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The Impact of Cultural Values on Students' Information-Seeking Behavior in Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract **- Cultural values influence how students seek, evaluate, and use information, yet little is known about their role in shaping academic information behavior in Ghanaian higher education. This study examined the influence of cultural values on the information-seeking behavior of students in Ghanaian Colleges of Education, with particular attention to knowledge sources, strategies, technology adoption, and interaction with librarians. A quantitative survey design, guided by a positivist paradigm, was conducted between April and June 2025. Data were collected from 183 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling across three Colleges of Education using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used for analysis in SPSS version 27. Cultural values significantly influenced students' preferences for interpersonal channels, selection of knowledge sources, and comfort with digital systems. Institutional differences were observed in information-seeking strategies and librarian engagement. Despite cultural reservations, students showed growing adaptation to digital tools. Cultural orientations continue to shape information-seeking behavior, but a gradual shift toward digital practices is emerging in Ghanaian higher education. Culturally responsive information literacy initiatives and enhanced librarian–student engagement is recommended to support inclusive learning environments.**
Keywords: **Cultural Values, Information-Seeking Behavior, Higher Education, Colleges of Education, Information Literacy, Ghana**

I. INTRODUCTION

In academic environments, students' information-seeking behavior is critical to their success in acquiring, evaluating, and applying information for research and learning. Information-seeking behavior refers to the strategies, processes, and actions individuals use to locate information that meets their academic or personal needs (Case & Given, 2016). In higher education, effective information seeking is closely tied to academic achievement, as students must consistently access reliable sources for coursework, assignments, and research. However, this behavior is shaped by various factors, with cultural values being one of the most significant.

Cultural values influence how individuals perceive and approach knowledge acquisition, learning processes, and technology use. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory identifies key factors-such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance-that contribute to these differences. For instance, students from collectivist cultures may prefer collaborative learning and information sharing, while those from individualistic cultures often seek information independently (Costa & Faria, 2024). These cultural factors affect not only learning approaches but also how students engage with information resources in academic settings.

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has made understanding students' information-seeking behavior more important than ever. For example, a study by Arkorful *et al.,* (2024) in Ghana showed that higher-education students' digital competencies-including communication, collaboration, and content creation-significantly predict their digital citizenship, defined as how responsibly and effectively they engage with online information environments. Yet, even with access to online databases, social media, and academic search engines, students continue to face cultural, linguistic, and infrastructural barriers that shape how they locate, evaluate, and use information. This demonstrates that technological availability alone does not erase culturally rooted differences in information practices.
Although much research has examined general information-seeking behaviors among students, relatively few studies address the influence of cultural values (Kim & Sin, 2017). Understanding this relationship is essential for academic institutions, especially those with diverse student populations, as it can guide the development of more culturally responsive support services. Addressing this gap, the current study investigates how cultural values affect students' information-seeking behavior in higher education, offering insights to enhance academic services and improve learning outcomes. As higher education becomes increasingly diverse, the ways in which cultural values influence students' academic behaviors-particularly their information-seeking practices-remain underexplored. Information seeking is central to academic success, yet the role of cultural differences in shaping these practices is not fully understood.

Recent research has shifted from broad patterns of information seeking to examining contextual factors. For example, a global study by Khosrowjerdi, Sundqvist, and

Byström (2020) found that national culture-including dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and indulgence-correlates with people's choice of information sources, revealing differences in the use of interpersonal versus impersonal sources. Similarly, a study in Nova Scotia, Canada, by Makani and WooShue (2006) found that business students often began their searches with academic databases, but cultural and institutional support determined how fully they made use of library resources.

While these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on technological access or socio-economic factors. Less is known about how deeply ingrained cultural norms shape behaviors in higher education. For instance, Tachie-Donkor and Ezema (2023) found that Ghanaian university students' information literacy skills strongly predicted their ability to seek and use information, but cultural backgrounds influenced which sources they trusted, how they judged credibility, and how proactive they were in seeking help. Although models such as Wilson's (1999) offer useful frameworks for understanding information needs, seeking, and use, they do not fully capture the complexity of how cultural values affect preferences for sources, trust in expert versus informal information, or help-seeking from librarians. This study has practical implications for several groups. For teachers and librarians, it provides insights into how cultural factors influence students' search and use of information, helping to tailor support services. For policymakers and administrators, the findings can inform the creation of culturally inclusive information literacy programs. For researchers, the study addresses a gap by contributing new evidence on how cultural values intersect with information-seeking behavior, offering a more comprehensive understanding of students' academic practices.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of cultural values on the information-seeking behavior of students in higher education. By focusing on diverse student populations, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can guide the development of culturally responsive academic support systems.

