

Alex Hon Ki Wong, PhD

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RESEARCH POSITIONS

Assistant Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands 2022 Feb – Present
Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences – Clinical Psychology

Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Würzburg, Germany 2018 May – 2022 Jan
Research group “Cognitive Control in the Context of Stress and Health”
Project : *The generalisation and extinction of costly avoidance*
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Andre Pittig

Visiting Fellow, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium 2017 Sept – 2017 Dec
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Tom Beckers

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology), University of New South Wales 2015 Mar – 2019 Feb
Highest grade recommended by all external thesis examiners
Thesis: *The effect of trait anxiety on the generalisation of fear acquisition and extinction*
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Peter Lovibond

Bachelor of Science (Honours)/Commerce, University of New South Wales 2010 Mar - 2014 Dec
Majors: Psychology (Honours) and Marketing
First class Honours in Psychology
Honours Thesis: *Associative- and Propositional-based generalisation in human fear conditioning*
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Peter Lovibond

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research interests remain in the application of associative learning to anxiety-related psychopathology in humans. I am particularly interested in the generalization of fear and avoidance to novel objects or situations, the extinction of pathological fear and avoidance, and how predisposing risk factors contribute to the acquisition and maintenance of pathological fear. I am also keen in developing new research methods and measurements to more precisely address the research questions of interest.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

NWO XS competition grant (€50,000) 2025 – 2026
Grant that supports promising ideas and facilitate innovative initiatives
Funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO)

Starter grant (€240,000)

2025 – 2028

Seed grant awarded for early career researchers with innovative research ideas

Funded by the Dutch Government Agreement on Higher Education and Science Scheme

Postdoc Plus Grant (€12,500)

2021 - 2022

Seed grant awarded for innovative research ideas

Funded by the Graduate School of Life Science, University of Würzburg

UNSW Exchange Program Award (\$3000)

2017

Travelling award for visiting Prof. Dr. Tom Beckers at KU Leuven

Funded by the School of Psychology, University of New South Wales

Australian Postgraduate Award (\$26000 annually)

2015 - 2018

Scholarship awarded for postgraduate research training

Funded by the Australian Federal Government

PUBLICATIONS (* DENOTES SENIOR AUTHORSHIP; † DENOTES SHARED FIRST AUTHORSHIP)

1. **Wong, A. H. K.** (2025). Spreading the reduction of fear: A narrative review of generalization of extinction learning in human fear conditioning. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 118, 102580. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2025.102580>
2. Aslanidou, A., Andreatta, M., **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Wieser, M. J. (2025). Generalized expectancy of threat in threatening compared to safe contexts. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 20(1), nsae097. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsae097>
3. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Pittig, A., & Engelhard, I. M. (2024). The generalization of threat beliefs to novel safety stimuli induced by safety behaviors. *Behavioural Brain Research*, 470, 115078. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbr.2024.115078>
4. Kesim, I. E., Pittig, A., & **Wong, A. H. K.** (2024). The effect of typicality training on costly safety behavior generalization. *Psychological Research*, 88, 1771-1782. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-024-01979-0>
5. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Franzen, M., & Wieser, M. J. (2024). Unconditioned stimulus devaluation decreases the generalization of costly safety behaviors. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 103, 102847. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2024.102847>
6. **Wong, A. H. K.**, van Dis, E. A. M., Hagenars, M., & Engelhard, I. M. (2023). The degree of safety behaviors to a safety stimulus predicts development of threat beliefs. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 170, 104423. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2023.104423>

7. Aslanidou, A., Andreatta, M., **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Wieser, M. J. (2023). No influence of threat uncertainty on fear generalization. *Psychophysiology*, e14423. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.14423>
8. Glück, V. M., Hilger, K., Engelke, P., **Wong, A. H. K.**, Boschet, J. M., & Pittig, A. (2023). A network perspective on real-life threat situations: Complex relations between situation-specific anxiety, trait anxiety, perceived threat, positive outcomes, approach motivation and approach and avoidance responses. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23575>
9. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Aslanidou, A., Malbec, M., Pittig, A., Wieser, M. J., & Andreatta, M. (2023). A systematic review of the inter-individual differences in avoidance learning. *Collabra: Psychology*, 9(1), 77856. <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.77856>
10. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (2023). Reducing avoidance of learnt fear: Extinction of an imminent threat signal partly decreases costly avoidance to a distal threat signal. *Journal of Experimental Psychopathology*, 14(2), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/204380872311175>
11. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Lee, J. C., Engelke, P., & Pittig, A. (2023). Reduction of costly safety behaviors after extinction with a generalization stimulus is determined by individual differences in generalization rules. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 160, 104233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2022.104233>
12. Pittig, A., & **Wong, A. H. K.** (2022). Reducing the return of avoidance and fear by directly targeting avoidance: Comparing incentive-based and instructed extinction of avoidance to passive fear extinction. *Journal of Experimental Psychopathology*, 13(4). doi:[10.1177/20438087221136424](https://doi.org/10.1177/20438087221136424)
13. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (2022). Threat belief determines the degree of costly safety behavior: Assessing rule-based generalization of safety behavior with a dimensional measure of avoidance. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 156, 104158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2022.104158>
14. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Wirth, F. M., & Pittig, A. (2022). Avoidance of learnt fear: Models, potential mechanisms, and future directions. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 151, 104056. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2022.104056>
15. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (2022). Avoiding a feared stimulus: Modelling costly avoidance of learnt fear in a sensory preconditioning paradigm. *Biological Psychology*, 168, 108429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2021.108249>
16. Pittig, A., Glück, V. M., Boschet, B. M., **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Engelke, P. (2021). Increased anxiety of public situations during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from a community and a patient sample. *Clinical Psychology in Europe*, 3(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.32872/cpe.4221>
17. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (2021). A dimensional measure of safety behavior: A non-dichotomous assessment of costly avoidance in human fear conditioning. *Psychological Research*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-021-01490-w>

18. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Beckers, T. (2021). Trait anxiety is associated with reduced typicality asymmetry in fear generalization. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 138, 103802.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2021.103802>
19. Pittig, A., & **Wong, A. H. K.** (2021). Incentive-based, instructed, and social observational extinction of avoidance: Fear-opposite actions and their influence on fear extinction. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 137, 103797. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103797>
20. **Wong, A. H. K.**, Glück, V. M., Boschet, J. M., & Engelke, P. (2020). Generalization of extinction with a generalization stimulus is determined by learnt threat beliefs. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 125, 103755. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103755>
21. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (2020). Costly avoidance triggered by categorical fear generalization. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 129, 103606. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103606>
22. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Lovibond, P. F. (2020). Breakfast or bakery? The role of categorical ambiguity in over-generalization of learned fear in trait anxiety. *Emotion*. Advance online publication.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000739>
23. Pittig, A., **Wong, A. H. K.**, Glück, V. M., & Boschet, J. M. (2020). Avoidance and its bi-directional relationship with conditioned fear: Mechanisms, moderators, and clinical implications. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 126, 103550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103550>
24. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Lovibond, P. F. (2020). Generalization of extinction of a generalization stimulus in fear learning. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 125, 103535.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2019.103535>
25. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Lovibond, P. F. (2018). Excessive generalisation of conditioned fear in trait anxious individuals under ambiguity. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 107, 53-63.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2018.05.012>
26. **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Lovibond, P. F. (2017). Rule-based generalisation in single-cue and differential fear conditioning in humans. *Biological Psychology* 129, 111-120.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2017.08.056>

MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED/IN PREPARATION/IN-PRINCIPLE ACCEPTANCE

Wong, A. H. K[†], Harrewijn, A[†], Aslanidou, A., Malbec, M., Andreatta, M., Franzen, M., & Wieser, M. J. (in principle acceptance). Persistence of safety behaviors or the acquisition of new ones? The effect of cross-US reinstatement in safety behaviors. Submitted as a pre-registered report.

Wong, A. H. K., Wieser, M. J., & Andreatta, M. (under review). Relief and the persistence of avoidance of learnt fear. OSF pre-registration: <https://osf.io/z4gmw/>

Wong, A. H. K., Verheyen, S., & Zaman, J. (under review). Safety behavior generalization to taxonomic- and thematic-related stimuli. OSF pre-registration: <https://osf.io/3zftq>

Chang, L., Wieser, M. J., & **Wong, A. H. K.** (under review). The role of unconditioned stimulus revaluation in avoidance of learnt fear. <https://osf.io/yta8h/>

Engelke, P., **Wong, A. H. K.**, & Pittig, A. (under review). Induced awareness of stimulus differences impedes the generalization of extinction learning with various, highly similar stimuli. <https://osf.io/qk2r6/>

Otto, M. W., Long, L. J., Papini, S., ..., **Wong, A. H. K.** et al. (under review). Study protocol for virtual reality exposure and public speaking anxiety: Moderating role of state and trait positive affect. Submitted as a pre-registered report. <https://osf.io/4ucmj>

Stegmann, Y., Battaglia, S., Carsten, H. P., ..., **Wong, A. H. K.** et al. (under review). Coherence of gamma-band EEG activity as a basis for associative threat learning: A registered report of a large-scale multi-site replication study. Submitted as a pre-registered report. <https://osf.io/km5jv/>

TEACHING & MENTORING

Erasmus University Rotterdam:

Lecturer & course coordinator – Anxiety and Stress (Bachelor) 2022 – present
Taught the etiology, maintenance, and treatments for a variety of anxiety-related disorders. Introduction of experimental psychopathology and its clinical translation.

