

Exploring Institutional Trust in New Zealand Pre/Post COVID-19 Pandemic

New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study: Years 2019-2022 N = 42,681

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NZAVS Report on Institutional Trust Pre/Post COVID

This report delves into the changes in institutional trust among New Zealanders from the pre-pandemic period in 2019 to 2022.

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study uses a two-item scale to measure **Trust in Science**

- “I have a high degree of confidence in the scientific community.”(Nisbet, Cooper, and Garrett 2015)
- “Our society places too much emphasis on science.”(reverse coded)

We average these scores to form a single score (Hartman et al. 2017). ¹ These items were introduced in NZAVS Wave 11 (2019 - 2020) ²

Previous research using a propensity score design reported on changes in Trust in Science during the first three weeks of New Zealand’s COVID lockdown in March and April 2020 (Sibley et al. 2020).

COVID-19 Government response (Marques et al. 2022)

- “I trust the Government to make sensible decisions about how to best manage COVID-19 in New Zealand.”
- “The New Zealand government response to COVID-19.”

Trust in politicians (Sibley et al. 2020)

- “Politicians in New Zealand can generally be trusted.”

Institutional trust in police (Tyler 2005)

- “People’s basic rights are well protected by the New Zealand Police.”
- “There are many things about the New Zealand Police and its policies that need to be changed.”
- “The New Zealand Police care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.”

General tendency to believe in conspiracies(Lantian et al. 2016)

- “I think that the official version of major world events given by authorities often hides the truth.”

¹We do not blindly adhere to the standard measurement approaches in psychometrics. It might be preferable to work with single items instead of the averaged score. See (VanderWeele 2022) for more information on this point.

²We must be cautious: causal identification requires contrasting outcomes under different exposures. Because all were exposed to the COVID-19 pandemic, these contrasts are not identified without the strong assumption that there were no pre-existing trends in the acceptance of science before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Sample responses: years 2019-2020: Pre-Covid, Lockdown, Post-Lockdown

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