

Table SPSS-10

Public perception of scientists: Selected years, 1983–2018

(Standard error)

Perception	1983 (n = 1,615)	1985 (n = 1,986)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,005)	1992 (n = 1,995)	1995 (n = 2,006)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2012 (n = 1,152)	2016 (n = 1,390)	2018 (n = 1,175)	
Scientists work for the good of humanity													
Strongly agree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.0	1.7	1.5	1.7
Agree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.3	1.9	1.5	1.9
Disagree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9
Strongly disagree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3
Don't know	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.5
Mean	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Scientists help to solve problems													
Strongly agree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.6
Agree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.5
Disagree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7
Strongly disagree	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	*	0.4	0.2	*
Don't know	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.5
Mean	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
Scientists want to make life better for the average person													
Strongly agree	na	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.7	1.5	
Agree	na	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.5	
Disagree	na	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	
Strongly disagree	na	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.5	*	0.3	
Don't know	na	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.5	
Mean	na	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	
Scientists are odd and peculiar													
Strongly agree	0.3	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.9
Agree	1.4	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.3	2.1	1.4	1.9
Disagree	1.5	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.8
Strongly disagree	0.6	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9
Don't know	0.6	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.6	1.2	0.7	0.7
Mean	0.02	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03

* = value < 0.5% responded. na = not applicable; question was not asked.

n = number of survey responses.

Note(s):

Mean score is based on a 4-point scale, where 4 equals "strongly agree" and 1 equals "strongly disagree." Table displays data for years when questions were proffered. Responses are to the following: *Scientific researchers are dedicated people who work for the good of humanity*; *Scientists are helping to solve challenging problems*; *Most scientists want to work on things that will make life better for the average person*; and *Scientists are apt to be odd and peculiar people*.

Source(s):

Data are sourced from multiple surveys that used either identical or similar survey items. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1983–2001); NORC at the University of Chicago, General Social Survey (2012–18).

Science and Engineering Indicators