

What is the meaning of an SPSS string variable?

Authored by
stats writer

June 23, 2024

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *What is the meaning of an SPSS string variable?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=148888>

An SPSS string variable refers to a data type in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software that is used to store and manipulate text or alphanumeric data. It can contain a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters and is typically used to represent categories, labels, or text responses in a data set. String variables are distinguished from other data types, such as numerical variables, as they cannot be used for numerical calculations and are treated as text data. They are commonly used in data analysis and statistical research to categorize and organize textual information.

SPSS String Variable

In this section, we are going to learn about String variables. String variables are the type of variables that are used when we want to record any qualitative data or qualitative variables. For example, name of the subject, or roll no of the subject.

Now we will take the example of the current study in which we study the effect of Hardwork or Performance. Suppose at the end of the study, we want to record the feedback of the subject, which might come in the format of statements. So for that, we can define a String variable. Remember, SPSS software is not doing qualitative data analysis, but we can definitely store the qualitative data, and later, we can do some analysis by using other software. So in our case, let's define a new variable called Name of subject and Feedback. So we will create Feedback as the first variable.

*SPSS File1.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	Hardwork	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
2	Intelligence	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
3	Performance	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
4	Age	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
5	Gender	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
6	Income	Custom	8	2		None	None	12	Right	Unknown	Input
7	Residence	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
8	Hairwidth	Scientific	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
9	Birthdate	Date	23	2		None	None	19	Right	Unknown	Input
10	Feedback	Numeric	8	2		None	None	8	Right	Unknown	Input
11											
12											

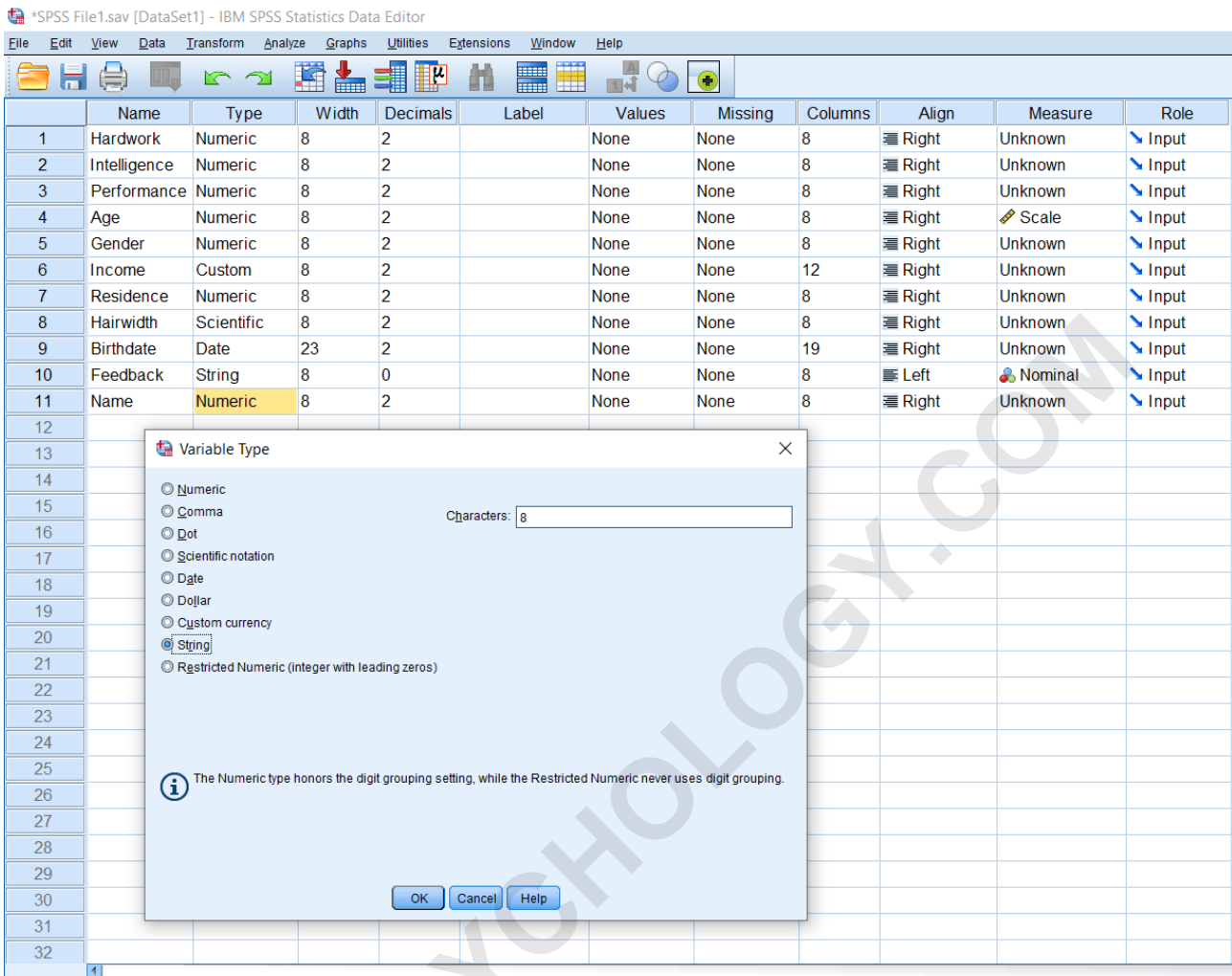
By default, it's Numeric, so we will convert it into the String variable because it is going to be in the statement of format.

