

Lab 5: Working with Variables

Goals: Create Dummy Variables

- 1) Relabeling
- 2) Collapsing Categories

Dummy Variable: a two-category variable, where the categories are labeled either “0” or “1”. Social scientists use dummy variables to make interpretations of statistical analyses easier. ****Don’t forget to always name the dummy variable after the “1” category.****

Example 1: Relabel

SEX is coded “1” for men and “2” for women. We want a new variable that is coded “1” for women and “0” for men, which will be named FEMALE since this is the “1” category.

In SPSS:

Transform → Recode → Into Different Variables
Select SEX → Output Variable = **FEMALE** → Change
Old and New Values
Old Value = 1; New Value = 0 → Add
Old Value = 2; New Value = 1 → Add
Continue → OK

Example 2: Collapsing Categories

Some variables have more than two categories but we still just want to compare two groups. In this case we would create a dummy variable to collapse the categories.

MARITAL is coded “1” married, “2” widowed, “3” divorced, “4” separated and “5” never married. We want a new variable that is coded “1” for married people and “0” for all unmarried people, which will be named MARRIED since this is the “1” category.

In SPSS:

Transform → Recode → Into Different Variables
(Unselect previous recoded variables if present)
Select Marital → Output Variable = **MARRIED** → Change
Old and New Values
(Remove previous old and new values if present)
Old Value = 1; New Value = 1 → Add
Old Value Range = 2-5; New Value = 0 → Add
Continue → OK

Example 3: Collapsing Categories

Some variables require more extensive collapsing.

REGION is coded “1” New England, “2” Middle Atlantic, “3” E. North Central, “4” W. North Central, “5” South Atlantic, “6” E. South Central, “7” W. South Central, “8” Mountain and “9” Pacific. We want a new variable that is coded “1” for people living in the south and “0” for people living in other regions, which will be named SOUTH since this is the “1” category.

In SPSS:

Transform → Recode → Into Different Variables

(Unselect previous recoded variables)

Select Region → Output Variable = **SOUTH** → Change

Old and New Values

(Remove previous old and new values)

Old Value Range = **5-7**; New Value = **1** → Add

Old Value Range = **1-4**; New Value = **0** → Add

Old Value Range = **8-9**; New Value = **0** → Add

Continue → OK