

CHAPTER 2

METHODS IN THE STUDY OF PERSONALITY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Gathering Information

- Sources: Observe Yourself and Observe Others

- Seeking Depth: Case Studies

- Depth from Experience Sampling

- Seeking Generality: Studies of Many People

Establishing Relationships among Variables

- Correlation between Variables

- Two Kinds of Significance

- Causality and a Limitation on Inference

- Search for Causality: Experimental Research

- Recognizing Types of Study

- What Kind of Research Is Best?

- Experimental Personality Research and Multifactor Studies

- Reading Figures from Multifactor Research

Summary

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Research in personality relies on observations of both the self and others. The desire to understand a person as an integrated whole led to case studies: in-depth examinations of specific persons. The desire for generalizability—conclusions that would apply to many rather than to just a few people—led to studies involving examination of many people.

Gathering information is only the first step toward examining relationships between and among variables. Relationships among variables are examined in two ways, corresponding to two kinds of relationships. Correlational research determines the degree to which two variables tend to go together in a predictable way when measured at different levels along the dimensions. This technique determines two aspects of the relationship: its direction and its strength. The special relationship of cause and effect cannot be determined by this kind of study, however.

A second technique, called the experimental method, is a test for cause and effect. In an experiment, an independent variable is manipulated, other variables are controlled (made constant), and anything that cannot be controlled is treated by random assignment. An effect caused by the manipulation is measured in the dependent variable.

Experimental and correlational techniques are often combined in multifactor studies. When the study contains a personality variable and an experimental manipulation, it's termed experimental personality research. Multifactor studies permit the emergence of interactions.

KEY TERMS

Case study: An in-depth study of one individual.

Causality (causal relationship): A relationship such that variation in one dimension produces variation in another.

Clinically significant: An association large enough to have some practical importance.

Correlation: A relationship in which two variables or dimensions covary when measured repeatedly.

Correlation coefficient: A numeric index of the degree of correlation between two variables.

Dependent variable: The variable measured as the outcome of an experiment; the effect in a cause-effect relation.

Descriptive statistics: Statistics used to describe or characterize some group.

Experience sampling: Method in which people report repeatedly on their current experiences.

Experimental control: The holding constant of variables that are not being manipulated.

Experimental method: The method in which one variable is manipulated to test for causal influence on another variable.

Experimental personality research: A study involving a personality factor and an experimental factor.

Generality (generalizability): The degree to which a conclusion applies to many people.

Idiographic: Relating to an approach that focuses on a particular person across situations.

Independent variable: The variable manipulated in an experiment, tested as the cause in a cause-effect relation.

Inferential statistics: Statistics used to judge whether a relationship exists between variables.

Interaction: A finding in which the effect of one predictor variable differs depending on the level of another predictor variable.

Main effect: A finding in which the effect of one predictor variable is independent of other variables.

Multifactor study: A study with two (or more) predictor variables.

Personology: The study of the whole person, as opposed to studying only one aspect of the person.

Practical significance: An association large enough to have practical importance.

Random assignment: The process of putting people randomly into groups of an experiment so

their characteristics balance out across groups.

Statistical significance: The likelihood of an obtained effect occurring when there is no true effect.

Third-variable problem: The possibility that an unmeasured variable caused variations in both of two correlated variables.

Variable: A dimension along which two or more variations exist.

TEST ITEMS

Multiple Choice

1. Looking inward to your own experience is called

- a. inspection.
- b. self-monitoring.
- c. introspection.
- d. personal case study.

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

2. Henry Murray used the term _____ to describe efforts to understand the whole person.

- a. biographical research
- b. personology
- c. introspection
- d. macro-assessment

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

3. Which view most directly promotes the use of case studies?

- a. Introspection
- b. Cognitive
- c. Personology
- d. Correlational

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

4. Which of the following is NOT true of the case study method?

- a. Case studies are rich in detail.
- b. Case studies are often clinical studies.
- c. Case studies can be used to generate theories.
- d. Case studies are conducted in settings carefully created and controlled by the researcher.

