

Religion and Science

We often hear historical and contemporary accounts of an alleged fundamental conflict between religion and science. When thinking of these topics, we often think of names such as Galileo or Darwin and events such as the Scopes Monkey Trial. Even more recently we hear of school boards struggling with what to teach in the classroom concerning issues such as evolution and creationism. Let's use the ARDA's website to examine some empirical data on people's beliefs on the relationship between religion and science.

If you find yourself lost at any point, look to the instructions on the right.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA).

You should have the ARDA homepage on your browser.

First, let's see how people perceive the relationship between religion and science.

The 1998 General Social Survey asked a series of questions concerning faith, science, and technology. Find this file in the "Data Archive" section of the ARDA's website.

Let's search for variables that might relate to the topic of religion and science. Search for the word "science" in the survey.

One of the variables that you should find is number 653. This variable asks a question that might be useful. It asks respondents "Agree or Disagree: We trust too much in science and not enough in faith."

2. What is this variable's name?

Open your web browser.

Go to www.thearda.com

Click on "Data Archive" in the main toolbar.

Select "General Social Surveys" under U.S. Surveys.

Select "General Social Survey, 1998."

Click on the "Search" tab.

Search for "science."

Click on the name of variable 653.

3. How many people responded to this question? (Hint: Be careful here. There is a difference between how many people are in the survey and how many responded to this specific question.)

4. What **percent** of respondents “Strongly agree” with this variable’s statement?

5. Now, since you are good at asking sociological questions, you think to yourself, “I bet a person’s response to this question would vary depending on their [insert other variable here]...” What variables (i.e. other factors) might lead a person to answer one way or another on this question?

Let’s use the ARDA’s online data analyzer to look at some other variables that could be affecting responses.

6. What **percent** of Protestants strongly agree with the variable’s statement?

7. What percent of Jewish individuals strongly agree with the variable’s statement?

Click on “Analyze Results” below the question.

8. What role does education have on responses to TRUSTSCI? Describe:

9. Are there any regional differences in the responses to this question (it may help to combine the numbers for the “strongly agree” and “agree” categories so you aren’t just looking at the responses of two people)?

We have been looking at the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS). It just so happens that the 1988 GSS also asked questions concerning the relationship between religion and science. Open this file and find a cross-tabulation on a variable that involves some issue relevant to religion and science that you find particularly interesting. Print out the table and attach it to this assignment.

10. Variable number and name:

11. Variable’s question:

12. Review one or more of the tables you constructed. Describe the relationship between the two variables in the table:
