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Information Practices, Creativity, and Sustainable Cultural Development in Local Cultural Ecosystems: A Case Study of Corfu, Greece

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between information practices, creativity, and sustainable cultural development within localized cultural ecosystems. Drawing on perspectives from cultural studies, information behavior research, and heritage studies, the study examines how culturally embedded forms of information seeking, sharing, interpretation, and reuse contribute to creative expression and the continuity of local cultural identity. Using the island of Corfu as an indicative case study, the paper investigates how informal knowledge networks, community-based cultural interactions, and heritage-centered meaning-making shape creative cultural practices. Particular attention is given to the role of everyday information interactions in sustaining local cultural memory and enabling cultural adaptation in the context of globalization and digital transformation. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach based on contextual analysis and theoretically informed synthesis of existing literature on cultural ecosystems, creativity, and information practices. Rather than focusing on quantitative measurement, the paper seeks to illuminate the socially situated and culturally embedded dimensions of creativity within local communities. The analysis suggests that creativity in cultural ecosystems emerges not merely through access to information, but through participatory processes of interpretation, collaboration, and cultural reinterpretation. These practices support both the preservation and the renewal of cultural heritage, contributing to forms of sustainable cultural development that reinforce community identity and cultural resilience. By connecting information practices with cultural sustainability and local heritage dynamics, the paper contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on cultural ecosystems and offers insights for culturally responsive cultural policy, heritage management, and community-centered cultural development strategies.

Keywords: Information Practices, Cultural Ecosystems, Creativity, Sustainable Cultural Development, Cultural Heritage, Community Participation, Cultural Resilience, Information Behavior, Local Cultural Identity, Corfu

Introduction

Culture is increasingly recognized as a fundamental dimension of sustainable development, shaping social cohesion, community identity, and collective well-being. While discussions of sustainability have traditionally focused on economic, environmental, and social dimensions, scholars and international organizations have argued that cultural processes and cultural heritage are equally important for the long-term resilience of communities [1,2]. In this context, attention has shifted toward understanding how local cultural ecosystems generate, preserve, and transform cultural knowledge in ways that support both continuity and innovation.

Local cultural ecosystems comprise networks of people, institutions, traditions, and practices that collectively sustain cultural life within a specific geographical and social context. These ecosystems are not static repositories of heritage but dynamic environments in which cultural meanings are constantly negotiated and reinterpreted [4,5]. Through participation in cultural activities, community events, artistic practices, and everyday social interaction, individuals contribute to the ongoing production and reproduction of cultural knowledge. Such processes become particularly significant in an era characterized by globalization, technological change, and increasing cultural interconnectedness [6,7].

Within these cultural environments, information plays a crucial role. Information is not simply accessed and consumed; it is shared, interpreted, transformed, and embedded within social and cultural practices. Research in information behavior has increasingly emphasized the socially situated nature of information activities, demonstrating that information seeking and use are shaped by social relationships, cultural norms, and community contexts [8-10]. Information practices therefore constitute an important but often overlooked component of cultural sustainability.

At the same time, creativity has become a central concept in discussions of cultural development. However, critiques of the creative industries discourse emphasize that creativity is not limited to economic production but is also deeply embedded in place-based cultural practices and everyday social life [11]. While creativity is frequently associated with innovation, cultural industries, and economic growth [12], recent scholarship has highlighted its social and cultural dimensions. Creativity often emerges through collaborative interaction, participation in communities of practice, and engagement with existing cultural resources rather than through isolated individual effort [13,14]. These processes can also be understood through the lens of cultural and social capital, where access to cultural knowledge, networks, and symbolic resources shapes creative participation [15]. From this perspective, creativity can be understood as a process of cultural reinterpretation that enables communities to adapt inherited knowledge and traditions to contemporary circumstances.

The relationship between information practices and creativity has attracted growing attention within information science. Previous studies have shown that information seeking and information use play an important role in supporting creative activities, particularly within artistic and cultural domains [16,17]. Research on musicians and creative communities has demonstrated that creativity is closely connected to information exchange, collaboration, and the interpretation of diverse information sources [25]. However, despite these advances, relatively little attention has been paid to how information practices contribute to creativity and cultural sustainability within local cultural ecosystems.

This gap is particularly evident in studies focusing on heritage-rich communities. Cultural heritage research has extensively examined preservation, memory, and identity [5,18], while information behavior research has explored everyday information practices in various social contexts [8,20]. Yet few studies have attempted to bridge these perspectives in order to examine how information practices support creative engagement with heritage and contribute to sustainable cultural development.

The present study addresses this gap through an interpretive examination of the cultural ecosystem of Corfu, Greece. Corfu represents a particularly interesting case due to its rich historical heritage, multicultural influences, strong local traditions, and active cultural life. The island's cultural identity has been shaped through centuries of interaction among Venetian, French, British, and Greek influences, resulting in a distinctive cultural landscape where heritage remains deeply embedded in everyday life. Cultural practices associated with music, festivals, religious celebrations, local history, and community participation continue to play an important role in shaping social and cultural experience.

Drawing upon perspectives from cultural studies, information behavior research, and heritage studies, this paper examines how information practices contribute to creativity and sustainable cultural development within this local cultural ecosystem. The study argues that creativity is not simply a product of access to information but emerges through socially embedded processes of information sharing, interpretation, and cultural participation. These processes support both the preservation of cultural continuity and the development of new forms of cultural expression.

By exploring the intersection of information practices, creativity, and cultural sustainability, the paper contributes to interdisciplinary discussions concerning the role of information in cultural life and offers insights relevant to cultural policy, heritage management, and community-centered approaches to sustainable cultural development.

Literature Review

Cultural Ecosystems and Sustainable Cultural Development

The concept of cultural ecosystems has gained increasing prominence within cultural studies, heritage research, and cultural policy scholarship. Cultural ecosystems refer to the interconnected networks of individuals, communities, institutions, practices, and resources that collectively shape cultural life within specific social and geographical contexts. Rather than viewing culture as a collection of isolated activities or artifacts, the cultural ecosystem perspective emphasizes relationships, interactions, and the dynamic processes through which cultural meaning is created and sustained [5].

This perspective aligns closely with contemporary understandings of sustainable cultural development. While early approaches to sustainability focused primarily on economic growth and environmental protection, scholars have increasingly recognized culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development [1]. Cultural sustainability encompasses the preservation of cultural identity, the transmission of cultural knowledge, community participation, and the capacity of communities to adapt cultural practices in response to changing social conditions [2].

Within local communities, sustainable cultural development depends not only on the protection of tangible and intangible heritage but also on the active engagement of community members in cultural life. Heritage is increasingly understood as a living process rather than

a static collection of historical objects or traditions. According to Smith [18], heritage derives its significance from contemporary social practices through which communities attribute meaning to the past. This understanding aligns with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which emphasizes heritage as living practices, expressions, and knowledge transmitted across generations [3]. Similarly, Harrison [5] argues that heritage should be viewed as an ongoing process of cultural negotiation that connects memory, identity, and social participation.

The growing influence of globalization has further intensified discussions concerning cultural sustainability. Global cultural flows create opportunities for cultural exchange and innovation while simultaneously posing challenges related to cultural homogenization and the potential erosion of local identities [6,7]. Consequently, researchers have emphasized the importance of local cultural ecosystems as spaces where communities negotiate continuity and change while maintaining distinctive cultural identities.

In this context, understanding how cultural knowledge is shared, interpreted, and reproduced within local communities becomes essential for understanding cultural sustainability itself.

Information Practices in Cultural Contexts

Research in information behavior has traditionally focused on the processes through which individuals identify information needs, seek information, and use information to accomplish specific goals [9,19]. However, contemporary approaches increasingly recognize that information activities are deeply embedded within social and cultural environments.

The emergence of practice-oriented perspectives has shifted attention from individual information seeking toward broader information practices situated within everyday life. Information practices encompass the routine ways in which people encounter, share, interpret, and use information within particular social contexts [8,20,21]. From this perspective, information is not simply a resource to be acquired but an integral component of social participation and cultural experience.

Lloyd [10] argues that information practices are socially constructed through participation in communities and shared activities. Information is learned, interpreted, and applied within specific cultural settings where social relationships, norms, and collective experiences influence how individuals engage with information. Similarly, Chatman [22] demonstrated that information behavior is shaped by social worlds characterized by shared understandings and localized forms of knowledge.

