

FIGURE 1.4 The Basic Structure of a Quasi-Experiment

Sex is not randomly assigned. Men are assigned to the male condition; women to the female condition.

A sample of men and women is selected from a population.

Male condition:
Men are asked to complete as many tasks as possible in 5 minutes.

Female condition:
Women are asked to complete as many tasks as possible in 5 minutes.

Dependent measure:
The number of tasks completed is recorded.

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In this example, researchers measured differences in multitasking behavior by sex. The grouping variable (sex) is preexisting. That is, participants were already male or female prior to the study. For this reason, researchers cannot manipulate the variable or randomly assign participants to each level of sex, so this study is regarded as a quasi-experiment.