

## Muslim Diversity Study: A quantitative study protocol

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## Abstract

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) represents a significant longitudinal research initiative aimed at comprehensively understanding the social values and attitudes prevalent among New Zealanders. Initiated in 2009, this study has successfully gathered data from a substantial cohort exceeding 70,000 adult participants. 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 2019, the Muslim community in New Zealand was subjected to the most severe terrorist attack in the nation's modern history. In response to this tragic event, 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, termed the Muslim Diversity Study (MDS), was conceived to recruit a larger cohort of Muslim participants within the NZAVS framework over a three-year quantitative longitudinal study (2023-2026). The study is preregistered on OSF Registries (DOI:10.17605/OSF.IO/B39XT). This protocol 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. It also provides lessons learned 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. This protocol will serve as a reference text for researchers conducting work not only on Islam and the Muslim community 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 and findings 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)

### **Muslim Diversity Study: A quantitative study protocol**

On 15 March 2019, a devastating far-right extremist attack on two mosques took place in Christchurch, killing 51 Muslims and injuring 40 (*Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Masjidain on 15 March 2019*, 2020). Although this attack shocked the world (*World Leaders Condemn New Zealand Mosque Attacks*, 2019) and was unprecedented in New Zealand (*Jacinda Ardern on the Christchurch Shooting*, 2019), it was not as surprising to the Muslim community (A. Rahman, 2019) due to Muslims' widespread experience of Islamophobia and prejudice in the country (Sibley et al., 2020). Islamophobia has been reportedly increased overseas following these attacks (*Islamophobia After Christchurch Terror Attacks Quadrupled - Australian Report*, 2022), however, the evidence in New Zealand seems to be mixed. While news articles have reported increased hate towards Muslims (Frykberg, 2023), our findings are indicative of improved attitudes towards Muslims (Bulbulia et al., 2023; Shanaah et al., 2021) following attacks. Addressing this discrepancy is beyond the scope of current article, however, it is worth noting that most of our research in this area, primarily from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) (Sibley, 2024) lens, has so far shed light on such attitudes from a non-Muslim perspective. In other words, we have reported on how Muslims are perceived by non-Muslim members of New Zealand society, rather than how Muslims perceive themselves. While the published NZAVS reports are an absolute necessity, the self-experience of Muslims themselves as the direct victims of this heinous crime is equally, if not more, important.

The current article elaborates on the protocol of a pioneering three-year longitudinal study titled the Muslim Diversity Study poised to achieve this very goal – examining Muslims' self-perception in New Zealand from a variety of angles, as well as, the predictors of resilience, flourishing, and wellbeing within Muslims. The study started in 2023 and is planned to conclude in 2026. The goal is to achieve as many as 650 Muslim respondents.

### **Introduction**

The Muslim community has been expanding in New Zealand. Based on the 2018 census, New Zealand had more than 60,000 Muslims; which has grown to > 75,000 according to the 2023

Census ([Stats NZ, 2024](#)). Studies also show that the number of converts to Islam has increased after the 2019 terror attack ([Arkilic, 2020](#)). The Muslim community is uniquely positioned in New Zealand: as a growing religious minority, it is a historically stigmatized group that were the direct victims of the 2019 terrorist attack ([Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Masjidain on 15 March 2019, 2020](#); [Sibley et al., 2020](#)).

Muslim Diversity Study (MDS) — officially known as *A national longitudinal study of Muslim diversity and flourishing* embraces a community-oriented approach by collaborating with the Muslim community in order to make decisions about the execution of data collection and for identifying key questions of interest for the community at large. It is important that such processes and decisions are recorded in the form of a study protocol so that our findings are shared with the broader public and future researchers in New Zealand and across the globe can benefit from our outputs.

This protocol addresses MDS' pilot community consultation, the decisions made and modified based on consultation, community engagement, data collection, team, measures, and proposed data analysis plan. To set the rationale for MDS, it is important to have a brief look at attitudes towards Muslims in New Zealand.

## The need for Muslim Diversity Study

Muslims have generally faced prejudicial attitudes in New Zealand ([Greaves et al., 2020](#); [Sibley et al., 2020](#); [Yogeeswaran et al., 2019](#)). Until the Christchurch terror attack, news stories on Islam and Muslims in New Zealand media were mostly an extension of ‘the negative othering rhetoric’, and the national media tended to link Muslim converts to jihadis ([Drury, 2016](#)). Unsurprisingly, such rhetoric has been found to foster anti-Muslim prejudice ([Shaver et al., 2017](#)).

In the aftermath of Christchurch shootings, the Government introduced unprecedented counter-terrorism measures such as the prohibition of the sale of all military-style semi-automatic and assault rifles and creating the Royal Commission of Inquiry into these attacks ([Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Masjidain on 15 March 2019, 2020](#)). The Royal Commission of Inquiry presented an 800-page report emphasizing New

Zealand's inclusive and welcoming identity, among other measures ([Arkilic, 2021](#)). In addition, New Zealand press embraced a more inclusive and positive narrative with respect to Islam and Muslims ([Kabir, 2024](#); [K. A. Rahman, 2020](#)).

Although, there have been sporadic reports of increased hate crimes after the attacks ([Wilson & Shastri, 2020](#)), the average sentiments have improved. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS), in a series of articles, reported the positive shift in these attitudes toward Muslims post Christchurch attacks ([Bulbulia et al., 2023](#); [Shanaah et al., 2021](#)), and the psychological response of New Zealand public to shootings ([Byrne et al., 2022](#)).

The Christchurch shootings prompted many New Zealand research groups and institutions to further study Muslims and with Muslims, that so far have been a culturally-distinct, under-researched, minority group. These studies included trauma-focused response ([Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2021](#); [Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2024](#)), inclusion, Islamophobia, and wellbeing ([Junaid et al., 2024](#)), perceived discrimination among Muslim immigrant youth ([Raissi, 2024](#)), the political implications of government decisions ([Arkilic, 2021](#)) among others. Given that, at NZAVS, we have explored perception of Muslims and the mechanisms of attitudinal changes towards Muslims following 15 March 2019 attacks ([Bulbulia et al., 2023](#); [Hawi et al., 2019](#); [Shaver et al., 2017](#); [Sibley et al., 2020](#)), it was timely and necessary that we expanded our reach further.

The NZAVS is a planned 20-year-long longitudinal national probability annual panel study of social attitudes, personality, ideology and health outcomes that began in 2009 and is currently in its 15th year. It has so far collected data from more than 70,000 New Zealand residents using the electoral roll ([Sibley, 2024](#)). The NZAVS has been instrumental in exploring key issues related to minorities, including but not limited to discrimination, intergroup relations, identity, distress, security, and the dynamics and mechanisms behind them.

The NZAVS has been uniquely positioned due to its prestigious reputation (> 150 peer-reviewed publications), longitudinal panel design, large sample size, and a large multi-disciplinary research team ([Sibley, 2024](#)). More importantly, NZAVS has a nationally

representative sample with data from different identity and religious group ([Sibley, 2024](#)), thereby, allowing us to compare data from different identity groups. However, the Muslim sample in NZAVS has been < 100, that did not allow us to make meaningful inferences regarding Muslim lives and issues in comparison with other religious groups. Hence, there was an immediate need to collect more data from Muslims in New Zealand.

In addition, much of the NZAVS work to date with the Muslim community has focused on conveying information about how Muslims are perceived by the non-Muslim members of New Zealand society. After receiving strong positive signals from the Muslim community to scientifically explore diversity, discrimination, self-perception, resilience, meaning-making, and flourishing; this three-year longitudinal study was conceived in 2022 to address this scholarly and community knowledge gap. Therefore, MDS is effectively a booster to NZAVS, and uses the NZAVS questionnaires to collect data from the members of Muslim community in New Zealand.

We aim to explore the diversity of Muslims in New Zealand, assess Muslims' perceived discrimination in comparison with other religious groups, unearth predictors of flourishing and meaning-making, and measure the effect of service-attendance and religious-identification on these constructs.

MDS started with pilot community consultation as detailed below in this protocol.

### **Pilot community consultation**

Before applying for the research grant, we deemed necessary to gauge Muslim community's interest in the project, as well as the feasibility of the project for the Muslim community. This pilot consultation took place between February and November, 2022 where the principal investigator reached out to 29 Muslims (20 representing community, religious or cultural organisations and 9 individuals) in different cities from different academic and cultural backgrounds, age groups, and genders including community leaders, religious scholars, and activists. The conversations focused around four objectives: 1) To assess the feasibility of the project for Muslims, 2) To assess interest of Muslims in the project, 3) To get feedback on the survey items, and 4) To inquire if translation may be needed. First, all 29 respondents believed that

the study was feasible and timely for Muslims, and that Muslims will be interested to participate. In addition, the highest participation should be anticipated from youth, second generation migrants, educated, and women. Second, not only did they believe that the study and our planned measures were important, they have also promised to support us in every possible way.

Challenges identified: 1) The participation from Christchurch might not be up to the expectations as after Christchurch shooting people were surveyed a lot and not provided with the findings. 2) It might not be easy for people to understand the questionnaires due to unfamiliarity of the community with research. 3) The participation from elderly community and Muslim converts might be low, so we need to find avenues to address them. 4) Community members might be suspicious and consider the study to have ulterior or personal motives.

Recommendations: 1) The participants must be informed about the study motivation and be transparent and clearly communicate, benefits to the community, and that it will increase Muslims' visibility and raise their voice in research. Especially the long-term benefits for the community and their children should be made clear. 2) We should reach out to the community via trusted community, ethnic, religious organisations, and mosques. 3) For youth engagement, we should go via youth organisations such as Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) at universities. It was suggested that a family focused strategy should be used as starting with men would be more effective. 4) Findings should be shared back with the community in future due to the diversity it will present. 5) Many said that the questionnaire needs to be translated into seven ethnic languages. However, they also indicated that a majority of potential participants could comprehend the English version easily. 6) To be able to share with the community and keep them up-to-date, it was also recommended to have a unique identity and website. Therefore, instead of calling it a booster to NZAVS, the project was named Muslim Diversity Study.

This whole process led to develop a comprehensive guideline that addresses feasibility, advice on engagement with the community, the possible challenges, and avenues to enhance participation. The participants of this consultation form the Advisory Group of MDS and are being consulted regularly as needed.

## Translation

Our consultation with the community indicated that the translation may only be needed for a small number of New Zealand Muslims, and that a majority will be able to use the English version. As a result of consultation with a group (Sulaiman-Hill and colleagues) who have been conducting research within the Muslim community, instead of using the common translation back-translation procedure, we were thinking of using a more effective way of translating, back-translating, and comparing notes to ensure conceptual equivalence (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2021). This method was inspired by the recent developments and recommendations based on the needs in countries that home an increasing number of refugees (Barger et al., 2010; Ozolins et al., 2020). Following this, the translation was planned to be checked by experts as recommended by Fenn et al. (2020) and piloted within the Advisory Group to ensure reliability and conceptual equivalence.

However, one important aspect of MDS is comparing Muslim scores on NZAVS with members from other religious groups. With a translated questionnaire, we still faced the risk of inability to capture the attitudes and behaviours as accurately as the English version. Therefore, we would not know if differences between the scores of Muslims and other groups would be due to religious affiliation or a biased translation. We raised this problem with the Advisory Group, and it was recommended not to translate the questionnaire and to furnish the English version to all potential Muslim participants. This gave us a methodological safety-net since we could be more confident that the meaning of concepts is not distorted because of translation.

## Consultation on survey items

In consultation with 21 members of the Advisory Group, we identified six items of the NZAVS questionnaire that could be of a sensitive nature and may pose challenges for individuals unfamiliar with research. A clear majority (81% – averaging the acceptance rate for all 6 items) thought that no items needed to be removed. Given that the NZAVS items were developed with considering Christianity as the largest religious group at the conception of study, we decided not to change the items for MDS to allow comparison between scores of different religious

groups. In addition, the MDS cover letter states: “As the survey is designed for the general New Zealand population, there may be questions that do not necessarily apply to you. Please feel free to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer”.

## Hypotheses

*Hypothesis 1:* Muslims with the strongest ties to their community as measured by service attendance and prayer are buffered most from anti-Muslim prejudice.

*Hypothesis 2:* Muslims experience greater challenges to employment and health than matched members of other religious groups.

*Hypothesis 3:* Subjective well-being, the meaning of life, and psychological distress are similar among Muslims and matched members of religious groups from the buffering of religious community-making.

## Method

### Participants

NZAVS participants details will be available online after the completion of Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>. MDS attempts to increase the sample size of Muslims in NZAVS by  $n = 650$  ( $> 1\%$  of New Zealand Muslim population), corresponding with the NZAVS sampling rate from the overall New Zealand population. Based on the 2018 Census, New Zealand had 60,261 Muslims in 2022 ([Stats NZ, 2024](#)) — about 1.3% of New Zealand population. As shown in Table 1, we selected six cities (Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton, Wellington, Palmerston North, and Dunedin) that had at least 1,000 Muslims, for data collection. Inclusion criteria consist of self identification as Muslim, being 18 year of age or older, and currently residing in New Zealand. In sum a total of xxx Muslim participants completed the questionnaire and joined the NZAVS.

### Materials

NZAVS questionnaire consists of many psychological measures (see [Sibley, 2024](#)). In this protocol, we are highlighting measures that are pertinent to the planned papers aimed at communicating the findings emerging from MDS.

For Likert type scales, the minimum and maximum levels are noted along with description, for instance, 1 = Not Important, 7 = Very Important would mean that a score ranges between 1 and 7, with 1 being the minimum and 7 being the maximum score; whereas (R) indicates the reverse-scored items. Notwithstanding, we might choose to explore further measures which will then be elaborated on in the individual articles.

### ***Service attendance and religiosity***

1. Do you identify with a religion and/or spiritual group? (Yes/No). If yes, what religion or spiritual group? (String entry).
2. How many times did you attend a church or place of worship in the last month? (String entry).
3. How many times did you pray in the last week? (String entry).
4. How many times did you read religious scripture in the last week? (String entry).
5. How important is your religion to how you see yourself? (1 = Not Important, 7 = Very Important).
6. I identify as a spiritual person. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
7. Do you believe in God? (Yes/No).
8. Do you believe in any form of spirit or life force? (Yes/No).

