

Muslim Diversity Study: Quantitative protocol and practical insights on engaging New Zealand's Muslim communities

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Abstract

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) represents a substantial longitudinal research initiative aimed at comprehensively understanding the social values and attitudes prevalent among New Zealanders. The NZAVS is distinguished by its extensive examination of various social, political, and health-related dimensions of life in New Zealand, with a particular emphasis on investigating negative attitudes towards minority groups, including manifestations of discrimination and prejudice. In response to 2019 Christchurch attacks, our objective was to utilize data from the NZAVS to gain insights into Islamophobia and its repercussions for the Muslim community. Furthermore, we sought to explore the overall wellbeing and flourishing of Muslims in New Zealand, investigating how values, identity, religiosity, and meaning-making influence Muslims' self-perception and health outcomes. However, the limited sample size of Muslims within the NZAVS posed a challenge to making robust inferences. To address this limitation, the current project was conceived to recruit a larger cohort of Muslim participants within the NZAVS framework over a three-year quantitative longitudinal study. This article has two major parts. Firstly, it delineates the contextual motivations for this research, the pilot consultation with the Muslim community, and the decisions made and adjusted based on this consultation. It also outlines the data collection methods, research team functions, quantitative measures used, and timeline. Secondly, it provides practical guidelines in terms of data collection drawing on our understanding of enablers and challengers of data collection from a culturally distinct religious community in New Zealand. Hence, this article will serve as a reference text for researchers conducting work not only on Muslims in New Zealand but also on other ethnic and religious communities and minorities in the country. It will also allow researchers to apply the methods to other contexts and regions across the world to provide comparative insights and analyses.

Keywords: Muslims, diversity, New Zealand, Muslim Diversity Study (MDS), New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (MDS)

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