

PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF ENERGY CONSERVATION  
BEHAVIOUR AMONG OFFICE BUILDING USERS

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PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF ENERGY CONSERVATION  
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I dedicate this thesis to  
My beloved mom and dad  
Supportive supervisor  
My family and friends  
Without those support and inspiration  
I would never have the courage to follow my dreams

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## ABSTRACT

In this age of growing world, climate change is considered as one of the major threats to our Mother Earth. Energy sector represents the largest sources of emissions by far, which is accounted for almost 68% of greenhouse gases emission in the world. Buildings contribute to 32% of overall global final energy use. Energy conservation is one of the vital components to address in term of psychological behavior among building users towards energy saving action. However, energy conservation behavior among household often influenced by monetary incentive shall not be generalized into office building context whereby the users have no financial responsibility on its utilities expenses. At present, the challenge of how to encourage office building users towards energy conservation behaviour is one of an emerging topic that drawing the attention of researchers. A specific desired behavior such as energy conservation behavior is influencing by set of psychological determinants, hence a specific set of psychological determinants in local context should be identified in targeting effective behavior change. Thus, this study focuses to identify the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users and to determine the causal relationship of the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour. Using behavioural changes as an adaptation approaches, an extensive literature search has been carried out on 70 published literatures to explore the existing energy conservation model to specify the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour within office building context. The result of the content analysis indicated that the energy conservation behaviour among office building users attributed by few psychological determinants: Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control, Habits, Motivation and Energy Knowledge. In this context of study, an elicitation study was conducted among office building user in Kota Iskandar to gather input regarding the belief and thoughts on energy conservation behaviour. Then, a set of questionnaire survey was design based on the result of an elicitation study and distributed to the office building users in Kota Iskandar. A total of 126 convenience sample were gathered and submitted for SEM analysis. The causal relationship of the identified psychological determinants was tested by using smartPLS-SEM software version 3.0. In detailed, the results show that the psychological determinants that are significant towards energy conservation behaviour among office building users are the Subjective Norm, PBC and Past Experiences. The findings may serve as an initial reference to the management progress in fostering ESB among users in building context.

## ABSTRAK

Pada zaman dunia yang semakin berkembang, perubahan iklim dianggap sebagai salah satu ancaman terhadap Bumi kita. Sektor tenaga telah membentangkan bahawa sumber terbesar adalah gas rumah hijau dimana sebanyak 68% dari pelepasan gas di dunia adalah gas rumah hijau. Bangunan telah menyumbang sebanyak 32% dari seluruh penggunaan tenaga di dunia. Penjimatan tenaga adalah salah satu komponen yang digariskan dari aspek tingkah laku psikologi dalam kalangan pengguna bangunan ke arah tindakan penjimatan tenaga. Walaubagaimanapun, tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga dalam kalangan isi rumah sering dipengaruhi oleh insentif kewangan dan tidak boleh diselaraskan dalam konteks bangunan pejabat dimana pengguna tidak mempunyai tanggungjawab kewangan terhadap perbelanjaan utiliti. Saat ini, cabaran berkenaan cara untuk menggalakkan pengguna bangunan pejabat ke arah tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga merupakan salah satu topik yang menarik perhatian pengkaji. Tingkah laku yang spesifik seperti penjimatan tenaga dipengaruhi oleh satu set penentu psikologi. Oleh itu, satu set penentu psikologi yang spesifik dalam konteks tempatan perlu dikenal pasti dalam mensasarkan perubahan tingkah laku yang efektif.. Dengan itu, kajian ini fokus untuk mengenalpasti penentu psikologi terhadap tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga dalam kalangan pengguna bangunan pejabat dan untuk menentukan hubungan kausal di antara penentu psikologi terhadap tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga. Dengan menggunakan perubahan tingkah laku sebagai pendekatan penyesuaian, satu carian secara meluas terhadap 70 kajian lepas yang telah diterbitkan telah dijalankan untuk meneroka model penjimatan tenaga yang sedia ada supaya penentu psikologi bagi tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga dalam konteks bangunan pejabat dapat dikenalpasti. Keputusan daripada carian tersebut mendapati bahawa tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga dalam kalangan pengguna bangunan pejabat dipengaruhi oleh beberapa penentu psikologi:- Sikap, Norma Subjektif, Kawalan Tingkah Laku, Tabiat, Motivasi dan Ilmu Tenaga. Dalam konteks kajian ini, satu kajian awalan telah dijalankan untuk mengumpul input berkenaan pandangan dan kepercayaan pengguna bangunan pejabat di Kota Iskandar terhadap tingkah laku penjimatan tenaga. Selepas itu, satu set borang soal selidik telah dibentuk berdasarkan keputusan kajian awalan dan ia telah diedarkan kepada pengguna bangunan pejabat di Kota Iskandar. Sejumlah 126 sampel kemudahan telah dikumpulkan dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis SEM. Hubungan kausal antara penentu psikologi telah dianalisis menggunakan perisian smartPLS versi ke 3. Keputusan analisis menunjukkan bahawa terhadap tiga penentu psikologi yang penting iaitu Subjektif Norma, Kawalan Tingkah Laku dan Pengalaman Lepas. Dapatan kajian ini boleh dicadangkan sebagai rujukan awalan bagi pihak pengurusan untuk memupuk ESB dalam konteks bangunan.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

GHG	-	Greenhouse gases
CO <sup>2</sup>	-	Carbon Dioxide
UK	-	United Kingdom
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
PLS	-	Partial Least Square
EC	-	Energy Conservation
TPB	-	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	-	Theory of Reasoned Action
PBC	-	Perceived Behavioral Control
SPSS	-	Package for Social Sciences
CSEM	-	Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling
CR	-	Composite Reliability
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In this age of growing world, climate change is considered as one of the major threats to our Mother Earth. Greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions include carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is known as the main contributor of global warming and other serious environmental problems. Moreover, rapid development in industrial sector and high dependency on fossil fuel nowadays had caused carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission increasing yearly. Due to the rising concern, the scientists and policy makers has heightened the focus on mitigating climate change issues by reduce the total of energy consumption by sector such as transportations, buildings, industrial and agriculture.

Potential contribution of buildings to global warming over the next 100 years is highly significant (Dumitru *et al.*, 2016). Academic debates had discussed on energy-related issues particularly on human behavior change as environmentally sustainable behavior can helps in reducing significant amount of GHG emissions from buildings. Energy conservation is one of the vital components to address in term of psychological behavior among building users towards energy saving action. Energy conservation could be defined as the activities to prevent the energy from being wasted more than its purpose.

Over recent years, energy conservation has attracted considerable attention from social scientist to focus on reducing energy consumption trend and improve the energy behavior. However, changes towards environmentally sustainable behavior is much more complex to adopt (Lokhorst *et al.*, 2015). A specific desired behavior such as energy conservation behavior is influencing by set of psychological determinants, hence a specific set of psychological determinants in local context should be identified in targeting effective behavior change. This study aims to identify the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour and its causal relationship in formulating the energy conservation behaviour. This chapter will further discuss on the problem statement, research objectives and research methodology. Generally, this chapter was divided into seven sections include introduction, problem statement, research objective, scope of study, significance of study, research methodology, layout of chapter and research methodology flowchart.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Rapid development in many countries had caused rising of GHG emissions worldwide. Energy sector represents the largest sources of emissions by far is accounted for almost 68% of GHG worldwide (IEA, 2016). The latest global CO<sub>2</sub> concentration recorded is significantly higher than the maximum safe concentration limit suggested (Hansen *et al.*, 2013) and it could not be sustained easily. Globally, industry GHG emissions is accounted three times more than residential consumption and buildings are responsible for almost 32% of total global final energy use (IPCC, 2015).

Commercial buildings consider as one of the main contributors for the increasing level of GHG emissions in the world as commercial buildings account for a significant amount of total energy consumption that contributed to GHG emissions (Yang *et al.*, 2008). As example, commercial building in the United States consume approximately 20% of the electricity in 2011 (EIA, 2011) and commercial sector in Japan contribute for 26% of the country's total energy consumption (Uchiyama,

2002). In addition, office buildings within commercial and retail sectors in UK accounts for 17% of their total energy consumption and they found the highest energy consumption in an office is heating and air conditioning (Manika *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, Australian office buildings also shown increasing trend of its total energy demand with increases from 740 ktoe in 2009 to 757 ktoe in 2011 (Australian Energy Statistic, 2014) and energy demand from office building in China is found 10-20 times higher than residential sector which is about 70-300kWh/m<sup>2</sup> per annum (Yang *et al.*, 2008).

In Malaysia, dependency on natural gas and crude oil has contributed to the rise of GHG emissions over the years particularly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Malaysia Energy Commission, 2016). Commercial sector in Malaysia consume energy approximately 32% of energy which is higher than residential sector (Saidur, 2009) and energy consumption by office building has showed a significant growth, which is about 48% of total electricity generated as Malaysia is having high economic growth (Saidur and Masjuki, 2008). Therefore, Malaysia has pledged to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 45% by 2030 as effort to mitigate climate change effects and other environmental problems.

Malaysian government has taking initiative to reduce energy use by introducing “24 Degree Celcius” policy where all the air conditional in government office building must set the minimum temperature at 24 Degree Celcius which consider as comfortable temperature within office building context in order to reduce the energy use (Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, 2011). Other initiatives that have been taken to regulate and fostering energy conservation in Malaysia includes Green Energy Office (GEO) Building, Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) and Sustainability Achieved via Energy Efficiency Program (SAVE) (NEEAP, 2014). In further, GEO Building is referred to the building that had been designed with low energy features. Typical office building in Malaysia would consume energy approximately 200kWh/m<sup>2</sup> while GEO Building energy consumption was designed to be 50kWh/m<sup>2</sup> (NEEAP, 2014). EPC is one of the initiatives which started in January 2013 by Malaysian Government. EPC present the concept which allowed government building to improve energy consumption by



engaging energy service companies (ESCO). This initiative has eased the government's monetary burden on building energy bills and help to promote energy efficiency in government buildings where ESCO will provide the cost of investment to implement energy efficiency improvements and saving made from the improvements will be used to pay the cost of investment to ESCO. In addition, SAVE program was designed under Economic Transformation Program (ETP) of Malaysian Government in July 2011. This program has helped to create a market for energy efficient appliance by providing cash rebates for the purchase of energy-efficient refrigerator, air-conditioners and chillers (NEEAP, 2014).

Other than that, Malaysia also has developed energy efficiency initiatives such as rating and labelling of appliances. This initiative is among the effective tools to update consumers regarding the energy consumption limit of an appliance. As example, it has been applied for refrigerators, fans, air conditioner and televisions. However, this labelling is compulsory for selected items only (NEEAP, 2014). Besides that, many programs also had been developed to increase the awareness among energy users. As example, Malaysia had launched a national energy efficiency awareness campaign (SWITCH) to increase the awareness level among users regarding energy saving. This campaign aims to create awareness among public, to ensure the understanding and to encourage the practice of energy efficiency by switching off the appliances when not in used and use more energy efficiency appliances (SWITCH, 2011). In addition, a guideline on energy saving behavior has been developed and implemented to all government office buildings including guidelines to allow sunlight enter the office by draw the curtains, switch the computer and printer to sleep mode when not in used and apply the function of print preview. This initiatives aims to reduce 5% of energy consumption in all government buildings (Chua and Oh, 2011). Malaysian government also launched Earth Hour Program starting from 2009 till present as effort to encourage public to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30pm – 9:30pm on a day towards the end of March. This program aims to against global warming issues. All the initiatives have been successfully implemented among the users but failed to attract the attention on energy conservation behaviour in a long term practice. Unfortunately, energy

conservation behaviour required a voluntary behavioral change in order to sustain the practice.

As a consequence, energy reduction has become a key focus among the stakeholders with initiatives to reduce energy consumption in a buildings (Janda, 2011). It seems clear that reducing energy use is beneficial for environment and organization (Lokhorst *et al.*, 2015) because energy use in buildings is recognized as a significant contributor to GHG emissions (Coleman *et al.*, 2013). Basically, there are two common approaches to foster energy saving which are technological approaches and behavioural approaches (Mahon *et al.*, 1983). Previous research has primarily focused on technology based solution. However, more efficient energy use will require behavioural changes to adopt and improved the practices towards energy saving action (Yeboah and Kaplowitz, 2016). According to Carrico and Riemer (2011), behavioural intervention approaches has successfully encourage employees in university buildings to reduce the energy use. Other than that, study by Yuasa *et al.* (2014), found that lifestyle change among the household in Tokyo has resulted significant reduction of total energy consumption. Moreover, changes in individual behaviour on energy consumption also have great beneficial effects on GHG emissions and reduce the impact on natural environment (Lokhorst *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, study by Ayoub *et al.* (2014) found that improving energy conservation behaviour among users can saved energy consumption more than 10%. Energy reduction also can be achieved when people acknowledged about the importance of lifestyles change towards energy conservation behaviour (Von Borgstede *et al.*, 2013). Other than that, study by Masoso and Grobler (2010) found that promoting individual behavioural changes is one of the potential ways to reduce energy use where applicable to existing and new buildings. In addition, 56% of electricity in office building can be saved if the building occupants turning off the lights and equipment especially during non-working hour (Masoso and Grobler, 2010). At present, study by Khashe *et al.* (2016) found that behaviour changes among occupants towards energy savings can resulted higher savings compared to the investment cost made for technological approaches. These studies proved that

encouraging behavioural changes among building users towards energy conservation behaviour could result significant reduction of energy usage.

The participation of occupant plays an important role to reduce energy consumption in buildings despite of technological measures (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, there are several different characteristic between energy saving within an office environment and household context (Lokhorst *et al.*, 2015). As example, the determinants directly influence the household behavior towards energy conservation will be slightly different compared to office building context due to financial responsibility. Some research found that household energy conservation behaviour has significant relationship with financial incentives while employees do not have any direct financial interest to conserve energy at workplace (Giddings, 2015). In recent time, employees interest to reducing energy use still vague because they may influenced by the fact that they are not paying for the bills and do not directly responsible for the energy saving practices within the organization (Coleman *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, energy consumption of office building has received substantial concern due to the increase demand of energy and comfort level in buildings from employees (Pérez-Lombard *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, it is essential to monitor the energy consumption of employee within office building context which more focused on individual behavioral changes. Besides that, the trend of transition towards sustainable environment and societies also has made development of sustainable employee behaviour at workplace as worthy issues in social science research.

The contribution of energy conservation behaviour in reducing overall building's energy consumption has been demonstrated in previous research. To target an effective behaviour change, a specific set of determinants that influencing the desired behaviour should be identified according to the local context. As according to (Ajzen, 1985), human behaviour is formulated by a set of psychological determinants. There are two elements should be considered in identifying the determinants to encourage users towards energy conservation behaviour which are contextual-specific factors and psychological factors (Boomsma *et al.*, 2016). The significant role of psychological factors in increasing pro-environmental behaviour

has been acknowledged in previous research. As depicted by Yu *et al.* (2011), users behaviour is one of the reasons why buildings energy consumption can be higher than it supposed to be. There are numerous psychological factors could influence individual behavioural changes towards energy conservation behaviour. For example, study by Thøgersen and Grønhøj (2010) has found that perceived control and self-efficacy has a strong contribution in fostering energy conservation behavior. Other psychological factor that has been successfully encourage pro-environmental behavior is social norm (Abrahamse and Steg, 2013). Social norm refers to individual's energy related behavior which influenced by the action and thinking of certain group member such as friends and family. Meanwhile, study by Wang *et al.* (2014) found that energy conservation behaviour among residents in Beijing is affecting by few factors such as attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control (PBC), living habits, energy knowledge and public information. According to Blok *et al.* (2015), there are several internal factor that can influence the pro-environmental behaviour, which are environmental awareness, values and attitude. While, the external factor include social norm and financial constraints (Pothitou *et al.*, 2016a). In addition, study by Boomsma *et al.* (2016) has discussed on four important factors which consider could influence individual's energy saving behaviour, which are knowledge, imageability, perceived control and social norm. In essence, there are various psychological determinants have been proven to have significant contributions in fostering desired behaviour.

In view of the previous studies presented above, the psychological determinants influencing the desired behaviour are indeed varying across the local context and culture. Most of the previous research has focused and highlighted the determinants of household energy conservation behaviour which significantly influence household practice towards energy conservation. However, similar set of psychological determinants in the household context may not be effective in the office building context. There are limited literatures on the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users in Malaysia. Thus, the research question arises are: (1) what are the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users? (2) Does causal relationship of the determinants exist in formulating energy conservation

behaviour? This research aims to identify the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users and the causal relationship of the determinants in formulating energy conservation behaviour among office building users.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The objectives of this research include:

- i) To identify the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users
- ii) To determine the causal relationship of the psychological determinants in formulating energy conservation behaviour among office building users.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

The scope of this study is focused on the government office buildings located in Kota Iskandar, Johor. The respondents are office building users in Kota Iskandar. The rationale to select Government Office Building in Kota Iskandar is because Kota Iskandar is one of the government office buildings which targeted to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve sustainability environment as outlined in Low Carbon Society Action Plan 2025.

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

The findings of this study are able to serve as an initial reference to management progress in fostering energy conservation behaviour among office building users and it contributes to existing literatures on the psychological

determinants in formulating energy conservation behaviour. Indeed, the psychological determinants allow future researchers to use as psychological variables in determining energy conservation behaviour in different context and area.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

This chapter is carried out in five stages include literature review, design survey instrument, data collection, data analysis and conclusion and recommendation. Figure 1.1 illustrates the research flow chart for present study. The detail descriptions for each stage is explained as below:

### **1. Stage One : Literature Review**

Literature review was done by review journals, articles, conference paper, books and thesis. The relevant theory and psychological determinants that influenced pro-environmental behavior in previous studies had reviewed and summarized in this chapter. Such theoretical model developed in previous studies in determining the psychological determinants that can influence energy conservation behaviour has been identified by literature search.

### **2. Stage Two : Survey Instrument Designation**

This stage is to design survey instrument which includes design of the questionnaires. An elicitation study was held to gather input to formulate the final questionnaire survey. An appropriate sampling strategy will be selected to gather the raw data. Pre-test of the questionnaires is needed before distributes to the respondents to ensure the survey instruments are free from technical error.

### 3. Stage Three : Data Collection

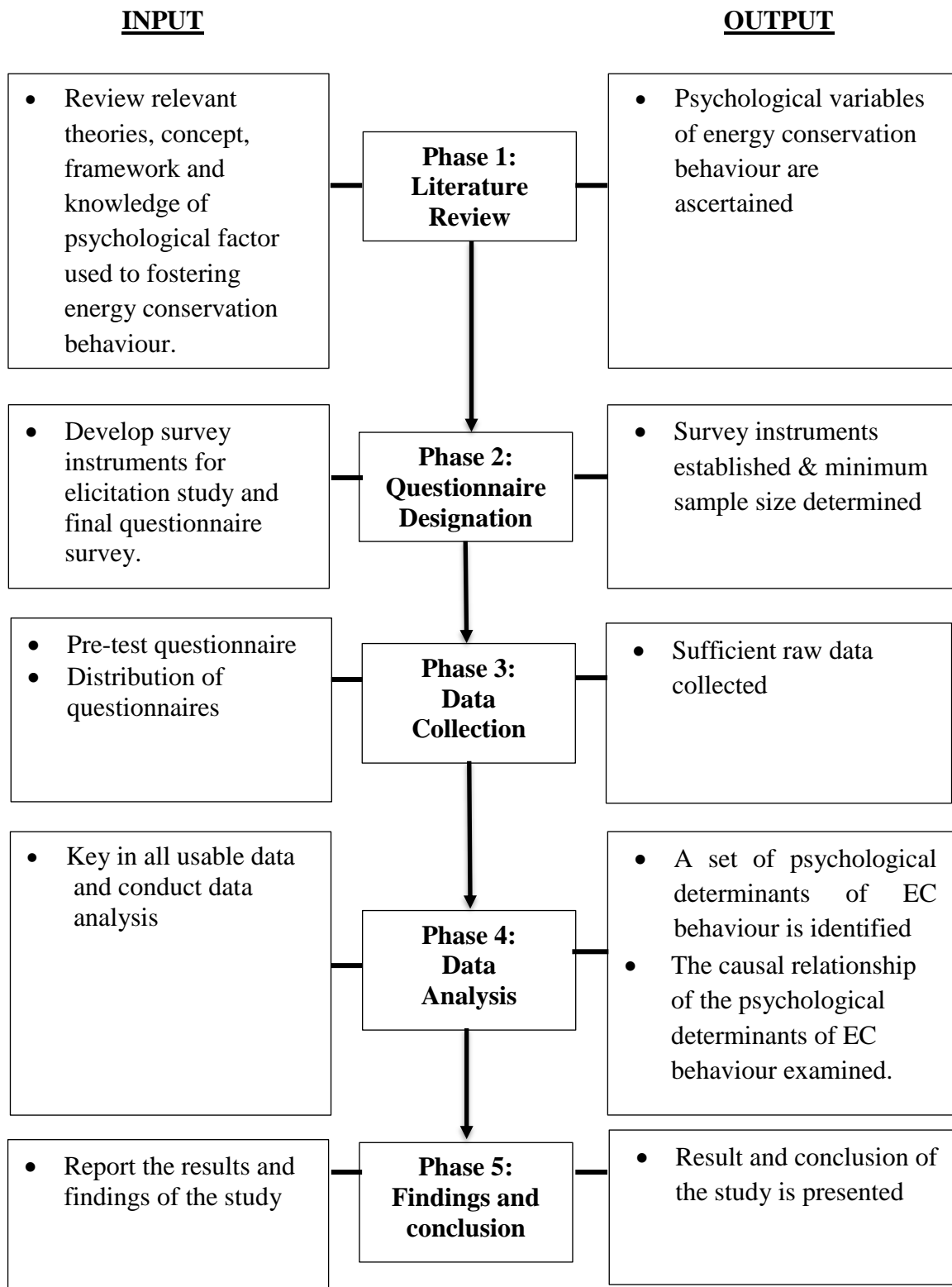
After the final questionnaire is revised accordingly based on the comments and feedbacks from the pre-testing stage, the final questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondent (staffs of government office building in Kota Iskandar). This data collection stage is to collect empirical data on the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office building users.

### 4. Stage Four : Data Analysis

This stage is to analyze the raw data obtained from respondents. The collected data is compiled and analyzed in order to answer the research objective. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) assisted by SEM-Smart-PLS software is used to analyze the raw data gathered.

### 5. Stage Five : Conclusion and recommendations

This stage is the final stage of the study where conclusion is derived from the findings. Recommendation and limitation is presented for further research purpose.



**Figure 1.1** Research Methodology Flow Chart : Adopted from Low (2012)



## **1.8 Chapter Outline**

The research consists of five chapters. Overall it focuses on the psychological determinants of energy conservation behaviour among office buildings users. Chapter one is about the introduction of energy consumption by commercial sector, energy challenges, government initiatives and importance of energy conservation behaviour among office building users. In this chapter, research objective was formulated based on the problem statement. The scope of study, significance of study, research methodology and the chapter outline are also included in this chapter.

Chapter two is literature review. It included the literature search and review where the theoretical part was carried out. It focuses mainly on the literature part of energy conservation and psychological variables that can foster energy saving behaviour. The relevant theories, concept, framework, model and knowledge are reviewed in this chapter.

Next, chapter three is research methodology. It discusses on the methodology used to achieve the research's objectives. This chapter explained further regarding survey instruments, sampling technique, elicitation study, data collection and method use to analyze the raw data.

Chapter Four is findings and discussions. The analyzed data discussed depth in this chapter. All analysis of data collected in this study is present. Graph, chart and figure are included for better understanding.

Lastly, chapter five is conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions are derived from previous chapter which is findings and discussions. All the objectives in this study were achieved. Recommendations are presented for future research and followed with limitation of study.

## **1.9 Summary**

In conclusion, the problem statement and gaps of research have been identified in this chapter. Research objective is formulated and scope of study is defined. A brief research methodology diagram and the chapter outline are presented.

.

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