

# The Case For Remote Data Collection

We are often asked the differences between remote versus in-person data collection. The data speaks for itself – remote surveying provides a cost-effective, high speed alternative to in-person data collection without sacrificing the quality and rigor of the research.

You can learn more about the validity of remote data collection from the literature shared here or the 60 Decibels case study on the next slide.

Here are a few myths and truths about the ability to gather representative, quality insights by speaking directly to end-customers on the phone.

**Myth #1:** Data tends to be less accurate when gathered remotely

False. A study conducted in 2016 published by the World Bank found in-person and phone responses were aligned and accurate. The respondents, owners of microenterprises did not change their behavior based on the medium. Read more [here](#).

**Myth #2:** Remote survey methods are just as costly as in-person

Definitely not. The same study cited above, [Call Me Maybe](#), demonstrates the significant cost savings when opting for remote data collection methods.

**Myth #3:** Research using remote data collection can't be published as academic, peer-reviewed studies

Think again! Check out [this recent study](#) published by Science Advances in February 2021 - *Falling Living Standards during the COVID-19 Crisis: Quantitative evidence from nine developing countries*

# Case Study

Comparing the effectiveness and rigor of phone vs. in-person survey methods

“ Since connecting to the grid, I have noticed that my children's grades at school have improved because I'm able to help them with their homework in the evening now that we have dependable lighting. This has made me very proud as a father.”

- Phone survey respondent: Male, 42

60 Decibels found there were no significant differences in data quality and insights when comparing in-person and phone survey methods in Zambia.



## Approach

60 Decibels conducted phone and in-person interviews as a part of data collection in Zambia for an off-grid energy fund to gather impact insights and evaluate any differences in the results by method. The population was randomly assigned to a phone-based or in-person survey group. The in-person survey group was segmented by region and randomly selected by energy service provider. We interviewed 12% of the population in-person.

## Insights

After thoroughly analyzing 554 phone interviews and 72 in-person interviews of off-grid energy service customers, we found no significant differences in the quality or depth of the results. 60 Decibels phone surveys prove to be a viable and rigorous data collection alternative to in-person.

## Key Takeaways

- > Through remote data collection, 60 Decibels can gather rich, nuanced data directly from end-customers without the often burdensome and costly logistics of facilitating in-person interviews
- > Phone surveys allow 60 Decibels to conduct surveys at scale while maintaining a positive experience for research and respondents