Chapter 2

Personality Research Methods

1. Which of the following statements is true about theories of personality?

   A. They provide only a part of the picture of human personality.
   B. They support the expert's viewpoint.
   C. Theories are predicted from one hypothesis or another.
   D. They are directly tested using empirical methods.

   ANS: A REF: 19

2. According to the "law of parsimony,"

   A. a good theory generates a large number of hypotheses.
   B. the best theory is the one that explains a phenomenon with the fewest constructs.
   C. hypotheses are generated from theories.
   D. theories should require as few studies as possible to support them.

   ANS: B REF: 20

3. Which of the following statements is true about theories in personality psychology?

   A. A good theory generates testable hypotheses.
   B. A theory is a statement about the relationship between constructs or events.
   C. The best theory is the one that explains a phenomenon with the fewest constructs.
   D. all of the above

   ANS: D REF: 20

4. A researcher maintains that a person's self-esteem level is largely inherited from his or her parents. From this she derives the prediction that children with low self-esteem probably come from homes where one or both parents have low self-esteem. In this case, the prediction is the

   A. theory.
   B. hypothesis.
   C. independent variable.
   D. dependent variable.

   ANS: B REF: 21 WWW

5. Personality researchers take steps to discover the nature of personality in which order?

A. Generate hypotheses, evaluate data, speculate
B. Generate hypotheses, collect data, evaluate data
C. Collect data, evaluate data, speculate
D. Speculate, collect data, generate hypotheses

ANS: B REF: 21

6. When conducting personality research, in most cases a researcher should

A. begin with a theory from which the hypothesis is derived.
B. wait until the results are in before deciding what the hypothesis is.
C. use the most recent personality tests available.
D. wait until seeing the data before deciding which theory the results support.

ANS: A REF: 21

7. Which of the following is *not* true about a good theory?

A. It uses as few concepts as necessary to explain a phenomenon.
B. It can generate many testable hypotheses.
C. It is never proved or disproved.
D. All experts agree it is correct.

ANS: D REF: 21

8. The sequence researchers move through when using the hypothesis-testing approach are

A. prediction - theory - test.
B. theory - prediction - test.
C. test - prediction - theory.
D. prediction - test - theory.

ANS: B REF: 22

9. A researcher divides participants into those who suffer from insomnia and those who sleep well. He compares the two groups on the number of hours each spends at leisure activities in an average week. He finds the insomniacs spend significantly fewer hours at such activities than do the participants who sleep well. In this example, the number of hours spent at leisure activities is

A. the independent variable.
B. the dependent variable.
C. confounded with which group the participant is in.
D. the hypothesis.

ANS: B REF: 23

10. You are studying the immediate effects of alcohol on people's feelings of well-being. Which of the following could be the dependent variable in this study?

A. Score on a measure of well-being

B. Amount of alcohol consumed within one hour prior to test
C. Level of alcohol in the blood
D. Either b or c

ANS: A REF: 23

11. To obtain an interaction in your research findings, you would need more than one

A. independent variable.
B. dependent variable.
C. hypothesis.
D. statistical test.

ANS: A REF: 24 WWW

12. A subject variable, which is a characteristic of research participants, is also known as

A. a hypothesis.
B. a manipulated independent variable.
C. a nonmanipulated independent variable.
D. a personality assessment.

ANS: C REF: 25

13. A researcher finds that males make fewer errors than females when working in a competitive situation. However, women make fewer errors than men when working in a cooperative situation. This is an example of

A. a confound.
B. two manipulated independent variables.
C. an interaction.
D. a failure to replicate.

ANS: C REF: 24

14. A researcher compares people who have gone to college with those who have not. He predicts and finds that people with a college education are less likely to smoke or drink than those who never went. In this example, the researcher is using

A. randomly assigned participants.
B. a manipulated independent variable.
C. a nonmanipulated independent variable.
D. a correlation coefficient.

ANS: C REF: 25

15. A researcher uses a manipulated independent variable in her experiment. This means she

A. conducts her research in a laboratory.
B. uses comparison groups.
C. makes her prediction before conducting the study.
D. randomly assigns participants to conditions.

ANS: D REF: 25

16. Experimenters can be most confident in making statements about cause and effect when they conduct research using which of the following?

A. Correlation coefficients
B. Manipulated independent variables
C. Nonmanipulated independent variables
D. Case studies

ANS: B REF: 25 WWW

17. A statistically significant finding can sometimes be the result of chance fluctuation. This concern can be eased by

A. replication.
B. using case studies.
C. making predictions before seeing the data.
D. using manipulated independent variables.

ANS: A REF: 27

18. What is made difficult by the "file drawer" problem?

A. Determining if the prediction was made before or after seeing the results
B. Determining if the appropriate statistical tests were used
C. Determining the strength of an effect by how often it is replicated
D. Determining how valid the measures were

ANS: C REF: 27

19. Which of the following is true about replication in experimental research?

A. We often use different experimental methods to reach different conclusions.
B. We deal with the problem of prediction versus hindsight by replicating the results of original research.
C. We often use participant populations different from those used in the original research.
D. We tend to explain effect after the data are in.

