

MANAGING PROJECT FEATURES TO MITIGATE
CONSTRUCTION HAZARDS

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MANAGING PROJECT FEATURES TO MITIGATE CONSTRUCTION
HAZARDS

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To my beloved father and mother:

Wahi B. Mat and Hamidah Hj. Drahman,

My siblings:

Mohd Fardillah Wahi

Noraziah Wahi

Azizah Wahi

Mohd Fikri Wahi

Thank you for never ending support.

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, construction industry is known as one of the most hazardous activities. This research is to study the project features during planning stage in order to reduce the construction hazards. This research was carried out by reviewing published articles, journals, and conference papers. Seventy questionnaires were distributed to the project participants involved in the construction industry, such as Consultants and Contractors. Forty-five people have responded to the questionnaires and data were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Relative Importance Index (RII). The results have shown that demolition work, restricted site area and construction at mountain, hilly area and on sea are the highest contributors to hazards. In order to reduce the construction hazards more attention should be given to these types of work by providing trainings, safety measures, and any other safety arrangements.

ABSTRAK

Industri pembinaan dikenali sebagai salah satu aktiviti yang paling berbahaya di seluruh dunia. Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji ciri-ciri projek pada peringkat perancangan awal untuk mengurangkan bahaya di tapak pembinaan. Kajian ini telah dijalankan dengan mengkaji semula artikel yang diterbitkan, jurnal, dan kertas persidangan. Tujuh puluh soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada para peserta projek yang terlibat dalam industri pembinaan, seperti Perunding dan Kontraktor. Empat puluh lima orang telah menjawab soal selidik dan data dianalisis dengan menggunakan Alpha Cronbach (α) dan Indeks Kepentingan Relatif (RII). Keputusan telah menunjukkan bahawa kerja-kerja perobohan, kawasan tapak yang terhad, dan pembinaan di kawasan gunung, berbukit, dan di laut merupakan penyumbang tertinggi kepada bahaya. Dalam usaha untuk mengurangkan bahaya di tapak pembinaan perhatian yang lebih perlu diberikan kepada jenis-jenis kerja dengan menyediakan latihan, langkah-langkah keselamatan, dan apa-apa aturan keselamatan yang lain.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS	FULLNAME
DOSH	Department of Occupational Safety and Health
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Association
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RII	Relative Importance Index
SPSS	Statistical package for social science

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

The construction industry in Malaysia is a major contributor and aspiration towards realising the government Vision 2020. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2012 shows the construction industry is taking the lead, with growth having doubled from 3.4% to 7% in 2011. The construction sector is expected to grow at a fast pace of 7% in 2012 as large infrastructure projects and housing construction activities begin to pick up as shown in Table 1.1 (Department of Statistics and Ministry of Finance, MOF, 2012).

The construction industry is critical to the creation of national wealth and has multiplying and spin-off effects on other economic sectors including the financial, banking, insurance, transportation and manufacturing services (Lindsay, 2012).

Table 1.1: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by Sector (2010 – 2012)

Sector	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by Sector 2010 – 2012 (at constant 2000 prices)								
	Change (%)			Share of GDP (%)			Contribution to GDP Growth (Percentage Point)		
	2010	2011 ¹	2012 ²	2010	2011 ¹	2012 ²	2010	2011 ¹	2012 ²
Agriculture	2.1	4.7	4.1	7.3	7.3	7.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mining	0.2	-2.4	2.5	7.0	6.5	6.3	0.0	-0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	11.4	4.5	4.5	27.6	27.5	27.2	3.0	1.3	1.2
Construction	5.1	3.4	7.0	3.3	3.3	3.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Services	6.8	6.4	6.5	57.7	57.7	58.9	3.9	3.7	3.8
Less: Undistributed FISIM	5.8	6.4	6.2	4.1	4.1	4.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Add: Import duties	9.6	13.2	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.1	0.2	0.0
GDP	7.2	5.9- 5.5	5.0- 6.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	7.2	5.0- 5.5	5.0- 6.0
Legend: ¹ Estimate ² Forecast ³ Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM)									
Notes: Total may not add up due to rounding.									

Source: Department of Statistics and Ministry of Finance, MOF (2012)

The construction industry plays a significant role in improvement of any country's economic growth. Despite on the massive contributions to economic growth, construction industry has always been blamed for the high rate of accidents and fatalities; this has placed the construction industry among the industries with unreasonable rate of accidents, permanent and non-permanent disabilities and fatalities (Abdul Rahim, *et al.*, 2003).

The latest annual report updated by the Social Security Organization (SOCISO), also known as Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial (PERKESO) (2011), reveals that the total reported accidents from year 2010 to 2011 have declined by 515 cases or 1.45% from 35,603 cases in 2010 to 35,088 cases in 2011 as shown in Figure 1.1.

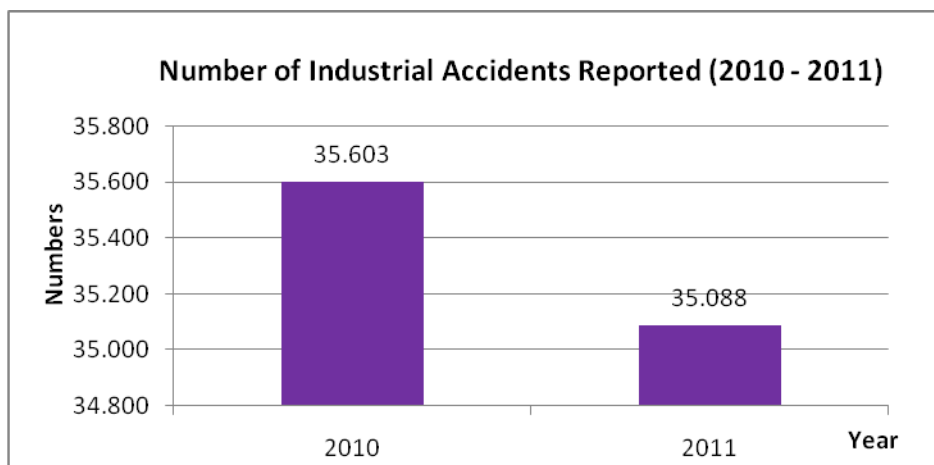


Figure 1.1: Number of Industrial Accidents Reported, (2007-2011)

Source: PERKESO Annual Report (2011)

Based on PERKESO Annual Report (2011), Table 1.2, in 2011 the construction industry was listed at ranking number five (5) for the number of reported accidents on site. It was reported that a higher number (4,330) of male workers were involved with accidents compared to 607 female workers who were involved in accidents. These add up to a total number of 4,937 people who were involved in accidents in the construction industry. The report shows that even the major and high-growth construction industry faces a high risk of accident occurrence.

Table 1.2: Number of Accidents According to Industry and Gender, 2011

RANKING	INDUSTRY	ACCIDENT REPORTED		
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1.	Manufacturing	13,736	3,370	17,106
2.	Real Estate, Leasing and Business	8,458	1,710	10,168
3.	Public Administration and Defence/ Social Security	4,440	968	5,408
4.	Trading (Wholesale Trade)	4,679	684	5,363
5.	Construction Industry	4,330	607	4,937
6.	Trading (Retail Trade)	3,372	989	4,361
7.	Transportation and Storage	3,525	326	3,851
8.	Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	1,914	496	2,410
9.	Accommodation and Food Services Activities	1,534	580	2,114
10.	Health and Social Work	677	484	1,161
11.	Financial and Insurance or Takaful Activities	657	330	987
12.	Electricity, Gas, Water Supply, and Sanitation Services	722	51	773
13.	Mining and Quarrying	396	25	421
14.	Other community, Social and Personal Service Activities	282	65	347
15.	Education	155	132	287
16.	Activities of Extraterritorial Organization and Bodies	182	21	203
	GRAND TOTAL	49,059	10,838	59,897

Source: PERKESO Annual Report (2011)

Nowadays most of the construction project teams concentrate exclusively on completing for projects rather than focusing on safety requirement at construction sites. This had resulted in thousands of construction workers being killed and suffered disabling injuries annually. Jannadi *et al.* (2002) cited that the major causes of accidents are related to the unique nature of the industry, human behavior, difficult work-site conditions and poor safety management, which had resulted in unsafe work methods, equipment and procedures.

Based on the statistic obtained from the Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) Malaysia as shown in Figure 1.2, Sarawak is the state that falls under the highest number of occupational deaths, with a number of 25 victims. However, with 382 incidents, the state of Perak has the highest number of non-permanent disability

(NPD) victims. Meanwhile, the highest number of victims with permanent disability (PD) falls under the state of Johor Bahru, with 28 victims.

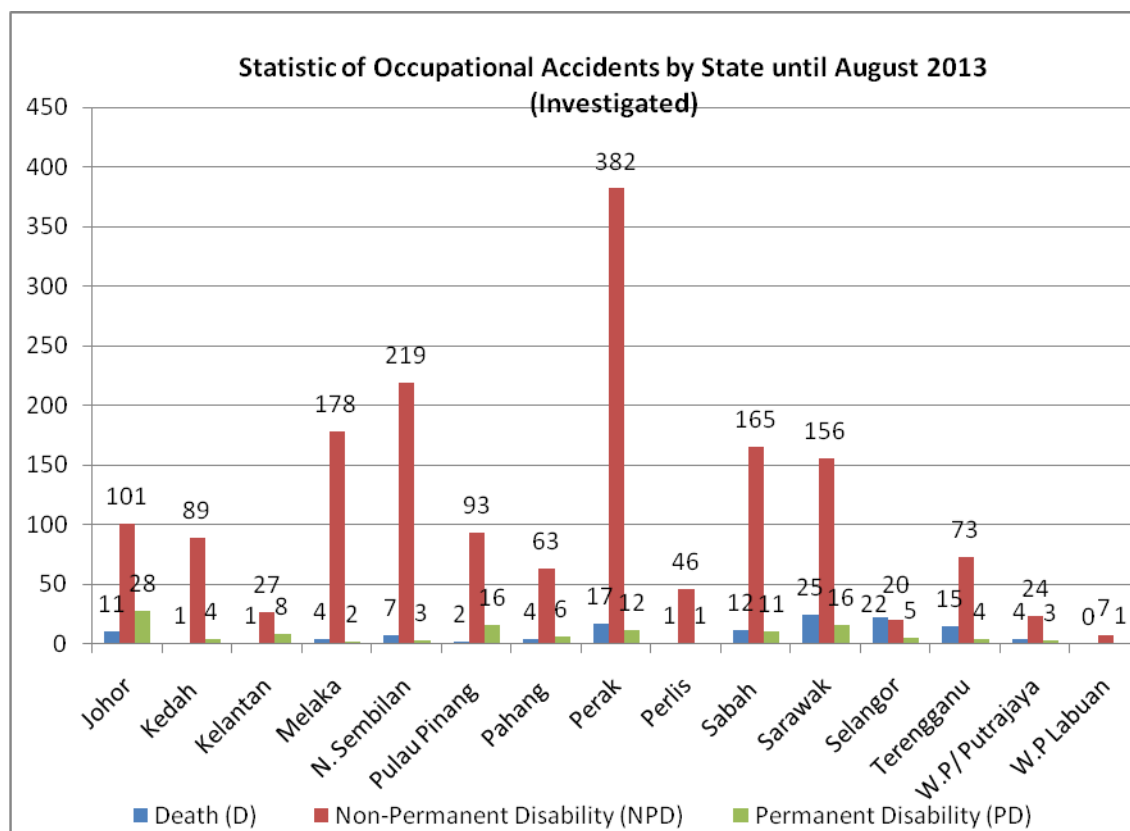


Figure 1.2: Statistic of Occupational Accidents by State until August 2013
(Investigated)

Source: Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) Malaysia (2013)

According to Haslam, R.A. *et al.* (2005), the key factors in the accidents were problems arising from workers or the work team, workplace issues, shortcoming with personnel protective equipment, problems with suitability and condition of materials and deficiencies with risk management.

Many approaches have been proposed and implemented to improve safety in construction industries in order to reduce the number of accidents, fatalities, injuries to workers and damage to equipment. Some countries completely depend on government agencies in providing safety at worksite, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (Jannadi *et al.*, 2002). This is due to the fact that

the responsibility of the management in the construction industry itself is considered to be of high concern (Meredith Armstrong and Charles J., 2003).

As an example, the construction industry safety practice in Saudi Arabia is not regulated by any government agency but becomes an area of responsibility of the top management of the organization (Jannadi *et al.*, 2002). From the study of such practice, Meredith Armstrong and Charles J. (2003) reiterate that the leadership at the top and throughout the organization, from CEO to supervisors, must have commitments to safety and health and set aside resources to accomplish safety and health goals.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although regulations in occupational safety and health in Malaysia are quite comprehensive and reinforced with strict and regular safety inspection and audit by DOSH, the number of accidents at construction sites is still alarmingly high. The number of accidents and fatalities is still at an unacceptable figure.

In 2013, Malaysia Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) recorded a total number of 36 deaths in the construction industry; see Figure 1.3, this makes the construction sector the second highest fatality rate in Malaysia. The manufacturing industry led the table with 47 occupational deaths. Even though the total number of reported accidents and frequency of industrial accidents show downward trends the construction industry is still one of the most hazardous industries in Malaysia.

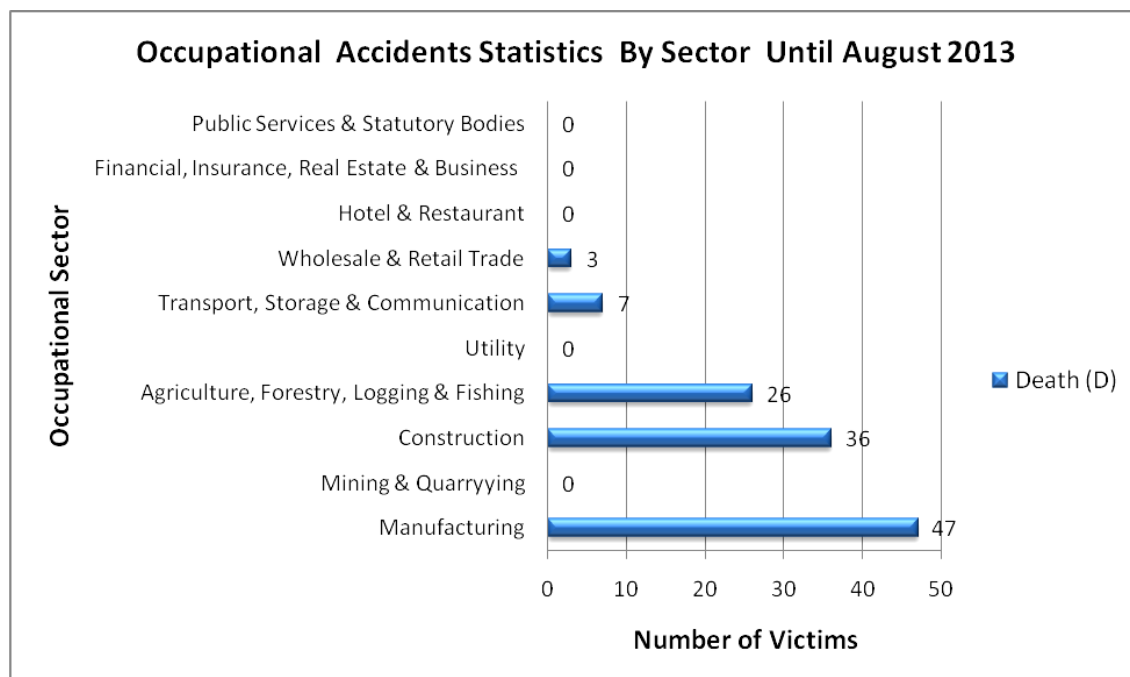


Figure 1.3: Statistic of Occupational Accidents by Sector until August 2013

Source: Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) Malaysia (2013)

Globally, the volume of injury, illness and fatalities in construction sites is alarmingly high with 55,000 persons die due to hazards in workplaces, 294,000 persons falling ill and 3.8 million persons injured. The annual costs are estimated at about \$128 billion to \$155 billion. Construction accidents lead to delay in project completion and increase the expenses in construction work (Paul A. *et al.*, 2008). The negative impacts and consequences arising from high fatalities are high premium costs of insurance and high medical costs. Therefore it is vital that the players within the industry adopt a serious attitude towards safety at construction sites.

Construction Project Features (CPFs) such as the nature of project, method of construction, site restriction, project duration, procurement system, design complexity, level of construction and subcontracting have contributed to the cause of accidents in construction projects (McKay *et al.*, 2002), (Loughborough University and UMIST, 2003), (Gambatese *et al.*, 2008) and (Health and Safety Executive, 2009).

The number of construction workers fatally injured after being struck by objects or equipment has increased by 7% from 2011 to 2012. This total includes 233 workers struck by falling objects or equipment and 199 struck by powered vehicles or mobile equipment during construction works operation (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). This is due to site with insufficient working space apart from other types of project features (Loughborough University and UMIST, 2003); (Loughborough University, 2009); and (Health and Safety Executive, 2009).

Construction Project Features undeniably contributed to accident causation through the introduction of the proximal factors (Manu P. *et al.*, 2010). Proximal factors are events responsible for causing accidents and can be contributed by human relation, reinforcement, legislation, financial and contractual, environmental and plant and machineries. These related factors affect the project features which in turn contributed to accidents causation (McKay *et al.*, 2002); (Loughborough University and UMIST, 2003); (Behm, M., 2005); and (Chockalingam S. and Sornakumar T., 2011).

1.3 Aim of Study

The aim of this research is to study project features to enhance construction safety. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been outlined.

1.4 Objectives of Study

In order to achieve the above aims, the following objectives have been laid out:

- i. To study the project features that contribute to construction hazards.
- ii. To investigate causes affecting the project features.

- iii. To propose improvements in planning stage to enhance construction safety.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research is focused on the construction industry. The respondents include selected participants involved in projects in the construction industry, such as Consultants and Contractors. The scope of the study is limited to the area of Johor Bahru, Malaysia. From a large number of Consultants and Class A Contractors actively involved in the construction industry in Johor Bahru, seventy set of questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents. The respondents will be randomly chosen to respond to the questionnaires.

1.6 Significance of Study

The idea of conducting this study is to identify and recognise the project features that are causing construction hazards. To view it in a wider perspective of the construction industry, the investigation will include the causes or factors that are affecting the project features.

The identification of the project features in the construction project will assist the study in obtaining the severities of each project feature in causing hazards. The level of severities of each project feature in creating hazards and the causes affecting the project features will be identified and ranked from the lowest to highest contribution of hazards.

The results from the analysis will enable recommendations on ways to reduce hazards in construction projects. The result of the study is expected to provide

information to avoid or reduce hazards in construction projects, thus improving the working condition in the construction industry to a status of a safe industry.

1.7 Research Methodology

In order to complete the research methodology of this study, there are certain processes that need to be identified and implemented. The methodology of this research is carried out in order to determine the essential steps that will be performed to meet the objectives of this research. The followings are the explanation of processes involved for the completion of this research:

1.7.1 Preliminary Study

The first and foremost step of the study is called preliminary study. This step involves identifying research problems which cover the objectives and scope of study. The problems are identified based on discussion with interested parties, articles, and journals gathered regarding the research topic. The problem statement of the research will be identified in order to determine the research aim, objectives, and scope of the study.

The research area will be determined based on the related topic. The determined research area and topic of this research will be shaped from the feedback obtained from the Consultants and Contractors who are involved in the construction industry.

1.7.2 Literature Review

The preliminary step is followed by exploratory search of the literature. The reviews are gathered from reference books, articles, journals and working papers. Literature reviews are carried out to enhance the understanding and theory regarding the study.

1.7.3 Data Collection

The data and information collected prior to the main study are needed to strengthen the facts that are reviewed in the literature. The data are important in order to obtain the relevant information that is needed in carrying out this research. Two types of research methods are used: the primary data and secondary data.

Method of Data Collection:

a) Primary data

The basic method of collecting data for this research is distribution of questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaires are distributed to project participants in the construction industry.

b) Secondary data

The step is then followed by exploratory search of the literature. Secondary data sources for literature are gathered from reference books, journals, newspapers and articles. These sources provide a lot of data that can help enrich understanding regarding the theory of the present research.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

From the data collected, they will be analysed to produce a relevant search report. The data for this research will be analysed using Frequency Analysis, Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha) and Relative Importance Index (RII).

1.7.5 Conclusion and Recommendation

This last step is used to report all the relevant data when making Conclusions. Specific Recommendations are made available to aid future researchers in carrying out related studies. The list of References which are made available for the research is obtained from true and valid sources.

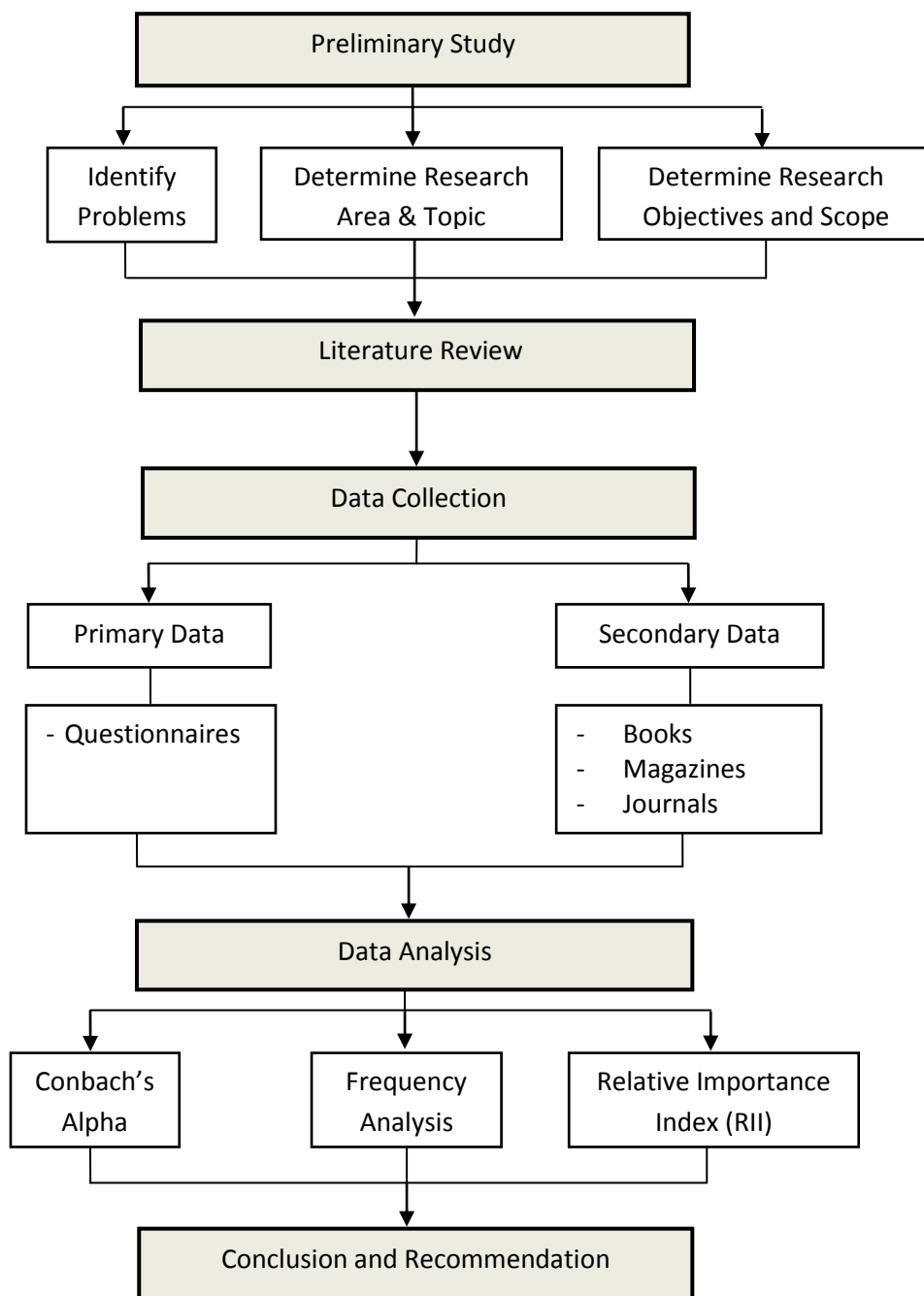


Figure 1.4: Methodology Flowchart of the Research

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