AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION IN EMPIRICAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT
Concepts are the building blocks of social theories and conceptualization is the process through which a researcher achieves theoretical validity for his research problem. Operationalization enables the researcher to generalize his findings to the defined population. It is through the processes of conceptualization and operationalization that the social scientist is able to develop specific research procedures that will result in empirical observations which links theoretical world with observable reality. Most of the research papers in social sciences that are being published in National Journals in recent years are giving frightfully little attention to the critical issues of conceptualization and operationalization. The present paper makes an attempt to identify the various stages in conceptualization and operationalization process and also shows how such a process can be integrated into the general research process. The conceptualization and operationalization process as proposed by the authors is illustrated with an example. The paper concludes with some suggestions for paper writers on conceptualization and operationalization of their research problems.

KEYWORDS: Conceptualization, Operationalization, Research Process, Empirical Research, Levels of measurement, Reliability and Validity.