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Introduction: Why a Book on Statistical Help for Graduate Students and Faculty?*

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Abstract

This book, A Self-Help and Practical Guide to Preparing Theses, Dissertations, and Manuscripts, is authored by John R. Slate and Ana Rojas-LeBouef from Sam Houston State University. This book is written to assist graduate students and faculty members, as well as undergraduate students, in their use of the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences-PC (SPSS-PC) versions 15-19. Specifically, we have generated a set of steps and screenshots to depict each important step in conducting basic statistical analyses. We believe that this book supplements existing statistical texts in which readers are informed about the statistical underpinnings of basic statistical procedures and in which definitions of terms are provided. Accordingly, other than providing a few basic definitions, we assume that dissertation chairs/thesis directors, students, and/or faculty will obtain their own definition of terms. We hope you find this set of steps and screenshots to be helpful as you use SPSS-PC in conducting basic statistical analyses.



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This chapter is part of a larger Collection (Book) and is available at: Calculating Basic Statistical Procedures in SPSS: A Self-Help and Practical Guide to Preparing Theses, Dissertations, and Manuscripts¹

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NOTE: Slate and LeBouef have written a "companion book" which is available at: Preparing and Presenting Your Statistical Findings: Model Write Ups^2

Authors Information

John R. Slate is a Professor at Sam Houston State University where he teaches Basic and Advanced Statistics courses, as well as professional writing, to doctoral students in Educational Leadership and Counseling. His research interests lie in the use of educational databases, both state and national, to reform school practices. To date, he has chaired and/or served over 100 doctoral student dissertation committees. Recently, Dr. Slate created a website, Writing and Statistical Help³ to assist students and faculty with both statistical assistance and in editing/writing their dissertations/theses and manuscripts.

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1 Introduction: Why a Book for Helping Students and Faculty with SPSS and Writing Help?

In the past two decades of teaching basic and advanced statistical procedures, we have observed student after student who experienced difficulty with using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and with interpreting the voluminous output generated by SPSS. These difficulties, along with statistics anxiety experienced by many students, led us to develop a specific and detailed set of steps for students to follow. Students reported to us, over and over, how helpful the point-and-click steps were to them in allowing them to use SPSS. Some students, even with the steps, still managed to experience difficulty in being able

 $^{^2} http://my.qoop.com/store/NCPEA-Publications-1781472103076212/$

³http://cnx.org/content/m37280/latest/www.writingandstatisticalhelp.com

 $^{^4} http://cnx.org/content/m37280/latest/www.writing and statistical help.com$

⁵http://www.ncpeapublications.org

⁶http://ncpeapublications.org/about-elr.html

⁷ http://cnx.org/content/col10606/latest/

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to use SPSS successfully. As a result, we generated screenshots for every major point-and-click step. This combination of steps and screenshots has met with excellent student satisfaction and, most importantly for us as instructors, has enhanced their ability to be successful in using SPSS.

We have written this textbook in hopes of facilitating individuals' success in using SPSS for their statistical analyses and in interpreting the SPSS output properly. Graduate and undergraduate students who take a statistics course in which SPSS is used will find these steps and screenshots to be very practical and very easy to follow. Doctoral students, who completed their statistics course years ago, but who are now working on their dissertation data analysis will find this textbook to be a practical step-by-guide. Finally, faculty members who engage in scholarly activities but are years removed from their own statistics courses will find this textbook to be helpful.

We hope that you find our materials helpful to you in your use of SPSS and in your interpretation of SPSS output. This textbook reflects our efforts and interests in making statistical analysis less threatening and less anxiety-producing than many persons find it to be. Currently, great emphasis is placed on accountability in educational settings. Being able to analyze data, of which an abundance clearly exists, in an interpretable way is essential, especially if we want to make the educational lives of our students better.

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