

Populations' behavior analysis toward Covid-19 safety measures: Evidence from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

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PITCH

This policy brief assesses the COVID-19 safety measures use practices of some MENA populations, namely: Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian populations. To this end, three waves of data provided by rapid phone survey (household data) of ERF COVID-19 MENA Monitor, and Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) household survey, carried out by the Center of Applied Economics for Development (CREAD) are used.

ISSUES

The COVID-19 pandemic unsettled several aspects of our daily lives. The quick spread of the virus constrained governments to establish mobility restrictions and enforce the use of safety measures to contain the disease. Even with the elaboration of the vaccines, the use of this safety measures stills crucial, since the emergence of new variants reduces the vaccines effectiveness (Laith et al. 2021). It is then relevant to increase the

populations' awareness toward the use of these measures, even two years after the beginning of the pandemic. In this direction, our study analyses the behavior of the aforementioned MENA countries in terms of used safety measures' kind and intensity. In this regard, we investigate the following questions:

- (i) How do the populations of these countries behave regarding these safety measures?
- (ii) How do these behaviors evolve over time?
- (iii) And which socioeconomic variables are determinant in these behaviors?

METHODS

The used data for both Morocco and Tunisia are those collected by the ERF, through three phone calls carried out in November 2020, February 2021 and April 2021. Whereas the data of Algeria were collected through a household survey carried out from May, 23rd 2021

to June 15th 2021. The questions of interest were asked within three periods of time: period 1, from March 2020 to June 2020; period 2, from July 2020 to September 2020, and the third period, from October 2020 to May 2021.

To answer the question (i), chi-square tests are done, for each wave, and for each safety measure and the variables: gender, age, educational level, and residence region. Concerning the question (ii), transition graphs, followed by simulation are computed. Finally, an ordered probit model and a logit model are built to answer the question (iii). In this regard, demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education level, the area of residence), Household characteristics (size, number of children under age six in the household, and number of children enrolled in school), are working status are considered as control variables.

Authors: Lahna IDRES, Moundir LASSASSI.

Key words: COVID-19, Safety measures, MENA regions

Geography: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia.

Themes: COVID-19, Safety measures

Find out more at: <https://www.afd.fr/en/carte-des-projets/impact-covid-19-households-and-firms-mena-region>

Figure 1: Used safety measures

RESULTS

Used safety measures to prevent COVID-19:

When analyzing the data, it appears that Moroccans are more respectful toward each safety measure compared to Algerians or Tunisians. Also, a common decrease in the percentage of people observing each safety measure is noticed for all countries. Except for the wearing mask measure in Algeria, where an increase in the number of people doing it is noticed from July 2020 to

September 2020. The percentage of people respecting each safety measure is greater than 80% for both Morocco and Tunisia, whatever the period. In Algeria, these percentages fall below 80% from October 2020 to May 2021.

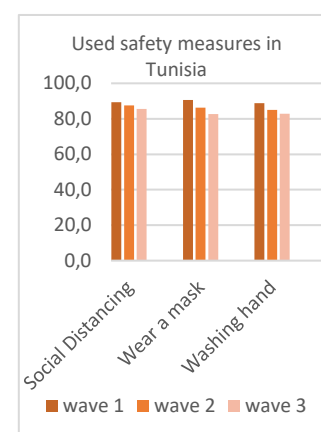
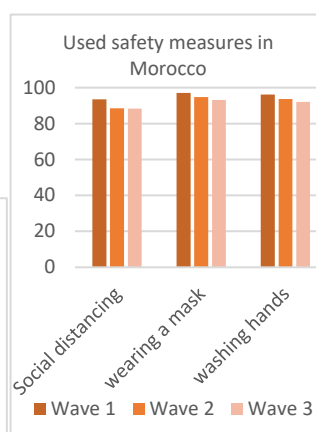
Focusing on the variables: gender, age, educational level and residence region, and their effects on the populations' behavior toward each safety measure, it appears that: (i) These effects differ following: the country, the safety measure kind, and the period of time. In this regard, the variables which have a significant effect, whatever the safety measure kind, and over the three periods of time are: - residence region and educational level in Algeria, in such a

way that urban people and those having a high educational level are the most respectful - Gender and age in Morocco, in such a way that women and the oldest are the most respectful - Gender in Tunisia, where women are more respectful than men. (ii) Even in the same country, the most used safety measure is not generally the same all over the time, whatever the variable. However, urban people mostly use social distancing in Algeria, men mostly use the measure "wear a mask" in Morocco, and Men mostly use social distancing, whereas women mostly use the measure "wear a mask" in Tunisia.

Intensity of used safety measures:

When focusing on the number of measures that are observed, it appears that most people observe

three safety measures all over the three waves and for all countries. Moreover, the highest percentage of people observing three safety measures is reached in Morocco. Furthermore, if these populations keep the same behaviors like those observed when passing from the second to the third wave, it appears that 80% of Moroccans will keep respecting three safety measures, whereas this percentage is about 59% in Tunisia, and only 5% in Algeria. The analysis by gender, age, marital status, and working status shows that: men use a greater number of safety measures than women; the oldest comply with fewer measures compared to the youngest; formal salaried and unemployed respect more barrier measures compared to self-employed workers; and never married respect more barrier measures compared to ever married.



Source: Computed by the authors

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Focus on the sensitization of rural and people with less than basic to basic educational level in Algeria; men and youth in Morocco; and men in Tunisia.
- ▶ Remind the importance of combining the safety measures (use more than one), especially, for women and the oldest, in the three countries.
- ▶ The communication strategies must then highlight the potential of the virus to infect youth and men as well as the fact that people within these categories can also experience complicated COVID-19 form or die.