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

5. Experience sampling studies are similar to case studies in that they both

- a. typically involve repeated measurements.
- b. typically use external observers.
- c. typically require people to think back far in time.
- d. all of these answers are correct

Answer: A

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

6. What prevents the results of a single case study from being applied to many people?

- a. Lack of test–retest reliability
- b. Lack of generality
- c. General scoring error
- d. Singular inconsistency

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

7. Most personality research has been done
- in the United States or western Europe.
 - on college students.
 - on white, middle- to upper-middle-class people.
 - all of these answers are correct

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

8. A _____ is a dimension along which variations exist. There are always at least two _____ along each dimension.
- level, constructs
 - value, variables
 - variable, observations
 - variable, values

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

9. Psychologists describe correlations by referring to their
- direction and duration.
 - duration and strength.
 - direction and strength.
 - none of these answers are correct

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

10. Which of the following is one way to organize information about a correlation?

- a. A scatterplot
- b. A horizontal plot
- c. A pie chart
- d. A vertical plot

Answer: A

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

11. A scatterplot with many points in the lower right quadrant of the plot, many points in the upper left quadrant, and very few points in the other quadrants would indicate a(n)

- a. positive correlation.
- b. negative correlation.
- c. inverse correlation.
- d. reverse correlation.

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Difficult

12. When low values on one dimension are associated with high values on another dimension, the correlation between the two variables is termed

- a. inadequate.
- b. inverse.
- c. qualified.
- d. substantive.

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

13. The strength of a correlation refers to its

- a. directionality.
- b. degree of accuracy in prediction.
- c. positivity as opposed to negativity.
- d. level of statistical significance.

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

14. A perfect positive correlation is indicated by an r value of:

- a. 0.0
- b. 1.0
- c. 10.0
- d. 100.0

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

15. Which of the following is the strongest plausible correlation coefficient?

- a. 1.68
- b. -.63
- c. .42
- d. .56

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Difficult

16. A correlation of _____ means two variables are not related at all.

- a. .5

- b. .0
- c. -.5
- d. -1.0

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

17. To test whether research findings can be attributed to chance, researchers use

- a. random numbers tables.
- b. descriptive statistics.
- c. inferential statistics.
- d. all of these answers are correct

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

18. If a research finding is statistically significant, it

- a. is unlikely to have occurred by chance.
- b. will have wide-ranging effects.
- c. is important to humanity.
- d. is likely to have occurred by chance.

Answer: A

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

19. In addition to statistical significance, psychologists often talk about the _____ significance of research results.

- a. scientific
- b. humanitarian
- c. practical

d. historical

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

20. Correlational research cannot tell us

- a. how strongly two variables go together.
- b. why two variables go together.
- c. whether two variables go together.
- d. in what direction two variables go together.

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

21. Why can't correlational research tell us why two variables go together?

- a. Because it is conducted in laboratories instead of the real world
- b. Because it is not scientifically rigorous
- c. Because it is too experimental
- d. Because of the third-variable problem

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

22. What type of study design allows for statements about causality?

- a. Case study
- b. Experimental
- c. Correlational
- d. Multifactor

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

23. The independent variable is the one that is

- a. free to vary.
- b. measured.
- c. manipulated.
- d. the outcome variable.

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

24. The variable manipulated by the experimenter is called the

- a. independent variable.
- b. control variable.
- c. dependent variable.
- d. correlation coefficient.

Answer: A

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

25. Ensuring that all variables are constant in an experiment, except for the independent variable, is called

- a. random sampling.
- b. experimental control.
- c. random assignment.
- d. experimental manipulation.

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between

variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

26. Which of the following is NOT a reason someone would use random assignment?
- To assure that each participant has an equal chance of being in either experimental condition
 - To balance out differences between experimental groups
 - To rule out the third variable problem
 - To assure that people within each group are similar to one another

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Evaluate

Difficulty Level: Difficult

27. If a researcher randomly assigns subjects to two groups at the beginning of an experiment, we can assume that at that point
- The groups will have similar numbers of males and females.
 - The two groups will be similar with respect to IQ.
 - The two groups will be approximately equal in size.
 - all of these answers are correct

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Evaluate

Difficulty Level: Difficult

28. If you find that two groups differ from each other on the dependent measure at the end of an experiment, you are able to conclude that
- only one thing could have caused the difference: manipulation of the dependent variable.
 - the groups differed on the dependent measure before the study started.
 - only one thing could have caused the difference: manipulation of the independent variable.
 - none of these answers are correct

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Evaluate

Difficulty Level: Moderate

29. If a study categorizes subjects on the basis of some naturally occurring difference, it is most likely a(n)

- a. correlational study.
- b. experimental study.
- c. cross-lagged study.
- d. case study.

Answer: A

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

30. One reason that a personality psychologist might not use the experimental method is

- a. experiments tend to be long in duration.
- b. experiments cannot be used in personality research.
- c. for ethical reasons, certain variables can't be manipulated.
- d. all of these answers are correct

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

31. The factors in any given multifactor study

- a. are always personality variables.
- b. are always experimental manipulations.
- c. can be any combination of personality variables and experimental manipulations.
- d. cannot all be experimental variables.

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply
Difficulty Level: Moderate

32. Experimental personality research

- a. focuses on only one variable at a time.
- b. combines experimental manipulations and individual differences.
- c. tells us nothing about cause and effect.
- d. none of these answers is correct

Answer: B

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

33. In multifactor research, possible results fall into which two categories?

- a. Good and bad
- b. Interactive and singular
- c. Main effects and interactions
- d. Correlational and causal

Answer: C

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

34. Interaction effects are possible to find only in

- a. interaction studies.
- b. correlational studies.
- c. main effect studies.
- d. multifactor studies.

Answer: D

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

True and False

1. Looking inward to one's own experiences is known as *introspection*.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

2. One reason introspection is problematic is that people tend to feel certain their memory is correct.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

3. Unlike introspection, observation of another person is unbiased.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

4. Henry Murray coined the term *personology*.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

5. *Personology* is the study one small aspect of a person.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

6. Case studies are lacking in detail relative to other types of studies.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

7. One advantage of experience-sampling studies is that they do not tend to require people to remember events from the distant past.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

8. The idiographic method focuses on groups of individuals.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

9. It is very difficult for a single case study to be generalizable to everyone.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

10. Most of the research on personality has been done in the United States and Europe.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

11. A variable must have at least three values or levels.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.1: Define case study, experience sampling, and the concept of generality
Skill level: Apply
Difficulty Level: Moderate

12. In order to study age-related changes in personality, you would need to study at least two age groups.

Answer: T
Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables
LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables
Skill level: Apply
Difficulty Level: Moderate

13. In order to understand the relationship between two variables, psychologists consider the strength and direction of that relationship.

Answer: T
Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables
LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables
Skill level: Understand
Difficulty Level: Easy

14. If lower values on one variable are associated with lower values on another, the two variables are negatively correlated.

Answer: F
Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables
LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables
Skill level: Analyze
Difficulty Level: Moderate

15. A correlation of $r = .27$ is stronger than a correlation of $r = -.57$.

Answer: F
Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables
LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables
Skill level: Analyze
Difficulty Level: Moderate

16. When the probability of a correlation being as large as it is if no true relationship exists between the variables is less than 5%, we consider the result statistically significant.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

17. A clinically or practically significant association is typically not statistically significant.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

18. A statistically significant correlation is always an important one.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

19. Correlational research provides information about causality among two or more variables.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

20. In order for a study to be considered experimental, the researcher must manipulate a variable.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

21. In experimental research, the researcher actively creates a difference between the treatment given to one group and the treatment given to others.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

22. Experimental control is not a necessary component of experimental research.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

23. In experimental research, variables that can't be controlled, such as individual differences, are treated by random assignment.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Easy

24. Because it is sometimes difficult to know what it was about a manipulation that produced an effect, we must be cautious even about how we view the results of experiments.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

25. Results of correlational studies are always reported as correlations.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between

variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

26. Personality psychologists have criticized experiments on the grounds that they don't deal directly with personality.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

27. All variables can be manipulated in an ethical fashion.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

28. It is not possible to combine correlational and experimental techniques in the same study.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

