

Research Methods for Social Sciences

Conceptualisation

Concept

- Concept: “A mental image that summarizes a series of observations, emotions and thoughts”
- Loose (gevşek) use of words in everyday language
- What exactly is meant by words in the language of science should be explained
- Conceptualizing concepts is the basis for operationalization and measurement

Thoughts, Concepts

- The term «prejudiced» is a term that we use and agree to describe people with certain characteristics in a short way.
- Concepts are drawers where thoughts are hidden in our brains
- We call agreement on terms related to these thoughts and concept to the result. (compassionate, caring, emotional, environmentalist, cross-seeding etc.)
- In that respect, dictionaries are official list of terms the society agreed on

Concepts and Reality

- Concepts display the mind
- Summarizes interrelated observations and experiences
- Observations and experiences are real
- Concepts are not real

Conceptualisation

- It is the process of defining what you mean when a term is used.
- Conceptualization in deductive (tümdengelim) theory helps transform certain parts of an abstract theory into testable experiments with specific variables.
- In induction (tümevarım) theory, conceptualization is an important part of the process of extracting meaning from related observations.

Definition of Concepts

- Real definition (determination of the basic nature or characteristics of a particular asset; insufficient for scientific research)
- Nominal definition (definition of meanings given to a term)
- Operational definition (measurable definition; socio-economic status = income + education level)
 - Your income in the last 12 months?
 - The last school you finished?
- Nominal definition → Operational description → Measurement in the real world

Indicators, Dimensions

- Are women more compassionate (şefkatli) than men?
- Various dimensions of compassion (emotion, action, species of companions, etc.)
- What are the indicators of compassion?
- In conceptualization, both dimensions are defined, and indicators are determined for each dimension.
- Indicators replace each other

Conceptualisation → Operationalization

Operationalization

- Conceptualization and operationalization are closely related.
- Conceptualization is the refining and defining of abstract concepts.
- Operationalization is the development of specific research procedures that will result in empirical observations representing concepts in the real world.

Source: Babbie, 2007, p. 133

Operationalization Options

- Change interval (income level)
- Changes between the tips (uçlar)
- Which dimension of the concept will be operationalized

Source: Babbie, 2007, p. 133-136

Conceptualization and Operationalization Examples

Conceptualization of “Teacher Morale”

- Is there a relationship between teacher morale and professional working environment?
- Hypothesis: “Professional working environment increases the level of teacher morale.”
- For this, the meanings of concepts such as “teacher”, “morale” and “professional working environment” should be considered.
- What is meant by the concept of “teacher morale”?

Source: Neuman, 2007, s.268-275

Who is the Teacher?

- School principal, librarian, football team coach, trainee teacher, part time teacher, teachers working outside school (apprentice coaches, dog trainers)
- Full-time staff who spend time in class with students
- Those with a teaching diploma
- . . .

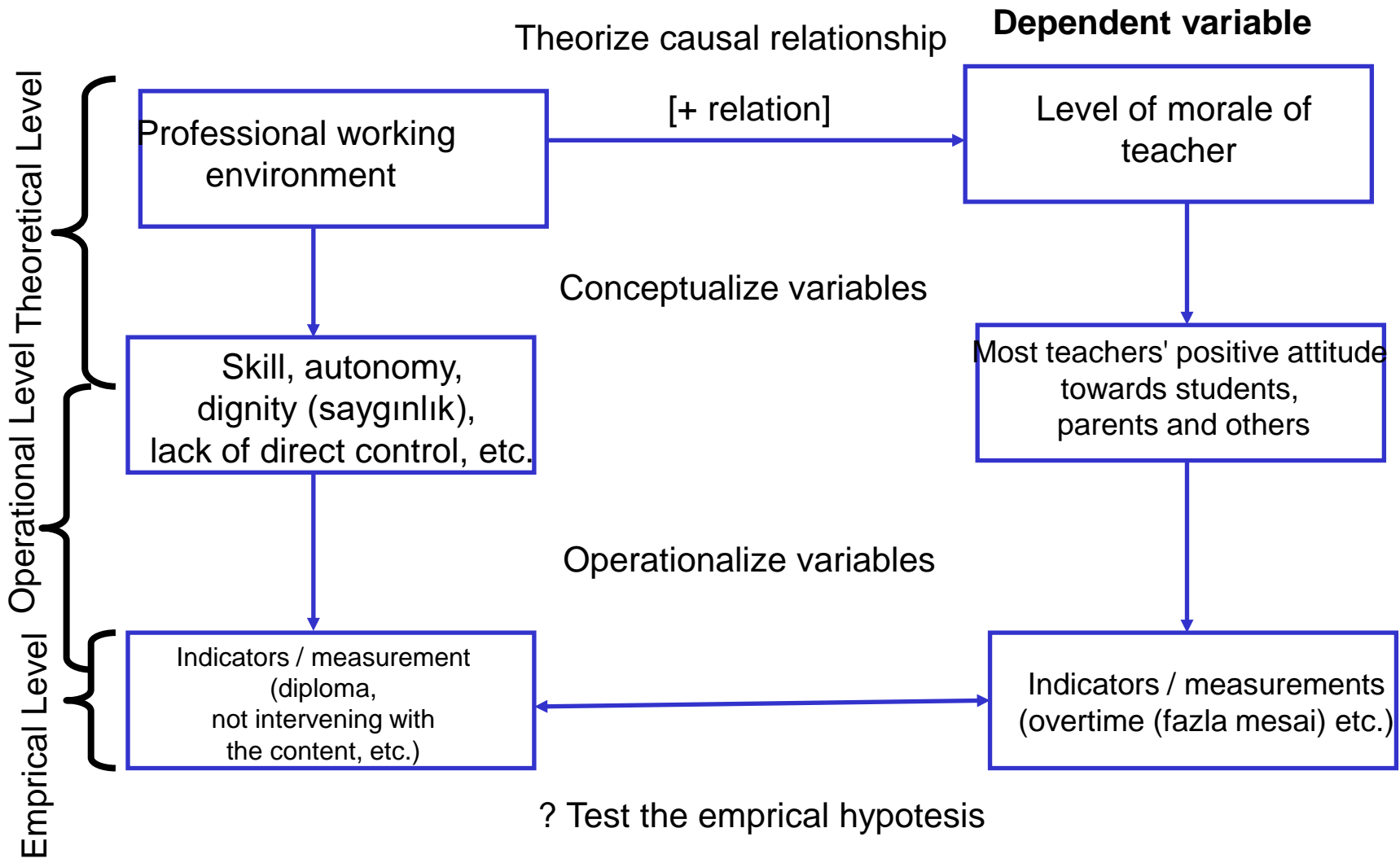
What is Morale?

- How do people feel about things?
- Trust, spiritism, being positive, optimism, feeling of togetherness, joy, mental state (dictionary meaning)
- How is morale different from "mood"? (mood more individual and temporary)
- Does moral mean optimism / pessimism?

Teacher Morale

- If morale is the feeling that feeds on something (student, school management, salary, profession, etc.) then does teacher morale have more than one dimension (eg feelings towards students, teachers)?
- Teacher morale
- High morale: Expressing positive opinions about school, not complaining about working hard, enjoying being with students
- Low morale: Complaint, not attending school-related activities unless mandatory, looking for another job

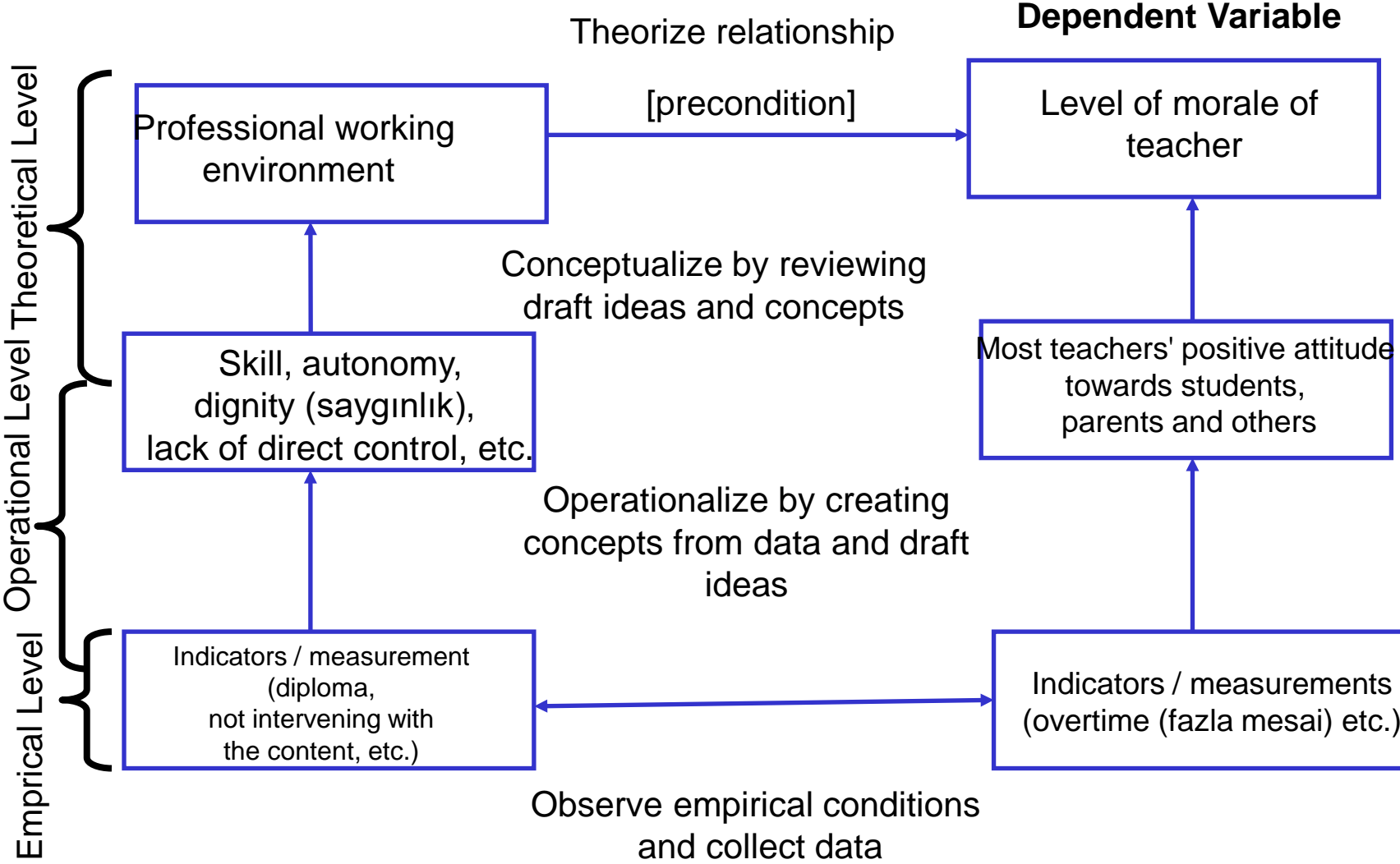
Conceptualization and Operationalization with Deduction



Source: adapted from Neuman, 2006, p.187



Conceptualization and Operationalization with Induction



Source: adapted from Neuman, 2006, p.187

