



The Ten Years of Citizen Participation in Malaysia Public Project: 2010-2020

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ABSTRACT: Citizen Participation is an essential element in achieving sustainable community across the globe. However, in many countries, the execution of citizen participation is not optimal due to various constraints such as development goals and administrative power. Malaysia is no exception in that matter. Therefore, this paper seeks to investigate the extent of citizen participation in the Malaysian context during 2010-2020. The desk research method was applied, and data was collected through a literature review. The retrieved information was analysed using thematic analysis. This study verified that Malaysian's participation is at tokenism level of Arnstein's ladder of participation. The findings showed that execution of citizen participation in public project or program need to be improvised. This study recommends government, thru its authorities, to boost citizen participation in a public project utilizing various efficient engagement methods.

KEYWORDS: Citizen Participation, Citizen Involvement, Level of Participation, Public Participation, Public Project Malaysia, Sustainable Community Development.

INTRODUCTION

Citizen participation is identified as the process via stakeholder influence and shared power on priority set-up, resource distributions, policy decisions, and entrance to community services and products (World Bank 2001). Skeffington Committee in the United Kingdom earlier interpreted that citizen participation is an act of sharing ideation of policies and suggestions. Public can genuinely take part in the planning process (Healy 1998). Thus, citizen participation is related with public action that seeks to influence policy decisions (Nagel 1987). The importance of citizen participation in the democratic political process has been acknowledged across the globe (Salamat et al. 2011). Demand is increasing from citizens to let them play a significant role in the government process rather than passive voters (Tambouries et al. 2007). However, the authority can't capture all demands of the citizens (Davidoff 1965). Fischer (2012) indicated that in western countries, plentiful projects have seriously practised citizen participation to get their perspective on social and economic matters. This practice is achieved through various engagement approaches comprising traditional and innovative methods (Gastil and Levine 2005; Fishkin 2009; Joss 1995). Thus, several ways to get good comprehension about citizens demand are via citizens collaboration, consensus formation and effective argument (Raford 2011). Arose from this trend, Malaysia position in embedding 'citizen participation' in its public project development seems required. Several factors drive this necessity. Malaysia is a developing country and previously placed hefty efforts to be included as a developed nation in its vision 2020 policy. However, from the current progress, the goal has been shifted with new insertion of policy by the government that spells out in its Eleven Malaysia Plan Mid-Term Review (MEA 2018) and Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (MEA 2019). Although the direction is no longer chanting strongly to obtained developed nation status, the inclusion of citizens at all levels of the country development thru various outlined trust and enablers are obvious (MEA 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to comprehend the citizen participation situation in Malaysia. Furthermore, to suggest a better inclusion of their participation in the future development of public projects. The structure of the paper starts by defining citizen participation and its importance. In third section, represents Malaysian citizen participation, difficulties in implementing and trend in a developed and developing nation. The fourth section an overview of citizen participation model from various scholars specially from Sherry Arnstein (1969) was explained. The fifth section subsequently mentioned the research method in analysing the extent of citizen participation based on Arnstein's theory. The sixth and seventh section indicated the analysis findings on the reflection of citizen participation within ten years (2010-2020) and discussion about it. Finally, the article concludes some significant findings in Malaysian citizen participation and recommendations for fostering citizen inclusion.



2. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: WHY IT MATTERS?

Citizen participation is a process which enable individuals to become active and truly involve in decision-making regarding matters concerning them that may impact their lives (WHO 2002). Main objective of citizen participation is to give opportunity for citizen to involve in development planning process (Marzuki 2015). It is because citizen participation is said as a vehicle to deliver their pursuits and apprehensions related to development proposals where the proposed development may affect their livelihood (Slocum and Thomas-Slayter 1995). According to Lukensmeyer et al. (2011), political and administrative difficulties may be diminished by the involvement of citizen in the development set up and advocating a professional transparency atmosphere. This is because citizen participation could help identify a public concern, desires, and lead to excellent management of resources (Chadwick 1971; Marzuki 2015). Its aid in stimulating exchange of information among stakeholders of developments' planning which may contribute to better connections between them and boosting consensus insight that may result in a supportive manner to the proposed development plans (Cavric 2011).

Nevertheless, the success of participation process is based on the extent of citizen is permissible to participate (Lukic 2011). A great participation process requires citizen to partake at numerous phases of planning and development as Litchfield (1996) recommended. Though, lots of restrictions may obstruct citizen from involving in the implementation of participation process. Research demonstrates that participatory setting regulations and objectives in public provision projects are frequently vague (Ansell and Gash 2008; Gustafson and Hertting 2017). Moreover, the efficacy of citizen participation differs (Abram and Cowell 2004; Lane 2003; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). This is because it involved various levels of process openness and impact on the decision-making system, rendering the civilization and planning context (Alfasi 2003; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). Scholars also argued about the effectiveness of citizen participation that is delusional even thru collaborative working (Brabham 2009; Brown 2015; Zolkafli et al. 2017a) and utilization of modern information technologies (Kleinhans et al. 2015; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). Furthermore, it is said that successful public projects required an excellent form in their strategy and operation (Volden 2018; Samset 2003). In the other hand, powerholder or authority claimed that the citizen was not interested to be included in the process (Murphy 1988). It is further emphasised by Timothy (1999) that reasons behind authority lack of expectation in citizen participation were because of restricted financial allocations, deficient resources in staff management and information and low understanding of citizen general knowledge in participation and decisional process.

No matter how it is discussed by scholars, we cannot deny that citizen participation is an essential element in community development in ensuring its sustainability. Egan (2004) listed 'governance' as one of the criteria in achieving a sustainable community. Under this governance criteria, he indicated citizen participation or involvement as one of the features that construct a sustainable community. Thus, it is embedded as one of the elements of good governance. This concept has been acknowledged and practices at the worldwide level (World Bank 1994). Consequently, with the precise objective of Malaysia government or its agencies in performing social obligation for its citizen and the aim to be a developed nation, exclusion of citizen participation is not tolerable. Out of 17 SDGs that has been outlined, SDG 11 highlighted sustainable communities as one of its objectives to be attained (United Nations 2017). Under SDGs 11, the main slogan is to create cities inclusive, resilient, safe, and sustainable, where the route to achieve it is by balancing economic, social, and environmental sustainability. One of the targets in accomplishing it is by improvising city planning and management in a participatory and comprehensive manner (United Nations 2017).

3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN MALAYSIA

3.1 Citizen Participation in Public Policy and Project

Citizen participation has been acknowledged as a fundamental component of good governance and sustainable development by the government of this country (Zolkafli et al. 2017a; Nasir et al. 2013). Malaysia has officially embedded citizen participation in its Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172). It asserted that the public need to be enlightened, taught and involved in town and country planning (Zolkafli et al. 2017a; Maidin 2011). The amendments to the act have been done up until now (PLAN Malaysia, 2021). Malaysia is also progressive towards the attainment of overall SDG's but somehow have a small progression towards SDG's goal no. 11, where it is not the country's focus compared to other SDGs (DOSM 2020). However, Malaysia obviously emphasizes 'citizen participation' in its current policy known as 'Shared Prosperity Vision 2030'. The main goal of this Vision is to deliver proper essential livelihood to all citizens by 2030 (MEA 2019). Apparently, citizen participation is seen in the first objective of the vision. It stated, 'Development for All' by means of restructuring the economy to be more escalating, knowledge-based, and superior-valued



with full 'community participation' (MEA 2019). Several trusts were outlined, and enablers are drawn to attain governance, integrity, enlightened society, and sustainability associated with citizen participation. Therefore, citizen participation is seen as an entrance for sustainable progress given that it is well managed based on the demands of the public, extending benefits for current and future creations (Marzuki 2015). A logical approach to participation at the beginning is essential to create adjustments to sustainable community development. The approach must be capable of establishing and inspiring the transition process through a local community-based method (Ahmad 2016).

3.2 The Extent and Challenges of Citizen Participation

Several studies have been done in Malaysia regarding citizen participation, particularly in land usage development (Omar and Leh 2009; Maidin 2011; Marzuki et al. 2012; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). It was revealed that extent of citizen participation, especially in public projects and programs, still needs to be scrutinized and improvised. It explained that citizen participation is low and restricted, there is a shortage of comprehensive preparation-related information and limited knowledge of planning matters. Furthermore, the studies acknowledged insufficient government initiatives in encouraging citizen participation and lacking alertness from the citizen.

Besides that, some local authorities do not involve majority of the citizen in enhancing service delivery or any development blueprint (Muhammad et al. 2015; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). That is because Malaysia is a developing nation that gives vital importance to its economic growth (Chin 2000; Watson 2013; Marzukhi 2020) and public opinions against it tend to be relegated (Marzukhi 2020; Siddiquee and Mohamed 2007). The authority also thought that excessive public participation would decelerate a project or program execution and lagging overall development progress (Manaf et al. 2016). In addition, authorities received persistent criticism, poor attitude, sluggish enforcement, and workforce egotism that affected citizen participation success (Nurudin et al. 2015). Thus, to maintain the focus on economic growth, the sustainability concept as introduced by neoliberal systems is being used in tackling and involving the citizen through facilitated planning processes (Gunder 2010; Gunder 2006; Marzukhi 2020; Raco 2016).

Therefore, based on these points of view, this article seeks to analyse the extent of citizen participation in Malaysia. The study focuses on existing research in Malaysia from scholars that have been published for the past ten years (2010-2020) on citizen participation in public project. The time span of ten years was chosen because in 2010, Malaysian Government announce of tenth (10th) and eleven (11th) Malaysian Plan that serve as national development guideline which emphasizing on citizen participation (EPU 2010; EPU 2016). It marks the government effort in highlighting citizen participation through implementation of both plans. Secondly, Malaysia started to announce targeted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced by United Nations in 2015 where citizen participation being reemphasized again (EPU 2021). The five-year Malaysia Plan sounding getting stronger because of announcement of the SDGs. Furthermore, new Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 has been designated within those 10 years. In addition, there were some changes in political power from 2018 to 2020 that spotlight the inclusiveness of the citizen in mid-term review of the 11th Malaysia Plan. Most of these documented policies obviously accentuating on 'citizen participation' (MEA 2018; MEA 2019). Apparently, Malaysia is known as a multi-ethnic country consist of Malay and indigenous people, Chinese, Indian and others. Most of the majority group of citizens came from Malay & Indigenous background (DOSM 2022). Therefore, most of the article that has been discovered by this study were based on majority citizen in Malaysia. There has been very limited discussion on minority group founded in public project in Malaysia. In the other way around, it means that minority group was following the majority.

4. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION MODEL

Several models have prompted on citizen participation acquired by scholars. The sort of information and chances given to citizen are the basis in determining citizen participation level. Thus, some models introduced by scholars were notable among other models.

Wiedemann and Femers (1993) trust that citizen participation portrays citizen institutions. Citizen participation will appear when common knowledge and information were provided about the issue being raised even though they had less influence in the decision making. The deficiency stated by scholar is about agency dual duty. There was conflict of interest acknowledged. Agency is responsible to provide relevant information about the issue raised to the citizen for them to opinion out. While on the other hand, the agency also acts as exclusive decider about the issue raised. B.C.R.T and Dorsey (1994) outlined eight (8) degree of citizen process in decision making process. However, commitment and influence assist in expanding participation degree at each rung. The scholars stated that the citizen needs to be appropriately educate and acknowledge about any issue. The appropriateness of educating and acknowledging citizen will resulted in meaningful contribution and maximizing their participation. Besides that, citizen agreement on issues can be achieved by educating and acknowledging them.

While ‘a new ladder of citizen participation’ developed by D.M. Connor (1988) acknowledged that obstacles may happen anywhere during implementation of a program. Thus, he suggested a brand-new model that can settle or prevent conflict which may occurred from unsatisfied citizen. Prevention of any conflict based on any issue happen is seen as a vital aspect in this model by the author. The most well-known citizen participation model was derived from Sherry R. Arnstein “ladder of citizen participation” (1969). The scholar illustrated citizen power or influence in decision making process via their participation. The model illustrated eight (8) level of citizen participation as in **Figure 1**.

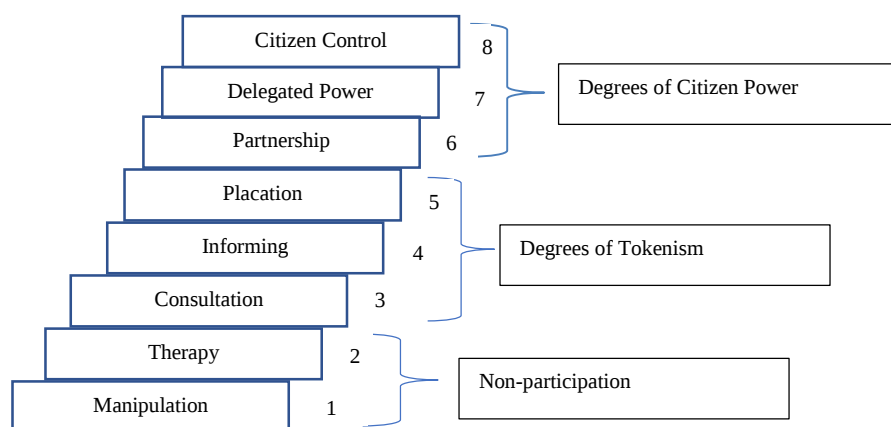


Figure 1: Eight Level of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

The lowest rungs known as non-participation interpreted as an objective of powerholder to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ citizen with no intention to get genuine participation from them. There are two (2) types that were considered in this rung known as manipulation and therapy. Manipulation seen as placing citizen in such advisory group for the goal of ‘educating’ the citizen and not really concern in tapping their ideas for decision-making. While Therapy is more on ‘curing’ the citizen mind in an extensive engagement by the powerholder.

The middle rung stated as degree of tokenism which allows citizen to voice out their opinion and to be heard by the powerholder. No assurance of changing any status quo or follow through done. The final decision is still hold by the powerholder. In this rung, (3) ‘information’, (4) ‘consultation’ and (5) ‘placation’ was arranged accordingly in showing the citizen influence in the matter discuss or decision-making. At the highest level in this rung, which is placation, advised been given and attentively heard but no power to obstruct the final decision by the powerholder.

The upper rung known as degree of citizen power that shows great citizen influence in the process of decision-making with the powerholder. It enables them to discuss and connect in trade-offs with conventional power holder indicated as partnership. At the highest rung, citizen get majority control in decision-making or in great power on management which known as delegated power (7) and citizen control (8).

4.1 Participation Model Observation

Table 1: Schlossberg and Shuford (2005) outlined their observation of various view by scholars

Scholars	Spectrum	Orientation
Wiedemann and Femers (1993)	Education → Joint decision making	Administrative
B.C.R.T and Dorcey (1994)	Inform → On-going involvement	Planning process
D.M. Connor (1988)	Education → Prevention	Conflict resolution
Sherry R. Arnstein (1969)	Manipulation → Citizen control	Power Orientation



