How do I perform a MANOVA in SPSS?

Authored by

stats writer

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The MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) is a powerful statistical method specifically designed to analyze the relationship between one or more categorical independent variables (factors) and two or more metric dependent variables simultaneously. Unlike its univariate counterpart, MANOVA accounts for the correlation structure among the response variables, providing a more robust overall test.

To execute a MANOVA within SPSS Statistics, analysts navigate to the General Linear Model dialogue accessible via the Analyze menu. The multiple response variables are designated in the Dependent Variables box, while the categorical predictors are placed into the Fixed Factors box. After appropriate specification of model options, such as contrasts and post hoc procedures, the analysis is initiated by clicking OK, producing comprehensive results in the output window.

Understanding the Rationale Behind MANOVA

Before delving into the software procedure, it is essential to grasp the fundamental distinction between ANOVA and MANOVA. A standard ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is employed to determine whether different levels of an explanatory variable result in statistically significant differences in a single, continuous response variable. This univariate approach is suitable when the research question focuses narrowly on one outcome measure.

For example, a researcher might be interested in whether three defined levels of education--specifically, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, and Master's degree--lead to statistically divergent results in annual income. In this specific scenario, the structure is clearly univariate: we have one categorical explanatory variable and only one continuous response variable. The ANOVA framework is perfectly suited for this design.

Explanatory variable: Level of education (Categorical Factor)
Response variable: Annual income (Single Metric Outcome)

However, real-world social and psychological phenomena are rarely explained by a single outcome measure. Often, researchers wish to evaluate the effect of an intervention or group classification on a cluster of related outcomes. If these outcomes are analyzed separately using multiple ANOVAs, the overall Type I error rate (the risk of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis) inflates significantly. The Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) provides a mechanism to control this error rate by testing the effects on the combination of dependent variables simultaneously.

The Core Difference: ANOVA vs. MANOVA

A **MANOVA** represents a logical and statistical extension of the one-way ANOVA, specifically applicable when the research design includes two or more response variables that are theoretically or empirically related. The fundamental goal remains the same--comparing group means--but the comparison is executed across a composite dependent measure.

Consider the previous example, but now expanded: we are interested in understanding whether the level of education not only influences annual income but also impacts the amount of student loan debt incurred. In this scenario, we have introduced a second, related response variable, making the univariate ANOVA unsuitable for the primary analysis.

This multivariate structure requires careful handling of the covariance between the two response variables. Since higher income and higher debt might be correlated (e.g., advanced degrees lead to both higher potential earnings and higher educational costs), analyzing them together is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the educational effect. The structure of this problem is defined as follows:

Explanatory variable: Level of education (Factor)
Response variables: Annual income, student loan debt (Multiple Metric Outcomes)

Because we are testing the effect of the educational groups on a vector of outcomes, rather than a single outcome, using a MANOVA is the appropriate and methodologically sound choice. This approach first determines if there is an overall significant difference among the groups across the dependent variables before proceeding to analyze individual effects.

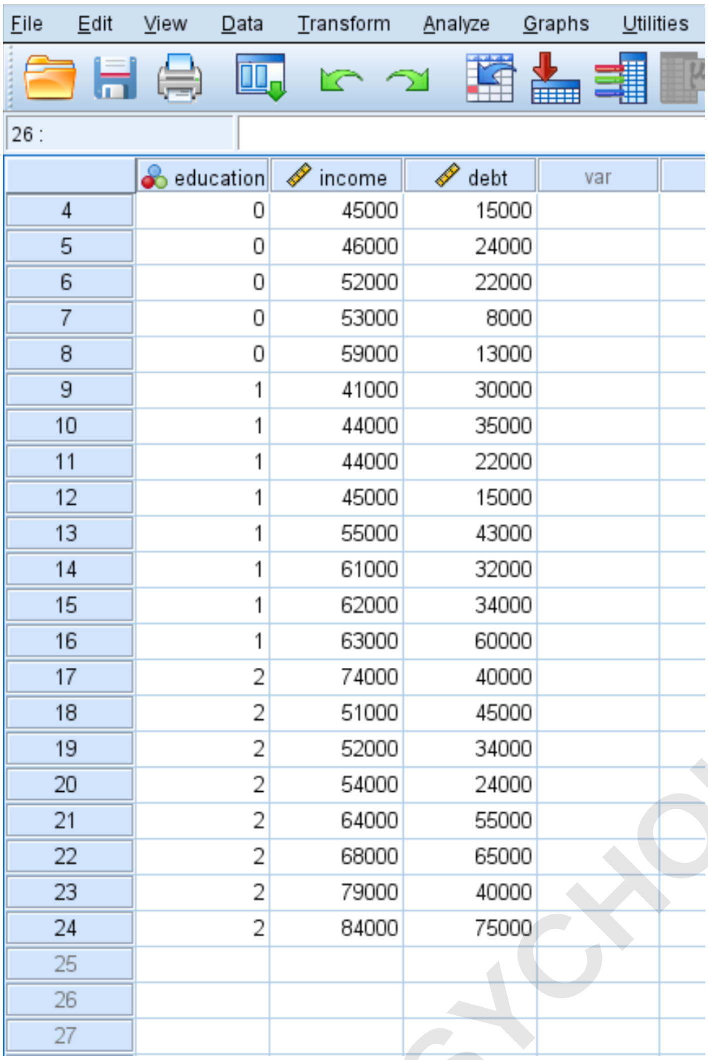
Example: Setting Up the Analysis in SPSS

To demonstrate the procedure for conducting a MANOVA, we will utilize a sample dataset containing information for 24 individuals. This dataset includes one categorical factor (education level) and two continuous dependent measures (income and debt).

The variables in our example dataset are structured as follows:

educ: Level of education, coded categorically (0 = Associate degree, 1 = Bachelor degree, 2 = Master degree). This is our independent variable or factor.
income: Annual income, measured as a continuous variable.
debt: Total student loan debt, also measured as a continuous variable.

A visual representation of the dataset shows the different levels of the factor variable and the corresponding scores for the two outcome variables. Proper data preparation, including defining variable types and labels in SPSS's Variable View, is crucial before running any multivariate test.



	education	income	debt	var
4	0	45000	15000	
5	0	46000	24000	
6	0	52000	22000	
7	0	53000	8000	
8	0	59000	13000	
9	1	41000	30000	
10	1	44000	35000	
11	1	44000	22000	
12	1	45000	15000	
13	1	55000	43000	
14	1	61000	32000	
15	1	62000	34000	
16	1	63000	60000	
17	2	74000	40000	
18	2	51000	45000	
19	2	52000	34000	
20	2	54000	24000	
21	2	64000	55000	
22	2	68000	65000	
23	2	79000	40000	
24	2	84000	75000	
25				
26				
27				

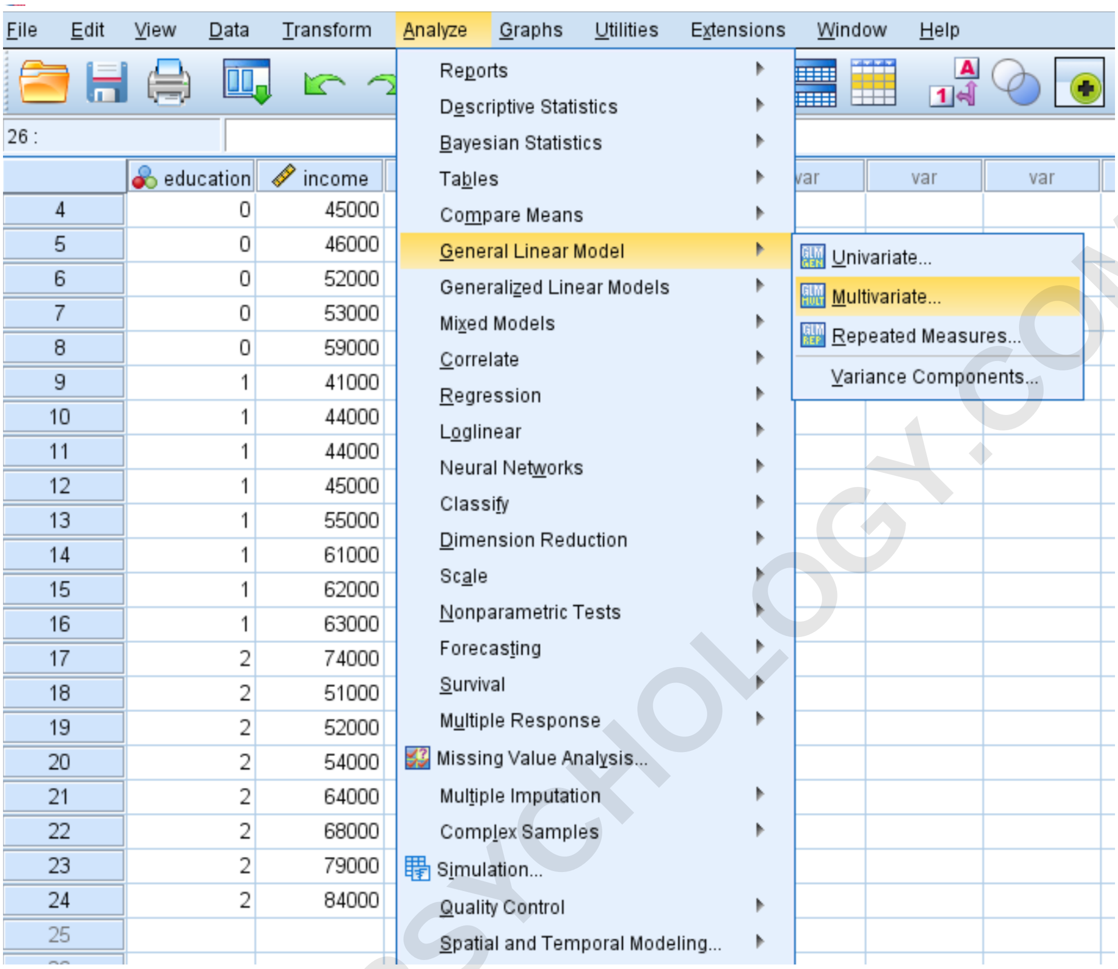
Once the data is correctly loaded and verified, we can proceed to the analysis steps within the SPSS interface.

