**Compute a total score in SPSS**

In this video, I’m going to show you how to compute a total score across two or more variables for each row of data. For this example, we have participants from a survey so each row represents a participant and I’ve got four satisfaction scores, and I want to combine these to have one total satisfaction score for each participant. Let’s have quick look at our coding before we get started. You can see for each of these that I’ve got the same coding and one represents strongly disagree, through to five representing strongly agree. It’s really important that these codings are consistent across all four items- the number of items that you have in your scale. Go ahead and click ‘okay’. And for each of my questions, they’re all positively worded. If I had a negatively worded question, say for example dissatisfied with quality, I would need to make sure to reverse code that, so that it was consistent with the other items that I was combing it with. If you have any questions about reverse coding, please do see that specific video.

So just make sure that all of them are positively worded or all positively worded or all negatively worded when you’re combing items from a scale like this. If we go to the data view, we can see I’ve got four total scores here. The first one computes a total score regardless of missing values. I’m going to go ahead and click the icons here so I can see my codes. So we can see 5+3+2+1, that gives us 11, and it’s the same thing for Participant Two, even though they’ve got a missing value, its computed a total score using the three scores that they do have. Now when we have a total score we may want to restrict SPSS from computing a total if a person has any missing values, so that’s what the other total scores are for. So the second example we’ll do is we’ll compute a total, only if a participant has at least two. So that’s going to exclude Participant Five, because they only have one. And similarly for total score three and four, we’re only going to compute a total if the participant has at least three or at least four of the satisfaction scores. So let’s have a look at how we can do this with SPSS. I need to delete mine before we get started. If we go to the transform menu, compute variable. So our target variable, we need to give it a name. I’m going to call mine Total Score. We can also add a typing label. So I’m going to call mine Total Satisfaction Score. Now remember in labels we can have spaces and special characters whereas we can’t do that with the variable name. Our type is numeric. Go ahead and click ‘continue’. Now in our numeric expression box, this is where we are going to build our total score- our sum. Now you could just put each one in with a plus sign, and that would be totally fine, you would get a total score. The only problem is we can’t then specify to SPSS what to do with participants with missing values so it’s not as flexible or easy as the sum function. So I’m going to go ahead and delete this, and I’m going to find the sum function from the statistical menu. So from function group, choose statistical, then choose sum. I can double click this or use the arrow to move it up. And we want to replace each of these question marks with a variable, so go ahead and replace the first one with our first variable, replace the second one. Now I’ve got more than two, so I need to separate them with a comma, put my third one in, comma, and then put my fourth one in, comma. When you’re done, go ahead and click ‘okay.’ You can see here that I have a total score for each participant. Now what if I only wanted a total score if the participant had answered at least two questions? Well lets go back to transform and compute, we’re just going to make a slight modification. I need to give this variable a different name because I can’t have two the same. So I’m going to put a two there. And after my sum function, I’m going to put a full stop and then the number two. And this tells SPSS only calculate a total if there are at least two of the satisfaction scores. So go ahead and click ‘okay.’ And you can see here Participant Five because they only have one satisfaction score, a total score has not been computed for them. We’re going to do something similar for three and four. So if I just change this to a three to give to a different name, and the same thing here. So now I have to have at least three satisfaction scores, click ‘okay.’ Now you would do the same thing if you wanted to make sure a person answered all four, in order to have a total score. So this gives you a total score for each participant.

END.