

Exercise 13 Syntax Files

These exercises have been prepared for use in conjunction with Chapter 13 of the 4th edition of “SPSS for Psychologists” by Brace, Kemp and Snelgar (2009)

1. One of our colleagues, Dr Suzanne Czech of University of New South Wales, is investigating antisocial behaviour in young people. In a pilot study she asked a group of students about the antisocial behaviours they had engaged in. These behaviours included activities such as not attending school, stealing from shops and getting into fights. For each of these antisocial behaviours the students reported whether they had ever engaged in the behaviour, how old they were when they first engaged in the behaviour, and how old they were when they last engaged in the behaviour.

The data file **Ex13Q1.sav** contains a sample of some of the data Suzanne collected. The variables are divided into blocks of three. The first three variables are named:

- ASB01 Have you ever done this behaviour
- FAGE01 How old when first did this
- LAGE01 How old when last did it

These blocks are repeated for each of 10 different antisocial behaviours

- a. Because we are interested in the development of anti-social behaviour, we need to calculate how many different antisocial behaviours each participant had engaged in for each year of their life between the ages of 9 and 18 years of age. We will make 10 new variables called NumASB9 (number of ASBs engaged in by the age of 9 years) through to NumASB18 (number of ASBs engaged in by the age of 18). This could be done using the dialogue boxes, but this would be very time consuming and likely to lead to errors. A better way is to prepare a set of syntax commands to compute the new variable NumASB9, and then copy and edit this to compute NumASB10 and so on. We can then run all the syntax commands in one operation. In this way you should be able to quickly and accurately compute the new variables we need. (See the next page if you need help with this.)
- b. Plot the average number of ASBs for each year of age between 9 and 18 years.
- c. Amend your solution to part a) to calculate a new set of variables called CurrentASB09 to CurrentASB18 which take account of the age at which the participants last engaged in an ASB.

TIPS:

There are several ways this can be done, but you could try the following:

1. Use the dialogue boxes to access the Count function and use this to count the number of values between 1 and 9 (don't count the 0 as these are the missing values) in the variables NumASB01 to NumASB10. Set the target variable for the count to 'NumASB09'
2. Paste this count command into the syntax window and then copy and edit it so that it counts the number of values in the range 1 to 10.
3. Repeat this process for each of the variables NumASB01 to NumASB10.
4. Run all the syntax commands
5. Whenever you construct syntax files such as this one, it is a good idea to check for errors by manually checking the values for one randomly selected participant.

Note that this variable name has been edited on each line

Example Syntax file

```
COUNT NumASB09=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 9).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB10=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 10).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB11=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 11).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB12=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 12).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB13=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 13).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB14=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 14).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB15=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 15).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB16=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 16).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB17=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 17).  
EXECUTE.  
  
COUNT NumASB18=FAGE01 FAGE02 FAGE03 FAGE04 FAGE05 FAGE06 FAGE07 FAGE08 FAGE09 FAGE10(1 thru 18).  
EXECUTE.
```

And that this value has been changed on each line.