Chapter 2

Personality Assessment, Measurement, and Research Methods

Sources of Personality Data

• Self-Report Data (S-Data)
• Observer-Report Data (O-Data)
• Test-Data (T-Data)
• Life-Outcome Data (L-Data)
Issues in Personality Assessment

• Links among different data sources
• Fallibility of personality measurement
  – All sources of data have limitations
  – Results that replicate through “triangulation” are most powerful

Evaluation of Personality Measures

• Reliability
• Validity
• Generalizability
Reliability

• Degree to which measure represents “true” level of trait being measured
• Degree to which measure produces consistent results.
  – Test-retest reliability
  – Inter-rater reliability
  – Internal consistency
    • Split Half reliability
    • Alternate Forms reliability

Validity

• Degree to which test measures what it claims to measure
• Types of validity
  – Face validity
  – Predictive validity
  – Convergent validity
  – Discriminant validity
  – Construct validity
Generalizability

• Degree to which measure retains validity across different contexts, including different groups of people and different conditions
• Generalizability subsumes reliability and validity
• Greater generalizability not always better; what is important is to identify empirically contexts in which a measure is and is not applicable

Research Designs in Personality

• Experimental Methods
• Correlational Studies
• Case Studies
Correlational Studies

• Correlation coefficient varies from $-1$ (perfect negative relationships) through 0 (no relationship) to $+1$ (perfect positive relationship)
• Correlation does not indicate causation
  – Directionality problem
  – Third variable problem

When to Use Experimental, Correlational, and Case Study Designs

• Each design has strengths and weakness; strength of one is weakness of another
• Which design a researcher uses depends on the research question and the goal of research
• Taken together, three designs provide complementary methods for exploring personality
Summary and Evaluation

• Decisions about data source and research design depend on the purpose of study
• There is no perfect data source
• There is no perfect research design
• But some data sources and some methods are better suited for some purposes than for others