

Generalizability of behavioral interventions

Abstract: There is considerable heterogeneity in the results of social and behavioral science findings, and more specifically, in the impact of behavioral intervention studies that aim to change human behavior for the better. Their average effectiveness in changing behavior is modest. Although they can be highly effective in some conditions, they may be ineffective in others and even counterproductive in yet others. Importantly, one cannot reliably predict which of these outcomes will occur due to a lack of knowledge about the generalizability of prior results. In this talk, I will focus on two large-scale team science projects involving over 1,500 collaborators that highlight the importance of the topic of generalizability and outline some potential solutions. In the *Muli100* project, 100 published studies were re-analyzed by independent research teams to estimate the extent to which their findings remain robust to independent re-analysis. In the ongoing *Global Happiness Megastudy*—a large-scale, cross-cultural, collaborative project comparing the effectiveness of the most popular, easily implemented happiness intervention strategies—we aim to estimate population heterogeneity, design heterogeneity, and analytical heterogeneity within one large study.