

The concept of Generalizability in Psychology and Economics

Universität Bamberg
▲ Hochschule Harz



Lukas Röseler

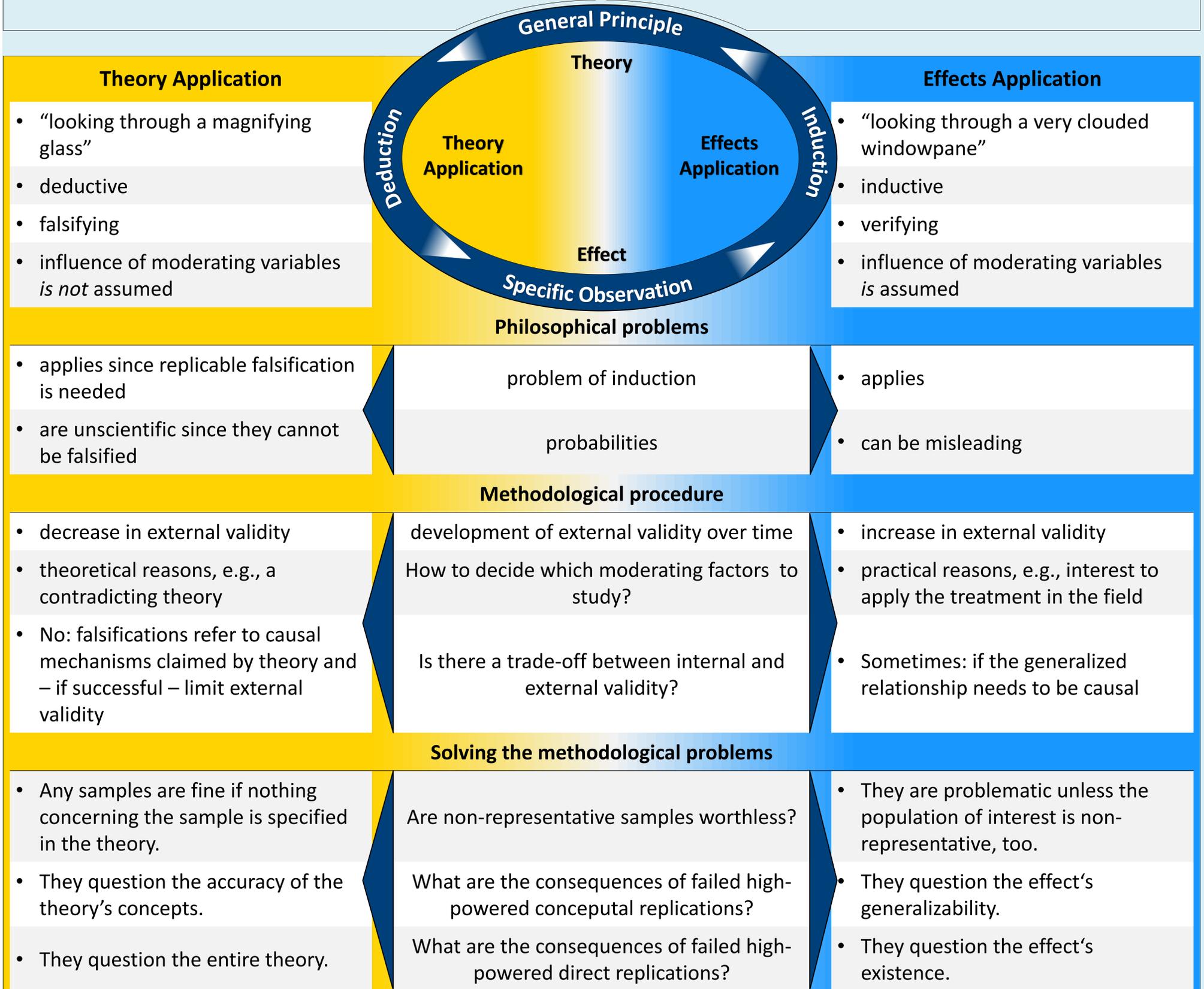
Lukas.roeseler@uni-bamberg.de

Background

Even though generalizability and replicability plays a central role in social sciences, **researchers have yet to agree on what generalizability of results actually means**. On the basis of the **distinction between effects application and theory application** by Calder, Phillips, and Tybout (1981), I suggest **solutions to traditional and current methodological problems**.

Methodological Problems

- What possesses external validity? A theory or an effect?
- To what settings/persons/measures/... do we generalize?
- What are the consequences of failed replications?
- Are student samples worthless?
- When do I need a representative sample, stimulus, setting, ...?



Conclusion

- > different kinds of generalizability encompass different problems
- > take into account a researcher’s view before criticizing the methodology
- > pronounce your own view for research (hint: it’s not in the data!)

<https://doi.org/10.20378/irbo-55156>

REFERENCES

- Calder, B. J., Phillips, L. W., & Tybout, A. M. (1981). Designing research for application. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8(2), 197–207. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2488831>
- Calder, B. J., Phillips, L. W., & Tybout, A. M. (1982). The concept of external validity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 240–244.
- Calder, B. J., & Tybout, A. M. (1999). A vision of theory, research, and the future of business schools. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27(3), 359–366. doi:10.1177/0092070399273006
- Ferber, R. (1977). Research by convenience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 4(1), 57–58.
- Lynch, J. G. (1982). On the external validity of experiments in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 225–239. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2488619>
- Lynch, J. G. (1983). The role of external validity in theoretical research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(1), 109–111.
- Lynch, J. G. (1999). Theory and external validity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27(3), 367–376. doi:10.1177/0092070399273007
- Winer, R. S. (1999). Experimentation in the 21st century: The importance of external validity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27(3), 349–358.