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Traditional Surveys Versus Digital Surveys: Perspectives of Library and Information Science Researchers on Best Method for Data Collection in Research

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Keywords: Traditional surveys; Digital surveys; LIS research; Data collection methods; Nigeria

Abstract

Aims: This study examined the preferences of Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers in Nigeria regarding traditional (paper-based) versus digital (online) survey methods for data collection in research. The primary aim was to assess the perceived advantages, drawbacks, contextual influences, and practical challenges associated with both survey methodologies.

Method: A mixed-method research design was employed, involving quantitative data from structured questionnaires and qualitative insights from open-ended responses. The study utilized convenience sampling techniques, targeting LIS researchers across Nigerian universities through the NALISE WhatsApp platform. Data were collected via Google Forms and analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Results: Findings revealed a slight preference for digital surveys (53.2%) over traditional surveys (46.8%), largely due to the benefits such as time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, broader reach, and enhanced data analysis capabilities. However, traditional surveys were preferred for their data accuracy and ease of administration in low-tech contexts. Key fac-

tors influencing researchers' preferences included researcher expertise, population characteristics, time constraints, and technological infrastructure. Major challenges identified were difficulties in ensuring data quality, limited access to technology, and insufficient training in survey design. Despite the promise of digital surveys, representativeness, technical issues, and ethical concerns persist.

Conclusion: The studyconcluded that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to survey methodology. While digital tools offer significant operational advantages, they must be balanced against contextual limitations such as digital divides, technical capacity, and representativeness. Traditional methods retain value, especially where trust, accuracy, or accessibility is paramount. A hybrid or adaptive survey approach, supported by institutional training, technological investment, and ethical oversight, is recommended to optimize research effectiveness and inclusiveness in the Nigerian LIS context.

Introduction

Data collection methods and research methodologies are essential elements in conducting studies, as they allow researchers to gather information and derive significant findings. Survey, as a primary data collection tool, has evolved from paper-based formats to digital modalities. With the advancements in technology, digital surveys have emerged as a viable alternative to traditional survey methods. This is particularly relevant in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), which is dedicated to the organization and sharing of knowledge. Researchers in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) often face the decision of choosing between traditional surveys that use paper-based questionnaires and digital surveys conducted online. The choice depends on various factors, such as research objectives, target population, available resources, and technological proficiency. While traditional surveys have been widely used and appreciated for their familiarity and ease of use, digital surveys have gained popularity due to their efficiency and flexibility (Evans & Mathur, 2018).

Traditional surveys refer to data collection methods that involve in-person administration, mail distribution, or printed questionnaires. These methods are often valued for data accuracy, as respondents are guided directly or can seek clarification, and they are particularly beneficial in settings with limited digital infrastructure (Mutepfa & Tapera, 2018). However, they are often associated with higher costs, slower response times, limited geographical reach, and the burden of manual data entry. Traditional surveys are favored by some LIS researchers and participants due to their familiarity and simplicity (López-Chila, 2021). These surveys do not require access to digital devices or an internet connection, making them more accessible for individuals with limited technology access or poor connectivity (Dolch & Zawacki-Richter, 2019).

On the other hand, digital or web-based surveys utilize online platforms or mobile apps for questionnaire administration. These tools provide significant ad-

vantages in terms of time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, wider reach, and automated data processing. According to Fang et al. (2021), digital surveys can collect data in real-time and facilitate complex survey designs through skip logic, branching, and multimedia integration. Nonetheless, challenges such as technical difficulties, limited representativeness due to digital divides, and response bias persist (Pathiravasan et al., 2021). Digital surveys also require participants to possess a basic level of technological literacy and access to stable internet connections. They allow researchers to quickly reach a larger and more diverse pool of participants at a lower cost (Lowry et al., 2019). Additionally, digital surveys simplify data collection and storage, providing features for data analysis, visualization, and real-time reporting (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). Fang et al. (2021) found that digital surveys were significantly faster and more scalable, but sometimes less representative due to uneven internet access. Similarly, Pathiravasan et al. (2021) found that adherence rates were lower in mobile app-based surveys compared to traditional ones, highlighting issues with respondent retention and motivation. These insights imply the importance of selecting the appropriate survey method based on contextual factors, including population characteristics, digital infrastructure, and research goals. Researchers can leverage online platforms to streamline the data management process. To maximize the benefits, researchers can adopt a hybrid approach that combines elements of both traditional and digital surveys. This approach involves using online platforms for data collection while providing participants with the option to request and complete paper-based questionnaires if necessary.

However, it is important to consider potential drawbacks. Digital surveys may introduce selection bias due to unequal access to digital devices and internet connectivity (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). Researchers must also address concerns regarding data privacy and security. Additionally, some populations may still prefer paper-based surveys due to familiarity or personal preferences (Toepoel, 2017). In the Nigerian context, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding the preferences and challenges faced by LIS researchers when deciding between traditional and digital surveys. These controversies often arise in academia when researchers are required to justify their choice of data collection procedures. Limited research has been conducted to explore the specific factors that influence the preferences of Nigerian LIS researchers and the potential challenges they encounter in implementing survey methods. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to bridge the gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the preference for traditional surveys versus digital surveys for data collection in research in the field of LIS.

Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the preferences between traditional (paper-based questionnaires) and digital (online)surveys conducted by LIS researchers in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. determine the preferred survey methodology for data collection in the field of LIS in Nigeria;
2. examine the perceived benefits of traditional and digital surveys among Nigerian LIS researchers;
3. determine the perceived drawbacks of traditional and digital surveys among Nigerian LIS Researchers;
4. identify factors that affect the preferences of Nigerian LIS researchers in deciding between traditional and digital surveys;
5. determine the potential challenges experienced by Nigerian LIS researchers in utilizing traditional and digital survey methods;
6. identify the contextual factors that influence the decision-making process of Nigerian LIS researchers when selecting survey methodologies.

Literature Review

The choice of data collection methods in research, particularly between traditional (paper-based) and digital (online) surveys, has attracted growing interest across disciplines. In doing so, the review covers the study's specific objectives:

Preferred Survey Methodology for Data Collection in LIS Research

The preference for survey methodology among LIS researchers is often influenced by a combination of practicality and philosophical orientation toward data collection. Traditional surveys, rooted in positivist paradigms, are frequently praised for their structured approach and personal contact, while digital surveys reflect the rising influence of post-positivist and pragmatist epistemologies that embrace flexibility and technology (Tella, 2015). Fang et al. (2021) noted that while digital surveys are increasingly favored for their efficiency, traditional methods still hold ground in contexts with limited digital penetration.

Perceived Benefits of Traditional and Digital Surveys

The perceived advantages of each survey method extend beyond functionality to include issues of scale, accessibility, and engagement. Digital surveys offer speed, cost-efficiency, and wider reach (Evans & Mathur, 2018), while traditional surveys are often associated with higher data accuracy and trust, especially in low-tech or high-context environments (Mutepfa & Tapera, 2018). Lowry et al. (2016) emphasized that the flexibility in digital design, including features like skip logic and multimedia, enhances user engagement. However, as López-Chila et al. (2021) caution, the effectiveness of these features depends on the respond-

ent's technological literacy, a variable still highly uneven in many African LIS communities. Some scholars argue that while digital surveys offer consistency and scalability, they may lack the depth and contextual nuance afforded by traditional methods. Roecker et al. (2010), in comparing conventional and digital mapping techniques, found that traditional approaches provided richer observational detail.

Drawbacks of Traditional and Digital Survey Methods

While each method has strengths, both present significant drawbacks. Traditional surveys are often criticized for being time-consuming, labor-intensive, and geographically restrictive (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). Conversely, digital surveys, despite their scalability, face issues related to sampling bias, digital divides, and lower completion rates due to technological fatigue or interface design flaws (Pathiravasan et al., 2021; Toepoel, 2017). The literature indicates that the rapidity of digital methods may sometimes lead to superficial responses, whereas the logistical burden of paper-based methods may deter participation.

Factors Influencing Preferences in Survey Method Selection

Survey method preference is rarely a binary choice; it is mediated by factors such as researcher expertise, technological infrastructure, study goals, and population characteristics. According to Fricker (2008), decisions often hinge on accessibility, digital competence, and the nature of the study population. For LIS researchers in developing countries, cost and infrastructure are particularly decisive. Tella (2015) emphasizes that some researchers favor paper-based surveys not out of methodological conviction but due to familiarity and institutional constraints. This reflects a broader tension between innovation and pragmatism in methodological choices.

Challenges in Implementing Traditional and Digital Surveys

Implementing either survey method comes with operational challenges. Digital surveys are often hindered by poor internet connectivity, data security concerns, and low digital literacy among participants (Reveilhac et al., 2022). Meanwhile, traditional surveys demand more physical resources and time, increasing the risk of delays and budget overruns (Zhang, 2000). Moreover, challenges such as ensuring data quality and securing sufficient response rates are common to both methods but manifest differently (Hays et al., 2015). The literature suggests that capacity building is critical to overcoming these hurdles in LIS research contexts.

Contextual Factors in Method Selection by Nigerian LIS Researchers

The influence of context is central to understanding survey method choices. Nigerian LIS researchers operate within a dual burden of digital aspiration and analog limitation. Adeyemi and Oyeniran (2019) argue that infrastructural asymmetries, funding gaps, and uneven access to training create a methodological dilemma: researchers may want to go digital but are forced to rely on paper. The literature calls for an adaptive or hybrid model that leverages both methods depending on specific research conditions (Opara et al., 2023). Such a stance aligns with pragmatic pluralism, allowing researchers to tailor their methods to realities on the ground.

