility	P9
Update your information	P12
Participate in introductory and advanced courses	P12
Update your specialized knowledge	P14
Efforts to introduce the profession and express its importance	P14
Promote community health literacy	P14
Education	P14
Collaboration with other community institutions and organizations	P4
Pay attention to needs	P1
Respect for all people regardless of social status, religion, nationality, gender, age	P7
High value for the librarianship profession	P7
Preservation of public cultural heritage	P6
Paying attention to the culture of society and respecting the beliefs of the people	P8
Respect for the individual's privacy	P8
Adherence to the professional value system	P8
Observance of individual and social ethics	P8
Feeling responsible for people	P8
Gain trust and respect	P10
Try to accept people with open arms	P8
Observance of social justice	P8

Factors influencing adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians

Table 5

Organizational, processual, and individual factors

Basic Code	Source
Instructions of the Public Libraries of the country	P13
Optimal use of facilities	P13
Enforcement	P13
Professional standards	P4
Create a calm and pleasant environment without stress and anxiety	P4
Define the duties of librarians	P4
Library Objectives and Policies	P4
Duties	P12
Information Resources	P12
Use of the highest rules and standards in the execution of specialized and professional work	P7
Obey and follow the internal regulations of the association	P7
Related rules to professional behavior	P7
Regulatory mechanisms (external control)	P6
Strengthening legal solutions and regulations	P6
Respect for intellectual property rights	P6
Existence of protective laws	P5
Legal requirements	P6
Maintain client trust	P6
Facilitating the process of accessing correct information	P6
A challenge for immoral people	P8
Not misuse people's confidential information	P8
Fast and convenient transfer of information to the user community	P8
Lack of executive guarantee	P11
Accurate and correct executive guarantee	P14
Procedural unity among the medical library community	P14

Cont. Table 5

Organizational, processual, and individual factors

Basic Code	Source
Membership of medical librarians in the association and acceptance of the statute	P14
Develop a statute of professional ethics on the existing facts	P14
Preparation and regulation of the relevant statute factors	P14
Understand the working conditions of members	P9
Maintain work motivation	P9
Honesty towards duty and responsibility to clients	P6
Professional tasks	P9
Individual factors	
Basic Code	Source
Attract the audience and retain it as a user	P11
Perform tasks with patience and compassion	P11
Responsiveness	P11
Library knowledge, along with librarian ethics and character	P11
Act according to professional principles	P10
Specialized abilities	P10
Good will	P13
Affability	P3
Affability	P13
Boost confidence	P5
Ability to use correctly	P4
Communication with others	P5
Conversation	P5
Effective communication	P5
I respect my behavior to my clients	P5
Humility	P5
Respect	P5

Cont. Table 5*Organizational, processual, and individual factors*

Basic Code	Source
Good behavior with clients	P5
Verbal skills	P4
Proper behavior	P12
Professional communication skills	P12
Librarians' communication skills	P12
Improve your knowledge, especially specialized knowledge of librarianship and information sciences	P1
Refrain from waiting for any unusual rewards for providing services to users	P1
Equity	P13
Observance of fairness and justice	P1
Honesty and kindness	P4
Friendly communication	P4
Good behavior	P1
Kindness	P9
Kindness and generosity	P11
Love to work	P7
Avoid using abusive behaviors	P6
Avoid individual decision-making	P14
Work conscience	P5
Commitment to work	P5
Conscience	P6
Work conscience	P8
The principle of fiduciary duty	P8
Confidentiality	P8
Prevent discouragement	P9
Their commitment	P10
Commitment	P5

Cont. Table 5

Organizational, processual, and individual factors

Basic Code	Source
Commitment to work	P5
Committed to doing things	P4
Internal commitment	P6
Heart commitment	P6
Commitment to work	P9
Individual interest and commitment to this profession	P11
Avoid prejudice	P9
Biased and morally oriented	P11
Satisfaction	P11
Accompanying and empathizing with the client	P11
Creating a calm and safe atmosphere for the user	P11
Provide a user-friendly atmosphere	P11
Demonstrate maximum readiness to respond	P11
Patience	P11

Practical barriers to adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians.

