Religion and Views on Homosexuality

Both at the local and the national level, homosexuality is being increasingly discussed in public forums. In these discussions, it is difficult to ignore the role religion has in shaping many individuals’ viewpoints on this topic. Here we will explore national survey data from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) to see how religion affects respondents’ views towards homosexuality.

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

First, let’s find some survey questions in the ARDA’s datasets that ask respondents about their views on homosexuality. Using the ARDA’s search feature, perform a search for the word “homosexual” or “homosexuality.”

1. You may find several questions that fit your search criteria, but find a variable with the name LIBHOMO (these are short-hand names of questions that were asked in surveys). What does this question ask?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. What is the name of the survey in which this question was asked? (Hint: The name of the survey is to the right of the question’s short-hand name.) Choose the most recent survey that asks this question and that is an Instructional Dataset. The title of the dataset will mention if inapplicable codes have been coded as missing. (Hint: Click “View Matches 1 – 150” in the returned results for the Data Archive, click Ctrl+F, then type LIBHOMO in the search box. Number 11 of the 15 returned responses is the most recent dataset with inapplicable responses coded as missing.)

___________________________________________________________________________

Let’s learn some more about this survey. Click on the name of the survey. This will bring up a summary page for the survey.
3. How many people participated in this survey? (Hint: People are often referred to as “cases” in datasets.)

___________________________________________________________________________

4. Is this a national, regional, or local survey?

___________________________________________________________________________

OK, now that we know more about the survey that we are looking at, let’s go back to the question you found earlier. Click on the grey “Search” tab and find the variable. After you find it again, click on the variable name to bring up a basic table of responses.

5. What percent responded that they would favor the action proposed in this question?

___________________________________________________________________________

Before we analyze this question further, let’s formulate a hypothesis. What do you think the relationship between church attendance and responding in favor to this question will be? In other words, do you think responses in favor of this question will increase, decrease, or stay the same as church attendance increases?

6. Write your hypothesis:

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Click on “Analyze Results,” and fill in the following table to test your hypothesis about church attendance and responses to the question.
7. Fill in the following table for those responding in the “Favor” category (percentages):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% in Favor</th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Several times a year</th>
<th>1-3 times a month</th>
<th>Nearly every week</th>
<th>Once a week or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Was your hypothesis supported?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

9. Take a look at the other tables for this question. Of the variables provided, which seems to have the strongest relationship with this question? That is, what seems to make the biggest difference in a person’s response to this question?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

You should now have a basic understanding of how to locate variables of interest and how to look at the graphs and tables. It is now your turn to explore data on your own. Continuing with the topic of views on homosexuality, find a different survey question among the ARDA’s datasets. After finding the question that interests you, analyze the results and find an interesting table.

Explain what you found below:

10. What is the survey question you chose to analyze?
___________________________________________________________________________
11. What survey was this question a part of?

12. Why did you find this table interesting or surprising? Explain what it shows about the relationship between the two variables: