



EMPIRICAL TAKEAWAYS

CONCEPTUALIZATION

and

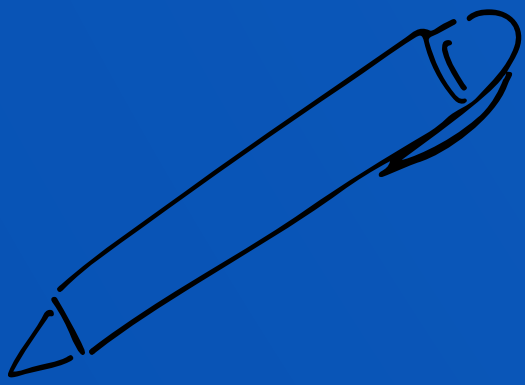
OPERATIONALIZATION



DO YOU HAVE AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH QUESTION?

Then an important next step is
to identify your key concepts





SOME EXAMPLES

What are the main factors influencing trust in judges?

What are the reasons for taking or not taking a business conflict to court?

Does procedural justice affect the extent to which defendants are satisfied with the outcome?

How often are cases of domestic violence acquitted?



YOUR KEY CONCEPTS RAISE SEVERAL QUESTIONS

1) Who/which to empirically study in which research setting?

In relation to the previous examples:

- What kind of judges or what kind of defendants to focus on?**
- What defines a business conflict or a case of domestic violence?**



BUT ALSO...

2) How explanatory is your question?

In relation to the previous examples:

- Do you have specific factors in mind that could influence trust in judges?
- Do you have reasons in mind that could underlie the decision whether to take a business conflict to court?



This should influence your decision to do qualitative research (open) or quantitative research (with hypotheses)

MOST IMPORTANTLY HOWEVER

3) Your key concepts raise questions on how to devise measures of the concepts

called: *operationalization*

Why focus on measurement?

- It gives us a consistent device for identifying fine differences
- It provides the basis for more precise estimates of the degree of relationship between concepts (i.e. correlation)

MANY THEORIES EMPLOY HYPOTHETICAL CONSTRUCTS

In *qualitative* research, concepts and their definitions are derived (more) inductively, meaning emerging from empirical reality.

In *quantitative* research, abstract notions need to be defined precisely before they can be measured.

More complicated concepts typically have multiple dimensions and indicators.



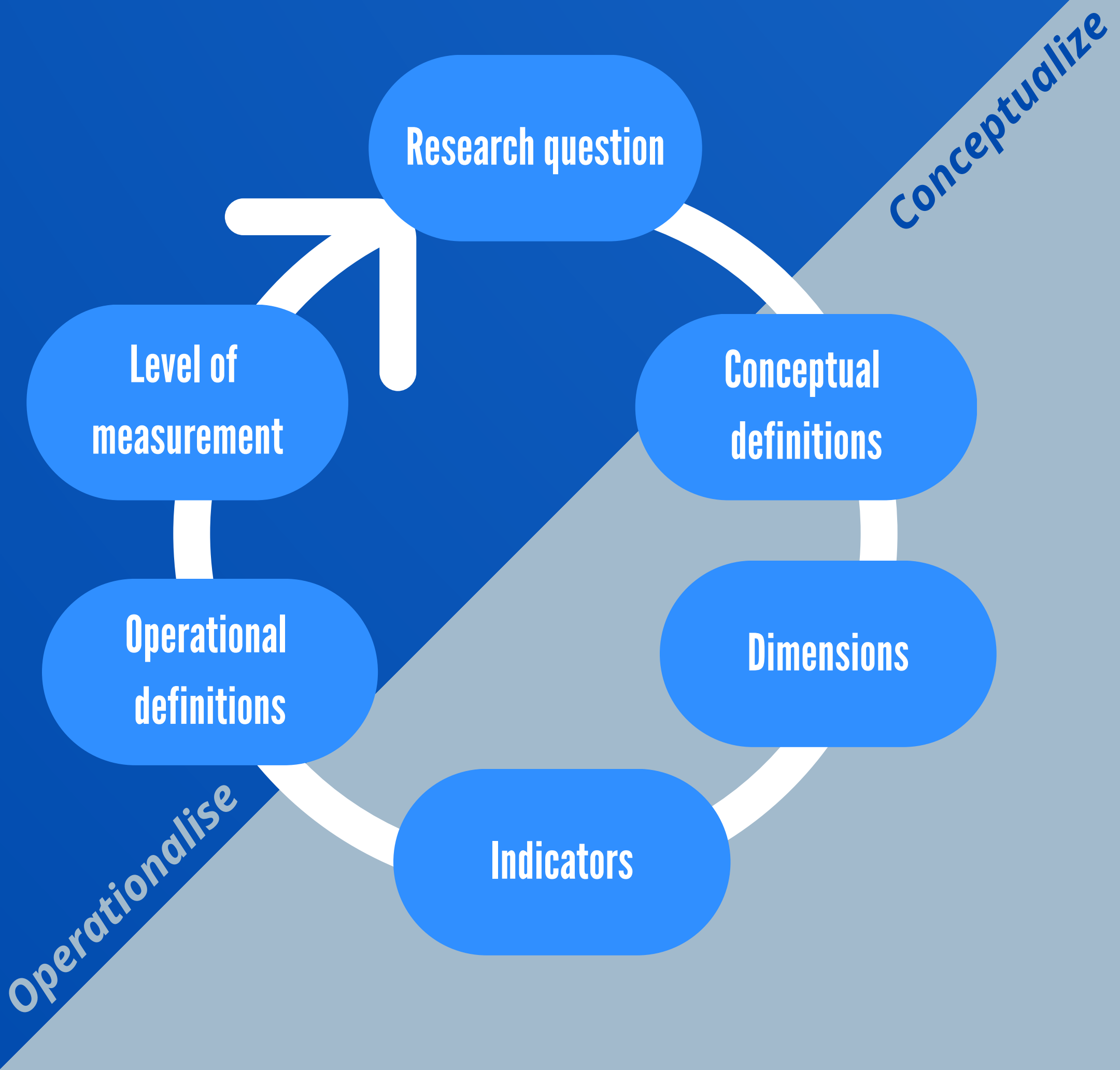
CONNECTING CONCEPTS AND DATA

Operationalization moves the researcher from an abstract level to the empirical realm.

Concepts are being replaced by variables.

Specific research procedures are developed that will result in collection and interpretation of data to answer the research question.





Research question

Conceptualize

Conceptual definitions

Dimensions

Indicators

Level of measurement

Operational definitions

Operationalise

TWO CRUCIAL STEPS IN RESEARCH DESIGN

Conceptualization

The process of formulating
and clarifying concepts



Develop conceptual definitions:
what we mean and don't mean
with the terms we use

Operationalization

The process of translating
concepts into indicators



Develop operational definitions:
how to measure and quantify
the concept