

**DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK
FOR PUBLIC POLICY FORMULATION IN MALAYSIA**

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Abstrak

Penyertaan elektronik (e-penyertaan) adalah domain penyelidikan yang memberi tumpuan kepada pembangunan teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi (ICT) untuk menyokong penyertaan dalam proses tadbir urus negara. Salah satu masalah dalam melaksanakan proses di Malaysia adalah kekurangan penyertaan rakyat dalam memberikan input yang akan digunakan dalam proses penggubalan dasar awam di negara ini. Di samping itu, terdapat kekurangan kajian tentang e-penyertaan dan rangka kerja yang menyokong penggubalan dasar awam. Oleh itu, dalam kajian ini, penyelidik cuba untuk melihat bagaimana rakyat boleh terlibat dan bagaimana mereka boleh memainkan peranan dalam proses merangka dasar-dasar awam di negara ini dengan menggunakan mekanisme teknologi maklumat. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk membangunkan satu rangka kerja bagi pelaksanaan e-penyertaan dalam proses penggubalan dasar awam. Untuk mencapai objektif ini, tahap persepsi dan kepuasan rakyat berkaitan inisiatif e-penyertaan dalam penggubalan dasar awam dan proses pelaksanaan dikenal pasti. Soal selidik, temu bual, pemerhatian, dan analisis dokumen yang berkaitan merupakan kaedah yang digunakan dalam kajian ini. Teori Rangkaian Aktor (ANT) dari perspektif sosio-teknologi telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk menganalisis pembangunan rangka kerja e-penyertaan. Rangka kerja e-penyertaan yang dicadangkan akan dinilai menggunakan Kaedah Delphi untuk mendapatkan kata sepakat daripada pakar yang dilantik. Hasilnya, rangka kerja e-penyertaan untuk rakyat di Malaysia telah berjaya dibangunkan. Rangka kerja e-penyertaan ini membolehkan rakyat bersama-sama untuk menyumbang ke arah penggubalan dasar awam. Dari perspektif teori, rangka kerja menunjukkan bahawa ANT menyediakan asas yang kukuh untuk proses pembuatan dasar dengan menjajarkan sifat heterogen penyertaan awam. Dari segi amalannya, diharapkan penggunaan ICT akan membolehkan penyertaan daripada orang ramai dengan lebih meluas dan seterusnya menyumbang kepada amalan demokrasi.

Katakunci: Penyertaan rakyat, Penyertaan Elektronik, Dasar Awam, Teori Rangkaian Aktor (ANT), Kaedah Delphi

Abstract

Electronic participation (e-participation) is a research domain that focuses on the development of information and communication technology (ICT) to support participation in a nation's governance processes. One of the problems in implementing this process in Malaysia is the lack of participation from its citizens in providing inputs to be used in the nation's public policy formulation processes. In addition, there is a lack of research on e-participation and framework that supports the public policy formulation. Therefore, in this study, the researcher attempts to look at how the public can involve and play their part in the process of drafting the nation's public policies by utilizing the information technology mechanism. The main objective of this study is to develop a framework for the implementation of e-participation in the public policy formulation processes. To achieve this objective, the public's levels of perception and satisfaction with the current Government's e-participation initiatives in the public policy formulation and implementation process are identified. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and analysis of relevant documents were the methods used in this study. Actor Network Theory (ANT) from the socio-technological perspective was applied in this study in order to analyze the development of the e-participation framework. The proposed e-participation framework was then assessed using the Delphi Method to seek the consensus from the experts appointed. As a result, the e-participation framework for public participation in Malaysia was successfully developed. This e-participation framework enables people to jointly contribute towards the formulation of public policy. From the theoretical perspective, the framework implies that ANT provides a strong foundation for policy making process of aligning the heterogeneous nature of public participation. In practice, the ICT tools for public participation will hopefully enable a wider participation in contributing to a democratic practice.

Keywords: Citizen participation, Electronic participation, Public policy, Actor Network Theory (ANT), Delphi Method

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Appendix A

Questionnaire of citizen participation in public policy formulation process in Malaysia

Appendix B

Study of understanding about public participation and e-participation in the public policy formulation

1. First Round
2. Second Round



Glossary of Term

Actor Network Theory: treats entity and materiality as enacted and relational effect and explores the configuration and reconfiguration of those relations.

Delphi Method: to search consensus-building by using a series of questionnaires produced through multiple iterations from the collected data provided by selected subjects.

E-consultation: citizen provides feedback to government; to contribute their views and opinion.

E-decision making: a relation based on partnership with government and citizens actively engage to the policy making process.

E-government: the use of ICTs to exchange information and services with citizens, businesses, general public and government agencies to achieve better government.

E-information: government produces and delivers information for use by citizen.

E-participation: interaction to government that emphasises on the role of ICT to enlarge the space for discussion and inclusion of opinions of stakeholders into government process.

Formative Research Methodology: used to develop and improve the instructional design theories or model.

Grounded theory analysis: method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon.

Public policy: related to public interest since it somehow affected all actors and it is in relation to the government objective.

Public policy formulation: efforts of the government in addressing issues affecting the public.

List of Abbreviations

ANT	Actor Network Theory
CG	Community Group
EG	Electronic Government
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
FRM	Formative Research Methodology
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
G2C	Government-to-Citizen
G2B	Government-to-Business
G2G	Government-to-Government
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ICU	Implementation Coordination Unit
INTAN	Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara
IAGPs	Inter-Agency Planning Groups
MAMPU	Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit
MDC	Multimedia Development Corporation
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
NDC	National Development Council
NDPC	National Development Planning Committee
NEC	National Economic Council
NEP	New Economy Policy
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NKRA	National Key Result Areas
NSC	National Security Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPP	Obligatory Passage Point
OPPs	Outline Perspective Plans
PEMANDU	Performance Management & Delivery Unit
SG	Spokesperson Group
TG	Technical Group
TWGs	Technical Working Groups

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have revolutionised human life in myriad ways. The impacts of ICT developments are clearly seen in many areas. For instance, the Government uses ICT to modernise its governance processes. ICT is the most powerful and suitable tool to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of governance processes as well as to reduce the costs of human errors.

Taking advantage from the rapid expansion of ICT, in 1996, Malaysia launched the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) to accelerate its entry into the information age. Putrajaya is the new federal administrative capital where the concept of Electronic Government (EG) was introduced. As one of the seven MSC flagships, EG aims to reinvent the perception of Malaysian public and private sectors towards the public sector. Simultaneously, vital information processed within the Government is streamlined. EG initiatives have already utilised new ICT technologies to decrease administrative costs and improve service delivery to public (Commission of the European Communities, 2003). This remarkable innovation is mainly focused on solving everyday problems faced by the public in dealing with Government agencies.

Numerous nations around the world spend a large amount of money to implement ICT technology for the effectiveness of its governance process. Many evidences have clearly shown the effectiveness of EG implementation in delivering high quality standards of information and services in the public and private sectors as well as increasing the efficiency of management systems in the private sectors.

Different subjects related to EG and the roles played by the Government in order to digitalise the governance processes have been discussed. It is undeniable that Malaysia's EG is a platform to deliver information and services to its public. However, the public's participation concept in EG or usually known as e-participation is abandoned (Suh, 2005; Betancourt, 2005; Sokolova, 2006; Ulziikhutag and Sukhbaatar, 2006).

In assessing the effectiveness of EG, some fundamental factors should be considered namely accountability, transparency, and openness (Information Society Commission, 2003). These three fundamental factors will be affecting the e-participation (Information Society Commission, 2003). In this sense, the EG initiative may create space and mechanisms in encouraging people to participate transparently. Thus, it will allow its intended consumers to actively play their roles in public policy formulation. Apart from that, e-participation will allow public to share their ideas, opinions or any valuable inputs to the Government in the decision making process.

By systematically implementing the e-participation process in EG, the general public are directly involved in Government's decision making process. This view is supported by Squires (2002) who stated that quality must be public-centred because public services have a different relationship with their 'customers' based on the democratic context within which these services are to be provided. Therefore, opinions, ideas or information provided by the public would assist the Government to make decisions in creating or updating an act, policy or plan that involves public's interest. As stressed by the International Association for Public Participation (2007), e-participation is "*any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision*

making and uses public input to make better decision”. According to a UN report in 2005;

Promoting participation of the public is the cornerstone of socially inclusive governance. The goal of e-participation initiatives should be to improve the public's access to information and public services; and promote participation in public decision making which impact the well being of society, in general, and the individual, in particular. E-participation is the sum total of both the government programs to encourage participation from the public and the willingness of the public to do so. It encompasses both the demand the supply side.

(United Nations, 2005, p.19).

Various e-participation projects have attempted to create public-based groups through online forums, virtual discussion rooms, electronic juries or electronic polls (OECD, 2003a). Although such projects received supports from the Government, these projects have limited impacts and have not yet led to clearly defined e-participation approach or framework. In the European Union, for instance, a current document on public participation proposed that all EG strategies should promote online public participation (Commission of the European Communities, 2003).

In general, three EG players were identified: Government public administrators, the general public, and related interest groups. However, these individuals and interest groups do not automatically have the “priority” to formulate a public policy. This scenario then contributes to the mushrooming of blogs created by unsatisfied public

and politicians to discuss their ideas and opinions to either support or reject the current public policy formulation. These blogs, which are supported by many, are usually able to gain policymakers' attention. Some even use the mass media to express their feelings and recently this mode seems to be quite effective to "wake the Government up".

1.2 Problem Statement

Many Government agencies in the developing countries have tried to deliver government services to their public through ICT mechanisms known as EG. These EG websites are mostly focusing on publishing information and providing links to other Governmental sites'. Pardo (2000) stated that one of the functions in e-government is public participation. This statement is supported by a number of scholars such as Tamarah and Amer (2010) who separated the development of e-government into six stages which include citizens' participation in government.

E-government definition gap

Malaysian Government has set a goal for the success of EG implementation. That goal is to improve the convenience, accessibility, and quality of interaction with public and businesses; simultaneously, to improve the speed and quality of policy, coordination and enforcement as well as the information processed within the Government (MAMPU, 1997a). Malaysian e-government initiatives have been launched to improve the internal operations of the government and provide better services to the people of Malaysia. This initiative aims to increase the convenience, accessibility and effectiveness of Government's interaction with people and businesses. The government has established myGovernment portal

(<http://www.gov.my>) since 2003 as the government's initiative in improving its service delivery.

To date, they still do not fulfil the requirements of a true e-government concept as proposed by the UN and many scholars in this area (e.g. Pardo, 2000; Tamarah & Amer, 2010) where people's participation in public policy decision making is a necessity. Currently, the available e-government applications are not intended to cater the involvement of public's participation in formulating public policy. Public participation as required by the UN and scholars is more on policy formulation decision making. This situation is not consistent with the concept of e-government proposed by the UN.

As stated in the UN Global E-Readiness Reports 2005, the following definition and concept of e-government has been adopted: *“(E-government is) the use of ICT and its application by the government for the provision of information and services to people. The aim of EG, therefore, is to provide efficient government management of information to the public; better service delivery to public; and empowerment of the people through access to information and participation in public policy decision-making”* (United Nation, 2005, p.14). From this definition, it is stated clearly that e-government should take into account the public participation in the political decision making process, an element that is still missing in Malaysian e-government initiative.

Based on that, there is a clear gap in the EG implementation process in Malaysia involving the Government and the people. In the context of this research, the gap refers to the communication gap that still exists between the decision maker

(Government) and the general public. This communication gap relates to the participation between people and government public policy formulation. Hence, it is imperative to bridge this gap by creating a mechanism to enable peoples' participation in public policy formulation to fully fulfil the purpose of EG.

Certain aspects related to participation and involvement of people in policy or decision-making process has caused intense debate. This issue is more complex when we put it in the context of political, economic and social development of a democratic country like Malaysia.

Using ICT to enabling citizen participation

The concepts of EG and e-participation relate to the use of ICT by the public to participate in government's decision making process. According to Pardo (2000) and Tamarah and Amer (2010), public participation element is essential to an e-government. There are many definitions of e-participation discussed by the researchers and experts in the field. Most of them agreed to the general definition that defines e-participation as a sum total of both the government programs to encourage participation from the public. This participation uses ICT to offer the opportunity to people as a whole to interact with the government using different electronic media. Specifically, e-participation can be viewed as providing participation process via electronic communication at all levels of government, public and business community.

Accordingly, one of the important challenges for the success of e-participation is to find out ways of integrating ICT into communities (social) that can strengthen social

inclusion and bridge the gap of social and technical divides. An approach in exploring the task of ICT in the delivery of e-participation initiative is to turn to the traditional “social shaping” approach (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). ICT may act as part of technology that presents clear benefits to Governments or the public (Burn & Robins, 2003; Navarra & Cornford, 2012). Social shaping supports the idea that socio-technical setting is appropriate for analysing e-participation.

Taylor (2004) noted that e-participation initiatives does not improve on cost savings and does not improve social inclusion, innovation or participation. These findings reflect the e-participation initiatives where the efficiency benefits from the consistency of processes must be balanced against local knowledge (constituent public) and expertise (Ellingsen et al., 2007). These two important factors need to be properly planned and implemented when integrating ICT into government business processes.

Socio-technical perspective

Several studies describe the framework for e-participation (Rifkin et al., 1988; Macintosh, 2004; Tambouris et al., 2007; Phang and Kankanhalli, 2008; Islam, 2008). However, their frameworks focused more on specific conditions or environments. Spidergram’s framework (Rifkin et al., 1988) tries to understand participation as a process and assesses the changes and progress of the program over time. This framework focused on the medical environment. Meanwhile, a five-stage top-down and bottom-up e-participation framework developed by Tambouris et al. (2007) concentrated on the stages of the e-participation starting from the Democratic Process (Top) of a country until Technologies (Down). This framework is suitable for

democratic developed countries where the role of ICT is just as a supportive mechanism. However, this framework is highly dependent on the political structure of a country and it may not be suitable for countries which do not practise democratic political system.

A framework of ICT exploitation for e-Participation as proposed by Phang and Kankanhalli (2008) fits the appropriate e-participation techniques with ICT tools to reach the objective. Nevertheless, this framework does not highlight the socio-economic issues involved in setting up any e-participation objectives. This socio-economic issue has been addressed by 7Ps Sustainable E-participation implementation model proposed by Islam (2008). The model discusses socio-economic settings and tools to bridge the existing gap in Phang and Kankanhalli's (2008) framework. However, 7Ps Sustainable E-participation framework does not highlight the matter from the socio-technical perspective. This perspective gives the researcher an idea to investigate in depth in developing an e-participation framework.

Therefore, understanding the tools and implementation of ICT in e-participation requires critical attention in socio-technical settings. Rhodes (2004) noted that there are several ways to implement a technology. Firstly, technological determinism views where technological implementation is viewed as a different entity from and outside the society. Secondly, technological constructivism views where technology is created by socio view and implemented in itself. Thirdly, the socio-technical view that links social and technical perspectives together, but still treats them as separate entities from each other. However, McMaster, Vidgen and Wastell (1998) argue that none of the approaches offers adequate opportunities for a true socio-technical understanding

symmetrically but they treat technology and society asymmetrically. This means that an acceptable approach of technology or information system implementation is through a symmetrical approach of technology and society.

To model an e-participation framework in socio-technical perspective, the researcher used the Actor Network Theory (ANT). Actor Network Theory (ANT) is an alternative framework that suggests a socio-technical view in which neither social nor technical position is preferred. ANT deals with the socio-technical aspects by denying that purely technical or purely social relations are possible, and considers the world to be full of hybrid entities (Latour, 1993) containing both human and non-human elements. Generally, ANT is developed around problems associated with attempts to handle socio-technical problems (Latour, 1993). By using this theory, the researcher came out with a new e-participation framework based on socio-technical perspective.

In this research, the researcher applied e-participation concept in Malaysia's public policy formulation process as the domain of research. Until now, there is a scarcity of research on e-participation concept in public policy formulation in Malaysia. However, there are some case studies being reviewed in other countries. The cases include e-participation in the Israeli local Governments (Nachmias & Rotem, 2005), citizens' participation and policy making in Singapore (Leong, 2000), and a case study on citizens' participation in South Africa (Andrews, 2005). Several countries have implemented e-participation concept such as United Kingdom, Sweden, Estonia and Australia. By analysing the above-mentioned studies, it is found that each idea is based on residual political environment. In other words, every country has different political structure and philosophy.

In the researcher's study context, Malaysia has its own political democracy environment running within three major races; Malay/Bumiputera, Chinese, and Indian. The Malaysian government should consider this matter carefully and in entirety. In the country, the e-participation concept still needs to be further studied to solve issues and problems arising from its implementation.

Due to this, the researcher proposed an e-participation framework that will suit with the public policy formulation. Due to the immaturity of the e-participation field in the country, the researcher decided to identify the requirements for an e-participation framework. The researcher believes that as the e-participation domain matures; this framework can be further applied to be implemented to all parts of government decision making.

Therefore, an appropriate e-participation framework should be developed to cater for the participation of public in policy formulation. Based on this e-participation framework, it can assist the government to involve people in public policy formulation. So, the issue of low level of e-participation as mentioned earlier could be reduced to a minimum level.

1.3 Research Questions

This research attempts to address the issues related to the lack of citizen's e-participation in the country's public policy formulation process. However, due to some research constraints, students of the institutes of higher learning, who are subset of Malaysian citizens, are selected for this research. In addressing these issues, the following research questions were proposed:

- What are the students' perceptions of their participation in public policy formulation?
- Are the students satisfied with the current e-participation system implemented by the government?
- What are the requirements for an e-participation framework?

Based on that, the main research question is as follows:

- How can the current processes of public policy formulation be enhanced through the e-participation approach?

1.4 Research Objective

The main objective of the research is to propose a framework to implement e-participation in public policy formulation processes. To achieve this, the following sub objectives have been formulated:

1. To obtain students' perceptions on public policy formulation as carried out by the Government in terms of e-participation.
2. To measure students' satisfaction with the current e-participation implementation employed by the Government.
3. To identify the requirements for an e-participation framework.
4. To develop a framework for implementing e-participation for public policy formulation processes.