Within cultural environments, information practices play a particularly important role in supporting cultural transmission and community identity. Public libraries and similar cultural institutions have also been shown to play a key role in fostering trust, social inclusion, and community participation through information access and mediation [23]. Oral traditions, storytelling, artistic collaboration, community archives, festivals, and informal communication networks all function as mechanisms through which cultural information is shared and preserved. These practices facilitate the circulation of cultural knowledge while reinforcing collective memory and social cohesion.

Digital technologies have further transformed information practices in cultural settings. The increasing availability of digital archives, online cultural platforms, and social media has expanded opportunities for accessing and sharing cultural information [14,24]. At the same time, scholars have raised questions regarding authenticity, contextual understanding, and the changing nature of cultural participation within digital environments. These developments suggest that information practices are becoming increasingly complex as local cultural traditions interact with global digital networks.

Despite extensive research on information behavior and information practices, relatively little attention has been devoted to examining their role within local cultural ecosystems and their contribution to sustainable cultural development. This gap becomes even more apparent when considering the relationship between information practices and creativity.

Creativity as a Cultural and Informational Process

Creativity has long been regarded as a fundamental component of cultural production and innovation. Traditional approaches often emphasized individual talent and originality as the primary sources of creative achievement. More recent scholarship, however, has challenged this individualistic perspective by highlighting the social, collaborative, and contextual dimensions of creativity [12,14].

Contemporary research increasingly conceptualizes creativity as a process that emerges through interaction with cultural resources, social networks, and communities of practice [13]. Creative individuals rarely operate in isolation; rather, they draw upon existing knowledge, shared experiences, and cultural traditions that provide the informational foundation for creative activity. Creativity therefore involves not only the generation of new ideas but also the reinterpretation and transformation of existing cultural meanings.

This perspective has particular relevance for cultural heritage contexts. Heritage provides communities with symbolic resources, narratives, and collective memories that can inspire new forms of cultural expression. Rather than opposing tradition and innovation, heritage often serves as a foundation for creative adaptation and cultural renewal [5,18].

Research within information science has increasingly explored the relationship between information behavior and creativity. Studies have demonstrated that creative activities depend heavily on information seeking, information sharing, and exposure to diverse information sources [17]. In a comprehensive review of the literature, Lavranos et al. [17] found that information behavior constitutes a critical component of creative processes across artistic and professional domains.

Similarly, Lavranos et al. [16] argued that information seeking behavior can act as a significant motivator for musical creativity, particularly when individuals engage with information in exploratory, collaborative, and interpretive ways. Their work emphasized that creativity is not solely dependent on information access but also on the ways in which information is contextualized and transformed into meaningful creative outcomes.

Research focusing on musicians further demonstrated the importance of social interaction and community participation in creative information practices [25]. found that musicians frequently rely on informal networks, collaborative learning, and community-based information exchange to support creative development. These findings suggest that creativity emerges

through socially situated information practices rather than through isolated individual information seeking.

Taken together, these studies indicate that creativity should be understood as both a cultural and informational phenomenon. Creative activity is shaped by access to cultural knowledge, participation in social networks, and engagement with shared systems of meaning.

Research Gap

Although previous research has generated valuable insights into cultural sustainability, information practices, and creativity, these areas have largely developed along separate disciplinary trajectories. Cultural studies have focused extensively on heritage, identity, and cultural development, while information science has examined information behavior and everyday information practices. Research on creativity has similarly explored artistic production, innovation, and creative communities.

However, relatively little research has integrated these perspectives to examine how information practices contribute to creativity and sustainable cultural development within local cultural ecosystems. Existing studies rarely address the informational mechanisms through which communities preserve, reinterpret, and transform cultural knowledge in ways that support cultural resilience.

Furthermore, much of the literature on creativity has concentrated on urban creative industries or professional creative sectors, leaving smaller local cultural ecosystems comparatively underexplored. There remains a need for research that examines how creativity emerges through everyday information practices embedded within heritage-rich communities.

The present study addresses this gap by exploring the cultural ecosystem of Corfu as a case through which to examine the relationships among information practices, creativity, heritage, and sustainable cultural development. By bringing together perspectives from cultural studies, information behavior research, and heritage scholarship, the paper seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the informational foundations of cultural sustainability.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive research approach to explore the relationship between information practices, creativity, and sustainable cultural development within a local cultural ecosystem. The choice of an interpretive perspective is based on the recognition that cultural practices, information activities, and creative processes are socially constructed phenomena whose meanings are shaped by particular historical, social, and cultural contexts [4]. Rather than seeking causal explanations or statistical generalizations, the study aims to develop a contextualized understanding of how information practices contribute to creativity and cultural sustainability within a heritage-rich community.

