

Using SPSS for Scale Based Questionnaires

When using a scale based questionnaire you will more than likely be looking for a total score, either of the entire questionnaire or of certain subscales within the questionnaire. You can either do this by hand or use SPSS to calculate the total scores for you.

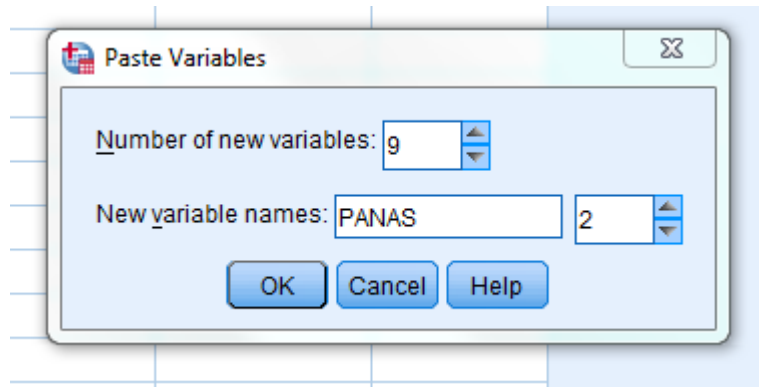
Inputting the variables

If you choose to calculate your total scores by hand, you may only need to create a couple of variables; e.g., Negative Affect Total and Positive Affect Total, and insert the totals into the relevant data cells in Data View.

To use SPSS to calculate total scores, you will need to create a variable for each individual question on the questionnaire, along with clear individual value definitions, e.g., 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, etc.

Once you have manually defined the values of one variable, you can copy the variable definition attributes to a number of other variables (i.e. you don't have to type them in ten times over!!)

1. In **Variable View**, click on the row number of the variable.
2. From the menu, select **Edit** and then **Copy**.
3. Click on the row number of the next empty row.
4. From the menu, select **Edit** and then **Paste Variables**.
5. In the dialogue box that appears, enter the number of new variables that you want to add (e.g., 9 if you have 10 questions in your questionnaire all with the same scoring system). Enter the prefix you wish to use (e.g., PANAS) and the number you wish the new variable to start on (e.g., 2). Click on **OK**.



4	PANAS	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
5	PANAS2	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
6	PANAS3	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
7	PANAS4	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
8	PANAS5	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
9	PANAS6	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
10	PANAS7	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
11	PANAS8	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
12	PANAS9	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
13	PANAS10	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, stron...	No
14							

Reverse Scoring Items

In some scales the wording of particular items will be reversed to help prevent response bias. Negatively worded items need to be reversed **before** a total score can be calculated for that scale.

It is possible to rescore variables into the same variable name (e.g., PANAS2) and overwrite the existing data, however it is much safer to create a new variable for recoded items and keep the original data unchanged.

1. From the menu at the top of the screen, click on **Transform**, then click on **Recode Into Different Variables**.
2. Select the items you want to reverse and move these into the **Input Variable-Output Variable** box.
3. Click on the first variable and type a new name in the **Output Variable** section on the right-hand side of the screen and then click the **Change** button
Important: make sure you use a new variable name that is easy for you to decipher. Using the prefix **REV** or **RC** (reverse coded) can be useful.
4. Repeat for each of the other variables you wish to reverse.
5. Click on the **Old and New Values** button. This example will be shown for a 1-5 scale.
In the **Old value** section, type 1 in the **Value** box.
In the **New value** section, type 5 in the **Value** box (this will change all scores that were originally score as 1 to a 5).
6. Click on **Add**. This will place the instruction (1 → 5) in the box labelled **Old > New**.
7. Repeat the same procedure for the remaining scores. For example:
Old value – type in 2 **New value** – type in 4 **Add**
Old value – type in 3 **New value** – type in 3 **Add**
Old value – type in 4 **New value** – type in 2 **Add**
Old value – type in 5 **New value** – type in 1 **Add**
Always double check that you have entered the correct items in to be recoded and that all the old and new values are right.
8. Click on **Continue** and then **OK**. The new variable with reversed scores should be found at the end of the data file.

Calculating total scores

Once you have input all the data from your questionnaires you can calculate the total score for the entire questionnaire or specific subscales for each of your participants.

1. From the menu at the top of the screen, click on **Transform**, then click on **Compute Variable**.
2. In the **Target Variable** box, type in the new name you wish to give to the total scale scores (e.g., TOTPOS).
Important: make sure you don't accidentally use a variable name that has already been used in the data set. Use the TOT prefix for totals to make things easier and make a note of variable names in your codebook.
3. Click on the **Type and Label** button. This is where you can include a full description of the scale (e.g., total positive affect). Click on **Continue**.
4. From the list of variables on the left hand side, click on the first item in the scale.
Important: make sure you know which items belong in which scale if you are using separate

subscales. Use your codebook.

5. Click on the arrow button to move the item into the **Numeric Expression** box and click on + on the calculator pad.
6. Repeat the process until all scale items appear in the box.
Important: if you are using negatively scored items you will need to be sure you are including the correct item.
7. Double-check that all items are correct and that there are + signs in the right places. Click **OK** (or on **Paste** if you wish to paste this command to the **Syntax Editor** window). To execute it after pasting to the **Syntax Editor**, highlight the command and select **Run** from the menu.
8. This will create a new variable at the end of your data set called **TOTPOS**.

