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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

COLLECTIVE INFORMATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO STUDENTS' GROUPS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING (VET) INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate collective informational requirements to students' groups in vocational education training (VET) institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the information requirements among students' groups in VET institutions in rural library settings, determine the challenges encountered by VET students' groups in meeting the collective information requirements during collective information seeking (CIS) process, determine what should be done to improve the collective information requirements to students' groups engaged during CIS in VET institutions in rural library settings. The population of the study comprised of selected VET students in Tanzania's rural settings. Purposive sampling technique used to select the study participants. This study used a convenience sampling to select VET students for inclusion in focus group discussions (FGD) and interview. The data for the study was collected through the use of observation, interviews and focus FGD. Qualitative data was analysed through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis helped to develop different themes relating to the specific objectives of this study. The findings revealed that, VET students in rural settings required information on databases related to their areas of specialization (66.7%, n = 12), information from the subject librarians (66.7%, n = 12), and information on the availability of materials for group assignments (27.8%, n = 5). The major challenges were identified as: Low IL skills among VET students' groups hinders access to collective information requirements, few ICT equipment to VET rural institutions, absence of information on protective gears and working tools to VET courses, absence of information on reference professional items, absence of policy or framework that guides VET students' groups during CIS and absence of subjects librarians who were required to assist VET students' groups during CIS process.

Keywords: Challenges of Collective Information Requirements, Collective Information Requirements, Information, Rural Library Settings.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTRODUCTION

The collective information requirements to students on higher education have become salient topics of debate and research globally. Globally, the library happens to be the most widely utilised source of information in literate societies to meet users' information requirements (Ilhaq & Tousif, 2021). Ilhaq and Tousif (2021) revealed that, students required information and work collectively to bring about innovations. In this regard, library setting is a central point where students converge to acquire information and share ideas and work collectively to bring about innovations. Students grasp that libraries facilitate information seeking because of their information collection, services and programmes as they skilled and experienced staff to help information-users meet their collective information requirements.

Vocational educational training (VET) students' groups have the diversity of collective information requirements during collective information seeking (CIS) process. Information literacy (IL) skills helps information seekers to efficiently locate, accurately evaluate, share, and use information efficiently and effectively in addition to clearly communicating it in various formats (Baidoo et al., 2021). VET students' groups in rural settings required collective information to accomplish the groups' tasks given. On their part, Kim and Lee (2014) found students often engage in such activities as locating, selecting, organising, evaluating, synthesising, and using relevant information sources to meet their collective information requirements to construct meaning on some knowledge content.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

VET students' groups in higher institutions worldwide face the challenge of meeting collective information requirements when given groups' assignments to accomplish during CIS process. VET students lack IL skills to access collective information requirements during CIS process. Wema (2021) found that, higher learning students in Tanzania largely failed to seek, retrieve and share information to meet their information requirements caused by inadequate information seeking skills. Corresponding results by Tlauka and Fombad (2017) revealed that, undergraduates confused electronic resources to web-based internet sources to meet the students' information requirements.

Research Questions

What is the information requirement to VET students' groups in VET rural institutions?

What challenges do students' groups encounter in accessing collective information requirements during collective information seeking (CIS) process in VET rural institutions?

What modal can be recommended to VET students' groups in accessing collective information requirements during CIS process?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed descriptive approaches. Qualitative research serves to develop a rich and detailed understanding of certain theories, concepts, and constructs. This method also provided all-inclusive and complete views of group behaviour during CIS process and increased the validity of the research results using

