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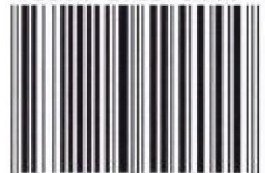
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VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION: A PROPOSED STUDY AT A MATURED TOWNSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This paper scrutinizes the voluntary participation in the residents' association at Bandar Laguna Merbok, a matured township in Kedah. This study defines voluntary participation as a community's voluntary involvement in Persatuan Penduduk Laguna Merbok (PPLM). This study aims to understand how the individuals decide to participate voluntarily in PPLM and to determine the factors behind their participation. This study will employ a basic survey instrument. The residents are set to undertake an online survey to rate their voluntary participation perceptions towards the PPLM. Their feedback will be gathered and analyzed using correlational analysis. Purposive Sampling Technique is employed to collect data from targeted respondents. It is hoped that this study will be beneficial to PPLM in terms of promoting their services and attracting more membership in the future.

Keywords: correlational analysis, purposive sampling, residents' association, voluntary participation.

INTRODUCTION

Bandar Laguna Merbok is a matured township comprising of both residential and commercial units. As a fully developed township, it accommodates about 3,800 units of residential homes, worth more than RM1.2 billion. A lot of nearby amenities are available like schools, hospitals, cafes, mosque and shopping malls. Residents also enjoy easy access to the North-South Highway. At the backdrop, there is the peak of Gunung Jerai, the tallest and legendary mountain in Kedah. In all, this township can be regarded as possessing a wholesome lifestyle. Unfortunately, due to poor planning, the claim of a gated and guarded residential home was at risk. The residents have no legal obligation and are not required to pay for the security services. In fact, the cost of providing this service had been taken care by the developer for quite some. Strategically, the developer set up a clubhouse and created a membership programme that covers both provision of facilities at the clubhouse and security service throughout residential area at Bandar Laguna Merbok. Unfortunately, the membership did not turn up very well. The problem arose when the developer planned to leave and move to develop another housing area. The residents were left with security threats. Who would take care of the security service once

the developer has gone? A drastic action is needed to overcome this problem. Subsequently, a residents' association, namely Persatuan Penduduk Laguna Merbok (PPLM) was set up in the early 2018 after consulting various interest groups in the community.

PPLM faces a major challenge. How to drive its membership based on voluntary participation. In principle, the voluntary participation in the residents' association aims for positive benefits for the community and society at large throughout the provision of needed goods and best services such as security. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2020), voluntary means doing work for good causes without being paid for it. Voluntary participation in this study refers to community's voluntary involvement in PPLM that provides several services such as security and emergency helps. Each resident has the right to decide whether to participate or not to participate in PPLM. This is in line with a study done by Dixit & Olson (2000), where every individual in community should be given an equal right to participate in any community's or neighbourhood association. Effective voluntary participation will always have a vital sense of ownership towards their neighbourhood. According to Flynn, (1995), voluntary participation will encourage members working with others in neighbourhood and increase the chances of involvement in any neighbourhood programme. Apart of that, Kanter (1994) stated that the effective voluntary participation is related to the benefits gain. Besides that, Kaplan (1985) showed that each effective voluntary participation achieves its objectives if each partner or member in the neighbourhood have an access toward the information sharing and resources access. As at the end of 2019, the membership of PPLM stood at 73% of total residents in Bandar Laguna Merbok.

There are two possible theories to be used in measuring the voluntary participation namely, Theory of Planned Behavior and Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation. The theory of planned behaviour is appropriate to be used to predict the behaviour of the volunteers (MacGillvary & Lynd-Stevenson, 2013). This theory examines the voluntary participants among residents in Bandar Laguna Merbok and why the residents are motivated to join voluntarily in PBLM. The Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Vroom,1964) assumed that individuals evaluate choices and decisions based on the belief to personal outcome to optimize pleasure and minimize pain. Zboja, Jackson and Grimes-Rose (2020) indicated that the positive attitude towards voluntary participation in the non-profit organization is caused by the belief in helping the people.

Voluntary participation in any organization can also be seen from a rational decision-making process. Primarily the participants need to identify the issue or problem, establish and weigh decision criteria, generate and select the alternatives, and finally select the best alternative.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Even though the membership of PPLM has already exceeded 70%, the rate of voluntary participation remains unknown. It is a great advantage if the management of PPLM knows this fact, which can be exploited in planning future activities for the residents. Besides, by understanding this voluntary participation of the residents, it can help PPLM to provide better quality services that fulfil the community's expectation.

The objectives of this study are to identify the rate of residents' voluntary participants, and the actual factors behind their decision to participate in PPLM. The variables used include the voluntary participation, the knowledge, attitudes, awareness, motivation, and financial capability of the residents.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies the purposive sampling technique for data collection. Purposive sampling techniques refer to judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling (such as people, organization, events, piece of data) that are to be studied. It focuses on the characteristics of a population of interest, which will best enable the researchers to answer the research questions. The respective respondent includes all residents in Bandar Laguna Merbok, either they are member or non-member for PPLM.

The online survey questionnaire will be used to evaluate the factors associated with voluntary participation perceptions towards the PPLM. The respondents would be approached virtually via 'residents WhatsApp group' and other social media platforms. In principle, the link of online survey questionnaire would be distributed and shared to all respondents. The content of questionnaire is associated with nine items such as demographic data, voluntary participation, attitude, knowledge, motivation, financial capability, perception towards PPLM, happiness level and awareness of security in neighbourhood. This online questionnaire will be pretested among the selected respondents in Bandar Laguna Merbok to confirm its accuracy and validity in measuring the respondent understanding of voluntary participation. All variables are measured by developing items for each of them with the use of five (5) Likert scale type format with endpoint of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

CONCLUSION

The findings from this study are aimed to provide better insights for the management of PPLM in understanding the reasons behind the community's decision whether to participate or not to participate in the programme. Having the knowledge whereby the residents are reluctant to join PPLM will enable the management to explore and generate initiatives to drive for more membership in the future. This study is crucial for the sustainability of PPLM in the long run. By understanding the reasons for their choice of participation, the outcomes can give the idea to the committee in charge to design suitable programmes that can lead to satisfaction to the majority of the community in Bandar Laguna Merbok.

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