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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

THE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AT THE
ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

BY

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REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

IN

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Academic Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

The application of knowledge management practices is essential in libraries within an open distance learning university in meeting user needs. There were problems in its application at the ZOU library, as evidenced by a number of complaints from the user community. The purpose of this study was to assess the reasons behind the problems encountered by the ZOU library in applying knowledge management practices in its service provision. The study was informed by the Knowledge Process (Lifecycle) and Systems Model by Dutt (2008), with the strategies, technologies, personnel and processes in knowledge management constructs informing the research objectives; hence guiding the overall research. The research conformed to a mixed methods approach, entailing the mingling of qualitative and quantitative approaches in this single study. The qualitative approach informed the research design, which was a case study. The population encompassed 22 library staff members and 114 library committee members. The study then used the homogenous purposive sampling technique to sample 12 library staff members, which the study used as interview participants, and used the convenience sampling technique to sample 74 library committee members, which the study used as questionnaire respondents. Therefore the study sample size was 86 staff members. In addition, the study also used document analysis to augment data collected from the interviews and questionnaires. The major finding of the study was that library did not have a strategic policy document detailing the application of knowledge management practices. The study also found that lack of training on knowledge management was one of the reasons impeding the application of knowledge management practices. The study therefore, recommended the crafting of a policy document detailing the application of knowledge management practices within the library. In addition, the study further recommended the library to initiate diverse training and development programmes to train the library staff members on knowledge management.

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