Conducting international research in the library and information science field: challenges and approaches

by Krystyna Matusiak, Kawanna Bright, and Debbie Schachter

Introduction

Researchers and practitioners in the library and information science (LIS) field engage in international activities and research for a variety of reasons. In his monumental work on international and comparative librarianship, Peter Lor lists a wide range of motivations for engaging in these activities, including philanthropy, policy, advocacy, extending national influence, broadening international understanding, and advancing knowledge[1]. As Lor notes, international comparative research, «can provide insights that are less readily gained from the study of library conditions in a single country»[2]. International LIS research as a distinct field of study and research emerged in the 1960s[3]. LIS scholars explored the conceptual and methodological aspects of conducting research in international contexts in the following decades, but as Lor notices, the scholarly work in this area has not grown significantly since the 1980s[4].

In recent years, however, there has been a renewed interest in international comparative research, with a growing number of scholarly projects and conference presentations.

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1 Peter Johan Lor, *International and comparative librarianship: concepts and methods for global studies*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Saur, 2019, p. 51-66.

2 *Ivi*, p. 62.

3 *Ivi*, p. 63-72.

4 *Ibidem*.

Several studies focused on the internationalization of LIS education[5]. De Gruyter published a collection of papers on LIS education in developing countries[6]. In 2021, the IFLA Congress and the Annual Conference of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIST) hosted panel discussions about the challenges and approaches to conducting international research in LIS[7]. Researchers acknowledge methodological challenges, language barriers, and ethical concerns, and discuss the approaches for making LIS international research more inclusive and methodologically more diverse.

This paper will present an international research project undertaken by members of the IFLA Library Theory and Research section (LTR) that investigated the approaches to teaching research methods in LIS programs worldwide. The paper focuses on the project's research design, research ethical issues, and multilingual data collection. It discusses the inherent challenges in conducting international research and outlines the approaches to increasing the geographic and linguistic diversity of study participants.

Background

The distinction between international and comparative librarianship has been the subject of debate since international research emerged as an area in LIS scholarship. Lor devotes a significant portion of his book to discussing the differences. He defines international librarianship as a field of professional activity rather than a scientific discipline. The emphasis in international librarianship is on the activities and relationships between libraries and information agencies in more than one country. Comparative librarianship, on the other hand, is an area of scientific inquiry, in which comparative research methods are applied to examine LIS processes and phenomena across countries or cultures, with a goal of understanding underlying similarities and differences[8]. As an area of scholarly investigation, comparative librarianship employs scientific methodology and often involves collaborative research teams. The two concepts are related and sometimes overlapping, as reports from international activities can be a source of data for comparative analysis. This paper focuses on the second definition in reference to international comparative research, although some topics discussed in this paper, such as linguistic barriers, building collaborative multinational teams, and ethical considerations, apply also to the field of international professional practice.

5 Ismail Abdullahi; Leif Kajberg; Sirje Virkus, *Internationalization of LIS education in Europe and North America*, «New library world», 108 (2007), n. 1/2, p. 7-24, DOI: 10.1108/03074800710722144; Anna Maria Tammaro, *Preparing the new information professionals: the challenge of the Bologna Process*. In: *Preparare i nuovi professionisti dell' informazione: atti della conferenza internazionale, Parma 24-25 novembre 2003*, a cura di Anna Maria Tammaro. Fiesole: Casalini libri, 2006, p. 1-12, DOI: 10.1400/119694.

6 *LIS education in developing countries: the road ahead*, edited by Ismael Abdullahi, A. Y. Asundi, C. R. Karisiddappa. Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2014, DOI: 10.1515/9783110355383.

7 Nuria Bautista-Puig [*et al.*], *Beyond helicopter research: unpacking international studies on LIS Education and research methods*. In: "An open forum on LTR research project. IFLA WLIC 2021: World Library and Information Congress: 86th IFLA General Conference and Assembly" (Athens, August 17-19th, 2021), <https://www.ifla-wlic2021.com/events/sessions/beyond-helicopter-research-unpacking-international-studies-on-lis-education-and-research-methods>; Devendra Potnis [*et al.*], *Conducting and publishing research in developing countries: challenges and solutions*, «Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology», 58 (2021), n. 1, p. 634-638, DOI: 10.1002/pra2.516.

