

External Validity

March 25

Definition

How do we define external validity?

- Mundane realism (surface similarity)
- Generalizability of results

Discussion

Experiments have strong internal validity.

If that is why we do experiments, why do we care about the external validity of experiments?

SUTO framework

- Setting
- Units
- Treatments
- Outcome

Assessing external validity

How do we assess the external validity of a single study?

Assessing external validity

The most common multi-study method of assessing external validity is the review

1. Qualitative reviews
2. Quantitative/systematic reviews (meta-analysis)

Assessing external validity

Other strategies of assessing external validity include:

- Formal/exact replication
- Approximate replication
- Statistical generalization
- Parallel experimentation

Exact replication

- Recreate a previous experiment exactly
- Requires a complete protocol
- SUTO: What can we replicate?

Approximate replication

- Model a new study off a previous study
- Possibly intentional changes in SUTO characteristics

Statistical Generalization

- Hedges is interested in the formal, statistical generalization of experiments
- How does this work?

Parallel Experiments

- Execute the same experiment with variations in some experimental feature
- Compare results across experiments
- SUTO: What can we replicate?

Discussion

Are these types of replication useful? Why or why not?

Discussion

How important is it for an experiment to have high external validity?

Discussion

What is the point of a single experiment if it does not generalize?

Presentations

What are you thinking for your exam paper?

Preview

- No class next week
- In 2 weeks:
 - Survey Experiments
 - Presentation by Rune Slothuus
 - Share a one-page synopsis of your project
 - Due via email to me: Monday April 7 12:00