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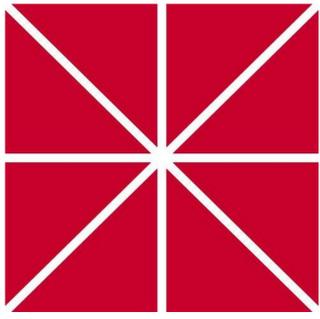
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Beliefs and their Byproducts: The Impact of Religiosity and Political Ideology on Attitudes Toward COVID-19, Vaccines, and Climate Change

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Abstract:

Several studies have indicated that an individual's level of religiosity impacts their views toward science and scientific phenomena. Moreover, research shows that these views can also be impacted by an individual's political affiliation and ideology. In this research paper, I examine the relationship between one's religiosity and political ideology and their attitude toward the novel corona virus (COVID-19), vaccines, and climate change. Using data from the 2021 Chapman University Survey of American Fears, I find that while religiosity plays a role in one's attitudes toward these three scientific phenomena, the greatest correlation stems from one's political ideology. In other words, this study shows that when evaluating one's outlook on COVID-19, vaccines, and climate change, an individual's political views serve as a more substantial indicator of one's perspective than religiosity. Tackling COVID-19, combating climate change, and convincing the public of vaccine safety and efficacy is of the utmost importance. These issues cannot be properly addressed if leaders, governments, and organizations do not understand the viewpoints of the general public. The conclusions of this research will allow these stakeholders, along with society as a whole, to gain a better grasp of the audiences in which they are dealing with as well as an enhanced awareness of why different individuals adopt certain attitudes toward scientific issues.

Introduction to Research:

- This study utilizes data from the 2021 Chapman University Survey of American Fears (n=1,035)
- There is a growing clash between modern American science and modern American conservatism with an overall distrust of science among many conservatives (Mooney, 2005)
- Religiosity, generally speaking, has been associated with lower levels of scientific knowledge, more negative attitudes toward science, and less trust in scientific sources of information (McPhetres and Zuckerman, 2018)
- Conservative evangelical theology tends to express more negative views and behaviors toward science and scientific issues (Ellison and Musick, 1995; Perry, Whitehead, and Grubbs, 2020)

Works Cited:

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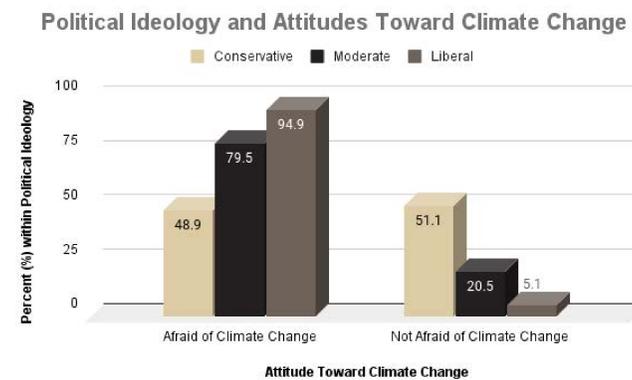
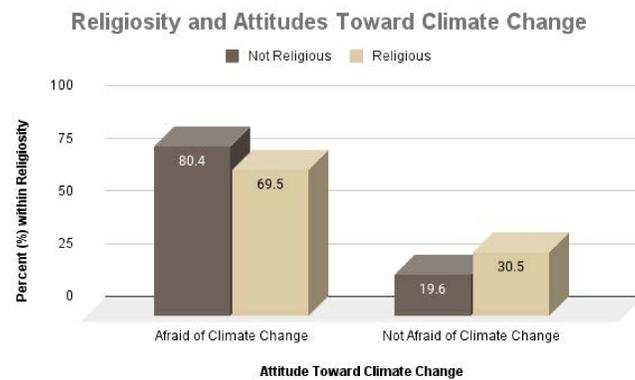
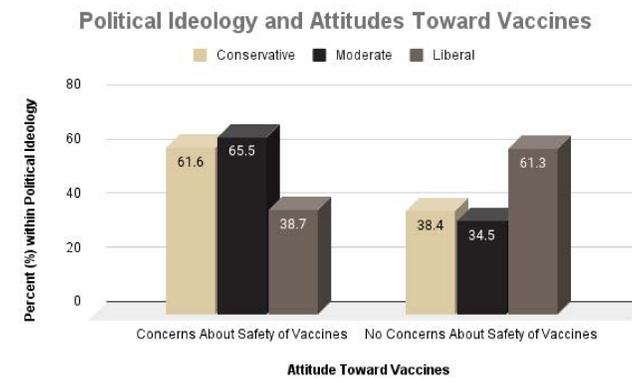
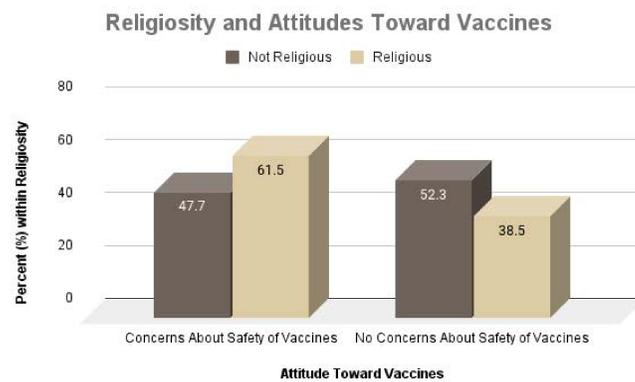
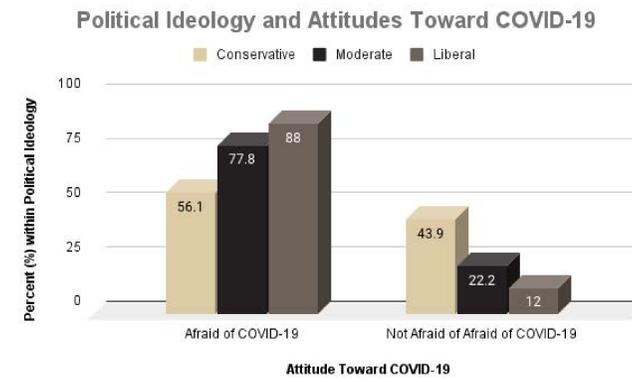
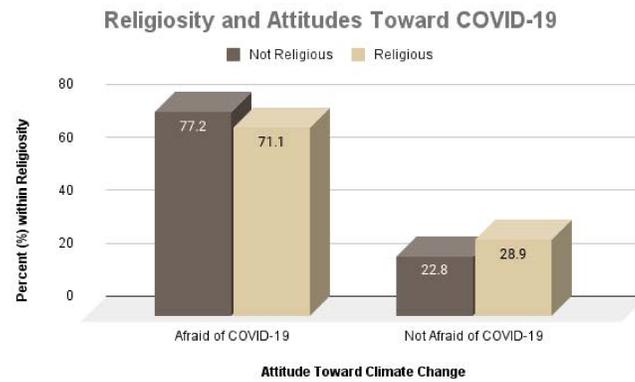
Hypotheses:

