

Creating a Data File

Entering data from an experiment into a SPSS data file is a two step process that we will call a) the **data definition** phase and b) the **data entry** phase. However, before the data definition phase takes place the wisest thing to do is to create a **paper template** for the data set first. Take for example, the data from the experiment reported on page 4. Participants in that study read a message purported to have been authored by either a high credible source or a low credible source and then to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the author on a 15 point scale of agreement. The agreement responses of the 10 participants in that study are listed below.

<u>Agreement with Low Credible Speaker</u>	<u>Agreement with High Credible Speaker</u>
5	8
4	10
4	12
1	10
1	10

In creating the **paper** template for the data set, we would need to create two columns of numbers - one to identify which source condition the participant was in and the other to identify the participant's actual agreement response.

Source Credibility	Agreement Response
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We will use the number **1** to indicate that the participant was in the **low** credible condition and the number **2** to indicate the participant was in the **high** credible condition. Thus, our **paper** template for the data set for the ten participants would look like this.

Source Credibility	Agreement Response
1	5
1	4
1	4
1	1
1	1
2	8
2	10
2	12
2	10
2	10

Now to create the computerized version of the above **paper** template

1. Logon to the system
2. **Click Start > Programs > SPSS for Windows > SPSS 10.1 for Windows.** At this point a window will appear asking you what you would like to do. Click on the circle next to Type in Data (2nd option in list) and then click OK at the bottom of the window.
3. A Data Editor will appear. Look in the lower left corner of the screen. You should see a **Data View** tab and to the right of it a **Variable View** tab. The **Variable View** tab will be used first for the **Data Definition** Phase of creating a data file. This tab will be used to define the characteristics of the two columns of numbers listed above in the **paper** template. The **Data View** tab will be used to actually enter the raw numbers listed above.

DATA DEFINITION PHASE

- Click on the **Variable View** tab in the lower left corner. A new screen will appear with the following words at the top of each column.

Name Type Width Decimals **Label** **Values** Missing Columns Align Measure

Unless otherwise specified in the manual or by your instructor, the only columns we will be using in this manual are the **Name** column, the **Label** column, and the **Values** column.

The **Name** column allows us to put a name at the top of the **computerized** version of our data set. It is, however, limited to no more than **eight** characters. Thus, although the **paper** version of the data set above has the name **Source Credibility** the **computerized** version is going to be shortened to **Source**, and although the **paper** version of the data set above has the name **Agreement Response**, the **computerized** version is going to be shortened to **Agree**.

The **Label** column allows us to expand the Name of any variable beyond eight characters but only for the computer print out of the results of our analysis. Thus, we can expand the word Source to Source Credibility in the Label column. Thus, when we get a computer print out we will have the more informative words of Source Credibility and Agreement Response rather than the less informative words of Source and Agree.

The **Value** column allows us to attach meaning to the 1's and 2's in the independent variable column of source credibility so that the computer "knows" that a 1 = a low credible source and a 2 = a high credible source.

- Click on the white cell in **Row 1** under the word **Name** and type in the word **Source** (for source credibility) which is the name of the first column of numbers in the **paper** template.
- Click on the white cell in **Row 1** under the word **Label** and type in Source Credibility. (Doing this will provide you with a more expansive label in the computer print out of the results of your analysis.)
- Click in the white cell in **Row 1** under the word **Value**. The word none will appear along with a grey box to the right.
 - Click on the small grey box and a value labels window will appear
 - In the white box next to the word **Value**, type in the number **1**.
 - Click on the white box next to the word **Value Label** and type in the name of level 1 of the current independent variable. In the present example type **Low** (for low credible source).
 - Click on the **Add** button. 1 = "low" should now appear in the bottom white box.
 - In the white box next to the word **Value** type in the number **2**.
 - Click on the white box next to the word **Value Label** and type in the name of level 2 of the current independent variable. In the present example type **High** (for high credible source.)
 - Click on the **Add** button. 1 = "low" and 2 = "high" should now appear in the bottom white box.
 - Click **OK** button (top right corner of screen)
- Click on the white cell in **Row 2** under the word **Name** and type in the word **Agree** which is the name of the second column of numbers in the **paper** version of the data template (and is a shortened name for the agreement response dependent variable.)
- Click on the white cell in **Row 2** under the word **Label** and type in **Agreement response**. (Doing this will provide you with a more expansive label in the computer print out of the results of your analysis.)

DATA ENTRY PHASE

10. Click on the **Data View** Tab in the lower left corner. The data **view** screen will now appear with **Column 1** named **Source** (for the source credibility independent variable) and **Column 2** named **Agree** (for the agreement dependent variable).
11. Enter the data for all ten subjects listed in the paper template as follows. Click the white cell at Row 1, Column 1 under source and enter

1 tab 5
1 tab 4
1 tab 4
1 tab 1
1 tab 1
2 tab 8
2 tab 10
2 tab 12
2 tab 10
2 tab 10

The data may also be entered down one column at a time entering the codes for source, where 1 means low and 2 means high credible source and then moving to column 2 and entering the responses on the agreement scale.

12. When you finish step 11, your computerized version of the data set should look like the paper template of the data set. You are now ready for data analyses.