In sum, a close analysis of the reviewed literature reveals several notable gaps that warrant further investigation. One major gap is the limited contextual relevance of existing studies to the African or specifically, Nigerian research environment, particularly within the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). While studies by Fang et al. (2021), Pathiravasan et al. (2021), and Nayak and Narayan (2019) offered useful insights into the use of digital surveys in health, medical, and educational domains, their geographical and disciplinary focus differs significantly from the LIS context in Nigeria. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research that captures the cultural, infrastructural, and academic realities faced by LIS researchers in developing countries. This is particularly important for fields like LIS in Nigeria, where research is not only conducted by academics but also by practicing librarians, policy consultants, and postgraduate students who may have varying access to resources and training.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain comprehensive insights into the preferences and experiences of Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers in Nigeria regarding traditional and digital survey methods. The quantitative aspect involved the use of structured questionnaires, while the qualitative component utilized open-ended questions to elicit detailed narrative responses. The actual population for this study consisted of 421 LIS researchers who were registered members of the Nigerian Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) WhatsApp platform as of November 2023. This group, comprising academics from Nigerian universities offering LIS programs, was selected due to their accessibility, nationwide representation, and active involvement in scholarly communication. The study employed a convenience sampling technique, leveraging the WhatsApp group to distribute the survey instrument directly to the participants. This sampling approach was chosen because the members were readily available, professionally relevant, and active in research-related discourse. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire created on Google Forms.

The instrument included both closed-ended items (used for quantitative analysis) and open-ended questions (used for qualitative insights). The questionnaire link was posted in the NALISE WhatsApp group, and participation was voluntary. To prevent duplicate entries, the “Limit to 1 response” feature was enabled, requiring a Google account login. At the end of the survey, only 391 participated, and responded with sufficient and complete responses to the questionnaire items.

Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 20 LIS educators from institutions not included in the final sample. Feedback from the pilot informed minor revisions to question clarity and structure. The final instrument covered key dimensions such as survey method preferences, perceived benefits and drawbacks, influencing factors, challenges encountered, and contextual considerations.

To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were calculated for major sections. The reliability scores were as follows: perceived benefits and drawbacks ($\alpha = 0.82$), factors influencing preference ($\alpha = 0.85$), and challenges experienced ($\alpha = 0.80$). These values indicate a high level of reliability across the measured constructs.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and visual charts to identify trends in survey method preference and influencing variables. Qualitative responses were analyzed through thematic analysis, following open coding procedures to identify recurring patterns and themes aligned with the study objectives.

Results

The resultsare presented in tables and figures, which are aligned with the study’s specific objectives:

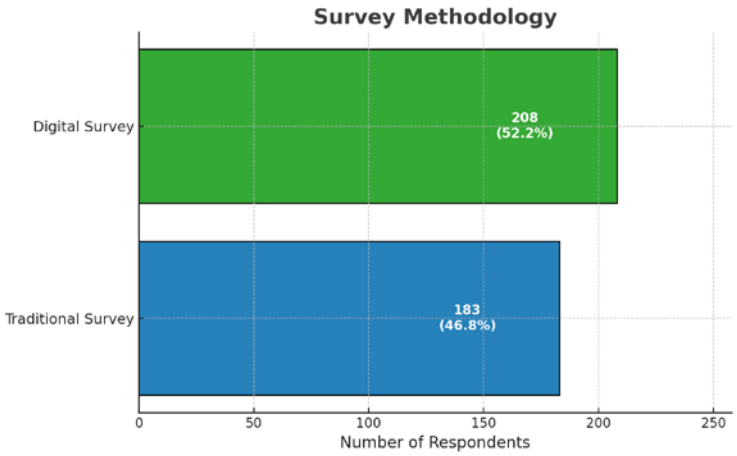

Figure 1: Preferred survey methodology for data collection in the field of LIS

Source: Made by authors

Figure 1 shows that 183 participants (46.8%) expressed a preference for traditional surveys, while 208 participants (53.2%) indicated a preference for digital surveys. The findings of the study showed that respondents' preference for digital surveys was slightly above average.

Responses derived from the open-ended part of the semi-structured questionnaire

The participants highlighted several advantages of digital surveys. One participant shared, "Digital surveys reduced the time required for data collection and analysis compared to traditional paper-based surveys." Another added, "They allow real-time response tracking and eliminate the stress of manual data entry." Many respondents appreciated the accuracy of data captured through digital tools. One stated, "I use validation rules in my digital surveys to prevent wrong inputs and missing responses."The flexibility of question design was also commended. As one respondent put it, "I like that I can include multiple-choice, ratings, and open-ended questions all in one form."

Several participants observed improved participation. For instance, one noted, "My response rate increased after I moved from paper to digital surveys." Another commented, "It's easier to reach people in different locations with online forms." Convenience was a recurring theme. A respondent said, "People can fill it at their own time and don't need to travel to meet me."

Participants also praised interactive and multimedia features. One remarked, "I used videos and pictures to explain complex questions, and it worked well." Another explained, "Adding a leader board and small rewards made the survey fun and more people responded. "Privacy and candid feedback were also noted. One participant stated, "Respondents are more honest when there's no face-to-face interaction."

Regarding overall research outcomes, participants emphasized cost and time savings. As one explained, "It's cheaper than printing and easier to analyze because of the built-in graphs." Another said, "I got my results faster, and could make decisions immediately after data collection." Finally, on data quality, one respondent concluded, "The form alerts me when something is missing or wrongly filled, so my data is cleaner."

Survey Method	Benefit	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Traditional Surveys	Data Accuracy	127	65.9%
	Ease of Administration	94	48.7%
	Flexibility	73	37.9%
Digital Surveys	Time Efficiency	189	90.4%
	Cost-effectiveness	142	67.9%
	Data Analysis	110	52.6%

Table 1: Perceived Benefits of Traditional Surveys and Digital Surveys among Nigerian LIS Researchers (n =391)

Source: Made by authors

Table 1 presents the perceived benefits of traditional and digital surveys among Nigerian LIS researchers. Among the respondents, data accuracy was the most commonly recognized benefit of traditional surveys, with 127 researchers (65.9%) acknowledging its importance. Additionally, 94 researchers (48.7%) identified the ease of administration as a benefit, while 73 researchers (37.9%) emphasized the flexibility it provides. On the other hand, digital surveys were primarily recognized for their time efficiency, with 189 researchers (90.4%) acknowledging this advantage. Cost-effectiveness was identified by 142 researchers (67.9%) as a benefit of digital surveys, and 110 researchers (52.6%) highlighted the advantage of data analysis.

Survey Method	Drawback	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Traditional Surveys	Time-consuming	113	62.1%
	Limited reach	86	47.3%
	Data entry and management	67	36.8%
Digital Surveys	Limited representativeness	127	60.8%
	Technical difficulties	98	46.9%
	Respondent bias	79	37.8%

Table 2: Perceived Drawbacks of Traditional and Digital Surveys among Nigerian LIS Researchers

Source: Made by authors

Similarly, Table 2 presents the perceived drawbacks of traditional and digital surveys among Nigerian LIS researchers. For traditional surveys, the most commonly perceived drawback among the respondents was the time-consuming

nature, with 113 researchers (62.1%) recognizing this as a disadvantage. Additionally, 86 researchers (47.3%) mentioned the limited reach of traditional surveys as a drawback, and 67 researchers (36.8%) identified data entry and management as a challenge. In contrast, for digital surveys, the most widely recognized drawback was limited representativeness, with 127 researchers (60.8%) acknowledging this limitation. Furthermore, 98 researchers (46.9%) reported technical difficulties as a drawback of digital surveys, and 79 researchers (37.8%) mentioned the potential for respondent bias.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Familiarity with Traditional Surveys	182	46.6%
Familiarity with Digital Surveys	209	53.4%
Data Collection Efficiency	154	39.4%
Data Accuracy and Reliability	178	45.5%
Cost-effectiveness	137	35.0%
Participant Engagement	168	42.9%
Time Efficiency	186	47.6%
The Flexibility of Survey Design	195	49.9%
Technological Infrastructure	122	31.2%
Access to Resources	159	40.6%

Table 3: Factors Influencing Survey Method Preferences (n=391)

Source: Made by authors

Table 3 indicates the factors that influence preferences of survey methods among the participants. Out of the total respondents, 182 individuals (46.6%) reported being familiar with traditional surveys, while 209 individuals (53.4%) reported familiarity with digital surveys. Among the influencing factors, 154 participants (39.4%) considered data collection efficiency as a significant aspect of their survey method preferences. Likewise, 178 participants (45.5%) emphasized the importance of data accuracy and reliability. Cost-effectiveness emerged as a noteworthy factor for 137 respondents (35.0%), indicating the consideration of cost implications in their preferences. Participant engagement was also deemed significant, with 168 individuals (42.9%) recognizing its importance. Time efficiency was highlighted by 186 participants (47.6%), indicating a preference for survey methods that save time. The flexibility of survey design was regarded as important by 195 respondents (49.9%), indicating a desire for methods that allow adaptable survey designs. The availability of technological infrastructure was identified as an influencing factor by 122 participants (31.2%), highlighting the importance of suitable technological resources for survey methods. Access to resources was also considered crucial by 159 individuals (40.6%).

Survey Method	Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	Data Collection Time Constraints	221	56.5%
	Difficulty in Ensuring Data Quality	275	70.3%
	Survey Design Complexity	108	27.6%
	Inadequate Resources for Survey Implementation	96	24.6%
	Low Response Rates	26	6.6%
	Ethical Considerations	58	14.8%
Digital	Lack of Technical Skills	126	32.2%
	Limited Access to Technology	167	42.7%
	Insufficient Training on Survey Methodology	152	38.9%
	Lack of Stakeholder Collaboration	64	16.4%

Table 4: Challenges Experienced by Nigerian LIS Researchers in Utilizing Traditional and Digital Survey Methods (n = 391)

Source: Made by authors

Table 4 presents the challenges encountered by Nigerian Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers in the use of traditional and digital survey methods. For traditional surveys, the most frequently reported challenge was difficulty in ensuring data quality, noted by 275 respondents (70.3%). Additionally, data collection time constraints were cited by 221 respondents (56.5%). Other challenges included survey design complexity (27.6%), inadequate resources for implementation (24.6%), ethical considerations (14.8%), and low response rates (6.6%). In the case of digital surveys, the most prominent challenge was limited access to technology, reported by 167 respondents (42.7%). This was closely followed by insufficient training on survey methodology (38.9%) and lack of technical skills (32.2%), underscoring the need for digital literacy and capacity building. A smaller but notable percentage (16.4%) reported a lack of stakeholder collaboration, which may affect participant recruitment and tool deployment in digital contexts.

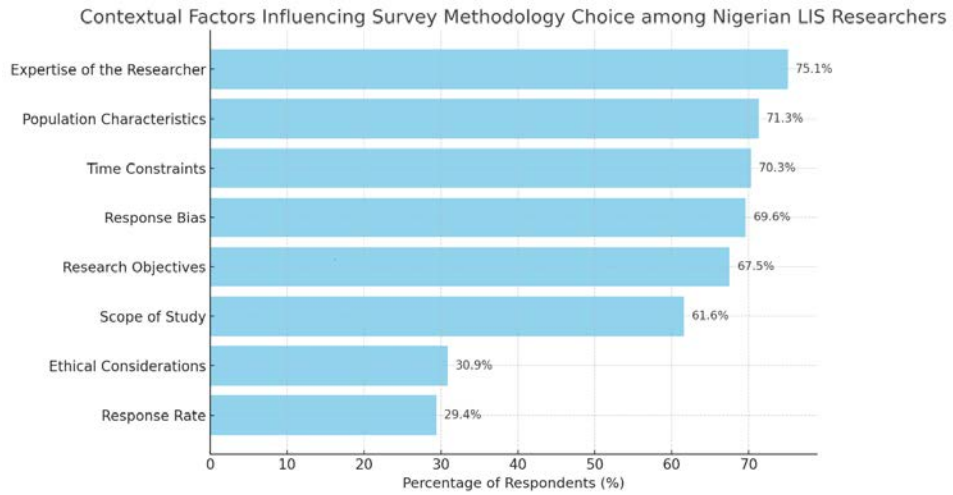

Figure 2: Factors Influencing Decision-making Process of Nigerian LIS Researchers in Survey Methodology Selection

Source: Made by authors

Figure 2 displays the percentages of contextual factors that impact the decision-making process of Nigerian LIS researchers when choosing survey methodologies. The factor most frequently reported by participants is the “Expertise of the Researcher,” with 294 respondents (75.1%) recognizing its significance. Other notable factors include “Population Characteristics” (279 respondents, 71.3%), “Time Constraints” (275 respondents, 70.3%), and “Response Bias” (272 respondents, 69.6%). Similarly, “Research Objectives” (264 respondents, 67.5%) and “Scope of Study” (241 respondents, 61.6%) emerge as influential factors. In contrast, factors such as “Ethical Considerations” (121 respondents, 30.9%) and “Response Rate” (115 respondents, 29.4%) have a relatively lower influence on the decision-making process. In total, these findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of decisionmaking among Nigerian LIS researchers when choosing survey methodologies.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to explore the preferences, benefits, drawbacks, influencing factors, challenges, and contextual considerations associated with traditional and digital survey methods among Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers in Nigeria. A major finding of the study is the subtle preference for digital surveys over traditional surveys. While both methods were acknowledged for their unique strengths, most respondents favored digital surveys due to their perceived efficiency and modern applicability. This preference aligns with assertions by Evans and Mathur (2018) and Fang et al. (2021), who stressed the convenience,

speed, and reach of digital data collection tools. However, the findings also show that traditional surveys are not obsolete. A significant number of researchers still favor them, particularly for their reliability in low-tech contexts. This affirms the position of Mutepfa and Tapera (2018), who noted that traditional methods remain relevant in environments where digital infrastructure is weak. Further, qualitative responses from the open-ended sections of the questionnaire provided valuable insights into user experiences. Participants praised digital tools for enhancing engagement through multimedia, gamification, and interactive design features. They reported that digital surveys made participation more enjoyable and convenient, especially for busy or geographically dispersed respondents. These observations affirm the arguments made by López-Chila et al. (2021), who found that interactivity can significantly improve response quality. However, some respondents also expressed a preference for traditional surveys when engaging with older populations or when ensuring more candid and reflective answers were critical. This implies that no single method is universally ideal and that both survey types should be considered complementary rather than oppositional.

In terms of perceived benefits, digital surveys were highly regarded for their time-saving features, cost-effectiveness, and streamlined data analysis. Respondents reported that digital platforms reduced the burden of manual data handling and enabled quicker decisions. These findings corroborate studies by Lowry et al. (2016) and Nayak and Narayan (2019), who observed that the automation and scalability of digital tools made them attractive for researchers seeking to save both time and money. On the other hand, traditional surveys were seen as beneficial for ensuring data accuracy and ease of administration. This is consistent with the observations of Zhang (2000) and Tella (2015), who maintained that paper-based methods can be more reliable, especially in settings where respondents may require clarification or when digital literacy is low.

