

Employers' perceptions of employees' skills gap: A study in the stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak.

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Problem Statement



- Employers need workers with great soft skills and hard skills (Robles & Marcel, 2012).
- 92% of executives think that American workers are not as skilled as they need to be (Adecco, 2016).
- Three quarters of 2000 managers in Australian firms claims there is a skills gap in the organization (Lindorff, 2011).
- The higher the level of education the employers had, the more important skills gap is perceived (Robinson, 2008).
- 55% of respondents stated that the skills gap is the result of the gaps of education in some areas and on-the-job training (Association for Talent Development [ATD], 2015).
- Therefore, this study will focus on what employers think about their employees skills in the stone quarrying industry.

Research Objectives



General Objective:

To study the perceptions of employers towards employees' skills gap in the stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak.

Specific Objectives:

- i. To examine the profile of employees' skills gap perceived by employers in stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak.
- ii. To examine the demographic characteristics (employers' education level, tenure, age) that affected perceptions of employers on employees' skills gap in stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak.
- iii. To examine the source of skills gap (education system, training and development, job motivation) perceived by employers that influenced employees' skills gap in stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak.



Research Hypotheses

Ha₁ - There is a significant difference in employer's perceptions of employee's skills gap based on employers' **education level**.

Ha₂ - There is a significant difference in employer's perceptions of employee's skills gap based on employers' **tenure**.

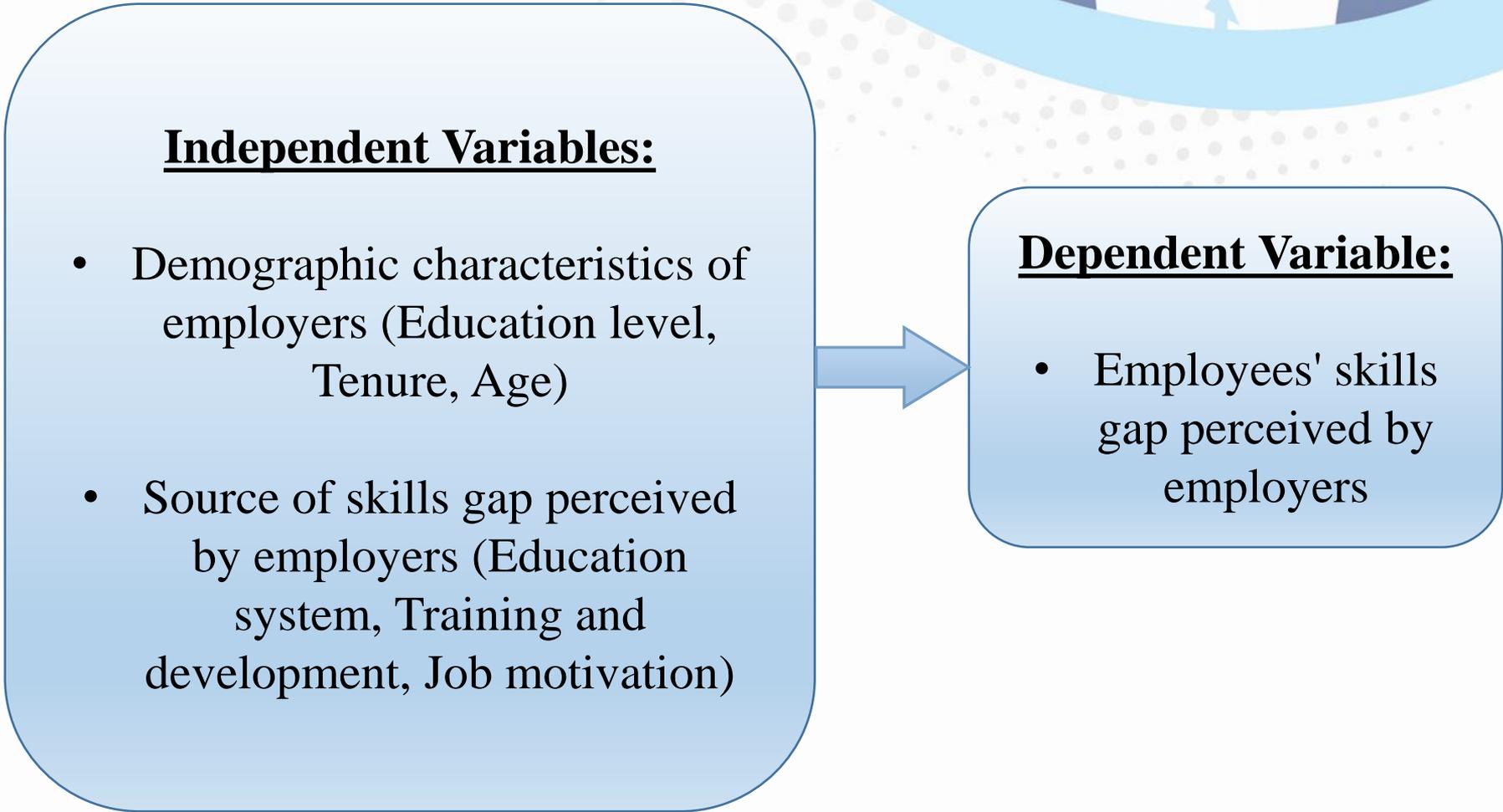
Ha₃ - There is a significant difference in employer's perceptions of employee skills gap based on employers' **age**.

Ha₄ - There is a significant relationship between **education system** and employees' skills gap.

Ha₅ - There is a significant relationship between **training and development** and employees' skills gap.

Ha₆ - There is a significant relationship between **job motivation** and employees' skills gap.

Conceptual Framework

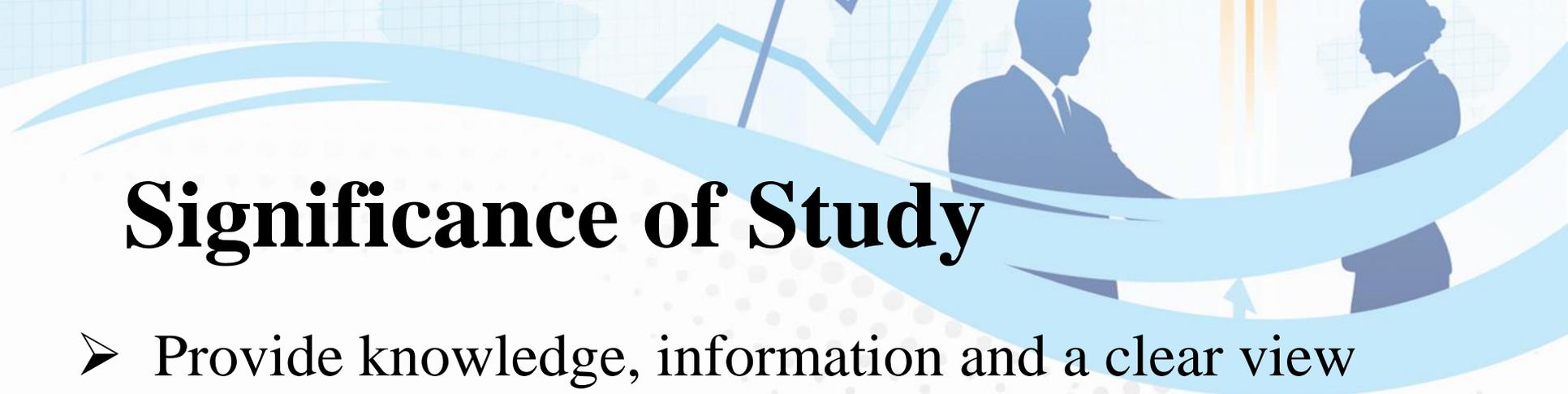
The diagram illustrates a conceptual framework. It features a large light blue rounded rectangle on the left containing the 'Independent Variables' section. A blue arrow points from this box to a smaller light blue rounded rectangle on the right containing the 'Dependent Variable' section. The background includes a blue line graph, silhouettes of two business professionals, and a blue wavy banner at the top.

Independent Variables:

- Demographic characteristics of employers (Education level, Tenure, Age)
- Source of skills gap perceived by employers (Education system, Training and development, Job motivation)

Dependent Variable:

- Employees' skills gap perceived by employers



Significance of Study

- Provide knowledge, information and a clear view about the demographic profile of the skills gap in the stone quarrying industry.
- As a reference for employers in stone quarrying industry to identify the skills gap of their employees.
- As a further reference for other practitioners which include students, other researchers or any individuals for their future research.

Definition of Terms

Terms	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Skills gap	Refers to the significant gap between the current capabilities of an organization and the skills it requires in order to achieve the goals (ATD, 2015).	Disparity of the skills required by employers and the skills that employees possessed which refers to skills mismatch in stone quarrying industry.
Soft skills	Combination of people skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills and emotional intelligence (Rao, 2012).	Communication skills, problem solving skills, teamwork skills, information management skills, entrepreneurship skills, moral and professional ethic skills, and leadership skills (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi [KPT], 2006).
Hard Skills	The technical competencies and domain knowledge (Rao, 2012).	Technical skills and professional skills (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi [KPT], 2006).
Stone quarrying	Rough trimming and sawing of marble, granite and sandstone (Euromonitor International, 2015).	Extraction from the monumental stone including slate, rocks for road metal and concrete aggregates, cement rock and dimension stone (Department of Statistics, 2016).
Employer/ Line manager	A person who directly manages other employees and operations of a business while reporting to a higher ranking manager (Reh, 2016).	Consists of top management, middle management, and first line management in an organization (Cadden & Lueder, 2012).



Research Design

Research Design: Cross-sectional

Population & Sampling:

- **Pilot Study:** 30 respondents
 - ✓ Cronbach's Alpha = 0.951 (Excellent consistency)
- **Actual Study:** 55 respondents
 - ✓ Cronbach's Alpha = 0.957 (Excellent consistency)
- Employers of the stone quarrying industry in Kuching, Sarawak

Research Technique: Random sampling technique

Research Instrument: Questionnaire