Public Participation in Local Development: A Case Study of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province

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Abstract

This study aims to: (1) examine the level of public participation in local development within the context of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province; (2) identify factors associated with public participation in local development within the same community; and (3) propose strategies to enhance public participation in local development. The study adopts a quantitative research methodology. The target population for the study was determined based on the following criteria: (1) individuals residing in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province; (2) individuals aged between 30 and 60 years; and (3) individuals holding community positions such as village headmen, assistant village headmen, assistant village headmen for security affairs, presidents and members of village health volunteer groups, community volunteers, caregivers, members

of the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) Council, subdistrict agricultural extension officers (soil doctors), members of the Village Fund, women's groups, civil defense volunteers, and public school teachers.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire developed by the research team, comprising three sections: Section 1 – general demographic information of the respondents; Section 2 – questions related to participatory communication; and Section 3 – questions related to public participation in local development. Data collection was conducted from February to August 2024. Data analysis was performed using statistical software designed for public administration research, applying frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient (r). Research Findings

1. The overall level of public participation in local development in Ban Lung Community was found to be high (M = 4.17, S.D. = 0.68). When disaggregated by dimensions, the highest mean score was found in cooperation-building (M = 4.29, S.D. = 0.68), followed by empowerment of the public (M = 4.18, S.D. = 0.70), information dissemination (M = 4.17, S.D. = 0.80), consultation (M = 4.12, S.D. = 0.79), and participatory engagement (M = 4.10, S.D. = 0.77), respectively.

2. The factor of participatory communication was found to be significantly correlated with public participation in local development (r = 0.830), at the 0.01 level of statistical significance. When analyzed by dimension, the following correlations were identified: Sender: r = 0.796, Message content: r = 0.845, Communication channels: r = 0.838, Receiver: r = 0.876. These results indicate that all components of the communication

process contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of public participation in local development.

3. Based on the findings, the research proposes strategic recommendations to enhance public participation in local development in Ban Lung Community, comprising: (1) strengthening the role of the sender; (2) improving the clarity and relevance of the message content; (3) diversifying and optimizing communication channels; and (4) promoting active engagement among receivers in the communication process.

These findings reinforce the significance of participatory communication as a vital mechanism for promoting civic engagement in local development efforts and ensuring inclusive governance at the community level.

Keywords: Public Participation, Local Development, Distribution of opportunities

Introduction

Local governance is an essential and significant form of administration in the political context, as it provides opportunities for public involvement and represents the level of government that is closest to the people (Constitution Drafting Committee, 2016). In the past, Thai citizens had limited opportunities to participate in political and administrative affairs. However, with the global trend toward democratization, Thailand has undergone political reforms, leading to a heightened awareness among citizens of their rights, freedoms, and roles in political participation. This transformation is clearly reflected in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Phra Mahawiset Kantadhammo, 2020, p. 48). Today, local

administration has increasingly incorporated citizen participation in governance and development processes. Local leaders are elected directly by the people, enabling them to address community-specific issues more effectively and respond directly to the needs of their constituencies (Chaiamnat, 2017).

Local development aims to improve the quality of life of the people, with active and meaningful participation from local citizens. Ideally, development initiatives should originate from within the community itself (Thongwitthaya, 2001, pp. 23–25). The level of efficiency and effectiveness of local development efforts largely depends on the extent of citizen participation. Kromthong (2014) has emphasized that modern development must be driven by local participation, which includes creating opportunities and enabling conditions for all community members to engage in development activities. This inclusive engagement ensures equitable access to the benefits of development (Kongyong, 2002, p. 701).

Citizen participation serves as a mechanism to decentralize opportunities for people to contribute to decision-making processes, express opinions, provide recommendations, participate in planning and implementation, and exercise oversight through direct engagement (Sribuaiam, 1997). However, current levels of participation remain limited. Research conducted by Phra Thawatchai Santidhammo (2018) identified challenges related to the lack of public engagement in development processes, highlighting the necessity for greater cooperation from citizens. Kromthong (2014, p. 13) also reaffirmed that citizen participation is central to successful local development, contributing to both community solidarity and stability.

