

Pew Research Center - Science and religion interviewer guide

FINAL VERSION

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Throughout, please pay attention to the language used by interviewees and the terms they use to describe the science and religion issues discussed. Probe on the definitions of terms, where appropriate, and mirror the language they use.

Key questions in **bold**. Potential probing or follow-up questions are not in bold.

INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING 5 mins	INTERVIEWER NOTES
<p>My name is ____, and I work for [firm name], an independent research agency. I am here conducting this interview on behalf of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit organization. [IF QUESTIONED ABOUT PEW: Pew Research is a nonprofit organization located in the United States].</p> <p>We asked you here today to discuss your views about science and its role in society. All your thoughts and opinions are important, and there are no right or wrong answers to any of my questions. We abide by the ESOMAR code of conduct in carrying out this work.</p> <p>We are audio recording this interview. This is to make sure we accurately capture everything that you say. These recordings will be made available to Pew Research Center after the interview, but they will not be shared outside that organization and your personal details will be kept totally confidential. We will also be transcribing this interview to help us with our analysis. We will share this transcript with Pew Research Center but, again, your personal details will be kept confidential.</p> <p>Taking part in this interview is completely voluntary, and you will be able to end the interview at any point or refuse to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with. The interview will last around one hour.</p> <p>Do you agree to participate in this interview?</p> <p>Do you have any questions before we begin?</p> <p>[Any housekeeping – toilet breaks, mobile phones off, fire exits, refreshments, etc.]</p> <p>Before we begin, can you tell me a bit about yourself – your first name, how you spend your time, the area where you live?</p>	<p>This section can be modified based on the local office’s standard practices, but we suggest it should include an introduction, a brief overview of the topics to be covered, and information about recording the conversation and privacy.</p>
OPENER 5 mins	INTERVIEWER NOTES
<p>Let’s start by talking about your thoughts about society today...</p> <p>Thinking about life today compared with 10 years ago, what are the main changes you have seen in society in [Malaysia/Singapore]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the ways you think society has changed for the better? What about for the worse? • What are some changes you’d like to see that haven’t happened? <p>And do you think society has been changing too quickly, too slowly, or is the pace of change about right?</p>	<p>If needed, probe to clarify if changes are seen as good or bad and why.</p>

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VIEWS OF SCIENCE 12 mins	INTERVIEWER NOTES
<p>I want to get your thoughts on some science topics...</p> <p>How much would you say you know about science?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If struggling] Would you say you know a lot, a little, or nothing at all about science? • Where do you get your information on science from? <p>When I say “scientific research,” what words come to mind?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If struggling to come up with words] What are some topics scientists might research? And why might they do this kind of research? <p>In general, do you think the government should spend more money or less money on scientific research in [Malaysia/Singapore]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much of a government priority should investment in scientific research be? Should it be a main priority, or just one of many priorities? <p>Thinking about all the things our government does, in your opinion, are government investments in basic scientific research usually worthwhile for society over time, or are they not worth the investment? Why do you say that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about government investments in medical research – are those investments usually worthwhile, or are they not worth the investment? Why do you say that? • What about government investment in engineering and technology – is that usually worthwhile, or is it not worth the investment? Why? 	<p>The purpose is to understand what science-related issues are salient for our interviewees, and to get a sense of how they think science has impacted people.</p> <p>We also want to probe on the government spending issue, understand why interviewees want to see more/less government money spent on science, and understand whether they view science spending as a priority.</p> <p>[If needed] If interviewee asks, by basic scientific research we mean “scientific research that is aimed at advancing knowledge, even if there are no immediate practical applications of that knowledge.”</p>
VIEWS ABOUT RELIGION AND SOCIETY TODAY 10 mins	INTERVIEWER NOTES
<p>Transitioning to a different topic, I have a few questions about faith issues and the role of religion in our country today...</p> <p>Do you think religion plays an important role in life in [Malaysia/Singapore]? Why do you say that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think religion should play a more important or a less important role? <p>What makes someone a “good [interviewee religion (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim)]”? What practices or views come to mind?</p> <p>Generally, do you think it is easy or difficult to be a religious person in [Malaysia/Singapore] today?</p> <p>Thinking just of yourself, how much do you consider being [interviewee religion (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim)] to be an important in how you think about who you are as a person?</p>	<p>Here we will bring up religion for the first time.</p> <p>The goal is to get a sense of what role they think religion plays in their society, for the people of Malaysia/Singapore, generally.</p> <p>Please note that the question about what makes someone a good Buddhist/Hindu/Muslim is particularly important, as is the question about whether it’s easy or difficult to be a religion person today.</p>
INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION 15 mins	INTERVIEWER NOTES
<p>What role do you think moral values should play in scientific research?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you think about “moral values,” are they different or the same as the values of [interviewee religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam)]? 	<p>The purpose here is to understand how people see the intersection between</p>