Supervisor - Research theses and internship supervision 2022 – present
Supervised the processes of data collection, data analyses, and thesis writing. All research topics focused on anxiety-related experimental psychopathology, including the generalisation and extinction of learnt fear and fear-related costly avoidance. (Number of master students: 42; Number of research interns: 6)

University of Würzburg:

Instructor – Seminar of Clinical Psychology (Masters) 2018 - 2022
Taught and discussed how various associative learning models contribute to the understanding of the etiology and maintenance of a variety of clinical disorders,

including anxiety-related disorders, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders.
The seminar focused on experimental psychopathology and its clinical translation.

Instructor – Translational Neuroscience (Masters)

2019 - 2022

Taught and discussed the neuroscience approaches to the understanding of psychopathology in both animals and humans, with a specific focus on anxiety-related experimental psychopathology.

Instructor – Seminar of Clinical Psychology (Bachelor)

2018 - 2022

Taught and discussed the various models of fear learning, and the contribution of these models to understand the acquisition, maintenance, generalisation, and reduction of maladaptive fear in anxiety-related disorders.
The seminar focused on anxiety-related experimental psychopathology and its clinical implications.

Supervisor - Research theses and internship supervision

2018 - 2022

Supervised the processes of data collection, data analyses, and thesis writing.
All research topics focused on anxiety-related experimental psychopathology, including the generalisation and extinction of learnt fear and fear-related costly avoidance. (Number of master students: 8; Number of bachelor students: 1; Number of research interns: 8)

University of New South Wales:

Tutor – Introduction to Psychology tutorials

2016 – 2017

Delivered first year psychology content to undergraduates. Responsible for marking students' assignments, mid-session exams and presentations.

Tutor – Research Methods tutorials

2016 - 2017

Taught the concept and the usage of statistical analyses. Responsible for marking students' assignments and mid-session exams.

Peer mentor – Undergraduate peer mentoring program

2017

Peer mentored six Honours students, shared knowledge and experience in research, and helped evaluating their research career options.

PHD SUPERVISION

Paula Engelke

2019 – present

Topic: Enhancing the generalization of extinction learning

University of Würzburg

Co-supervised with Prof. Dr. Andre Pittig

Asimina Aslanidou

Topic: The role of threat uncertainty in fear generalization

2022 - present

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Co-supervised with Prof. Dr. Matthias Wieser & Dr. Marta Andreatta

Mozhao Li

Topic: The role of social stress on attentional biases and threat responses

2023 – present

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Co-supervised with Prof. Dr. Matthias Wieser & Dr. Minita Franzen

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Talks

Wong, A. H. K., Wieser, M. J., & Andreatta, M. (May, 2024). Relief and the persistence of avoidance of learnt fear. Presentation at the 15th European Meeting of Human Fear Conditioning, Heeze, The Netherlands.

Wong, A. H. K. (April, 2023). *The effect of outcome devaluation of avoidance generalization*. Presentation at the 2023 International Conference on Learning and Memory, California, USA.

Wong, A. H. K. (March, 2023). *The effect of outcome devaluation of avoidance generalization*. Presentation at the International Convention of Psychological Science, Brussels, Belgium.

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (June, 2022). *The reduction of avoidance of learnt fear via first-order conditioned stimulus extinction*. Presentation at the Reading Emotions Symposium (Online).

Wong, A. H. K., Lee, J. C., Engelke, P., & Pittig, A. (May, 2022). *Individual differences in the generalization of avoidance extinction*. Presentation at the Learning in Emotionally Vulnerable People H2020, Timisoara, Romania.

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (May, 2022). *Learnt threat beliefs determine the reduction in generalized costly safety behavior*. Presentation at the 13th European Meeting of Human Fear Conditioning (Online).

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (May, 2019). *Costly avoidance triggered by categorical fear generalization*. Presentation at the 11th European Meeting of Human Fear Conditioning, Würzburg, Germany.