The research is informed by an interdisciplinary framework that brings together perspectives from cultural studies, information behavior research, and heritage studies. Such an approach is particularly appropriate because the phenomena under investigation extend across disciplinary boundaries. Information practices are examined not merely as information-related activities but as cultural practices embedded within community life, while creativity is

understood as a socially situated process linked to cultural participation and collective meaning-making.

The study therefore follows a qualitative case-study orientation, using a specific cultural context to explore broader conceptual relationships among information, creativity, and cultural sustainability.

Case Study Context: Corfu as a Local Cultural Ecosystem

The island of Corfu provides a particularly suitable setting for examining the interaction between information practices and cultural creativity. Situated in the Ionian Sea, Corfu possesses a distinctive cultural identity shaped by centuries of historical interaction among Greek, Venetian, French, and British influences. This historical trajectory has produced a rich cultural landscape characterized by diverse traditions, architectural heritage, musical practices, religious celebrations, local narratives, and strong forms of community participation.

Corfu's cultural ecosystem extends beyond formal cultural institutions and includes a wide range of informal cultural networks and community-based activities. Local festivals, philharmonic bands, religious processions, artistic initiatives, heritage associations, community events, and everyday social interactions all contribute to the circulation of cultural knowledge and the preservation of collective memory. These activities create opportunities for information exchange, cultural learning, and creative participation.

At the same time, the island faces challenges common to many heritage-rich destinations. Tourism, globalization, demographic change, and digital transformation influence how cultural traditions are maintained, represented, and transmitted. These conditions make Corfu an appropriate case through which to explore how local communities negotiate continuity and change while sustaining cultural identity.

The case is not intended to be representative of all cultural ecosystems. Rather, Corfu serves as an illustrative example that allows for the examination of broader theoretical questions concerning the informational foundations of creativity and cultural sustainability.

Data Sources

The study relies on multiple sources of evidence drawn from academic literature, cultural documentation, publicly available cultural materials, and contextual observations relating to Corfu's cultural environment. Sources include scholarly works on cultural ecosystems, information behavior, creativity, heritage studies, and sustainable cultural development, as well as reports and documentation concerning local cultural practices and heritage activities.

Particular attention was given to cultural activities that involve significant forms of knowledge exchange and community participation, including musical traditions, local festivals, religious celebrations, heritage-related events, and community cultural initiatives. These activities provide valuable insights into how information circulates within the local cultural ecosystem and how cultural knowledge is interpreted and transformed through participation.

The use of multiple sources allows for a richer understanding of the social and cultural processes under examination while supporting the interpretive nature of the study.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was guided by three interrelated conceptual dimensions derived from the literature:

- **Information Practices**. This dimension focuses on the ways individuals and communities seek, share, interpret, and use information within cultural contexts. Particular attention is given to informal knowledge exchange, social interaction, and community-based communication practices [8,10].
- **Creativity**. Creativity is examined as a socially situated process emerging through engagement with cultural resources, collaborative interaction, and the reinterpretation of existing knowledge and traditions [16,17].
- **Cultural Sustainability**. This dimension concerns the capacity of cultural systems to maintain continuity while adapting to social, technological, and economic change. Emphasis is placed on cultural resilience, community participation, and the preservation and renewal of cultural identity [1,2].

These three dimensions provided the analytical lens through which the cultural ecosystem of Corfu was examined. Rather than treating them as separate categories, the analysis explored their interconnections and mutual influence within everyday cultural practices.

Analytical Procedure

The analytical process involved an iterative reading and interpretation of relevant literature and contextual materials. Themes and patterns relating to information exchange, creative participation, cultural knowledge transmission, and heritage engagement were identified and examined in relation to the conceptual framework.

The analysis focused on understanding how cultural knowledge is communicated and transformed within community settings, how creative activities draw upon existing informational resources, and how these processes contribute to cultural continuity and adaptation. Particular attention was given to the role of informal networks and participatory cultural practices, as these frequently emerged as key mechanisms linking information behavior with cultural sustainability.