A. Objectives of the Study

The study will address the following research questions:

1. To examine the influence of cultural values on students' perceptions of knowledge sources in academic environments.
2. To analyze the ways in which cultural values affect students' information-seeking strategies.
3. To assess how cultural attitudes toward technology shape students' adoption and use of digital resources for information seeking.
4. To evaluate the extent to which cultural norms influence students' willingness to seek help from information professionals such as librarians.
5. To investigate how cultural values impact the academic performance of students in relation to their information-seeking behavior.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is guided by Wilson's (1999) Model of Information Behaviour, which serves as the framework for examining the impact of cultural values on students' information-seeking behaviour in Colleges of Education in Ghana. The model, developed through an extensive synthesis of information behaviour research, integrates insights from psychology, sociology, and library and information science. It has been widely applied to study how contextual, personal, and environmental factors influence the ways individuals seek, access, and use information. The model posits that information-seeking behaviour is shaped by a combination of contextual factors (such as cultural norms, institutional environments, and social roles), intervening variables (including motivation, resources, and barriers), and activating mechanisms that drive individuals to search for information. It further suggests that information seeking is not a linear process but an iterative cycle in which needs, barriers, and strategies continuously interact.

Wilson's model assumes that information behaviour consists of several interconnected components, including the recognition of an information need, the selection of information sources, the adoption of search strategies, and the use of retrieved information to satisfy academic or personal goals. These components make the model particularly relevant for this study, as it provides a comprehensive framework for examining how cultural values such as collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance influence students' preferences for knowledge sources, their strategies for seeking information, and their interactions with information professionals. The model will therefore be used to systematically investigate the cultural dimensions of academic information seeking among students in Ghanaian Colleges of Education.

A. Influence of Cultural Values on Students' Perception of Knowledge Sources

Cultural values substantially shape how students perceive and value diverse knowledge sources. A recent scoping review by Weva *et al.,* (2024) found that, among students from collectivist countries, academic achievement is often influenced by external evaluations and communal reference points. This means students frequently rely on sources endorsed by family, teachers, and community leaders. In contrast, students from more individualistic backgrounds tend to place greater trust in self-selected academic journals, peer-reviewed articles, and self-directed online sources. Supporting this, Costa and Faria (2024) identified different individualist–collectivist profiles among secondary school students, showing that those with stronger collectivist orientations were more likely to depend on interpersonal and traditional sources of knowledge, while students balancing individualism and collectivism drew from both formal and informal sources, including digital environments.

B. Cultural Values and Information-Seeking Strategies

Information-seeking strategies vary considerably across cultures and are shaped by values such as individualism–collectivism and power distance. A cross-cultural study by Costa and Faria (2024) found that students classified as "high individualist–high collectivist" were more likely to combine independent search strategies (e.g., personal use of academic databases) with collaborative or communal approaches (e.g., group discussions), whereas students leaning strongly toward individualism preferred to seek information alone. Similarly, a large-scale study of 53 countries using PISA data by Johnson, Allen, and Gallo Cordoba (2024) revealed that students in high power distance cultures were more likely to defer to teachers or authoritative figures when encountering difficulties, while those in lower power distance contexts exhibited more autonomous information-seeking behaviours. These findings confirm that, beyond access to resources, cultural norms shape not only how students search for information but also whom they trust, how they navigate institutional hierarchies, and whether they adopt group-oriented or self-oriented strategies.

C. Role of Cultural Values in Adoption and Use of Technology for Information Seeking

Cultural values also play a critical role in how students adopt and use technology for information seeking. For example, Tarhini *et al.,* (2017) examined the moderating effect of individual-level cultural values on users' acceptance of e-learning in developing countries. They found that uncertainty avoidance and other cultural values significantly altered the influence of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and social norms on behavioural intention to adopt e-learning systems. More recently, Masenya (2024) explored the use of modern technologies for knowledge sharing within South African academic libraries, highlighting those cultural orientations toward tradition or modernity affected how readily academics and students engaged with digital platforms. These findings demonstrate that, although students increasingly have access to online databases, digital libraries, and search engines, their cultural orientations toward risk, authority, and tradition continue to shape the technologies they trust, their comfort levels, and the extent to which they integrate these tools into their information practices.

D. Effect of Social and Educational Norms on Interactions with Information Professionals and Information-Seeking Behaviour

Social and educational norms strongly influence how students interact with librarians and other information professionals. A study by Bangani *et al.* (2020) at a South African university found that, while students recognized librarians' roles in supporting information literacy, many were reluctant to approach them for help-particularly when doing so required questioning authority or revealing a lack of knowledge. This hesitation was more pronounced in cultures with higher power distance, where authority hierarchies are deeply ingrained. By contrast, in contexts where educational norms favour lower power distance, students were more likely to view librarians as collaborative partners rather than distant authority figures. These dynamics shape not only help-seeking behaviour but also students' ability to engage with library services, evaluate sources, and navigate academic information systems.