descriptive data and methodological triangulation. More specifically, qualitative methodologies allow researchers to observe explanations for a phenomenon, so that they can assign in-depth meanings to their findings that are not possible through the aggregated quantitative results (Kouamé & Langley, 2018). All sorted data was read carefully to obtain the general sense of information and overall meaning in relation to the study's objectives. All data was organised into categories and coded based on the established themes. Participants' views were analysed to obtain their perceptions, understanding, and meaning attached to a subject in context. Nvivo Version 7 Computer software used to code, sort, categorise, and analyse the data. The data for the study was collected through the use of observation, interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). Face-to-face interviews present an advantage because physical conversational meetings can enhance the possibility of creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere for the interviewees to express their views (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021). In this regard, Basil (2019) contend that FGDs are advantageous because they constitute expressive collecting data means that yield a lot of information in a relatively short time; the method is, in fact, a resource-saving data collection approach appropriate for investigating the reality of life and experiences of the respondents (Seven et al., 2021). Moreover, Observation, as a data collection method, allows the researcher to witness interactions of the study participants as they perform tasks (Marwa, 2017) of interest to the study in accordance with the research objective and research problem.

VET students' groups were given groups' assignments to accomplish. The participants worked on two tasks in a computer lab in the library settings. A review of the methodology used in CIS studies showed that, computer lab settings were the most common method of data collection during collective information seeking (Hertzum, 2019). In this study, the researcher purposively recommended final-year students from each VET institution because they are more experiencing in CIS. Purposive sampling was conducted on convenience and purposive samples that was randomly drawn. A convenience sample is the one that is drawn from a source that is conveniently accessible to the researcher. Below, presents the details of the methodology used to conduct this study:

Participants

The study recruited 72 participants from second year in VET institutions in Tanzania's rural areas; 18 VET students for interview, 18 VET students for observation and 36 VET students for focus group discussion (FGD). The participants were between 21 and 30 years old. 10 VET students (56%) were male, and 8 VET students (44%) were female during interview and focus group discussion. The participants were randomly chosen from those who expressed their interest to reach 72 participants.

From the outset, the respondents were briefed beforehand about the study in line with established research protocols. Thereafter, the participants had to sign consent forms after briefings for them to provide informed consent. The VET interview participants of three (3) pairs in each VET institution who signed up were given the group' task to accomplish. They required to be familiar with the use of digital libraries. The participants chose the day and time convenient for them for their sessions. Then, they performed two collective information-seeking tasks during collective information seeking (CIS) on the internet.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Settings

Each pair of participants in VET institutions did their session separately at their convenient time in a computer lab. The computer labs were located in VET rural libraries premises. Sessions took between one to two hours. The variables in the study included information seeking techniques and criteria used to evaluate the massive retrieved information on the internet.

Hypothesised Model of Collective Information Requirements to VET Students' Group

The proposed model of this study comprised three phases was modified from Karunakaran et al.'s (2013) model, which anchored to conduct this study on collective information requirements of VET students' groups during CIS. Phase one of the model represented information requirements of students' groups seeking informa-tion collectively to satisfy their group information requirements. Students' groups looked for collective information to accomplish the group assignment. This phase entailed collective problem identification of the collective assignment whereby students' group identified their collective information require-ments to finish the group' assignment of the group. Phase two showed collective information sharing in the presence of collective information literacy (IL) skills of the group, allowed information to be shared within the group upon its retrieval during the collective information seeking (CIS) process. Under this phase, the groups shared information to have the common understanding to all members for solving the collective assignment. The information was then collectively retrieved and shared when the students' group had at their disposal of the information literacy (IL) skills such as information searching strategies to meet their collective information requirements.

Also, groups could effectively retrieve information if there were no challenges (lack of information literacy skills) they encountered during the collective information seeking process. Otherwise, any challenges the group encountered during CIS process could torpedo the collective assignment. However, the challenges the students' group countenanced did not reach the phase three, the final in the series that could be attributable to lack of information in solving the problem identified in phase one. The retrieved collective information is essential in solving problems associated to the shared groups' assignments. If the group faced any challenges (Lack of IL skills) during CIS process, it would have group to re-start the process of CIS all over again, which naturally would prevent them from reaching the pinnacle of such searches phase three. After all, this final phase required students' groups collectively seeking information to solve the problems associated with their shared assignment, which this phase could engender to enable students' group to accomplish group' assignments. Fig. 1 presents the proposed model to access collective information requirements during CIS process.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Collective Information Requirements

