

Context

The main mode of transmission of the coronavirus is believed to be exposure to droplets from infected persons who cough or sneeze. Since social distancing (staying away at least one meter from others) and staying home as much as possible reduce the likelihood of being in close contact with an infected person, these behaviors are believed to be essential for slowing down the spread of the coronavirus (WHO 2020).

Many countries have implemented strict policies aimed at reducing person-to-person contact, which may include temporary bans on international travel and local transport, prohibiting large gatherings, closures of houses of worship, and non-essential businesses. (Divala et al. 2020; Piryani et al. 2020; SSHA 2020). Several countries have also issued advisories recommending that residents practice social distancing and stay home whenever possible. Some governments have ordered a complete lockdown of high-risk areas, prohibiting people from leaving their residences, except to obtain essentials such as food.

Persuasive design practitioners use psychological and social theories to find ways to influence human behaviors. According to the B. J. Fogg Theory of Behavior change, people's willingness to engage in a new behavior - such as social distancing or staying home - depends on three key factors, namely 1) how motivated they are to adopt the behavior, 2) how easy or difficult it is for them to do so, and 3) a trigger or cue that makes them take action (Fogg 2009). Many different types of triggers are possible. In the case of Covid-19, possible triggers could be public advisories issued by the government, mass media messages reminder people to social distance or stay home, etc. According to the Fogg theory, if there is sufficient motivation to practice the recommended behavior and it is easy to do, then people will respond to these triggers and they will adopt the preventive behavior. However, if people are not motivated to practice the behavior or it is difficult to do, then people will ignore the cues and will not change their behavior.

In other words, whether government efforts to urge social distancing and staying home will succeed depends on people's motivation and ability to adhere to these recommendations. In many settings (e.g., in poor, crowded communities) it may be very difficult to comply with social distancing rules. People may not be motivated to engage in behaviors that do not conform with established social norms. Similarly, for people who work in the informal economy it will be very difficult to stay home. People are unlikely to be motivated to stay home, if doing so will cause their families to go hungry, or if they live with an abusive partner (Divala et al. 2020; O'Donnell et al. 2020; SSHA 2020).

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3-2-1 COVID-19 Survey

Viamo, as part of our COVID-19 response, added COVID-19 information on our 3-2-1 Service (<https://viamo.io/services/3-2-1/>) in 18 countries, including messages on symptoms and prevention. As of July 1 2020, these key messages have been listened to 25 million times by more than 3.3 million users. To further understand the information gaps and needs of our users, we added the 3-2-1 Service COVID-19 Survey to poll our users about their knowledge of the disease, as well as the impact of the disease on their livelihood.

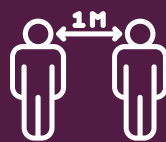
To keep the IVR survey short, 12 different questionnaires were used, each addressing a specific COVID-related topic area (knowledge of COVID-19 and how to prevent it, attitudes, preventive behaviors, motivation, impact on food security, income, mental health, COVID-related school disruption etc.). The surveys were implemented in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Madagascar, Malawi, and Rwanda. The first wave of the 3-2-1 COVID-19 Surveys, conducted in May 2020 and involving over 1,500 respondents for each of the 12 questionnaires, demonstrated the value of the 3-2-1 Service for providing rapid, reliable, low-cost data on country experiences during the pandemic. Compared to Random Digit Dial mobile surveys, 3-2-1 Service users are younger, slightly poorer, and more likely to get their information through their mobile phones.

We present here key findings from Wave 1 of the 3-2-1 Service COVID-19 Survey as longitudinal, cross-sectional data continues to be collected. These findings may be of interest to officials, planners, and policy-makers currently addressing the pandemic at all levels of the response.

Highlights



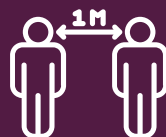
In general, the majority of respondents (64%) are very motivated to stay home to avoid coronavirus infection. However, doing so may not be easy. One out of seven respondents (14%) report it is very difficult for them to stay home.



The level of motivation to keep one meter distance from others to reduce their risk of infection varies considerably by country. The percentage who are very motivated to social distance ranges from only 43% in the DRC to 76% in Rwanda. Overall, one in eight (12%) respondents report it is very difficult to practice social distancing.



Relatively few people stayed home during the past week. Nearly one in four (23%) reported not leaving their house, while another 20% stayed home more than usual.



Across the five countries, 51% of respondents reported social distancing all the time, and an additional 21% reported doing so most of the time. Respondents in the DRC are least likely to practice distancing, while those in Rwanda are most likely to do so.

Figure 1 and 2: Figures 1 and 2 show peoples' motivation and ability to stay home to avoid becoming infected with the coronavirus. Overall, 63.9% of respondents reported that they are very motivated to stay home. However, the level of motivation to stay home varies considerably by country. The highest levels of motivation to stay home are observed in Rwanda, where 82.5% of respondents report they are very motivated to stay home. By contrast, only 46.7% of respondents in the DRC and 57.3% of those in Nepal say they are very motivated to stay home. It is also noteworthy that a considerable fraction of respondents (11.7%) indicate that they are not at all motivated to stay home. The percentage of respondents who are not at all motivated is notably higher in the DRC (24.1%).

Fig 1: Percentage distribution by motivation to stay home to avoid coronavirus infection

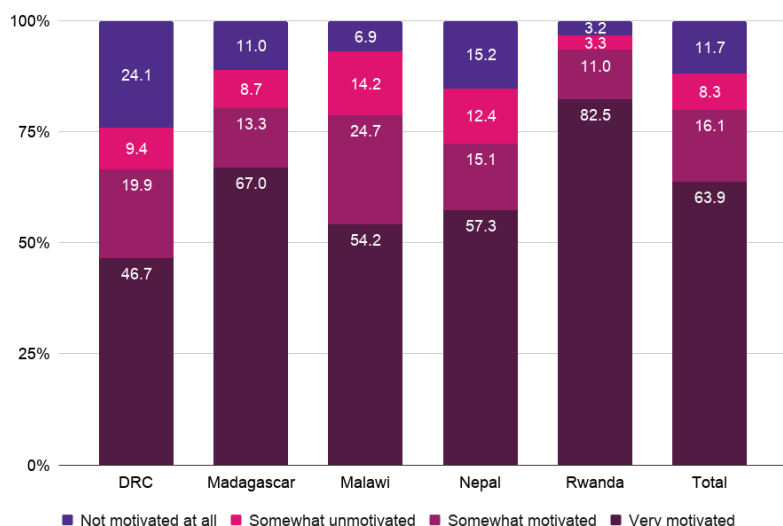
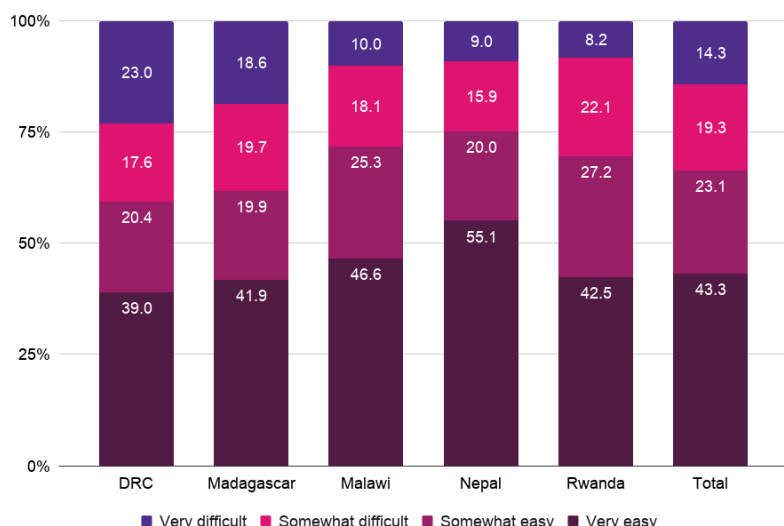


Fig 2: Percentage distribution by level of difficulty to stay home to avoid coronavirus infection



For many people, it is difficult to stay home. Figure 2 shows that 14.3% of respondents find it very difficult to stay home, and 19.3% somewhat difficult. Less than half (43.3%) report it is very easy for them to stay home. Respondents in Nepal are most likely to report it is very easy to stay home (55.1%), while those in the DRC are least likely to find it easy.



33.6%
of respondents find it very difficult or somewhat difficult to stay home.



Fig 3: Percentage of respondents who stayed home more than usual or did not leave the house (past week)

Figure 3: Given the reported lack of motivation to stay home and the difficulty of doing so, public advisories by the government to encourage people to stay home are unlikely to trigger changes in behavior. As shown in Figure 3, only 22.5% of respondents reported that they did not leave their house during the previous week, while another 19.7% stayed home more than usual.



22.5%
of respondents reported that they did not leave their house during the previous week.

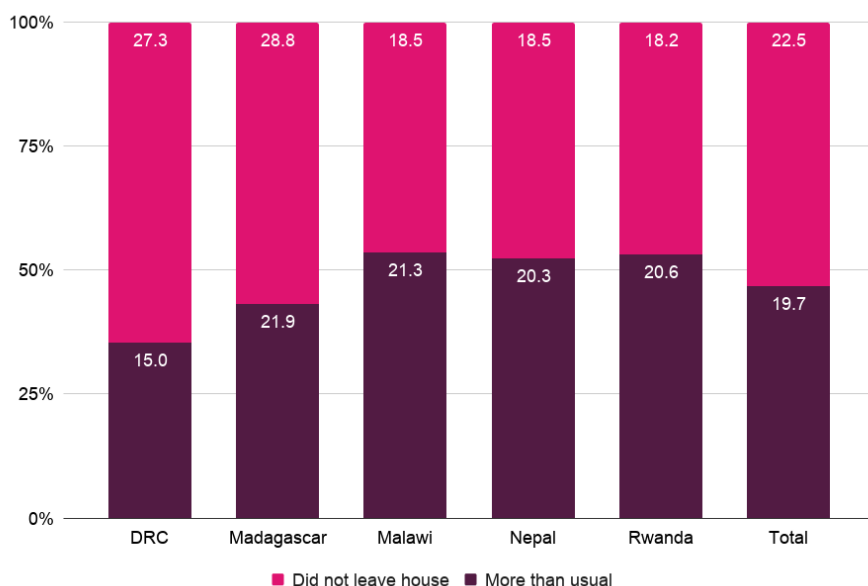
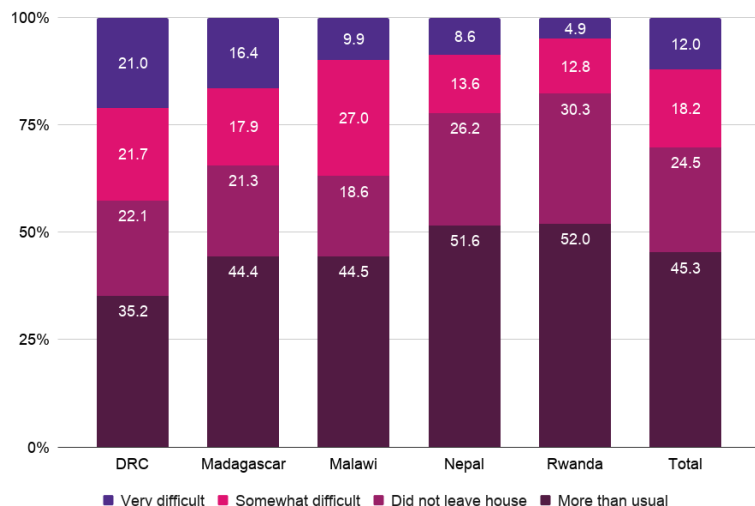
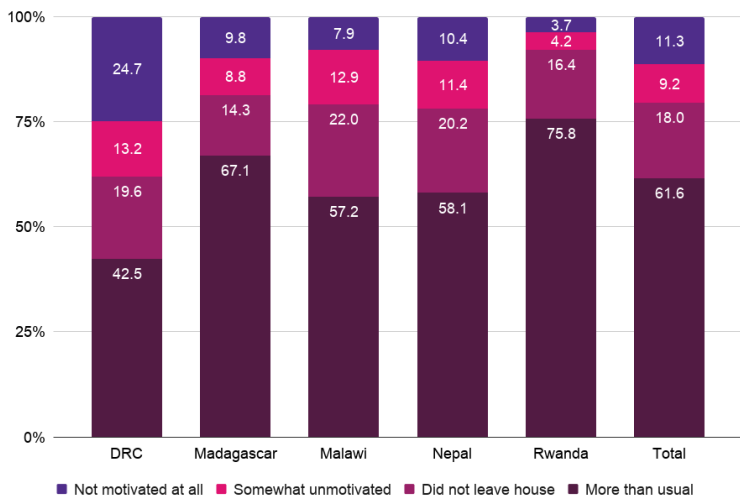


Figure 4 and 5: The level of motivation to practise social distancing, and the perceived ease of doing so are shown in Figures 4 and 5. Overall, only 61.6% of respondents report that they are very motivated to stay at least one meter from others. The percentage who report that they are very motivated to practice social distancing ranges from a low of 42.5% in the DRC to a high of 75.8% in Rwanda. In the DRC 24.7% report that they are not motivated at all to practice social distancing, as do 10.4% of respondents in Nepal.

Fig 4: Percentage distribution by motivation to stay at least one meter away from others

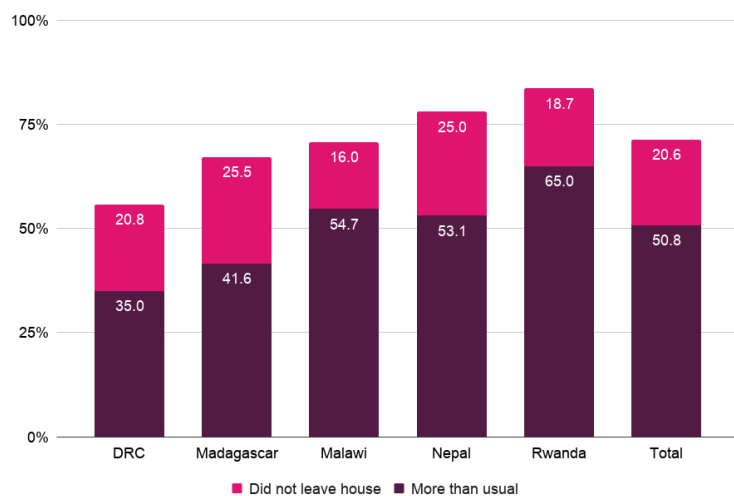
Fig 5: Percentage distribution by level of difficulty to stay at least one meter away from others



As anticipated, it is not easy for people to practice social distancing (see Figure 5). Overall, one in eight respondents (12.0%) say it is very difficult to practice social distancing, and an additional 18.2% say it is somewhat difficult to do. Respondents in DRC are most likely to indicate that social distancing is very difficult to implement (21.0%). The Fogg behavior change model suggests that under these circumstances, government recommendations to practice social distancing are unlikely to succeed.

Fig 6: Percentage of respondents who always or usually stayed one meter away from others (past week)

Figure 6: Overall, only one in two respondents (50.8%) noted that they always stayed away from others at least one meter during the week before the survey. An additional 20.6% reported doing so most of the time. The highest percentages who reported social distancing all the time were reported in Rwanda (65.0%), followed by Malawi (54.7%) and Nepal (53.1%); the lowest percentages were reported in the DRC (35.0%) and Madagascar (41.6%).



References

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