NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

AN EVALUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF REFERENCE
LIBRARIANS AT CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, ZIMBABWE

BY

ALICE MATURI
(N0125275H)

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

IN

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Academic Supervisor   **MRS E. MAISIRI**

BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE

YEAR: 2015

i

ABSTRACT

Students at the Chinhoyi Univeristy of Technology were shunning the reference services, both traditional and virtual, at the University's Library and the purported reason was that the reference librarians' behaviour was discouraging the students from using the services. To substantiate this claim, a research study was conducted. The goal of the research was to establish the extent to which the reference librarians, both for in-person and remote services, adhered to the 2004 Reference and User Services Association Guidelines for Behaviour Performance for Reference and Information Providers. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, employed a case study design and took on a users' perspective in evaluating the librarians' behaviour. The population included staff and students and the sample consisted of 70 staff and 275 students. Questionnaires and 50 online reference chat transcripts were used to gather data. The findings were that the Virtual Reference Service reference librarians had a high adherence to approachability and least adherence to searching and follow-up. While the in person reference librarians had high adherence to searching and part of approachability, they had least adherence to listening/inquiring and follow-up. It was concluded that the study found mixed responses, generally there was a low adherence to the guidelines. The study recommended that librarians be educated not only about the recommended professional guidelines, but also on the salience of adhering to them. Further research can be conducted on why reference librarians do not adhere to professional guidelines.