

EXTRANEOUS VARIABLE

DEFINITION

An extraneous variable is any variable other than the independent variable that may affect the outcome of an experiment, potentially introducing error. It can confound results if not controlled, leading to misleading conclusions. Researchers try to identify and control these variables to ensure the validity of their findings.

EXAMPLES

- **Time of Day:** If testing cognitive abilities, performance might differ in the morning versus the evening.
- **Temperature:** When studying plant growth, unexpected temperature fluctuations can influence results.
- **Participant Mood:** A participant's mood can affect their responses in an experiment.