Each spectrum and orientation showed dissimilar focus on the basic concept of citizen participation. Wiedemann and Femers (1993) spectrum was started from education to joint decision making. The orientation was based on administrative objective. Then, B.C.R.T and Dorsey (1994) initiated planning process where the spectrum was from informing to ongoing involvement. While D.M. Connor (1994) developed a conflict resolution participation model with the spectrum started from education to prevention. For Sherry R, Arnstein (1969), the focus is on power orientation of citizen participation with the spectrum from manipulation to citizen control. Therefore, based on the objective of this study in determining level of citizen participation, Sherry R. Arnstein (1969) model was selected. Besides that, even until now, Arnstein's model is the most and continuously referred to by scholars for their research in expanding their philosophy of citizen participation (Apostol et. al 2013; Kenny et. al 2013; Kieti et. al 2013; B. Lam 2013; C. Wahl 2013 and it is easily understandable in interpreting types of citizen participation.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs desk-research method to collect the data. It focused on articles of case studies conducted in Malaysia for the past 10 years (2010-2020) on citizen participation in public project. The literature was searched with various keywords such as: "citizen participation in public project Malaysia, citizen participation towards sustainable community development Malaysia", and level of citizen involvement Malaysia. Then the selected articles underwent the process of screening, which defined their relevancy about the selection. Those articles which followed the given criteria were chosen that were: i) published in the time span of 2010 to 2020 and ii) citizen were given chances to involve in programs or project. Furthermore, certain criteria on selected case studies were based on the following discipline had also been chosen to get a wider view as shown in **Table 2** such as: (1)Transportation, (2)Local Government Service, (3)Housing Settlement Post-Disaster, (4)General Planning, (5)Local Agenda 21, (6)&(7)Local Government Program, (8) Tourism, (9)Geographical Information System (GIS), (10)Deforestation, (11)City Planning. Then, extent of citizen participation in project or programs was highlighted by applying thematic analysis (Tobi, 2009; Ryan and Bernards, 2003; Krippendorff, 2004). To seek for the extent of citizen participation, Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 2019) was adopted in knowing the current position of their involvement level.

6. RESULT

Based on the review on selected articles, it reveals certain similarity according to selected criteria chosen in citizen participation in public project in Malaysia. The result of the analysis shown in **Table 2**.

6.1 Citizen Participation of Arnstein's Ladder Theory

The studies displayed the extent of citizen participation in several field as mentioned earlier in section three utilizing Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation model.

6.1.1 Lowest Rung, The Non-Participation

The lowest rung known as the lowest level in citizen participation. At this rung, the objective was to get citizen support and to 'educate' them upon matters that appeared by the one who holds the power. Thus, their participation considered as non-participative as stated by Arnstein's. Three (3) studies were categorized under this rung; Zain et al. (2018), Muhammad et al. (2015) and Roosli (2014). Zain et al. (2018) obviously mentioned lack of understanding on citizens participation in his case study. While Muhammad et al. (2015) indicated minor involvement of community and minimal sharing of information with the authority. This happened even though the citizens had interest in contributing ideas for service delivery betterment provided by the authority. On the other hand, Roosli (2014) remarks on the failure in recognizing the citizens necessities. The citizen was included only as a formality to fulfil the provision in the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172). Therefore, these 3 studies showed that in some part of Malaysia, not all citizen was genuinely involved in decision-making process.

6.1.2 Middle Rung, Degree of Tokenism-Informing and Consultation

The middle rung represents little citizen influence or power in participation process. No assurance of their ideas was going to be implemented. The final verdict is still hold by powerholders. Based on these description, six (6) studies showed several characteristics in the informing and consultation level. The 6 studies were represented by Marzukhi (2020), Kaur et al. (2017), Manaf et al. (2016), Nurudin et al. (2015), Marzuki et al. (2012) and Zolkafli et al. (2017). For instance, minimal consultative approach being applied where the rights of citizens participation falsely practiced in the study by Marzukhi (2020). Kaur et al. (2017) mentioned about lack of citizen empowerment in decision-making that evidently needed a bottom-up method. In other case

by Manaf et al (2016), the authority thought that including massive citizen will slower the progress in achieving authority designated goals. Besides that, the citizen felt that their contribution would not give significant impact, even though they know their rights to participate in the process. Nurudin et al. (2015) noticed that, most citizen understood the idea of public participation. However, even so, they rarely engaged with the authority. This is because of insufficient dissemination of information by the authority and lacking in citizens ability to participate. Marzuki et al. (2012) disclosed that citizen participation is restricted even though space been given for them to participate. This is due to dominance action by the authority in hearing session in the case study. Furthermore, Zolkafli et al. (2017) revealed on utilization of ICT apparatus via facilitated and self-administered approach in his study. It was suggested that more facilitated or consultative method need to be promoted. This is to help in expanding citizen participation to deliver extraordinary quality of spatial data. Thus, these 6 cases fall under 'information' and 'consultation' level in the middle rung. It proved that in certain area in Malaysia, action conducted by the authority clearly represented their willingness to listen to citizen opinions but with no assurance that the views will be executed or embedded in the designated development. In other words, citizens were involved in participation process via certain platform just to get their voice to be heard but no serious follow through upon the ideas (Arnstein 2019).

6.1.3 Middle Rung, Degree of Tokenism-Placation

At this level, citizens opinion and ideas being seriously heard but final decision was still hold by authority or the powerholder. Two (2) case study were identified that were Connolly (2020) and Abdullah et al. (2015). Connolly (2020) indicated active citizen participation together with non-governmental organisation (NGO) in safeguarding their habitants and ecosystem at Penang Hillside. Cooperation between parties was being witnessed in this case with NGO's is highlighted as the significant component in disseminating information and knowledge to the citizen. This is regarding instilling awareness of their environment that may affected their life. It is obviously exhibited citizen influence in the program or project that was going to be executed. Therefore, urging the authority to act appropriately even though some criticisms were raised upon their decisions in allowing special approval to few developments on the hillside. Similarly in the case of Kuala Lumpur City Plan stated by Abdullah et al. (2015), serious participation of citizen in planning was demonstrated. Citizen's suggestions being considered by the authority before the plan was published. Furthermore, 'changes of paradigm' in citizen participation occurred during the process of planning. The process showed remarkable awareness and comprehension of the citizen on their rights. Thus, in few parts in Malaysia especially in urban area, these cases interpreted "Placation" theory by Arnstein's where citizen have some strong influence in the decision-making process. They were allowed to advise the powerholder even though the authority holds decisive power upon matters that need to be decided.

Table 2: Findings on Citizen Participation in Malaysia Public Project based on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

No.	Publication	Study Design	Focus of Study	Key Findings & Analysis	Level of Citizen Participation (CP)
<u>Lowest Rung, The Non-Participation</u>					
1	(Zain et al. 2018)	Quantitative study (survey)	To recognize the extent of public participation and understanding in environmental impact assessment (EIA) process in Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project.	- Indicated low level understanding of citizen participation. - Public unaware about development procedure and their rights. - Not met objective of citizen participation. - Significant changes required by authority in promoting program and educating citizen continuously via mass media.	Non-participation
2	(Muhammad et al. 2015)	Quantitative study (survey, interview)	To evaluate level of community involvement in sustainable	- Progressive upgrading needed in facility services and maintenance culture. - Minimal community participation	Non-participation



			development process to measure public service delivery.	and sharing information with the authority. • Community unaware of participating right and skeptical thoughts on the authority in valuing their opinion. • Community showed heavy interest in contributing ideas to improvise service delivery.	
3	(Roosli 2014)	Quantitative study (survey, document, and review)	To examines technological, spatial and social impact of post-disaster housing projects on disaster victims of tsunami in Kedah and Penang.	• Victims highly satisfied with the housing project but more concerned about their livelihood and community healing. • Short-term action failed to identify main problem-socio economic survival. • Required adaptable method and include victims' participation in the decision-making process.	Non-participation
<u>Middle Rung, Degree of Tokenism-Information and Consultation</u>					
4	(Marzukhi 2020)	Qualitative study (interview, document review)	To evaluate whether idea of planning discourse-sustainability can assist in capital accumulation via transformation of governance practices.	• Minimalist consultative tactic being applied and designed by government. • Citizen participation not genuinely practiced and restricted. • Exposed government supremacy and administrative difficulties in the planning system.	Degree of tokenism
5	(Kaur et al. 2017)	Qualitative study (Interview, focus group, observation, document review)	To determine the effectiveness of the participatory mechanisms used in Local Agenda 21 (LA21) programs in East West Malaysia.	• Official equipment and traditional approaches were utilized to engage with citizen-single manner of communication. • The council led the process and hold the final verdict. • Lack of citizen empowerment in decision-making. Bottom-up approach framework relating public participation need to be outlined.	Degree of tokenism
6	(Manaf et al. 2016)	Quantitative study (survey)	To assess the level of involvement of local citizens in local government decisions in	• Citizen wanted to be included in decision-making process and not only as recipient of the services offered. • Authorities appeared unpleasant with excessive citizen involvement which	Degree of tokenism



			Malaysia-northern part of Malaysia.	may increase expectations and slowing public project process. • Perception of citizen that their involvement does not affect final verdict but believe they have rights to contribute to the process. • Urban community is more responsive, vigilant, and knowledgeable than rural community.	
7	(Nurudin et al. 2015)	Quantitative study and case study approach (interview, survey, secondary data)	To explore the actual dimensions of public participation practice in Seremban Municipal Council (MPS).	• Most participants understand the concept of citizen participation and attended program related to cleanliness, environment, LA 21, health and security. • Citizen participation seldomly achieved for overall program conducted due to inadequate distribution of program information and citizen ability in the activities.	Degree of tokenism
8	(Marzuki et al. 2012)	Qualitative study (interview)	To examine the public participation approach to tourism planning in Langkawi Island Malaysia.	• Constraints in citizen participation due to of behavior of the residents, ineffective approach by authority, and insufficient information provided. • Limited occasions were given for consultation. • Verdict made by authority does not involve public. Indicated authority dominance in participation process.	Degree of tokenism
9	(Zolkafli et al. 2017a)	Quantitative study (survey, internet based-PGIS mapping via website by facilitated and self-administered mode)	To evaluates the capacity of general public to effectively contribute to land use planning outcomes in Malaysia using Participatory GIS (PGIS)	• Facilitated PGIS process delivered greater quality spatial data compared to self-administered PGIS. • PGIS platform together with facilitated PGIS is needed to enhance public participation and value of spatial data produced.	Degree of tokenism
<u>Middle Rung, Degree of Tokenism-Placation</u>					
10	(Connolly 2020)	Qualitative study (Interview, storyline, observation,	to evaluate the potential of emergent urban governance initiatives in	• Initiatives of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO-Penang Forum), active co-operation by the government and citizen (PHW-citizen as informer) exhibited	Degree of tokenism (placation)



		document review)	Penang, Malaysia, for achieving more socially and environmentally just forms of urban development.	significant interconnection, positive impact on safeguarding and cultivating multi-species flourishing to sustain metropolitan ecologies and its value of living.	
11	(Abdullah et al. 2015)	Qualitative/observational cohort study (observation and self-experience)	To analyse the process of public participation during the preparation of the Kuala Lumpur City Plan (KLCP).	• Citizen involvement and opinion was seriously shown and taken into consideration at the overall planning stage. • It indicated that citizen involvement has shifted higher to new paradigm than previous decade.	Degree of tokenism (placation)

7. DISCUSSION

The eleven studies presented the extent of citizen participation in public project or program in the areas of transportation, local government service and program, housing settlement post-disaster, tourism, GIS, general and city planning. From the analysis, the studies displayed that most cases evidenced the extent of citizen participation within the lower to the middle rung of Arnstein's (1969) model. It is indicated that powerholder or the authority dominance was obvious even though implementation of citizen participation process took place. These happened mostly due to inability of citizen in understanding the true concept of citizen participation, their rights and restricted opportunity given for them to contribute their ideas even though they wanted it. Besides that, powerholder inefficiency in disseminating information to the citizen and their real intention to include citizen in the process itself contribute to the level of citizen participation. This is supported by Ainul Jaria Maidin (2011) which stated most citizen was not mindful of their civil rights and do not have ample knowledge about the matters being discussed. Moreover, she mentioned inadequate initiatives by powerholder, lacking successful and diverse means in publicizing information to the citizen. Additionally, a great level of political interference also contributed to the extent of citizen participation. Powerholders have the advantages in controlling the planning process to achieve their designated growth. Therefore, not the best suit to signify the citizen appeal. Thus, it was admitted that higher level involvement of citizen is for betterment of the society and development. Several studies acknowledged that citizen often acquired local wisdom and they can recommend ground-breaking resolution that possibly exhibited good initiatives of resource allocation (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Fung 2004; Sirianni 2009; Marzuki 2015). Citizen participation can assist in improving procedure and deploy verdicts which may connected with realisation of citizen program objective (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Fung 2004; Sirianni 2009). Additionally, citizen participated in an advisory group as a stakeholder to notify comprehensive scope of planning and decision-making processes (McCool & Guthrie 2001). This also supported by Wang and Van Wart (2007) that revealed participation enhances decision-making because it includes diversity of interests and open to greater resolution to overcome social mess. Fischer (2012) stated that this had been seen in some developed and developing nations such as the United States of America, European countries, India, and Brazil. He indicated positive changes occurred in terms of service distribution, problem solutions, and better assistance for societal and economic progress in those countries. There are studies done like Abdullah et al. (2015) and other few cases that has been researched in prior decades in this country revealed that active participation from the citizen did took place (Nurudin et al. 2015). It occurred when the authority was thoughtful and genuine opportunity was given to the citizen in empowering them to influence decisions that may affected their life. In short, it means empowering the citizen.

However, scholars argued that powerholder unfavoured excessive citizen participation because it will sluggish solution process and enhances citizen anticipation (Manaf et al. 2016). Moreover, there are administrative cost involved with citizen participation (Ebdon and Franklin 2006; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Robbins et al. 2008). The cost of involving mass citizen is said to be expensive than singular administrator for decision-making with suitable skill and knowledge (Irvin and Stansbury 2004) and fear upon losing command of the process (Moynihan, 2003). Besides that, Malaysia is a developing nation that give focus on the economic progression (Chin 2000; Watson 2013; Marzukhi 2020). Due to that, public opinions against it tend to be relegated



(Marzukhi 2020; Siddiquee and Mohamed 2007). Thus, powerholder tend to not include mass citizen in development design and betterment of service distribution (Muhammad et al. 2015; Zolkafli et al. 2017a). One thing that cannot be ignored from the studies analysed was that the featuring role by the powerholder in commencing citizen participation though criticism upon executing it being rendered (Nurudin et al. 2015). This expressed that real participatory democracy relies on democratic knowledge which has been added and translated with inclusion of a wide variety of individuals (Oliver 2008). In short, the studies interpreted that the extent of citizen participation in the public project or program were still lagging at certain extent in Malaysia and need some effective methods of implementation. In other words, the authority needed to improvise their intention and way of involving citizen to obtain genuine participation from them to achieve the country's SDGs and other agenda where hefty efforts are required in doing so.

8. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, genuine participation and better transparent conduct of the authority is required in involving citizen in diverse project or program. Even though citizen participation had been and continuously performed in project or program, some challenges and difficulties may exist in terms of desired goals by the authority, procedures involve, engagement approach, ability and background of citizen as well as their behaviour about matter being discussed. Nevertheless, credit needs to be given to the efforts made by the government and the citizen for the amendments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172) relating to citizen participation since its establishment. Citizen awareness is also seen as a crucial component in ensuring their opinion to been taken considerably into development process. Thus, this will further assisted authority in achieving the growth target with great compliance from the citizen (Maidin 2011). Citizen were indeed interested in the quality of the authority and service delivered (Manaf et al. 2016). Besides that, the authority must exemplified crucial starring role in advocating and boosting citizen participation to ensure success in the designated strategy and project (Manaf et al. 2016). In short, this recommend that upcoming citizen participation process must deploy applicable citizen involvement where they able to convey unreservedly within context being discuss and powerholder seriously taken into consideration of their feedback that is significant so that transparency and accountability of decisional process and citizen alertness can be enhance (Hartley and Wood 2005). Furthermore, creative, and innovative approaches such as utilization of ICT tools and application is seen as a booster in enhancing citizen participation. Kingston et al (2000) indicated that technology is supposedly utilized in citizen participation process due to its instant and constant development. In addition, the authority may provide them with attractive incentives or reward in return of their active participation. It will assist in improving citizen participation, increase effectiveness and resulted in better solution-making for the community and their surroundings. Eventually, the nation can experience sustainable community development and at the same time meet the country's pledged for SDGs particularly under SDGs 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities and other parallel agenda relating to citizen participation.

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