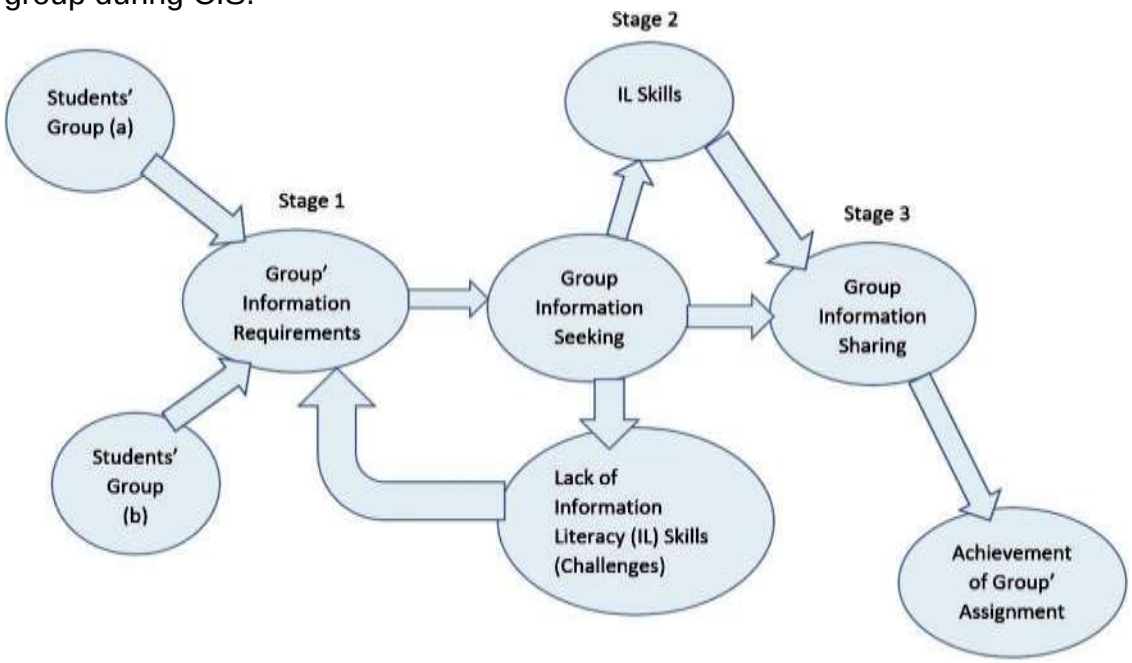
It is vital for students to realise their information requirements because of the availability of a lot of information on the internet, some of which are not credible (Baidoo et al., 2021). The delivery of information literacy (IL) instruction to students is progressively becoming more essential because of the proliferation of electronic

resources and the heightened utilisation of the internet as an information source to satiate their collective information demands (Baidoo et al., 2021). Given and Willson (2015) contend that for the group to meet their collective information requirements during information seeking, retrieval, and sharing, they need to share their collective goal as a collective entity.

On their part, Kim and Lee (2014) found students often to engage in such activities as locating, selecting, organising, evaluating, synthesising and using relevant information sources to meet their collective information requirements to construct meaning on some knowledge content. The complex problem is easily solvable when the collaborators share their expertise and skills during collective information seeking, retrieving, and sharing (Reddy, 2014). The collaborators during information seeking, retrieving, and sharing, required sharing their experience and expertise to the technical aspect to meet their collective information requirements (Reddy, 2014).

Tarzaan et al. (2015) confirm that libraries must play active roles aimed to meet information requirements of students. After all, libraries seek to meet the users' basic information requirements by acquiring information materials in diverse forms of print, non-print, and audio-visual materials to users in the community. In similar vein, Hertzum (2019) proffers that international students' information requirements and seeking behaviour were shaped not only by their host university but also by cross-cultural, personal, and situational issues.