### ***Prejudice***

1. I feel that I am often discriminated against because of my religious/spiritual beliefs. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
2. People from my ethnic group are discriminated against in New Zealand. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
3. I feel that I am often discriminated against because of my age. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
4. I feel that I am often discriminated against because of my ethnicity. (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).

5. I feel that I am often discriminated against because of my gender. (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).
6. Intergroup Warmth Ratings: Participants are asked to rate their feelings of warmth toward different groups using the “Feeling Thermometer Scale” for each group from least to most warmth on a 7-point scale where 1 = Least Warm and 7 = Most Warm (see Figure 1 for reference). Groups include: NZ Europeans, Māori, Asians in general, Pacific Islanders, Elderly people, People with a disability, Refugees, Overweight people, Immigrants in general, Chinese, Indians, Muslims, LGBTQ+ people, People with mental illness.

### ***Felt belonging***

1. I know that people in my life accept and value me. (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).
2. I feel like an outsider. (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).
3. I know that people around me share my attitudes and beliefs. (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).

### ***Support***

1. There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
2. There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress (R). (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
3. I know there are people I can turn to when I need help. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

### ***Employment***

1. What is your highest level of qualification? (String entry).
2. Are you currently employed (This includes self-employed or casual work)? (Yes/No). This leads to a four-point nominal response: employed full-time, employed part-time, unemployed, and not in the labour force.

3. In that job, what is your current occupation? (String entry).
4. What is the main activity of the business or employer that you work for? (String entry).
5. How long have you worked at your current organization? (String entry: years/months).
6. How satisfied are you with your current job? (1 = Not Satisfied, 7 = Very Satisfied).
7. How secure do you feel in your current job? (1 = Not Secure, 7 = Very Secure).
8. How valued do you feel by your current organization? (1 = Not valued, 7 = Very Valued).

### ***Health***

1. In general, would you say your health is... (1 = Poor, 7 = Excellent).
2. I seem to get sick a little easier than other people. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
3. I expect my health to get worse. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
4. Do you have a health condition or disability that limits you, and that has lasted for 6+ months? (Yes/No). If yes, please state: (String entry).
5. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? This is measured using a 6 point nominal scale (a. Never - I don't drink, b. Monthly or less, c. Up to 4 times a month, d. Up to 3 times a week, e. 4 or more times a week, f. Don't know).
6. Have you ever regularly smoked tobacco cigarettes? (Yes/No).
7. Have you ever regularly used e-cigarettes? (Yes/No).
8. Do you currently smoke tobacco cigarettes? (Yes/No).
9. Do you currently vape or use e-cigarettes? (Yes/No).
10. Access to and satisfaction with GP: Do you have a regular family doctor/GP? (Yes/No). (If yes) How satisfied are you with the service and care you receive from your family doctor/GP? (1 = Not Satisfied, 7 = Very Satisfied). Do you think your doctor/GP shares a similar cultural background to you? (1 = Definitely No, 7 = Definitely Yes). Does your doctor/GP respect your cultural background when you are discussing health issues with them? (1= Definitely No, 7 = Definitely Yes).
11. Please estimate how many hours you spent during each of the following things last week

(String entry). Options provided: Working in paid employment, housework/cooking, looking after children, volunteer/charitable work, exercising/physical activity, watching TV/Netflix/movies, travelling/commuting, watching/reading news, using the internet (in total), using social media (e.g., Facebook), playing video games/computer games.

12. BMI: Calculated by using a person's weight (Kg) divided by square root of height (m) that is asked separately, using "What is your height? (String entry (meters))", and "What is your weight? (String entry (Kgs))".
13. During the past month, on average, how many hours of actual sleep did you get per night? (String entry).
14. Do you have a health condition or disability that limits you, and that has lasted for 6+ months? (Yes/No). If yes, please state: (String entry).
15. Chronic diseases diagnosis: See Figure 2.

### ***Subjective wellbeing/psychological distress***

Measured using the Kessler-6 items (items 1-6 in Figure 3) rated on a 5-point scale (0 = None of the time, 4 = All of the time) ([Kessler et al., 2010](#)).

### ***Meaning of life***

Items are: "My life has a clear sense of purpose" (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree) and "I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful" (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

### ***Life satisfaction and national wellbeing***

Items from Figure 4 measured on 11-item measure (0 = Completely Dissatisfied, 10 = Completely Satisfied). In addition, "I am satisfied with my life (1= Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)" and "In most ways my life is close to ideal (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)" are used.

***Self esteem***

Items are, “On the whole I am satisfied with myself” (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate), “I take a positive attitude toward myself” (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate) and “I am inclined to feel that I am a failure” (R) (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate).

***Gratitude***

Items are, “I have much in my life to be thankful for” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), “When I look at the world, I don’t see much to be grateful for” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree) and “I am grateful to a wide variety of people” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

***Community making***

I feel a sense of community with others in my local neighbourhood (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

***Intergroup anxiety***

I feel anxious about interacting with people from other races (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

***Rumination***

During the last 30 days, how often did you have negative thoughts that repeated over and over? (0 = None of the time, 4 = All of the time).

***Forgivingness versus vengeful rumination***

Items are, “Sometimes I can’t sleep because of thinking about past wrongs I have suffered.” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), “I can usually forgive and forget when someone does me wrong. (R)” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), and “I find myself regularly thinking about past times that I have been wronged.” (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

***Matching with other religious groups***

Similar to Bulbulia et al. (2023), we will use the following variables to identify matching members in different religions groups. 1. Age: “What is your age?” (String entry), and “When is

your date of birth?” (String entry). 2. Education: Measured by an 11-point ordinal scale (0 = No Qualification, 11 = Doctoral Degree, based on the New Zealand Qualification Framework (*The New Zealand Qualifications Framework, 2016*)) from responses to the qualification-related question. 3. Employment: A binary variable is created (0 = Unemployed, 1 = Employed) based on the responses to employment item “Are you currently employed?”. 4. Ethnicity: The items displayed in Figure 5 are categorised following the New Zealand Census Groups: European, Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American/African), and Other. 5. Gender: Responses to the string entry item “What is your gender?” will be used to create a binary variable (Male = 1, Not male = 0). 6. Area-unit deprivation: Measured based on 2018 New Zealand Deprivation Index ([Atkinson et al., 2019](#)) that assigns a decile-rank index (1 = Least Deprived, 10 = Most Deprived) using participants’ immediate neighbourhood’s aggregate census information. This index is calculated using component factor analysis of nine variables in weighted order as follows: proportion of adults who received a means-tested benefit, household income, proportion not owning own home, proportion of single-parent families, the proportion of unemployed, proportion lacking qualifications, proportion household crowding, proportion no telephone access, and proportion no car access. Hence, this index reflects nationwide mean deprivation level for small neighbourhood-type units (i.e., small community areas consisting about 80-90 people). 7. Socioeconomic status (Occupational prestige): A census-derived occupation-based measure NZSEI (New Zealand Socioeconomic Index) is used to estimate one’s socioeconomic status. It uses an open-ended question regarding one’s occupation, which is subsequently classified in accordance with the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Level 3. In the case of missing values, the measures is imputed using a combination of age and education. The measure is assigned scores between 10 = Low and High = 90. 8. Parent: Measured by assigning a binary variable (1 = Those with children, 0 = The rest) to the item: “How many children have you given birth to, fathered, or adopted?”. (String entry). 9. Partner: Responses to “What is your relationship status?” are assigned a binary variable (1 = Has a partner, 0 = Doesn’t have a partner). 10. Religious identification: Responses

to “Do you identify with a religion and/or spiritual group?” are coded a binary variable (1 = Yes, 0 = No). 11. Political orientation: Responses to “Please rate how politically left-wing versus right-wing you see yourself as being” are assigned a 7-point scale (1 = Extremely left-wing, 7 = Extremely right-wing). 12. Residence: Urban or rural residence (a two-item nominal variable) is identified based on the physical addresses provided. 13. Region of habituation: Whether participants are living in an urban or rural area, based on the addresses provided, is coded; 1 = Urban, 0 = Rural. 14. Race-based rejection anxiety: “People from other races would be likely to reject me on the basis of my race”. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). 15. Big Six personality traits: Six personality traits, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, honesty-humility, and neuroticism, are measured using a 7-point (1 = Very Inaccurate, 7 = Very Accurate) Mini-IPIP6 scale ([Sibley et al., 2011](#)).

## Ethics

The NZAVS was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 26 May 2021 until 26 May 2027 (Reference: UAHPEC22576). All participants granted informed written consent and the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee approved all procedures.

## Design

MDS is a three-year-long booster for NZAVS. NZAVS is a planned 20-year-long longitudinal panel study of adult New Zealanders, currently in its 15th year (Wave 15) that corresponds with Wave 1 (the first year) of MDS (15 Oct 2023 to 14 Oct 2024). Wave 2 and Wave 3 of MDS will correspond with NZAVS Wave 16 (15 Oct 2024 to 14 Oct 2025) and Wave 17 (15 Oct 2025 to 14 Oct 2026), respectively. NZAVS uses quantitative measures. The following dependent variables will be considered to test the proposed MDS hypotheses.

1. Perceived religious discrimination
2. Perceived ethnic discrimination
3. Employment status

4. Job satisfaction
5. Job security
6. Feeling valued by organisation
7. Self-rated health
8. Perceived health decline
9. Chronic diseases and disabilities
10. Kessler-6 psychological distress scale
11. Meaning of life
12. Life satisfaction
13. Sense of belonging
14. Perceived support
15. Warmth toward various groups
16. Vengeful rumination
17. Forgiveness

## Data Analysis

### *Hypothesis 1*

- Correlation between religiosity and prejudice
- Regression: Service attendance, prayer frequency, religious importance, and spiritual identification (IVs) and perceived discrimination (DV)
- Moderation: Testing whether or not community involvement moderates the relationship between religiosity and perceived discrimination.
- Mediation: Whether or not the sense of belonging mediates relationship between religiosity and perceived discrimination.

### *Hypothesis 2*

- Using propensity score matching to match Muslims with participants from other religious groups based on variables used in previous publications, such as Bulbulia et al. (2023).

These are: age, education, employment, ethnicity, gender, deprivation index, socioeconomic status, being a parent, having a partner, religious identification, political orientation, urban vs. rural residence, region, race-based anxiety, and Big Six personality measures.

- Regression: Employment status (binary) predicted from religious affiliation, job satisfaction, and job security.
- Regression: Self-rated health and disability predicted from religious affiliation, health behaviours, and chronic diseases.
- Chi square: Religious affiliation vs employment status and disability status.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

- Matching participants similar to Hypothesis 2.
- ANOVA: Comparing average scores of subjective wellbeing as well as psychological distress between Muslims and members of other religions.
- Regression: Community support and religious community-making buffering against distress and enhancing wellbeing
- Structural equation modelling: Modelling mediation of community-making on the relationship between religious affiliation and wellbeing outcomes.
- Moderation: To find out whether the strength of community support and belonging moderate the effects of religious group membership on wellbeing and distress.

### **Preregistration**

The hypotheses, measures, and proposed data analysis are preregistered on OSF (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/B39XT>). The study was preregistered before any attempted data analyses.

### **Procedure**

#### ***Research assistant recruitment and training***

The 30 research assistants, as indicated in Table 1, were recruited before the MDS Wave 1. The position was advertised by University of Canterbury and shared via social media, emails, and

community organisations. The eligibility criteria included the least of tertiary level education in New Zealand, familiarity with research in humanities, interest in working with community, and experiences of working with a Muslim community organisations. Thirty research assistants were recruited after initial screening and interviews from a total of 95 applicants.

Before the commencement of study, a series of comprehensive Zoom trainings took place to familiarise research assistants with NZAVS, the MDS background, and survey questionnaires. In addition, research assistants learned about ethical guidelines, confidentiality principles, interacting with a culturally diverse participants pool, planning for hiring participants, and promoting the community participation in the study.

### ***Data collection***

Research assistants used the snowball approach for data collection. They started reaching out to their close circles, and kept expanding their reach. The sample was non-representative, and participants had the choice of filling in the online questionnaire using Qualtrics, or a paper questionnaire and returning it to the NZAVS headquarters in Auckland University using a pre-paid postal envelope.

After the initial stage of reaching out to the close circle, the research assistants started reaching out to community organisations. A runsheet was provided, and different documents and promotional materials such as individual messages, community messages, flyers, and posters were at the research assistants disposal based on their needs. We have also developed a clear vision statement and ethics statement that were part of our MDS introductory letter. In addition, an additional cover letter was sent to all Muslim participants alongside the information sheet. It was aimed to clearly convey the purposes of booster to the community. Please see appendices A-H for these materials. Finally, 10 promotional shirts were designed that the research assistants wore during festivals and community events for study promotion.

The social media campaign started at the beginning of 2024 and continued until the end of Wave 1. Beside regular posts on a weekly, and later on, on a fortnightly basis; we also used paid promotion to increase reach of the project.

For the purposes of community promotion, we relied on a combination of community outreach at local mosques, religious, community, and ethnic organisations, Muslim schools and businesses, and MSA's (Muslim Student Associations). From available databases and community contacts, we identified 218 organisations and RAs were able to approach Muslims in 105 organisations. Out of these, 80 have endorsed and promoted the study. Different organisations endorsed us in different manners: some allowed us to give speeches to their audience, others shared our promotional material online in social media, community message groups (e.g., WhatsApp), and mailing lists. It is worth noting that some of these organisations did not necessarily belong to the Muslim community (e.g., refugee resettlement centres and ethnic community trusts), though, they still offered support. In addition, tens of posters were placed in community facilities (e.g., mosques and libraries) and hundreds of flyers were handed over after Friday prayers as well as cultural and religious festivals.

In addition to reaching out to organisations, the principal investigator conversed with 28 local and national community leaders, celebrities, religious scholars, and academics to spread our message to the communities. As part of this recruitment drive, the principal investigator also presented 28 talks, presentations, or lectures to Muslim community groups around New Zealand via mosques, universities, or community organisations in the mentioned cities, explaining the goals of the NZAVS, and how it would benefit the New Zealand Muslim community to be represented in this ongoing national longitudinal panel sample. Five additional talks were delivered by research assistants too.