8 P. J. Lor, *International and comparative librarianship* cit., p. 81-87.

The process of designing research and selecting methodology for international comparative studies is usually not much different from planning empirical research to be conducted in a single country. Researchers must make decisions about research design, choosing from qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches; select research strategies and data collection techniques; apply for research ethics approval; and consider data analysis strategies and interpretative frameworks. International research can be strengthened, however, by adopting multiple research methods. Hantrais explores the benefits of methodological pluralism in international comparative research. Using more than one research method contributes to strengthening research validity and gaining a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena in cross-national and cross-cultural contexts[9]. Methodological pluralism can involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods or a more integrated mixed-methods design. The mixed-methods approach implies not only a mixture of qualitative and quantitative instruments in data collection but also an integration of the two approaches in data analysis and interpretation[10].

Ethical research practices are critical in conducting studies with human participants to protect their autonomy and privacy, minimize unnecessary risks, guarantee the confidentiality of data, and ensure benefits accrue not only for science but also for individual participants and communities[11]. There are no universal ethical guidelines for conducting international research and the norms for research with human participants may vary from country to country. In the United States and Canada, researchers conducting research with human participants need to receive approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) – United States – or a Research Ethics Board (REB) – Canada – affiliated with their university. These boards are panels of scholars that evaluate research projects with the goal of maintaining high ethical standards and preventing any form of research misconduct related to research with people[12]. In the US, before submitting a research proposal for approval, researchers are required to complete training in conducting human subjects research through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program[13] and, in Canada, the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2) Course on Research Ethics[14]. For collaborative projects with researchers coming from different organizations or countries, a couple of options are available for receiving IRB approval in the US. The university of the principal investigator can serve as the IRB of record and receive approval for the entire research team under the condition that all team members have a certificate of completing the CITI training. A reliance

9 Linda Hantrais, *Methodological pluralism in international comparative research*, «International journal of social research methodology», 17 (2014), n. 2, p.133-145, DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2014.892656.

10 John W. Creswell; Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2017, p. 1-15.

11 Joan E. Sieber, *Planning ethically responsible research*. In: *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods*, edited by Leonard Bickman, Debra J. Rog, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks [etc.]: Sage, 2009, p. 106-142, DOI: 10.4135/9781483348858.

12 American Psychological Association, *Frequently asked questions about institutional review boards: IRBs review proposals before a research project begins to determine if it follows ethical principles and federal regulations*. 2017, <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/research/defending-research/review-boards>.

13 CITI Program, <https://about.citiprogram.org/>.

14 TCPS 2: CORE-2022 (Course on research ethics), <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>.

agreement is established between the participating institutions. Unaffiliated researchers must cover the cost of training, which can be a barrier for international scholars. The other option is for each investigator to obtain research ethics approval through their own organization, following the institutional ethics review guidelines.

The unique challenges in conducting international research are related to linguistic barriers, cultural differences, power imbalances between researchers and study participants, and the legacy of the colonial research model. Language constitutes a significant barrier in conducting multinational research with study participants speaking different languages. Lor emphasizes that language is often an «underestimated barrier to international and comparative research»[15]. The understanding of concepts and the use of terms varies across languages, and translations often can't capture those nuances. From the perspective of non-native speakers of English, the use of English as a dominant language in international research may lead to simplification and misunderstandings[16]. There is also a considerable range of English spoken across the globe. Thus, linguistic diversity poses major challenges for designing surveys and conducting interviews with study participants coming from multiple countries. Study participants are disadvantaged if interviews are not conducted in their first language as they may not be able to express themselves fully. Translation of survey instruments with attention to conceptual equivalence is a recommended practice in international comparative research[17].

The legacy of the colonial research model popularly referred to as 'helicopter research' or 'parachute research' is primarily discussed in anthropology, biology, and other natural and social science fields[18]. In LIS, the panel discussion about moving beyond helicopter research was held at the IFLA Congress in 2021[19]. The term 'helicopter research' refers to the practices in conducting research where researchers from developed countries, often located in the Global North, travel to less privileged regions of the world to collect data. After researchers leave the data collection site, they publish the results without acknowledging the local contributors and don't share the knowledge with the local community[20]. Evans argues that the legacy of the colonial research model still pervades science and writes

> as the fly-in, fly-out workers of the science world, these researchers would often have little understanding of the communities they studied and never fed back the results – leading to research that benefited the researcher, but not the participants[21].

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15 P. J. Lor, *International and comparative librarianship* cit., p. 191.

16 Linda Hantrais, *International comparative research: theory, methods and practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 88-89.

17 *Ivi*, p. 80.

18 Tessa Evans, *Helicopter science*, «Society and education», 2018, n. 27, <http://www.lateralmag.com/articles/issue-27-helicopter-science>; Danny Haelewaters; Tina A. Hofmann; Adriana L. Romero-Olivares, *Ten simple rules for Global North researchers to stop perpetuating helicopter research in the Global South*, «PLoS computational biology», 17 (2021), n. 8, DOI: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1009277; Budiman Minasny; Dian Flantis, *"Helicopter research": who benefits from international studies in Indonesia?*, «The Conversation», August 29, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/helicopter-research-who-benefits-from-international-studies-in-indonesia-102165>.

19 N. Bautista-Puig [*et al.*], *Beyond helicopter research* cit.

20 B. Minasny, *Helicopter research* cit.

21 T. Evans, *Helicopter science* cit.

Haelewaters, Hofman, and Romero-Olivares propose 10 guidelines for avoiding 'helicopter research' and fostering non-colonial collaborative research practices[22].

The case of the international research project undertaken by the IFLA LTR team, described in this paper, highlights some of the inherent challenges in conducting research with participants recruited from multiple countries and collecting data in several languages. It also discusses the methodological considerations and issues in gaining research ethics approval for a collaborative, multi-institutional, international project.

IFLA LTR research study

The IFLA LTR committee launched a new international research project in 2020 as part of the committee's two-year action plan. The research study focused on investigating the approaches to teaching research methods in LIS programs and training of library professionals in different countries. The LTR team was well-positioned to undertake the study because of the diverse background of the committee members and prior experience in conducting international research. In previous years, the group conducted an international study on the roles and responsibilities of professionals working in research data management and data curation[23]. The importance of understanding the research process and expertise in research methods for LIS professionals emerged as one of the key themes in the study, and those findings provided an impetus for designing the new LTR project.

In preparation for the large international project, the LTR team conducted a smaller pilot study in the United States in 2019. The purpose of the study was to examine research methods courses in Library and Information Science Master's (MLIS) level programs accredited by the American Library Association. The study employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis with data collected from three sources: LIS program websites, Master's level research method course syllabi, and questionnaires and interviews with 15 faculty teaching LIS research methods courses at the Master's level[24]. The pilot study provided a foundation for designing the international study and generated a set of data for comparative analysis.

The international study was undertaken to address a gap in the literature about education in research methods in LIS. There are almost no recent international comparative studies examining how library professionals are being prepared for conducting research. Library practitioners in many countries are increasingly expected to engage in assessment, research data management, and empirical research[25]. The project aimed

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22 D. Haelewaters, *Ten simple rules for Global North researchers* cit.

23 Anna Maria Tammaro [*et al.*], *Data curator's roles and responsibilities: an international perspective*, «Libri», 69 (2019), n. 2, p. 89-104, DOI: 10.1515/libri-2018-0090.

24 Krystyna K. Matusiak; Kawanna Bright, *Teaching research methods in Master's level LIS programs: the United States perspective*, «Journal of education for library and information science», 61 (2020), n. 3, p. 357-382, DOI: 10.3138/jelis.61.3.2020-0001.

25 Nicole D. Alemanne; Lauren H. Mandel, *Developing research practitioners: exploring pedagogical options for teaching research methods in LIS*, «Journal of education for library and information science», 59 (2018), n. 3, p. 26-40, DOI: 10.3138/jelis.59.3.2018-0015.04; Rachel Fleming-May [*et al.*], *Experience assessment: designing an innovative curriculum for assessment and UX professionals*, «Performance measurement and metrics», 19 (2018), n. 1, p. 30-39, DOI: 10.1108/PMM-09-2017-0036; Carol Tenopir [*et al.*], *Academic librarians and research data services: attitudes and practices*, «IT lib», 2019, n. 1, <https://itlib.cvtisr.sk/%c4%8cl%c3%a1nky/clanek3579/>.

to contribute new comparative data on research methods education internationally and to inform LIS educators about the different models for preparing library professionals for the research environment. The purpose of the research study was to:
- Examine what approaches to teaching research methods are currently being applied in LIS programs worldwide;
- Compare international educational models for preparing library practitioners to conduct research and evaluation studies.

The scope of the research was extended in the international study and included professional preparation programs on both Bachelor's and Master's levels. In the US and Canadian models, a Master's degree in LIS is a requirement to enter the field, and students typically don't have an undergraduate degree in LIS or information studies[26]. However, outside the United States and Canada, an undergraduate degree in LIS is a dominant professional entry-level qualification to practice librarianship in many countries. The study conducted by the IFLA Building Strong LIS Education group (BSLISE) found that most countries require an undergraduate degree as the first degree for professional practice rather than a Master's[27].

Research ethics approval
The research team included multilingual scholars from Canada, Mexico, Sri Lanka, and the United States. The diverse background of researchers is a strength in collaborative international studies, but working with researchers across different jurisdictions poses a challenge to receiving timely approval from their respective ethical review boards. This project opted for a centralized approach, with one university serving as an IRB of record and signing a reliance agreement with the US participating institutions. The protocol was also shared with the REB at the Canadian university. Researchers in two other countries sought local approval from the ethics board at their institutions. Receiving research ethics approval for this collaborative project took several months and required a significant amount of communication between the researchers and review boards of the participating institutions. Informed consent to take part in the study was received from participants by answering a question in the online survey. This approach was outlined in the centralized IRB protocol.

Methodology and recruitment
This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis in order to address the research question 'how are research methods taught in LIS programs globally?'. As mentioned, the focus of the study was on professional preparation programs – Bachelor's or Master's levels that offer the degree or credentials required to work as a librarian or information professional in a given country. The data was collected through two methods: 1) an online survey distributed widely in the LIS international

26 Krystyna K. Matusiak; Mary Stansbury; Ewa Barczyk, *Educating a new generation of library and information science professionals: a United States perspective*, «Przegl d Biblioteczny», 82 (2014), n. 2, p. 189-206; Laura Saunders, *Core and more: examining foundational and specialized content in library and information science*, «Journal of education for library and information science», 60 (2019), n. 1, p. 3-34, DOI: 10.3138/jelis.60.1.2018-0034.

27 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Building Strong Library and Information Science Education Working Group, *Building strong LIS education: a call to global and local action – An IFLA BSLISE Working Group White Paper*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries, 2018, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15641/0-7992-2542-6.

community and 2) a series of qualitative interviews conducted virtually with participants who completed the survey and indicated an interest in participating in an interview. The data was collected for nine months, from September 2020 to May 2021.

The survey instrument was adapted from the pilot study questionnaire used to investigate the teaching of research methods in US MLIS programs[28]. Based on the pilot study's findings and on the differences in LIS education outside of the United States, additions were made to the questionnaire to:
- Collect information on the level of education (undergraduate and graduate), as the degree required for professional work is at the undergraduate level in many countries;
- Identify when research methods courses are typically taken by students during the program;
- Identify examples of assignments used in the courses;
- Determine instructors' thoughts on how students perceive the course.