Fig. 1. Hypothesised model of collective information requirements to VET students' group during CIS.



In this endeavour, technology facilitates the students' meeting of their collective information requirements through sharing of documents and compilation of information as a team (Given & Willson, 2015). Knight and Littleton (2015) show that, the key issue on understanding the information seeking, retrieving, and sharing behaviour is not only understanding the process of using the information system but also understanding of the diverse tasks that the system can cover to meet the different collective information requirements of the users.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The key findings in this section of literature review are: First, information is required to meet the collective information requirements of the group' members; second, group information seekers need to share their experience and expertise in a bid to meet their collective information requirements during collective information seeking and retrieving.

Collective Information Seeking Model

Karunakaran et al.'s (2013) model has three phases of group-based information activities: Problem identification; three micro levels comprising seeking, retrieving and sharing; and information use that allows the information generated in the first two stages that was collectively compared and evaluated for a common understanding and usage to materialise.

The first phase of Collective Information Seeking Behaviour (CISB) entails problem identification, which allowed information seekers to identify their collective information requirements based on their common understanding. In an institution, people usually solve problems or meet information requirements and produce a shared representation of the problem to solve them via collective communication. A shift from individualised information seeking activities to CISB was induced by lack of domain capability, complexity of the information requirements, and fragmented information resources due to a lack of readily accessible information. At the second stage of activity, people's collective information seeking behaviour helped to solve complex problems and achieve the shared goal. In the final stage, the information obtained in the first two phases was also collectively compared and evaluated to develop a common understanding and use.

This study applied Karunakaran et al.'s (2013) model primarily because it delineates the challenges information users face during the collective information seeking process (as in stage three which indicates unmet information requirements of users group).

Fig. 2 shows Karunakaran et al.'s (2013) model used in this study.

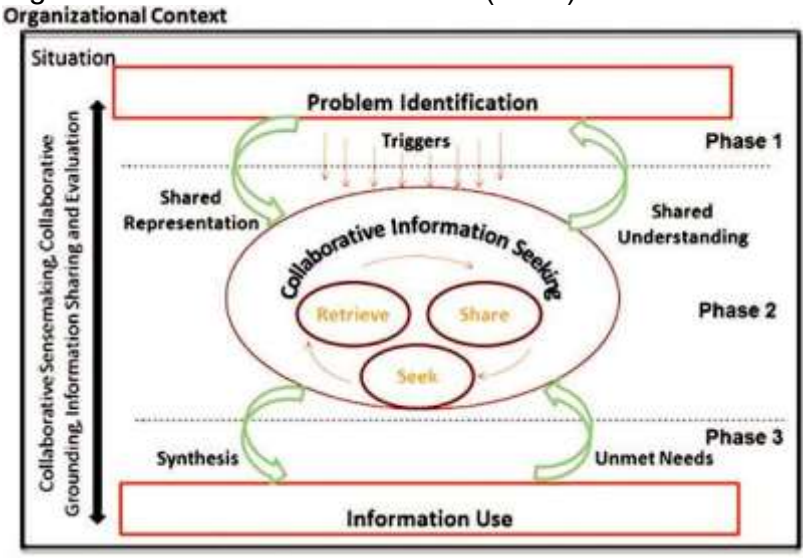


Fig. 2. Model of Karunakaran et al. (2013).

RESULTS

Interview Findings

Information Required by VET Students' Groups to Accomplish Their Group' Assignments Face-to-face interview with representatives from various remote VET institutions were undertaken to ascertain the groupings of students' collective information requirements. The information required for each VET course to complete the assigned tasks varied.

In Table I, the results of the major interview revealed that, the groups of VET' students in rural settings required information on databases related to their areas of specialization (66.7%, n = 12), information from the subject librarians (66.7%, n = 12), and information on the availability of materials for group' assignments (27.8%, n = 5). Furthermore, the groups' collective information requirements included policies, historical information, and information on the nature of problems (61.1%, n = 11). In a similar vein, groups of VET students in rural locations required information (61.1%, n = 11) on both theory and practical aspects of their assignments. One of the respondents in VET College A during interview noted saying:

> "We need information from subjects' librarians who had specialized in our subjects' areas and comprehend better our collective information requirements" (VET College A, Student No.5).

