



IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS ON POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT IN NIGER STATE: RE-EXAMINING REMOTE DATA COLLECTION IN POST LOCKDOWN ERA

ABSTRACT

Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the Wuhan city of China and its eventual spread to other countries and territories across the globe including Nigeria, efforts were made by the Nigerian government in particular, to ensure public safety and to check its spread within the country. Some of these safety measures include restriction of movements by

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Introduction

Since the outbreak of the novel Corona virus in faraway Wuhan in China and its gradual but pervasive spread to other countries including Nigeria, national governments have taken safety measures aimed at mitigating its further spread and attending to urgent needs of the victims and those at risk of getting infected. Some of these measures include restriction of movements by enforcing curfews, enforcing physical distancing protocols, banning of public gatherings, closure of non-essential businesses and other public institutions, including tourism institutions and destinations. All of these measures generated new challenges for conducting tourism research in Nigeria particularly in the area of data collection. It is against this backdrop that this paper set out to investigate the perception of scholars and tourism destination managers about the challenges associated with remote data collection in tourism research in the post Covid-19 era in Niger state.



Remote data collection has now emerged as a viable alternative, thanks to the increasing prevalence of the mobile phone in emerging economies.

Remote data collection has been utilized in developed countries through landline telephones for many years, but the lack of landline infrastructure in many countries prevented it from taking off in regions such as Africa and Latin America (Sherin et al., 2017). However, in the past 5 years mobile connectivity has excelled in markets such as Kenya. The higher

enforcing curfews, enforcing physical distancing protocols, banning of public gatherings, closure of non-essential businesses and other public institutions, including schools; lockdowns were also enforced in some parts of the country especially where high incidences were recorded. All of these safety regulations impacted in no small measure on the conduct of Political Science research in Niger state particularly in the area of data collection. It is against this backdrop that this paper set out to investigate the perception of scholars and students of Political Science regarding the challenges associated with remote data collection in Political Science research in the post lockdown era in Niger state. The paper utilised both primary and secondary sources of data to generate requisite data for this study. Primary data for the work was through the administration of 100 questionnaires to conveniently sampled respondents comprising scholars and students of Political Science in Niger state, while secondary data was through documentary reviews. The study revealed that some of the challenges associated with remote data collection in Political Science research development include low response/feedback rates, high cost of data and call charges and weak network strength especially in the rural areas. The paper therefore recommended that remote data collection methods should be adopted in combination with some traditional methods of collecting primary data as best as practicable in order to partly address the challenge of low response/feedback rate as well as available power supply in the remote area and high standard of data collection techniques in the state.

Key words: Lockdown, Remote data collection, Covid-19, Curfews, Political Science Research



percentage of households who have at least one mobile phone through which they can receive text messages and voice calls, some of which also have mobile internet connections, has made remote data collection a possibility in regions where in-person data collection has long been the norm (McCrocklin, 2019). Some of the advantages of remote data collection include: Speed: Remote data collection through respondents' own mobile devices can be administered very quickly, allowing brands to react to current events and development organizations to gather vital information following a crisis. GeoPoll can help design a questionnaire or research project and deploy it within days, and once data collection begins results come back in near real-time.

With regards to cost; though cost varies depending on the remote mode you use to collect data, gathering data remotely is less expensive than in-person data collection, as it does not require in-person enumerators to travel to multiple locations. In terms of reach: One of the greatest advantages of collecting data remotely is the volume that can be collected within a short time frame. By sending surveys through a partner such as GeoPoll, which is directly integrated with mobile network operators around the world and can handle large messaging volumes, you can gather thousands of survey responses quickly. Data can be collected from a variety of locations at once, so you can gather data from both urban and rural areas, specific locations, and even multiple countries at the same time (Adejo, 2017; McCrocklin, 2019; ID insight, 2020).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include:

1. To investigate the feasibility of adopting remote data collection technique in Political Science research by scholars and students in the post lockdown era in Niger state
2. To find out the challenges involved in using remote data collection technique in Political Science research by scholars and students in the post lockdown era in Niger state
3. To recommend plausible measures of addressing the challenges associated with remote data collection in Political Science research among scholars and students in Niger state



Methodology

The paper utilised both primary and secondary sources of data to generate requisite data for this study. Primary data for the work was elicited through the administration of one hundred (100) questionnaires to conveniently selected respondents comprising scholars and students of Political Science from Federal College of Education, Kontagora and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, in Niger state, while secondary data was generated through documentary reviews.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

Table 1: Administration of research instrument

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
No. of instruments administered	100	100
No. of instruments retrieved	98	98

Source: Field Survey (2021)

A total number of one hundred (100) instruments were administered out of which ninety-eight (98) were successfully retrieved. Thus subsequent analysis in this work was based on the number of retrieved instruments only.

Table 2: Category of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Political Science Scholars	60	61
Political Science Students	38	39
Total	98	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

There were two categories of respondents covered in the study. As presented in table 2 above, sixty (60) respondents representing sixty-one percent (61%) were political Science scholars while the remaining thirty-eight (38) of the respondents representing thirty-nine percent (39%) were Political Science students.



Table 3: Did you adopt remote data collection techniques in Political Science research during the post lockdown era?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	93
No	07	07
Total	98	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 3 above show that ninety-one (91) respondents, representing ninety-three percent (93%) claimed to have adopted remote data collection techniques in Political Science research during the post lockdown era while the remaining seven (7) respondents, representing seven (7%) of the total respondents covered in the study.

Table 4: What technique(s) of remote data collection did you adopt?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Google forms	65	72
Phone interviews	11	12
WhatsApp chats	07	08
Email	03	03
Telegram	05	05
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 4 above show that sixty-five (65) respondents representing seventy-two percent (72%) claimed to have adopted 'Google forms'; eleven (11) respondents, representing twelve percent (12%) claimed to have adopted 'phone interviews'; 'WhatsApp chats' was adopted by seven (07) respondents, representing eight percent (8%); three respondents, representing three percent (3%) claimed to have adopted 'email' as a technique while the remaining five (5) respondents representing five percent (5%) claimed to have adopted remote data collection in the post lockdown era.



Table 5: Did you consider these techniques convenient for data collection in Political Science research?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	73	80
No	18	20
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 5 above show that seventy-three (73) respondents, representing eighty percent (80%) considered remote data collection during the post lockdown era as convenient; while the remaining eighteen (18) respondents, representing twenty percent (20%) did not consider adoption of remote data collection technique during post lockdown as inconvenient.

Table 6: Did you supplement it with conventional/traditional data collection technique?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	64
No	33	36
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 6 above show that fifty-eight (58) respondents, representing sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents claimed they did supplement remote data collection techniques with traditional data collection techniques; while thirty-three (33) respondents, representing thirty-six percent (36%) of the respondents claimed they adopted remote data collection technique without supplementing it with traditional data collection techniques.

Table 7: If yes, why?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
To generate more responses	69	76



Lack of contiguity to respondents	16	17
Other	06	07
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 7 above show that sixty-nine (69) respondents, representing seventy-six percent (76%) reasoned that their decision to combine remote data collection techniques and other traditional data collection techniques was to generate more responses; sixteen (16) respondents, representing seventeen percent (17%) mentioned lack of contiguity to respondents a reason for the admixture of remote and traditional techniques of data collection in Political Science research; while the remaining six (6) respondents, representing seven percent (7%) indicated 'other'.

Table 8: If no, why?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty in reaching/ accessing target respondents	69	76
Convenience	16	17
Other	06	07
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 8 above show that sixty-nine (69) respondents, representing seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents cited difficulty in reaching/accessing target respondents as their reason for adopting remote data collection technique only; sixteen (16) respondents, representing seventeen percent (17%) of the respondents cited convenience as their exclusive adoption of remote data collection technique in tourism research in the post lockdown era in Niger state, while the remaining six (6) respondents, representing seven percent (7%) cited 'other'.

Table 9: What challenges did you encounter with the use of remote data collection in Political Science research in Niger state?



Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Low response rate	75	82
High data and call rates	09	10
Poor network coverage especially in the rural areas	04	05
Other	03	03
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 9 above show that seventy-five (75) respondents, representing eighty-two percent (82%) cited low response rate as a challenge encountered in remote data collection in Political Science research in Niger state; nine (9) respondents, representing ten percent (10%) of the respondents cited high data and call rates; four (4) respondents, representing five percent (5%) cited poor network coverage especially in the rural areas while the remaining three (3) respondents, representing three percent (3%) cited 'other' as the challenges of remote data collection technique in the study area.

