**Reduce the number of groups of a categorical variable in SPSS**

In this video, we’re going to look at how we can reduce the number of groups for a categorical variable. I’m going to use a Likert scale variable called satisfaction. Currently there are five groupings, if we have a look at their variable view here, we can see its one to five. 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, and I want to consolidate these groups, so sometimes when you’ve got Likert scales, because the difference between disagree and strongly disagree is different for each participant. So one person’s strongly disagree would be someone else’s disagree, and similarly with agree and strongly agree. It’s very difficult to differentiate between the two. So by combining them we can just get more consolidated views of how strongly people feel about a particular question. So I’m going to combine strongly disagree and disagree and strongly agree and agree, so that means I’m going to have three groups instead of five. These first two are going to be group one, undecided is going to be group two, and these last two are going to be group three. Go ahead and click ‘okay.’ I’ve also coded some missing values using the missing values box so I’ve entered zero as my missing value code and I’ve told SPSS here I want 0 to represent missing data so you can see that here from the data view. So if we go ahead and start our reduce recoding. We’re going to go to the transform menu, choose ‘Recode into different variables’ and again we don’t want ‘Same variables’ because we don’t want to overwrite our current data, we want to make a new one. I’m going to use satisfaction and move it over to our variables box and I need to give it a new name. Now remember variable names can’t contain spaces or special characters but we can use an underscore. I’m going to give it a label after we’re finished. So I’m going to go ahead and click ‘change’. Our variable will appear, or our new variable name will appear in the variables box. Go ahead and click on ‘old and new values’. Now here’s where we can tell SPSS what our current coding is on the left and we cam define our new coding on the right. There are a couple of ways we can do this, for example we could use our ranges to say one and two represent one. But I’m just going to do it one by one so our old value, our strongly disagree was one, and it’s going to remain in group one. I’m going to click ‘add’. Our disagree which was two, is going to be joined up with strongly disagree so it’s going to be coded as one. Undecided, which is three, is now going to be group two, and our agree which is group four, is going to be our final group three, and similarly, our strongly agree which is five, is also going to be in group three. Go ahead and click ‘add’, now I do have the missing value codes which I want keep, so I’m going to say all other values encapsulate everything else I have not redefined and copied old values so my missing value codes which are zero, are going to be transferred to my new variable. Go ahead and click ‘continue’, then ‘okay.’ We can see we’ve got our new variable. I want to do a bit of defining so if we go to the variable view and change the number of decimal places to zero. I also want to keep my label, so I’m going to copy and paste it in. And now I just need to define my new groups. So one represents disagree or strongly disagree. Two is undecided and three is agree or strongly agree, and go ahead and click ‘okay.’ I also need to define my missing data again so all my missing values were coded as zero, so I need to enter that into my discreet missing values. Discreet just means a whole number, so zero’s a whole number. So we’re going to put that in there- click ‘okay’. Now if we go back to our data view, we can see our new variable here. I just want to compare it to what I had originally to make sure what I’ve done in correct. So agree has become agree or strongly agree, disagree has become disagree or strongly disagree and undecided has remained the same. So it looks like all my data has been recoded or regrouped properly, and if we have a look at our codes, we can see it’s coded one, two or three with missing values as zero, just like we wanted.

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