Another respondent during the interview in VET College C noted saying:

> "When VET students are given group' assignments to accomplish, they require information on the availability of materials used for the group' assignments. Therefore, VET rural institutions located in the rural areas lack vital information on the availability of the materials used for groups' assignments which are practical oriented. This poses the big challenge to accomplish the groups' assignment on time" (VET College C, Student No.2).

However, during interview in VET college A, B and C show that, VET students' groups shared information on practical. The VET assignments given to VET students were on practical oriented. During the interview in VET college A, one of the respondents noted saying:

> "When we are given group' assignments to accomplish, we go to the library for searching information related to the assignments to get the concept. Then, VET group' members get the ideas on how to solve the problem. Lastly, VET group' members go for the practical to solve the problem as the team" (VET College B, Student No.5).

TABLE I: Interview Findings on Collective Information Requirements of VET Students' Groups in Babati, Lushoto and Kondoa Districts

The main collective information requirements of vet students' groups	Percentages (%) (N = 18)
Availability of information for materials for groups' assignments	5 (27.8%)
Database information and subject librarians	12 (66.7%)
Manual, directives and procedures information	2 (11.1%)
Measurements information for groups' assignments	3 (16.7%)
Policies information	11(61.1%)
Practical information for groups' assignments	11(61.1%)
Price and quality of materials information for groups' assignments	2 (11.1%)
Risks and protective information for groups' assignments	2 (11.1%)

Information on specifications of materials to be used for groups' assignments	2 (11.1%)

Challenges Encountered by VET Students' Groups in Meeting the Collective Information Requirements during Collective Information Seeking (CIS) Process.

The interview findings revealed the following challenges encountered by VET students to access collective information requirements during CIS process:

Unreliable internet to VET institutions,
Low IL skills among VET students' groups' members,
Few ICT equipment to vocational training institutions,
Few information on protective gears and working tools,
Absence of policy or framework that guide VET students' groups during CIS,
Absence of subjects librarians who required to assist VET students' groups during CIS,
Insufficient e-resources for VET courses,
Absence of practical information to some VET courses.

Suggestions for the Challenges that VET Respondents Face

During interview and focus groups discussions (FGD), VET respondents were asked about what should be done to improve the conditions for collective information seeking (CIS) aimed at meeting group' assignment requirements. VET respondents provided the following suggestions during interview and focus groups discussions (FGD):

Interview findings revealed that, VET rural libraries are required to subscribe to professional databases for VET courses offered in rural settings. This ensures the efficiency of collective infor-mation to VET students' groups when given group' assignments to accomplish. Subscription of professional databases ensures availability of e-resources for VET students' groups meeting their collective information requirements.

FGD findings revealed that, it is vital to have CIS policy to assist VET students' groups during CIS process. VET students' groups in VET rural areas require CIS policy during CIS process to meet the collective information requirements. During focus group discussion, one of the respondents in VET College B quoted saying:

"Failure to have a CIS policy in place leads to VET students' groups not getting the required collective information requirements to accomplish the given assignments. Hence, considering the importance of required IL skills during CIS process, triggers CIS policy formulation for VET students' groups in rural areas to meet the collective information requirements of VET students" (G – B1).

VET respondents recommended IL skills to VET students' groups during CIS process to access collective information requirements. Interview findings revealed that, subject librarians required assisting VET students' groups to meet their collective information requirements. FGD findings asserted that subject librarians believed by VET students' groups that they understand better the detailed

information of their professional courses. FGD findings showed that, some directives during groups' assignments required someone who was more expert in the field.