### ***Ensuring research assistants' convenience***

MDS research assistants come from different backgrounds. Some of them have had extensive research experience, whereas, for some of them, it was the first attempt of engaging in data collection. Some research assistants wanted explicit weekly targets and others decided their own targets. The principal investigator conducted fortnightly check-ins with individuals and teams in cities to ensure that questions are answered, and was always available to guide the process, provide feedback. The principal investigator was also available to talk with participants if

and when needed via audio and video mediums.

Research assistants were available to help participants with understanding questions, and if needed, were also present when participants completed questionnaires.

### ***Web hosting***

The MDS website (access from [here](#)) provides the most up-to-date and needed information for public and professionals and will keep updating as we make progress.

### ***Data management***

The collected data are processed in the NZAVS headquarters, deidentified, and only made available to trusted researchers and collaborators. The NZAVS data dictionary, sampling procedure, sample details and other relevant information can be accessed online (<https://osf.io/75snb/wiki/home/>) (Sibley, 2024).

### **Timeline**

As displayed in Figure 6, the community consultation started before Wave 1 and continued until the end of it. In addition, social media marketing has been an integral part of MDS data collection campaign. The planned future events, with approximate dates, are indicated too.

### **Lessons learned**

Some members of the Muslim community might distrust social research and view it as state surveillance. Based on our interactions with the community, we had anecdotal evidence of increase in such scepticism after the Christchurch shootings. Hence, we ensured that our approach and methodology addressed these issues beforehand, such as building trust, highlighting the importance and benefits of academic research, and addressing under-representation of Muslims in research – our flyers, posters, social media messages, and individual messages are testaments to this. Based on our interactions with the Muslim community and feedback from research assistants, we anecdotally know that the following elements encourage increased participation of the Muslim community in research.

1. Building rapport

2. Addressing concerns regarding confidentiality and data management
3. Being transparent and truthful with the community
4. Approaching the community via trusted leaders
5. Reaching out to individuals personally, not via groups. Reportedly, research assistants have found this, especially by the means of targeting their close circles, and keeping expanding their reach, as a more effective approach to incur higher response rate as compared to targeting the community out via organisations.
6. Medium: At the beginning, the focus was on both online and paper questionnaires. Towards the end, based on the feedback from research assistants, we employed paper questionnaires only, which resulted in a comparatively higher turn out.
7. Achievable targets: After testing different targets, during the final five months, each research assistant committed to the completion of a minimum of three participants each week. This, coupled with point 6, enhanced our outcomes.

We also learned that the following factors could hinder data collection efforts.

1. Length of the questionnaire measured by the time taken to complete it
2. Unfamiliarity of participants with scientific research
3. Privacy concerns
4. Political climate
5. Language barriers
6. Generational differences, with older generations less likely to take part.

Although these findings are anecdotal, we have witnessed enhanced participation by addressing some of the challenges to data collection. To better understand and document, we have conducted a qualitative research of research assistant experiences in terms of data collection ([Afzali, 2024](#)). Findings from this research will be published in the near future.

## **Strengths**

MDS represents the establishment of a vital strand of knowledge production which has been limited to date. Recognizing that the NZVAS marks a decent contribution on this count, we assert that MDS booster is understandably a huge step in the right direction.

As the first contextually rich and socially expansive piece of knowledge on the Kiwi Muslims produced using systematic, standardized research practices, MDS hopes to partially illuminate the decision-making, policy formulation, and inclusion practices of the social power players (especially the news media, political parties, and social action groups) by the way of addressing the under-representation of the Muslim community in research and using an equitable ratio of NZAVS (>1% of the target population). The findings of MDS are expected to positively enlighten these entities as regards the political perceptions, sense of diversity, discrimination, self-perception, resilience, meaning-making, and flourishing of the Muslims of New Zealand.

MDS will help the general public develop a better understanding of their Muslim fellows thereby removing misconceptions about Muslims. MDS also provides a rich foundation for future researchers to build on as regards the Muslims of New Zealand.

## **Limitations**

MDS is a quantitative-only study. This quantitative focus was needed to enable comparison with other groups of NZAVS, and the fact that it is a booster for NZAS. By learning from MDS and gauging the need from community, there is potential for qualitative research in the future. In addition, given the large sample size and several variable examining different social aspects, the MDS specifically, and NZAVS in general, provide unprecedented rich databases on life aspects of New Zealander, evident by tens of peer-reviewed scientific publications.

MDS aimed to collect data from those who could speak and understand English language, which could hamper generalisability of findings. This constitutes the second limitation of the project. It was necessary because we needed a booster for NZAVS and the data had to be comparable with those collected from other groups. A potential qualitative follow up will address

this limitation by aiming to collect data from the wider community and those who cannot comprehend English.

The length of the questionnaires perhaps decreased the overall participation and completion. However, it is important to notice that collecting data on these variables (in contrast to a shorter questionnaire with fewer insights) to boost NZAVS and comparing with other religious groups was deemed as an absolute necessity.

Finally, given that MDS follows the exact NZVAS structure, some items might not necessarily be culturally compatible with the Muslim community attitudes and beliefs. However, as mentioned in the Consultation on survey items, a majority of Advisory Group noted that such items did not need to be removed.

### **Application and implications**

This research enables Muslims in New Zealand to be active participants in shaping their unique identity. This identity not only encapsulates the diverse ethnocultural societies within the New Zealand Muslim community, but also allows for the formation of a distinct national identity. Often research used to drive policy and intervention targeted at New Zealand Muslims is informed by research undertaken on Muslim communities overseas. Whilst there are many comparable similarities between Muslims worldwide, their everyday life experiences are heavily shaped by the society in which a Muslim resides in. Furthermore, the strengthening of this identity can facilitate greater in-group understanding, connection, and belonging to New Zealand.

This research also has the potential for the Muslim voice to have a greater influence on public perception of Muslims in New Zealand. The visible Muslim voice in many parts of the western world is often reactionary to political events, discriminatory experiences, or accusations of terror. Greater understanding and public discourse of lived experiences of Muslims in New Zealand one allows for a more accurate understanding of these experiences, and two, facilitates a shift in how Muslim voices are ‘allowed’ to participate in society.

This research can also inform international discourse on the experiences of Muslim immigrants, and their views and beliefs on their country of residence. Stockemer and Moreau

(2021) completed a comprehensive review on studies focused on Muslim immigrants sense of belonging and identity; results reflected this varied greatly depending on the country of residence at a macro-level, and personal education at the micro-level.

It allows Muslim to have an active, data informed input in shaping policies and intervention targeted at their wellbeing and livelihood; this is especially significant in the aftermath of the March 15th terror attacks targeting Muslims in New Zealand. Research highlights significant long term mental health distress and vulnerability for individuals directly impacted by the attacks.

Insights from the findings could be used as a form of policy advocacy in two ways: first, by engaging with policymakers to advocate for policies that address discrimination and promote inclusivity. This could involve working with local governments and organisations to ensure that the voices of Muslims are heard in policymaking and in organising safety and security initiatives. Second, by collaborating with law enforcement to create safety initiatives that ensure the wellbeing of Muslim communities.

Policymakers can use our findings to develop more effective and equitable policies that better address the needs and rights of Muslim communities. For instance, understanding the impact of community ties and religiosity on the resilience of Muslim communities can guide the government in creating support programmes that strengthen these aspects.