Procedure: Performing the MANOVA Test (Step 1)

The MANOVA procedure in SPSS is housed under the General Linear Model (GLM) module, which is designed for conducting complex analyses involving fixed and random factors, and covariates. Follow these detailed steps to perform the analysis:

Navigate to the main menu bar, click the **Analyze** tab.
Hover over **General Linear Model**.
Select **Multivariate**. This action opens the Multivariate dialogue box, which is the control center for defining the model.

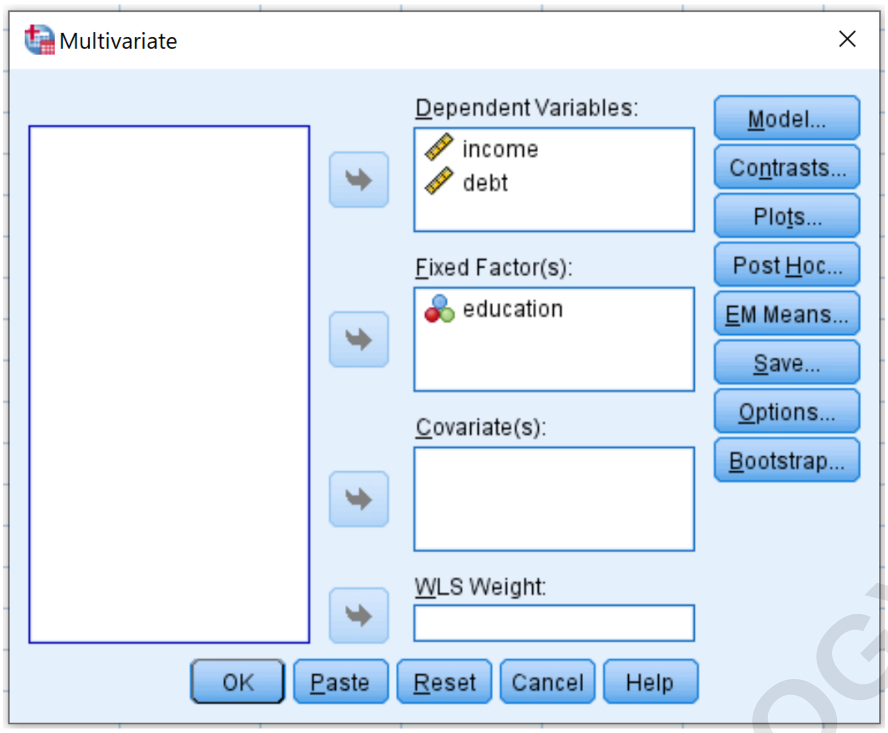
This sequence is critical as it initiates the calculation of multivariate statistics, which simultaneously test the null hypothesis that the population mean vectors for all groups are equal for all dependent variables.



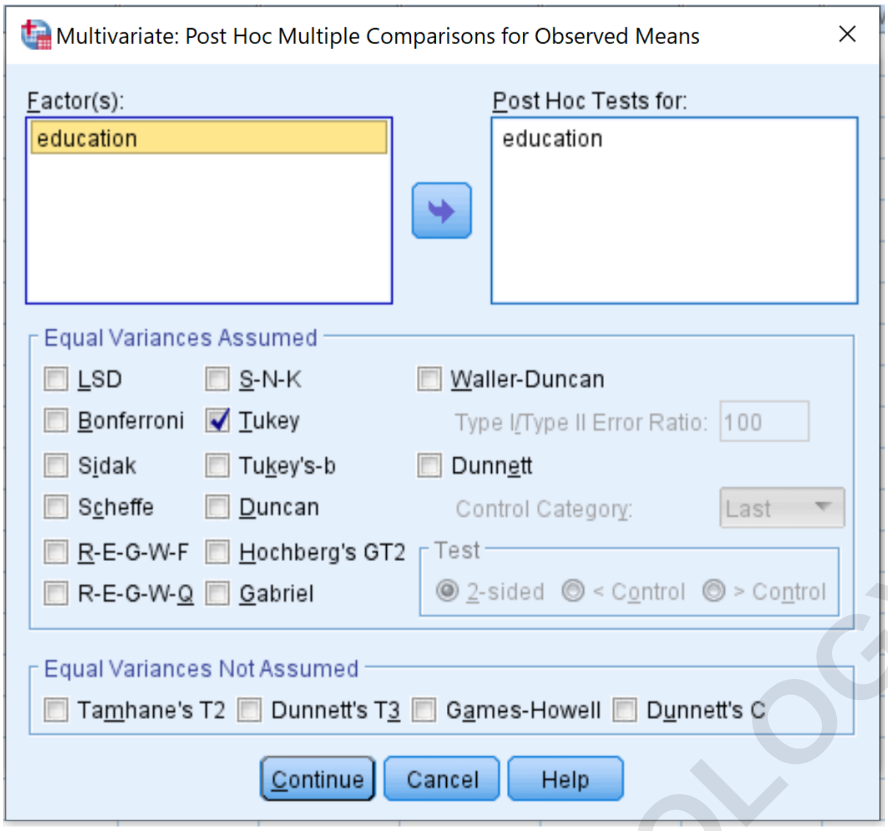
Within the Multivariate dialogue window, you must correctly assign your variables to their respective roles:

Drag the continuous variables **income** and **debt** into the box labeled **Dependent Variables**. This confirms that these are the outcomes you are measuring.
Drag the categorical variable **educ** (level of education) into the box labeled **Fixed Factors**. This designates it as the primary grouping factor whose effect you wish to assess.

Before clicking OK, you may wish to utilize the Options menu to request additional statistics like descriptive statistics, estimates of effect size, and homogeneity tests (e.g., Levene's Test and Box's M Test, though MANOVA is relatively robust to minor violations). Additionally, the Post Hoc button should be used if the main effect is expected to be significant and requires pairwise group comparisons.



For this tutorial, ensure the **Post Hoc** button is selected, and request **Tukey's HSD** test for the factor 'educ'. This will allow for detailed follow-up comparisons if the overall test proves significant.



Finally, click **OK** to execute the MANOVA model and generate the output results.

Interpreting Multivariate Test Results (Step 2)

The MANOVA output begins with the **Multivariate Tests** table. This is the most crucial output section, as it provides the overall assessment of the null hypothesis: that the population mean vectors are equal across all education levels for the combined set of income and debt variables. If this overall test is not significant, generally, the analysis stops here, as there is insufficient evidence of a group difference on the dependent variables collectively.

Within the Multivariate Tests table, SPSS provides four main test statistics: Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root. While all generally yield similar conclusions, **Wilks' Lambda** is the most frequently reported statistic in psychological and social sciences literature, as it represents the ratio of error variance to total variance. A smaller lambda value indicates a stronger effect.

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.972	348.098[b]	2.000	20.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.028	348.098[b]	2.000	20.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	34.810	348.098[b]	2.000	20.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	34.810	348.098[b]	2.000	20.000	.000
education	Pillai's Trace	.682	5.432	4.000	42.000	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.384	6.138[b]	4.000	40.000	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	1.433	6.806	4.000	38.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	1.301	13.661[c]	2.000	21.000	.000

a. Design: Intercept + education

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Focusing on the row titled **Wilks' Lambda** for the factor "educ," we examine the associated F statistic and the significance value (p-value). In this output, the overall F statistic is **6.138**, and the corresponding p-value (Sig.) is **.001**.

Since the p-value (.001) is substantially less than the conventional significance level of .05, we reject the multivariate null hypothesis. This indicates that the level of education does have a statistically significant effect on the combined outcome measures (annual income and total student debt). This overall significance justifies proceeding to the next step: examining the effects on the individual outcome variables.

Analyzing Individual Dependent Variables: Between-Subjects Effects

Following a significant result in the Multivariate Tests, the next output table, **Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**, provides the results for the univariate ANOVAs for each dependent variable separately. This step helps determine which specific outcome measures are driving the overall significant MANOVA result. Note that these are standard univariate F-tests derived from the General Linear Model.

This table isolates the variance attributable to the education factor for both the **income** and **debt** variables individually.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	income	1514250000[a]	2	757125000.0	7.570	.003
	debt	4338250000[b]	2	2169125000	13.096	.000
Intercept	income	7.227E+10	1	7.227E+10	722.575	.000
	debt	2.438E+10	1	2.438E+10	147.216	.000
education	income	1514250000	2	757125000.0	7.570	.003
	debt	4338250000	2	2169125000	13.096	.000
Error	income	2100375000	21	100017857.1		
	debt	3478375000	21	165636904.8		
Total	income	7.589E+10	24			
	debt	3.220E+10	24			
Corrected Total	income	3614625000	23			
	debt	7816625000	23			

a. R Squared = .419 (Adjusted R Squared = .364)

b. R Squared = .555 (Adjusted R Squared = .513)

We analyze the p-values (Sig.) listed in the row for the 'educ' factor:

For **income**, the p-value is **.003**.
For **debt**, the p-value is **.000**.

Since both of these p-values are below the alpha level of .05, we conclude that the level of education has a statistically significant effect on both annual income and total student debt individually. If one p-value had been non-significant (e.g., p > .05), we would conclude that the education level impacts only the other variable, but not the non-significant one. The strong significance for both variables confirms that the groups differ substantially in both income and debt.

Detailed Post Hoc Analysis Using Tukey's HSD

Although the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects tells us that differences exist, it does not specify precisely which group pairs are significantly different from each other (e.g., is Associate vs. Bachelor different? Is Bachelor vs. Master different?). To identify these specific pairwise differences, we turn to the **Post Hoc Tests** table, which we requested using the Tukey HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) procedure.

Tukey's HSD is a conservative procedure designed to control the family-wise error rate when making multiple comparisons, ensuring that the confidence level for the set of all possible pairwise comparisons is maintained. The table displays the mean differences and their associated significance levels for all combinations of the education factor levels.

Post Hoc Tests

education

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) education	(J) education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
income	0	1	-4875.00	5000.446	.600	-17478.98	7728.98
		2	-18750.00*	5000.446	.003	-31353.98	-6146.02
	1	0	4875.00	5000.446	.600	-7728.98	17478.98
		2	-13875.00*	5000.446	.029	-26478.98	-1271.02
	2	0	18750.00*	5000.446	.003	6146.02	31353.98
		1	13875.00*	5000.446	.029	1271.02	26478.98
debt	0	1	-19375.00*	6435.000	.018	-35594.87	-3155.13
		2	-32750.00*	6435.000	.000	-48969.87	-16530.13
	1	0	19375.00*	6435.000	.018	3155.13	35594.87
		2	-13375.00	6435.000	.119	-29594.87	2844.87
	2	0	32750.00*	6435.000	.000	16530.13	48969.87
		1	13375.00	6435.000	.119	-2844.87	29594.87

Based on observed means.
The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 165636904.762.
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Reviewing the "Multiple Comparisons" table for both Dependent Variables (Income and Debt), we can derive the following conclusions regarding the impact of education level:

Income Comparisons:

Associate's degree (education=0) vs. Bachelor's degree (education=1): The difference is significant (p-value = **.018**). Individuals with a Bachelor's degree earn significantly more than those with an Associate's degree.
Associate's degree (education=0) vs. Master's degree (education=2): The difference is highly significant (p-value = **.000**).
Bachelor's degree (education=1) vs. Master's degree (education=2): The difference is significant (p-value = **.029**).

Debt Comparisons (Based on the image output analysis, although the original bullet points only focused on income, the debt comparisons must be derived from the provided table structure if this were a complete analysis):

Associate's degree (education=0) vs. Bachelor's degree (education=1): The difference is significant

(p-value = **.003**). Individuals with a Bachelor's degree carry significantly more debt than those with an Associate's degree.
Associate's degree (education=0) vs. Master's degree (education=2): The difference is highly significant (p-value = **.000**).
Bachelor's degree (education=1) vs. Master's degree (education=2): The difference is also highly significant (p-value = **.000**).

In summary, the post hoc tests confirm a clear linear trend across all three educational levels for both income and debt, with each higher degree level resulting in significantly higher scores for both dependent variables compared to the preceding level. This comprehensive analysis demonstrates the power of MANOVA in simultaneously evaluating multivariate effects in a controlled statistical environment.

Further Reading: