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Research Article

E-Government in Selangor: a Case Study of Citizen's Participation and its Challenges

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Abstract. In the study of democracy, E-Government is significant as it functions as a platform to promote e-democracy by promoting people's participation through utilising modern technology such as the Internet. However, it is noted that most of the government websites are still stagnant and lacking in criteria and features of embracing two-ways communication. This can hinder the process to promote e-democracy in the government websites. This study uses Marianne Kneuer's framework to examine the impact of e-government on e-democracy in Selangor by using content analysis method. The objectives of this research are to study the progress of e-democracy implementation in the government websites in Selangor by looking at the features based on the framework proposed by exploring three categories: free and equal access, e-participation, and e-governance. There are twelve local government websites in Selangor. Although it is noted that the governments have provided some features related to e-democracy, the features need to be updated and improved from time to time. The challenges to

the effectiveness and efficiency of e-government and e-democracy were also highlighted based on the results collected and interviews conducted with the website administrators. Those were namely allocation of budget, feature standardization, regular updates of the websites, unclear division of task, leader's approach and also public awareness and acceptance. The e-democracy implementation in government websites has been accepted positively by the government administrator by improving their websites which are in line with e-democracy features.

Keywords: E-Government, E-Democracy, E-Participation, E-Governance, Free And Equal Access

INTRODUCTION:

Over the years, the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly reshaped the landscape of local democracy in Malaysia by becoming more efficient operationally and up to date to meet people's demands through adopting e-government. Malaysia could see pioneering initiatives since the 1960s, but efforts became more significant from 1996 onwards with the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC). MSC is an integrated part that aligns with Malaysia's Vision 2020 to become a fully developed country (Muhd Rosydi, 2013).

In 1996, during Tun Dr Mahathir's era, the Malaysian government identified several initiatives under MSC known as seven flagships applications to modernise the public sector, especially in its e-government system. Smart School, Telehealth, R&D Cluster, Economic Business, MyKad, Technopreneur Development, and E-government were established by Tun Dr Mahathir in 1997. E-government is one of the seven flagships of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) initiative (Muhd Rosydi, 2013; Sidek, 2013), and it plays a role in improving the internal management of the government administration and communications (Azmi zam et al., 2010). Jeong and Nor Fadzlina (2007) stated that these initiatives ensure that the public sector leads in transforming government service processes that affect everything, including societal structures in Malaysia.

E-government is generally regarded as a public administration reform that seeks to improve the flow of information and transparency (Bolivar et al., 2006), encouraging citizens to actively participate in the decision-making process (Cooper & Yoder, 2002; Gilman & Lewis, 1996), and engage in public policy-making (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2003). These goals use government as a tool to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery to the citizens and to better the administration system at all levels of government (Muhd Rosydi, 2013; Yildiz, 2007). In the Malaysian context, Tun Dr Mahathir's work following the foundation of ICT was the birth of state and local government websites, with each state and its local government having its website to provide information and services to the people. As a result, e-government is anticipated to deliver features that encourage people to engage.

According to the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) research, Internet users climbed from 24.5 million in 2016 to 28.7 million in 2018. It demonstrates that the number of users is gradually increasing from year to

year. The current paper focuses solely on Selangor's local government to investigate this increase. It is because Selangor has the largest percentage distribution of Internet users (23.8%) compared to current national and state populations. About 20% of the nation's Internet users live here (Internet Users Survey, 2017).

Project Monitoring System (SPP), Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), Generic Office Environment (GOE), Electronic Procurement (EP), Electronic Services (E-Services), Electronic Labour Exchange (ELX) and E-Syariah were the first seven pilot ventures built under MSC. All of them are intended to increase the ease, accessibility and quality of interactions between the citizens and government in information flows (Muhd Rosydi, 2013). E-government is expected to boost e-participation from the public by providing various interactive features that motivate people to use them. For example, this platform creates an avenue for self-service, enabling the public to obtain up-to-date information, public registration and payments, and other transformational services (Zulhuda, 2015). Furthermore, many other efforts and services have been introduced by the local government to promote active participation from the people, such as by providing e-forms and different modes of e-payments and the introduction of e-mobile where people can access their phones to browse government websites.

The idea of e-government has been implemented in Malaysia at the state and local levels of government because the government accepted the e-government establishment. SMART Selangor is one of the ideas from the Selangor government to improve the state's digital infrastructure so that citizens of the state have access to the WiFi provided by the state government. This will improve government engagement with the people. In the news published by MyStar on 20th March 2019, the Selangor government plans to improve Selangor's digital infrastructure by improving the current WiFi by introducing Smart Selangor Programme in the state.

According to Kampung Tunku Assemblyman Lim Yi Wei, the idea of SMART Selangor is one of the good initiatives as the government comes out with the idea to install the infrastructure first (MyStar, 2019). According to her, some people, especially senior citizens, are still unaware of government services and information. For example, MBPJ's 'e-Aduan' and 'Bantuan Sihat SMART Selangor'.

By having a good system of ICT, it will be easy to create a channel or platform for the public to use the website as a tool to consult and participate in decision-making and matters of any referendum where government encourage people to participate. Therefore, in this study, to have a successful implementation of e-government, e-democracy features need to be promoted so that it can encourage public participation and will improve the concept of e-government, not only as an information provider but also as a tool to encourage people to participate in government's decision-making process.

The advent of new technologies could increase the quality-of-service delivery to the people and improve people participation by encouraging e-democratic features in local government websites. Therefore, in this study, the researcher will analyse the e-democracy concept by looking at a few categories under the e-democracy framework proposed by Kneuer (2016) to know the progress of the government

websites. E-democracy, which serves as a dependent variable in this study, will be accessed by looking at e-democracy categories: free and equal participation, e-participation and e-government. The availability of features in each category will determine whether the local government websites can promote democracy or vice versa. The information obtained from the content analysis will serve as a guideline for the local government to improve the websites gradually from time to time.

METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a qualitative method. A content analysis of the Selangor government websites was conducted by looking at the websites with high Internet penetration and total populations. Stone et al. (1996) stated that "content analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text", which in this case was the study of the interactive and non-interactive features of the websites. The content analysis helps to describe the website features and contents, whereas the predictive function is strengthened with critical analysis. The time frame was between 1 March 2021 and 20 August 2021. In-depth interviews were conducted with website administrators of selected governments to verify data and their challenges based on the website progress results through content analysis. These interviews identified the progress of e-government and the level of integration of e-participation in the government website. The questions are divided into few categories to answer the research questions. The interview questions are divided into two parts, first, on the historical development of websites development in government of Selangor and the second part is on efforts taken by the department and progress of the websites of the government. Therefore, the questions designed are valid as the main data is collected through the content analysis by examine the contents of the websites based on the framework proposed. Coding sheets were created to study the contents of government websites.

Data Analysis

This study employs a qualitative approach to study the contents of websites and the challenges that impede the successful implementation of e-governments in the Selangor government website. This research is required to refer to both primary sources and secondary sources. The secondary sources are needed for data analysis obtained from observations on the websites, respondents' answers and interviews with the website administrators. The coding sheets are made up of components that are intended to demonstrate the dimension of e-participation and e-government. As a result, this research used Kneuer's (2016) recommendations to evaluate the contents of Selangor's government websites. Coding sheets were prepared by the researcher to evaluate each of the selected government websites. Data analysis is based on the results from the content analysis from the websites. Therefore, the theoretical framework proposed in this study was used to guide the content analysis and interview with the website's administrators. These semi-structured interviews help to learn more about the obstacles faced by the government and provide insight into the dimensions of e-government and e-democracy.