Findings from this study can contribute to government strategies that focus on adaptability and change while engaging with the Muslim community to encourage bonding, bridging, and linking social capital where possible.

Research also highlights the psychological impact that the terror attacks had on wider Muslim communities in New Zealand, who viewed the attack to be of a personal nature through a shared identity with the targeted victims of the attacks Nasier (2023). This poses significant responsibility on the health system in New Zealand to be equipped to meet the ongoing and long-term needs of New Zealanders impacted by terror. This research can provide valuable insights into the Muslim community, facilitating the development of interventions that are effectively tailored to meet their needs.

Practically, the findings could guide the development of targeted interventions aimed at reducing Islamophobia and supporting the Muslim community in New Zealand. Since “programmes are the instruments, governments use to implement a policy or achieve a particular outcome” (Rose, 1991), community-based programmes that strengthen social ties and religious practices could be designed to buffer against anti-Muslim prejudice. Insights from the findings could further pave the way for organising public forums and discussions to bring together Muslims and non-Muslims to address issues of discrimination, resilience, and community well-being, with the aim of fostering dialogue and understanding.

The findings could also inform policy regarding the need for targeted anti-discrimination measures. As the research has provided insights into the challenges faced by Muslims in employment and health, it is expected that targeted interventions to improve these areas for members of the Muslim communities should be policy priorities for the government. Muslims in New Zealand are diverse and the Muslim community organisations have been actively working with local and central governments to provide advice and input regarding ethnic communities (*Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, 2024; New Zealand Muslim Association, 2024*). However, it should be noted that while it may be regarded as illusory to develop policies, programmes, and practices that purport to be “blind” to race and ethnicity (Durie, 2005), socio-economic measures addressing discrimination among Muslims in New Zealand should be tailored to the communities, considering their religious characteristics alongside their ethnicities or races.

Regarding socio-economic concerns, the practical applications of the study’s findings can be seen in interventions focusing on employment and economic support, such as creating programmes that assist Muslims in navigating the job market and addressing the unique challenges they face. This could include mentorship programmes, skills training, and networking opportunities. Additionally, partnerships between local businesses and Muslim community organizations could promote diversity in hiring practices and support entrepreneurs. Culturally sensitive mental health initiatives that are visible within Muslim communities and tailored to their

cultural and religious needs would also be effective programmes.

## **Conclusion**

MDS is a crucial booster for the NZAVS because not only it addresses the under-representation of Muslim in NZVAS, but it only helps us answer many questions about Muslims' self-perception, meaning-making, flourishing, religiosity, and health outcomes. The current protocol also provides a preliminary understanding of how to work with a minoritised religious community in a culturally sensitive manner. Further discoveries are going to be published by the MDS team in the near future. Despite the well-known limitations of observational, quantitative, survey research, MDS provides substantial values in terms of implications and applications. Techniques learned from MDS can be applied while working with Muslims and other culturally similar groups in New Zealand and overseas.

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**Table 1***Muslim Population by Selected Cities*

City	Population	Research Assistants
Auckland	40,221	10
Christchurch	3,942	8
Hamilton	3,561	4
Wellington	3,294	5
Palmerston North	1,317	1
Dunedin	1,299	2

**Figure 1***Feeling thermometer scale*

Please rate your feelings of <u>WARMTH</u> toward the following groups using the "feeling thermometer scale" for each group.							
Feel <u>LEAST WARM</u> Toward This Group	Neutral				Feel <u>MOST WARM</u> Toward This Group		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
NZ Europeans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Māori	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Asians in general	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pacific Islanders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Elderly people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People with a disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Refugees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overweight people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Immigrants in general	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chinese	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Indians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Muslims	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LGBTQ+ people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People with mental illness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Note.* From NZAVS Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>

**Figure 2***Chronic disease diagnosis*

<b>07. Have you been diagnosed with, or treated for, any of the following health conditions by a doctor in the last five years?</b>	<input type="radio"/> High cholesterol <input type="radio"/> High blood pressure <input type="radio"/> Asthma <input type="radio"/> Heart disease <input type="radio"/> Diabetes (Type II) <input type="radio"/> Depression <input type="radio"/> Anxiety disorder <input type="radio"/> Other (please state): <input type="text"/>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Note.* From NZAVS Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>

**Figure 3***Kessler-6 subjective wellbeing scale*

During the last 30 days, how often did....		(Please use the scale below to circle a number for each question)					
None Of The Time 0	A Little Of The Time 1	Some Of The Time 2	Most Of The Time 3	All Of The Time 4			
1. ... you feel hopeless?			0	1	2	3	4
2. ... you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?			0	1	2	3	4
3. ... you feel restless or fidgety?			0	1	2	3	4
4. ... you feel that everything was an effort?			0	1	2	3	4
5. ... you feel worthless?			0	1	2	3	4
6. ... you feel nervous?			0	1	2	3	4
7. ... you have negative thoughts that repeated over and over?			0	1	2	3	4
8. ... you feel exhausted?			0	1	2	3	4
9. ... other people exclude you from conversations?			0	1	2	3	4

*Note.* From NZAVS Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>

**Figure 4***Life Satisfaction scale*

Instructions: Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of your life and New Zealand.											
Completely Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied						Completely Satisfied				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. Your standard of living.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. The economic situation in New Zealand.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. The quality of New Zealand's natural environment.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Your health.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. The social conditions in New Zealand.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. The performance of the current New Zealand government.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Your future security.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Business in New Zealand.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. Your personal relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. Your access to health care when you need it (e.g., doctor, GP).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. The quality and health of the waterways in your local region.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Note.* From NZAVS Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>

**Figure 5***Ethnic groups*

**02. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?**

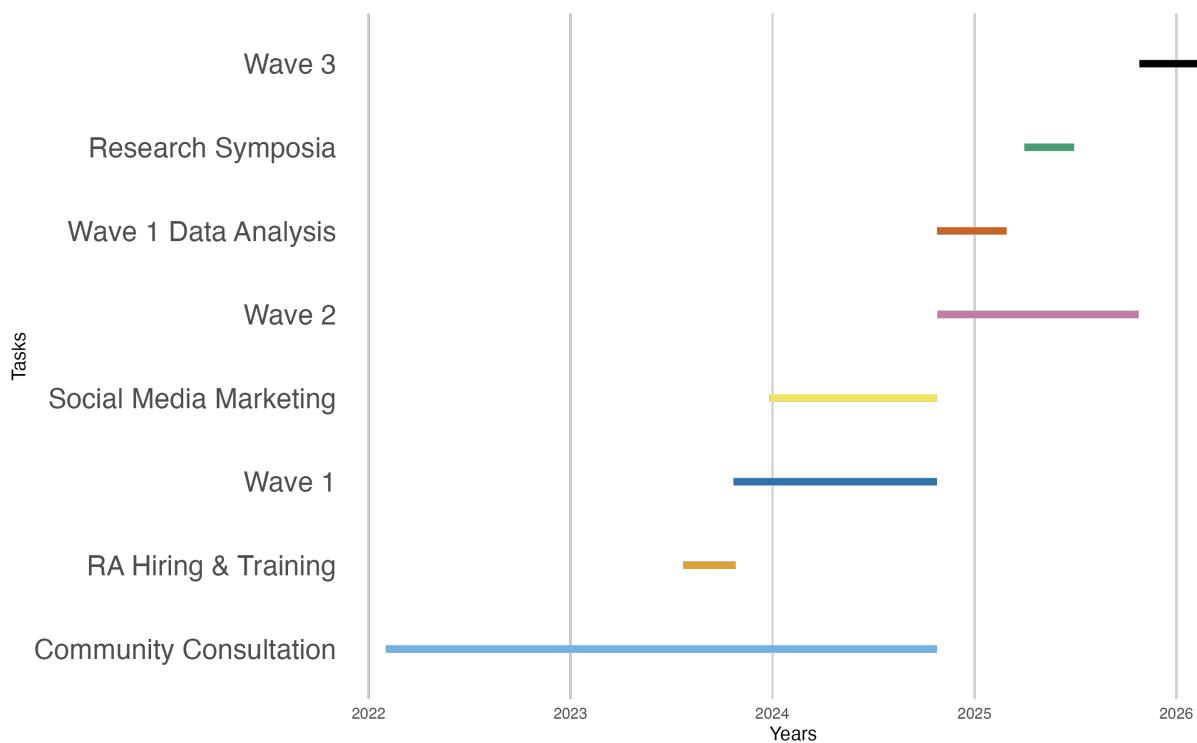
(Mark the space or spaces which apply to you).

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Māori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other such as *DUTCH, JAPANESE, TOKELAUAN.*  
Please state:

*Note.* From NZAVS Wave 15 <https://osf.io/75snb/>

**Figure 6**

*MDS timeline showing tasks and durations*



## Appendix A

### MDS Runhseet

[Monospaced font refers to urls in the actual document.]

Salam alaikum and welcome to the Muslim Diversity Study.

1. This Dropbox folder consists of all information that you might need.
2. We have updated our communication and approach strategy, found [here](#).
3. This document contains message to the community and FAQs. [will keep updating]
4. Cover letter for the Muslim Diversity Study.
5. MDS Questionnaire (pdf)
6. Use this message to send the MDS participation request to individuals. Please remember that individual connection is extremely important, and this is what we bank on.
7. Use this message to advertise MDS on social media (e.g., Facebook or LinkedIn); and to send it via WhatsApp or emailing lists to the wider community and organizations.
8. Use this message for shorter social media platforms (e.g., Twitter/X).
9. Access the poster (pdf) here (and png).
10. Access the flyer (pdf) here (and png).
11. This document can be shared with organizations to introduce MDS.
12. Organisation lists: Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin. In addition, this is the list of organisations that have endorsed us or shared our ads. Please keep adding names to this list.
13. Please use this guideline for reaching out to organizations.
14. This story by UC has recorded the motivation behind MDS and its benefits for the Muslim community. It can be shared widely with those that want to know more.
15. The recent public lecture narrates the whole story of MDS (past, present, future) in a detailed manner. This, again, can be shared extensively with anyone interested.
16. Find our social media and website [here](#).
17. The paper questionnaires are valuable, and to ensure meaningful responses, we shall only

provide them to individuals who express interest and want them. Please distribute as many copies of flyers, and I can provide more flyers as needed.

18. Participants using the Qualtrics link should be reminded that they can resume the questionnaire from where they left off if they don't complete it initially. Ideally, an additional message can be sent using this wording: "You can easily resume the questionnaire where you left off by clicking on the provided link. Feel free to complete the questionnaire in multiple sessions; your previous responses are automatically saved." Since it's not part of the ethics approval, it can be sent in the next message as additional guideline (instruction).
19. To claim your hours, log-in [here](#).
20. If you are claiming your hours for the first time, use information in [this folder](#).
21. If you want to have an update on collected data so far, see [this](#).
22. I am thinking of a qualitative research project based on our experiences with the Muslim community where we'd want to interview our current RA's. It's briefly detailed [here](#). If any of you are keen to be part of this or know someone who might want to take this on, please let me know. It can easily be a master's thesis, and as detailed in the brief, it will attract great impact.
23. [https://linktr.ee/muslims\\_nz](https://linktr.ee/muslims_nz)
24. <https://linktr.ee/muslimdiversity>

## Appendix B

### Message to Individual Participants

Your Voice Matters! Join the Muslim Diversity Study!

Assalamu Alaikum WR WB [person's name]

I'm [name of the RA], a research assistant in the Muslim Diversity Study.

We need YOUR perspective!

The Muslim community is underrepresented, and we're changing that with your help. Participate in this first-of-its-kind survey to share your views on social attitudes, values, resilience, religiosity, flourishing, meaning-making, wellbeing, and experiences of Muslims in New Zealand. Let's make our voices heard!

Why Participate?

Gather data on underrepresented Muslims, amplifying voices and providing insights into issues, wellbeing, and experiences.

Equip the Muslim community with evidence-based information for advocacy.

Enrich understanding, strengthening the collective voice, and shaping a more accurate narrative.

Your contribution counts and confidentiality is assured!

By participating, you could potentially win one out of five \$1000 grocery vouchers.

The data will be analysed with a focus on the Muslim community. Your input guides our research, ensuring authenticity and representation. We reassure you that the responses to the questionnaire are anonymized, encrypted, and aggregated in a manner that ensure confidentiality.

Spread the Word!

Please share with your friends, family, and community members! Let's come together and make a difference.

To complete the questionnaire kindly click on the link below or message us for a paper copy:

[https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim\\_diversity](https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim_diversity)

For more info, visit our website (below) or reach out to Dr Usman Afzali (the lead researcher):  
(email address and contact phone number)

<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/science/schools/psyc-speech-hear/research/muslim-diversity/>

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COMMITTEE ON 26/05/2021 UNTIL 26/05/2027, REFERENCE NUMBER: UAHPEC22576.

## **Appendix C**

### **Community and Social Media Message**

Your Voice Matters! Join the Muslim Diversity Study!

Assalamu Alaikum WR WB, Muslims in New Zealand!

We need YOUR perspective!

The Muslim community is underrepresented, and we're changing that with your help. Participate in this first-of-its-kind survey to share your views on social attitudes, values, resilience, religiosity, flourishing, meaning-making, wellbeing, and experiences of Muslims in New Zealand. Let's make our voices heard!

Why Participate?

Gather data on underrepresented Muslims, amplifying voices and providing insights into issues, wellbeing, and experiences.

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Spread the Word!

Please share with your friends, family, and community members! Let's come together and make a difference.

To complete the questionnaire kindly click on the link below or message us for a paper copy:

[https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim\\_diversity](https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim_diversity)

For more info, visit our website (below) or reach out to Dr Usman Afzali (the lead researcher):  
(email address and contact phone number)

<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/science/schools/psyc-speech-hear/research/muslim-diversity/>

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## Appendix D

**Figure D1**

*MDS Flyer*



The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study

### Your Voice Matters! Join the Muslim Diversity Study

Attention, New Zealand Muslims! Be part of history! Engage in a ground-breaking multi-city study led by Muslims, exploring social attitudes, values, resilience, religiosity, flourishing, meaning-making, wellbeing, and experiences of Muslims in New Zealand.

**Objectives:**

- Gather data on underrepresented Muslims, amplifying voices and providing insights into issues, wellbeing, and experiences.
- Equip the Muslim community with evidence-based information for advocacy.
- Enrich understanding, strengthening the collective voice, and shaping a more accurate narrative.