According to Phra Thawatchai Santidhammo (2018) study, public participation is critical for sustainable local development, though many communities still face problems arising from insufficient engagement. Multiple factors contribute to successful development, but participation is one of the most influential. Citizens play a vital role as the central actors in development, helping to ensure that local initiatives align with community needs and aspirations. Kromthong (2014, p. 12) further emphasized that the knowledge and understanding of local people about development processes are fundamental to identifying and solving problems effectively. Development strategies that foster genuine public participation are more likely to be practical, sustainable, and responsive to real needs.

Given the importance of citizen engagement, this study—Public Participation in Local Development: Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province—was conducted to examine the level of public participation in local development and to identify the key factors that influence such participation. The findings are intended to serve as a foundation for developing effective strategies to promote citizen involvement in local development processes. Ultimately, the goal is to establish participatory models that are not only practical and sustainable but also capable of addressing real community issues and contributing to long-term development outcomes.

Research Objectives

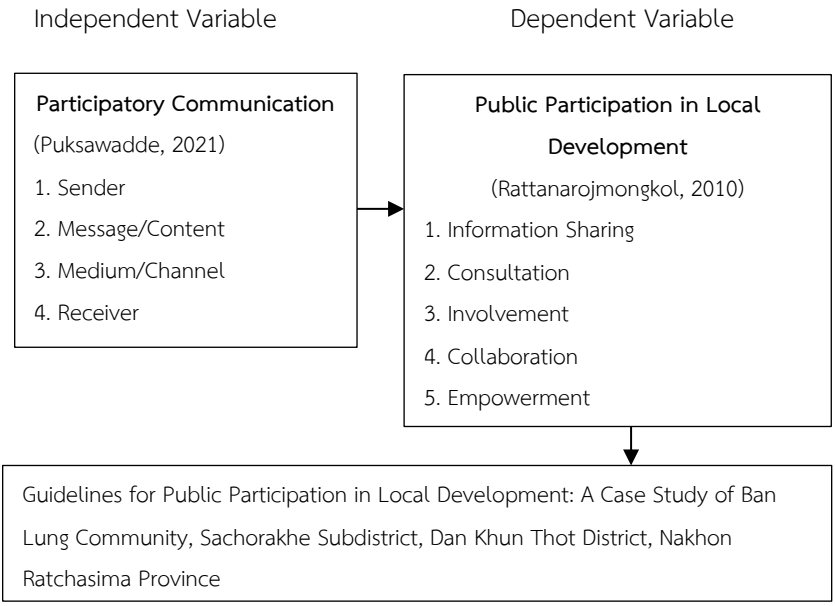
1. To examine the level of public participation in local development in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

2. To investigate the factors associated with public participation in local development in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

3. To propose strategies for enhancing public participation in local development in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

Research Scope

1. Conceptual Framework



2. Research Hypothesis

Participatory communication—comprising sender, message content, communication channels, and receiver—is correlated with public participation in

local development: A case study of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

Research Methodology

1. Population

The population in this study was determined based on the following criteria: (1) individuals residing in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province; (2) individuals aged between 30 and 60 years; and (3) individuals holding specific community positions, including: village headmen, assistant village headmen, assistant village headmen for public security, presidents and members of the village health volunteer group (VHVs), community volunteers, community caregivers, members of the Subdistrict Administrative Organization Council (SAO Council), subdistrict soil doctors, members of the Village Fund, women's groups, civil defense volunteers, and public school teachers. In total, the population consisted of 85 individuals.

2. Sample

The sample group for this study comprised residents of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. A total of 70 individuals were selected as the sample. The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula, with a margin of error set at 0.05.

3. Sampling Method

The researchers employed probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling, with the following steps:

In the first step of the sampling process, the researchers assigned numerical codes to individuals holding community leadership positions in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. A total of 13 positions were identified, and a corresponding number of labeled slips were prepared to represent each role. Specifically, one slip was assigned to the village headman, two slips to assistant village headmen, and one slip to the assistant village headman responsible for public security. One slip was allocated to the president of the village health volunteer group (VHVs), while sixteen slips were prepared for members of the VHVs. One slip was designated for a member of the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) Council, and two slips for community caregivers. Additionally, thirty slips represented community volunteers, one slip was designated for the subdistrict soil doctor, and nine slips were assigned to members of the Village Fund. Fifteen slips were allocated to members of the women's group, two slips for civil defense volunteers (Or Por Por), and four slips for public school teachers. In total, 85 labeled slips were created, each representing one eligible individual from the study population.

In the second step, the researchers thoroughly mixed all 85 labeled slips to ensure an even and random distribution within the container. Following this, the slips were randomly drawn one by one until the required sample size of 70 individuals—each holding a designated community position—was reached.

4. Variables and Levels of Measurement

The variables used in this research were derived from a synthesis of theoretical concepts and findings from relevant literature. Based on this

review, the research team identified the variables and their levels of measurement as follows:

4.1 Independent Variable and Measurement

The independent variable in this study is participatory communication. This variable was assessed based on the respondents' opinions through the questionnaire item: "To what extent do you agree with participatory communication in terms of the sender, message content, communication channels, and receiver?" The variable was measured using an interval scale. For analytical purposes, the scores from the individual items were summed to form a composite score, ranging from 12 to 60. These total scores were then categorized into three levels of participatory communication using group-referenced criteria as follows: Low level scores ranging from 12 to 28, Moderate level scores ranging from 29 to 45, High level scores ranging from 46 to 60.

This classification enabled the researchers to interpret the respondents' overall level of participatory communication and analyze its relationship with public participation in local development.

4.2 Dependent Variable and Measurement

The dependent variable in this study is public participation in local development. This variable was assessed through respondents' self-reported levels of agreement with various aspects of participation, including information sharing, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment. The variable was measured using an interval scale, and total scores from the relevant questionnaire items ranged from 15 to 75 points. To facilitate interpretation, the researchers categorized the scores into three levels of public participation. A low level of participation was defined as a

total score ranging from 15 to 35 points, indicating minimal engagement in local development activities. A moderate level corresponded to scores ranging from 36 to 56 points, reflecting occasional or partial involvement. A high level of participation was defined as scores ranging from 57 to 75 points, suggesting strong and consistent engagement in all key areas of local development.

This classification allowed for a clearer understanding of how actively the community members participated and supported further analysis of the relationship between participatory communication and levels of public engagement.

5. Methods and Instruments for Data Collection

5.1 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection in this study was conducted by the principal researchers along with a team of five members. The process involved administering questionnaires to a sample group of 70 community members who held various positions in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The procedures were carried out as follows:

1) Preparation of the Research Team

Prior to data collection, a preparatory meeting was organized to ensure a shared understanding among the research team regarding each step of the data collection process. During the meeting, the structure and purpose of the questionnaire were thoroughly explained to ensure consistency and clarity in the administration of the instrument.

2) Data Collection Procedures

The research team began by studying the travel routes to the target community to facilitate timely and efficient access to the area. Upon arrival, the team introduced themselves to the local community, explained the objectives of the study, and scheduled appropriate times to conduct the survey with each respondent. Preparation for fieldwork included assembling the research team, arranging transportation, and organizing the questionnaires required for distribution.

5.2 Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire, which was developed and structured into three main sections, as follows:

Section 1: General Information of the Respondents

This section included closed-ended questions designed to gather demographic data. It consisted of the following items:

1) Gender – A closed-ended question with two response options.

2) Age – A closed-ended question with three response options.

3) Educational level – A closed-ended question with six response options.

4) Occupation – A closed-ended question with six response options.

Section 2: Participatory Communication

This section aimed to measure the level of participatory communication, consisting of Likert scale items with five response levels: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The section was organized into four dimensions:

1) Sender – 3 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

2) Message Content – 3 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

3) Communication Channels – 3 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

4) Receiver – 3 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Section 3: Public Participation in Local Development

This section consisted of items designed to assess the level of public participation among members of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. All questions were structured using a 5-point Likert scale, with the following response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The section included five key dimensions of public participation, with three items under each dimension:

1. Information Sharing – 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.
2. Consultation – 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.
3. Involvement – 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.
4. Collaboration – 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.
5. Empowerment – 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

Each of these dimensions reflects a key component of community-level participation in local development and contributes to the overall scoring and analysis of the dependent variable.

5.3 Instrument Construction

The development of the research instrument followed a systematic process, as outlined below:

1) The researchers began by reviewing relevant literature, including academic books, articles, and prior research studies related to public participation in local development. This review informed the conceptual framework, research scope, and the construction of the instrument.

2) Based on the literature review, the researchers established a conceptual framework for public participation in local development.

3) Questionnaire items were drafted in alignment with the conceptual framework, ensuring consistency with the research objectives, key content areas, and overall structure of the instrument.

4) The questionnaire was constructed to meet the study's objectives and content scope under the supervision of an academic advisor.

5) The draft questionnaire was then submitted to the advisor for review to assess content validity and to identify any issues regarding item clarity and alignment with the objectives, definitions, and target population. Subsequently, the revised version was subjected to a series of quality assurance processes.

6) Content Validity was assessed by consulting the advisor, who reviewed the questionnaire items to ensure alignment with the intended content. Revisions were made accordingly.

7) Construct Validity was examined by evaluating whether the questionnaire items reflected the theoretical constructs under investigation. This was done through discussions with the academic advisor.

8) Reliability Testing was conducted to assess internal consistency. The revised questionnaire was pilot tested with 30 individuals holding community positions in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The results were then analyzed to calculate the reliability coefficients for the overall instrument, each section, and each item. The reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the full questionnaire yielded a coefficient of 0.927,

indicating a high level of reliability. The reliability coefficients for each dimension are presented in Table 1

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients of the Questionnaire

Section / Item	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Section 1: Participatory Communication	0.850
Message Sender	0.504
Message Content	0.617
Communication Channels	0.504
Message Receiver	0.522
Section 2: Public Participation in Local Development	0.902
Information Sharing	0.749
Consultation	0.677
Involvement	0.753
Collaboration	0.435
Empowerment	0.587
Overall Reliability	**0.927**

9) Revisions and improvements were made based on feedback from the academic advisor. These revisions addressed content accuracy, language clarity, and the appropriateness of wording used in the interview questions. Once all corrections had been completed and validated, the finalized version of the interview schedule was administered to the target population.

6. Data Processing and Analysis

The research team processed the collected data by first reviewing and verifying the completeness of the interview responses. Each item

response was then coded systematically and entered into a computer for statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows). The analysis was conducted in two parts, as follows:

6.1 Univariate Analysis

This level of analysis aimed to examine the characteristics of the population under study, analyzing one variable at a time across various attributes. Descriptive statistics—such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were employed to summarize and present the data using SPSS.

After computing the means, the data were grouped into three categories to interpret levels of responses based on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 to 5). The criteria used for interpretation were as follows: High level: Mean scores between 3.68 – 5.00; Moderate level: Mean scores between 2.34 – 3.67; Low level: Mean scores between 1.00 – 2.33.

6.2 Bivariate Analysis

This level of analysis involved examining the relationships between variables using a correlation matrix. Specifically, it was employed to test hypotheses regarding the relationship between the independent variable (participatory communication) and the dependent variable (public participation in local development). The analysis utilized the Pearson correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of relationships between variables, processed using SPSS for Windows.

Research Results

The study on public participation in local development: A case study of Ban Lung Village, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District,

Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The research team presents the results of data analysis in four sections as follows.

Section 1: Level of Public Participation in Local Development

This study on public participation in local development, conducted in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, collected data from a total of 70 respondents. The demographic characteristics of the respondents included gender, age, education level, and occupation.

Regarding gender, 24 respondents (34.30%) were male, while 46 respondents (65.70%) were female. The majority were aged between 41–50 years (36 respondents or 51.40%), followed by 28 respondents aged 51–60 years (40.00%) and 6 respondents aged 30–40 years (8.60%). In terms of educational attainment, most respondents had completed primary education or below (29 individuals or 41.40%). Others had completed lower secondary education (20 individuals or 28.60%), upper secondary education (16 individuals or 22.90%), and bachelor's degrees (5 individuals or 7.10%). Occupationally, the majority of respondents were community volunteers (24 individuals or 34.30%), followed by village health volunteers (12 individuals or 17.10%), members of women's groups (10 individuals or 14.30%), and public school teachers (4 individuals). One respondent was a village headman (1.40%). Other occupations included assistant village headmen, peacekeeping assistants, community caregivers, SAO council members, subdistrict soil doctors, members of the Village Fund, and civil defense volunteers. This group comprised 19 individuals (27.10%), including: 9 members of the Village Fund (12.90%); 2 civil defense volunteers (2.90%); 2 community caregivers (2.90%); 1 assistant village headman (1.40%); 1

peacekeeping assistant (1.40%); 1 SAO council member (1.40%); 1 subdistrict soil doctor (1.40%); 1 president of the village health volunteer group (1.40%); 1 president of the women's group (1.40%).

The results regarding the level of public participation in local development focused on five dimensions: information sharing, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment. The detailed statistical results are presented in Table 2

Table 2

Percentage of Ban Lung Community Members by Level of Public Participation in Local Development

Level of Public Participation	**Percentage (%)**
Low (Score between 15–35 points)	1.40
Moderate (Score between 36–56 points)	20.00
High (Score between 57–75 points)	78.60
Total	**100.0**

As shown in Table 2, the majority of residents in Ban Lung Community demonstrated a high level of participation in local development (score between 57–75 points), accounting for 78.60% of the total. This was followed by 20.00% at a moderate level of participation (score between 36–56 points), and only 1.40% at a low level of participation (score between 15–35 points), respectively.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Public Participation in Local Development by Dimension

Public Participation in Local Development	$\bar{x}$	**S.D.**	**Interpretation**
Information Sharing	4.17	0.80	High

Public Participation in Local Development	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Consultation	4.12	0.79	High
Involvement	4.10	0.77	High
Collaboration	4.29	0.68	High
Empowerment	4.18	0.70	High
Total	**4.17**	**0.68**	High

According to Table 3, the overall level of public participation in local development was found to be high, with a mean score of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.68. When examined by individual dimensions, the highest average score was observed in the collaboration dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29, S.D. = 0.68), indicating that community cooperation was the most prominent aspect of participation. This was followed by empowerment ($\bar{x}$ = 4.18, S.D. = 0.70), information sharing ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, S.D. = 0.70), consultation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12, S.D. = 0.79), and involvement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10, S.D. = 0.77), respectively. All dimensions were interpreted as reflecting a high level of participation.

1. Information Sharing

When examining individual items under the dimension of information sharing related to public participation in local development, the findings revealed that most responses were at a high or very high level. The data show that a significant proportion of respondents actively provided accurate information to the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) of Sachorakhe for the purposes of jointly developing local development plans and engaging in mutual knowledge exchange. This behavior was reported at high to very high levels by 78.6% of participants. The second most frequent behavior was planning and cooperating in solving problems within the subdistrict, reported at high to very high levels by 71.4% of respondents.

In terms of mean scores for information sharing, the highest-rated item was "Providing accurate information to the SAO of Sachorakhe for the purpose of joint development planning", which was rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27, S.D. = 0.96). The second highest was "Providing accurate information to the SAO for mutual learning and local development collaboration" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, S.D. = 0.85), followed by "Providing accurate information to the SAO for planning and cooperating in problem-solving", which also received a high-level rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, S.D. = 0.92).

2. Consultation

An item-by-item analysis of public participation in local development under the consultation dimension revealed that most responses fell within the high or very high categories. The highest proportion of respondents—80.00%—indicated that they exchanged opinions with the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) of Sachorakhe to jointly plan local projects. This was followed by 75.8% who reported providing accurate information to the SAO to support the formulation of local development plans, and 75.7% who expressed opinions in joint decision-making processes during project evaluation within the subdistrict.

In terms of average scores, the highest mean was for the item: "Residents exchange opinions with the SAO to jointly plan subdistrict projects", which received a high-level rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, S.D. = 0.96). The second highest was: "Residents provide accurate information to the SAO for local development planning" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, S.D. = 0.88), followed by: "Residents express opinions for decision-making with the SAO in project evaluations", also rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05, S.D. = 0.96).

3. Involvement

An itemized analysis of public participation in local development under the involvement dimension revealed that most responses fell into the high or very high category. Specifically, 77.2% of respondents reported having an active role in decision-making and planning for subdistrict development with the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) of Sachorakhe to ensure alignment with community needs. An equal percentage (77.2%) also participated in joint meetings with the SAO to determine directions for subdistrict development. Meanwhile, 72.9% reported involvement in formulating agreements on project implementation with the SAO.

In terms of average scores, the highest-rated item was "Participating in decision-making on subdistrict development planning with the SAO to meet local needs", rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12, S.D. = 0.88). This was followed by "Participating in the formulation of agreements for project implementation with the SAO to ensure comprehensive coverage of local needs" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, S.D. = 0.86), and "Participating in decision-making during joint meetings with the SAO to find development strategies for the subdistrict" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05, S.D. = 0.94).

4. Collaboration

An analysis of individual questionnaire items related to public participation in local development under the collaboration dimension revealed that the majority of responses were at the high or very high level. Specifically, 87.1% of respondents reported participating in idea-sharing sessions to guide the development of subdistrict projects. This was followed

by 85.7% who took part in village assemblies to discuss and resolve issues related to local infrastructure deterioration, and 82.8% who participated in village meetings to express community needs.

In terms of average scores, the highest mean was for the item: "Participating in village assemblies to discuss and resolve problems related to local infrastructure maintenance", which was rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.32, S.D. = 0.75). This was followed by: "Engaging in idea-sharing to guide subdistrict project planning" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30, S.D. = 0.80), and "Attending village assemblies to express local needs" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24, S.D. = 0.84), all of which were also rated as high.

5. Empowerment

The analysis of individual items related to public participation in local development under the empowerment dimension indicated that most responses were at the high or very high level. Specifically, 82.9% of respondents reported participating in community voting processes to express opinions regarding subdistrict development. This was followed by 81.5% who took part in public hearings organized by the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) of Sachorakhe to reflect community concerns, and 81.4% who participated in voting processes aimed at resolving conflicts within the subdistrict.

In terms of average scores, the highest-rated item was: "Participating in community voting to express opinions on subdistrict development", which received a high-level rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22, S.D. = 0.76). This was followed by: "Participating in public hearings with the SAO to voice concerns about

local issues" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.18, S.D. = 0.87), and "Voting in community meetings to resolve internal conflicts in the subdistrict" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, S.D. = 0.82).

Section 2: Level of Participatory Communication

For this study, data were collected from a total of 70 residents of Ban Lung Community. The analysis focused on the level of participatory communication among the population in Ban Lung, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The findings were categorized into four key dimensions: message sender**,** message content**,** communication channels, and message receiver. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Percentage of Respondents Classified by Level of Participatory Communication

Level of Participatory Communication	Percentage (%)
Low (Score range: 12–28 points)	1.40
Moderate (Score range: 29–45 points)	20.00
High (Score range: 46–60 points)	78.60
Total	**100.0**

According to Table 4, the majority of residents in Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, expressed a high level of participatory communication, with scores ranging from 46 to 60 points, accounting for 78.60% of the respondents. This was followed by those with a moderate level (scores ranging from 29 to 45 points) at 20.00%, and a low level (scores between 12 and 28 points) at only 1.40%, respectively.

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation of Participatory Communication Classified by Message Sender, Message Content, Communication Channel, and Message Receiver

Participatory Communication	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Message Sender	4.24	0.70	High
Message Content	4.25	0.78	High
Communication Channels	4.25	0.70	High
Message Receiver	4.24	0.66	High
Total	**3.98**	**0.62**	High

According to Table 5, the overall level of participatory communication was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.98, S.D. = 0.62). When considered by individual dimensions, the highest mean scores were found in the areas of message content ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25, S.D. = 0.78) and communication channel ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25, S.D. = 0.70). These were followed by message sender ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24, S.D. = 0.70) and message receiver ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24, S.D. = 0.66), respectively.

1. Message Sender

From the itemized analysis of participatory communication in local development, focusing on the message sender, the study found that most responses fell within the “high” to “very high” levels. The majority of the respondents agreed that the operations of the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) of Sachorakhe used clear and unambiguous language when disseminating information to encourage public participation in community activities, with 84.3% rating this as high or very high. Following this, 81.4% believed that the SAO demonstrated good communication skills, such as using polite tones to invite people to development training

programs. Finally, 78.6% of respondents agreed that the SAO effectively used communication skills, such as informative signage, to distribute beneficial information within the subdistrict.

In terms of mean scores, the highest was for clarity of language ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30, S.D. = 0.84), followed by polite verbal communication ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28, S.D. = 0.80), and finally signage communication ($\bar{x}$ = 4.15, S.D. = 0.86).

2. Message Content

Considering public participation in terms of message content, the majority of responses were also in the high to very high range. Specifically, 82.9% agreed that the SAO presented essential information about local problems to encourage collective planning. 81.5% agreed that the SAO provided reliable information regarding development activities, enhancing understanding and participation. Furthermore, 78.6% felt that the SAO provided clear content to help the public accurately understand local development goals.

In terms of mean scores, the highest were for reliable information on development activities ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27, S.D. = 0.93), followed by significant local problem information for collaborative planning ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27, S.D. = 0.84), and then clear and concise information ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21, S.D. = 0.91).

