

Sesame Street Study

This data set and its description were obtained from Stevens (1990, pp. 232-239) and a data disk supplied by Stevens.

This is part of a large data set that evaluated the impact of the first year of the Sesame Street television series. Children were sampled from five different sites in the U.S. Age was coded in months. Viewing category was coded from 1 (if child rarely watched the show) to 4 (if the show was viewed more than five times per week). Setting in which Sesame Street was viewed was coded as 1 for home and 2 for school. The next variable on the file was a treatment condition in which some children were encouraged to view Sesame Street (coded as 1) and others were not (coded as 2). The next set of variables on the file (variables 8 through 13) involves pretest scores on a variety of cognitive variables. After viewing the series, the children were posttested on these same variables; these are variables 14 through 19 on the file. The final variable on the file is a pretest measure of vocabulary maturity, as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The first variable on the file is subject ID, and then comes SITE, SEX, AGE, viewing category, SETTING, and treatment condition (variable 7). The data set is named sesame.sav.

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DESCRIPTION OF SESAME STREET DATA BASE

This data is part of a large data set that evaluated the impact of the first year of the Sesame Street television series. Sesame Street was concerned mainly with teaching preschool related skills to children in the 3-5 year age range, with special emphasis on reaching 4 year old disadvantaged children. The format of the show was designed to hold young children's attention through action oriented, short duration presentations teaching specific preschool cognitive skills and some social skills. Each show was one hour and involved much repetition of concepts within and across shows.

A main concern for the evaluation, which was carried out at Educational Testing Service, was that it would permit generalization to the populations of children of most interest to the producers of the program (the Children's Television Workshop). Five populations were of interest:

1. Three to five year old disadvantaged children from inner city areas in various parts of the country.
2. Four year old advantaged suburban children.
3. Advantaged rural children.
4. Disadvantaged rural children.
5. Disadvantaged Spanish speaking children.

Children representative of these populations were sampled from five different sites in the United States.

Both before and after viewing the series the children were tested on a variety of cognitive variables (variables 8 through 19 in the data set), including knowledge of

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Children representative of these populations were sampled from five different sites in the United States.

Both before and after viewing the series the children were tested on a variety of cognitive variables (variables 8 through 19 in the data set), including knowledge of body parts, knowledge about letters, knowledge about numbers, etc.

The variables are arranged on the file as follows:

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Variable No.	Variable Name	Description
1	ID	Subject identification number
2	SITE	Five different sampling sites coded as 1,2,3,4 or 5.
3	SEX	Male=1, Female=2
4	AGE	in months
5	VIEWCAT	Viewing categories coded as a 1 if children rarely watched the show to a 4 if the children watched the show on average of more than 5 times a week
6	SETTING	Setting in which <i>Sesame Street</i> was viewed, coded as 1 for home and coded as 2 for school
7	VIEWINC	A treatment condition in which some children were encouraged to view <i>Sesame St</i> (code=1) and others were not (code=2)
8	PREBODY	pretest on knowledge about body parts (maximum score=32)—naming and functions of body parts
9	PRELET	pretest on knowledge about letters (maximum score=58)—including recognizing letters, naming capital letters, matching letters in words
10	PREFORM	pretest on knowledge about forms (maximum score=20)—recognizing and naming forms
11	PRENUMB	pretest on knowledge about numbers (maximum score=54)—recognizing and naming numbers, counting, addition and subtraction
12	PRERELAT	pretest on knowledge of relational terms (maximum score=17)—amount, size and position relationship
13	PRECLASF	pretest on knowledge of classification skills (maximum score=24)—classifying by size, form, number and function
14	POSTBODY	posttest knowledge on body parts
15	POSTLET	posttest knowledge of letters
16	POSTFORM	posttest knowledge of forms
17	POSTNUMB	posttest knowledge of numbers
18	POSTREL	posttest knowledge of relations
19	POSTCLAS	posttest knowledge of classification skills
20	PEABODY	Mental age scores obtained from administration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test as a pretest measure of vocabulary