Analysis of Public Participation in Place Branding: A Case Study of City of Alor Setar, Malaysia

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Abstract:
The paper study the involvement of place users into place branding. It examines involvement to; first, knowledge of public participation; second, involvement in public participation; third, perception that city managers include place users in planning and implementation stage of place branding; fourth, local community must together with government agencies in brand development process, and; fifth, respondents' willingness to participate in the planning and implementation stage. The method used in this study was quantitative by using the questionnaire as a tool. The findings revealed that place users willing participate in any stage of the program. The paper concluded by recommending for further research in the willingness of the private sector in various sectors to cooperate and collaborate, regarding services and financial matters.

Keywords
 Place Branding, Public Participation, City Management, City Planning

1. Introduction

In 80s, urban managers in Europe has been approaching "place branding" in accentuating the image and identity of the place. Place branding has become a famous and favourite strategy to present a place or city (Mommas in Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007). It excellently functions as the source of added symbolic value and at the same time, increases the economic value of the place with a mental image and a cultural implication. It can be said that branding is one of the new mechanisms to recover the identity and image of a place.

However, branding confronts the concerns of lifestyle as well as generating captivating place images that direct to market. Rehan (2013) stated that place branding is a new method for the development of a sustainable city. She also added

that place branding is a novel aspect of public communication and improves the city marketing by converting a visual image into the brand image.

The rapidity of urbanisation could lead to urban issues become more involved. Local authorities are hope of the people to get the best service and quality. Local authorities as city managers have a significant role in governing the place. Therefore, the cooperation of local authorities to mobilise residents to tackle urban issues more efficiently. However, the public should participate and be involved in every stage of the development being provided by the channel.

According to Goh (1991), the participation of the community in the planning process in general means the involvement of the public in the planning stage of development policy and strategy. Kaiser, Godschalk, and Chapin (1995) consider public input as something voluntary. Society must take part in all matters relating to the elaboration of the state. It is to ensure that the planned development is unbiased and meet the needs of all segments of society. Arnstein (1969) in "a ladder of citizen participation" journal also seeks public input as part of the power of the people. People role is to facilitate the implementation of more efficient planning for local population residing in the planning area. The public is more aware of what is genuinely need in local life.

Notwithstanding different definition, public responsibility can be defined as a sense of awareness to be responsible because of decisions are taken by a group of stakeholders. However, public participation can be viewed from different perspectives. For the project proponent, public involvement may be only to meet legal requirements and guidelines for project approval. For the public, the opportunity to participate in various missions depending on the interests of the different stakeholders. The needs and responsibilities of public involvement in all development process are a positive step towards sustainable development. This aspect has not been given equal attention in the formulation of policy,

planning and implementation of development projects. The public participation is usually considered ancillary requirements and usually introduced in the form of individual or group initiatives of the organisation.

Public participation in the development process can only happen if the legislative, operational and institutional set up is enabling or permitting it to occur. It contended that weak governance has often lead to failure to send even such vital public interest such as education, primary health, property rights, and roads.

2. Public Participation in Malaysia

Public participation is a principle or political practices, and can also identify as a right to the public to participate in the process of policy and strategy making. Public involvement can be used alternately with the concept or practice of stakeholder engagement. Public assistance seeks and facilitates the participation of those who are potentially affected or interested in the result of the development. The central principle of public involvement is every person who lives in the area have the right to participate in decision-making process. The engagement of the public suggests that public contributions will influence the outcome of the decision making by the local authority. Public participation can consider as a technique of an empowering and essential part of the democratic system that applied by the local authority.

In the situation of knowledge sharing, public participation is inclusiveness and collective intelligence which formed by the desire of the whole community. Public input is part of a "people-centred or human-centric" principle, which has happened in Europe for over thirty years. That public input consists the different elements of development programs, international relief, public policy, business, and education. Public participation can develop as part of the "first" paradigm shift. It based on hierarchical logic, promoting the idea of "more heads are better than one" alternative and argue that public participation can maintain productive and long-lasting change. Pring and Noe (2002) define the general definition of public involvement; participation means "various mechanisms that individuals or groups can use to communicate their views on public issues." So, it is the way that people get their views on about civil matters. The way this can happen is a lot: vote, show, appeals, lobbying, letter writing, debating, campaigning and more.

In Malaysia, public involvement is a crucial point in the planning process. Rational urban planning is to satisfy and meet the public interest and the need for development. In addressing the local demands, public participation in planning management are

required. This state in Section 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172) of the people role in the planning process. Based on Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, public participation effort was designed to:

i. Encourage people to jointly involved in the planning of future development in their area. With that, developers will be in line with the residents need as well as building and reflecting the reputation of the local authorities.
ii. Notify landowners and residents of the proposed type of development in store for their land and residential areas during the specified period.

Public participation can succeed in a variety of approaches. The participation should be both learning, teaching, and sharing the knowledge between the city manager and the residents. In "Agriculture: Reconnecting people, land, and nature" book, Pretty (2002) discusses creating a perception of environments over social experience and local property rights. Pretty cites the use of the Greek word "Metis" to define "forms of knowledge embedded in local experience." "Metis" is open to new approaches and prospects and is constantly growing with the work of investigation, monitoring and accustoming. That is training not just environmental but is for social and economic purposes. The communities' involvement and communication in project and policy development can produce in a variety of various approaches.

3. Place Branding

A brand is the perception of people on your business or product (Handley, 2012). It is the form in which other images of the business take form in According to Kapferer (2012), the first meaning of "brand" is the name given to a product or service from a source. A brand is the product memory and future (Kapferer, 2012). Kornberger (2010) said there are people who consume the brand, and not the products or services per se. The brand is a name, term, image or design, or a mix of them, which are planned to connote the merchandise of administrations of one vender and to distinguish themselves from their contenders (Kotler, 2000).

Place branding is another system to recuperate the quality and image of the place or city. The idea of place branding outlined by Anholt (2002) is fresh and has been misconstrued. It integrates country branding in addition to the region and urban communities. Anholt touched the base term of place branding from his prior work with country branding.

He initially clarified his perception that "the notorieties of nations are fairly like the brand image of organisations and product, and similarly essential." For quite a long time, the city manager has perceived the need to extend the vivid image to the world. However, in the previous couple of decades, place branding has started to be perceived as an apparent request.

4. The Players and Stakeholder in the Public Participation

Public participation means the decision-making process affected by the involvement of people. It encourages sustainable resolution by giving the information to the participators and keep in touch with participators and show them how their input influenced the decision.

> *"The practice of public participation may involve public meetings, surveys, open houses, workshops, voting, citizen advisory committees and other forms of direct participation by the society."*
>
> King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998

In 1992, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development enshrined the principle of public participation. The policy states that "environmental issues are the best to handle with the involvement of all concerned citizens, at the appropriate level" Rio Declaration continued, drawing a close connection within the entrance to information and public engagement:

> *"At the national level, each shall have adequate access to information on the environment held by the authorities, including info on risky information and activities in his or her communities, and the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The city must motivate public consciousness and participation by making information easy to access. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided."*
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> Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992

4.1. Public Participation in Place Branding

Recently, residents began recognized as a stakeholder of increasing value. There are three kinds of functions that can be assigned to residents as a local stakeholder in the developing and manage a place brand (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013). First, citizens as an integrated part of the place brand, second, citizens as representatives of their place brand, and lastly, citizens as citizens. Hereźniak and

Florek (2016) said the difficulty of place brand managers is how and to what degree place residents could and should participate in place branding program.

Al-Kodmany (2013) said that "*place making is the art of creating an urban landscape that fosters pride and ownership of the physical and social environment.*" One of the important points of place branding both as a process and as a philosophy is its transformational potential for places. The transformational potential in this context means that diverse groups of users implement numerous initiatives, whose common denominator is placed brand identity.

5. Importance of Public Participation

Public involvement is crucial in place management. The public should participate directly in each development stage. This because the public is a party that will receive the effect, either directly or indirectly against any development that built. People role is vital at every stage of development regardless of whether before, during or after each development is done. Thus, the response from the public at an early stage of planning is necessary for minimising the impact on local people and plans to achieve for the people. It is consistent with the concept of man's relationship to man. Also, the public involvement is essential to help the implementer to plan more efficiently. Given the fact that the public is the local people who live in the planning area, they are what is a need in local life.

Public participation is environmental. There are many benefits of public involvement in environmental decision-making; these benefits also apply to the coastal region since many of the principles and provisions of an effective democracy. The common advantage of public participation in the environmental matter is: to educate the public and make them aware of environmental problems, using the knowledge and experience of stakeholders to improve planning and policy, public understanding and support, more openness (transparency in decision-making), less disagreement, delays and misunderstandings and implementation of sustainable development. If it is transferred out at a higher level, public participation drives to better results for the environment as people contribute their expertise and knowledge. The corresponds to the purpose of Århus Convention - "accountability and transparency in decision-making and to strengthen public support" (Halley & Wood, 2005).

6. Methodology

The article points to classify the involvement of place users into place branding. The data were

collected by quantitative techniques. The primary data of this study is a questionnaire to the respondents. The respondents comprised of the different background in features of gender, age, race, level of education, and work. The questionnaire design is composed of questions regarding the common understanding of participation in place branding. It also covered questions concerning their participation in place branding either at planning or implementation stage. The questionnaire was divided to 100 respondents who were at random picked around Alor Setar City Centre. The data compilation was carried face to face and answered around ten minutes.

The questionnaire is separated into two segments. Section A includes the background data of respondents. Section B comprises five related questions; (i) knowledge of public participation; (ii) involvement in public participation; (iii) perception that city managers include place users in planning and implementation stage of place branding; (iv) local community must together with government agencies in brand development process, and; (v) respondents' willingness to participate in the planning and implementation stage.

7. Findings

Analysis presented in the article is to determined participation of place user in place branding. As stated by Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009), one of place branding aims is to understand and satisfy the need of different groups of stakeholders. Pretended, that the method of place branding is benefit when the product of branding matches expectations of user's. Participation of place users in place branding process may cause the brand to be accepted by receivers, then finally, increase the productiveness of branding program.

The analysis shows 52.0% of the respondents are women, while male respondents are 48.0%. There show the gender distributions of the respondents completely equal. The age category of 30-39 years showed the largest number of respondents with 32% and lowest age category was 60 years and above.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Demography Aspect	Percent
Gender	
Male	48
Female	52
Age	
20-29	20
30-39	32
40-49	17
50-59	19
>60	12
Race	
Malay	47
Chinese	23
Indian	24
Siamese	6
Education Level	
SPM	28
Diploma	17
Degree	29
Master/PhD	7
Others	19
Areas of Work	
Government Agencies	27
Services	23
Business Related	14
Self-employed	5
Retired	11
Unemployed	12
Others	8
Origin	
Alor Setar	67
Another District in Kedah	22
Others	11

Source: Field Work, 2017

Analysis shows that Malays has the highest number contrasted to the other races. That since as the larger part of the population in the study area was Malay and the Siamese was a minority. Majority of respondents work with government offices and graduate degree level. Higher quantities of respondent origin were Alor Setar origin. The total numbers of respondents came from other areas are 22% and the balance came from other areas besides Kedah. Analysis of data showed that the values of the variable under study were indeed scattered.

Table 2. Respondents on public participation

Perception to Place Branding	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge of public participation	3.40	.696
Involvement in public participation	2.90	.759
Perception that city managers included place users in planning and implementation stage of place branding	2.89	.601
City managers must engage with place users in brand development process	3.72	.451
Willingness to participate in any stage of program	3.44	.501

Source: Field Work, 2017

Findings show that most of place users have knowledge on public participation with mean value of 3.40 (σ=.696). However, their involvement in public participation not in line with their knowledge where analysis generated low mean value (2.90). It was revealed that even respondents have awareness of public participation, their involvement is still low. A low mean value of 2.89 was produced from analysis of perception that city managers included place users in planning and implementation stage of place branding. As preach by Adkin (2016), public participation was effective to develop strategic strategies. In line with Adkin, respondents agreed that city managers must engage with place users in brand development process. This analysis recommended that while respondents know about public participation, but they have the perception that the city managers exclude them in the program. Findings also found that Siamese was more likely to participate in public participation. The Malay viewed somewhat less than overall respondents where only 14.9% Malays are found participating in public participation (Table 3).

Table 3. Respondents involvement in public participation based on race

	Respondents involvement in public participation (%)		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Respondent's Race	Malay	42.6	42.6	14.9
	Chinese	30.4	43.5	26.1
	Indian	25.0	45.8	29.2
	Siamese	16.7	16.7	66.7

Source: Field Work, 2017

Initiating with an ethical engagement between city managers and the place users should be concerned with planning and implementation of place branding. Following which all parties can then cooperate in the establishment of the vital strategy. Dola and Mijan (2006) said that the ongoing relationship and trust between government, developers and the users should be promoted. With empowerment allied with some control and benefits such as ownership, a sense of belonging could easily be achieved.

8. Conclusion

Generally, "public participation" understood as a method of the variable. This process starts with the information providing. Then, by sharing the relevant information through media and meetings.

Public participation is one way to reduce tensions and conflicts over public policy decisions. There are various techniques can be used to get public input efficiently. The city manager and the participants can obtain some benefit significantly from an active public involvement process. However, all parties' expectations must be approximately equal to the process to be effective. In managing growth, collaboration is required not only for information exchange or collective decision making but also partnerships to optimise actions and resources, forming a basis for the reciprocal incentive, and avoiding duplication gap and conflict. Inefficiency in legal instruments for example in securing more access to land and executing planning techniques for urban development can be a hurdle to project implementation.

9. Direction for Future Study

A study could be undertaken on the willingness of the private sector in various sectors to cooperate and collaborate, regarding services and financial matters. It is essential to discover proper information and to what their needs are in place branding. Such a study would also support the founding of a close collaboration between the private sector and city managers as well as promoting 'win-win situation'.

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