Table 6

Practical barriers to adherence to professional ethics (Administrative barriers, Individual barriers, Cultural and social barriers) among health sciences librarians

Optional coding	Basic Code	Source
Administrative barriers	Existence of non-specialists in the position of management	P5
	The low importance of the administrative structure of medical sciences to the entire librarianship profession	P11
	Defective office structure	P11
	Defective structure	P11
	Administrative problems and issues	P14
	Lack of executive support	P2

Cont. Table 6

Practical barriers to adherence to professional ethics (Administrative barriers, Individual barriers, Cultural and social barriers) among health sciences librarians

Optional coding	Basic Code	Source
	Dissatisfaction	P3
	Insufficient salary	P13
	Discrimination	P13
	Job motivation	P3
	Hard work	P13
	Managers lack the spirit of criticism	P5
	Weak management	P13
	Existence of non-specialists in the position of management	P5
	Information sciences	P4
	Cumbersome administrative rules and regulations	P12
	Lack of unity of procedure among the library community	P1
	Lack of operational view	P12
	Lack of executive guarantee	P1
	Lack of executive guarantee	P2
	Lack of responsibility in the form of laws	P7
	Lack of familiarity with the mission of libraries	P9
	Unavailability of a valid and verified reference	P11
	Defective office system	P6
	Systemic problems	P11
	Lack of organization mechanisms for monitoring	P2
	Little monitoring	P7
	Lack of supervision for proper execution of works	P11
	Lack of justice	P3
	Failure to uphold administrative justice	P5
	Lack of fair payment	P11
	Lack of justice at the library level	P14

Cont. Table 6

Practical barriers to adherence to professional ethics (Administrative barriers, Individual barriers, Cultural and social barriers) among health sciences librarians

Optional coding	Basic Code	Source
Individual Barriers	The inability of existing laws to bind librarians to ethical principles	P7
	Description of the librarian's duties in the book of administrative organization	P11
	Lack of a written constitution of ethics	P4
	A statute that can be implemented in the library has received less attention.	P7
	Lack of a formal statute for professional ethics	P11
	Lack of work conscience on the librarians	P14
	The responsibility of the individual towards his/her work and occupation	P5
	Lack of scientific and practical knowledge of librarians	P5
	Lack of work conscience	P5
	Dealing with anger, anxiety, and stress in the workplace	P5
Cultural and social barriers	The economic situation of librarians	P4
	Lack of motivation in individuals	P12
	Decision making	P1
	Dissatisfaction	P11
	Being upright is everything	P11
	Job credit	P14
	Cumbersome mechanisms in the library	P2
	Society culture	P5
	Lack of self-confidence of the library community about its role	P4
	Dominant culture and values of the organization	P5
	Society culture	P12
	Simplify librarians' work	P9

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the factors and barriers affecting the commitment to professional ethics among health sciences librarians. Based on the research findings, six sub-codes have been recognized, namely self-responsibility, moral responsibilities toward colleagues and other library staff; responsibilities toward authors of scientific works; responsibilities toward library users; responsibilities toward the profession; and medical librarians' responsibilities toward community.

In Table 1, the focus is on interpersonal relationships and professional conduct, emphasizing values such as responsibility, justice, decision-making, adherence to principles, goodwill, and sincerity. It highlights the significance of maintaining a fair and respectful environment among colleagues, staying up to date with information, sharing knowledge, and respecting intellectual property rights. Table 2 highlights the ethical responsibilities toward library users, emphasizing the provision of health and educational information, respect for clients, identification of user needs, and the creation of a supportive and private environment. Ethical responsibility to the profession is detailed in Table 3, calling for information dissemination, professional development, and the separation of personal beliefs from professional duties. Finally, Table 4 underscores the ethical commitment of medical librarians to the broader community that includes serving people, promoting health literacy, collaborating with community institutions, respecting diversity, and upholding societal values. Collectively, these tables emphasize the multifaceted ethical obligations that library staff must uphold, emphasizing professionalism, knowledge sharing, respect, and ethical behavior in their roles.

The adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians is influenced by many factors, as outlined in Table 5. Organizational and processual factors (Table 5) underscore the importance of a well-defined and regulated library environment. This includes the impact of national library instructions, the optimal utilization of library facilities, and enforcing professional standards. Ethical considerations are also closely tied to library objectives and policies, emphasizing the significance of clearly defined roles for librarians. Additionally, legal and regulatory frameworks play a critical role, with librarians expected to respect intellectual property rights, comply with internal regulations, and provide accurate client guarantees. Ethical

behavior is further shaped by a sense of professionalism, organizational unity, and membership in library associations, which collectively influence the way librarians conduct their duties. Understanding working conditions and maintaining motivation are additional aspects that influence ethical adherence at the organizational level.