The interpretive nature of the analysis allowed for the identification of broader relationships and patterns that may not be visible through more narrowly defined empirical approaches.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study is exploratory and interpretive in nature and does not seek statistical generalization. The findings should therefore be understood as context-dependent and illustrative rather than universally applicable.

Second, the research relies primarily on theoretical interpretation and contextual analysis rather than extensive primary empirical data collection. While this approach is appropriate for exploring conceptual relationships, future studies could strengthen and extend the findings through interviews, ethnographic observation, focus groups, or participatory research involving local cultural actors.

Third, the study focuses on a single cultural ecosystem. Although Corfu offers a rich and meaningful context for analysis, other cultural settings may exhibit different patterns of interaction between information practices, creativity, and cultural sustainability.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the informational dimensions of cultural life and contributes to interdisciplinary discussions concerning the role of information practices in sustaining creative and resilient cultural ecosystems

Results

Information Practices as Cultural Processes

The analysis suggests that information practices constitute a fundamental component of cultural life within the local cultural ecosystem of Corfu. Information is not merely acquired for practical purposes but is embedded within social relationships, cultural traditions, and community participation. Cultural knowledge is transmitted through multiple formal and informal channels, including family networks, community associations, educational institutions, cultural organizations, religious communities, and artistic groups.

A recurring pattern observed within the cultural environment of Corfu is the importance of interpersonal communication in the transmission of cultural knowledge. Stories about local history, customs, traditions, and community experiences are frequently shared through everyday social interaction. Such exchanges contribute to the preservation of collective memory while simultaneously enabling individuals to interpret and adapt cultural knowledge to contemporary circumstances.

These findings support the view that information practices are socially situated activities rather than isolated individual behaviors [8,10]. Within the cultural ecosystem, information serves not only as a resource but also as a mechanism through which cultural identity is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced. The circulation of cultural information therefore contributes directly to the maintenance of community cohesion and cultural continuity.

The findings further indicate that information practices often occur within environments characterized by trust, familiarity, and shared cultural understanding. Informal communication networks appear particularly significant in facilitating access to local knowledge and cultural experiences. Community participation thus functions simultaneously as a cultural and informational process.

Heritage as a Living Informational Resource

One of the most significant findings concerns the role of cultural heritage as an active informational resource within the local cultural ecosystem. Heritage in Corfu is not experienced solely through monuments, museums, or historical sites. Instead, it is continuously reproduced through participation in cultural activities, festivals, musical traditions, religious celebrations, and community events [3].

The analysis suggests that heritage-related practices serve as important spaces for the transmission of cultural knowledge. Through active participation in these activities, community members encounter historical narratives, symbolic meanings, and cultural values that contribute to the formation of collective identity. Heritage therefore functions not simply as an object of preservation but as an ongoing process of communication and interpretation.

Particularly notable is the role of musical traditions in facilitating cultural knowledge exchange. Corfu's long-established philharmonic tradition represents more than a form of artistic expression; it also constitutes a community-based mechanism for learning, mentoring, collaboration, and cultural transmission. Participation in musical activities creates opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and cultural meanings across generations. This observation resonates with previous research demonstrating the importance of information sharing and collaborative learning within musical communities [25]. In the Corfiot context, musical participation appears to function as both a creative activity and a vehicle for sustaining cultural memory.

Creativity Emerging Through Participation

The findings indicate that creativity within the cultural ecosystem of Corfu is closely associated with participation rather than individual innovation alone. Creative practices frequently emerge through engagement with community activities, cultural traditions, and shared cultural resources. Individuals draw upon existing cultural knowledge and reinterpret it in ways that generate new forms of expression while maintaining meaningful connections with local identity.

This pattern challenges perspectives that portray creativity primarily as an individual or market-driven phenomenon. Instead, creativity appears to emerge through processes of interaction, collaboration, and cultural negotiation. Community members participate in the collective production of meaning by adapting traditions, introducing new interpretations, and responding to changing social realities.

Information practices play a central role in these processes. Access to cultural knowledge, interaction with other community members, and exposure to diverse cultural experiences provide the informational foundation upon which creative activities develop. Creativity therefore appears to be supported not only by the availability of information but also by the social environments within which information is exchanged and interpreted.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that have identified information seeking and information sharing as important elements of creative activity [17]. The present study extends this perspective by illustrating how creative information practices operate within a local cultural ecosystem and contribute to broader processes of cultural sustainability.

