

Considerations for Analysis of PSS Data

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This module describes analytic considerations that should be kept in mind when using PSS data. Since the data in PSS are collected every two years and the target population for PSS is all private schools located in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, there is considerable overlap from one PSS data collection to the next. It may be beneficial to merge data files across collection years. Additionally, this module presents information about particular data anomalies and changes to PSS over time.

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Analysts will need to decide how to use data files from multiple years for analyses. Each data file can be analyzed separately. However, since there is considerable overlap from one PSS data collection to the next, you may want to merge data files across collection years using one-to-one matching, where each data record is matched by a unique identifying variable. When there is no match on the unique identifier between the two files, then the separate data records from the second data file are added to the first data file in the order of the matching variable. For example, a merged data file containing 2011-12 PSS data and PSS data from another survey year would include all of the 2011-12 records and all of the other survey year's records, listed in order of school permanent identification number, which is used for matching.

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When there is a match on the unique identifier, any variables from the second data file that were not included in the first data file, are added onto the matched record as additional variables. Matched data records will have additional data in variables that match. For example, the total enrollment variable will have data from both 2011-12 and the other survey year.

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PSS school records can be matched across years by using the school's permanent identification number, or PIN (spelled P-I-N). The PIN is a unique 8-character code assigned when a private school is first included in PSS and it has different variable names in different survey years. PPIN (spelled P-P-I-N) is the variable name for the 2011-12 PPS. When merging 2011-12 PSS data with files from different survey years, "*PIN" (spelled *-P-I-N), should be used for the merge variable.

All PSS files are sorted in ascending order by the ANSI/FIPS State Code and then by the PIN. Therefore, they do not need to be pre-sorted before merging them. In SPSS, value labels are attached automatically during the extraction process.

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Let's take an example to walk through the steps. For the code shown on the screen, words in italics are meant to be replaced by the file or variable names that you specify. Also, comments that explain what the preceding line of code does when run have been added as lines of text in between asterisks. This text is not part of the SPSS syntax.

In the SPSS syntax shown on the screen, first the two data files to be merged are specified. The command for merging is "match files." The "table" statement that follows a forward slash in the "match files" command specifies the second data file, and the "by" statement provides the variable on which to perform the merge.

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Here is an example using SAS to perform a one-to-one matching data file merge. As with the SPSS syntax, the 2011–12 PSS school records can be matched to those of other years by using the school's permanent identification number. The files do not need to be pre-sorted before merging.

The words shown in italics in this example are meant to be replaced by the file or variable names relevant to your analysis. Comments that explain what the preceding line of code does when run have been added as lines of text contained within forward slashes and asterisks. This text is not part of the SASS syntax.

In the SASS syntax shown on the screen, first a name for the merged file is specified. The command for merging is "merge" and the "by" statement provides the variable on which to perform the merge.

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There are some caveats and considerations that analysts should take into account when using PSS data. Beginning with the 1993-94 PSS, the definition of an eligible private school was expanded to include schools with a high grade of kindergarten (kindergarten-terminal schools). When analyzing 1989-90 or 1991-92 PSS data with post 1991-92 PSS data, the analyses can be restricted to the 1989-90 and 1991-92 definition of a private school (providing instruction in any of grades 1 through 12) by selecting TABFLAG (spelled T-A-B-F-L-A-G)= 1 for the post 1991-92 PSS years.

The 2011-12 PSS data file does not contain the 8-category locale code, LOCALE (spelled L-O-C-A-L-E), that was included on the 2005-06 and earlier PSS files. The 2011-12 file does contain the more recent (2003) 12-category locale code, or ULOCALE (spelled U-L-O-C-A-L-E), which is also included on the 2003-04, 2005-06, 2007-08, and 2009-10 PSS.

Beginning with the 2009-10 PSS, race/ ethnicity data from Item 7 were collected following the Department of Education's October 2007 guidance on collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data. The seven race/ ethnicity categories used in 2011-12 were Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race, coded as P320; for those not of Hispanic or Latino origin, American Indian or Alaska Native, coded as P310; Asian, coded as P316;

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Black or African American, P325; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, P318; White, P330; and, "Two or more races," P332.

In earlier PSS collections, race/ ethnicity data were collected using five categories. Asians and Pacific Islanders were combined in one category, Asian or Pacific Islander; and, there was no category for those of two or more races.

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These DLDT modules describe how to use the most recent 2011-12 PSS. PSS has undergone a number of major content and procedural redesigns over the course of more than 20 years. Earlier versions of PSS may have sampling changes, content changes, or processing changes not covered here. Each round of PSS has its own Data File User's Manual or Data Documentation applicable to that data collection. Crosswalks do not exist for comparing item content over time so each user is well advised to study questionnaire wording directly from one data collection to another. Additionally, geographic identifiers below the state level have changed over time across all NCES surveys. Many of these changes are due to statistical policies directed by OMB.

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This module described analytic considerations that should be kept in mind when using PSS data. Since the data in PSS overlap across years, users may want to merge data files, so the module explained how to conduct that merge. The module also presented data anomalies and changes in the PSS data collection over time.

This concludes the PSS dataset training. You may now click the exit button to return to the landing page.