H1: individuals with higher levels of religiosity are less likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change and more likely to be concerned about the safety of vaccines.

H2: individuals with conservative political ideologies are less likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change and more likely to be concerned about the safety of vaccines.

H3: individuals who are both religious and politically conservative are the least likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change and more likely to be concerned about the safety of vaccines.

Data: (obtained via cross-tabulations)



All correlations from the above six bar graphs are statistically significant (p<.05)

Findings:

- **H1: Religiosity**
 - 77.2% of **non-religious** respondents are afraid of catching COVID-19 compared to 71.1% of **religious** respondents (6.1% difference)
 - 61.5% of **religious** respondents are concerned about the safety of vaccines compared to 47.7% of **non-religious** respondents (13.8% difference)
 - 80.4% of **non-religious** respondents are afraid of climate change compared to 69.5% of **religious** respondents (10.5% difference)
- **H2: Political Ideology**
 - 88% of **liberal** respondents are afraid of catching COVID-19 compared to 56.1% of **conservative** respondents (31.9% difference)
 - 61.6% of **conservative** respondents are concerned about the safety of vaccines compared to 38.7% of liberal respondents (22.9% difference)
 - 65.5% of **moderates** are concerned about the safety of vaccines (highest percentage)
 - 94.9% of **liberal** respondents are afraid of climate change compared to 48.9% of **conservative** respondents (46% difference)
- **H3: Religiosity and Political Ideology**
 - 55.6% of **religious AND conservative** respondents are afraid of catching COVID-19 (lowest percentage)
 - 69.5% of **religious AND moderate** respondents are concerned about the safety of vaccines (lowest percentage)
 - 63% of **religious AND conservative** respondents are afraid of climate change (lowest percentage)

Conclusion:

- **Religiosity** has a **slight** impact on attitudes toward COVID-19, vaccines, and climate change
 - More religious, less likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change and more likely to have concerns about the safety of vaccines
- **Political ideology** has a **major** impact on attitudes toward COVID-19, vaccines, and climate change
 - More conservative, less likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change (with the exception of concerns about vaccines)
- **Religious conservatives** are least likely to be afraid of COVID-19 and climate change but religious moderates are most likely to have concerns about the safety of vaccines