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (July, 2017). *Extinction with generalisation stimulus in high and low anxious individuals*. Presentation at the Australian Learning Group 2017 mid-year meeting, Sydney, Australia.

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (April, 2017). *Individual differences in fear generalisation on a categorical level*. Presentation at the 44th Experimental Psychology Conference, Newcastle, Australia.

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (December, 2016). *The role of reasoning in fear generalisation in high and low anxious individuals*. Presentation at the Australian Learning Group Christmas Workshop, Sydney, Australia.

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (November, 2016). *The role of reasoning in fear generalisation in high and low anxious individuals*. Presentation at the Sydney Postgraduate Psychology Conference, Sydney, Australia.

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (July, 2016). *Associative- and Propositional-based generalisation in human fear conditioning*. Presentation at the 4th International meeting of the Australian Learning Group jointed with International Society for Comparative Psychology, Sydney, Australia

Lovibond P. F., Chan C. K. Y., Chen, J. T. H., & **Wong, A. H. K.** (June, 2016). *Uncertainty and ambiguity in anxiety*. Presentation at the 8th World Congress of Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies, Melbourne, Australia

Posters

Wong, A. H. K., van Dis, E. A. M., Pittig, A., Hagenaars, M. A., & Engelhard, I. M. (May, 2023). *The degree of safety behaviors to a safety signal predicts development of threat beliefs*. Poster presentation at the 14th European Meeting of Human Fear Conditioning, Salzburg, Austria.

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (September, 2021). *Threat belief determines the generalization of costly avoidance*. Poster presentation at the 3rd International congress of World Association for Stress Related and Anxiety Disorders, Vienna, Austria.

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (May, 2021). *Avoidance of learnt fear: Examining costly CS-avoidance in a sensory preconditioning paradigm*. Poster presentation at the 12th European Meeting of Human Fear Conditioning, Bochum, Germany (Online).

Wong, A. H. K., & Pittig, A. (May, 2021). *Avoidance of learnt fear: Examining costly CS-avoidance in a sensory preconditioning paradigm*. Poster presentation at the 38th Symposium of the Division of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy of the DGPs, Mannheim, Germany (Online).

Wong, A. H. K., & Lovibond, P. F. (September, 2017). *The effect of trait anxiety on categorical fear generalisation*. Poster presentation at the 2nd International Summer School of Emotional Learning and Memory in Health and Psychopathology, Leuven, Belgium.

INVITED TALKS

- Dutch-Flemish Postgraduate School for Experimental Psychopathology, Utrecht, 19/04/2024
- KU Leuven, 06/03/2023
- Graduate School of Life Science, University of Würzburg, 26/09/2022 (cancelled)

- Expert meeting of Learning in Emotionally vulnerable people, 27-28/5/2022, West University of Timisoara
- Erasmus University Rotterdam, 24/2/2022
- University of New South Wales, 29/8/2019
- Maastricht University, 01/12/2017
- Ghent University, 18/11/2017

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Associative Editorial board member for:

Behaviour Research and Therapy

04/2023 – present

Ad hoc reviewer for:

Behavioural Brain Research | Behavioural Processes | Behaviour Research and Therapy | Behavior Research Methods | Biological Psychology | Clinical Psychological Science | Cognition & Emotion | Collabra: Psychology | Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience | Frontiers in Neuroscience | International Journal of Psychophysiology | Journal of Anxiety Disorders | Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry | Journal of Experimental Psychology: General | Journal of Experimental Psychopathology | Journal of Mood & Anxiety Disorders | Journal of Pain | Learning and Motivation | Neurobiology of Learning and Memory | Neuropsychologia | Nutritional Neuroscience | Psychological Reports | Psychological Science | Psychophysiology | Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology | Scandinavian Journal of Pain | Scientific Reports

Doctoral committee member for:

Eveliina A. A. Glogan (Maastricht University)

15/12/2021

Research ethical review committee member for:

Erasmus University Rotterdam

01/08/2022 – present

Master thesis prize committee member for:

Erasmus University Rotterdam

12/2022

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Senior member, Experimental Psychopathology 2022-present
- Member, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie 2020- present
- Member, *American Psychological Association (APA)* 2016 - present
- Member, *Australian Learning Group (ALG)* 2015 -present

MEDIA FOR OPEN SCIENCE AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH



Open Science Framework:

<https://osf.io/vakq8/>



ResearchGate:

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alex-Hon-Ki-Wong>



Twitter/X:

<https://twitter.com/PsycAlexWong>



Google Scholar:

<https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=hGM68v4AAAAJ&hl=en>