Chapter 14 -- Generalization

- External Validity
  - Ability to generalize results of specific study
    - Different subjects
    - Different setting
    - Different manipulations

Generalizing to other populations

- “Possible” issues
  - College students vs. general population
  - Locale
  - Gender differences
  - Volunteers
  - Cultural

Generalization – interaction?

- Can view generalizability in terms of an interaction
- If results do not generalize between populations
  - Interaction between IV and population

  Example: Effect of TV violence on aggressiveness
  - Run study with college students

Subject considerations

- Don’t assume inability to generalize
- Only a problem if "interaction" occurs
- Too many students – “they only tested college students”
- Need reasonable justification to question generalizability

Generalizing from Laboratory Studies

- Mundane vs. Experimental Realism
  - Mundane realism – degree to which experimental manipulation bears resemblance to events as they occur in the real world
  - Experimental realism – degree to which experimental manipulations affect variables or mechanisms that dictate behavior in the real world

- Experimental realism – most important for generalization

Generalizability

- Can be assessed through replications
Types:
- Exact (direct) replication
  • Try to follow procedures as closely as possible
  • Same operational definitions of variables
  • Helps to identify Type I errors
- Conceptual replication
  • Test same question
  • Use different operational definitions
  • Assesses whether results generalize beyond exact procedure used

Generalizations
- Literature Reviews
  • Articles or chapters that summarize or recap a research literature
  • Examine many studies on a topic
  • May be able to identify limits in generalizability
  • Qualitative

- Meta-Analyses
  • Research (analytic) technique that combines results of many studies
  • Can identify factors limiting generalizability
  • Can measure "strength" of an effect
  • Quantitative