

Conceptualization

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February 19, 2018

Overview

- 1 Housekeeping
- 2 Variables
- 3 Definitions
- 4 Examples
- 5 Operationalization

- Homework 1 will be returned next class (apologies for the delay!)
- Remember, you need to choose a research topic ASAP so you can begin research towards identifying a good research question
- Make sure to sign the **attendance** sheet!

- Independent variables (explanatory, treatment)
- Dependent variables (outcome)
- What effect does **childhood poverty** have on **academic performance** in high school?

Concept Defined

Concepts are mental images that summarize a set of similar observations, feelings, or ideas. **Childhood poverty** and **academic performance** are examples of concepts.

Conceptualization Defined

The process of specifying what we mean by a term. Conceptualization helps translate portions of an abstract theory into specific variables that can be used in testable hypotheses.

Conceptualization in Practice

- Involves more than just thinking up some definition for our concepts
- Must use social theory and prior research to identify appropriate definitions
- Need to identify what we think is important about the phenomenon under study
- Should understand how the definition we choose fits within the theoretical framework guiding the research

Conceptualization in Practice

Let's conceptualize the following 4 concepts

- Poverty
- Academic performance
- Social Status
- Health

Operationalization Defined

Operationalization involves connecting concepts to measurement operations. It is a process of specifying measures that will indicate the value of a conceptualization in an empirical analysis.

Operationalization Defined

Think of it as the empirical counterpart to the process of conceptualization

- When we conceptualize, we specify what we mean by a term (basically define it)..
- When we operationalize, we identify specific measurements we will take to indicate that concept in empirical reality (basically how can we measure it in the observable world).
- It is through operationalization that we can link the abstract concepts in our heads to concrete indicators in the real world.

Conceptualization in Practice

Let's conceptualize the following 4 concepts

- Race
- Poverty
- Social Status
- Health