



Identifying & Developing Quantitative Scales for Service Learning Research

**4th International Conference
on Service-Learning
Research**

Clemson University

October 10, 2004

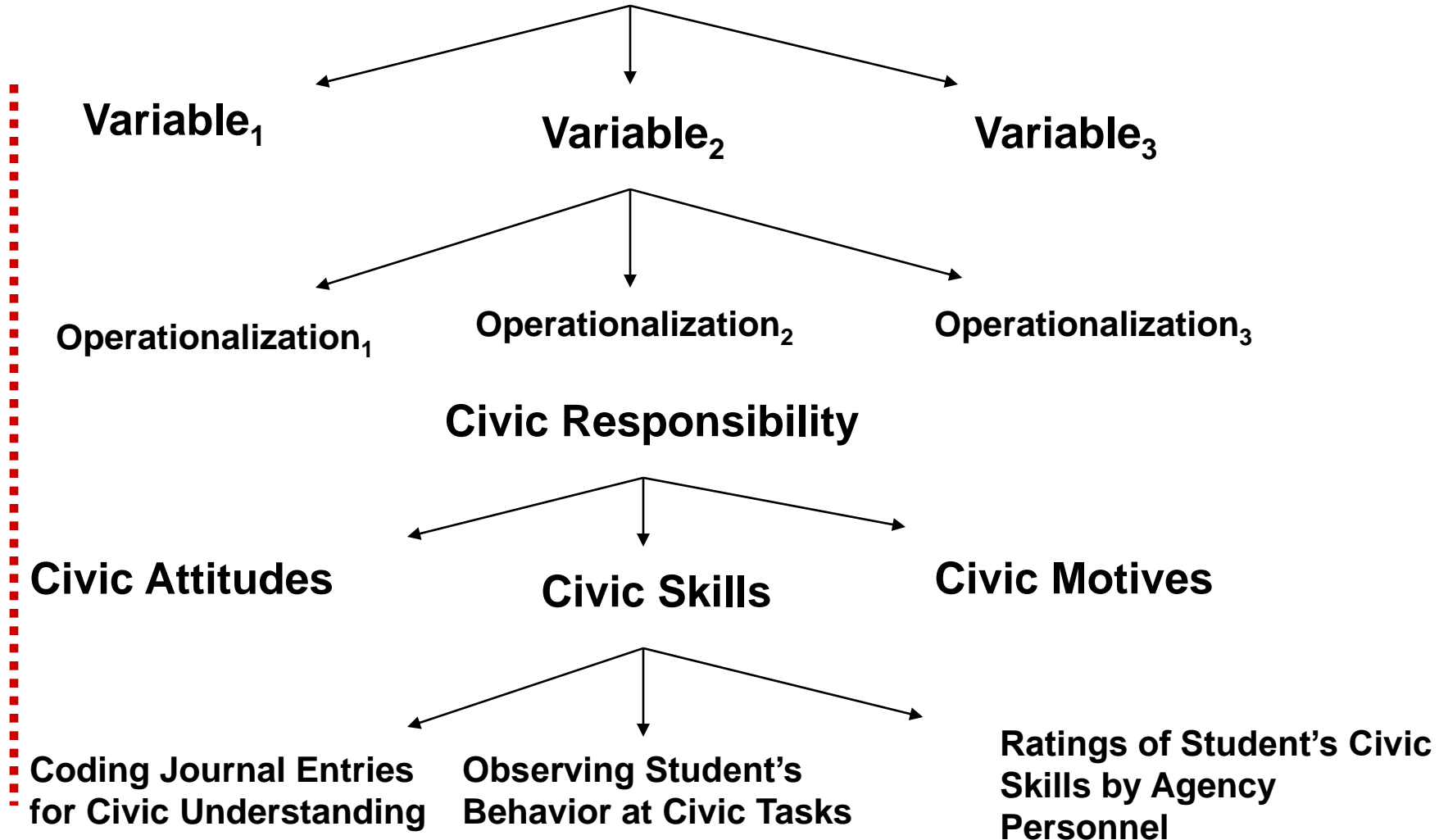
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Convincing Research

- Guided by theory
- Clear constructs
- Control for differences among groups
- Multiple indicators
- Multiple methods
- Converging results across different methods
- Confidence in conclusions
- Implications for teaching and learning in general

Construct



Use of Multiple Indicators

- Multiple indicators are superior (quantitative and qualitative) whether focusing on:
 - Items on a scale
 - Time samples
 - Journal entries
 - Courses or campuses
 - Skills
 - Intentions

A scale is nothing more
than a structured interview
on paper.



Characteristics of Good Scales

- Temporal consistency (reliable)
- Internal consistency (coherence)
- Validity (meaningfulness)



Uses of Scales

- Independent variable (e.g., process evaluation, quality control, manipulation check)
- Moderator variable (e.g., under what conditions, for what types of students)
- Mediating variable (e.g., intervening variables)
- Dependent variable (e.g., what outcomes)



Measurement Issues

- Sensitivity
- Focus
- Meaningfulness
- Match to other factors (e.g., IV)

Developing an Original Scale

- Takes a large amount of time and resources
- Requires knowledge of scale development procedures
- Runs the risk that the result may not be a “good” scale



How to Begin

- Create consensus on purpose and value of the research
- Identify internal/external resources
- Collaborate with others (on campus, regionally)
- Set regular meetings
- “Playful piety” and peanut M&M’s



Identify Constructs

- Review literature of existing theory
- Consult with others
- Conduct focus group or structured interviews of participants
- Establish good theoretical statement(s)



Create Survey Questions

- Multiple item measures
- Debate the minors
- Informal respondents
- Review/use campus assessment instruments
- Format of survey is important



Pilot Testing of Survey

- Takes time
- Evaluate validity
- Coefficient alpha
- Revise/edit/delete weak items



Constructs in Retention and Service Learning Study

- Peer Interaction
- Faculty Interaction
- Career Relevance
- Active Learning
- Personal Relevance
- Civic Responsibility

- Course Satisfaction
- Perceived Learning