**Eligibility:**  
Muslim, 18+, residing in New Zealand.

By participating, you could potentially win one out of five \$1000 grocery vouchers.

**Who's Behind It?**  
A group of Muslim researchers across New Zealand, led by Dr Usman Afzali. Endorsed by religious scholars, academics, and community leaders.

**Confidentiality:**  
We ensure confidentiality by coding identities and encrypting data. Analysis involves consultation with active Muslim community researchers.

**To Know More:**  
<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/research/about-uc-research/research-specialities-and-projects/research-projects/the-muslim-diversity-study>

**To Participate:**  
[www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim\\_diversity](http://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim_diversity)  
 or scan the QR code.

Contact the lead researcher, Dr Usman Afzali, for queries:  
 usman.afzali@canterbury.ac.nz  
 03 369 1367

**Spread the Word:** After participating, share with friends and family. Let's make a difference together!





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**AUCKLAND**  
Te Whare Winianga o Tamaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 26/05/2021 UNTIL 26/05/2027,  
REFERENCE NUMBER: UAHPEC22576.

## Appendix E

**Figure E1**

*MDS Poster*



**Attention, New Zealand Muslims!**  
**Your Voice Matters! Join the**  
**Muslim Diversity Study**

Be part of history! Engage in a ground-breaking multi-city study led by Muslims, exploring social attitudes, values, resilience, religiosity, meaning-making, wellbeing, and experiences of New Zealand Muslims.

**Benefits:**

- Represent Muslims, and provide insights into issues, wellbeing, and experiences.
- Equip Muslim community with evidence-based information for advocacy.
- Strengthen the collective voice and shape a more accurate narrative.
- Win one out of five \$1000 grocery vouchers.

**Who's Behind It?**  
A group of Muslim researchers across New Zealand, led by Dr Usman Afzali.  
Endorsed by religious scholars, academics, and community leaders.

**Confidentiality:**  
We hide identities and encrypt data.  
Analysis involves consultation with active Muslim community researchers.

**To Know More:**  
<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/research/about-uc-research/research-specialties-and-projects/research-projects/the-muslim-diversity-study>

**To Participate:**  
[www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim\\_diversity](http://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim_diversity)  
or scan the QR code.

Contact Us:  
✉ usman.afzali@canterbury.ac.nz  
📞 03 369 1367

**Spread the Word:** After participating, share with friends and family. Let's make a difference together!




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**Appendix F****MDS Vision**

The NZAVS is committed to the following three principles for the Muslim Diversity Study.

**Protection:** The NZAVS is strongly committed to respecting and protecting data gathered from all participants and takes confidentiality seriously. Our commitment to participant privacy and safety is central to the NZAVS.

**Participation:** The NZAVS is committed to enhancing the research capacity of our communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Any NZAVS research focusing specifically on the Muslim community will be reviewed by our Muslim academic advisor Dr Usman Afzali, and/or appropriate nominated reviewers from the Muslim community in New Zealand. We are committed to Muslim community-led research for Muslim-focussed studies to ensure respectful reporting that considers the social, religious, and cultural settings of New Zealand's Muslims.

**Partnership:** The NZAVS actively fosters opportunities for collaborative research with emerging Muslim researchers in New Zealand. We seek to mentor Muslim graduate students interested in accessing NZAVS data for research in their own postgraduate theses or dissertations. We invite students from the Muslim community in New Zealand to contact our Muslim academic advisor, or any member of the NZAVS board or leadership team for guidance in developing a project.

## **Appendix G**

### **Participant confidentiality**

Here at the NZAVS we take our participants' confidentiality very seriously. All personal details are encrypted and stored separately from questionnaire data. Only Professor Chris Sibley and trusted research assistants working on the NZAVS in secure conditions have access to participants' contact details. Participants' contact details are used solely for the purposes of contacting them to continue their participation in the NZAVS each year and to provide them with information and feedback about research findings from the NZAVS.

Reference: <https://osf.io/75snb/wiki/home/>

### **Ethics approval**

The Muslim Diversity Study is regulated by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

The current ethics approval statement for the 2021-2027 period is as follows: The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 26/05/2021 until 26/05/2024, and renewed on 02/05/2023 until 26/05/2027. Reference Number: UAHPEC22576.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Ethics and Integrity Team, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: [humanethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@auckland.ac.nz).

### **Why we need ethics approval?**

Ethical approval for research is essential to ensure that studies involving human participants are conducted in a morally responsible and respectful manner. It serves to protect the rights, wellbeing, dignity, and confidentiality of those involved in the research, as well as the broader community affected by the study. Ethical approval ensures that potential risks are minimized, benefits are maximized, informed consent is obtained, and any potential conflicts of interest or

biases are addressed. This oversight helps maintain public trust in the scientific community and upholds the fundamental principles of fairness, respect, and accountability in research endeavours.

## **Appendix H**

### **MDS Cover Letter**

Salaam alaikum, kia ora, and greetings!

My name is Dr Usman Afzali, and I am the lead researcher of the Muslim Diversity Study. The Muslim Diversity Study is conducted as part of the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. This is a broad longitudinal study aiming to survey people from all across New Zealand (see the information sheet on the next page for more details).

As a researcher and committed member of the New Zealand Muslim community, I recognise the importance of including our voices in discussions about New Zealand. This inspired me to develop a booster study to enhance Muslim representation in the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, since we are underrepresented at present. I would be deeply grateful if you would consider participating in this survey. By sharing your perspectives, you will enrich our understanding of the attitudes, values, and wellbeing of the Muslim community in New Zealand. This will strengthen the voice of our community within New Zealand. We will publish the findings of our work in scientific journals, create brief reports and infographics, and present our findings to Muslim communities across New Zealand over the coming years.

My research team includes Muslim researchers from across New Zealand. By completing this survey, you are contributing to a research project led by people from the Muslim community for the Muslim community in New Zealand. Furthermore, analysis of the collected data, with a specific focus on the Muslim community, will not proceed without seeking consultation with researchers who are themselves part of the Muslim community.

As the survey is designed for the general New Zealand population, there may be questions that do not necessarily apply to you. Please feel free to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. This study is funded by a research grant from a not-for-profit organisation, the Templeton Religion Trust, to help increase the participation of Muslims in the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study.

If you would like to complete this questionnaire online instead of returning by post, please use: [https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim\\_diversity](https://www.nzavs.auckland.ac.nz/muslim_diversity).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Muslim Diversity Study, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Dr Usman Afzali (contact details below). For general inquiries about the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, please contact Professor Chris Sibley (contact details below). If you need help with understanding items of this questionnaire, feel free to reach out. Our researcher assistants are trained and have a detailed understanding of the questionnaire. Details are available at:

<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/science/schools/psyc-speech-hear/research/muslim-diversity/>

Your participation in this survey is highly valuable, and your input will significantly contribute to our understanding of the social values and attitudes of the Muslim community in New Zealand.

Sincerely,

Dr Usman Afzali,

School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing,

University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140.

(email address and phone number)

Professor Chris Sibley,

School of Psychology,

University of Auckland,

Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

(email address)

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COMMITTEE ON 26/05/2021 UNTIL 26/05/2027, REFERENCE NUMBER: UAHPEC22576.