On the individual front (Table 5), health sciences librarians' adherence to professional ethics is significantly influenced by their personal qualities and skills. This includes their ability to engage and retain users through patience, compassion, and responsiveness. Librarians are expected to possess a solid knowledge base and character underpinned by specialized abilities that enable them to act according to professional principles. Practical interpersonal skills, such as communication, respect, humility, and affability are vital in cultivating a respectful and ethical work environment. Commitment, a strong conscience, and adherence to the principle of fiduciary duty guide ethical decision-making. Kindness, generosity, and avoiding prejudice and bias are crucial in client interactions. Additionally, the client-centered approach, which encompasses satisfaction, empathy, and a commitment to creating a safe and accommodating atmosphere, plays a pivotal role in shaping ethical conduct among individual librarians.

Adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians can be hindered by a multitude of barriers, as elucidated in Table 6. Administrative barriers (Table 6) reveal a range of challenges stemming from the administrative realm, including the presence of non-specialists in managerial positions, structural deficiencies, inadequate support, and complex rules and regulations. These issues can significantly impact the librarians' ability to make ethical decisions and carry out their roles effectively. Moreover, the absence of adequate monitoring, justice, and formal statutes for professional ethics further compounds these challenges, creating administrative obstacles to ethical adherence.

Individual barriers (Table 6) reflect personal challenges faced by health sciences librarians. These challenges may encompass a lack of work conscience, knowledge gaps, and emotional hurdles such as stress and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, economic constraints and motivational issues can deter librarians from upholding professional ethics in their daily work.

Cultural and social barriers (Table 6) highlight external factors influencing librarians' ethical conduct. Cultural factors include job credit, societal culture, and the prevailing values of the organization, which

may only sometimes align with ethical principles. Additionally, a lack of self-confidence within the library community and limited awareness of the librarian's role in other disciplines can be cultural impediments. Overcoming these barriers necessitates a shift towards a culture that simplifies librarians' work, fosters confidence, and aligns organizational values with ethical principles. Ultimately, addressing these diverse barriers is essential for promoting ethical conduct among health sciences librarians and ensuring the highest standards of professionalism in their field.

Self-responsibility is one of the ethical principles of health sciences librarians, which is known by components such as responsibility, justice, decision-making under challenging situations, adherence to principles, good faith, sincerity, and inner insight. Self-responsibility is evidence that a person considers himself responsible for events and seeks to find the cause of success and failure in his work. Besides this factor, responsibility towards colleagues and other employees has been identified by components such as helping inexperienced members, paying attention to the status of colleagues, moral responsibility towards colleagues and other library staff, treating their colleagues and other staff members with respect, respect to colleagues' personality and helping them. A librarian works in a group environment, and organizational success depends on a guarantor of group activity.

Liability to work creators is another ethical principle of health, known by characteristics such as moral responsibility towards creators of scientific works, compliance with intellectual property rights, and protection of the property rights of owners. In addition, ethical responsibility towards library users is recognized by issues such as honoring the client, providing, organizing, and disseminating health information, providing the information needed by health teams, meeting educational and research information needs, respecting clients, and honoring clients. Paying attention to the users' needs is an essential principle in the librarians' professional ethics, and users will gain internal satisfaction with the library and its services when their needs are met. Therefore, considering their actual needs is an essential and inevitable necessity.

Professional responsibility is another element of health sciences librarians' ethical principles, identified by components such as dissemination and use of information produced, increasing knowledge and skills, encouraging

professional advancement of colleagues, strengthening professional knowledge, attracting potential professional members, carrying out duties with honesty and respect. The proper performance of this responsibility promises better service to the community. Responsibility towards the community is characterized by components such as serving people, helping to improve community health, promoting community health literacy, striving for the excellence of the librarianship profession, and social dignity. Librarians' adherence to professional ethics enables libraries to achieve their objectives, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of society.

Factors influencing adherence to professional ethics among health sciences librarians can be categorized as individual, organizational, processual, and social. These include optimal use of resources, compliance with laws and professional standards, a calm and supportive work environment, clearly defined duties, library goals and policies, job descriptions, access to information resources, performing tasks with patience and compassion, accountability, professional skills, honesty, integrity, and fostering self-confidence.

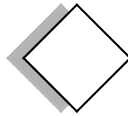
Influential factors can help preserve and ensure professional ethics in libraries. The results of this part of the research align to a certain extent with the results of Lacroix (2021). However, there are some barriers that were identified in this study as practical barriers to the health sciences librarians' commitment to professional ethics, such as administrative, personal, cultural, and social barriers. In this regard, libraries can pave the way for the realization of professional ethics in the organization by removing and diluting these barriers. Given these results, libraries can either facilitate regulation or create statutes consistent with the organization's reality and missions, leading librarians to adhere to professional ethics. Since professional ethics cannot be implemented grammatically, noticing the influential factors and removing obstacles is a suitable solution to implement professional ethics in the libraries of Iranian medical universities.

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