The screenshot shows the IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor interface. The main window displays a list of variables with the following columns: Name, Type, Width, Decimals, Label, Values, Missing, Columns, Align, Measure, and Role. The 'Feedback' variable is highlighted in yellow. A 'Variable Type' dialog box is open over the 'Feedback' variable, showing the following options:

- Numeric
- Comma
- Dot
- Scientific notation
- Date
- Dollar
- Custom currency
- String
- Restricted Numeric (integer with leading zeros)

The 'Characters' field in the dialog box is set to 8. An information icon at the bottom left of the dialog box provides the following text: "The Numeric type honors the digit grouping setting, while the Restricted Numeric never uses digit grouping." The dialog box has 'OK', 'Cancel', and 'Help' buttons at the bottom.

Then we will create Name as the second variable and convert it into a String variable.



Now the variables have been created. Since we have restricted Width to 8 so, we need to increase it. Let's keep it more than a thousand. So we can write a full story if we want about the feeling of their subject. We will also increase the Width of Name variable so that we can accommodate the longer name. If we don't increase the width, the text will be truncated. Suppose we are writing I felt very good, but because of lower width it will be truncated as "I felt v" like this:

	Hardwork	Intelligence	Performance	Age	Gender	Income	Residence	Hairwidth	Birthdate	Feedback	Name
1						Rs. 1,500,000.00		1.00E-003	10-Dec-1995 00:00:00.00	I felt v	
2						Rs. 1,200,000.40			18-Oct-1993 00:00:00.00		
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											

Now we increase the width of Income as 1008, and click on the Data View option and enter a dummy Feedback. Suppose the first subject says, "I felt very good. Thanks".

	Hardwork	Intelligence	Performance	Age	Gender	Income	Residence	Hairwidth	Birthdate	Feedback	Name
1						Rs. 1,500,000.00		1.00E-003	10-Dec-1995 00:00:00.00	I felt very good. Thanks	
2						Rs. 1,200,000.40			18-Oct-1993 00:00:00.00		
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											

Now we will write the Name as "John Smith".

The screenshot shows the IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor interface. The title bar reads '*SPSS File1.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor'. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Data, Transform, Analyze, Graphs, Utilities, Extensions, Window, and Help. The toolbar contains various icons for file operations and data manipulation. The main window displays a data table with the following columns: Hardwork, Intelligence, Performance, Age, Gender, Income, Residence, Hairwidth, Birthdate, Feedback, and Name. The first row of data is for 'John Smith'.

	Hardwork	Intelligence	Performance	Age	Gender	Income	Residence	Hairwidth	Birthdate	Feedback	Name
1	Rs. 1,500,000.00	.	1.00E-003	10-Dec-1995 00:00:00.00	felt very good. Thanks	John Smith
2	Rs. 1,200,000.40	.	.	18-Oct-1993 00:00:00.00		
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM