

## Usman Afzali, PhD (Psyc), MD

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Lecturer (Teaching and Admin)  
School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing  
University of Canterbury  
Christchurch, New Zealand

### Contact & Socials

Email [usman.afzali@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:usman.afzali@canterbury.ac.nz)  
Phone +64 3 369 1367  
Mobile +64 21 269 0620  
Website <https://usman-afzali.github.io/web3/>  
ORCID [0000-0001-5119-9388](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5119-9388)  
Google Scholar [Usman Afzali](#)  
GitHub [usman-afzali](#)

### Employment

|           |                               |  |
|-----------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2023→     | University of Canterbury      | Postdoctoral Research Fellow [ <a href="#">Muslim Diversity Study</a> ]  |
| 2022→     | University of Canterbury      | Lecturer (Teaching and Admin) [ <a href="#">Neuroscience</a> & <a href="#">Research Methods</a> ]  |
| 2022      | University of Canterbury      | Postdoctoral Research Associate [Computational Neuroscience]   |
| 2021→2022 | Victoria University of Wgtn   | Research Assistant   |
| 2018→2022 | University of Canterbury      | Teaching Assistant→Teaching Assistant Coordinator<br>→Guest Lecturer→Lecturer (Teaching only)  |
|           | <i>Postgraduate Courses:</i>  | Cognitive Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Advanced Research Methods & Statistics  |
|           | <i>Undergraduate Courses:</i> | Cognition, Social Psychology, Intermediate Research Methods & Statistics,<br>Introductory Research Methods & Statistics, Introductory Psychology |

### Fields of Research

Psychology of Religion, Human Flourishing, Contemplative Neuroscience, Cognitive Psychology:  
Memory control, Forensic Neuroscience.

### Education

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 2022 | University of Canterbury, PhD in Psychology                          |
| 2018 | University of Canterbury, BSc with First Class Honours in Psychology |
| 2017 | University of Canterbury, BSc in Psychology                          |
| 2009 | Shaikh Zayed University, MD in Curative Medicine                     |

### Awards

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 2022 | <a href="#">UC Foundation</a> Doctoral Publication Prize (1,000 NZD)                                     |
| 2022 | <a href="#">SPR</a> Free Membership  |
| 2022 | Georgina Carvell Memorial Prize (5,000 NZD)  |
| 2019 | <a href="#">Te Puna Toiora</a> Scholarship (2,500 NZD)   |
| 2019 | <a href="#">University of Canterbury Doctoral Scholarship</a> (21,000 NZD p.a. plus tuition for 3 years) |
| 2018 | Stage 4 Psychology Prize   |
| 2017 | Stage 3 Psychology Prize (250 NZD)   |

## Grants

### Principal Investigator

2023

U. Afzali (PI): **TRT-2022-30579 “A national longitudinal study of Muslim diversity and flourishing, aka Muslim Diversity Study”** Templeton Religion Trust, NZD 406,021 (University of Canterbury).

## Publications

(Citations: 88, *h-index*: 6, *i10-index*: 4; [Google Scholar](#), Jul, 2024)

### 2023

10. Bulbulia, J. A., **Afzali, M. U.**, Yogeeswaran, K., and Sibley, C. G. (2023). Long-term causal effects of far-right terrorism in New Zealand. *PNAS Nexus*, 2(8). <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad242>
9. **Afzali, M. U.**, Jones, R. D., Seren-Grace, A. P., Palmer, R. W., Makarious, D., Rodrigues, M. N. B., and Neumann, E. (2023). Classification accuracy of the ERP-based Brain Fingerprinting and its robustness to direct-suppression and thought-substitution countermeasures. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 37(3), 480-495. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.4050>

### 2022

8. **Afzali, M. U.**, Seren-Grace, A. P., Palmer, R. W., Neumann, E., Makarious, S., Wilson, D., and Jones, R. D. (2022). Detection of concealed knowledge via the ERP-based technique *Brain Fingerprinting*: Real-life and real-crime incidents. *Psychophysiology*, 00:e14110, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.14110>
7. Byrne, K., Yogeeswaran, K., Dorahy, M. J., Gale, J., **Afzali, M. U.**, Bulbulia, J. A., Sibley, C. G. (2022). Psychological impact of far-right terrorism against Muslim minorities on national distress, community, and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports*. 12, 1620. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-05678-x>

### 2021

6. Shanaah, S., Yogeeswaran, K., Greaves, L., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., **Afzali, M. U.**, & Sibley, C. G. (2021). Hate begets warmth? The impact of an anti-Muslim terrorist attack on public attitudes toward Muslims. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1877673>
5. Rucklidge, J. J., **Afzali, M. U.**, Kaplan, B. J., Bhattacharya, O., Blampied, M. F., Mulder, R. T., & Blampied, N. M. (2021). Massacre, Earthquake, Flood: Translational science evidence that the use of micronutrients post-disaster reduces the risk of post-traumatic stress in survivors of disasters. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*. 10, 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1027/2157-3891/a000003>

### 2020

4. **Afzali, M. U.**, Bustos, J. V. C., & Kemp, S. (2020). Perception of financial satisfaction and its implications for free first-year education in New Zealand university students. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 4–14. ([url](#)).
3. Sibley, C. G., **Afzali, M. U.**, Satherley, N., Ejova, A., Stronge, S., Yogeeswaran, K., ... Bulbulia, J. (2020). Prejudice toward Muslims in New Zealand: Insights from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 49(1), 48–72. ([url](#))
2. Blampied, N. M., Mulder, R. T., **Afzali, M. U.**, Bhattacharya, O., Blampied, M., & Rucklidge, J. J. (2020). Disasters, policies and micronutrients: the intersect among ethics, evidence and effective action. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 133(1508), 8–11. ([url](#)).

## 2019

1. Yogeeswaran, K., **Afzali, M. U.**, Andrews, N. P., Chivers, E. A., Wang, M.-J., Devos, T., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). Exploring New Zealand National Identity and Its Importance for Attitudes toward Muslims and Support for Diversity. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 48(1), 29–35. ([url](#)).

## Dissertation

**Afzali, M. U.** (2022). *Suppressing unwanted memories and thoughts: Psychological traits and forensic brainwave investigations*. PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/13084>

## Supervision

### Ongoing

- 2024→ A. Bello. *PhD in Data Science*. Effects of interaction with a dog on the brain and non-brain activity using mobile brain/body imaging (MoBI). [Associate supervisor].
- 2024→ J. Badis. *BA Hons Psychology*. Predictors of Islamophobia in New Zealand: Findings from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. [Primary supervisor].
- 2023→ K. Johnson. *PhD Psychology*. Biomarkers for Early Dementia: Memory suppression, language comprehension and EEG. [Co-supervisor].

### Completed

- 2023→ 2024 N. Shadbolt. *BA Hons Psychology*. The Effects of Partial Sleep Deprivation on Memory Suppression. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2023 H. Grace. *BA Hons Psychology*. The Construction and Validation of The Contemplative Experience Scale. [Primary supervisor].
- 2023 R. Heaton. *BA Hons Psychology*. Investigating the Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Memory Suppression Tasks. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 K. Johnson. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Testing the Think/No-Think Effect with Same and Independent Cues: Conditionalised Versus Unconditionalised Recall. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 P. Theobald. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Actively Forgetting Unwanted Memories: An Inhibitory Account of the Think No/Think Paradigm. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 J. Auckram. *BSc Hons Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington*. Powering Through Struggles: Resilience of Muslim Women in Ōtautahi/Christchurch During Covid-19 Lockdowns. [Research mentor].
- 2021→2022 D. Matchett. *MSc Psychology*. Memory Suppression under Sleep Deprivation: The Effects of Sleep Loss and Sleep Time on Suppressing Unwanted Memories. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2021 J. Lynskey. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Memory Suppression in Those Susceptible to PTSD - A Study Adopting the Think/No-Think Paradigm. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2021 J. Newlands. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Does OCD Impact One's Ability to Actively Suppress Memories? A Think/No-Think Paradigm Study. [Secondary supervisor].

## Research Projects

- 2024→ Enablers and challengers of collecting data from Muslim community in Aotearoa New Zealand: An in-depth qualitative exploration of research assistant experiences using NVivo and Copilot
- 2023→ [A National Longitudinal Study of Muslim Diversity and Flourishing \(Muslim Diversity Study\)](#)
- 2022→ [Resting EEG Microstates During Contemplative Practices](#)
- 2022→ [Controlling Unwanted Memories: A Multisite Registered Replication of the Think/No-Think Effect](#)
- 2019→2020 Post-trauma Micronutrients Intervention ([Te Puna Toiora](#))
- 2018→2022 Brain Fingerprinting Independent Replication

## Presentations, Panel Discussions & Talks

- 2024<sup>t</sup> Belonging and Exclusion: The Psychology of Identity Crisis in a Diverse World (public lecture). University of Canterbury Muslim Students Association, Christchurch, New Zealand. 31 May 2024.
- 2024<sup>p</sup> [Exploring Muslim Diversity in New Zealand: Insights from the Muslim Diversity Study and NZAVS](#) (research presentation). University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. 2 May 2024.
- 2024<sup>d</sup> Unity Summit - Unity Week NZ (panel discussion). Christchurch Multicultural Recreation and Community Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand. 15 March 2024.
- 2024<sup>d</sup> Peace Week 2024 - Panel Discussion and Launch Event (panel discussion). The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. 10 March 2024.
- 2024<sup>t</sup> [Do We Have an Identity Problem?](#) (public lecture). The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. 09 March 2024.
- 2024<sup>t</sup> [Five Years After March 15](#) (public lecture). CACR, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand. 26 February 2024.
- 2023<sup>t</sup> [Long-term Effects of Far-Right Terrorism on Muslims in New Zealand](#) (public lecture). CARE, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. 17 Nov 2023.
- 2023<sup>t</sup> Suffering in Silence: Navigating Grief from Psychological and Islamic Perspectives (invited talk). An-Nur Mosque, Christchurch, New Zealand. 11 Nov 2023.
- 2023<sup>t</sup> Journey from Medicine to Academia: Navigating Challenges and Advocating for Change (invited talk). Afghanistan Independence Day 2023 Event, Afghan Association of New Zealand. Auckland, New Zealand. 21 Aug 2023.
- 2022<sup>p</sup> Behavioural Evidence of Suppression-induced Forgetting and its Interaction with Psychological Traits (research presentation). School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing, University of Canterbury. Jun 2022.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Brain Fingerprinting with Parolees and Brain Fingerprinting Countermeasures (research presentation). School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing, University of Canterbury. 03 Dec 2021.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Brain Fingerprinting: Replication and Countermeasures (research presentation). [New Zealand Psychological Society Annual Conference](#). 05 - 07 Sep 2021.
- 2021<sup>t</sup> Navigating Challenges: Immigrant Youth in New Zealand (invited talk). Afghan Association of New Zealand Youth Networking Conference. Auckland, New Zealand. 01 Aug 2021.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Detection of Concealed Knowledge via the ERP-based Technique Brain Fingerprinting: Real-crime Scenarios (research presentation). [Australasian Society for Experimental Psychology Annual Conference](#). 09 - 11 Apr 2021.
- 2021<sup>d</sup> Navigating the New Zealand Work Environment as an Immigrant (panel discussion). School of Law Graduands Panel, University of Canterbury. Christchurch, New Zealand. 29 Mar 2021.

## Professional Training

- 2024 Working With Students In Distress Workshop (University of Canterbury)
- 2023 MATLAB for Neuroscience (University of Canterbury)
- 2022 Git & GitHub with RStudio (edX and Udemy)
- 2022 R, Essential, Basics and Advanced training (LinkedIn Learning)
- 2022 Academic Development for lecturers (University of Canterbury)
- 2022 EEGLab - The Matlab toolbox for EEG and MEG data processing
- 2022 [Causal Diagrams: Draw Your Assumptions Before Your Conclusions](#) (edX Harvard)
- 2021 Python: Basics of programming, data analysis, data visualisation (edX IBM)
- 2021 Meta-Analysis (University of Canterbury)
- 2021 Tutor and Demonstrator Training (University of Canterbury)
- 2020 Teaching in Academia Workshop (University of Canterbury)

Professional Affiliations

2022→2023 [Society for Psychophysiological Research](#): Member  
2022→ [Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research](#): Associate  
2020→ [UC Meta](#): Member  
2019→ [New Zealand Psychological Society](#): Member

Skills

Academic    Applied frequentist statistics, teaching, research (conducting & supervision)  
Technical    R, Quarto, Git, Python, MATLAB, SPSS, Jamovi, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Qualtrics, EEGLab

Service

2024→ Chair, Staff-Student Liaison Committee ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2024→ Co-Producer, Psyched! The New Zealand Psychology Podcast. ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2023→ Academic Programme Co-convenor, [New Zealand Psychological Society Annual Conference - 2024](#)  
2023→ Vice President, Muslim Health Council Aotearoa  
2023→ 2024 Research Assistant, School of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington  
2023→ Peer Reviewer: Funding agency (e.g., HRC NZ) and academic journals  
2021 Academic Rep, Postgraduate Society ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2020 Founder, Postgraduate Society ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2020→ Member, School Marketing Committee ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2020→2021 Administrator, School's social media platforms ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2020 Founder, School's social media platforms ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2019 Contributor, Royal Commission Submission on Post-15 March Terrorist Attacks (The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand)  
2019 Founder, Social Hour (Facilitating socialization in the postgraduate community) ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2018→2021 Member, Postgraduate Council ([SPSH](#), [UC](#))  
2018→2019 Phone Counsellor, Lifeline Aotearoa  
2016→ Volunteer Imam (Prayers Lead), University of Canterbury Muslim Students Association

Languages

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Pashto         | ●●●●●● |
| Farsi/Persian  | ●●●●●● |
| English        | ●●●●●● |
| Hindi and Urdu | ●●●●●● |
| Arabic         | ●●●●●● |

Other

Citizenship    New Zealand  
Advocacy    Preregistration, Open Science, E-learning  
Interests    History, Historical Period Drama, Islamic Civilization, Nature and Wildlife

Referees

Available on request.