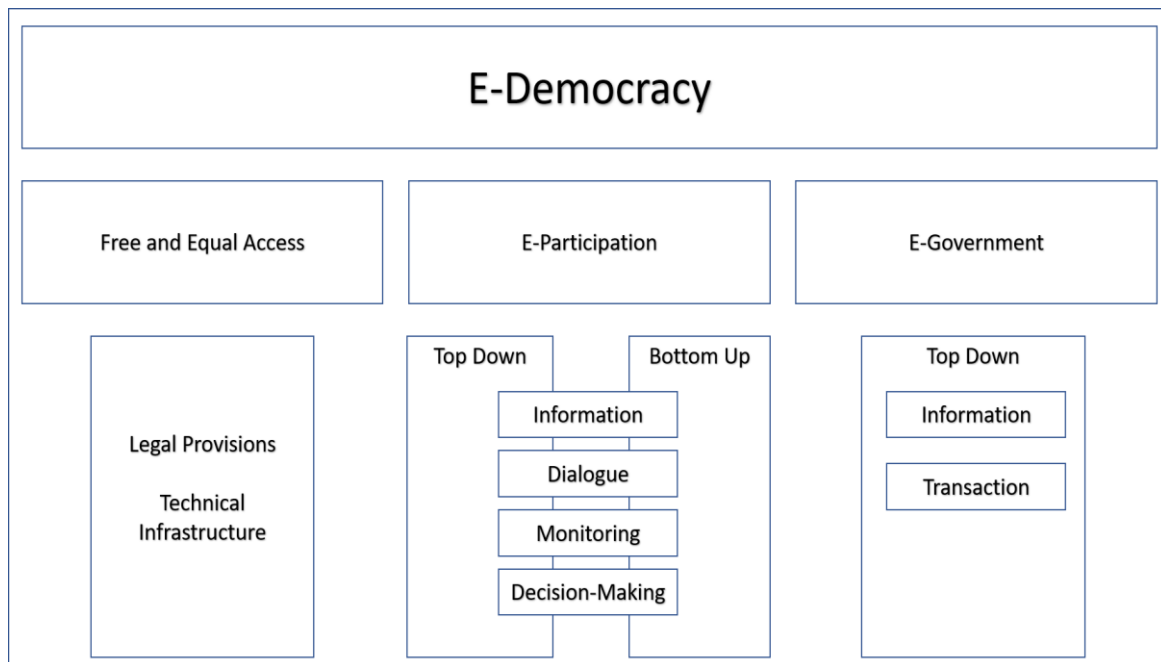
LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the existing works in Malaysia, for instance, are more interested in assessing people's satisfaction and acceptance towards e-government (Norazah & Ramayah, 2010; Norshita et al., 2010) and factors influencing people to use e-government in Malaysia (Ooh, 2008). Previous studies also discussed the challenges and potential of e-government in Malaysia (Nur Afiqah & Noreen Izza, 2016; Roslind Kaur, 2006; Wan Abdullah et al., 2013). Conversely, some studies highlight the factors that contributed to the failure of e-government among rural communities in Malaysia (Nur Afiqah & Noreen Izza, 2016). Hence, this study adds new findings to the existing pieces of literature by studying e-services provided by the local government websites in promoting e-democracy.

There are several studies conducted in Malaysia on e-government to examine the factors that influence citizens' adoption towards the e-government applications in Malaysia. Liyana Shuib et al. (2019), Norazryana et al. (2021) and Muhammad Hafiz and Muhammad Safuan (2023) agreed that e-government and governments via social media proved to influence people's attitudes to engage in protective behaviour where it can promote positive relationship between government and people. Study conducted by Muhammad Hafiz Hariz et al. (2023) by using Technology Acceptance Model, found that e-services provided by the government websites must be user-friendly and simple to use by providing videos to help people to use the services in the websites. However, there is no details of services given which can be implemented by local government websites. Therefore, this study came out with details on the features need to be introduced by the local government websites to improve government and public engagement where the public play an important role to influence government's decision-making process. The study examined e-democracy based on citizen participation in local government websites.

Furthermore, failure to obtain public trust is one of the factors hindering the successful implementation of e-government in Malaysia (Belanger & Carter, 2008; Voutinioti, 2013). Public rejection towards e-government services could jeopardise the implementation of e-government in a particular country (Al Hujran et al., 2015; Alzahrani et al., 2016; Khasawneh & Abu Shanab, 2013; Mahmood et al., 2014;). Thus, gaining public trust is vital in establishing e-government so that they will continue using services provided by the government. According to Razlini (2017), the lack of features that promote people's participation can be the reason for the lack of people's participation in the decision-making process. A few people know the services provided by the government make them not want to use the services, for example, online payment, because there is a lack of public trust from people. On the part of the public administrator, many officers do not prioritise e-government due to a lack of knowledge in dealing with websites. Apart from their lack of knowledge, the government officers' attitude also contributed to its failure. Hence, organisational behaviour can also hinder managing the e-government and encouraging people's participation.

Figure Number: 1. Concept of E-Democracy



Source: Adopted from Marianne Kneuer (2016), *E-democracy: A New Challenge for Measuring Democracy* (Mohammed Yasin, N., 2022).

Figure 1.0 shows the concept of e-democracy by Kneuer (2016). E-democracy is the use of ICT by democratic actors such as the government, media, political or societal organizations and citizens in the political and governance processes (Kneuer, 2016). Kneuer (2016) believes these three categories are crucial to studying democracy. Based on the framework adopted, e-democracy depends on these three categories: free and equal access, e-participation and e-government (Mohammed Yasin, N., 2022).

Free and equal access means when government provide basic features that is very important to attract people to use e-government that is by providing ICT so that people have access to use the system without any discrimination. The second category is e-participation. This stage is where local government provide interactive features to enable people to influence governments decision making system by having top-down and bottom-up approach. One more category proposed by Marianne Kneuer is to have e-government by providing basic information to be delivered to the people. This category is important as this will determine whether government is ready to provide more interactive features in e-participation category (Mohammed Yasin, N., 2022). In the first category, free and equal access, two subcategories are the legal provision and technical infrastructure. This category is regarded as the basic conditions for ICT. The legal provision and technical infrastructure serve as central prerequisites for e-democracy (Kneuer, 2016).

For e-participation, four requirements are needed: information, dialogue, monitoring and decision-making, and two requirements under e-government,

namely information and transaction. E-participation is expected to have top-down and bottom-up communication between the governments and the people. In contrast, e-government only provides basic services through a top-down approach from the government to the people. Top-down is the services provided without any feedback from the citizens, whereas bottom-up means there is feedback from the citizens when they use the government's services. For instance, in e-government, it can be seen that information is provided without needing any feedback from the people. Here government deliver the information (Kneuer, 2016).

In e-participation, all four requirements are expected to promote top-down and bottom-up communication between the government and the people. All these requirements can show different degrees of engagement between the government and the people. For instance, if people want to connect more with the government, they will move to another requirement, from information to dialogue. Unlike e-participation, e-government is limited to a top-down mechanism that offers online tools to citizens as a government service focusing on public service delivery, efficiency and policy outcomes. In this dimension, the role of the citizen tends to be conceived as that of a consumer or client. Although e-government seems purely a matter of service or efficiency, it has implications for a possible increase in democratic quality where it can enhance people's participation in e-government.

The third category, e-government, can be divided into two main subcomponents: information and transaction. The e-government information might look the same as in e-participation but is different. In e-participation, the information is more about encouraging and empowering people to participate. In contrast, the function of information for e-government is aimed at a more general objective focusing on websites that provide information from the local government. Thus, the indicators are the websites' existence so that citizens can access not only recent but also older documents and the comprehensiveness of the information so that citizens can greatly get an overview of a policy or receive additional support via links, podcasts, etc (Kneuer, 2016).

Therefore, in this study, based on the framework proposed, e-democracy is a stage where all these three-dimensional concepts have been fulfilled in the local government's websites namely free and equal access, e-participation and also e-government. Thus, in this study, by accessing the contents of each government websites by looking at these categories will determine whether the government websites can achieve e-democracy or vice versa.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Based on the study conducted, for the first category, free and equal access, it is observed that all the features in free and equal access have been provided by the selected government websites. For the second category, it is recorded that many of the features are yet to be fulfilled by the government websites except for a few features. There are social media features, dissemination of information, and complaint box. This means that the public is encouraged to participate in the government's decision-making process. The last category under e-democracy is e-

government. In this category, it is noted that all the features listed have been provided by all the websites. It is observed that a lot of efforts need to be done in order to come out with those features that can promote people's participation by having two way communication especially in e-participation category. Therefore, based on the interview conducted, it is noted that there are many obstacles that need to be tackled in order to promote e-democracy.

Challenges to the Effectiveness and Efficiency of e-Government Concerning e-Democracy:

The discussions on challenges will be divided into two parts; the first will be challenges from the government and the other from the public. This division will be crucial to note which aspects to focus on to improve so that e-democracy can be a successful implementation in e-government.

Public Awareness and Acceptance towards Local Government Websites: Challenges and Solutions

Based on the interviews conducted, it can be seen that Petaling Jaya local government and Subang Jaya local government show many users using the e-payment system on the website. In fact, according to Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya local governments, they even received emails and calls from the public to come out with more services related to the e-payment so they do not have to go and settle it manually. However, Klang and Kajang are still struggling with this aspect. According to them, it is quite difficult to change people's acceptance towards the usage of local government websites, and some of them do not trust using the services, especially e-payment. Based on the interview conducted, Petaling Jaya recorded highest number of users using their e-payment system and Subang Jaya local government are still facing some challenges to promote e-payment as the number of users using the features are still low.

Based on the interviews conducted with Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya local government representatives, campaigns or programmes need to be conducted to educate people and teach people how to use the services provided by the local government website. However, due to time constraints and other tasks they have to complete, they could not develop with certain programmes like this. Before the pandemic, Subang Jaya local government organised 'Hari Bertemu Pelanggan', but due to the pandemic, it needs to be cancelled as well.

Furthermore, not getting public support makes it difficult to fulfil e-democracy. Failure to get public trust is one factor that hinders the successful implementation of e-government (Kurfah et al., 2016; Voutinioti, 2013). Public rejection towards e-government services could jeopardise the implementation of e-government in that country. Thus, public trust in the usage of e-government needs to be tackled by recognising factors that hinder the public from its usage (Kurfah et al., 2016; Voutinioti, 2013).

According to Klang's representative, some initiatives can be done to promote people's participation, such as organising competitions on the websites during

important days or festivals on the websites. Besides that, according to Subang Jaya's officer, the websites have started encouraging people to participate in its e-payment system by giving certain discounts if they pay online compared to going to the departments to settle the payment. This can motivate people to pay online.

According to the interviews, the officers said sometimes some users do not know that such services are provided on the websites and are unsure where to find them. Therefore, the researcher believes that a video showing how to use the website can be posted on the local government's social media or the local government's homepage so that people understand and have some ideas about the services provided.

Based on the interview, some places where the government provides Wi-Fi so that people can use the services provided and connect with the services provided, especially during this pandemic, where most of the services have to be made available online. According to the officer, in terms of using the services, it is noted that still many of the users do not know how to use the services provided on the website, for example, to fill in the form and submit it online to make payment online or to make an application online.

Therefore, to solve this issue and encourage them to use online services, the public, like older people and the illiterate who come to the departments to use the services manually, will be helped by the staff. For example, a kiosk guides people on how to use the services. According to him, this is one of the initiatives from the Subang Jaya local government to encourage people to use the services provided online without the need to come physically to the related departments. So, this is how they are trying to educate people in the local government area to use the services provided.

Interview conducted with an officer from Petaling Jaya, Encik Mat Nizam Aziz; according to him, Internet penetration in Selangor is the highest compared to other state, and according to him, Petaling Jaya have a good internet connection, and people are very participative enough in using the websites. Based on the recorded interview conducted, he said, 'so far no problem or any issue stating that people have a problem to browse the local government website' and according to him also, 'Petaling Jaya is one of the local governments with high internet penetration so no issue in accessing the websites and use the services provided'. However, according to him, 'we are trying to put trust on people to use the websites as many are still reluctant to use the services provided for example; e payment'.

Besides that, due to the increased number of people using mobile, the government has already started to provide more online services through their website, focusing on E2E (end-to-end) services so everything can be done online. This is already in motion with the guide from MAMPU. They also plan to revise the interface for more user-friendly navigation.

Dr Marfunizah, senior lecturer from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) believed that traditional social media could educate some people about the importance of e-government and how it can promote e-democracy. According to her, this is because people, especially senior groups, still like to access information via newspapers. She suggested that government can play their efforts by advertising the importance of the

features available on the websites to the users. Hence, this group of people also know the importance of e-government and can start to use the services provided.

Standardisation of Features in Each of the Local Government Websites: Challenges and Solutions

Based on the data collection and analysis, it has been found that each local government website has different structures and contents varying from one another. However, guidelines for the contents of the websites have been given by MAMPU, especially in monitoring all the websites to follow the same standards of structure according to the checklist provided. However, it can be seen that each local government can develop their website structures as long as the basic and important features listed by MAMPU should be there. Thus, that is why all these local governments scored differently when the researcher conducted the study. The website representatives suggested that meetings or discussions at the local government level should be organised so that they can come out with the same features and share knowledge among their IT Officers to improve the websites by having more features to encourage public participation. Besides, by sharing knowledge and skills, they can also reduce the cost.

Dr Marfunizah emphasised having a special department in each of the local government websites that will be in charge of research and development as well as training staff on how to improve the e-government of the local government in Selangor. According to her, even though MAMPU has given the general guidelines, local government needs to be more efficient by coming out with up-to-date and latest features that can attract people to participate as we are already in the New Public Service phase where more connection with the people is needed. Therefore, each of the small units established by the local government can meet gradually to discuss established by the local government can meet gradually to discuss the latest features they can come out with. This can promote checks and balances among all the local government websites in Selangor.

Unclear Divisions of Task: Challenges and Solutions

Based on the interview conducted, the Klang local government officer said that the staff's divisions of tasks are unclear. For instance, who and which department shall control the website's contents, structure, social media, etc. This led to the malfunction of the system and also led to no cooperation among the staff because no clear job scope was given for each department. Other than that, for Subang Jaya's local government, the website is not only controlled by the IT Department, but the Corporate Department controls most of the contents and language. That is why during the interview, the researcher observed that the job scopes vary from one local government to another. Therefore, clear task divisions should be discussed because the local government itself have to know each department's functions. By having clear divisions of tasks and standardising with other local governments, it is easy to collaborate in future with other local governments and future collaboration for the same departments.

According to Dr Marfunizah, the local government should introduce a new policy to ensure a clear division of task handling and monitoring of the websites. This will make each of the staff have different areas of specialisation, and this will help them to have different areas of specialization and help them improve their skills and help in coming out with a good website by providing services which can promote people's participation gradually. This is because sometimes some website administrators do not know about operating the website and will ensure that all the basic guidelines given by MAMPU will be fulfilled. Dr Marfunizah added, 'We do not need basic features only. We need more than that to promote people's participation in e-government to create an interactive and responsive environment between the public and the local government'.

Availability of e-Participation Features on the Local Government Websites: Challenges and Solutions

In general, based on the research conducted by the researcher in this study, it is noted that the local governments' websites are still lacking in terms of e-democracy features. Features promoting the public's participation in Malaysia are still limited and must be addressed by the government (Siddique, 2007, 2008). Improving the features of e-participation will make the government practice transparency and gain people's trust to use the services provided (Razlini, 2012). The public will also feel their opinion matters, boosting their participation in government decision-making.

According to Yang Berhormat Lim Yi Wei, it is very important to have the features gradually because somehow pandemic has given awareness to the government of how important e-government is. Therefore, interactive features need to be implemented gradually to make people connected. Therefore, the researcher believes that the findings can contribute to the progress and development of the local government websites in Selangor by looking at the results and trying to improve and install new features.

Leaders Approach in using the Local Government Websites: Challenges and Solutions

In any country, in politics, the public always looks for a good leader to lead the countries who can bring positive changes and be responsive to the country. A good leader can inspire everyone in an organization to achieve their very best. Therefore, with good leadership, a leader can create a vision and motivate people to make it successful. Dr Marfunizah, when interviewed, believes that leadership is one of the main things that should be considered when the government wants to develop a plan or policy. She mentioned the pandemic for the past few years. It can be seen how the ministers, including Prime Minister, urged people to use the applications designed especially during Covid, known as the 'MySejahtera' application.

She also said that the efforts made by Khairy Jamaluddin during that time showed that it's important to have the application to keep on track of someone's health, vaccination status and so on. Later on, gradually, when people started to use this, even though some didn't like it, somehow, they had to normalize this

application. Gradually, other services and information can be retrieved from the application, and people are already used to the system. Dr Marfunizah mentioned that from something that people don't like, in the end, they rely on this thing because they know they can find any information from the application. After all, the source is reliable.

She also compares Tun Dr Mahathir's era of leadership when he was the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia. He came out with the 'Look to East Policy', where he led the civil servants to follow the Japanese administration system. Civil servants from various ministries have been sent to Japan for training so that they can learn and adopt the system in Malaysia administration system. This year also marked the 40th anniversary of the 'Look to East Policy' since the Malaysian government adopted the 'Look East Policy' (LEP) in 1982. Many reforms and development in public administration and human resources have resulted in Malaysia's economic progress and prosperity (Embassy of Japan in Malaysia Website, 2022). This strategy is a good and beneficial effort by the Malaysian government to improve management and development performance in the country (Nor Azlina & Rohaini, 2021). As a result, leaders must make the same efforts to make e-government successful by encouraging people to engage.

Allocation of Budget: *Challenges and Solutions*

Based on the interview, it is noted that the websites received a sufficient budget allocation for the website development initially. However, after that, the website's maintenance and improvement are placed under local government affairs, and they must manage their budget accordingly. Sometimes, they need to develop a new system and apps that need a certain amount of money and do not have enough budget. For instance, due to this pandemic, the officers need to develop new apps, and they also need to install new software, which requires a certain amount of money. According to them, they can request from the government. However, paperwork is needed, and many processes are needed for them to request approval. So that is why sometimes they cannot develop certain website features quickly. This is because they did not get a specific budget specifically for them as the budget is allocated to the state government. As mentioned, they have to come out with a paper plan or proposal to request from the state government. This is one of the challenges they face as they need to channel their budget into another aspect of the local government.

Other than that, the officers also agree that many of their IT staff, especially those from the IT Department, lack enough knowledge and ICT skills to manage the website. Subang Jaya Officer says they prefer an efficient and effective website like the Singaporean government website. However, many software and applications need to be studied in detail and applied by local government officers. Thus, training is needed for him to train the staff in charge of developing the websites. Furthermore, he suggested that competition can be made among IT officers among all the local governments in Selangor so that they feel motivated to acquire knowledge and apply the knowledge and skills in developing the website. According to Yang Berhormat Lim Yi Wei, interactive features must be installed and used on the website. Therefore,

training is crucial to expose the website administrator to the latest technology. For her, one feature that she thinks must be installed and implemented by the local government is 'live chat'. This will motivate people to use the website's features and ask any questions using the live chat. After all, users know they will assist by the live chat to help them use the services provided.