Professional e-reference information materials were recommended during interviews to improve access to collective information requirements to VET courses. Interview findings recommended VET' rural libraries to allocate enough budgets for buying ICT equipment like computers. ICT equipment are compulsory for the VET students' groups to meet collective information requirements during CIS process. Interview findings revealed that, information on protective gears required to be in detailed to protect VET rural students with accidents when accomplishing groups' assignments given.

Interview findings recommended practical information enriched in VET rural libraries. Practical information seemed to be compulsory due to the nature of VET courses which were more practical oriented. For example, the manual information of different items used during groups' assignments. The FGD findings recommend that VET rural libraries required to upgrade internet bandwidth to support VET students' groups during CIS.

Focus Group Discussion Findings

During the focus group discussion (FGD), students' groups were asked "what information they required to complete their assignments." One of the respondents of the plumbing and pipe fitting course at College A, a VET institution in the Babati district, stated that the students' group required information on measurements, particularly on how to measure the length of pipes from one place to another. During the FGD, a different responder from the plumbing and pipefitting department at college A explained that:

> As the professional in the field of plumbing and pipes fitting, someone needs to be well knowledgeable on making threads on different types of pipes. The professional student in the field needs to know how to join the two plastic pipes which are very vulnerable. Joining plastic pipes without breaking them needs skills during the joining process. Failure to join them in the professional way triggers to the leakage of water inside the wall from the plumbing system. The problems will extend to the electrical wiring system that leads to cut off of electricity from time to time due to electrical fault caused. Thus, someone needs information on how to join different types of pipes (G–A1).

Nonetheless, the researcher used FGD with a group of domestic electrical installation students at college C, a VET institution in the Lushoto district. The respondents were asked to clarify the information required to complete the assigned group task. The respondents disclosed that using various kinds of lights was required for their line of work and that it was essential to advice customers based on their needs. One of the group members in College C's household electrical installation course talked about many kinds of lights and how to use them:

> Dim light is the first type of light, which is made in series of lights lamps whereby the failure of one light's lamp to function must affects the functioning of other lights' lamps in the series. The dim lights are used in big halls, hotels and industries. If a place has sun light, then you use a dim light, which does not consume high electricity. Dim light ensures the safety of eyes; healthy eyes do not need very high light to see. Bright light is the second type of light, which helps to see very well at night, for example, on the roads or [football]

grounds. It is mostly required in the hospital when doctors are conducting a theatre operation. Bright light also helps to regulate temperature in an incubator for the production of chicks. The third type of light is medium light. The medium light, on the other hand, is required at home; someone can switch on one light at home to get medium light. The medium light is also required by typists who normally do not need much light for the safety of their eyes. The medium light is also used at home during self-reading, reading does not need bright light. Understanding different types of lights helps to advice well the customer depends on his or her' requirements (G–C1).

Observational Findings

VET students' groups from investigated courses observed searching the practical information in VET libraries to accomplish the practical assignments given. Moreover, VET respondents observed seeking the practical information during CIS to accomplish the groups' assignments. However, VET respondents observed calling the subjects' teachers to give them clarifications on information during CIS process to meet their collective information requirements.

DISCUSSION

Collective Information Requirements to Students

VET respondents in rural settings required to comprehend their collective information requirements to accomplish the groups' assignments given. It is vital for students to realise their information requirements because of the availability of massive information accessed to the internet, some of which are not credible (Baidoo et al., 2021). The different VET courses were having diverse collective information requirements to accomplish the given groups' assignments.

The discussion on VET students' groups' information requirements was based on students' infor-mation requirements on the context of collective information seeking (CIS). Interview in college A, B and C revealed that, VET respondents in rural settings had different information requirements depending on their subjects and the groups' assignments they sought to accomplish. The information required for each VET course to complete the assigned tasks varied. Table I above, the results of the major interviews revealed that, the groups of VET students in rural settings required information on databases related to their areas of specialization (66.7%, n = 12), information from the subject librarians (66.7%, n = 12), and information on the availability of materials for group assignments (27.8%, n = 5). VET students' groups required practical information (61.1%, n = 11) in the same level to policy information (61.1%, n = 11) to accomplish the groups' assignments. Policy information required by VET students' groups to guide them during CIS and when they required innovating different products. Measurement information (16.7%, n = 3) was required by VET students from welding courses when accomplishing groups' tasks of making iron office furniture. Additionally, the price, specification and manual information were also required as risk and protective information to accomplish the groups' assignments across all VET professional courses investigated in VET rural libraries settings (11.1%, n = 2).