E. Impact of Cultural Values on Academic Performance Related to Information-Seeking Behaviour

Cultural values are also closely linked to students' academic performance, particularly in relation to information-seeking behaviour. A scoping review by Weva *et al.,* (2024) involving students from collectivist countries showed that academic self-concept is a strong predictor of achievement, while cultural norms around collectivism influence students' approaches to group learning and independent research tasks. In some cases, heavy reliance on group cohesion can disadvantage students when independent performance is required. A study in Ghana by Kumaha, Baidoob, and Yusif (2024) similarly found that parental involvement-a cultural norm emphasizing family support-positively influenced the academic performance of tertiary students, particularly in tasks that required independent work, such as research and critical writing. These findings suggest that, while access to technology and resources is important, cultural attitudes toward group versus independent work, family expectations, and self-belief play a central role in shaping how effectively students leverage information for academic success.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the positivist research paradigm, which holds that factual knowledge is derived from observable and measurable phenomena and that reality can be understood through objective analysis of empirical data. Positivism emphasizes the use of statistical tools to test hypotheses and identify patterns in social behavior. As Collins (2010) notes, this paradigm aligns with the empiricist view that valid knowledge is grounded in sensory experience and logical reasoning. Positivism also assumes a realist ontology; whereby social phenomena exist independently of human perception and can be studied through systematic observation.

A survey research design was employed to collect quantitative data on how cultural values influence students' information-seeking behavior in selected Colleges of Education in Ghana. The study focused on three public institutions: McCoy College of Education in Nadowli, Tumu College of Education in Tumu, and NJA College of Education in Wa. These colleges serve as key teacher-training institutions in the Upper West Region of Ghana. McCoy emphasizes inclusive education, Tumu College integrates traditional knowledge systems, and NJA focuses on curriculum development and academic research. Collectively, the institutions represent distinct educational environments with varying degrees of engagement in digital and traditional information sources. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire,

developed from an extensive review of literature on cultural values, information behavior, and digital resource use (Hofstede, 2011; Noh, 2016; Meho & Tibbo, 2003). The questionnaire addressed variables such as perceptions of knowledge sources, preferred information-seeking strategies, use of digital platforms, and willingness to consult information professionals. All items were closed-ended and presented on a Likert scale to ensure standardization and statistical tractability.

The study population comprised all final-year students in the three colleges, with an estimated total of 1,080: McCoy (370), Tumu (360), and NJA (350). The sample size was determined using Miller and Brewer's (2003) formula for finite populations: n=N1+N(e)2n = \frac{N} {1 + N(e)^2} n=1+N(e)2N with a 5% margin of error, yielding a sample of 292. Proportionate stratified sampling was applied to ensure fair representation from each institution: McCoy (100), Tumu (97), and NJA (95). Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select participants. Class registers served as sampling frames, and a random number generator ensured unbiased selection. Data were collected manually through self-administered questionnaires distributed by the researcher and trained assistants. This in-person approach was chosen to maximize response rates and allow for clarification of any questions or ambiguities. The structured format enhanced the reliability and comparability of responses, enabling the identification of patterns in student behavior across institutions.

Data were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 26). Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, summarized student responses. To test for statistically significant differences across the three colleges, a one-way ANOVA was employed.

This test was appropriate for comparing mean differences in perceptions and behaviors among students from independent institutions. The findings provide a robust quantitative basis for understanding the extent to which cultural values shape students' information-seeking behavior in Ghanaian teacher education.

IV. RESULTS

A total of 292 questionnaires were administered, of which 183 were duly completed and valid for analysis. This yielded a response rate of 62%, which is considered strong and acceptable for survey-based research. According to VanGeest, Johnson, and Welch (2007), response rates above 60% are generally adequate to ensure the representativeness and validity of survey data in the social sciences. Similarly, Fincham (2008) emphasizes that a response rate of 60% or higher minimizes nonresponse bias and enhances the credibility of findings. The achieved rate, therefore, falls within acceptable standards, lending confidence to the reliability and generalizability of the study's results.

The results of the one-way ANOVA are presented in tabular form. Each column represents key statistical indicators. The Mean Difference (I–J) column shows the differences in average scores between each pair of institutions, where a positive value indicates that institution, I scored higher than institution J, and a negative value indicates the opposite. The Standard Error reflects the variability in estimating mean differences, while the Sig. (p-value) column indicates statistical significance. A p-value below 0.05 denotes a statistically significant difference. Lastly, the 95% Confidence Interval outlines the range within which the true mean difference is likely to fall; if this interval excludes zero, the difference is considered significant.

