

A Controversy in Values

5

Attitudes About Abortion

Americans disagree about all sorts of moral, religious, and political issues, but few debates have been as intense and as bitter as the controversy surrounding abortion. In this chapter, we will continue our analysis of American values by exploring responses to a series of questions about the conditions under which legal abortions should be available. We will also search for causal relationships and see if we can identify some of the reasons why abortion attitudes vary from person to person. The Frequency and Crosstabs procedures and percentage distributions, chi-square, and Cramer's *V* will continue to be our primary analytical tools.

OBJECTIVITY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Feelings about abortion are strong, and a word of caution about objectivity and science may be in order before we begin. In the context of scientific research, objectivity means that the investigator's personal opinions and values are not allowed to affect his or her procedures or conclusions. Obviously, if objectivity is not maintained, the usefulness of a research project will be compromised.

In reality, it is difficult for even the most dedicated scientist to achieve complete objectivity, especially when the topic involves emotionally charged issues such as abortion. Social scientists recognize this difficulty and maintain a number of protections against bias and value judgments. For example, before the results of a research project are published in a professional journal, they are critically and anonymously reviewed by colleagues who look for biased or unjustified conclusions, faulty logic, and other problems.

As a student, you will not have the benefit of professional reviews of your thinking as you complete the projects in this chapter. Still, you need to keep the ideal of objectivity in mind and pay close attention to what the data say (not what you wish they would say). Above all, remember that the goal of this chapter is to measure and analyze public opinion on abortion, not to resolve the issue or to say which side is right or wrong.

EXERCISE 5.1 DO AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT ABORTION SHOULD BE A LEGAL RIGHT?

The GSS-2006-tabular data set includes three items that measure attitudes about abortion. The items are listed, along with their SPSS variable names, in Exhibit 5.1. Note that rather

than asking a single, general question (e.g., “Do you favor or oppose abortion?”), these three items ask people to react to different circumstances. One advantage of this multi-item format is that it permits researchers to see if attitudes are absolute and unchanging (if people always support or oppose abortion regardless of circumstance) or if attitudes are contingent and change as situations change. It may be that people have more than one attitude or set of feelings about abortion, and if so, these complex reactions could only be captured with multiple survey items.

Exhibit 5.1 Three Items From the General Social Survey That Measure Approval or Disapproval of the Right to a Legal Abortion

<i>Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion</i>	<i>SPSS Variable Name</i>
1. if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby	ABDEFECT
2. if the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy	ABHLTH
3. if the women wants it for any reason	ABANY

As a first step in the analysis, we can measure the extent to which the sample opposes or supports the right to a legal abortion by running the Frequencies procedure for each variable in Exhibit 5.1. See Command Block 5.1 for the necessary commands and use the output to complete Research Report 5.1. You may want to save or print the output, or you can just copy the relevant information from the screen.

COMMAND BLOCK 5.1 Running the Frequencies Procedure for Attitudes on Abortion

- Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Frequencies**
- Highlight ABANY
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Variable(s):** box
- Highlight ABDEFECT
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Variable(s):** box
- Highlight ABHLTH
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Variable(s):** box
- Click **OK**

RESEARCH REPORT 5.1
Approval of the Right to a Legal Abortion

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

1. Record the percentage of respondents who said “yes” to each item:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Percentage “Yes”</i>
ABDEFECT	_____
ABHLTH	_____
ABANY	_____

2. Are Americans generally in favor of the legal right to an abortion or generally opposed? Explain.

EXERCISE 5.2 THE STRUCTURE OF ATTITUDES: ARE PEOPLE CONSISTENT IN THEIR ATTITUDES ABOUT ABORTION AS A LEGAL RIGHT?

Research Report 5.1 suggests that people do change their attitudes about abortion as the situation changes. The majority of the sample endorsed abortion when there was a serious health problem for either the mother or the baby, but support for abortion was much lower—a minority of the sample—in the more open-ended (for “any” reason) situation.

Are people consistent in their judgments about these various situations? If they are, then people who support the right to a legal abortion in the most permissive circumstance (ABANY) should also approve in the more restrictive situations specified in ABDEFECT and ABHLTH. By the same token, people who oppose abortion when there is a health risk should also oppose abortion in the less restrictive situation.

Explore the structure of abortion attitudes by examining the relationship between ABANY, ABDEFECT, and ABHLTH. Run Crosstabs for the three possible combinations of variables (ABANY with ABDEFECT, ABANY with ABHLTH, and ABDEFECT with ABHLTH). Get column percentages for all tables but don’t bother about other statistics. See Command Block 5.2 for the necessary commands.

COMMAND BLOCK 5.2 Running Crosstabs for Two Abortion Items at a Time

- Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Crosstabs**
 - Highlight ABDEFECT and Click the arrow pointing to the **Row(s):** box
 - Highlight ABANY and click the arrow pointing to the **Column(s):** box
 - Click **Cells**
 - In the **Percentages** box, select **Columns**
 - Click **Continue**
 - Click **OK**
 - Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Crosstabs**
 - Highlight ABDEFECT in the **Row(s) box:** and click the arrow to return ABDEFECT to the variables list on the left-hand side of the window
 - Highlight ABHLTH and click the arrow pointing to the **Row(s):** box
 - Click **OK**
 - Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Crosstabs**
 - Highlight ABANY in the **Column(s):** box and click the arrow to return ABANY to the variables list on the left-hand side of the window
 - Highlight ABDEFECT and click the arrow pointing to the **Column(s):** box
 - Click **OK**
 - **Print** or **Save** the output
-

From the bivariate tables, we can tell what percentage of respondents who say “yes” on ABANY also say “yes” on ABDEFECT and ABHLTH. We can also see if people consistently endorsed abortion in the two situations where health was a concern. Use the Crosstabs output to complete Research Report 5.2.

RESEARCH REPORT 5.2
Relationships Between Abortion Attitudes

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

1. What percentage of respondents who said “yes” to ABANY also said “yes” to ABDEFECT? _____
(Look at the table that has ABANY as the column variable and ABDEFECT as the row variable. The percentage you want is in the upper-left cell.)

2. What percentage of respondents who said “yes” to ABANY also said “yes” to ABHLTH? _____
(Look at the table that has ABANY as the column variable and ABHLTH as the row variable. The percentage you want is in the upper-left cell.)

3. What percentage of respondents who said “yes” to ABDEFECT also said “yes” to ABHLTH? _____
(Look at the table that has ABHLTH as the row variable and ABDEFECT as the column variable. The percentage you want is in the upper-left cell.)

4. Look at *all* possible combinations of “yes” and “no” in the three tables. Do these patterns suggest that people are consistent in their attitudes? Explain.

EXERCISE 5.3 USING THE COMPUTE COMMAND TO CREATE AN INDEX

In Exercise 5.1, we pointed out that having three separate measures of attitudes about abortion allows us to see if attitudes change as situations change. There is also a disadvantage to having multiple measures: They make it difficult to get a sense of “overall” attitudes or how the sample feels about abortion “in general.” Fortunately, SPSS provides a technique, called the Compute command, by which we can use the three separate variables to create a summary variable, or an index, which will measure these overall feelings.

The Compute command uses the scores of existing variables to create new variables. The new variables can then be added to the data set and used just like any other variable. For example, they can be included in the Frequencies or Crosstabs procedures.

The Compute command is extremely flexible and permits all mathematical operations (addition, multiplication, etc.) in the creation of new variables. Our use of the Compute command will be relatively simple. We will tell SPSS to add the scores of the three abortion items together to create a new variable, which we will then use as an overall measure of people’s attitudes. We’ll call the new variable ABINDEX, short for ABortion INDEX. We can choose any name for a new variable as long as it does not duplicate some other variable name, is no more than eight characters long, and begins with a letter.

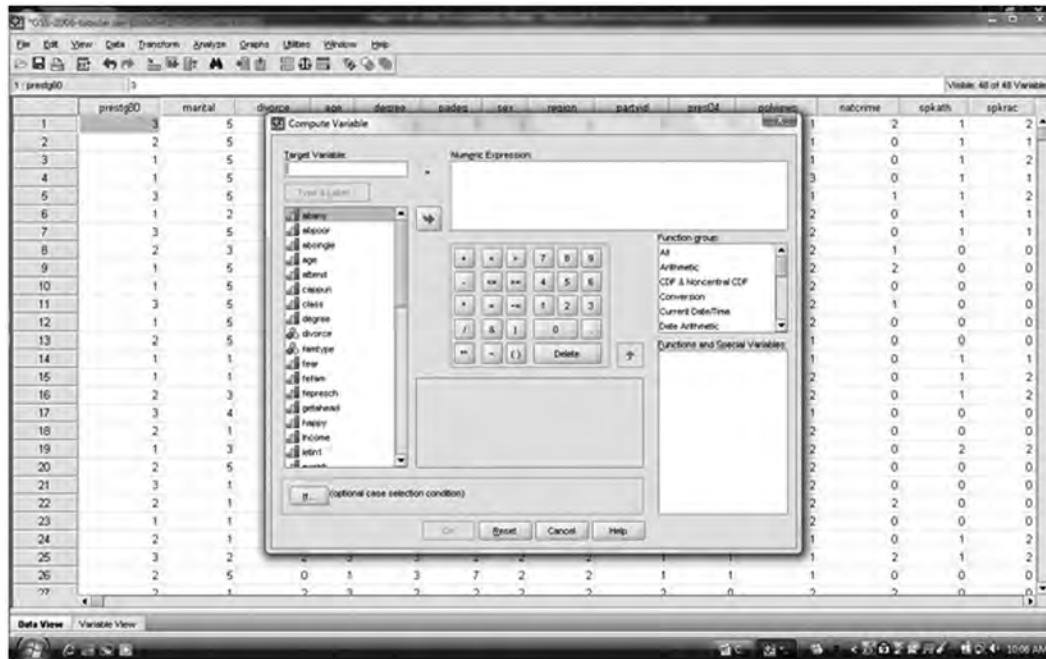
Consider the three abortion items. On each, a score of “1” means yes, or approval of a legal right to abortion, and a score of “2” means disapproval. When we add the three variables together, ABINDEX will have a low score of “3” (when a person says “yes” to all three items), and the high score will be “6” (“no” to all three). We can label the score of 3 as “strongly in favor” and the score of 6 as “strongly opposed.”

The intermediate score of “4” would be earned when people answered “yes” for any two items and “no” for the third ($1 + 1 + 2 = 4$). The score of “5” would be assigned to anyone who answered “no” to any two items and “yes” to the third ($2 + 2 + 1 = 5$). These intermediate scores can be labeled “moderately in favor” (4) and “moderately opposed” (5). Scores and labels for ABINDEX are presented in Exhibit 5.2. Note the direction of the variable: Higher scores indicate *greater opposition* to abortion.

Exhibit 5.2 Scores and Labels on ABINDEX

Score	Label	Composition of Score
3	Strongly in favor	Answered “yes” to all three items
4	Moderately in favor	Answered “yes” to two items and “no” to one
5	Moderately opposed	Answered “yes” to one item and “no” to two
6	Strongly opposed	Answered “no” to all three items

The Compute command is accessed from the Transform menu. Instructions for computing new variables are given to SPSS in the Compute Variable dialog box:



The first step in computing a variable is to give it a name. Do this by typing ABINDEX in the Target Variable: box in the upper-left corner of the window. The value of our computed variable (ABINDEX) will be the summation of the three abortion items. We can state this computation as

$$\text{ABINDEX} = \text{ABANY} + \text{ABDEFECT} + \text{ABHLTH}$$

and we need to create this expression in the Numeric Expression: box in the upper-right corner of the Compute Variable dialog box. Select (highlight) ABANY from the variable list on the left; click the arrow to transfer the variable to the Numeric Expression: window. Click the plus sign (+) from the calculator pad in the middle of the screen and then select ABDEFECT and click the + sign again. Finally, select ABHLTH from the variable list, move it to the Numeric Expression: window and then click OK. These commands are summarized in Command Block 5.3:

COMMAND BLOCK 5.3 Computing an Abortion Attitude Index (ABINDEX)

- Click **Transform** → **Compute**
- Click in the **Target Variable:** window and type ABINDEX
- Highlight ABANY
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Numerical Expression:** box
- Click the + sign
- Highlight ABDEFECT
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Numerical Expression:** box
- Click the + sign
- Highlight ABHLTH
- Click the arrow pointing to the **Numerical Expression:** box
- Click **OK**

When you click **OK**, SPSS computes the new variable and adds it to the data set. You can check to see if the variable has been added by moving to the far right-hand column of the Data Editor, the window in which the GSS-2006-tabular data set is displayed. (See Exercise 1.1 for instructions on how to move around in this window.)

Creating Variable and Value Labels

It is good practice to create labels for new variables and for their scores as you create them. In SPSS, labels document the variables and make output easier to read. A variable label is an extended explanation of what the variable measures and value labels explain each score.¹

To create labels, click the **Variable View** tab at the bottom of the Data Editor screen. The screen will now show ABINDEX as the last variable in the data set and the spaces in the Label and Values columns will be blank:

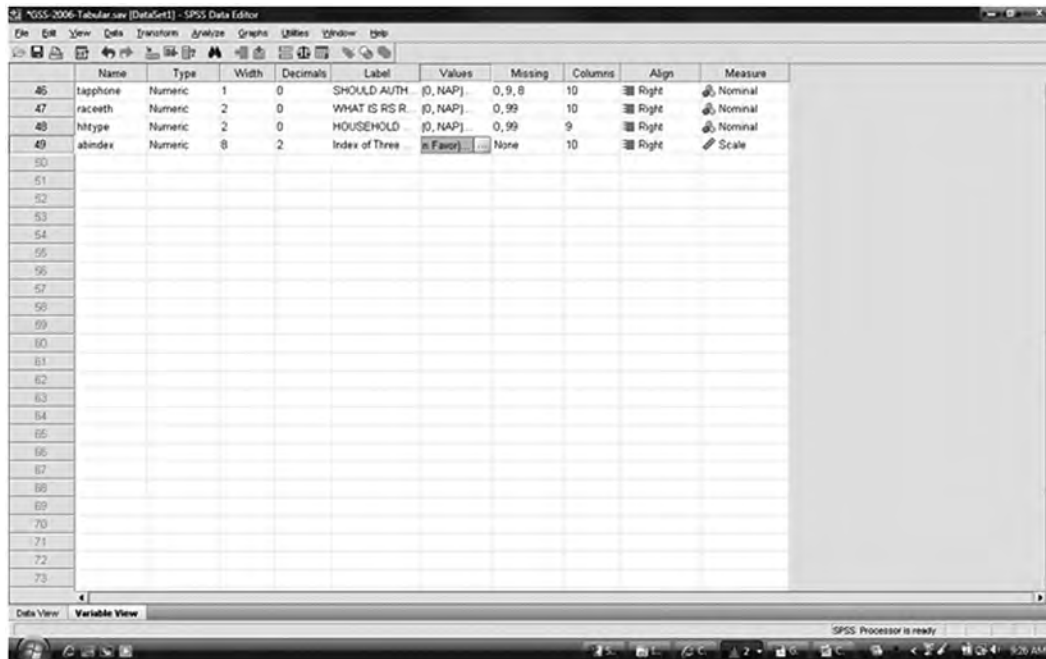
	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure
28	abdefect	Numeric	1	0	STRONG CHA.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
29	abhhth	Numeric	1	0	WOMANS HE.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	8	Right	Nominal
30	abany	Numeric	1	0	ABORTION IF	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	7	Right	Nominal
31	premarx	Numeric	1	0	SEX BEFORE	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
32	spanking	Numeric	1	0	FAVOR SPAN.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
33	suicid1	Numeric	1	0	SUCIDE IF INC	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
34	fear	Numeric	1	0	AFRAID TO W.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	6	Right	Nominal
35	news	Numeric	1	0	HOW OFTEN	(0, NAP)	0, 9	6	Right	Nominal
36	bhours	Numeric	2	0	HOURS PER D.	(-1, NAP)	-1, 99, 98	9	Right	Nominal
37	fepresch	Numeric	1	0	PRESCHOOL	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
38	fefam	Numeric	1	0	BETTER FOR	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	7	Right	Nominal
39	racd2	Numeric	1	0	DIFFERENCES	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	9	Right	Nominal
40	racd4	Numeric	2	0	DIFFERENCES	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	9	Right	Nominal
41	marbk	Numeric	1	0	CLOSE RELAT.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	8	Right	Nominal
42	polrt	Numeric	1	0	YOUR INTERE	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	8	Right	Nominal
43	polrt1	Numeric	1	0	DON T HAVE	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
44	marhomo	Numeric	1	0	HOMOSEXUAL	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	9	Right	Nominal
45	letn1	Numeric	1	0	NUMBER OF I.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	8	Right	Nominal
46	tapphone	Numeric	1	0	SHOULD AUTH.	(0, NAP)	0, 9, 8	10	Right	Nominal
47	raceeth	Numeric	2	0	WHAT IS RS R.	(0, NAP)	0, 99	10	Right	Nominal
48	hstype	Numeric	2	0	HOUSEHOLD	(0, NAP)	0, 99	9	Right	Nominal
49	abindex	Numeric	8	2				10	Right	Scale
50										
51										
52										
53										
54										
55										

