

LEARNING CHECK

1. What is the difference between an independent variable and a predictor variable?

A: An independent variable is manipulated by the researcher, whereas a predictor variable tends to be naturally occurring and cannot be easily manipulated by the researchers.

2. What is the difference between a dependent variable and an outcome variable (also called a criterion)?

A: This is a matter of wording, but the term “dependent variable” tends to be used in experimental research, whereas the term “outcome variable” or “criterion” tends to be used in nonexperimental research. With that said, you will often still see nonexperimental research using terms such as “independent variable” and “dependent variable.” Just be aware of the methodology and whether a variable was manipulated by the researchers.

3. What is (are) the predictor variable(s) in Clayton et al.’s (2013) research?

A: feelings of loneliness, anxiety, alcohol use, and marijuana use

4. What is (are) the outcome variables in Clayton et al.’s (2013) research?

A: Facebook intensity

5. Why would it have been impossible (or least extremely difficult for both practical and ethical reasons) for Clayton and his colleagues (2013) to do an experiment, given the focus of their research?

A: It was not practical (or possible to do ethically) to manipulate the variables of feelings of loneliness, anxiety, alcohol use, and marijuana use. Imagine the problems (legally, practically, and ethically) of randomly assigning a participant to be in the “alcohol consumption” group! Given the nature of this study, an experiment was not possible to do.