The Role of Community Networks

Another important finding concerns the significance of community networks in sustaining cultural creativity and information exchange. Cultural associations, local organizations, artistic groups, educational institutions, and informal social networks collectively create an environment that supports cultural participation and knowledge sharing.

These networks facilitate opportunities for learning, collaboration, and cultural engagement. They also provide spaces where cultural knowledge can be transmitted across generations, ensuring continuity while allowing adaptation and innovation. The findings suggest that community networks function as important mediators between heritage and creativity by connecting historical knowledge with contemporary cultural practices [15].

The role of social interaction is particularly evident in activities that require collective participation, such as festivals, musical performances, heritage events, and local celebrations.

These activities strengthen social bonds while simultaneously creating opportunities for the circulation of cultural information.

From an information behavior perspective, community networks can be understood as information environments that support both learning and creativity. Their importance extends beyond the transmission of factual knowledge to include the communication of values, meanings, and cultural experiences.

Digital Transformation and Cultural Participation

The analysis also reveals the growing influence of digital technologies on local cultural ecosystems. Digital platforms increasingly serve as channels through which cultural information is documented, shared, and promoted. Social media, digital archives, online communities, and cultural websites provide additional opportunities for participation and engagement with local heritage.

These technologies expand access to cultural information and enable broader visibility for local cultural activities. They also facilitate connections between local communities and wider national or international audiences. In this sense, digital technologies contribute to the dissemination and preservation of cultural knowledge.

However, the findings suggest that digital communication does not replace traditional forms of cultural participation. Face-to-face interaction, community engagement, and experiential involvement remain central to the transmission of cultural knowledge and the development of cultural identity. Digital platforms appear most effective when they complement rather than substitute existing community-based cultural practices.

This coexistence of traditional and digital forms of participation reflects the adaptive nature of cultural ecosystems. Rather than abandoning established cultural practices, communities often incorporate new technological tools into existing cultural frameworks.

Information Practices and Cultural Sustainability

Taken together, the findings indicate that information practices play a critical role in supporting sustainable cultural development. The circulation of cultural knowledge through formal and informal networks contributes to cultural continuity, creativity, and resilience. Information practices facilitate the preservation of heritage while also enabling communities to reinterpret cultural traditions in response to changing circumstances.

The study suggests that sustainable cultural development depends not only on institutional preservation efforts but also on the vitality of everyday information interactions. Cultural sustainability emerges through continuous processes of communication, participation, learning, and creative adaptation. These processes allow communities to maintain meaningful connections with their cultural heritage while remaining responsive to contemporary social and technological transformations.

In the case of Corfu, the relationship between information practices and cultural sustainability appears particularly strong because cultural knowledge remains deeply embedded within community life. The findings therefore support the argument that information practices should be considered an essential dimension of cultural ecosystems and an important factor in understanding the long-term sustainability of local cultural development.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that information practices constitute a central yet often overlooked dimension of local cultural ecosystems. While cultural sustainability is frequently examined through the lenses of heritage preservation, cultural policy, tourism, or creative industries, the present analysis suggests that the everyday processes through which individuals and communities seek, share, interpret, and reuse information are equally important for sustaining cultural life. In the case of Corfu, information practices emerge as mechanisms through which cultural knowledge is transmitted, creativity is fostered, and cultural identity is continuously negotiated.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is the demonstration that creativity is deeply embedded in social and informational contexts. Rather than appearing as a purely individual attribute, creativity emerges through participation in community life and engagement with shared cultural resources [11]. This finding supports contemporary perspectives that view creativity as a collaborative and socially situated process [13,14]. Within the cultural ecosystem of Corfu, creative expression is closely linked to collective memory, local traditions, and ongoing interaction among community members.

These observations are consistent with previous information behavior research that has emphasized the importance of information seeking and information use in creative processes. Lavranos et al. [16] argued that information behavior functions as a significant motivator for creativity, particularly in environments where individuals actively engage with diverse informational resources. Similarly, Lavranos et al. [17] demonstrated that creativity is strongly influenced by information-related activities, including exploration, discovery, collaboration, and interpretation. The present study extends these insights beyond artistic production and professional creative contexts by illustrating how information practices contribute to creativity within a broader cultural ecosystem.