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<p>Have you heard about any scientific research that concerns you for religious reasons?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If concerned] What kinds of research are you thinking of? What aspect of this research concerns you? • Are there any areas you think scientists should <i>not</i> research? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [If yes] Which areas should be off-limits? What are your concerns? What is prompting these concerns? [PROBE FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OR SOMETHING ELSE] <p>Scientists continue to develop new technologies that can help women get pregnant. How familiar are you with these types of technologies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What technologies do you have in mind? How do you feel about these technologies? Under what circumstances are these technologies appropriate? And when are they inappropriate? • Do you think scientific research on new technologies to help women get pregnant pays too much, too little or about the right amount of attention to the moral values of society? Why do you say that? [PROBE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS] <p>Have you heard about scientific research to change people’s genetic characteristics, sometimes called “gene editing”? How familiar are you with gene editing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If heard of gene editing] What have you heard? • Gene editing allows scientists to change a person’s genetic characteristics. These techniques are still being developed. Gene editing might be used to treat certain diseases, to prevent a baby from getting certain diseases in the future, or potentially to change other characteristics such as a baby’s eye color. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you feel about this idea? Under what circumstances would you see the use of gene editing as appropriate or not appropriate? • Do you think scientific research on gene editing pays too much, too little or about the right amount of attention to the moral values of society? Why do you say that? [PROBE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS] <p>Cloning is a process in which scientists create an exact genetic copy of an animal. Have you heard about scientists cloning animals? How familiar are you with cloning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If heard of cloning] What have you heard? • In cloning, scientists copy the genetic traits of an animal into an embryo and then implant that embryo into another animal of that species. The baby that is born will have the exact genetic make-up as the original animal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you feel about this idea? In what circumstances do you see the use of animal cloning techniques as appropriate or not appropriate? • Do you think scientific research on cloning pays too much, too little or about the right amount of attention to the moral values of society? Why do you say that? [PROBE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS] 	<p>their religion and science, and what role they think values should play in research.</p> <p>The important thing in this section is to avoid suggesting that science and religion are in conflict. We want interviewees to describe the relationship between their religious views and science, on their own terms.</p> <p>If interviewee asks whether gene editing could be used to change a baby’s gender or some other characteristic, please just say “yes, potentially.”</p>
<p>VIEWS ABOUT CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE 10 mins</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER NOTES</p>
<p>What are your thoughts about science in connection with your religious beliefs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you see the two as related? Or do you see them as largely separate? 	<p>The purpose here is to understand if and where</p>

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<p>In your opinion, do you think there is generally a conflict between science and [interviewee religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam)], or not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me some ways in which science conflicts with your own religious beliefs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [If interviewee only mentions topics already discussed, i.e. pregnancy technologies, gene editing and cloning] Other than the areas we've already talked about, what other areas of conflict do you see between science and your religion? • [If respondent has mentioned multiple areas of conflict between science and religion] What do you think is the biggest conflict between science and [interviewee religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam)]? • Can you tell me some ways in which science is compatible with your own religious beliefs? <p>I want to ask specifically about the scientific theory of human evolution. Some religious groups see conflict between their religious beliefs and how scientists think human life began and evolved. What are your views? Do you see a conflict between your religious views and the scientific theory of human evolution?</p>	<p>the interviewee sees conflict between science and religion.</p> <p>This discussion is saved until the end of the interview, because we don't want to bias the discussion by immediately introducing the idea that science and religion are at odds.</p> <p>Please note that this last question about evolution is required; please probe on interviewee's opinion.</p> <p>[If needed] If interviewee asks, the scientific theory of human evolution refers to scientists' explanation that humans have developed over time due to natural processes such as natural selection – for example, that humans developed (or descended) from primates.</p>
<p>CLOSING 2.5 mins</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER NOTES</p>
<p>Is there anything else I haven't asked about that you think is relevant to what we've talked about today? Is there anything you wish I had asked about?</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.</p>	<p>Give the respondent an opportunity to volunteer any information they think is relevant or important.</p>