29. It is impossible to do research in which one variable is an experimental manipulation and two are personality variables.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

30. All experimental personality research studies are multifactor studies.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Difficult

31. The more factors involved in a study, the easier it is to clearly interpret results.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

32. Interactions can only be detected in multifactor studies.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

33. It is possible to observe an interaction if a study includes one factor.

Answer: F

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

34. An interaction between variables can take a variety of forms.

Answer: T

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Short Essay

1. How are experience sampling studies similar to case studies? How are they different?

Sample Answer:

Experience sampling studies are similar to case studies in that they provide depth and are conducted across periods of time. They are different in that they rely on self-reports from the person under study rather than external observers.

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1.3: Depth from Experience Sampling

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

2. If only college students are used as research participants, what impact does this have on how results may be interpreted?

Sample Answer:

Results may lack generality because college students differ from older adults in several ways, e.g., having a less fully formulated sense of self.

Topic/Concept: Gathering Information

LO #/Text: 2.1.4: Seeking Generality: Studies of Many People

Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Moderate

3. Why is it so important to examine at least two levels of a personality variable before drawing conclusions?

Sample Answer:

You cannot be sure that the different values on the first variable are really associated with different values on the second variable unless you examine at least two levels. For example, we cannot see the effects of having low self-esteem by looking only at people with low self-esteem. You must also determine if the particular effect is absent (or present) among those with high self-esteem.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kinds of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

4. Identify and describe the two aspects of a correlation that need to be considered in order to understand its meaning.

Sample Answer:

DIRECTION: Positive—low values on one variable tend to go with low values on the other, and high values on one tend to go with high values on the other. Negative (inverse)—high values on one variable tend to go with low values on the other, and vice versa.

STRENGTH: Accuracy with which you can predict values on one dimension from values on the other dimension; ranges from $r = -1.0$ to $r = +1.0$.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables Skill Level: Understand

Difficulty Level: Moderate

5. Explain what is meant by *statistical significance*. How does statistical significance relate to the issue of importance?

Sample Answer:

Significant does not mean *important* in the usual sense. Rather, computations indicate the effect was unlikely to have been a product of chance factors. For example, if probability is 5% or less, the correlation is believable and, therefore, statistically significant. But it might only account for a small fraction of the behavior and may, therefore, be relatively unimportant in a practical sense.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Difficult

6. Doug observes that people who exercise tend to have higher levels of self-esteem. What are three ways Doug might interpret this correlational finding?

Sample Answer:

First, it could be that people who are high in self-esteem also tend to exercise. Second, it could be that exercise leads people to have higher levels of self-esteem. Finally, it might be that some unmeasured third factor may be causing both high levels of self-esteem and exercise.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Evaluate

Difficulty Level: Difficult

7. The use of random assignment is based on a specific assumption. Identify/explain that assumption.

Sample Answer:

If you study enough people, any important differences between them (and from other sources) will balance out between groups. Each group will, therefore, be likely to have as many depressed people, confident people, or people with any other trait that might be important.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables Skill Level: Apply

Difficulty Level: Moderate

8. Discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of the correlational method versus the experimental method.

Sample Answer:

CORRELATIONAL:

Advantages—(1) May examine events that take place over longer time periods and are very elaborate; (2) May gain information about events in which experimental manipulation would be unethical.

Disadvantage—Can say nothing about causal relationship between variables.

EXPERIMENTAL:

Advantage—Ability to demonstrate cause-and-effect relationship between variables.

Disadvantages—(1) Some uncertainty about what it was in the manipulation that was important; (2) Experiments on humans are usually limited to phenomena of relatively short duration, under carefully controlled conditions; (3) Experimental relationships often have little to do with central issues of personality.

Topic/Concept: Establishing Relationships among Variables

LO #/Text: 2.2: Examine the process of establishing two kind of relationships between variables

Skill Level: Analyze

Difficulty Level: Moderate

PRIMARY SOURCES

Aronson, E., Ellsworth, P. C., Carlsmith, J. M., & Gonzales, M. H. (1990). *Methods of research in social psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Cohen, J., & Cohen, P. (1975). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Assoc.