**STAT10S\_pspp: Exercise Using PSPP to Explore Chi Square**

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**Note to the Instructor:** The data set used in this exercise is gss14\_subset\_for\_classes\_STATISTICS\_pspp.sav which is a subset of the 2014 General Social Survey. Some of the variables in the GSS have been recoded to make them easier to use and some new variables have been created.  The data have been weighted according to the instructions from the National Opinion Research Center.  This exercise uses CROSSTABS in PSPP to explore the Chi Square test.  I prepared two documents to help you with PSPP – “[**Notes on Using PSPP**](http://www.ssric.org/files/notes_on_using_PSPP.docx)” and “[**Differences between PSPP and SPSS**](http://www.ssric.org/files/differences_between_PSPP_and_SPSS.docx)” which should answer many of your questions about PSPP. You have permission to use this exercise and to revise it to fit your needs.  Please send a copy of any revision to the author. Included with this exercise (as separate files) are more detailed notes to the instructors and the PSPP syntax necessary to carry out the exercise. These, of course, will need to be removed as you prepare the exercise for your students.  Please contact the author for additional information.

I’m attaching the following files.

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* [**Data subset**](http://ssric.org/files/gss14_subset_for_classes_STATISTICS_pspp.sav) (.sav format)
* [**Extended notes for instructors**](http://ssric.org/files/Extended_Notes_for_Instructors_for_STAT10S_pspp.docx) (MS Word; docx format).
* [**PSPP syntax file**](http://ssric.org/files/PSPP_Syntax_for_STAT10S_pspp.sps) (.sps format)
* [**This page**](http://ssric.org/files/STAT10S_pspp.docx) (MS Word; docx format).

**Goals of Exercise**

The goal of this exercise is to introduce Chi Square as a test of significance.  The exercise also gives you practice in using CROSSTABS in PSPP.

**Part I—Relationships between Variables**

We’re going to use the General Social Survey (GSS) for this exercise.  The GSS is a national probability sample of adults in the United States conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC).  The GSS started in 1972 and has been an annual or biannual survey ever since. For this exercise we’re going to use a subset of the 2014 GSS. Your instructor will tell you how to access this data set which is called gss14\_subset\_for\_classes\_STATISTICS\_pspp.sav.

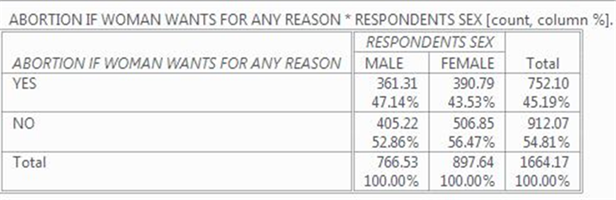
The 2014 GSS is a sample from the population of all adults in the United States at the time the survey was done.  In the previous exercise (STAT9S) we used crosstabulation and percents to describe the relationship between pairs of variables in the sample.  But we want to go beyond just describing the sample.  We want to use the sample data to make inferences about the population from which the sample was selected.  Chi Square is a statistical test of significance that we can use to test hypotheses about the population.  Chi Square is the appropriate test when your variables are nominal or ordinal (see [**STAT1S\_pspp**](http://ssric.org/node/560)).

In STAT9S we started by using crosstabulation to look at the relationship between sex and opinion about abortion.  We’re going to use a1\_abany as our measure of opinion about abortion.  Respondents were asked if they thought abortion ought to be legal for any reason.  Run CROSSTABS to produce the table.  You want to get the crosstabulation of d5\_sex and a1\_abany.  Put the independent variable in the column and the dependent variable in the row.   Since your independent variable is in the column, you want to use the column percents.  Uncheck the boxes for row and total percents so PSPP will not give you unnecessary output.

PSPP will list the variables and you will select those variables you want to use.  PSPP lists the variables using the variable labels.  However, it’s easier to find the variables if they are listed by variable names.  You can change the way PSPP lists the variables by right clicking anywhere on the list of variables and selecting “Prefer variable labels” and that will list the variables by name.  However, you will have to do this each time you encounter a list of variables.  There is no way to do this permanently.

**Part II – Interpreting the Percents**

Your table should look like this.



Since your percents sum down to 100% (i.e., column percents), you want to compare the percents across.  Look at the first row.  Approximately 47% of men think abortion should be legal for any reason compared to 44% of women.  There’s a difference of 3.61% which seems small.  We never want to make too much of small differences.  Why not?  No sample is ever a perfect representation of the population from which the sample is drawn.  This is because every sample contains some amount of sampling error.  Sampling error in inevitable.  There is always some amount of sampling error present in every sample.  The larger the sample size, the less the sampling error and the smaller the sample size, the more the sampling error.

But what is a small percent difference?  Probably you would agree that a one to four percent difference is small.  But what about a five or six or seven percent difference?  Is that small?  Or is it large enough for us to conclude that there is a difference between men and women **in the population.**  Here’s where we can use Chi Square.

**Part III – Chi Square**

Let’s assume that you think that sex and opinion about abortion are related to each other.  We’ll call this our research hypothesis.  It’s what we expect to be true.  But there is no way to prove the research hypothesis directly.  So we’re going to use a method of indirect proof.  We’re going to set up another hypothesis that says that the research hypothesis is not true and call this the null hypothesis.  In our case, the null hypothesis would be that the two variables are unrelated to each other.**[[1]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_edn1" \o ")**

In statistical terms, we often say that the two variables are independent of each other.  If we can reject the null hypothesis then we have evidence to support the research hypothesis. If we can’t reject the null hypothesis then we don’t have any evidence in support of the research hypothesis.  You can see why this is called a method of indirect proof. We can’t prove the research hypothesis directly but if we can reject the null hypothesis then we have indirect evidence that supports the research hypothesis.

Here are our two hypotheses.

·       research hypothesis – sex and opinion about abortion are related to each other

·       null hypothesis – sex and opinion about abortion are unrelated to each other; in other words, they are independent of each other

It’s the null hypothesis that we are going to test.

PSPP will compute Chi Square for you.  Follow the same procedure you used to get the crosstabulation between d5\_sex and a1\_abany.  Remember to get the column percents.  You don’t want the row and total percents so uncheck those boxes.  Then click on the “Statistics” button and check the box for “Chi-Square” and click on “Continue” and then on “OK.”

Now you will see another output box below the crosstabulation called “Chi-Square Tests.”  We want the test that is called “Pearson Chi-Square” in the first row of the box.  Ignore all the other rows in this box.**[[2]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_edn2" \o ")** You should see three values to the right of “Pearson Chi-Square.”

·        The value of Chi Square is 2.16.  Your instructor may or may not want to go into the computation of the Chi Square value but we’re not going to cover the computation in this exercise.

·        The degrees of freedom (df) is 1.  Degrees of freedom is number of values that are free to vary.  In a table with two columns and two rows only one of the cell frequencies is free to vary assuming the marginal frequencies are fixed.  The marginal frequencies are the values in the margins of the table.  There are 766 males and 898 females in this table and there are 752 that think abortion should be legal for any reason and 912 who think abortion should not be legal for any reason.  Try filling in any one of the cell frequencies in the table.  The other three cell frequencies are then fixed assuming we keep the marginal frequencies the same so there is one degree of freedom.

·        The two-tailed significance value is 0.141.**[[3]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_edn3" \o ")** This tells us that there is a probability of .143 that we would be wrong if we rejected the null hypothesis.  In other words, we would be wrong 141 out of 1,000 times.  With odds like that, of course, we’re not going to reject the null hypothesis.  A common rule is to reject the null hypothesis if the significance value is less than .05 or less than five out of one hundred.  Since .141 is not smaller than .05, we don’t reject the null hypothesis.  Since we can’t reject the null hypothesis, we don’t have any support for our research hypothesis.

**Part IV – Now it’s Your Turn**

Choose any two of the tables from the following list and compare men and women using crosstabulation and Chi Square:

·        satisfaction with current financial situation (f4\_satfin),

·         opinion about gun control (g1\_gunlaw),

·         gun ownership (g2\_owngun),

·        voting (p6\_pres12), and

·        religiosity (r8\_reliten).

Make sure that you put the independent variable in the column and the dependent variable in the row.  Be sure to ask for the correct percents and Chi Square.  What are the research hypothesis and the null hypothesis?  Do you reject the null hypothesis?  How do you know?  What does that tell you about the research hypothesis?

**Part V – Expected Values**

We said we weren’t going to talk about how you compute Chi Square but we do have to introduce the idea of expected values.  The computation of Chi Square is based on comparing the observed cell frequencies (i.e., the cell frequencies that you see in the table that PSPP gives you) and the cell frequencies that you would expect by chance assuming the null hypothesis was true.  PSPP will also compute these expected frequencies for you.  Rerun the crosstabulation for d5\_sex and a1\_abany remembering to ask for the column percents and Chi Square.  But this time when you click on the “Cells” button to ask for the column percents look in the upper left of the dialog box where it says “Counts.”  “Counts” is selected as the default.  These are the observed cell frequencies.  The boxes for column, row, and total are also checked as the default.  Uncheck the boxes for row and total percents since you don’t want them.  Now click on the “Expected” box so you will get the expected cell frequencies.

Now you will see the observed and the expected cell frequencies as well as the column percents in your output table.  The observed count will be on top, the expected frequencies next, and the column percents on the bottom.  Notice that they aren’t very different.  The closer they are to each other, the smaller Chi Square will be.  The more different they are, the larger Chi Square will be.  The larger Chi Square is, the more likely you are to be able to reject the null hypothesis.

Chi Square assumes that all the expected cell frequencies are greater than five.  We can see from the table that this is the case for this table.  If they are just a little bit below five, that’s no problem.  But if they get down around three you have a problem.  What you’ll have to do is to combine rows or column that have small marginal frequencies.

For example, run the crosstabulation of d5\_sex and d9\_sibs which is the number of brothers and sisters that the respondent has and ask for the counts, expected frequencies, and column percents.**[[4]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_edn4" \o ")**  Some of the minimum expected frequencies are close to 0.  That’s because there are only a few respondents with more than 14 siblings.  You will need to recode the number of siblings into fewer categories making sure that you don’t have any categories with a really small number of cases.

**Part VI – Now it’s Your Turn Again**

Look back at the two tables you ran in Part III and see if any of your expected frequencies were less than five.  What does that tell you?

**[[1]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_ednref1" \o ")** The null hypothesis is often called the hypothesis of no difference.  We’re saying that there is no relationship between these two variables.  In other words, there’s nothing there.

**[[2]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_ednref2" \o ")** Unfortunately there is no way to tell PSPP to just give us the “Pearson Chi-Square.”

**[[3]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_ednref3" \o ")** What do we mean by two-tailed? We’re not predicting the direction of the relationship. We’re not predicting that men are more likely to think abortion should be legal or that women are more likely.  So it’s a two-tailed test.

**[[4]](http://ssric.org/node/573/edit" \l "_ednref4" \o ")** Number of siblings is a ratio level variable.  You can use Chi Square with ratio level variables but usually there are better tests.  We’re just using this as an example.