In an effort to address different levels of professional preparation in many countries and more than one course offering in research methods, the international questionnaire introduced items related to the level of professional preparation (BA, MA, Ph.D.), multiple research method courses offered at different levels (introductory, advanced), different modality (online, onsite, hybrid), and attributes, such as required or elective courses. The new items contributed to the complexity of the survey questionnaire.

The participants were recruited through a variety of channels to reach a geographically and linguistically diverse population. The announcements in English were posted on the IFLA listservs and on the list of the Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). The research team followed up with the announcements on the regional LIS lists with postings prepared in several languages. Many members of the LTR committee got engaged in the recruitment process, posted the information about the study in their countries, and helped to recruit participants. In addition, members of the research team reached directly through e-mail to LIS educators in several countries and asked them to share a link to the survey through local lists and contacts.

The population of interest for this study was faculty members who had taught a Bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D./Master's combined research methods course for a LIS program outside of the United States in the past 3 years. Potential participants for the survey were either self-identified for the study after seeing an open e-mail call or invited to participate in the survey through direct e-mail to them or to their LIS program director. Participants for interviews were identified from those who completed the questionnaire and indicated an interest in being interviewed by the researchers. All participants who indicated an interest in the questionnaire were contacted by the researchers to set up an interview, with the research team conducting a total of 29 interviews.

The interview protocol from the pilot study was also used for the international study with one additional subset of questions related to professional preparation or different curricular models: «What is the level of professional preparation in your country? What degree do you need to work as a librarian?». The interviews were conducted over Zoom or phone and lasted from 30 min to an hour. Usually, two members of the research team participated in an interview. Scheduling interviews was sometimes challenging because of time zone differences and occasional connectivity issues were experienced. On the other hand, the research was conducted several months after

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28 K. Matusiak, *Teaching research methods in Master's level LIS programs* cit.

the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and many participants were comfortable communicating over Zoom. With the participant's consent, the interviews were recorded. The transcripts were generated automatically for English language interviews by the recording software. The transcripts were reviewed, checked against the recording, and corrected.

Language and international representation
The study moved away from the dominant English-only research in recognition of the international coverage. The goal of conducting the study in more than one language was to make the study more inclusive and to increase the access and linguistic diversity of participants. The survey questionnaire was translated into Spanish and French. The Qualtrics survey software that was used in the study offers automatic translation and provides an option for multilingual questionnaire versions. The French and Spanish translations of the questionnaire were reviewed and corrected by native speakers. Participants were able to select their preferred language at the beginning of the study: 62% of the questionnaires were completed in English, 32% in Spanish, and 5% in French. Respondents represented 40 countries (see Figure 1).

Country	# of Respondents	Country	# of Respondents
Belgium	1	Tunisia	1
Brazil	1	Uruguay	1
Canada	1	Zambia	1
Chile	1	Zimbabwe	1
Egypt	1	Guatemala	2
Finland	1	Japan	2
France	1	Lebanon	2
Germany	1	Russia	2
Hong Kong	1	Sri Lanka	2
India	1	Vietnam	2
Ireland	1	Colombia	3
Israel	1	Costa Rica	3
Kenya	1	South Korea	3
Mauritius	1	United Kingdom	3
New Zealand	1	Australia	4
Norway	1	Perú	4
Palestine	1	Italy	5
Spain	1	Poland	5
Switzerland	1	China	7
Thailand	1	México	12

Figure 1 – Countries represented by number of respondents to the questionnaires

As mentioned, the team conducted 29 interviews with participants from 19 different countries (see Figure 2). The interview guide was translated from English to Spanish and 10 interviews were conducted in Spanish. Generating transcripts for Spanish language interviews proved to be challenging, as the Zoom software used in the study creates transcripts for English audio only. Transcripts for Spanish interviews were

created through Canvas Studio and then reviewed and corrected by an editor fluent in Spanish. Next, Spanish transcripts were translated automatically into English using Google Translate, so that they could be coded and analyzed along with the transcripts from the English interviews. Translations were reviewed and corrected again by a bilingual editor. This multi-step process was time-consuming but necessary for building a consistent data set available to the research team members for data analysis.

Country	# of Participants
Australia	2
China	1
France	1
Germany	1
Guatemala	1
India	1
Italy	2
Japan	1
Kenya	1
México	6
Peru	2
Poland	1
Russia	2
Sri Lanka	2
United Kingdom	1
Uruguay	1
Zambia	1
Zimbabwe	1
Vietnam	1

Figure 2 – Countries represented by interview participants

Survey response
The survey remained open for 9 months and recruitment for participants was continuous during this time. At the closure of the survey there were 331 total submissions. Data cleaning identified seven submissions that did not consent to participate, 113 submissions that indicated they had not taught a research methods course in the last three years, 4 submissions about programs that did not offer a research methods course, and 104 submissions that were too incomplete for data analysis. This left 99 valid surveys for analysis, 29.9% of submitted surveys.

The research team is currently in the process of analyzing survey data and coding the interview transcripts. The findings from the study will be reported in forthcoming publications.

Discussion and conclusion
The LTR study faced many challenges discussed in the literature about international comparative research and adopted some of the recommended approaches. The research team included members from several countries and made an effort to make the study multilingual. The research instruments were translated, and participants were offered

an option of responding to the questionnaire and being interviewed in more than one language; however, the language options were limited by the linguistic expertise available within the research team. The study employed a mixed-methods design that was identified as beneficial for international comparative studies[29]. The survey captured valuable data about the levels of professional preparation for library careers in many countries and the different curricular models for teaching research methods in LIS programs, while the interviews provided more in-depth contextual information.

The survey method is widely used in the LIS field and clearly has some advantages[30]. It does provide a broad perspective, allows for generalization with a larger number of responses, and strengthens the validity of the research. Once designed, it's easy to distribute through a link to the online questionnaire. With a survey software, such as Qualtrics, questionnaire responses are relatively easy to analyze. However, the research team members noticed some limitations of using the survey method for international research. Even though 331 participants started the questionnaire in the LTR project, many did not finish it. The completion rate was relatively low, at 29.9%. As noted earlier, the complexity of the survey may be one of the reasons for the low completion rate and underlines the reality that it is very difficult to design a survey that would capture different contexts and unique curricular models. The research team members heard from some participants who started the survey and abandoned it because they felt the survey questions did not apply to them. For example, the survey questions did not address the cases where there was no dedicated LIS program, no separate research method class, or research methodology could have been embedded in other courses. The other issue the research team noticed was terminology and the different use of terms across languages and cultures, as discussed in the literature[31]. In particular, some participants in the LTR study understood teaching research methods as teaching search strategies rather than a methodology for conducting research. In retrospect, a pilot of the survey to a representative sample of participants may have provided early identification of completion challenges and could have been an opportunity to address these concerns before full dissemination.

The interviews provided an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings in terminology and to understand the local contexts – how librarians are prepared for their professional careers in different countries, to what extent they participate in research, and how they are being prepared for those roles. More importantly, the interviews allowed the research team to directly capture participants' voices, look at LIS education from their perspective, and highlight unique practices and knowledge. But of course, interviews have some limitations as well. Language barriers play a major role, as people are often interviewed in a language other than their native language and may struggle with expressing their thoughts[32]. If interviews are conducted in the native

29 L. Hantrais, *Methodological pluralism in international comparative research* cit.

30 Lynn Silipigni Connaway; Marie L. Radford, *Research methods in library and information science*. Santa Barbara (CA): Libraries Unlimited, 2016, p. 97-130; Barbara M. Wildemuth, *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*. Santa Barbara (CA): Libraries Unlimited, 2016, p. 272-283.

31 P. J. Lor, *International and comparative librarianship* cit., p. 191; L. Hantrais, *International comparative research* cit., p. 88-89.

