

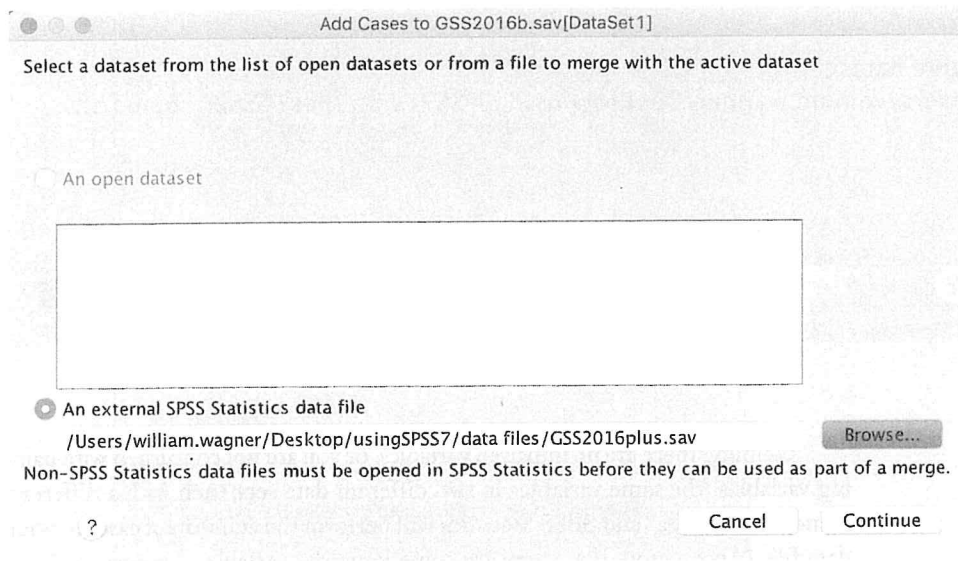
ADVANCED APPLICATIONS

MERGING DATA FROM MULTIPLE FILES

There are typically two ways a user wants to merge files with SPSS Statistics. One way is to combine two data files that contain the same variables but consist of different cases (e.g., two or more waves of surveys completed by different people, but including the same information). Another way is to have additional variables to add to existing cases (e.g., a second round of responses from the same respondents). Note that you must do this in the Data Editor window containing the file (active data set) to which you wish to add cases or variables.

First, suppose you want to add cases:

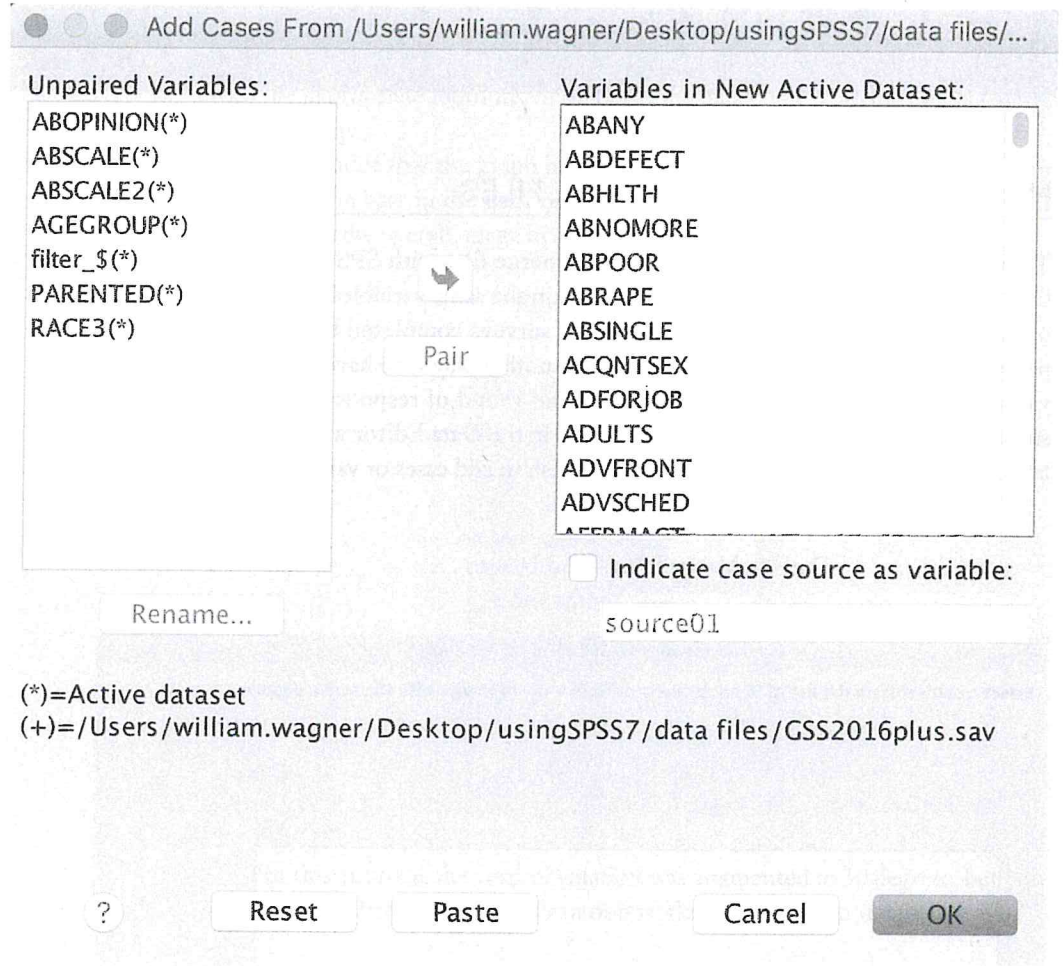
Data → Merge Files → Add Cases . . .



If you have already opened the data file in another SPSS Statistics Data Editor window, you can select “An open dataset” and choose from the list that will appear. Otherwise, select “An external SPSS Statistics data file,” and locate

the file you wish to add. Both files, of course, need to be in SPSS (.sav) format. If the file you are adding is not in SPSS data format, you should first import that file into SPSS Statistics before carrying out the merge function. For more information about importing files, see Chapter 1 of this book.

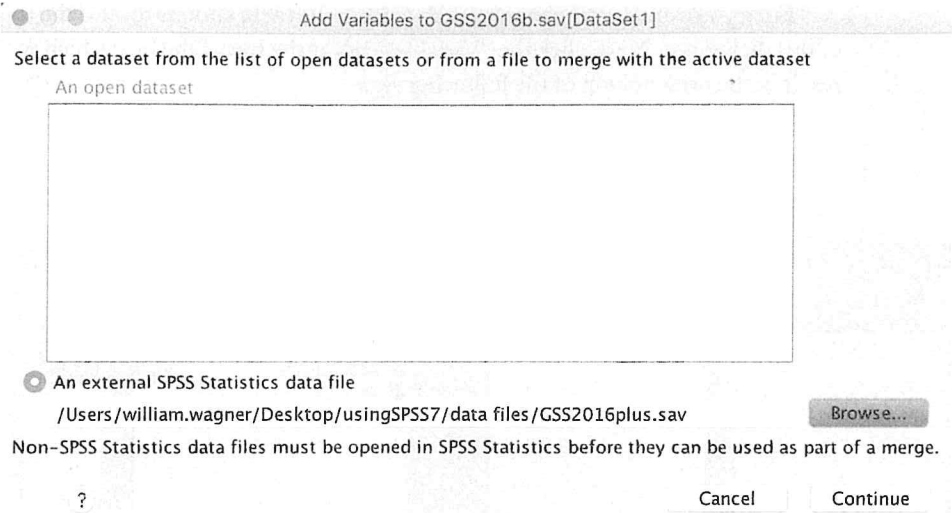
You will be presented with a new dialog box like the one that follows:



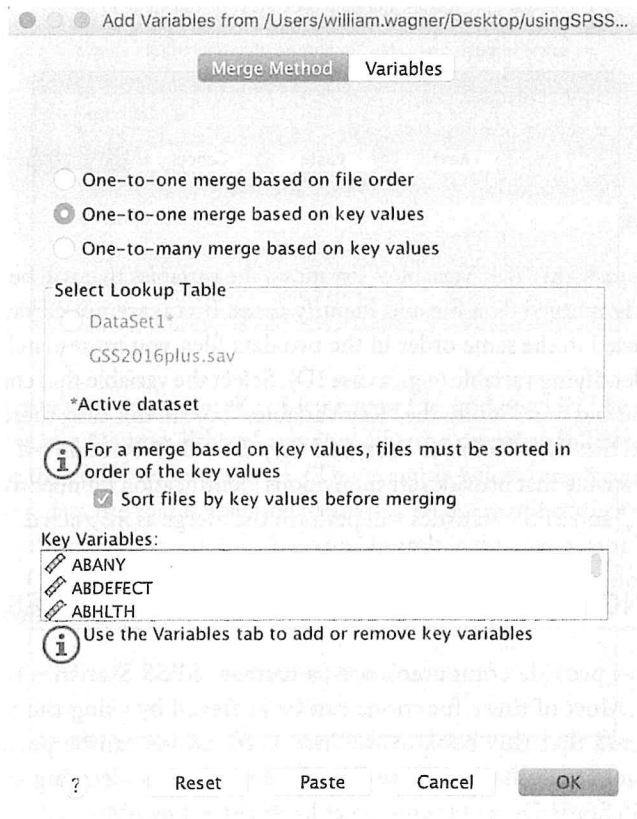
Assuming there are no unpaired variables, or you are not concerned with pairing variables (the same variables in two different data sets, each with a different name), select “OK,” and SPSS Statistics will perform the addition of cases to your data file. (Above, note that there are some unpaired variables, because we have created some new variables that are not in the original data set.)

Now, suppose you want to add new variables to your data set:

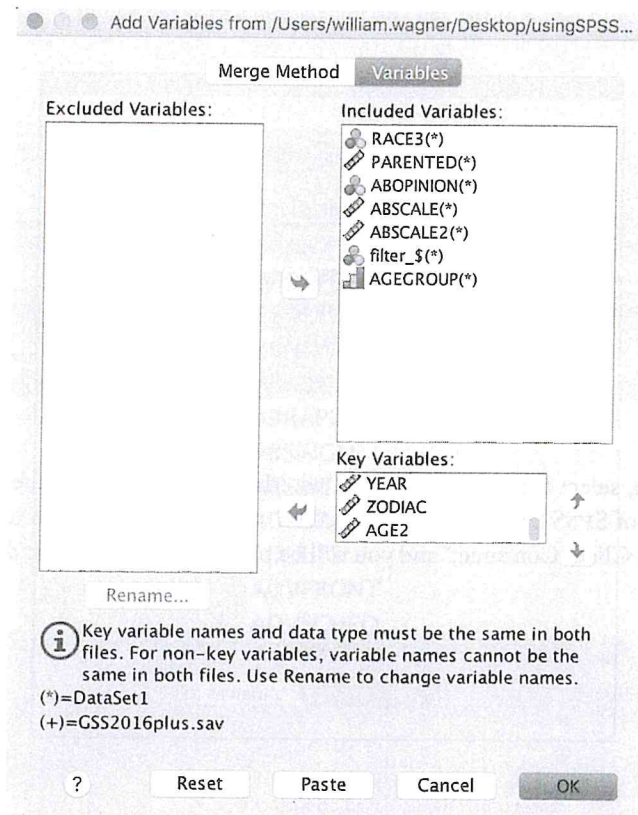
Data → Merge Files → Add Variables . . .



Again, select the appropriate file, whether it is open in another instance (window) of SPSS Statistics or is located on a disk or server connected to your computer. Click “Continue,” and you will be presented with the next dialog box:



First, you can select the merge method from the three choices toward the top of this dialog box. Next, click the “Variables” tab at the top of the box, which will result in the presentation of the following view.



In this case, the “Key Variables” list shows the variables that will be contained in the newly merged data file and identify cases. If you are not certain that the cases are listed in the same order in the two data files, you must match the cases by some identifying variable (e.g., a case ID): Select the variable that contains that information and move it into the “Key Variables” box. In this case, there are many variables in the “Key Variables” box, and they should all be removed, except for “ID,” the variable that provides an anonymous identification number to each case. Click “OK,” and SPSS Statistics will perform the merge as instructed.

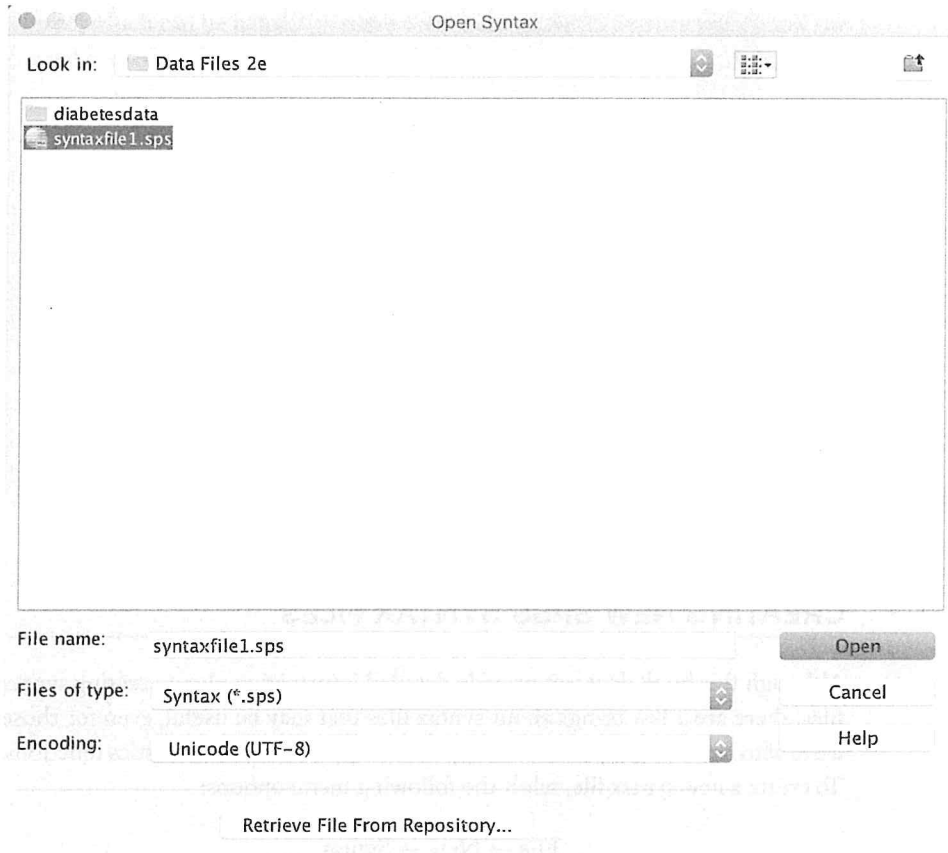
OPENING PREVIOUSLY CREATED SYNTAX FILES

Syntax files provide computer code to instruct SPSS Statistics to perform functions. Most of these functions can be achieved by using the point-and-click method that this book uses. That is, functions can be performed by using the menus at the top of the Data Editor window. Creating syntax code using SPSS Statistics syntax computer language is not addressed in this book.

If you have an SPSS Statistics syntax file, however, with code for performing SPSS commands, open it as follows:

File → Open → Syntax . . .

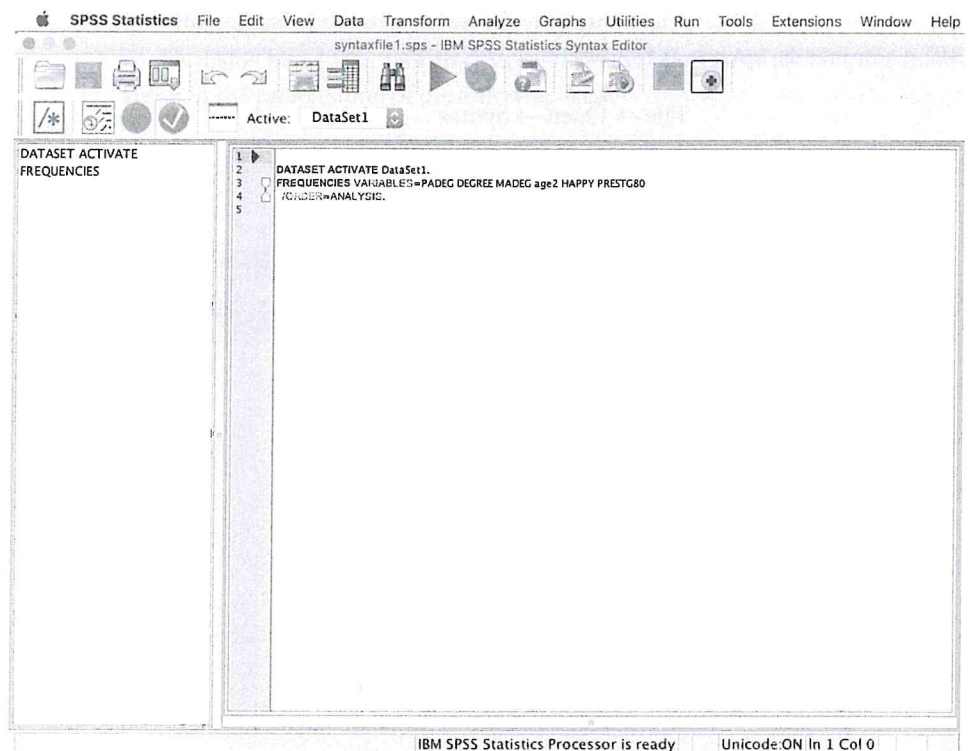
You will be shown a dialog box like the one below:



Navigate your computer files, locate your file, and open it. The syntax code will appear in a “Syntax Editor” window, like the one that follows. Select the portion of the code you wish to run. (The example below runs frequency information on a data file that is assumed to already be open.) Click the “run” button to execute the computer code. (The “run” button is the blue triangle.) You can also type <Ctrl> + R (<Apple> + R on Macintosh computers) or select from the menu as follows:

Run → Selection

From the menu, you also have the option to run the whole file or to run it from a particular point to the end. The menus also afford the option to choose which lines (from, to) of syntax code to run.



CREATING NEW SPSS SYNTAX FILES

Although this book does not provide detailed information about creating syntax files, there are a few things about syntax files that may be useful, even for those users who have no intention of writing code to perform SPSS Statistics functions. To create a new syntax file, select the following menu options:

File → New → Syntax . . .

A new window, “Syntax Editor,” will appear. Information that is typed into this interface will form the syntax file. All or part of what is typed into this interface can be used either immediately or at a later time.

With any of the SPSS Statistics point-and-click functions—those operations implemented using the menus at the top of the editor windows—there is an option to select “Paste” instead of clicking “OK.” When you do this, SPSS Statistics does not execute the function; instead, it records the instructions for performing the function in a syntax window. A user may choose to save the instructions for later use, or run them immediately and save a copy for future use or reference. What is pasted are the instructions SPSS Statistics gives “behind the scenes” for that particular function (e.g., frequency distributions). Saving the commands in this way allows faster replication of a series of tasks.

Saving pasted SPSS Statistics syntax files can be useful for those who are performing many operations that are repetitive or similar across variables—particularly if they are more complicated functions. Take recoding variables, for instance. If you are recoding a number of variables with similar, but not identical, schemes or names, then you could potentially save a great deal of time by pasting and editing the same recode command for multiple variables.

Saving syntax files also provides a complete record of how a data file was altered, which can be helpful to some users because SPSS Statistics will show the altered data file only and not provide a list of updates that have been made.



Access the full 2016 data file and the 1972–2016 Cumulative Codebook at the student study site: study.sagepub.com/wagner7e.