

Women and the Seminary

Do men and women attend seminary for the same reasons? Are their decisions to enter the seminary treated differently by family, friends, and others?

This learning module uses the dataset Women of the Cloth, 1983 to explore these and other questions. By completing this module, you will learn more about the relationship between gender and decisions to enter the clergy.

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).

Women of the Cloth, 1983 surveys both male and female respondents, selected from a number of Protestant denominations, many of whom either are currently seminary students or have previously attended seminary. This learning module will concentrate on questions asked of women and men who are or have been enrolled in seminary.

Find the Women of the Cloth dataset on the ARDA website and open it.

You should now see a description of the study. Read through the description and answer the following questions.

1. When was the study conducted?

2. Given the date of the survey, how applicable do you think this study is for the experiences of today's seminarians? What changes are likely to have occurred?

Open your web browser.

Go to www.thearda.com

Click on "Data Archive" in the main toolbar.

Click on the "Browse Alphabetically" tab.

Click on "W" and select "Women of the Cloth, 1983."

3. What denominations were included?

You can look at the questions that were asked in the Women of the Cloth survey, as well as the responses given for each question, by opening the codebook for the dataset.

Click on the “Codebook” tab.

4. Find the question FEMINFAC (variable 54). What percentage of respondents reported that there were no women on the faculty when they first entered seminary

Scroll down to variable 54.

5. Find the variable AGEINSEM (variable 40). What is the most common age that respondents reported entering seminary?

Scroll up to variable 40.

The ARDA can also be used to perform simple analyses of the variables that are included in the datasets. By using the “Analyze results” tool, you can compare the responses to each question for different types of people.

Perform the “Analyze” function on *either* variable 41, FAMINSEM or variable 42, FRNINSEM. Use the results of this analysis to answer the following questions.

6. Which variable did you choose?

7. Record the **percentage** of respondents who reported that their family or friends were supportive of their decision to enter seminary?

8. Now, find the table that compares the responses of male and female respondents. Report the **percentage** of female and male respondents whose family or friends were supportive of their decision.

Male: _____

Female: _____

9. What do these results suggest about gender and the seminary? Do there seem to be gender differences in the amount of acceptance that seminary students receive from family and friends?

The survey also asks those respondents who attended seminary about the importance of different motivating factors for them. Respondents are asked to report whether each of these factors was a primary reason, a secondary reason, or not a reason for their decision to enter the seminary.

Find this set of variables and use them to answer the following questions.

Scroll down to variables 41 and 42.

Click on “Analyze Results” below the question.

Scroll down until you find the “Gender” table.

Click on the “Search” tab, located next to the “Codebook” tab.

Enter an appropriate search term (such as “primary” or “secondary”) in the “Search” text box.

10. Respondents were asked to assess the importance of three factors in this set of questions, excluding “other issues.” List these factors below.

11. Develop a hypothesis about the differences between the responses of men and women to these questions. What factor(s) do you expect to be most important for women, and why? What factor(s) do you expect to be most important for men, and why?

12. For each of the three variables, find the “Analyze results” table that reports responses by gender. Which of the three factors seems to be most important for **female** respondents? Second most important? Least important?

13. Which factor seems to be most important for **male** respondents? Second most important? Least important?

Scroll through the list of variables to find the one you are looking for.

Click on the variable name.

Click on “Analyze Results” below the questions.

Examine the Gender table.