Click in the **Label** box and type “Index of Three Abortion Items” or something similar. Next click the **Values** box and then click the three dots to the right of the box. The Value Labels window will appear. Enter the scores for ABINDEX one at a time in the **Value:** box at the top of the window and then click in the **Label:** box and type the label associated with the score. Click the **Add** button and then return to the **Value:** window to label the next score. When you have finished labeling all scores, click **OK** to return to the Variable View screen.

We labeled the scores using the descriptions in Exhibit 5.2. You should realize that the content of labels—for variables or for the values or scores of the variable—is at the discretion of the researcher, but remember that the purpose of the labels is to document output and make it easier to read.

1. Note that value labels are useful only when the scores of the computed variable have no inherent meaning. If the computed variable added up different sources of income and the scores were expressed in dollars, there would be no need to label the values.

When you are finished labeling ABINDEX, the Variable View screen should look like this:



Saving the Data Set With the Computed Variable

At this point, the computed variable ABINDEX is only temporary; if you leave the SPSS program without saving the data set, ABINDEX will disappear. To save the data file with the new variable included, click the **Save** option from the File menu. Do this now and you will be able to access ABINDEX in the future. If you are working with the Student Version of SPSS, remember that the file is limited to 50 variables. There should be space to save the file with ABINDEX, but if not, you will get a warning when you attempt to save the file and SPSS will tell you that only the first 50 variables will be saved. If you lose ABINDEX because of this limitation, you can always recompute it as necessary.

Missing Cases

When computing a new variable such as ABINDEX, SPSS automatically deletes any case that is missing a score on any of the constituent variables. Thus, a respondent who failed to answer any of the three abortion items would be omitted from the computations. If cases with missing scores were not eliminated, the score on ABINDEX might not reflect actual opinions. For example, suppose someone said “no” (a score of 2) to ABANY and ABDEFECT but did not respond to ABHLTH. This person’s score on ABINDEX would be 4 (2 + 2), a score of someone who is “moderately in favor” of abortion. This is an incorrect score for this person because the information we have on the two items she or he did answer shows opposition to the legal right to an abortion. SPSS automatically drops any respondent with a missing score to eliminate this type of error. Because of this, computed variables typically have fewer cases than any of their constituent variables.

Checking the Computed Variable

It is always a good idea to check computed variables before using them. You can do this with a frequency distribution; the commands are presented in Command Block 5.4:

COMMAND BLOCK 5.4 Using Frequencies to Check Scores on ABINDEX

- Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Frequencies**
 - Highlight ABINDEX and click the arrow pointing to the **Variable(s):** box
 - Click **OK**
-

Use the Valid Percent column of this frequency distribution to complete Research Report 5.3.

RESEARCH REPORT 5.3
Summarizing the Abortion Index

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

1. Fill in the table below with the “Valid Percents” from the frequency distribution we created for ABINDEX in Command Block 5.4.

<i>Score</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Valid Percentages</i>
3	Strongly in favor	_____
4	Moderately in favor	_____
5	Moderately opposed	_____
6	Strongly opposed	_____

2. Summarize these results. Compare them with the earlier discussion of the complexity and “situation-specific” nature of attitudes. Can the sample be characterized as generally “in favor of” or generally “opposed to” the legal right to an abortion? Why?

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF ATTITUDES ABOUT THE RIGHT TO A LEGAL ABORTION?

Now that we have a sense of attitudes about abortion in the United States, it's time to analyze the sources of these opinions. What might cause support or opposition to the legal right to an abortion? Given the biology of pregnancy, is it reasonable to suppose that men and women might have different attitudes? Would men or women be more supportive of the legal right to abortion? We will test the relationship between SEX and ABINDEX, and you can follow up by testing the power of other potential independent variables in Exercise 5.5.

EXERCISE 5.4 TESTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ABORTION INDEX (ABINDEX) AND GENDER (SEX)

Follow the commands in Command Block 5.5 to run the Crosstabs procedure, with percentages and statistics, to produce a table with ABINDEX as the dependent variable and SEX as the independent variable.

COMMAND BLOCK 5.5 Running Crosstabs for ABINDEX and SEX

- Click **Analyze** → **Descriptive Statistics** → **Crosstabs**
 - Highlight ABINDEX and click the arrow pointing to the **Row(s):** box
 - Highlight SEX and click the arrow pointing to the **Column(s):** box
 - Click **Cells**
 - In the **Percentages** box, select **Columns**
 - Click **Continue**
 - In the **Crosstabs** dialog box, click **Statistics**
 - Select Chi-square and Cramer's *V*
 - Click **Continue**
 - Click **OK**
-

The output will look like that shown in Exhibit 5.3.

Exhibit 5.3 Crosstabs Output for ABINDEX and SEX

abindex Index of Three Abortion Items * sex RESPONDENTS SEX Crosstabulation					
			RESPONDENTS SEX		
			MALE	FEMALE	Total
Index of Three Abortion Items	Strongly in Favor	Count	126	147	273
		% within RESPONDENTS SEX	45.7%	41.8%	43.5%
	Moderately in Favor	Count	85	115	200
		% within RESPONDENTS SEX	30.8%	32.7%	31.8%
	Moderately Opposed	Count	39	50	89
		% within RESPONDENTS SEX	14.1%	14.2%	14.2%
	Strongly Opposed	Count	26	40	66
		% within RESPONDENTS SEX	9.4%	11.4%	10.5%
	Total	Count	276	352	628
		% within RESPONDENTS SEX	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 1.27; $p > .05$; Cramer's $V = .05$.

NOTE: This output has been modified and shortened to conserve space.

It might seem like common sense to suppose that men and women will hold different opinions about abortion, but the bivariate table shows that this is not the case. If you compare the responses for men with those for women (compare the male column with the female column for each row of the table), you will see that the two sexes are nearly identical in their attitudes on this issue. That is, for each row (score on ABINDEX), there is little difference in the percentage of men and women who hold that position.

The value for the significance of chi-square (.747, which is much greater than .05) tells us that the small differences between men and women in the table are trivial and the results of random chance. The conclusion that there is no relationship between SEX and ABINDEX is further reinforced by the small value for Cramer's V (.05). Thus, sex and attitudes on abortion are not related, and sex is not an important cause of abortion attitudes. The reasons attitudes vary on this issue must be sought in an area other than simple biology.

EXERCISE 5.5 TESTING HYPOTHESES ABOUT SUPPORT FOR LEGAL ABORTION

What other factors might shape attitudes about abortion? Use your textbook or other course materials, if relevant, to help you select two potential independent variables and develop hypotheses about the causes of attitudes about abortion. Make sure that variables permitting you to test your ideas are available in the GSS-2006-tabular data set. Some variables you might consider include religious denomination (RELIG) and religiosity (RELITEN or ATTEND). Also, because abortion has been a prominent political issue for decades, difference in attitudes might exist among liberals, moderates, and conservatives (POLVIEWS). What about the effect of level of education (DEGREE) or social class (CLASS)?

After you have developed hypotheses and identified your independent variables, use Command Block 5.5 to produce bivariate tables. Substitute the names of your independent variables for SEX and transfer them both to the Column(s) box. Use the tables to complete Research Report 5.4.

RESEARCH REPORT 5.4
Testing Your Hypotheses

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

For your first independent variable:

1. State the SPSS variable name: _____

2. Explain exactly what this variable measures:

3. State a hypothesis linking this variable to ABINDEX. Which category of your independent variable will be most in favor of the legal right to abortion? Why?

4. Summarize your results in the table below.
 - a. Line 1 states the title of the table. Fill in the blank with the name of your independent variable. Use common words (e.g., “religion”), not SPSS names (e.g., RELIG).
 - b. On Line 2, write in the name of your independent variable, again using common words.
 - c. On Line 3, write in the names of the categories of your independent variable, using as many blanks as necessary.
 - d. On Line 4, fill in the blank with the percentage “strongly in favor” (a score of 3) for each category of the independent variable.
 - e. On Line 5, enter the values for these statistics.

1. Abortion Index by _____				
2. _____				
3. <i>Abortion Index</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Percentage “Strongly in Favor”	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Chi-square = _____ p = _____ Cramer’s V = _____			

5. Summarize and interpret these results:

The column percentages _____ (do/do not) change, so there _____ (is/is not) a relationship between these variables. The significance (p) of chi-square for this relationship is _____ (less than/more than) .05, so this relationship _____ (is/is not) statistically significant. The value of Cramer's V is _____, so this is a _____ (weak/moderate/strong) relationship.

For your second independent variable,

6. State the SPSS name of the variable: _____
7. Explain exactly what this variable measures:
8. State a hypothesis linking this variable to ABINDEX. Which category of your independent variable will be most in favor of the legal right to abortion? Why?
9. Summarize your results in the table below:
 - a. On Line 1, state the title of the table. Fill in the blank with the name of your independent variable. Use common words (e.g., "religion"), not SPSS names (e.g., RELIG).
 - b. On Line 2, write in the name of your independent variable, again using common words.
 - c. On Line 3, write in the names of the categories of your independent variable, using as many blanks as necessary.
 - d. On Line 4, fill in the blank with the percentage "strongly in favor" (a score of 3) for each category of the independent variable.
 - e. On Line 5, enter the values for these statistics.

1. Abortion Index by _____				
2. _____				
3. <i>Abortion Index</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Percentage "Strongly in Favor"	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Chi-square = _____ p = _____ Cramer's V _____ = _____				

10. Summarize and interpret these results:

The column percentages _____ (do/do not) change, so there _____ (is/is not) a relationship between these variables. The significance (p) of chi-square for this relationship is _____ (less than/more than) .05, so this relationship _____ (is/is not) statistically significant. The value of Cramer's V is _____, so this is a _____ (weak/moderate/strong) relationship.

11. Were your hypotheses confirmed? Why, or why not?

INDEPENDENT PROJECT 5.1

Further Explorations in the Causes of Attitudes About Abortion

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

What other variables might be related to attitudes on abortion? Choose two more potential independent variables from the GSS-2006-tabular data set. Use Command Block 5.5 to produce bivariate tables for ABINDEX and each of the two new independent variables you choose. Substitute the names of your independent variables for SEX and transfer them both to the Column(s): box.

For your first independent variable,

1. State the SPSS name: _____

2. Explain exactly what this variable measures:

3. State a hypothesis about the relationship between your independent variable and ABINDEX. *Why* do you expect the variables to be related?

4. Summarize results by completing the following summary table.
 - a. On Line 1, fill in the blank with the name of your independent variable, using common words, not the SPSS name.
 - b. On Line 2, write in the name of your independent variable again, using the same words you used in Line 1.
 - c. On Line 3, write in the names of the categories of your independent variable, using as many blanks as necessary.
 - d. On Line 4, fill in the blanks with the percentage of respondents who were “strongly in favor” (a score of 3) for each category of the independent variable.
 - e. On Line 5, write in the values for the statistics.

1. Abortion Index by _____					
2. _____					
3. <i>Abortion Index</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Percentage “Strongly in Favor”	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Chi-square = _____	$p =$ _____	Cramer’s $V =$ _____		

5. Summarize and interpret these results:

The column percentages _____ (do/do not) change, so there _____ (is/is not) a relationship between these variables. The significance (p) of chi-square for this relationship is _____ (less than/more than) .05, so this relationship _____ (is/is not) statistically significant. The value of Cramer's V is _____, so this is a _____ (weak/moderate/strong) relationship.

For your second independent variable,

6. State the SPSS name: _____

7. Explain exactly what this variable measures:

8. State a hypothesis about the relationship between your independent variable and ABINDEX. *Why* do you expect the variables to be related?

9. Summarize results by completing the following summary table.

- a. On Line 1, fill in the blank with the name of your independent variable, using common words, not the SPSS name.
- b. On Line 2, write in the name of your independent variable again, using the same words you used in Line 1.
- c. On Line 3, write in the names of the categories of your independent variable, using as many blanks as necessary.
- d. On Line 4, fill in the blanks with the percentage of respondents who were "strongly in favor" (a score of 3) for each category of the independent variable.
- e. On Line 5, write in the values for the statistics.

1. Abortion Index by _____					
2. _____					
3. <i>Abortion Index</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Percentage "Strongly in Favor"	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Chi-square = _____ p = _____ Cramer's V = _____					

10. Summarize and interpret these results:

The column percentages _____ (do/do not) change, so there _____ (is/is not) a relationship between these variables. The significance (p) of chi-square for this relationship is _____ (less than/more than) .05, so this relationship _____ (is/is not) statistically significant. The value of Cramer's V is _____, so this is a _____ (weak/moderate/strong) relationship.

11. Were your hypotheses confirmed? Why, or why not?

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 5.1

Have Attitudes About Abortion Changed Over Time?

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

The GSS-1972 data set includes two measures of attitudes toward abortion: ABHLTH and ABNOMORE. The first (ABHLTH) measures support for a legal abortion when the mother's health is in danger, and the second (ABNOMORE) measures support for a legal abortion in the situation where the woman is married but does not want any more children.

Load this data set and run the Frequencies distribution for each of these variables. Use the Valid Percents column to complete this report.

1. What percentage of respondents said "yes" to each item in 1972?

<i>Item</i>	<i>Percentage "Yes"</i>
ABHLTH	_____
ABNOMORE	_____

2. Compare these percentages with those that you produced in Research Report 5.1. Can you tell if the nation has grown more pro- or more anti-abortion? Describe the extent of the change, if any.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 5.2
Have the Causes of Attitudes
About Abortion Changed Over Time?

NAME _____

INSTRUCTOR _____

DATE _____

Choose an independent variable from those you used for Research Report 5.4 or Independent Project 5.1. All other things being equal, choose the independent variable that had the strongest, most significant relationship with ABINDEX. From the GSS72.sav data file, choose either ABHLTH or ABNOMORE as a measure of attitudes about abortion and use the Crosstabs procedure to test its relationship with your selected independent variable for strength and significance. See Command Block 5.5 for guidance.

1. State the SPSS name of the independent variable you selected: _____

2. Explain exactly what this variable measures:

3. State a hypothesis about the relationship between your independent variable and your measure of support for abortion. *Why* do you expect the variables to be related?

4. Summarize results by completing the following summary table.
 - a. On Line 1, fill in the blank with the name of your independent variable, using common words, not the SPSS name.
 - b. On Line 2, write in the name of your independent variable again, using the same words you used in Line 1.
 - c. On Line 3, write in the names of the categories of your independent variable, using as many blanks as necessary.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- d. On Line 4, fill in the blanks with the percentage who were in favor of abortion (“Yes”) for each category of the independent variable.
- e. On Line 5, write in the values for the statistics.

1. Attitude toward abortion by	_____				
2.	_____				
3. <i>Attitude toward Abortion</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Percentage in Favor” (Yes)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Chi-square = _____ p = _____ Cramer’s V = _____				

5. Summarize and interpret these results:

The column percentages _____ (do/do not) change, so there _____ (is/is not) a relationship between these variables. The significance (p) of chi-square for this relationship _____ (less than/more than) .05, so this relationship _____ (is/is not) statistically significant. The value of Cramer’s V is _____, so this is a _____ (weak/moderate/strong) relationship.

6. Are these results consistent with the hypothesis you stated earlier between your independent variable and support of the right to a legal abortion? Explain.

MAIN POINTS

- Attitudes about abortion comprise one of the most intense and divisive differences in cultural values among Americans. When analyzing such emotionally charged issues, social scientists need to be especially careful to maintain objectivity.
- We examined the degree of opposition and support for the right to a legal abortion and the structure of abortion attitudes.
- With the Compute command, new variables can be created from the scores of variables already in the data set. We created an index (ABINDEX) to measure overall feelings about abortion.
- A number of hypotheses were tested about the causes of attitudes about abortion.

SPSS COMMANDS INTRODUCED IN THIS CHAPTER

COMMAND BLOCK 5.3 Computing an Index or Summary Variable

- Click **Transform** → **Compute**
 - Click **Target Variable:**
 - Type a name for the new variable
 - Use existing variables and mathematical procedures to state an expression that defines the new variable in the **Numerical Expression:** box
 - Click **OK**
 - **Save** the data file
-

FURTHER READINGS

- Ammerman, N. (2005). *Pillars of faith: American congregations and their partners*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hoffmann, J. P., & Johnson, S. M. (2005). Attitudes toward abortion among religious traditions in the United States: Change or continuity? *Sociology of Religion*, 66(2), 161–182.
- Jelen, T. G., & Wilcox, C. (2003). Causes and consequences of public attitudes toward abortion: A review and research agenda. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(4), 489–500.