Regarding perceived drawbacks, the findings revealed clear distinctions. Traditional surveys were primarily criticized for being time-consuming and geographically limited, which echoes Nayak and Narayan's (2019) concerns about logistical inefficiencies. Conversely, digital surveys were found to suffer from representational challenges due to unequal access to digital tools. This mirrors the conclusions of Pathiravasan et al. (2021), who documented the persistence of the digital divide as a major barrier to equitable data collection. Respondent bias and technical difficulties were also noted, suggesting that digital tools, while powerful, may not always guarantee accuracy or consistency without adequate preparation.

The study further uncovered a range of factors that influence researchers' preferences. Most participants identified researcher expertise, time efficiency, data reliability, and design flexibility as significant considerations. This finding is in agreement with Fricker (2008) and Tella (2015), both of whom emphasized that methodological choices are shaped by practical realities, including the researcher's skillset and the objectives of the study. For instance, LIS researchers operating within resource-constrained institutions may lean toward digital tools due to

their flexibility, while others may opt for traditional surveys based on familiarity and institutional norms.

Also, the study discovered several operational challenges experienced by LIS researchers. For traditional methods, concerns around data quality and time constraints were most pressing. These findings are in harmony with the literature that criticizes the inefficiencies of manual data handling and prolonged timelines (Hays et al., 2015). For digital surveys, issues such as limited access to technology, inadequate training, and lack of technical skills were prevalent. These challenges echo the concerns raised by Reveilhac et al. (2022) and Nayak and Narayan (2019), who advocated for more capacity-building initiatives to support the adoption of digital tools. The implication here is that while digital tools offer clear advantages, their effectiveness depends heavily on the digital competence of the researcher and participant.

Finally, contextual influences emerged as a crucial theme in this study. Respondents consistently emphasized that the choiceof the survey methods was shaped by population characteristics, the scope of study, time sensitivity, and the researcher's level of expertise. These findings support the pragmatic approach proposed in the literature, notably by Opara et al. (2023), which argues for adaptive survey strategies based on situational factors. In other words, LIS researchers in Nigeria do not select survey methods in isolation; they do so by weighing a constellation of context-driven variables.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the preferences, perceived advantages and disadvantages, influencing factors, and contextual considerations that shape the choice between traditional and digital survey methods among Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers in Nigeria. The findings revealed a modest but clear preference for digital surveys, driven by their time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and enhanced analytical capabilities. Respondents commended digital platforms for facilitating real-time data collection, broader geographic coverage, and multimedia engagement. However, traditional surveys still hold substantial value, especially in contexts with limited technological access, where data accuracy and ease of administration remain critical.

Despite the operational strengths of digital methods, both traditional and digital surveys were found to have significant limitations. Traditional methods were associated with slower turnaround times and higher administrative burdens, whereas digital methods faced challenges such as limited representativeness, technical difficulties, and digital literacy gaps. Researchers' methodological choices were influenced by factors such as their expertise, the nature of the study population, time constraints, and access to resources. The study further identified major implementation challenges, including poor digital infrastructure, inadequate

training, and data quality concerns. The study concludes that survey methodology selection in LIS research should not rely solely on convenience or trend, but rather on a critical appraisal of contextual realities.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Library and Information Science (LIS) researchers should adopt a flexible and hybrid approach to survey administration, combining digital and traditional methods depending on the nature of the research population. Institutional research committees and supervisors should encourage methodological pluralism, promoting both formats where appropriate rather than enforcing a single standard.
2. Universities and research institutions should train LIS researchers on how to match survey method strengths with research goals. For time-bound and large-scale studies, digital platforms should be encouraged. For sensitive topics or studies involving populations with low digital literacy, traditional tools should be supported. Researchers should be guided to select tools that enhance the strengths most relevant to their research objectives.
3. Library schools should collaborate to offer periodic workshops addressing the technical and operational weaknesses of both survey types. Training should focus on overcoming data quality issues in traditional surveys and minimizing representational bias and technical barriers in digital surveys.
4. LIS postgraduate programs and research support units should include survey design and methodology training as core components of researcher development. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing technical skills, promoting confidence with digital platforms, and guiding researchers on how to evaluate these factors when making methodological decisions.
5. University administrators and faculty heads should invest in digital infrastructure, particularly in departments conducting field-based research. In addition, continuous professional development programs should be instituted to equip researchers with data quality management skills and survey-specific technical knowledge. Funding agencies should also prioritize projects that incorporate survey training components.
6. LIS researchers should be encouraged to conduct a pre-survey context analysis before selecting a survey method. Ethical clearance boards and academic supervisors should require documentation showing how contextual factors (such as time, population profile, and available tools) were considered in choosing a method. This will foster deliberate, well-informed decision-making and improve overall research quality.

Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations. Firstly, the study relied primarily on self-reported data collected through a semi-structured questionnaire distributed via a digital platform (Google Forms). This approach may have introduced a degree of response bias, particularly favoring participants who are already comfortable with digital technologies, thereby potentially underrepresenting researchers who prefer or rely solely on traditional survey methods. Secondly, the sampling method employed may limit the inclusivity and generalizability of the findings. While the group includes a wide range of LIS researchers from Nigerian universities, it may exclude professionals not active on digital platforms or not affiliated with the association, particularly practitioners in remote or resource-constrained institutions. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on LIS researchers within Nigeria. As such, the contextual realities, infrastructure disparities, and institutional policies influencing survey method preferences may not be reflective of experiences in other disciplines or countries.

Suggestions for Further Study

Given the scope and limitations of this research, future studies are encouraged to adopt a more diverse sampling framework that includes LIS professionals outside the NALISE platform, such as librarians working in public, school, or private institutional libraries. Expanding the sample to include non-academic LIS stakeholders would provide a broader view of survey method preferences across different professional settings.

Future studies should consider qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore the lived experiences of researchers who have conducted both traditional and digital surveys. Also, investigating how demographic variables, such as age, academic rank, or digital literacy levels, influence methodological choices could also be a valuable addition to the literature.

Finally, comparative cross-country studies between Nigerian LIS researchers and their counterparts in other African or developing countries could illuminate regional trends, shared challenges, and innovative practices in survey-based research. Such studies would contribute to a more global understanding of data collection dynamics in resource-limited settings.

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Ankiety tradycyjne a cyfrowe: najlepsze metody gromadzenia danych w badaniach z perspektywy badaczy bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej

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Bolaji David Oladokun jest wykładowcą na Wydziale Bibliotekoznawstwa i Technologii Informacyjnych Politechniki Federalnej w Ikot Abasi w stanie Akwa Ibom w Nigerii. Posiada dyplom ukończenia studiów licencjackich na kierunku bibliotekoznawstwo i technologii informacyjnej oraz dyplom z wyróżnieniem w zakresie komunikacji masowej. Uzyskał również tytuł magistra bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej na Uniwersytecie Edukacyjnym Ignatius Ajuru w Port Harcourt w Nigerii, który otrzymał z wyróżnieniem. Bolaji jest również certyfikowanym bibliotekarzem w Nigerii (CLN), członkiem Nigeryjskiego Stowarzyszenia Bibliotek (NLA), Nigeryjskiego Stowarzyszenia Edukatorów Bibliotekoznawstwa

i Informacji Naukowej (NALISE) oraz Stowarzyszenia Nauk i Technologii Informacyjnych (ASIS&T). Jest autorem ponad 150 artykułów opublikowanych w akredytowanych czasopismach, materiałów konferencyjnych i rozdziałów w książkach. Ma również na swoim koncie trzy książki z zakresu bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej. Można się z nim skontaktować pod adresem: Bolaji.oladokun@yahoo.com

Yusuf Ayodeji Ajani jest wykładowcą drugiego stopnia 2 na Wydziale Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej Uniwersytetu w Abudży, FCT, Nigeria oraz studentem studiów podyplomowych na Wydziale Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej Uniwersytetu Ilorin w Ilorin w Nigerii. Ma imponujący dorobek publikacyjny, z ponad 70 artykułami opublikowanymi w renomowanych krajowych i międzynarodowych czasopismach z dziedziny edukacji i bibliotekoznawstwa. W 2023 roku otrzymał prestiżową nagrodę Emerald Literati Award w uznaniu jego wkładu w badania naukowe. W przypadku pytań i potencjalnej współpracy prosimy o kontakt z Ayodeji pod adresem yusuf.ajani@uniabuja.edu.ng.

Adeyinka Tella jest wybitnym naukowcem związanym z Wydziałem Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej Uniwersytetu Ilorin w Nigerii oraz pracownikiem naukowym na Wydziale Nauk Informacyjnych Uniwersytetu Południowej Afryki w Pretorii. Ma imponujące portfolio naukowe, w którym opublikował ponad 300 artykułów w renomowanych krajowych i międzynarodowych czasopismach z dziedziny bibliotekarstwa. W uznaniu jego wybitnego wkładu badawczego Tella został nagrodzony prestiżową nagrodą Emerald Literati Award w 2023 roku. Posiada również stopień naukowy C2 przyznany przez Narodową Fundację Naukową Południowej Afryki. Znany ze swojego ducha współpracy, Tella jest otwarty na kontakt i współpracę w różnych dyscyplinach (tellayinkaedu@yahoo.com).

Słowa kluczowe: ankiety tradycyjne; ankiety cyfrowe; badania LIS; metody gromadzenia danych; Nigeria

Streszczenie

Cele: Badanie sprawdzało preferencje badaczy bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej (LIS) w Nigerii dotyczące tradycyjnych (papierowych) i cyfrowych (internetowych) metod ankietowych zbierania danych w badaniach. Głównym celem była ocena postrzeganych zalet, wad, wpływów kontekstowych i praktycznych wyzwań związanych z obiema metodologiami badania.

Metoda badawcza: Zastosowano projekt badawczy oparty na metodzie mieszanej, obejmujący dane ilościowe z ustrukturyzowanych kwestionariuszy i jakościowe spostrzeżenia z odpowiedzi otwartych. W badaniu wykorzystano techniki uznaniowego pobierania próbek, skierowane do badaczy LIS z nigeryjskich uniwersytetów za pośrednictwem platformy NALISE WhatsApp. Dane zostały zebrane za pomocą Formularzy Google i przeanalizowane za pomocą statystyk opisowych i analizy tematycznej.