A. Demographic Data

The demographic data (Table I) reveal that males outnumber females across all three institutions. TCE has the highest male-to-female ratio (41:5), suggesting a gender imbalance that may affect participation and representation. Most students (94%) fall within the 20–29 age range, confirming that respondents were predominantly young adults. Only a small number were aged 30–39, particularly at MCE and JCE. The majority of students were in Level 300, especially at TCE and MCE, while JCE had equal numbers in Level 300 and Level 400. Cultural representation also varied: the most represented groups were Waala (59), Dagaaba (38), and Sisaala (34). TCE drew more students from Sisaala and Waala backgrounds, MCE had a more diverse spread, and JCE was dominated by Waala students. Ashanti and Gonja groups were the least represented, especially at JCE.

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Institution	Gender (M/ F)	Age Range (20–29 / 30–39)	Year of Study (L300 / L400)	Cultural Background (n)
Tumu College of Education	41 / 5	40 / 6	42 / 4	Dagaaba: 4, Ashanti: 8, Gonja: 0, Dagomba: 3, Waala: 12, Sisaala: 19
McCoy College of Education	45 / 30	74 / 1	65 / 10	Dagaaba: 19, Ashanti: 13, Gonja: 11, Dagomba: 14, Waala: 10, Sisaala: 8
Jahan College of Education	43 / 19	58 / 4	31 / 31	Dagaaba: 15, Ashanti: 0, Gonja: 0, Dagomba: 3, Waala: 37, Sisaala: 7
Total	129 / 54	172 / 11	138 / 45	Dagaaba: 38, Ashanti: 21, Gonja: 11, Dagomba: 20, Waala: 59, Sisaala: 34

Source: Field data 2023

B. Influence of cultural values on students' perception of knowledge sources

The analysis in Table II revealed significant institutional differences in how students valued knowledge sources. Students from Tumu College of Education (TCE) expressed a stronger preference for traditional knowledge, valuing indigenous sources more highly than their peers at McCoy College of Education (MCE) (Mean Diff = 0.439, p = .000) and Jahan College of Education (JCE) (Mean Diff = 0.326, p = .011). TCE students also reported more frequent use of academic sources than MCE students (Mean Diff = 0.487, p = .001), who themselves engaged with academic sources more than JCE students (Mean Diff = 0.309, p = .036). However, all three institutions perceived academic sources as culturally neutral, with no significant differences (p > .05). TCE students placed greater importance on consulting community elders compared to MCE (Mean Diff = 0.699, p = .000) and JCE (Mean Diff = 0.594, p = .000), reflecting a strong cultural alignment. Meanwhile, MCE students demonstrated a higher tendency to rely on formal academic authority when resolving conflicting information, significantly more than both TCE (Mean Diff = 0.477, p = .000) and JCE (Mean Diff = 0.449, p = .000). These findings highlight the role of institutional culture in shaping epistemic orientations and information-seeking practices.

TABLE II INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL VALUES ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

Dependent Variable	Institution (I)	Institution (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Perception of valuable of traditional knowledge sources	TCE	MCE	.439*	.108	.000	.18	.69
		JCE	.326*	.112	.011	.06	.59
	MCE	TCE	-.439*	.108	.000	-.69	-.18
		JCE	-.113	.099	.488	-.35	.12
	JCE	TCE	-.326*	.112	.011	-.59	-.06
		MCE	.113	.099	.488	-.12	.35
Frequency of Consulting Academic Sources	TCE	MCE	.487*	.135	.001	.17	.81
		JCE	.177	.141	.419	-.15	.51
	MCE	TCE	-.487*	.135	.001	-.81	-.17
		JCE	-.309*	.124	.036	-.60	-.02
	JCE	TCE	-.177	.141	.419	-.51	.15
		MCE	.309*	.124	.036	.02	.60
Perception of Cultural Alignment in Academic Sources	TCE	MCE	.078	.121	.798	-.21	.36
		JCE	.014	.126	.993	-.28	.31
	MCE	TCE	-.078	.121	.798	-.36	.21
		JCE	-.064	.111	.835	-.33	.20
	JCE	TCE	-.014	.126	.993	-.31	.28
		MCE	.064	.111	.835	-.20	.33
Importance Placed on Consulting Community Elders	TCE	MCE	.699*	.094	.000	.48	.92
		JCE	.594*	.098	.000	.36	.83
	MCE	TCE	-.699*	.094	.000	-.92	-.48
		JCE	-.105	.086	.443	-.31	.10
	JCE	TCE	-.594*	.098	.000	-.83	-.36
		MCE	.105	.086	.443	-.10	.31
Preference When Faced with Conflicting Information	TCE	MCE	-.477*	.115	.000	-.75	-.21
		JCE	-.027	.119	.971	-.31	.25
	MCE	TCE	.477*	.115	.000	.21	.75
		JCE	.449*	.105	.000	.20	.70
	JCE	TCE	.027	.119	.971	-.25	.31
		MCE	-.449*	.105	.000	-.70	-.20

Source: Field data 2023

C. Effect of cultural values students' information-seeking strategies

Table III summarizes differences in information-seeking strategies. TCE students showed a stronger preference for culturally familiar sources than MCE (Mean Diff = 0.607, p = .011), though the difference with JCE was not significant (p = .074). No significant difference emerged between MCE and JCE. TCE students were also more likely to compare information from multiple sources than both JCE (Mean Diff = 0.487, p = .000) and MCE (Mean Diff = 0.400, p = .004). They further verified digital sources more than JCE (Mean Diff = 0.380, p = .014), while MCE also outperformed JCE in this respect (Mean Diff = 0.299, p = .042). Cultural expectations influenced TCE students more strongly than those at MCE (Mean Diff = 0.655, p = .000) and JCE (Mean Diff = 0.720, p = .000). Interestingly, JCE students prioritized culturally familiar sources more than MCE students (Mean Diff = 0.492, p = .000).

TABLE III EFFECT OF CULTURAL VALUES STUDENTS' INFORMATION-SEEKING STRATEGIES

Dependent Variable	Institution (I)	Institution (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Lower Bound
Preferred Information Source	TCE	MCE	.440	.200	.074	-.03	.91
		JCE	.607*	.208	.011	.12	1.10
	MCE	TCE	-.440	.200	.074	-.91	.03
		JCE	.167	.183	.634	-.27	.60
	JCE	TCE	-.607*	.208	.011	-1.10	-.12
		MCE	-.167	.183	.634	-.60	.27
Frequency of comparing information from different sources	TCE	MCE	.487*	.118	.000	.21	.77
		JCE	.400*	.123	.004	.11	.69
	MCE	TCE	-.487*	.118	.000	-.77	-.21
		JCE	-.088	.108	.699	-.34	.17
	JCE	TCE	-.400*	.123	.004	-.69	-.11
		MCE	.088	.108	.699	-.17	.34
likelihood of verifying information from digital sources before use	TCE	MCE	.380*	.134	.014	.06	.70
		JCE	.081	.140	.832	-.25	.41
	MCE	TCE	-.380*	.134	.014	-.70	-.06
		JCE	-.299*	.123	.042	-.59	-.01
	JCE	TCE	-.081	.140	.832	-.41	.25
		MCE	.299*	.123	.042	.01	.59
Influence of cultural or family expectations on choice of information sources	TCE	MCE	.655*	.084	.000	.46	.85
		JCE	-.065	.087	.734	-.27	.14
	MCE	TCE	-.655*	.084	.000	-.85	-.46
		JCE	-.720*	.077	.000	-.90	-.54
	JCE	TCE	.065	.087	.734	-.14	.27
		MCE	.720*	.077	.000	.54	.90
Prioritization of information from sources that are culturally familiar	TCE	MCE	.286	.138	.100	-.04	.61
		JCE	-.206	.144	.326	-.55	.13
	MCE	TCE	-.286	.138	.100	-.61	.04
		JCE	-.492*	.127	.000	-.79	-.19
	JCE Institution (I)	JCE	.206	.144	.326	-.13	.55
		TCE	.492*	.127	.000	.19	.79

Source: Field data 2023

D. Influence of Cultural Attitudes on Use of Digital Resources

Table IV shows that TCE students were significantly more comfortable using digital devices than MCE students (Mean Diff = 0.200, p = .000), though not different from JCE students. MCE students were less comfortable than both TCE and JCE. TCE students also used online databases more than MCE students (Mean Diff = 0.494, p = .000), though differences with JCE were not significant. MCE students used online resources less frequently than both TCE and JCE. Cultural hesitation to use technology was highest at MCE, significantly more than at TCE and JCE. TCE students valued digital literacy more than both MCE and JCE, while no difference was found between the latter two. TCE students also reported greater access to culturally relevant digital content compared to MCE and JCE.

TABLE IV INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ATTITUDES ON USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

Dependent Variable	Institution (I)	Institution (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Lower Bound
Student' comfort in using digital devices	TCE	MCE	.200*	.048	.000	.09	.31
		JCE	.000	.050	1.000	-.12	.12
	MCE	TCE	-.200*	.048	.000	-.31	-.09
		JCE	-.200*	.044	.000	-.30	-.10
	JCE	TCE	.000	.050	1.000	-.12	.12
		MCE	.200*	.044	.000	.10	.30
Students' use of online databases or digital libraries to find academic information	TCE	MCE	.494*	.112	.000	.23	.76
		JCE	.164	.116	.335	-.11	.44
	MCE	TCE	-.494*	.112	.000	-.76	-.23
		JCE	-.330*	.102	.004	-.57	-.09
	JCE	TCE	-.164	.116	.335	-.44	.11
		MCE	.330*	.102	.004	.09	.57
Hesitation to Use Technology Due to Cultural Values	TCE	MCE	.464*	.076	.000	.28	.64
		JCE	-.283*	.079	.001	-.47	-.10
	MCE	TCE	-.464*	.076	.000	-.64	-.28
		JCE	-.747*	.070	.000	-.91	-.58
	JCE	TCE	.283*	.079	.001	.10	.47
		MCE	.747*	.070	.000	.58	.91
Perceived importance of digital literacy skills on academic success	TCE	MCE	.588*	.105	.000	.34	.84
		JCE	.548*	.109	.000	.29	.81
	MCE	TCE	-.588*	.105	.000	-.84	-.34
		JCE	-.040	.096	.907	-.27	.19
	JCE	TCE	-.548*	.109	.000	-.81	-.29
		MCE	.040	.096	.907	-.19	.27
Perceived Access to Culturally Relevant Information through Technology	TCE		.432*	.129	.003	.13	.74
		MCE	.049	.134	.929	-.27	.37
	MCE	JCE	-.432*	.129	.003	-.74	-.13
		TCE	-.383*	.118	.004	-.66	-.10
	JCE Institution (I)	JCE	-.049	.134	.929	-.37	.27
		TCE	.383*	.118	.004	.10	.66

Source: Field data 2023

E. Influence of Cultural Norms on Students' Willingness to Seek Help from Information Professionals

Table V indicates that TCE students reported significantly greater comfort in seeking help from library staff than MCE students, though the difference with JCE was not significant. MCE students were the least comfortable overall. TCE students interacted with librarians more frequently than both MCE and JCE students, though no significant difference emerged between MCE and JCE. Cultural norms exerted a stronger positive influence on TCE students compared to both MCE and JCE, with JCE also scoring lower than MCE. Perceptions of librarians' helpfulness in locating culturally relevant resources differed only between TCE and JCE, with TCE students rating them more positively. Finally, MCE students were significantly more likely to seek help from culturally similar staff compared to both TCE and JCE.

TABLE V INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL NORMS ON STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO SEEK HELP FROM INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

Dependent Variable	Institution (I)	Institution (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Lower Bound
Comfort Level in Seeking Help from Library Staff or Information Professionals	TCE	MCE	.668*	.131	.000	.36	.98
		JCE	.245	.136	.174	-.08	.57
	MCE	TCE	-.668*	.131	.000	-.98	-.36
		JCE	-.423*	.120	.002	-.71	-.14
	JCE	TCE	-.245	.136	.174	-.57	.08
		MCE	.423*	.120	.002	.14	.71
Frequency of Interaction with Librarians or Information Specialists	TCE	MCE	-.436*	.179	.042	-.86	-.01
		JCE	-.696*	.186	.001	-1.14	-.26
	MCE	TCE	.436*	.179	.042	.01	.86
		JCE	-.260	.164	.255	-.65	.13
	JCE	TCE	.696*	.186	.001	.26	1.14
		MCE	.260	.164	.255	-.13	.65
Influence of Cultural or Social Norms on Seeking Assistance from Library Staff	TCE	MCE	.559*	.137	.000	.23	.88
		JCE	-.348*	.143	.042	-.69	-.01
	MCE	TCE	-.559*	.137	.000	-.88	-.23
		JCE	-.907*	.126	.000	-1.20	-.61
	JCE	TCE	.348*	.143	.042	.01	.69
		MCE	.907*	.126	.000	.61	1.20
Perceived Helpfulness of Information Professionals in Locating Culturally Relevant Resources	TCE	MCE	.207	.104	.119	-.04	.45
		JCE	.367*	.108	.002	.11	.62
	MCE	TCE	-.207	.104	.119	-.45	.04
		JCE	.160	.096	.218	-.07	.39
	JCE	TCE	-.367*	.108	.002	-.62	-.11
		MCE	-.160	.096	.218	-.39	.07
Likelihood of Seeking Assistance from Culturally Similar Information Professionals	TCE	MCE	1.260*	.117	.000	.98	1.54
		JCE	-.087	.122	.756	-.38	.20
	MCE	TCE	-1.260*	.117	.000	-1.54	-.98
		JCE	-1.347*	.108	.000	-1.60	-1.09
	JCE Institution (I)	TCE	.087	.122	.756	-.20	.38
		MCE	1.347*	.108	.000	1.09	1.60

Source: Field data 2023

F. Impact of Cultural Values on Students' Academic Performance in Relation to Information-Seeking Behavior

Table VI demonstrates that TCE students perceived a stronger influence of cultural values on their academic performance and information-seeking behavior than MCE students, with no significant difference between TCE and JCE. MCE students consistently reported the weakest perceived influence of culture. TCE students indicated a greater impact of family expectations on the time spent seeking academic information compared to MCE students, while JCE students also reported a stronger influence than MCE. JCE students were most motivated by community expectations compared to both TCE and MCE. In terms of learning styles, JCE students reported greater cultural alignment than MCE students. Both TCE and JCE students valued culturally aligned materials more highly than MCE students, underscoring the role of cultural context in academic success.

