

Unit 1 Handout

Psychological Perspectives

Table 1.1		
Psychology's Current Perspectives		
Perspective	Focus	Sample Questions
Neuroscience	How the body and brain enable emotions, memories, and sensory experiences	How are messages transmitted within the body? How is blood chemistry linked with moods and motives?
Evolutionary	How the natural selection of traits promotes the perpetuation of one's genes	How does evolution influence behavior tendencies?
Behavior genetics	How much our genes and our environment influence our individual differences	To what extent are psychological traits such as intelligence, personality, sexual orientation, and vulnerability to depression attributable to our genes? To our environment?
Psychodynamic	How behavior springs from unconscious drives and conflicts	How can someone's personality traits and disorders be explained in terms of sexual and aggressive drives or as the disguised effects of unfulfilled wishes and childhood traumas?
Behavioral	How we learn observable responses	How do we learn to fear particular objects or situations? What is the most effective way to alter our behavior, say, to lose weight or stop smoking?
Cognitive	How we encode, process, store, and retrieve information	How do we use information in remembering? Reasoning? Solving problems?
Social-cultural	How behavior and thinking vary across situations and cultures	How are we—as Africans, Asians, Australians, or North Americans—alike as members of one human family? As products of different environmental contexts, how do we differ?

Structuralism vs. Functionalism

• Structuralism	• Functionalism
- Task of Psychology is to analyze consciousness into its basic elements and how they relate	- Psychology should investigate the function or purpose of consciousness rather than its structure
- Dependent on introspection - careful, systematic self-observation of one's own consciousness experience	- Influenced by Darwin and his theory of Natural Selection
- Favored Lab Experiments	- Favored how people adapt to real world situations

Scientific Method

- 1) Observe some aspect of the universe and formulate a question
- 2) Invent a theory ("Hypothesis") that is consistent with what you have observed
- 3) Use a theory to make predictions
- 4) Test those predictions by experiments or further observations
- 5) Modify the theory in light of your results
- 6) Go Back to Step 3 if necessary
- 7) Draw conclusions
- 8) Report your results

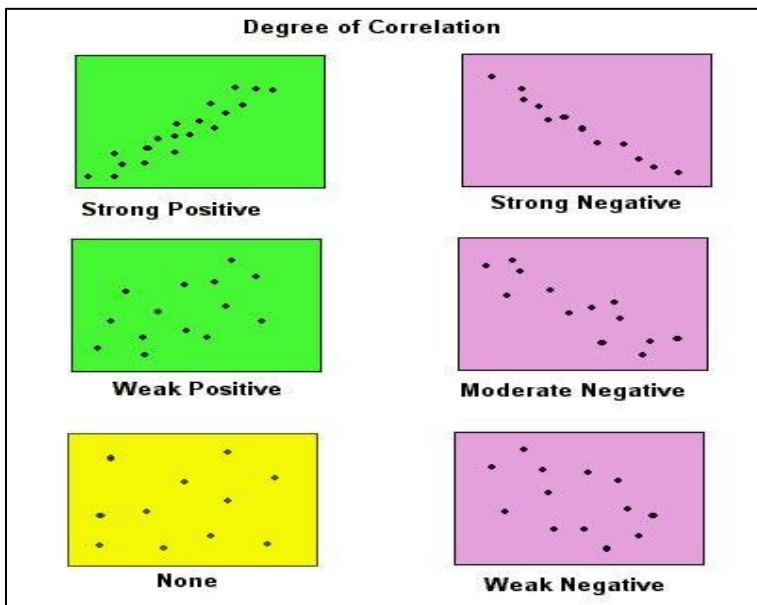
Comparing Research Methods

TABLE 1.2

COMPARING RESEARCH METHODS

Research Method	Basic Purpose	How Conducted	What Is Manipulated
Descriptive	To observe and record behavior	Case studies, surveys, and naturalistic observations	Nothing
Correlational	To detect naturally occurring relationships; to assess how well one variable predicts another	Computing statistical association, sometimes among survey responses	Nothing
Experimental	To explore cause and effect	Manipulating one or more factors and using random assignment to eliminate preexisting differences among subjects	The independent variable(s)

Correlational Relationships



Standard Deviation

