Internal and External Validity in Experimental Economics

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Abstract : Experimental economics is subject to criticism with regards to frequently discussed trade-off between internal and external validity requirements, which seems to be critically flawed. Incompatibility of trade-off condition and condition of internal validity as a prerequisite for external validity is presented. In addition, the imprecise concept of artificiality found to be rather improving external validity, seems to strengthen illusory status of external versus internal validity tension. Internal validity will be further analysed with regards to Duhem-Quine problem, where unpredictability argument is significantly weakened trough application of inductivism within the illustrative hypothetical-deductive model. Discussion outlined above partially weakens critical arguments related to robustness of results in experimental economics, if perfectly controlled experimental environment is secured.

Keywords : Duhem-Quine problem, external validity, inductivism, internal validity
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