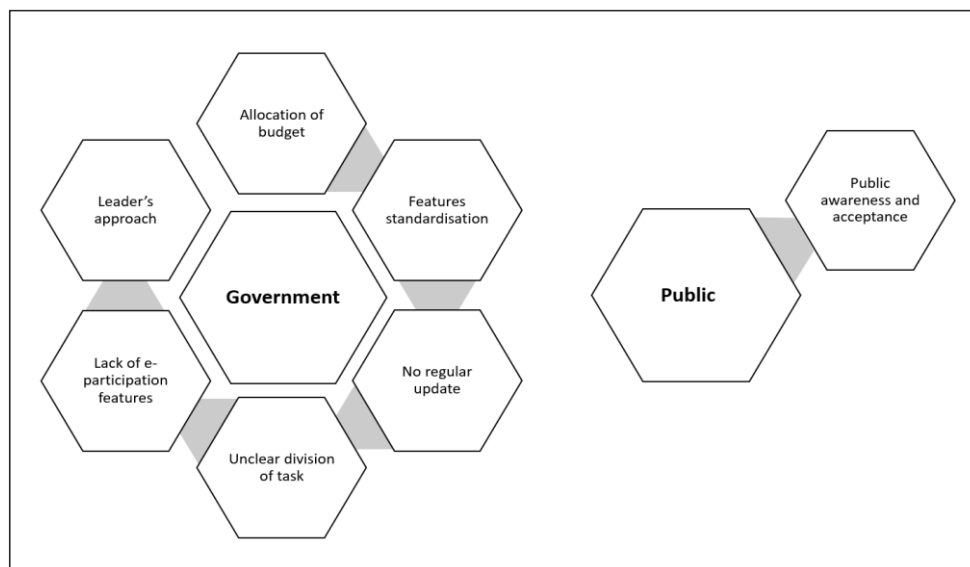
Therefore, regular training should be given to the staff to enhance their skills and maintain the standards of the websites, as MAMPU suggested and improve the features of the state websites, which are more on promoting people's participation in e-government services.

The usage of the latest technology is important to be up to date and to attract people who are from time to time becoming more mobile-oriented and advanced in terms of technology, especially young people. Therefore, the local government's challenge is attracting people by using social media and developing interactive features to attract people to participate. This is because some local government websites have been administered and managed by staff who are not experts in website development and have no knowledge. Therefore, budget allocations on the training of the staff involved in developing the websites are crucial so that they are advanced in ICT knowledge and can implement it in the website. Knowing how to manage websites can attract young people to embrace the idea of e-government and use the services provided as it is interactive enough and convenient for them as well as efficient.

Figure Number: 1.2

Based on the debate this far, the challenges can be divided into two categories: those posed by the government and those posed by the public as stated in Figure 1.2 below.

Types of Challenges to Promote e-Democracy



(Source: By author)

To summarise, all the obstacles and problems listed must be solved progressively by the website's responsible people of the website gradually. This is because if all the challenges are not addressed, the successful deployment of e-government will be hampered. As a result, this is a continual endeavour that the local government websites must carry out without neglecting any of the paradigms of public administration because different characteristics occupy distinct stages.

CONCLUSION:

To summarise, local government websites are critical as a platform for delivering government services to the public. As a result, the contents of the websites must be updated frequently to comply with MAMPU requirements and, more importantly, to promote e-democracy. Malaysia's goal of becoming a digital government can be achieved gradually through modernising and increasing the content of local government websites.

It is noted from the content analysis that all these four local government websites scored differently based on the features listed. Based on the findings, it can be seen that most of the local government's websites are still in the first level of e-participation, which is information. However, it is observed that some of the websites managed to come out with features at other levels, namely dialogue, monitoring, and decision-making. Therefore, based on the interview, all the panels agreed that the local government must provide more website features to promote e-democracy. This can only be achieved if people participate in governments' policy-making process. For the challenges, from the results and the interview conducted, it was found that several factors hinder the successful implementation of e-government in Malaysia and are divided into a few categories. The challenges are divided into two from the government's and the public's or the user's perspectives. Based on the discussion, the researcher believes that government should play a crucial role in promoting e-democracy by coming out with interactive features and updating the website occasionally. This will ensure people's participation gradually from time to time.

According to the theoretical framework, to attain e-democracy, all those three components, namely free and equal access, e-participation and e-government, must be developed continually, and the progress must be tracked to produce satisfactory outcomes at the end of the day. E-democracy can be attained by establishing local government websites with features based on the categories given by Kneuer (2026).

However, all hurdles and flaws must be overcome to implement e-government with e-democracy components to succeed in public engagement. As a result, e-democracy is achievable in Malaysia, it is currently developing well, but more efforts are required to make it successful.

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