

Communication of Local Development Policy by Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality

Wittayatorn Tokeaw, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality, focusing on: 1) policy content, and 2) the characteristics of word and phrase usage. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzed the Mayor's policy declaration documents from an award-winning administration recognized for good governance, employing purposive sampling and deductive content analysis. Findings indicate that the main content structure begins with the vision, "A City of Happiness and a Model Learning City of the Nation," which serves as a guiding framework for communication. This vision is divided into eight sub-themes: infrastructure, economy and tourism, natural resources and environment, holistic well-being, education, religion and culture, politics and administration, community and social welfare, and smart city development. These are linked by a central phrase, "for the benefit and happiness of the citizens." The communication strategy uses memorable language, emphasizes imagery and emotion, links the city's identity to local context, and encourages citizen participation through invitational phrases and value-laden expressions such as sustainability, quality of life, and fairness. Calls to Action (CTA) are integral, stimulating participation, fostering civic awareness, and promoting policy compliance, such as joining the Green City program or volunteering. Word and phrase usage reflects five dimensions: creating a vision and city image, building trust and leadership, clarifying policy content, motivating participation, and fostering collaboration with citizens and stakeholders. These strategies enhance the effectiveness of policy communication, integrate participatory principles and city branding, strengthen public support, and drive sustainable urban development in Hua Hin.

Keywords: policy communication, policy content, word and phrase usage, local development, mayor

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Introduction

Communication through the declaration of local development policies prior to assuming office by a mayor serves as a crucial mechanism in local public administration. It is rooted in the principles of participatory democracy, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and the public scrutiny of local leaders (Fung, 2015; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). This practice has been influenced by the national political system, in which the Prime Minister must present policy statements to Parliament before taking office in order to inform legislators and citizens of the government's administrative direction. In the context of local governance in Thailand, mayoral policy declarations are mandated under the Municipality Act B.E. 2496 and its amendments, particularly Section 48 Decem, which requires mayors to declare their policies before the municipal council within 30 days after assuming office (Chaiwong & Srisang, 2022). The essence of such declarations lies in communicating the content and messages of local development policies, which must align with municipal authority and local development strategies specified in municipal development plans.

These principles aim to establish a connection between local politics and local administration, ensuring the legitimacy of elected executives while allowing municipal council members, as representatives of the people, to examine and provide recommendations on proposed policies (Grindle, 2017). Policy declarations therefore function as political and administrative rituals with symbolic significance, representing the public expression of a leader's intention to develop the city (Fairclough, 2018).

The analytical framework for examining local development policy communication in Hua Hin Municipality consists of three dimensions: (1) the main structure of policy content, including vision, goals, measures, and expected outcomes (OECD, 2020); (2) content communication strategies, focusing on message organization, emphasis, and persuasive language (Entman, 2019); and (3) Call to Action (CTA) communication, analyzing words and phrases that encourage public participation and civic engagement (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015). Additionally, the analysis of words and phrases in policy communication encompasses five dimensions: creating city vision and image, building trust and leadership, enhancing policy clarity, motivating participation, and fostering collaboration with citizens and stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2020).

On June 20, 2025, at the Hua Hin Municipal Council Chamber in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Mr. Nopporn Wuttikul, Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality, delivered his local development policy declaration before the municipal council during the first ordinary session of 2025, chaired by Mr. Cheep Suksri. The policy declaration covered eight dimensions aimed at "transforming Hua Hin into a livable city through sustainable development." These included infrastructure, economy and tourism, natural resources and environment, holistic well-being, education, religion and culture, politics and administration, community and social welfare, and smart city development.

This study addresses significant knowledge gaps in Thai research on local policy communication. Most previous studies have focused primarily on strategic policy content, while lacking in-depth analysis of how words and phrases are employed to construct vision, trust, and public motivation. Furthermore, limited research has integrated political communication theories with the Thai local governance context (Fairclough, 2018; Fung, 2015). This study therefore contributes new knowledge concerning effective policy communication mechanisms that strengthen mutual understanding between leaders and

citizens, clarify urban visions, and support participatory communication strategies for sustainable local development.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the content of local development policy communication by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality.
2. To investigate the characteristics of word and phrase usage in the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using document-based content analysis. Data were collected from policy declaration documents presented before municipal councils. Existing documentary data were systematically classified, categorized, interpreted in terms of content, and synthesized to generate analytical conclusions. Unit of Analysis The study purposively selected the policy declaration documents of the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality as the unit of analysis. Hua Hin Municipality was chosen because it is recognized as a well-managed local administrative organization that has received several prestigious awards, including the ASEAN Sustainable City Award in the Clean Air category from Malaysia, the National Outstanding Sustainable Environmental Award, the First Runner-up Award for Sustainable Livable Municipality in 2022, the Prototype Elderly School Award of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 2021, the Merit Maker Plus Award for drowning prevention in 2025, and the Sustainable Tourism Management Standard (STMS) certification in 2022.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a policy declaration content analysis form validated by experts for reliability and content validity. The instrument comprised two sections: Section 1: Analysis of Local Development Policy Communication Content This section consisted of three analytical dimensions: (1) the main structure of policy content, (2) content communication strategies, and (3) analysis of policy communication content in terms of Call to Action (CTA). Section 2: Analysis of Word and Phrase Usage in Policy Communication This section consisted of five analytical dimensions: (1) the use of words and phrases to construct city vision and image, (2) the use of words and phrases to build trust and leadership, (3) the use of words and phrases to enhance policy clarity and implementation, (4) the use of words and phrases to motivate participation, and (5) the use of words and phrases to foster collaboration with citizens and stakeholders.

Data Collection

Relevant original documents were collected from publicly accessible municipal websites, specifically mayoral policy declaration statements delivered upon assuming office from three municipalities. The documents were converted into standardized digital formats to facilitate systematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through coding procedures based on eight analytical categories: (1) the main structure of policy content, (2) content communication strategies, (3) policy communication in terms of Call to Action, (4) the use of words and phrases for constructing city vision and image, (5) the use of words and phrases for building trust and leadership, (6) the use of words and phrases for enhancing policy clarity and implementation, (7) the use of words and phrases for motivating participation, and (8) the use of words and phrases for fostering collaboration with citizens and stakeholders. The findings were interpreted and synthesized through descriptive analysis.

Research Findings

Findings on the Communication Content of Local Development Policies of Hua Hin Municipality

Main Structure of Policy Content

The policy declaration of Mr. Nopporn Wuttikul, Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality, contains several key messages reflecting communication directed toward citizens, communities, and stakeholders. The main structure of the policy message can be summarized as follows: (1) Policy Vision: The policies were communicated under the clear vision of “developing Hua Hin into a City of Happiness and a Model Learning City of the Nation.” This vision functions as the conceptual framework guiding communication, portraying Hua Hin not merely as a tourism destination, but as a model city in terms of quality of life, learning, and sustainable development. (2) Supporting Policy Themes: The vision was further communicated through eight interconnected policy dimensions: infrastructure; economy and tourism; natural resources and environment; holistic well-being; education, religion, and culture; politics and administration; community and social welfare; and smart city development. (3) Connecting Language Across Messages: These policy dimensions were linked through common expressions such as “for the benefit and happiness of the citizens” and “toward sustainable development,” helping citizens understand that all policy areas are integrated within a comprehensive urban development framework. Thus, the overall structure of policy communication follows a sequence of “vision → strategic themes → expected outcomes,” targeting the citizens of Hua Hin Municipality and emphasizing values such as happiness, quality of life, learning, sustainability, technology, and collaboration.

Content Communication Strategies

The policy communication strategy emphasized accessibility, memorability, emotional appeal, and local relevance. Memorable phrases such as “convenient, clean, and safe” followed the “rule of three,” making them emotionally impactful and easy to recall. The communication also connected Hua Hin’s identity with recognizable local elements such as beaches, natural scenery, culture, and public spaces, thereby strengthening place identity and city branding. In addition, the policy language promoted citizen participation through invitational expressions such as “sharing happiness and hardship together,” “every action must consider the people’s voices,” and “developing together with all sectors.” Such language reduced the distance between government and citizens by positioning people as active participants rather than passive recipients. The policies also emphasized change and future orientation through phrases such as “upgrading,” “transforming,” “toward a smart

city,” and “ready for change,” which stimulated perceptions of progress and modernization. Furthermore, value-oriented language, including “sustainability,” “quality of life,” “fairness,” and “low-carbon city,” added ethical and social dimensions to the communication.

Policy Communication in Terms of Call to Action

The local development policy communication of Hua Hin Municipality clearly reflected campaign-oriented communication designed to stimulate public participation through strategic Calls to Action (CTA). The policy messages employed words, phrases, and symbolic language intended to invite, motivate, and inspire citizens to participate in urban development. Three forms of CTA were identified: (1) Participatory CTA—encouraging collective action, such as “Let us work together to develop Hua Hin into a livable city.” (2) Civic Awareness CTA—promoting civic responsibility, such as “Let us be good hosts for tourists” and “Hua Hin must remain clean for everyone.” (3) Practical Policy CTA—encouraging concrete participation in municipal initiatives, such as joining green city projects, volunteering, or downloading the Hua Hin Smart City application. These CTA strategies transformed awareness into action and represented the core of development communication at the local level. By employing simple, positive, and motivational language, the municipality fostered a sense of shared ownership, civic pride, and collective responsibility, ultimately supporting participatory and sustainable urban development.

Findings on the Characteristics of Word and Phrase Usage in the Communication of Local Development Policies of Hua Hin Municipality

The policy communication of Hua Hin Municipality through the policy declaration of Mayor Nopporn Wuttikul demonstrates distinctive characteristics in the use of words and phrases that effectively reflect the city’s intentions, policies, and vision. Academic analysis reveals five major dimensions as follows.

The Use of Words and Phrases to Construct Vision and City Image

The policy declaration begins by constructing a vision and city image through positive and inspirational language, such as the phrases “Hua Hin: A City of Happiness” and “A Model Learning City of the Nation.” These expressions play a significant role in creating shared imagery, enabling citizens to envision a prosperous future city in terms of economy, society, and environment (Entman, 1993). Such words and phrases reflect the use of framing strategies that shape public interpretation of policies in a positive manner consistent with citizens’ values. Furthermore, the use of positive adjectives such as “convenient,” “clean,” “safe,” and “sustainable” communicates multidimensional urban values while simultaneously establishing the ethos of both the city and its leadership. Vision-oriented language also functions as a city branding strategy that reinforces Hua Hin’s identity as a smart city emphasizing digital development, identity-based tourism, and sustainable environmental management. These linguistic choices position Hua Hin as a modern and distinctive city.

The Use of Words and Phrases to Build Trust and Leadership

The policy declaration emphasizes the credibility of leadership through language reflecting sincerity, attentiveness, and understanding of citizens. Expressions such as “standing beside the people through happiness and hardship” and “every action must consider the people’s voices” represent pathos-oriented communication that reassures citizens that the leader is

committed to solving public problems. Ethical and moral expressions such as “sincerity” and “consistency” strengthen the ethos of leadership. Simultaneously, references to legal legitimacy, such as “in accordance with the Municipality Act B.E. 2496,” function as logos, reinforcing credibility and legitimacy. Another important dimension is the reflection of citizens’ identity through phrases such as “understanding that citizens need a true representative of the people,” which makes citizens feel acknowledged and included. Such language clearly strengthens public trust and confidence in leadership.

The Use of Words and Phrases to Enhance Policy Clarity and Implementation

The policy declaration employs structural language and sequential expressions to enhance citizens’ understanding of policy direction. Phrases such as “focusing on sustainable development while adapting to change” and “developing proactive healthcare management systems” help citizens recognize the relationship between policy measures and expected outcomes. Repetitive use of action-oriented words such as “develop” and “promote” reinforces continuity and emphasis. In addition, outcome-oriented expressions such as “for the well-being of the citizens” connect policy measures directly to everyday life. These linguistic strategies reflect the concept of clarity in public policy communication, emphasizing communication that is concise, understandable, and practically applicable.

The Use of Words and Phrases to Motivate and Encourage Participation

The policy declaration prominently employs motivational language to stimulate public participation and support. Expressions such as “creating environmental volunteer networks,” “building collective happiness for Hua Hin,” and “promoting community-based health management” encourage citizens to perceive themselves as active contributors to urban development. Verbs such as “focus,” “create,” and “promote” communicate continuity and concrete action, demonstrating that development extends beyond rhetoric into practice. Such language also reinforces a sense of shared ownership among citizens. These motivational expressions align with the concept of participatory communication (Servaes, 2008), combining ethos and pathos with outcome-oriented communication to strengthen public awareness and engagement.

The Use of Words and Phrases to Foster Collaboration With Citizens and Stakeholders

The policy declaration strongly emphasizes collaboration with citizens and stakeholder networks through phrases such as “cooperation among all sectors,” “integrated collaboration across sectors,” and “linking tourism design collaboratively.” These expressions reflect the concept of collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), communicating that leadership opens participatory spaces for citizens and stakeholders. Inclusive language such as “citizens of all age groups” reinforces the perception that no group is excluded from development processes. Furthermore, the language promotes practical participation through statements such as “developing wellness centers as models for nutrition, music, culture, and therapeutic activities,” enabling citizens to recognize their own roles and participate concretely in urban development initiatives.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings on the communication of local development policies by the Mayor before the municipal council prior to assuming office can be summarized as follows: (1) The findings on the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality, which emphasized clear message structures, memorable phrases, and Calls to Action (CTA), are consistent with previous studies while also extending contextual knowledge within the local governance setting. Research on framing and political communication by Entman and Fairclough suggests that language framing is a crucial factor influencing public perception (Entman, 1993; Fairclough, 2018). This study found that the vision frame of “a city of happiness” functioned as a central framework integrating diverse policy measures, corresponding with the concept of City Branding proposed by Kavaratzis, which emphasizes integrating urban identity into strategic messaging (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2021). In terms of participation, the findings revealed that CTA-oriented and invitational language stimulated a sense of shared ownership, consistent with Participatory Governance theory and the work of Nabatchi, which highlights participatory communication as a mechanism for enhancing citizen responsiveness (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). Thai studies on local communication reported the existence of a “message–practice gap.” However, the Hua Hin case confirms that practical language and CTA strategies can reduce this gap when accompanied by pilot measures and clear follow-up mechanisms. Nevertheless, a limitation consistent with previous studies is the risk posed by technical terminology, such as “5G” and “City Operation System,” which may create comprehension barriers for general citizens (Heath & O’Hair, 2021). This study therefore highlights the necessity of communicative translation between technical policy language and public language to enhance understanding and participation. Overall, the findings confirm international theoretical perspectives on framing, participatory communication, and city branding, while providing clearer local contextual evidence that visual language design, memorable phrases, and audience-oriented CTA strategies are essential in transforming local policy into effective practice. (2) The findings on the characteristics of word and phrase usage in the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality reflect the effective application of Political Discourse and Strategic Communication concepts at the local level. The use of words and phrases to construct vision and city image corresponds with Framing Theory proposed by Entman (1993) and Fairclough (2018), which suggests that political leaders can shape positive interpretive frameworks enabling citizens to understand and accept policies through symbolically powerful language. Similarly, city-image expressions such as “a city of happiness” and “a model learning city” align with the City Branding concept of Kavaratzis and Hatch (2021), which views language as a tool for constructing urban identity and shared social values. The use of language to build trust and leadership is also consistent with Benoit’s (2015) work, which explains that political leaders employ Ethos–Pathos–Logos to establish credibility, trust, and public acceptance. At the same time, language emphasizing policy clarity, including structural and outcome-oriented phrases, reflects the concept of Clarity in Public Policy Communication (Heath & O’Hair, 2021), which stresses systematic and accountable communication. Furthermore, the use of motivational language and collaborative expressions corresponds with the concepts of Participatory Communication (Servaes, 2008) and Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), both of which view invitational and inclusive language as key mechanisms for fostering participation and shared ownership of policies. The findings therefore confirm that local policy communication through appropriate word and phrase selection is not merely a process of transmitting information, but also a mechanism for generating social empowerment and sustaining long-term urban development.

New Body of Knowledge

The study on the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality generated new bodies of knowledge summarized as follows: (1) The communication content of local development policies under the administration of Nopporn Wuttikul revealed three significant dimensions. First, the policy message structure was clearly organized, beginning with the vision of “A City of Happiness and a Model Learning City of the Nation,” which functioned as the central framework guiding communication. The vision was subsequently divided into eight interconnected policy dimensions: infrastructure, economy and tourism, natural resources and environment, holistic well-being, education, religion and culture, politics and administration, community and social welfare, and smart city development. These dimensions were linked through common expressions such as “for the benefit and happiness of the citizens.” Second, the content communication strategy employed memorable language emphasizing imagery, emotion, and symbolic meanings connected to the local context. The communication also encouraged public participation through invitational language and value-oriented expressions such as sustainability, quality of life, and fairness. Third, the policies strongly incorporated Call to Action (CTA) strategies aimed at motivating citizens to participate in urban development through civic participation, public consciousness, and practical engagement, such as joining green city initiatives or volunteering. These CTA strategies transformed awareness into action, fostered a sense of shared ownership, and promoted sustainable urban development. Consequently, Hua Hin Municipality’s policy communication represents an example of “socially empowering language” that integrates vision, content strategy, and CTA to strengthen public participation and connect policy communication with practical implementation. (2) The characteristics of word and phrase usage in Hua Hin Municipality’s policy declaration were consistent with the principles of public policy communication across five dimensions: (1) constructing city vision and image through positive and inspirational language; (2) building trust and leadership through expressions reflecting morality, ethics, and understanding of citizens; (3) enhancing policy clarity through structural and outcome-oriented language; (4) motivating participation through motivational expressions and result-oriented communication; and (5) fostering collaboration with citizens and stakeholder networks through cooperative language. The selection of these words and phrases reflects a communication strategy aimed at “building credibility, creating emotional connection, and providing rational support,” thereby making policy communication more persuasive and effective. Furthermore, these communication practices are closely associated with the concepts of participatory governance and city branding, positioning Hua Hin Municipality’s policy declaration as an effective model of policy communication in social, psychological, and administrative dimensions.

Conclusion

This study examined the communication of local development policies by the Mayor of Hua Hin Municipality, Thailand, focusing on two dimensions: the content of policy communication and the characteristics of word and phrase usage in policy communication. Employing a qualitative research design, the study utilized document-based content analysis of the mayoral policy declaration presented before the municipal council. The analysis was conducted through systematic coding and descriptive interpretation.

The findings revealed that the communication content was structured around a clear vision of transforming Hua Hin into “a City of Happiness and a Model Learning City of the Nation.” This vision served as the central communication framework and was translated into eight

interconnected policy dimensions: infrastructure, economy and tourism, natural resources and environment, holistic well-being, education, religion and culture, politics and administration, community and social welfare, and smart city development. The policy communication strategy employed memorable, image-oriented, and emotionally appealing language linked to local identity while promoting public participation through invitational expressions. Furthermore, the policies incorporated Call to Action (CTA) communication in three forms: participatory engagement, civic consciousness building, and practical involvement in municipal initiatives. These strategies transformed awareness into action, fostered shared ownership, and encouraged sustainable urban development.

The study also found that word and phrase usage reflected five dimensions of effective public policy communication: constructing city vision and image, building trust and leadership, enhancing policy clarity, motivating participation, and fostering collaboration with citizens and stakeholders. The language combined credibility, emotional appeal, and rational support, thereby strengthening policy acceptance and public engagement.

The findings confirm the relevance of Framing Theory, Participatory Communication, Collaborative Governance, and City Branding in local policy communication. The study contributes new knowledge by proposing that effective local policy communication integrates a clear policy architecture, behavior-oriented content strategies, and action-driven communication. Such an approach enables local governments to strengthen citizen participation, improve policy implementation, and promote sustainable urban development.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

Local administrative organizations should establish public communication policies with clear and systematic structures that effectively connect the city's vision, goals, and development outcomes in ways that are easily understandable to citizens. Policy communication should promote the use of inspirational language reflecting the city's identity while encouraging public participation in determining development directions. Furthermore, local governments should support Call to Action (CTA)-oriented communication strategies to stimulate citizen engagement in urban development. Policies concerning city branding and digital communication should also be formulated in order to enhance the city's image and long-term competitiveness.

Practical Recommendations

Municipalities should develop diverse policy communication strategies through both offline and online platforms by employing concise, accessible, and outcome-oriented language that clearly communicates the benefits citizens will receive. Communication materials capable of creating public recognition and emotional connection, such as videos, infographics, and social media content, should be produced. In addition, municipalities should create participatory spaces for public feedback and engagement among all citizen groups. The capacity of personnel in policy communication, public communication, and digital technology utilization should also be strengthened to ensure effective and continuous policy communication.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should examine public perceptions and the impacts of policy communication on citizens' behavior and participation within local communities. Comparative studies on policy communication models among local administrative organizations in tourism cities or smart cities should also be conducted. In addition, further research should explore policy communication through digital media and online platforms within the context of modern urban governance in order to advance knowledge on local policy communication and ensure its relevance to the rapidly evolving digital society.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that Grammarly, an AI-assisted writing software, was used in proofreading and refining the language used in the manuscript. The usage was limited to correcting grammatical and spelling errors and rephrasing statements for accuracy and clarity. The author further declares that, apart from Grammarly, no other AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate content in writing the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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Contact email: witayatorn@gmail.com