These findings are consistent with Hertzum (2019) who revealed that, students' information requirements were shaped by their host university and situational issues. Ebrahimzadeh et al. (2020) found that, collaborative information

requirements and networking were linked to the identification of informal and complex information requirements when researched on triggers and strategies related to the collective information seeking behaviour of researchers on the ResearchGate platform. The groups' members perceived information retrieved collectively for formulating the shared information requirements (Far, 2019). Moreover, the results from Obande and Ayongo (2024) affirmed that, undergraduate students used different information resources for various academic tasks. In their tasks, online electronic resources including search engines were the most commonly used resources, particularly for complex academic tasks to meet their information requirements (Obande & Ayongo, 2024).

Challenges to Access Collective Information Requirements to Students

Unreliable Internet

Unreliable internet to VET rural institutions (28%, n = 5) was one of major challenges that the VET respondents mentioned during interviews conducted in college A, B and C. VET respondents from college A, B and C admitted that, unreliable internet hindered them to meet their collective information requirements during CIS in VET rural' libraries. These findings concurred with those of Mwinyimbegu (2018) showed that, inadequate bandwidth (67.3%, n = 35) among selected public university libraries in Tanzania hindered the access of library users meeting their information requirements. Similar findings by Liman (2020) showed that (46%, n = 39) of respondents reported poor provision of library services was caused by poor internet services among academic libraries in Gombe State in Nigeria.

Low Information Literacy Skills (IL) to Students

Face-to-face interviews revealed low IL skills (90%, n = 17) to VET students' groups' members as the major challenges to meet their groups' information requirements during CIS. Similarly, findings by Luambano (2016) showed that, undergraduate distance learning students in Tanzania contended with the problems of lacking awareness of online resources and skills for them to search on the web effectively. Reviewed literature found that, IL education had remained a non- priority area in many institutions of higher learning (IOHL) and in many cases was not even taught as effectively as it should be.

Lack of Access to ICTs

Few ICT equipment (16.7%, n = 3) to the VET rural institutions of college C in Lushoto district, college A in Babati district and college B in Kondoa district was mentioned as the major challenge during face-to-face interview. The computers were not enough for all students to access information during CIS. Students' groups from college A, B and C were forced to access computers in shifts to accomplish their groups' assignments.

Thindwa et al. (2019) reported similar findings to this study that undergraduate security students in Malawi faced the challenge of shortage of computer laboratories for academic activities, accomplishing assignments, preparing for their examinations and completing research projects.

No Subject Librarians

The interview findings revealed that, the respondents from VET students' groups mentioned the absence of subjects' librarians (61%, n = 11) during CIS was among the hindrance to meet their collective information requirements. The VET respondents who were interviewed explained that subjects' librarians could understand better their collective information requirements which responded to their groups' assignments. Similarly, information scientists helped the choral directors to provide access to professional music networks and being creative in providing opportunities for serendipitous information discovery (Fena, 2020).

Insufficient of E-Resources

The FGD findings from VET colleges B and C revealed that, there were no electronic reference information materials for their courses to be referred when VET students' groups were given groups' assignments to accomplish. FGDs showed that, VET respondents failed to accomplish the given groups' assignments on time due to unavailability of required electronic information resources. These findings are consistent with Obande and Ayongo (2024) who stated that, used different electronic information resources for various academic tasks. In their tasks, online electronic resources including search engines were the most commonly used resources, particularly for complex academic tasks. Students in Benue State, Nigeria during information seeking looked for resources that made it easy to share documents (Obande & Ayongo, 2024).

