

Assignment 2

In Part A you are asked to examine the data window of the data set you've chosen and give some basic information about the set as a whole. You are also asked to comment on the collection process for the data you are using – what is it, and how was it collected. This information can be found in the documentation file that accompanies each data file.

In Part B you are asked to consider whether you need to focus in on a specific population in the data to explore your question. If your answer is yes, you need to create a filter and turn it on in spss. If your answer is no, you need to tell me why you don't need a filter in your written work.

In Part C you are asked to run some frequencies and basic statistics on some potential independent and dependent variables of your choice in your data. These variables should include at least one direct measure of your 'effect', and many of the obvious components of your 'cause(s)', as well as potentially other variables. Remember quantitative research aims at partial explanations, and you may also have to settle for variables that only partly cover the concept you are trying to measure. If it's an important idea, it's ok to run several variables that measure the idea in different ways. It's also ok to use simple variables like age, sex, ethnicity etc. These simple differences between us often 'explain' a lot of the complex differences between us (for example almost all social experience varies by gender in meaningful ways – even if that's not the main thing we are looking at. You may need to search the documentation and run a bunch of different variables before you settle on the ones you want to include so set aside some time for this part.

You are then asked to briefly comment on/critique the measures of these variables and briefly interpret the results in the tables and graphs in your output.

You are also asked to think through the measurement of important concepts in the 3 journal articles from A1, and add any useful or interesting discussion on the operationalization of these concepts.

Part A

Step 1: Look at the data window of your data to determine how many individual cases, and how many variables are in each. Report this in your write-up for this part.

Step 2: Very briefly describe the data collection and sampling methods used. Briefly comment on some of the potential data quality problems, given the methods used.

Part B

Step 1: Open new syntax to be saved as A2P1.sps

Step 2: In your syntax file, create a TITLE for your output that includes the syntax file name (in this case A2P1.sps), the date and your name.

Step 3: Decide on a variable you've chosen to filter people by (for example if you only want to look at men, you would need to choose 'sex of the respondent'. Find your variable in 'variable view', click on the values column, and figure out which category numbers go with categories that you want to look at.

Step 4: Run a select cases command using the variable you've chosen and specify which category numbers you want to keep.

Step 5: Run a frequency on the variable you used to create the filter – now when you look at the table you should only see the categories you wanted ('male' for example).

Part C

Step 1: Continue from above, reopening your syntax from last time, and starting at the bottom of the file

Step 2: In your syntax file, create a new TITLE for your output that includes the step name (in this case A2P2.sps), the date and your name.

Step 3: Run a frequency distribution, and appropriate charts and descriptive statistics on at least 5 variables of your choice that might relate to your question. At least one of these must be a potential dependent variable, even if it doesn't fit great. It is understood these may be a bad fit.

Step 4: Note the number of missing cases for each variable – what does this tell us about the potential quality of each variable? What about other potential quality problems with any of these variables?

Step 5: Briefly interpret the various measures in your output for this part. That is, summarize some of the information you see in the tables and charts in a meaningful way. You don't need to say much about simple things like sex or age if you've run them, but you should describe your dependent variable(s) and any interesting independent ones.

To Hand in:

A completed Syntax file, and a completed Output file, each converted appropriately.

A written report that includes discussion of the data you are using, and interpretation/analysis and potential critique of the variables you explored, and some relevant tie-ins to the concepts as measured in your three journal articles from A1. This written work should not exceed 3 double-spaced pages.