

Confound

- Defined: A variable that...
 - Covaries with the Independent Variable (I.V.)
 - May influence the Dependent Variable (D.V.)
- Something that the researcher didn't take into account was allowed to vary and it may explain the result that was obtained
- In experiments, researchers try to isolate the effect of a variable if a confound is present, they haven't done this

Person Confounds

- A personal characteristic (or individual difference variable) is allowed to vary with the I.V.
- Example: Dutton & Aron Bridge Study
 - Tendency towards thrill seeking was allowed to vary with the type of bridge/level of arousal I.V.

Procedural Confounds

- Researcher accidentally manipulates a 2nd variable along with the I.V.
- Example: ethnicity and helping behavior
 - 2nd variable of gender is allowed to vary with the I.V. of ethnicity
- General sloppiness

Operational Confound

- Manipulation influences more than one psychological construct
- Example: effect of mood on helping behavior
 - Offering free cookie manipulates mood but it also manipulates exposure to a prosocial model

Procedural versus Operational Confounds

- Procedural:
 - Did intended manipulation (White, Black, or Latino) have an effect on the DV?
 - We don't know because gender was varied at the same time
 - Problem is in a sloppy operational definition

Procedural versus Operational Confounds

- Operational:
 - Did intended manipulation (free cookie or no free cookie) have an effect on the D.V.? Yes it did
 - Did change in mood cause the effect? We don't know because mood and exposure to a prosocial model were varied at the same time
 - Two concepts are varied by the same operational definition