1.5 Significance of the study

As ICT is rapidly progressing worldwide, the process of finding and receiving information are becoming easier. The Malaysian Government through MSC flagships has came up with an EG initiative that created an electronic arch to deliver better

information and services to the public. Therefore, the outcomes of this research will provide a deeper understanding on e-participation to both Government and public. This research may bridge the gap between public and the Government in terms of communication too.

In addition, the e-participation framework will involve the public's participation in the governance process. With the increase of Malaysian public working in various professional areas, their opinions, ideas, and suggestions can definitely contribute to a more efficient governance process. Indirectly, e-participation may lead to an improved decision making process.

Moreover, the e-participation mechanism in public policy formulation through Malaysia's EG can be enhanced, which in turn, will benefit all related parties. By involving the public in decision making process, the level of public's satisfaction can be increased. Satisfied public will yield efficient Government. Public's opinions, ideas, and suggestions can be the added value to the decision making process of the Malaysian Government. From the significance of this study, it shows that a lot of benefits can be reaped by the Government from this development.

Moreover, the Government should recognise the importance and relevance of the general public's ideas, opinions or suggestions about public policy formulation processes. The conventional modes of communication and information gathering mechanisms make it difficult to enable the public to participate. Since public policy formulation is a sensitive issue, the Government must revise the current framework of public policy formulation in order to enhance the public's participation in decision

making process via the EG initiative. With democracy as the underlying principle, public's participation in governance process is necessary.

Despite the growing number of case studies, e-participation remains a relatively new concept and little is known about the different aspects of e-participation framework. This study aims to create a better understanding on e-participation design in Malaysian public policy formulation process. By observing and analysing previous e-participation frameworks and case studies on public policy formulation, the researcher aims to produce an enhanced version of public policy formulation for the e-participation concept through the EG initiative in Malaysia.

1.6 Scopes of Study

Scopes of this study are as the follows:

- a) Overall, there are some criteria that need to be given attention by the stakeholders in this research. There are three user groups of EG: Government-to-citizen (G2C), Government-to-business (G2B), and Government-to-Government (G2G). However, this study focused on public's view that can be linked to public policy formulation processes.
- b) This study focused on the current practice of public policy formulation of the Malaysian Government.
- c) There are many types of political systems. This study was conducted in parliamentary democracy political system as practiced in Malaysia.
- d) The proposed framework will be evaluated by using Delphi Method to obtain consensus from the experts.

- e) The framework component of e-participation will be focusing more on the planning phase of public policy formulation processes.
- f) Respondents of this research comprised of students from public Institute of Higher learning (IHL). They were given questionnaires to answer.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

The chapters of this thesis are derived by the researcher from the process that was carried out to achieve the objective of this thesis. The remainder of the thesis is organized as the following:

- *Chapter 2: literature review.* This chapter provides the literature and overview of the concept of democracy, public participation and e-participation. The researcher also comes out with a theoretical framework based on those three concepts above. E-government and its relationship with e-participation will also be discussed. Existing e-participation frameworks proposed by other researchers are also presented in this chapter.
- *Chapter 3: Methodology.* This chapter presents the approach/method and tools used by the researcher in this study. The research model was proposed as a guideline to meet the study's objectives.
- *Chapter 4: Students' perception towards participation in public policy formulation process.* This chapter discussed the first objective, which is to study the students' perception towards participation in public policy formulation in Malaysia. The researcher had to get feedbacks and perceptions from the respondents on e-participation in order to form a suitable framework in this subject.

- *Chapter 5: The requirement for e-participation framework.* This chapter presents the requirement needed to develop an e-participation framework. In this chapter, the researcher explores thee-participation approach and discusses on the main component of the said framework.
- *Chapter 6: Proposed participation framework in Malaysian public policy formulation using Actor Network Theory.* This chapter presents an e-participation framework to manage public policy formulation. The study embraces socio-technical research paradigm and uses Actor Network Theory (ANT) as the theoretical foundation with which to explore the mutual interaction between people and ICT. The discussions also include the resulting e-participation framework as proposed by the study and evaluated using the Delphi Method.
- *Chapter 7: Summary, Contribution, Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion.* The concluding chapter provides a summary of contributions and future research challenges.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Several central concepts have been identified in the top-down approach of democracy sustainability. From the top-down approach, democracy is recognised as an important determinant of sustainability. Democracy helps to identify the real causes of sustainability problems. Additionally, the relationship between public participation with democracy is highly influenced by the environment.

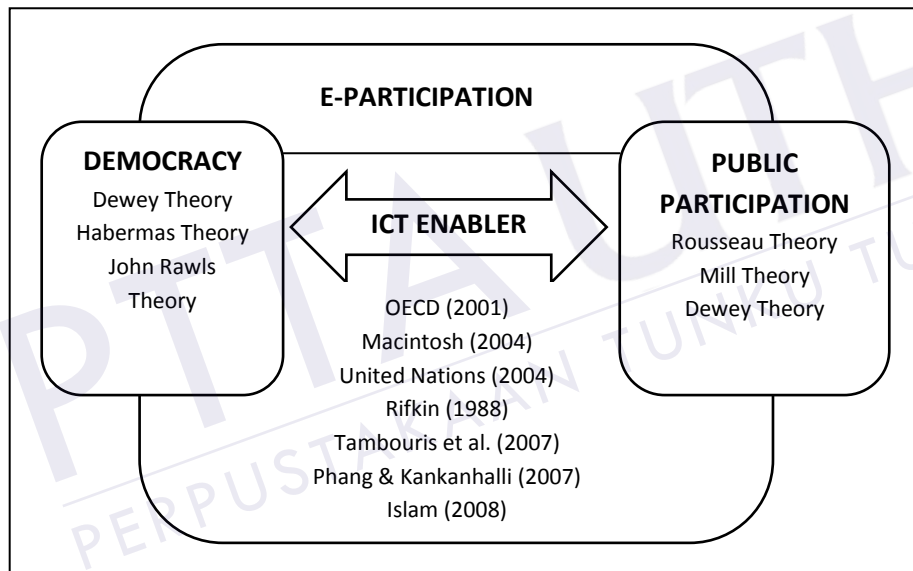


Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework

Figure 2.1 shows the identified links between democracy and public participation. The researcher posited the notion that in order to improve sustainability in democracy, the public need to acquire new insights of democracy. The theory of public participation is derived from the theory of democracy. Based on the figure above, the researcher posits the notion of public participation being the key element to improve sustainability in democracy. This research promotes the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as an enabler for public participation in a

democratic system. Previous researcher (Macintosh, 2004; Rifkin, 1988; Tambouris et al., 2007; Phang and Kankanhalli, 2007; and Islam, 2008) and certain organizations (OECD, 2001; and United Nations, 2004) have worked it in this field using ICT for public participation. Their work will further discussed in Section 2.4, Section 2.5.1, and Section 2.6.

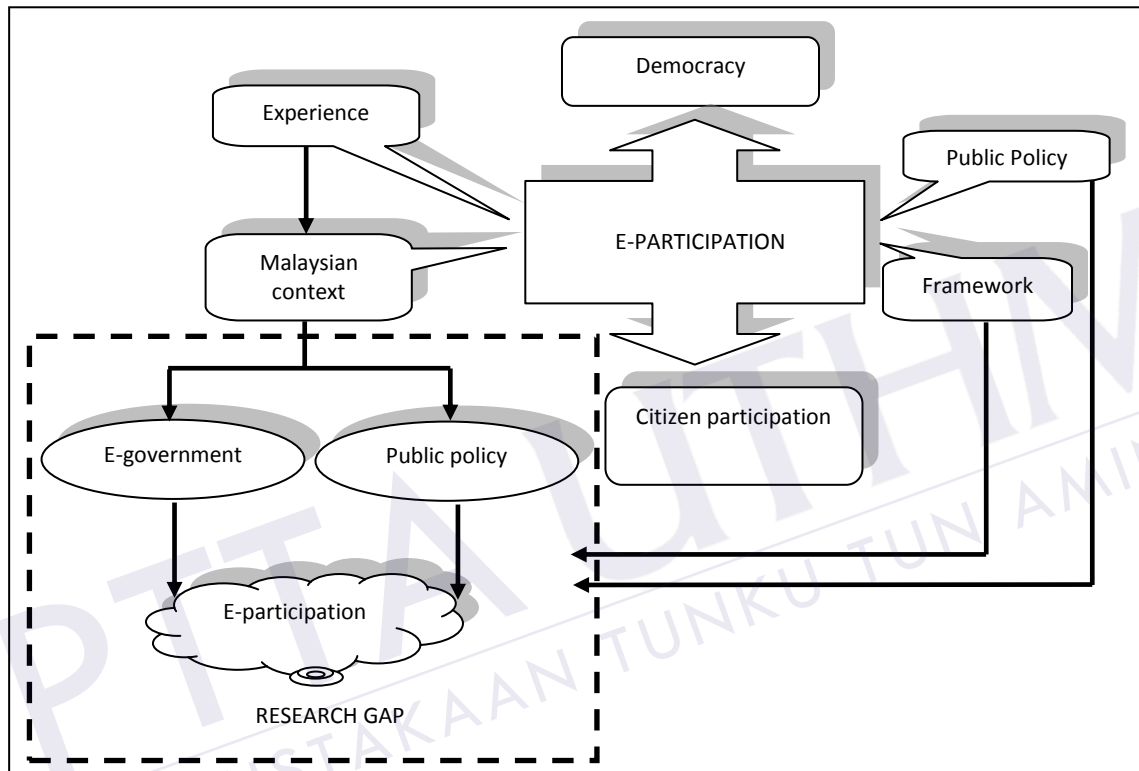


Figure 2.2. Structure of literature review and its link to the study

Figure 2.2 shows the overview of the study's literature review structure and their linkages. This chapter is divided into three sections. First section is about electronic government (EG) and public participation. This section explains about public participation, its history, theoretical perspective as well as its basis in the planning process. The second section describes about e-participation, currently available frameworks, rationale of EG, public policy formulation, and several examples of e-

participation models in other countries. The third section explains about Malaysia's EG and public policy formulation in general.

2.2 Electronic Government (EG)

EG has the potential to transform interaction modes used by the government to interact with the public and businesses using new ways. EG affects everyone since the role of Government is all-encompassing and very complex. The researcher comes out with three rationales on why Government should firmly impose its commitment to implement EG. First, expectations of the public for government services are rising due to the improved services accorded by the business sector. The public demand improved services from the Government and wonder why the Government cannot employ ICT and multimedia technologies the same way as the business sector. Second, implementing EG may reduce costs and expenses for the Government in the long run. Third, EG may lead to the growth of a business sector through its many network effects. For example, the business sector can leverage on an efficient EG, thus making it more competitive, efficient and productive.

Generally, perspective on EG can be divided into major applications of fields of study. However, these fields of study depend on the studies conducted by related researchers of EG from time to time. Presently, the researcher has identified four main fields of study in EG as presented in Figure 2.3 below.

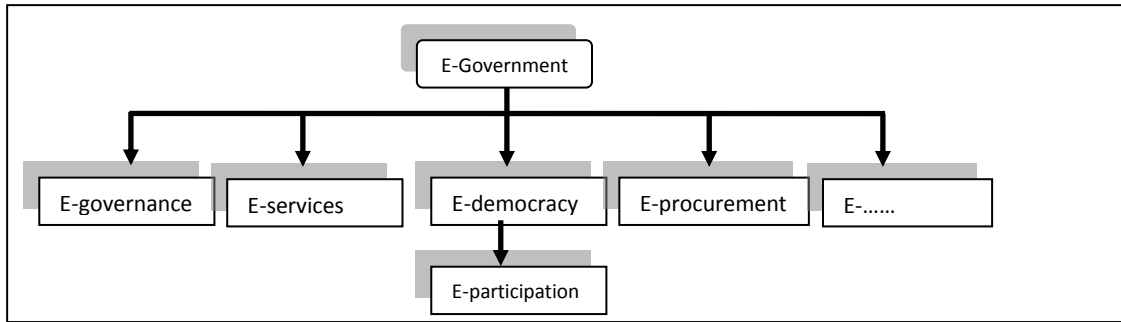


Figure 2.3. Field of studies in EG

In this study, the researcher gave extra attention on e-democracy niche (e-participation) area as the field that needs to be studied in the Malaysian environment. Based on the researcher's view, there are areas that need to be thoroughly studied as previously stated in the problem statement; Malaysia's EG in general does not really concentrate on obtaining public participation to assist the Government in decision making process. In this context, public participation need to be encouraged and accepted in public policy making process.

2.3 Relationship of E-government, E-governance, and E-participation

Utilization of ICT to improve the quality of governance process have been discussed and converted into practice. It has been done under various terms such as e-government, e-governance, and e-participation. These terminologies often refer to various possibilities of electronic forms to serve as an alternative instrument to change outdated manual processes to modern online processes in many ways. Such changes always relate to activities within the public administration system itself or/and external relationships between public and more or less integrated back-offices of a single administrative authority or various public administration institutions (Špaček, 2008).

According to Rahman (2007), EG refers to the government's use of information technologies to exchange information and services with public, businesses, general public, and government agencies. Meanwhile, according to West (2004), EG is the delivery of government information and services online through the internet or other digital means. US 2002 E-Government Act, as described by Grönlund and Horan (2004), defined EG as *"the use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to a) enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities or b) bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation"*.

In a broader perspective, EG can be defined as the utilisation of information technology to improve the access to and delivery of government services to benefit all EG stakeholders (Deloitte & Touche, 2003). Some researchers referred EG as the use of information technologies and it is able to transform interaction with public, businesses, and the Government. EG involves the computerisation of paper-based procedures that will prompt new styles of management, transacting business, listening to public, and delivering information (Okot-Uma, 2002). These technologies can serve many ends: enhanced delivery of services, improved interactions, public empowerment through access to information, and more efficient management. Consequently, EG aims to get better access to and delivery of government services and to drive towards efficient governance, less corruption and improved transparency,

greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions to better manage a country.

Forman in Barr (2001) defined e-government as “the use of Internet technology and protocols to transform agency effectiveness, efficiency, and service quality”. The Gartner Group, a leading private technology research company, provides a more dynamic, process-oriented definition of e-government as “the continuous optimisation of service delivery, constituency participation and governance transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet, and new media”. Detlor and Finn (2002) defined EG as “the delivery and administration of government products and services over an IT infrastructure”.

According to Grönlund and Horan (2004), some definitions are more about governance than Government. EG actually refers to what is happening within government organisations. On the other hand, e-governance refers to the whole system involved in managing a society. The system includes activities not only run by government organisations, but also companies (private sector) and the general public.

To close this definition gap, Riley (2004) mentioned that Government’s task is to focus on achieving the public interest, while governance is a way to describe the links between Government and its broader environment such as political, social and administrative. The comparison between Government and governance by Riley (2004) is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Comparison between Government and Governance

GOVERNMENT	GOVERNANCE
Superstructure	Functionality
Decisions	Processes
Rules	Goals
Implementation	Coordination
Outputs	Outcomes
E-Government	E-Governance
Electronic service delivery	Electronic consultation
Electronic workflow	Electronic controllership
Electronic voting	Electronic engagement
Electronic productivity	Networked societal guidance

Source: Adopted from Riley (2004)

Due to that, Grönlund and Horan (2004) defined EG as the use of information and communication technologies by the Government. The platform possesses the ability to transform the relationships between the Government and its relations such as public, businesses, and government agencies to improve the interactions with business and industry as well as public empowerment through access to information. The benefits include less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.

Another two definitions that illustrate this idea are from OECD (2003a) that defined EG as the use of ICT, and particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better

Government. Commission of the European Communities (2003) defined EG as the use of ICT in public administrations combined with organisational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes. From the definition mentioned above, EG refers to functions enabled by the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) in general.

In this idea, EG may be recognised as the opening phase of ‘an electronics’ era that focuses on one-way interaction (to give an information), followed by e-governance and e-participation. Sakowicz (2004) argued on the narrow approach to e-government that may lead to transforming bureaucracy into ‘infocracy’. Based on OECD’s broad definition about e-government, the definition consists of participatory aspect, which stresses on the instrumental character of ICT and requirements of innovative solution.

Wimmer and Bicking (2006) stated that there are four areas of study in the context of EG. They are society evolution research, ICT-related research, Government modernisation research, and research in values of Government innovation based on ICT including public value in e-participation environments. These four main areas cannot be separately considered. For instance, the success of e-participation implementation depends on how Government uses ICT to promote public participation. The e-government acts as a research field to integrate diverse disciplines in the exploration of innovation and solutions. It investigates and proposes a model of public agency as well as redefining the execution of public policy under innovative ICT technology.

Through Internet delivery systems, the criteria are non-hierarchical, non-linear, two-way communication, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week (West, 2005). Non-hierarchical and non-linear characteristics enable users to seek information based on their own convenience, instead of during office hours only. By facilitating two-way communication, EG has been hailed as a way to improve service delivery and responsiveness to users (Markoff, 2000). Therefore, the Malaysian Government should increase its interaction with the public to ensure that the public opinions are heard in the process of developing the nation. According to the EG vision, one-way interaction prevents the public from getting involved in government processes.

E-participation concept in the EG initiative is meant to assist the Government in public policy formulation. Approach to e-participation should be considered by the Government to create two-way interaction. Apart from that, e-participation initiative may increase the use of EG. By implementing e-participation, it will bring benefits to all walks of life, whether urban, rural, rich, poor, young, old, those familiar with IT, and those who are not. Interaction with the Government will become much easier and convenient too.

2.4 Democracy

Among political terms, “democracy” has been applied to representative institutions. Since this research closely deals with public participation in the democratic processes, the word “democracy” ought to be defined and described accordingly. Most of the definitions of democracy are linked to democracy with elections or voting. Schumpeter (1947) stated that democracy is the institution that “organises for arriving at political decision in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a

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