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