32 Katharina Resch; Edith Enzenhofer, *Collecting data in other languages: strategies for cross-language research in multilingual societies*. In: *The Sage handbook of qualitative data collection*, edited by Uwe Flick. London [etc.]: Sage, 2018, p. 131-146. DOI: 10.4135/9781526416070.

language of participants, such as Spanish, then transcripts must be translated to prepare a consistent data set for coding and analysis. Compared to surveys, interviews are also more difficult to conduct, require more time, and need to be transcribed, and in some cases translated. Data analysis is more challenging and time-consuming since qualitative research produces more data and additional software needs to be used for coding qualitative data.

The postcolonial research model and the power imbalances identified in the 'helicopter research' were less of an issue in this project since the research members interviewed their peers and fellow LIS educators. The interviews provided a wonderful opportunity to get to know colleagues in the field, learn from them about their unique approaches to teaching research methods, and create opportunities for building partnerships and collaboration. The legacy of colonialism, however, needs to be acknowledged. As several of the research team members come from North American and European countries, these researchers may have a stronger voice in research and scholarship due to the dominance of their countries. Researchers in the Global North are privileged through their fluency in English – the dominant language in scholarly communications – and through access to funding and technology. With the intention of addressing the negative implications of 'helicopter research', the study followed some of the guidelines for more inclusive research, by conducting data collection in three languages and having research team members from several countries. Furthermore, those interviewed were invited to participate in the knowledge dissemination of the research by contributing with a description of their teaching to an edited volume.

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Condurre una ricerca internazionale nel campo della LIS: sfide e approcci
La ricerca comparativa internazionale nel campo della LIS (Library and Information Science) esamina i processi e i fenomeni relativi alle biblioteche e ad altre organizzazioni d'informazione e ai loro utenti, concentrandosi sulle differenze e sulle somiglianze tra paesi o culture. La ricerca internazionale è difficile da condurre a causa delle barriere linguistiche, delle preoccupazioni etiche e dell'eredità del modello di ricerca coloniale. Questo articolo presenta un progetto di ricerca internazionale intrapreso dai membri della International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Library Theory and Research (LTR) Section che ha investigato gli approcci all'insegnamento dei metodi di ricerca nei programmi LIS in tutto il mondo. L'articolo si concentra sul disegno di ricerca del progetto, sulle questioni etiche della ricerca e sulla raccolta di dati multilingue. Discute le sfide inerenti alla conduzione della ricerca internazionale e delinea gli approcci per aumentare la diversità geografica e linguistica dei partecipanti allo studio. Il team di ricerca LTR ha adottato diverse strategie per reclutare partecipanti da più paesi e raccogliere dati in tre lingue. Gli annunci di reclutamento sono stati distribuiti attraverso liste internazionali e

regionali in più lingue. Lo strumento di indagine è stato tradotto dall'inglese allo spagnolo e al francese, e le interviste sono state condotte in inglese e spagnolo. Gli autori discutono anche i vantaggi metodologici del design a metodi misti e i benefici e i limiti dell'uso di sondaggi e interviste nella ricerca internazionale.

Conducting a piece of LIS international research: challenges and approaches

International comparative research in the library and information science (LIS) field examines the processes and phenomena related to libraries and other information organizations and their users. with a focus on differences and similarities across countries or cultures. International research is challenging due to language barriers, ethical concerns, and the legacy of the colonial research model. This paper presents an international research project undertaken by members of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Library Theory and Research (LTR) Section which investigated the approaches to teaching research methods in LIS programs worldwide. The paper focuses on the project's research design, on the research ethical issues and on the collection of multilingual data. It discusses the inherent challenges in conducting international research and outlines the approach to increasing the geographic and linguistic diversity of study respondents. The LTR research team adopted several strategies to recruit participants from multiple countries and collect data in three languages. The recruitment announcements were distributed throughout international and regional mailing lists in multiple languages. The survey instrument was translated from English to Spanish and French, and the interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The authors also discuss the methodological advantages of mixed-methods design and the benefits and limitations of using surveys and interviews in international research.