

Review of Research Lectures: Name that Method

For each study described below, answer the following questions: (1) Is the study primarily a correlational study, a quasi-experiment, or an experiment? (2) What variables are involved in the study? For experiments, specify the independent and dependent variables. (3) What is the likely hypothesis tested by the researchers?

A researcher is interested in the relation between caffeine consumption and stress level. She has participants keep a diary for one week, during which they record the number of cups of coffee, tea, and cola-based soft drinks they consume, and to record the number of chocolate candy bars and doses of medications containing caffeine that they consume. Participants also complete a measure of “daily hassles” that they experienced during the week.

Correlational Quasi-experimental Experimental Variables:

Psychologists are interested in the effects of mood on helping. They go to shopping malls and set up observation near telephone booths. Participants are people who use the phone booths in the vicinity of the researchers. Half of the participants find a quarter (left by the researchers) in the pay slot of the phone, and half of the participants find nothing. When the phone call is completed, all participants leave the booths to find a confederate who walks by the booths and drops a file folder full of papers. The researchers observe and record whether participants help pick up the papers, and if so, how long it takes them to do so.

Correlational Quasi-experimental Experimental Variables:

Researchers interested in factors related to aggression. They looked at an entire baseball seasons’ worth of news reports. For each game, the researchers recorded the temperature of the locale where the game was played and also recorded the number of batters who were hit by pitched balls.

Correlational Quasi-experimental Experimental Variables:

A researcher is interested in influences on self-esteem. Half of his participants are women and the other half are men. Participants are given a set of anagram problems to solve in five minutes. Half of the participants are randomly assigned to complete very easy anagrams and half are assigned to complete very difficult anagrams. After solving as many anagrams as they can, all participants complete a questionnaire labelled “Thoughts and Feelings Questionnaire,” which is really a measure of self-esteem.

Correlational Quasi-experimental Experimental Variables:

Researchers are interested whether men and women differ in how easily they are persuaded. Half of the participants are men, and half are women. During the session, men and women rate their attitude toward a tuition increase at their university. After providing their attitudes, they listen to a persuasive message containing strong arguments in favor of a tuition increase. Finally, male and female participants re-rate their attitude toward the proposed increase, and researchers look for gender differences in attitude change.

Correlational Quasi-experimental Experimental Variables:

IV. A Few Words about Ethics

A. Humans are difficult to study.

1. Humans care what others think.
2. Humans are natural “hypothesizers.”
3. Participants have choices.
4. Deception isn’t *always* necessary.

B. “Sins” of Omission versus “Sins” of Commission

C. The Ultimate Irony