ANS: C REF: 27

20. A psychologist is working with a patient who suffers from a very rare disorder. Which type of research is the psychologist likely to use?

A. Laboratory research
B. Survey research
C. Case study
D. Replication

ANS: C REF: 28

21. Which of the following is correct about the case study method?

A. It should only be used when a large number of participants cannot be examined.
B. It has been used almost exclusively by psychologists from the psychoanalytic perspective.
C. It is used only to generate hypotheses and illustrate treatments.
D. Sometimes it is more appropriate than conducting an experiment.

ANS: D REF: 29 WWW

22. Typically, a case study

A. has no comparison group.
B. is of little interest to personality theorists.
C. reports a large amount of numerical data.
D. allows researchers to draw strong conclusions about cause and effect.

ANS: A REF: 28

23. Some researchers try to understand personality with in-depth evaluations of individuals or groups of people. This approach is better known as

A. the hypothesis-testing method.
B. the experimental approach.
C. the correlation coefficient.
D. the case study method.

ANS: D REF: 28

24. Among the disadvantages of the case study method is

A. the problem of replicating a treatment.
B. the difficulty with determining relationships among variables.
C. the difficulty of examining certain concepts experimentally.
D. the possibility of subjective judgments.

ANS: D REF: 29

25. A psychologist gives several personality tests to a group of participants. When sifting through her data, she is surprised to find that people born in the summer have a slightly higher (but statistically significant) need for Achievement than those born in the winter. She concludes that exposing children to the stimulation of the outdoors during the first few months of life (as the summer-born children were) results in a higher need for Achievement when the children become adults. What might we conclude from this?

A. The hypothesis needs to be tested with a controlled lab study.
B. The hypothesis has not been tested because the researcher explained the findings after seeing the results.
C. The hypothesis is supported with these data, but probably should be replicated to see if it generalizes to other samples.

D. The hypothesis is useless because it cannot be tested.

ANS: B REF: 30

26. A researcher finds that men make more errors on a memory task than do women. After conducting the appropriate statistical test on this difference, he finds a probability level of less than .05. The researcher will probably conclude that

A. the difference represents a chance fluctuation.
B. the difference is statistically significant.
C. if he conducts the study again, there is a high probability that no difference would be found or that women would make more errors.
D. there is only a five in 100 chance that his finding represents a real difference between men and women.

ANS: B REF: 31

27. If the difference in a measured behavior is so small between experimental groups that it could be caused by a chance fluctuation, then we say

A. the result failed to reach statistical significance.
B. the result reached statistical significance.
C. the result was reliable between groups.
D. the result established a cause-and-effect relationship.

ANS: A REF: 31

28. Which of the following describes the relationship between your credit card balance each month and the amount of interest you are paying (not interest rate)?

A. A perfect negative correlation
B. A weak negative correlation
C. No correlation
D. A strong positive correlation

ANS: D REF: 32

29. Which of the following is correct about interpreting the results of statistical tests?

A. Obtaining a probability value of .05 tells us the difference between groups is definitely not caused by chance fluctuation.
B. If a probability value falls above .05, then the results will have to be replicated before we can have confidence in them.
C. Obtaining a probability value of .05 gives us confidence that the findings are not the result of chance, but does not eliminate this possibility.
D. A .05 probability value means there is a 5 percent chance the finding reflects a real difference.

ANS: C REF: 31

30. A psychologist gives a group of participants 20 personality tests. He looks at the correlations between each test and each of the other 19 (a total of 180 correlation

coefficients). He finds two correlations that are statistically significant—that is, that his statistical tests tell him would not occur more than five times out of 100. What should the psychologist conclude from his study?

A. The two statistically significant correlations probably represent "real" relationships.
B. The tests he used probably were not valid.
C. The two statistically significant correlations might very well be chance findings.
D. The tests he used may not be reliable.

ANS: C REF: 31

31. Statistical tests of significance provide a yes or no answer to which question?

A. Is there a correlation between variable X and variable Y?
B. Does the treatment cause changes in behavior?
C. Is the difference in the treatment conditions due to chance?
D. None of the above

ANS: D REF: 31

32. Tony found in his study of introversion that the more introverted subjects in his sample had fewer problems at work. Tony has found evidence for a

A. cause of work-related satisfaction.
B. statistically significant positive correlation.
C. statistically significant negative correlation.
D. a nonmanipulated independent variable.

ANS: C REF: 32

33. Which of the following does a correlation coefficient *not* tell us?

A. If the difference between two means reflects a real difference or can be attributed to chance fluctuation.
B. The strength of a relationship between two measures.
C. The direction of a relationship between two measures.
D. How well a score on one measure can be predicted by a score on another.

ANS: A REF: 31

34. Which of the following correlation coefficients indicates the strongest relationship?

A. .50
B. .20
C. 0
D. –.60

ANS: D REF: 32 WWW

35. Which of the following is the correlation coefficient indicating the strongest relationship?

A. –.62
B. .00

C. .89
D. –.05

ANS: C REF: 32

36. Which of the following is true about reliability?

A. Through statistical analyses, a test can be determined to be either reliable or not.
B. A test does not need reliability if it has good face validity.
C. If a test has reliability, it also has validity.
D. A test's reliability is shown by how well the test items correlate with each other.

ANS: D REF: 34

37. A test maker conducts the appropriate statistical tests to make sure that all the items on his new personality test are measuring the same basic concept. He wants to demonstrate that the test has good

A. discriminant validity.
B. congruent validity.
C. test-retest reliability.
D. internal consistency.

ANS: D REF: 35 WWW

38. A test that measures consistently over time has a high

A. test-retest coefficient.
B. internal consistency.
C. face validity.
D. internal validity.

ANS: A REF: 34

39. Which of the following is a problem of test validity?

A. When test responses are depend on recent events.
B. When test questions are vague.
C. When test responses do not reflect the hypothetical constructs being measured.
D. When similar test responses cannot be obtained in a second testing.

ANS: C REF: 35

40. Which of the following statements is correct about hypothetical constructs?

A. They are useful inventions by researchers that have no physical reality.
B. They are easier to measure than personality variables.
C. They cannot be measured with personality tests.
D. They have poor reliability and validity.

ANS: A REF: 35

41. A personality researcher administered her new measure of self-esteem to a group of

participants. She waited two weeks and then gave the test to the same people again. She found that scores on the test changed quite a bit during the two-week period. Many participants who had scored low during the first administration scored high the second time, and many who had scored high initially scored low on the second administration. What problem does the researcher have with the new test?

A. Poor reliability
B. Poor internal consistency
C. Poor congruent validity
D. Poor face validity

ANS: A REF: 34

42. A reliable test

A. measures what it was designed to measure.
B. measures what it measures consistently.
C. has good validity.
D. measures many different concepts at once.

ANS: B REF: 34

43. Jessica is conducting a study of the personality of eighth-graders with high achievement motivation. She discovers from statistical analysis that her test's items are measuring more than one concept. You might tell Jessica that she has a problem with

A. internal consistency.
B. reliability.
C. statistical significance.
D. predictive validity.

ANS: A REF: 35

44. A psychologist developed a new measure of "stage fright." He gave the test to 30 students and divided them into those scoring high and those scoring low. Next, he watched the students for signs of anxiety just before each was to give a talk in front of a class. What was the psychologist trying to establish by watching the students before their talk?

A. Internal consistency
B. Behavioral validation
C. Discriminant validity
D. Test-retest reliability

ANS: B REF: 37

45. When scores from a test correlate with other measures of the same construct, researchers can determine the test's

A. face validity.
B. congruent validity.
C. construct validity.
D. discriminant validity.

ANS: B REF: 36

46. A psychologist develops a new test for measuring a construct he calls “need for Status.” However, another psychologist to whom he shows the test says it looks like a measure of “need for Achievement.” What type of evidence does the first psychologist need to collect to persuade the second psychologist?

A. Internal consistency
B. Congruent validity
C. Discriminant validity
D. Behavioral validation

ANS: C REF: 37

47. A test maker wants to show that scores on her new measure of schizophrenia are correlated with professional psychologists' ratings of schizophrenia. She is interested in establishing

A. face validity.
B. congruent validity.
C. discriminant validity.
D. behavioral validation.

ANS: B REF: 36

48. A test maker wants to make sure her new measure of social anxiety appears to be measuring the construct. The test maker is interested in

A. face validity.
B. congruent validity.
C. discriminant validity.
D. behavioral validation.

ANS: A REF: 36

49. A test is said to have good validity if there is good evidence that

A. all the test items are measuring the same thing.
B. it has been used previously by many different researchers.
C. test scores are relatively stable over time.
D. the test measures what it was designed to measure.

ANS: D REF: 36

50. State in general terms a psychological theory you know about. From the theory, develop a hypothesis of your own that is a prediction from the theory. Identify the independent and dependent variables in your hypothesis and briefly describe an experimental test you could use to evaluate your hypothesis. Does your study use manipulated or nonmanipulated independent variables?

REF: 19-26

51. Give three reasons why statistically significant findings for a hypothesis may be, in reality,

due to chance.

REF: 26-27, 30-31

52. Describe a test or measure that is low in reliability. How can you know that it has poor reliability? Would a correlation coefficient for reliability be closer to 1.00 or -1.00 for this test? List some reasons why personality tests can be low in reliability.

REF: 34-35

53. Define validity. List by name the several kinds of test validity. Discuss each kind of validity by contrasting examples of tests that are low and high in it.

REF: 35-37

54. Most personality research begins with an assessment.

ANS: FALSE REF: 20

55. A formal prediction about the relationship between two or more variables is more commonly called a correlation.

ANS: FALSE REF: 21

56. The use of nonmanipulated variables is required when an independent variable exists without the experimenter's intervention.

ANS: TRUE REF: 25

57. Case studies have played a minor role in the history of personality psychology.

ANS: FALSE REF: 28

58. The correlation coefficient is an appropriate statistic when we want to understand the relationship between two measures.

ANS: TRUE REF: 32

59. A test is said to have high internal consistency when it yields similar scores each time it is administered to the same people.

ANS: FALSE REF: 35