The findings also reinforce the argument that cultural heritage should be understood as a dynamic informational resource. Heritage is often discussed in terms of preservation, authenticity, and memory [5,18]. However, the case of Corfu suggests that heritage simultaneously functions as a source of information that communities actively use, reinterpret, and transform. Participation in festivals, musical traditions, local commemorations, and community events enables individuals to engage with cultural knowledge in ways that support both continuity and innovation.

This perspective is particularly important in discussions of cultural sustainability. Sustainable cultural development is not achieved simply through the protection of cultural artifacts or the documentation of traditions. Rather, sustainability depends on the continued circulation of cultural knowledge within communities and the ability of individuals to participate in processes of cultural meaning-making. The findings therefore support broader arguments that cultural sustainability is fundamentally linked to participation, social interaction, and community engagement [1,2].

A further implication concerns the relationship between information practices and cultural resilience. The literature on resilience often emphasizes the capacity of communities to adapt to social, economic, and technological change while maintaining core aspects of identity and continuity. The present findings suggest that information practices contribute directly to this adaptive capacity. Through the sharing and reinterpretation of cultural knowledge,

communities are able to respond creatively to changing circumstances without abandoning their cultural foundations.

The role of community networks is especially significant in this regard. Informal communication channels, local associations, artistic groups, and cultural organizations create environments in which knowledge can be exchanged and collectively interpreted. Such networks support both learning and creativity while strengthening social cohesion. This finding resonates with earlier studies of musicians and creative communities, which highlighted the importance of collaborative information exchange and social interaction in supporting creative development [25].

The increasing influence of digital technologies introduces additional complexity into these processes. Digital platforms offer new opportunities for documenting, disseminating, and accessing cultural information. They can expand participation and strengthen connections between local communities and broader audiences. However, the findings indicate that digital communication does not replace the social and experiential dimensions of cultural participation. Instead, digital and face-to-face information practices coexist within the cultural ecosystem, each contributing in different ways to cultural continuity and innovation.

This observation is particularly relevant in contemporary discussions of globalization. Global communication networks provide unprecedented opportunities for cultural exchange but may also contribute to standardization and cultural homogenization [6,7]. The experience of Corfu suggests that local cultural ecosystems remain resilient when communities actively engage with cultural knowledge and maintain meaningful forms of participation. Information practices therefore act as mediating mechanisms through which global influences are interpreted and integrated into local cultural contexts.

The findings also have implications for cultural policy and cultural management. Existing policy frameworks often prioritize heritage conservation, cultural tourism, and economic development. While these objectives are undoubtedly important, the present study suggests that policymakers should also recognize the value of informal knowledge exchange, community participation, and local information networks. Cultural sustainability depends not only on preserving cultural assets but also on supporting the social processes through which cultural knowledge remains active and meaningful.

Libraries, archives, museums, and cultural centers may have an especially important role to play in this regard. Beyond their traditional functions as custodians of cultural resources, these institutions can serve as facilitators of participation, creativity, and community engagement [23]. By creating opportunities for interaction and knowledge exchange, they can strengthen the informational foundations of cultural ecosystems and contribute to sustainable cultural development.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to ongoing efforts to bridge cultural studies and information science. Although both fields are concerned with knowledge, meaning, and social practice, relatively few studies have explored their intersection within the context of cultural sustainability. The findings suggest that information behavior research offers valuable insights into understanding how cultural knowledge circulates within communities and how creativity emerges through everyday informational activities.

Ultimately, the case of Corfu illustrates that cultural ecosystems are sustained not only through institutions, policies, or heritage resources, but through the continuous interaction of people, information, and culture. Information practices function as the connective tissue linking heritage, creativity, and community participation. Recognizing this relationship allows for a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable cultural development and highlights the importance of everyday informational activities in shaping the future of local cultural ecosystems.

Conclusion and Future Research

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between information practices, creativity, and sustainable cultural development within the local cultural ecosystem of Corfu. Drawing upon perspectives from cultural studies, information behavior research, and heritage studies, the paper examined how everyday processes of information seeking, sharing, interpretation, and reuse contribute to cultural creativity and the sustainability of local cultural life.

