

Internal Validity



The degree to which the study demonstrates that the treatment *caused* a change in the behavior

Design

- Randomly place people in one group or another group
- Treat both groups exactly the same, EXCEPT...
- One aspect differs between them (e.g., drug, type of therapy, experience)
- If the groups behave differently, you conclude that the aspect they differ on is causing the change in the outcome



Design

- Find a group of people and assess their level of a variable (e.g., depression)
- Introduce a treatment, drug or experience
- Make sure nothing else in their lives has changed
- Assess their level of the variable after they receive the treatment



Challenges to

- Must show that variations in the cause leads to variations in the outcome
- Variations in the cause must come prior to examination of changes in the outcome
- Must establish that the aspect that differs between the groups is the only thing they differ on (i.e., get rid of extraneous factors)



Typical

- Experimenter bias
- Difficult to determine causality in correlational and quasi-experimental designs
 - Participants are not randomly assigned to conditions