Wyniki: Wyniki ujawniły niewielką preferencję dla ankiet cyfrowych (53,2%) w porównaniu z tradycyjnymi ankietami (46,8%), głównie ze względu na korzyści, takie jak oszczędność czasu, ekonomiczność, szerszy zasięg i ulepszone możliwości analizy danych. Jednakże tradycyjne ankiety były preferowane ze względu na ich dokładność danych i łatwość administrowania w kontekstach niskiego stopnia zaawansowania technologicznego. Kluczowymi czynnikami wpływającymi na preferencje badaczy były: wiedza specjalistyczna, charakterystyka populacji, ograniczenia czasowe i infrastruktura technologiczna. Głównymi zidentyfikowanymi wyzwaniami były trudności w zapewnieniu jakości danych, ograniczony dostęp do technologii oraz niewystarczające szkolenia w zakresie projektowania ankiet. Pomimo obiecujących cech ankiet cyfrowych, reprezentatywność, problemy techniczne i etyczne wciąż się utrzymują.

Wniosek: W badaniu stwierdzono, że nie ma jednego uniwersalnego podejścia do metodologii badania. Chociaż narzędzia cyfrowe oferują znaczne korzyści operacyjne, należy je zrównoważyć z ograniczeniami kontekstowymi, takimi jak przepaść cyfrowa, możliwości techniczne i reprezentatywność. Tradycyjne metody zachowują wartość, zwłaszcza tam, gdzie najważniejsze jest zaufanie, dokładność lub dostępność. Hybrydowe lub adaptacyjne podejście ankietowe, wspierane przez szkolenia instytucjonalne, inwestycje technologiczne i nadzór etyczny, jest zalecane w celu optymalizacji skuteczności badań i braku wykluczenia w nigeryjskim kontekście LIS.

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Traditionelle vs. digitale Umfragen: Perspektiven von Forschern der Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft zur besten Methode der Datenerhebung in der Forschung

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Schlüsselwörter: traditionelle Umfragen; digitale Umfragen; LIS-Forschung; Datenerhebungsmethoden; Nigeria

Zusammenfassung

Ziele: In dieser Studie wurden die Präferenzen von Forschern im Bereich Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft (LIS) in Nigeria hinsichtlich traditioneller (Papier-) und digitaler (Online-) Umfragemethoden zur Datenerhebung in der Forschung untersucht. Ziel war es, die wahrgenommenen Vor- und Nachteile, kontextbedingten Einflüsse und praktischen Herausforderungen beider Umfragemethoden zu bewerten.

Forschungsmethode: Es wurde ein Forschungsmodell mit Mischmethoden angewendet, das quantitative Daten aus strukturierten Fragebögen und qualitative Einblicke aus offenen Antworten kombinierte. Die Stichprobe war eine willkürliche Auswahl aufs Geratewohl und richtete sich an LIS-Forscher an nigerianischen Universitäten über die WhatsApp-Plattform der

NALISE. Die Datenerhebung erfolgte über Google Forms, die Analyse durch deskriptive Statistik und thematische Auswertung.

Forschungsergebnisse: Die Ergebnisse zeigten eine leichte Präferenz für digitale Umfragen (53,2 %) gegenüber traditionellen Umfragen (46,8 %), hauptsächlich aufgrund von Vorteilen wie Zeitersparnis, Kosteneffizienz, größerer Reichweite und verbesserten Analysefähigkeiten. Traditionelle Umfragen wurden jedoch bevorzugt, wenn Genauigkeit der Daten und einfache Verwaltung in Low-Tech-Kontexten erforderlich waren. Schlüsselfaktoren, die die Präferenzen von Forschern beeinflussten, waren ihr Fachwissen, die Merkmale der Zielpopulation, Zeitbeschränkungen und technologische Infrastruktur. Zu den Hauptherausforderungen gehörten Schwierigkeiten bei der Sicherstellung der Datenqualität, eingeschränkter Zugang zu Technologie und unzureichende Schulungen in der Fragebogenvorbereitung. Trotz vielversprechender Ergebnisse digitaler Umfragen bleiben Repräsentativität, technische Probleme und ethische Fragen bestehen.

Schlussfolgerungen: Die Studie zeigt, dass es keinen universellen Ansatz für Forschungsmethoden gibt. Obwohl digitale Werkzeuge erhebliche operative Vorteile bieten, müssen diese mit kontextuellen Einschränkungen wie digitaler Exklusion, technischen Möglichkeiten und Repräsentativität abgewogen werden. Traditionelle Methoden behalten ihren Wert, insbesondere dort, wo Vertrauen, Genauigkeit oder Zugänglichkeit entscheidend sind. Ein hybrider oder adaptiver Forschungsansatz, unterstützt durch institutionelle Schulungen, technologische Investitionen und ethische Aufsicht, wird empfohlen, um Forschungseffizienz und Inklusivität im nigerianischen LIS-Kontext zu optimieren.