Table 10: How can these challenges be overcome?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
By complementing remote data collection with traditional approaches	57	63
Using cost-effective call and data plans	11	12
Using mobile network companies that have vast nationwide coverage	16	17
Other	07	08
Total	91	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Data presented in table 10 above show that fifty-seven (57) respondents, representing sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents were of the opinion that complementing remote data collection with traditional approaches will go a long way in addressing some of the challenges associated with the exclusive use of remote data collection technique;



eleven (11) respondents, representing twelve percent (12%) recommended the use of cost-effective call and data plans; sixteen (16) respondents, representing nineteen percent (17%) recommended using mobile network companies that have vast nationwide coverage; while the remaining seven (7) respondents, representing eight percent (8%) cited 'other'.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that a good number of respondents have adopted remote data collection techniques during the post lockdown era in Niger state. This was demonstrated in the opinions of the respondents as contained in table 3 which show that ninety-one (91) respondents, representing ninety-three percent (93%) claimed to have adopted or responded to remote data collection instruments during the post Covid-19 era while the remaining seven (7) respondents, representing seven percent (7%) of the total respondents covered in the study claimed they have not at any point in time adopted or responded to remote data collection techniques during the post lockdown era.

Some of the techniques of remote data collection adopted by respondents in the post lockdown era included email, phone interviews, whatsapp chats, telegram etc. as contained in table 4 which show that sixty-five (65) respondents representing seventy-two percent (72%) claimed to have adopted 'Google forms'; eleven (11) respondents, representing twelve percent (12%) claimed to have adopted 'phone interviews'; 'WhatsApp chats' was adopted by seven (07) respondents, representing eight percent (8%); three respondents, representing three percent (3%) claimed to have adopted 'email' as a technique while the remaining five (5) respondents representing five percent (5%) claimed to have adopted remote data collection in the post lockdown era.

Majority of the respondents considered remote data collection techniques as convenient as shown in table 5 which show that seventy-three (73) respondents, representing eighty percent (80%) considered remote data collection during the post lockdown era as convenient; while the remaining eighteen (18) respondents, representing twenty



percent (20%) did not consider adoption of remote data collection technique during post lockdown as inconvenient.

Data presented in table 9 above show that seventy-five (75) respondents, representing eighty-two percent (82%) cited low response rate as a challenge encountered in remote data collection in Political Science research in Niger state; nine (9) respondents, representing ten percent (10%) of the respondents cited high data and call rates; four (4) respondents, representing five percent (5%) cited poor network coverage especially in the rural areas while the remaining three (3) respondents, representing three percent (3%) cited 'other' as the challenges of remote data collection technique in the study area.

Some of the challenges of remote data collection as captured in table 9 above show that seventy-five (75) respondents, representing eighty-two percent (82%) cited low response rate as a challenge encountered in remote data collection in Political Science research in Niger state; nine (9) respondents, representing ten percent (10%) of the respondents cited high data and call rates; four (4) respondents, representing five percent (5%) cited poor network coverage especially in the rural areas while the remaining three (3) respondents, representing three percent (3%) cited 'other' as the challenges of remote data collection technique in the study area.

In lieu of the identified challenges of remote data collection, the respondents advocated a number of measures to be taken to address the challenges associated with remote data collection in Political Science research in Niger state. Data presented in table 10 above show that fifty-seven (57) respondents, representing sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents were of the opinion that complementing remote data collection with traditional approaches will go a long way in addressing some of the challenges associated with the exclusive use of remote data collection technique; eleven (11) respondents, representing twelve percent (12%) recommended the use of cost-effective call and data plans; sixteen (16) respondents, representing nineteen percent (17%) recommended using mobile network companies that have vast nationwide coverage; while the remaining seven (7) respondents, representing eight percent (8%) cited 'other'.



Conclusion

The enforcement of lockdown and other sundry public safety measures against the spread of the Covid-19 era thrown up opportunities for the adoption of remote data collection techniques in Political Science research in Niger state; this opportunity is however not without its own challenges. Findings of this study revealed that some of the challenges associated with remote data collection in Political Science research include low response/feedback rates, high cost of data and call charges and weak network strength especially in the rural areas. All of these challenges make exclusive adoption of remote data collection a convenient but unreliable research methodological technique in Political Science research in Niger state.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings of this study, the following recommendations were advanced:

1. Remote data collection methods should be adopted in combination with other traditional methods of generating primary data in order to partly address the challenge of low response/feedback rate
2. Use of cost-effective call and data plans in order to minimize the cost of conducting Political Science research using remote data collecting technique.
3. Using mobile network companies that have vast nationwide coverage etc. this is to guard against the challenges of poor network coverage.

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TIMBOU-AFRICA ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS
MAY, 2021 EDITIONS, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF:
AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE DEV. RESEARCH VOL.5

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