**CHAPTER 1—PERSONALITY AND THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK**

**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

I. Why study personality? The study of human personality helps us understand ourselves and other people better and gives us a greater appreciation for the complexity of human experience.

II. Definition of **Personality**: Personality is the dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by an individual that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations and behaviors in various situations.

III. Personality and Science: Personality is a scientific enterprise concerned with the description, explanation, prediction, and control of events.

A. Components of Science: Theories and Research Methods

1. What are **theories**? A theory is a system of interrelated conceptual statements that are created by investigators to account for a phenomenon or a set of phenomena.

2. Kinds of theories

a. **inductive**-sets of general summary statements about phenomena derived from facts.

b. **deductive**-theories in which specific hypotheses are derived from abstract propositions and then tested by the collection of data. Deductive theories consist of postulates, propositions, conceptual definitions, operational definitions, hypotheses, and empirical observations.

1. **postulates**-the fundamental or core assumptions of a theory. They are taken as self-evidently true in order to provide a clear and focused direction for theorizing and research.

2. **propositions**- general relational statements that may be true or false. They are not tested directly; instead, hypotheses are derived from them.

3. **hypotheses-**specific propositions containing constructs that are conceptually defined and operationalized so they can tested and confirmed or disconfirmed through empirical testing. Hypotheses are tentative theoretical statements about how events are related to one another, often stated as predictions.

a. **a prior predictions**-predictions made before the collection of data.

4. **conceptual definitions**- concepts in the hypotheses are defined precisely so that accurate measures of the concepts can be devised.

5. **operational definitions**- procedures (or operations) used to define particular constructs.

6. **empirical observations**-observations of phenomena made by investigators.

1V. Research Methods Used to Test Theories

A. **Experimental Method**-technique for studying cause-and- effect relationships between variables. It involves the manipulation of independent variables and observation of the effects of the manipulation(s) on dependent variables.

1. **independent variables**-the variables actively manipulated by the experimenter so that their effects on individual behavior can be observed.

2. **dependent variables**-changes in behavior that occur as a result of the manipulation of conditions by an experimenter.

3. **control group**-the group that does not receive the experimental treatment. It is designed to provide baseline data against which the effects of the experimental manipulation(s) on the dependent variable(s) can be accurately judged.

B. **Correlational Method**-general procedure for establishing an association or relationship between events.

1. **positive correlation**-increases in the scores on one variable are associated with increases in the scores on the other variable.

2. **negative correlation**-increases in the scores on one variable are associated with decreases in the scores on the other.

3. **no relation**-the distributions of scores on the two variables are random

C. **Case Study Method**-technique involving the intensive study of a single person in order to understand his or her unique personality and behavior.

1. **post-hoc explanation**-explanation of a phenomenon given *after* its occurrence.

V. Ethics for Conducting Research

A. **informed consent**-the practice of telling study participants about the nature of their participation in a proposed experiment and then obtaining their written agreement to participate.

B. **debriefing**-informing study participants of the true nature and purpose of a study after it is completed.

VI. Criteria for Evaluating Theories

A. **Comprehensiveness**-theories are judged as more adequate and useful if they encompass and account for a wide range and variety of phenomena.

B. **Precision and testability**- adequate theories should contain constructs and relational statements that are clearly and explicitly stated and measured. Under such conditions, theories can be more accurately tested.

C**. Parsimony**- adequate theories should be as economical as possible, while still adequately accounting for the phenomena in their domain.

D. **Empirical validity**- the hypotheses of theories are tested by the collection of data to determine whether or not they are accurate.

E. **Heuristic value**- adequate theories should be challenging; they should stimulate new ideas and new research.

F. **Applied value-** adequate theories are capable of providing creative solutions to problems that are of interest and concern to people in society.