Personality Notes

PSYC 370

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

1.1 Defining Personality

- *Personality*: consistent behavior patterns and intrapersonal processes originating within the individual.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter Outline:

- The Hypothesis-Testing Approach
- The Case Study Method
- Statistical Analysis of Data
- Personality assessment
- Summary

2.1 The Hypothesis-Testing Approach

- **Theory**: General statement about the relationship between constructs or events.
  - Differ in the range of events or phenomena they cover.
- Characteristics of a good theory:
  - Parsimonious –Explains the phenomenon in simple terms.
  - Useful –Generates testable hypotheses.
- **Hypothesis**: Formal prediction about the relationship between or more variables that is logically derived from a theory.
- A theory is not accepted if empirical investigations consistently fail to confirm predictions.

2.1.1 Types of Experimental Variables

- **Independent variable**: Manipulated by the experimenter.
- **Dependent variable**: Measured by the experimenter.
- **Non-Manipulated independent variable**:
  - Exists without the researcher's intervention.
  - Investigator does not randomly assign participants to a conditions
  - Research cannot assume the participants in the two groups are identical.
  - Difficult to find cause-and-effect relationships.
- **Manipulated independent variable**:

- Begins with numerous participants.
- Randomly assigns participants to experimental groups.
- Researcher can assume that all the differences will be evened out.
- Random assignment increases confidence in causation relationships.

Interaction of Experimental Variables

- Research often has more than one independent variable.
- Interaction:
  - How one independent variable affects the dependent variable depends on the other independent variable.

2.1.2 Predictions

- Accurate predictions can be made if a scientist has a legitimate theory.
- Purpose of research is to provide support for a hypothesis.
- Researchers:
  - Generate a theory
  - Make a hypothesis
  - Collect data that supports or opposes the hypothesis

  Unpredicted findings by the researchers are the basis for future hypotheses and further research.

2.1.3 Replication

- Repetition of the research.
  - Example: Pharmaceutical company finds their new medication treats depression in adult men.
- Examines participant populations different from those used in the original research,
- Helps to determine whether the effect applies to larger number of people or is limited to the kind of individuals used in the original sample.
- Determining the strength of an effect by how often it is replicated is difficult because of the ***File Drawer Problem***.
  - Harder to get published when you didn't find significant results.
  - Researchers publish and report research only when they find significant effects.

2.2 The Case Study Method

- **Case study**: In-depth analysis of an individual, group, or event.
- **Case study method**:
  - Involves the collection of data from a single individual.
  - Can be used to study a single individual or a group.

2.2.1 Limitations of Case Study Method

- Determining cause-and-effect relationships.
- **Generalizability**:
  - Difficulty in generalizing from a single case to a larger population.

2.2.2 Strengths of Case Study Method

- Offers insight into the richness of a person's life.
- Valuable for generating hypotheses about the nature of human personality.
- Acts as a useful research tool. Appropriate in examining a rare case.

2.3 Statistical Analysis of Data

- Types of statistical tests appropriate for different types of data and research designs.
  - Analysis of variance (ANOVA).
  - χ^2 test.
  - Correlational coefficients.

2.4 Reliability

- Extent to which a test measures consistently.
  - Determined by calculating test-retest reliability coefficient.
- Internal consistency
  - All items on the test measure the same thing.
  - **Internal consistency reliability coefficient**:
    - High coefficient indicates that all items on the test measure the same thing.
    - Low coefficient suggests items are measuring more than one concept.

2.5 Validity

- Extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure.
- Easy to determine for some kinds of tests.
- Face validity:
  - Way to decide whether a test measures what it is says it measures is to look at the test items.
- Congruent validity:
  - Extent to which scores from the test correlation with other measures of the same construct.
  - Otherwise known as convergent validity.
- Discriminant validity:
  - Extent to which a test score does not correlate with the scores of theoretically unrelated measures.
- Behavioral validation:
  - Step in determining the construct validity of a test.
  - Test scores predicting relevant behavior is important.
  - Usefulness of the test must be questioned if the test scores cannot predict behavior.