The analysis demonstrated that information practices are deeply embedded within the cultural fabric of the community. Information is not merely accessed and consumed but actively exchanged, interpreted, and transformed through participation in cultural activities, social interaction, and community networks. These practices support the circulation of cultural knowledge, the preservation of collective memory, and the ongoing construction of cultural identity.

A central finding of the study is that creativity emerges through socially situated informational processes. Rather than being understood solely as an individual capability or a product of formal cultural industries, creativity appears closely connected to participation in community life and engagement with shared cultural resources. Cultural traditions, heritage practices, local narratives, and collaborative interaction provide the informational foundations from which creative expression develops. In this sense, creativity represents both continuity and change, enabling communities to preserve cultural knowledge while simultaneously adapting it to contemporary circumstances.

The study also highlights the importance of cultural heritage as a living informational resource. Heritage within the cultural ecosystem of Corfu functions not only as a repository of historical memory but also as an active source of cultural knowledge that informs present-day cultural practices. Through festivals, musical traditions, community events, and everyday social interaction, heritage becomes a dynamic process of communication and interpretation. Such processes contribute to cultural resilience by strengthening connections between past and present while supporting ongoing cultural renewal.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that information practices play a significant role in sustainable cultural development. Sustainable cultural ecosystems depend not only on institutional preservation efforts but also on the vitality of everyday informational and cultural interactions. Community participation, informal knowledge exchange, and collaborative engagement enable cultural systems to maintain continuity while responding to social, technological, and economic change. Information practices therefore constitute an essential yet frequently underrecognized component of cultural sustainability.

The study contributes to the growing body of scholarship that recognizes culture as a dynamic and participatory process. More specifically, it demonstrates the value of integrating information behavior perspectives into discussions of cultural sustainability and cultural development. By examining how information practices support creativity and heritage engagement within a local cultural ecosystem, the paper offers a broader understanding of the mechanisms through which cultural resilience is produced and maintained.

The case of Corfu illustrates that local cultural ecosystems remain vibrant not simply because cultural resources exist, but because individuals and communities actively engage with those resources through processes of communication, participation, and creative interpretation. Information practices operate as connecting mechanisms linking heritage, creativity, and cultural sustainability. Recognizing their importance may contribute to the development of more inclusive and community-centered approaches to cultural policy, heritage management, and sustainable cultural development.

Future Research

While the present study provides valuable insights into the informational dimensions of cultural sustainability, several opportunities for future research remain.
First, future studies could build upon the conceptual framework presented here through empirical investigation. Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, ethnographic observation, and participatory research could provide deeper understanding of how cultural actors experience and engage in information practices within local cultural ecosystems. Such approaches would offer valuable perspectives on the lived realities of cultural participation and creative engagement.

Second, comparative studies across different cultural settings could further illuminate the relationship between information practices and cultural sustainability. Comparative analyses involving urban and rural communities, island regions, heritage cities, or diasporic populations may reveal both common patterns and context-specific differences in the ways cultural knowledge is transmitted and transformed.

Third, future research could explore the role of digital technologies in greater depth. Although the present study identified the growing importance of digital platforms in cultural participation, additional research is needed to understand how digital communication influences cultural memory, heritage engagement, community identity, and creative expression. Questions concerning authenticity, digital inclusion, algorithmic visibility, and cultural representation warrant particular attention.

Fourth, greater emphasis could be placed on the role of information institutions within cultural ecosystems. Libraries, archives, museums, and cultural centers increasingly function as participatory spaces that facilitate learning, creativity, and community interaction. Examining how these institutions support cultural sustainability may provide useful insights for both researchers and policymakers.

Finally, future interdisciplinary research should continue to strengthen connections between information science and cultural studies. Despite increasing interest in culture, creativity, and participation, the informational dimensions of cultural life remain relatively underexplored within cultural sustainability scholarship. Integrating concepts from information behavior research with theories of cultural ecosystems, heritage, and community resilience may

contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural knowledge is produced, shared, and sustained over time.

As societies continue to experience rapid technological, social, and cultural transformation, understanding the informational foundations of cultural sustainability will become increasingly important. Future research in this area has the potential not only to advance theoretical knowledge but also to inform practical strategies for supporting resilient, creative, and culturally vibrant communities.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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