



by Norva Lo - Monday, 8 October 2012, 6:42 PM

Suppose an argument is **unsound**. Does it follow that it is an **unsuccessful** argument?

- If your answer is "yes", then explain why.
- If your answer is "no", then provide a counterexample of your own, which is an unsound argument, but is still successful.



by Julia - Tuesday, 16 October 2012, 10:13 AM

No. An argument is sound if the argument is valid and all its premises are true. An argument is successful if when we assume the premises are true, then the conclusion is more than 50% likely to be true than false.

Here is an example of an **unsound** and **successful** argument.

P1. Roger Federer is a professional tennis player or an acrobat.

P2. Roger Federer is not a professional tennis player.

C. Roger Federer is an acrobat. [from P1 and P2]

P2 is a false premise, so the argument is unsound. However, under the assumption that all the premises are true, there is a more than 50% chance (indeed exactly 100% chance in this case) that the conclusion is true. Therefore the argument is successful.

So unsound arguments can be successful.



by Norva Lo - Wednesday, 17 October 2012, 2:27 PM

Perfect reply!



Does an argument being successful imply its having a probable conclusion?

by [Norva Lo](#) - Wednesday, 5 September 2012, 4:21 PM

Suppose we are told that the argument from premise P to conclusion C is (nondeductively) successful. But we are not told the contents of P and C. Are we entitled to infer that C, considered in itself, is more likely to be true than false?

- If you think "yes", explain why.
- If think think "no", then give an example of an argument from P to C, which is successful, but where C, considered in itself, is not more likely to be true than false.

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Re: Does an argument being successful imply its having a probable conclusion?

by [George](#) - Wednesday, 5 September 2012, 6:08 PM

No, we cannot infer that C, considered in itself, is more likely to be true than false, without knowing the contents of P and C.

That the argument is nondeductively successful is insufficient to assume that C is true in itself, as the argument is ~~only~~ [\[being\]](#) nondeductively successful [\[only means that C is more likely to be true than false\]](#) under the assumption that P is true, which may not be the case.

Consider the following argument;

P1. 90% of people have 4 arms.

C. I have 4 arms.

Assuming P1 is true, [\[under this assumption C is more likely to be true than false. That's the reason why\]](#) this argument is nondeductively successful. [H]owever were we to consider C in itself we would find it it is much more likely to be to false than true.

(Edited by [Norva Lo](#) - original submission Wednesday, 5 September 2012, 6:28 PM)

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Re: Does an argument being successful imply its having a probable conclusion?

by [Norva Lo](#) - Wednesday, 5 September 2012, 6:30 PM

Very good! I particularly like your example.

I have also edited some parts of your answer to make it more precise.

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Main difference between Inductive Generalization and Analogical Argument?

by [Norva Lo](#) - Wednesday, 5 September 2012, 4:10 PM

What is the main difference between Inductive Generalizations and Analogical Arguments? Give some examples to illustrate your answer.

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Re: Main difference between Inductive Generalization and Analogical Argument?

by [Julia](#) - Friday, 7 September 2012, 3:54 PM

Hi Norva,

The main difference is that an Inductive Generalisation says that if a sub-group has a feature then the whole group has that feature.

e.g.

P. University lecturers like to wear orange hats

C. Everyone at university likes to wear orange hats

An analogical Argument says that if established cases have a certain feature, then a new similar case will have that feature too.

e.g.

P1. University lecturers like to wear orange hats and pink sunglasses

P2. Uni students like to wear orange hats and pink sunglasses

P3. Uni admin staff like to wear orange hats

C. Uni admin staff like to wear pink sunglasses

They are both generalisations, but the Inductive Generalisation infers that a sub-group represents a whole group and the Analogical Argument infers that the whole group (or primary analogues) represents the sub-group.

Julia

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Re: Main difference between Inductive Generalization and Analogical Argument?

by [Norva Lo](#) - Friday, 7 September 2012, 4:29 PM

Very good!

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