Absence of Policy or Framework for Vocational Education Training Students

The findings revealed that there was no policy or framework that guided VET students' groups in Lushoto, Babati and in Kondoa districts. This seemed difficult in case the VET group want to innovate new items or come up with the new ideas as the source of creation for new items during CIS. Nonetheless, Mwinyimbegu (2018) who stated that, (69.2%, n = 36) of the respondents said lack of policies and guidelines in public universities in Tanzania to guide the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) was a major challenge and should be taken into consideration. Samzugi (2017) revealed that, policy was important that theoretically guides the best practices.

Absence of Practical Information to Vocational Education Training Courses

The interviewees from auto-electrical course in college C in Lushoto district pin-pointed the absence of practical information for professional' materials (61%, n = 11). Practical information was found vital to meet their collective information requirements to accomplish the group' assignment during face-to-face-interview. For example, the information on car' gear box was not available in library when students' groups of auto-electrical course required to refer during CIS. One of VET respondents pursuing auto-electrical course of college C in Lushoto district, during interview declared that, knowledge retrieved from the library was mainly theory. Another respondent in college C stated that, as a result, group' members are compelled to go to the garage in the streets outside library to acquire practical information. This helped VET students to learn parts of the gear box and how it functions. Ilhaq and Tousif (2021) revealed that, students required information and work collectively to bring about innovations.

Lack of information on Protective Gears

Information on protective gears was observed not comprehensive for the courses of welding and metal fabrication, domestic electrical installation and auto-electrical. This was evident from the find-ings (44%, n = 8) revealed by VET students during interview, mentioned the challenge on information on protective gears was not comprehensive that faced by all VET respondents who were interviewed from domestic electrical installation, auto electrical, and welding and metal fabrication courses. Information on protective gears was cited as inadequate from interviewees of domestic electrical installation, welding and metal fabrication, and auto-electrical courses. Insufficient information on protective gears led some VET respondents observed not using protective gears when doing their groups' assignments. Similarly, the accurate information is crucial to avoid unreasonable results, inappropriate corrective actions and prevent the acquisition and transmission of infectious diseases when accomplishing tasks (Barratt et al., 2020).

Suggestion for Further Research

The study investigated the collective information requirements of students' groups in vocational education institutions in Tanzania's rural areas. The study identified several issues which could be the subject of further investigation by scholarly CIS researchers. This study is a baseline study to understand how VET students' groups in rural VET institutions in Tanzania seek information collaboratively. However, the present study had certain limitations. The researcher makes the following suggestions for further research:

> Most research (for example, Large et al., 2022; Ndumbaro & Mutula, 2019; Shahvar & Tang, 2014) concentrated only in big cities and neglected investigating students' groups on the CIS process in the rural settings.

Future research is required to investigate how other factors like the economic factors affect VET students' groups in accessing collective information during CIS. Moreover, future research requires investigating how culture believes in rural settings affecting the CIS when there is mixed gender among groups' members.

CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken to probe collective information requirements of VET students' groups in rural libraries. The study findings of this study explored the critical link between the collective information requirements of VET students and IL skills during CIS process. VET students required to possess the required IL skills to access the collective information requirements to accomplish the groups' tasks. VET students required practical information to accomplish the groups' assignments.

VET students recommended the following solutions to major challenges encountered by VET students to access collective information requirements during CIS process: VET institutions required to buy more bandwidth to ensure reliable internet, VET students need to improve on IL skills to ensure they access the collective information requirements on internet for their groups' tasks, VET institutions recommended to buy more ICT equipment, VET institutions required to add more information on protective gears to the library collection, subjects librarians are required to assist VET students' groups during CIS process, subscribed professional databases in VET rural institutions are essential for VET courses to

ensure access to e-resources to guarantee VET rural libraries possess practical information.

Moreover, policy or framework is required for VET students during CIS process to meet their collective information requirements when VET students' groups need to innovate available products during practical groups' assignments given.

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