TABLE VI IMPACT OF CULTURAL VALUES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Dependent Variable	Institution (I)	Institution (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Lower Bound
Perceived Influence of Cultural Values on Academic Performance and Information-Seeking Behavior	TCE	MCE	.535*	.131	.000	.23	.84
		JCE	.102	.136	.731	-.22	.42
	MCE	TCE	-.535*	.131	.000	-.84	-.23
		JCE	-.433*	.120	.001	-.72	-.15
	JCE	TCE	-.102	.136	.731	-.42	.22
		MCE	.433*	.120	.001	.15	.72
Impact of Family Expectations or Cultural Norms on Time Spent Seeking Academic Information	TCE	MCE	.508*	.131	.000	.20	.82
		JCE	-.239	.136	.189	-.56	.08
	MCE	TCE	-.508*	.131	.000	-.82	-.20
		JCE	-.747*	.120	.000	-1.03	-.46
	JCE	TCE	.239	.136	.189	-.08	.56
		MCE	.747*	.120	.000	.46	1.03
Community Perspectives on Education and Their Effect on Academic Motivation	TCE	MCE	.072	.159	.893	-.30	.45
		JCE	.612*	.165	.001	.22	1.00
	MCE	TCE	-.072	.159	.893	-.45	.30
		JCE	.539*	.146	.001	.19	.88
	JCE	TCE	-.612*	.165	.001	-1.00	-.22
		MCE	-.539*	.146	.001	-.88	-.19
Influence of Cultural Values on Preferred Learning Style (e.g., Group vs. Individual Work)	TCE	MCE	.269	.165	.234	-.12	.66
		JCE	-.137	.171	.704	-.54	.27
	MCE	TCE	-.269	.165	.234	-.66	.12
		JCE	-.406*	.151	.021	-.76	-.05
	JCE	TCE	.137	.171	.704	-.27	.54
		MCE	.406*	.151	.021	.05	.76
Effect of Culturally Aligned Educational Materials on Academic Performance	TCE	MCE	.601*	.116	.000	.33	.88
		JCE	-.065	.121	.852	-.35	.22
	MCE	TCE	-.601*	.116	.000	-.88	-.33
		JCE	-.667*	.107	.000	-.92	-.41
	JCE Institution (I)	TCE	.065	.121	.852	-.22	.35
		MCE	.667*	.107	.000	.41	.92

Source: Field data 2023

.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Influence of Cultural Values on Perception of Knowledge Sources

The study revealed that students at Tumu College of Education (TCE) valued traditional knowledge sources more highly than their peers at McCoy (MCE) and Jahan Colleges (JCE), reflecting a stronger orientation toward community-based and indigenous knowledge. This supports Yebowaah and Owusu-Ansah (2020), who found that Ghanaian students often rely on elders, lecturers, and community authorities when faced with uncertainty, while MCE students' preference for formal academic sources aligns with Adarkwa's (2024) observation that students with stronger information literacy skills prioritize databases and lecturer-approved texts. Adjei (2022) reported that senior high students still favored teachers and print materials when digital sources seemed less credible, and Adjei (2024) noted that junior high students often required interpersonal encouragement to use library resources effectively. Together, these studies confirm that cultural orientations, institutional support, and infrastructural limitations strongly shape students' perceptions of information credibility and their preference for traditional versus formal academic sources.

B. Cultural Values and Information-Seeking Strategies

TCE students were more inclined to compare conflicting sources and verify digital content than their counterparts at MCE and JCE. Kim, Sin, and Yoo-Lee's (2014) study supports this, showing that students who frequently used social media also engaged in evaluation strategies such as assessing author credibility, cross-checking sources, and verifying evidence-especially in contexts where digital content is abundant but not always reliable. AJIST research complements this: in the OPAC usage study (Adjei et al., 2024), students who were more aware of the catalogue also demonstrated stronger source evaluation behaviour. Likewise, findings from Examining Information Seeking Behaviour *(*Adjei, 2022*) su*ggest that high evaluative behaviours are linked to students' exposure to formal library instruction and critical thinking training.

C. Cultural Attitudes and Use of Digital Resources

TCE students reported greater comfort with digital tools and more frequent use of online academic resources. This agrees with Nkansah and Oldac (2024), whose study found that digital literacy, confidence in institutional infrastructure, and community/institutional support strongly predict the usage of online academic platforms. Baidoo and Nwagwu (2024) also found that technology readiness (infrastructure, devices, user support) correlates with user satisfaction and frequency of use. AJIST's Evaluating Digital Library Services in Ghanaian Private Universities (Adetsi, 2025) further notes that student awareness, training, and trust are crucial determinants of digital library adoption. In their absence, students revert to conventional sources despite digital availability.

D. Cultural Norms and Help-Seeking from Information Professionals

Students from TCE reported more comfort seeking help from librarians, whereas those at MCE tended to prefer culturally familiar figures. This aligns with Ntumi, Upoalkpajor, and Nimo (2025), who found that strong cultural norms and stigma around public perception reduce students' willingness to approach authority figures perceived as judgmental. Asimah and van der Walt (2023) also observed that library staff perceived as formal or unapproachable discourage student engagement. Within AJIST, the OPAC usage study (Adjei et al., 2024) found that student willingness to use formal library tools increased when staff were accessible and perceived as supportive, reinforcing that librarian approachability mediates help-seeking behaviour.

E. Cultural Influence on Academic Performance

The finding that TCE and JCE students perceived a stronger cultural influence on their academic performance through information-seeking practices is supported by Kumaha, Baidoob, and Yusif (2024), who show that parental involvement-a pervasive cultural norm-boosts performance in independent academic tasks. Samuel (2022) also demonstrated that a strong reading culture embedded in community and familial norms correlates with better achievement. AJIST's Examining Information Seeking Behaviour among Students in Selected Senior High Schools (Adjei, 2022) provides parallel evidence: students who more frequently engage formal, credible sources tend to perform better academically than those relying on informal or local sources. Moreover, Perceptions and Use of Library Resources *(*Adjei, 2024*)* suggests that positive library attitudes and usage contribute to students' academic success by expanding access to validated information.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has empirically examined the influence of cultural values on students' information-seeking behavior in three Colleges of Education in Ghana-McCoy, Tumu, and NJA. Grounded in the positivist research paradigm, the findings underscore that cultural norms significantly shape students' perceptions of knowledge sources, their willingness to engage with information professionals, and their adoption of digital tools for academic purposes. The data revealed clear institutional variations, with students from Tumu College of Education demonstrating a stronger reliance on traditional and communal knowledge practices, while McCoy College students showed a greater tendency to depend on formal academic authorities. NJA College students exhibited characteristics that were more balanced between these two orientations.

The results affirm that students' academic information-seeking strategies are not only a function of individual preferences or access but are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural fabric of their institutions and communities. These insights highlight the importance of culturally responsive information literacy programs that recognize and integrate local epistemologies while promoting digital literacy and engagement with formal academic resources. Overall, the study contributes to a growing body of literature on the intersection of culture and information behavior in higher education contexts in Africa. It offers practical implications for librarians, educators, and policymakers seeking to bridge cultural gaps in students' engagement with academic information sources and to foster more inclusive and effective learning environments.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance students' information-seeking behaviour in Colleges of Education in Ghana while addressing the influence of cultural values:

Integrate Culturally Responsive Information Literacy Programs: Librarians and educators should design and implement information literacy training that incorporates local cultural perspectives and acknowledges students' reliance on interpersonal and community-based knowledge sources. This will help bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern academic requirements.

Strengthen Digital Literacy Initiatives: Since cultural values still shape students' comfort levels with technology, targeted digital literacy programs should be developed to build confidence and competence in the use of online databases, digital libraries, and academic search engines.

Promote Active Librarian–Student Engagement: Librarians should adopt more student-centered approaches, creating welcoming environments that encourage students to seek assistance. Regular orientation sessions, peer-support schemes, and culturally sensitive communication strategies can foster stronger relationships between librarians and students.

Institutional Support for Blended Knowledge Systems: Colleges of Education should formally recognize and integrate both traditional knowledge and modern academic resources in teaching and learning processes. This approach would validate students' cultural backgrounds while promoting critical engagement with digital and scholarly resources.

Policy Development for Inclusive Academic Support: Educational policymakers should develop frameworks that embed cultural inclusivity in academic support services. This includes allocating resources for training, infrastructure development, and the continuous professional development of librarians and faculty on culturally responsive practices.

Further Research: Additional studies should be conducted across other higher education institutions in Ghana to validate and expand these findings, particularly exploring the role of gender, socio-economic status, and emerging technologies in shaping information-seeking behaviours.

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IX. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Albert Buondau was responsible for the conceptualization of the study. The methodology was jointly developed by Simon Sanche and Albert Buondau, while the investigation was carried out by Simon Sanche. Data curation was undertaken by both authors, with formal analysis conducted by Simon Sanche. The initial draft of the manuscript was prepared by Simon Sanche, and Albert Buondau contributed to reviewing and editing the draft. Supervision of the research process was provided by Simon Sanche. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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