3. Communication Channels

Regarding communication channels, the majority of respondents rated aspects as high or very high. Specifically, 87.1% agreed that the SAO used a website to keep residents updated with ongoing community news. Following this, 81.4% felt that noticeboards were effectively used for public

announcements, and 78.6% agreed that the village's public address system was used to invite participation in development activities.

In terms of average scores, both website communication and village noticeboards received the highest mean score of 4.22 (S.D. = 0.78). The public address system followed with a mean score of 4.21 (S.D. = 0.91).

4. Message Receiver

With respect to message receivers, most respondents rated their agreement as high or very high. 85.7% agreed that the SAO paid attention to local livelihood issues and sought public input in resolving problems. 84.3% said the SAO consistently shared local news to engage the public. Lastly, 78.6% felt the SAO encouraged public opinion exchanges on important matters.

In terms of means, the highest was the continuous provision of local information ($\bar{x}$ = 4.35, S.D. = 0.78), followed by responsiveness to local problems ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25, S.D. = 0.81), and invitation to opinion-sharing activities ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, S.D. = 0.80).

Section 3: Factors Associated with Public Participation in Local Development

The analysis of the factors associated with public participation in local development was conducted in accordance with the research framework. The research team performed a correlation matrix analysis to explore the relationship between participatory communication and public participation in local development. The analysis utilized correlation coefficients to evaluate the strength and direction of relationships between

variables. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software package. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Correlation Coefficients (r) of the Variables

	A	B	C	D	E	F
A	1.000					
B	0.861**	1.000				
C	0.868**	0.874**	1.000			
D	0.811**	0.825**	0.875**	1.000		
E	0.938**	0.948**	0.958**	0.927**	1.000	
F	0.830**	0.796**	0.845**	0.838**	0.876**	1.000

Note: * Statistically significant at the 0.05 level,** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level

The analysis of the correlation coefficients between the independent and dependent variables revealed that participatory communication was significantly associated with public participation in local development, specifically in the case of Ban Lung Community, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The correlation was found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level, with a correlation coefficient of 0.830. When examining each component of participatory communication, the findings showed that the message sender dimension had a correlation coefficient of 0.796, indicating a strong relationship with public participation. The message and content dimension demonstrated an even stronger correlation, with a coefficient of 0.845, while the communication channels dimension yielded a coefficient of 0.838. Most notably, the message receiver dimension exhibited the highest correlation with public participation, with a coefficient of 0.876. These results suggest

that each aspect of participatory communication plays a significant role in promoting and supporting meaningful involvement of citizens in local development processes. The clarity and credibility of communication, the effectiveness of information channels, and the active engagement of citizens in both sending and receiving information are all critical to fostering sustained and effective public participation.

Table 7

English Letter Codes Representing Variables

English Letter	Variable Description
A	Participatory Communication
B	Message Sender
C	Message and Content
D	Communication Channels
E	Message Receiver
F	Public Participation in Local Development

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the literature review, the researchers formulated and tested the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: Participatory communication—which consists of sender, message/content, communication channels, and receiver—has a relationship with public participation in local development.

Research Findings: Participatory communication was found to have a statistically significant relationship with public participation in local development at the 0.01 level, with a correlation coefficient of 0.830. When examined by components, the sender dimension showed a correlation coefficient of 0.796; the message/content dimension showed 0.845; the

communication channel dimension showed 0.838; and the receiver dimension showed 0.876. These findings are consistent with Aphichat Phuksawat (2021), who stated that participatory communication is correlated with public participation.

Section 4: Guidelines for Public Participation in Local Development

This section addresses the third research objective—proposing guidelines for public participation in local development. The findings from the study indicated that participatory communication is significantly correlated with public participation in local development. As a result, the researchers propose the following guidelines to enhance public participation, which include promoting the sender, content/message, communication channels, and receiver components:

1. Promoting the Sender Component

This involves publicizing information in a clear and unambiguous manner so that residents are informed and can participate in community activities. An example includes creating informative signage to disseminate beneficial information within the community.

2. Promoting the Message/Content Component

This involves presenting clear, credible, and essential information related to local issues to ensure comprehensive understanding among residents and to encourage participation in discussions on local development.

3. Promoting the Communication Channel Component

This includes providing accessible communication channels so residents can stay informed about local news and activities, such as using

public notice boards, community loudspeakers, and the official village website.

4. Promoting the Receiver Component

This involves encouraging residents to be attentive to local issues and to actively engage in solving problems affecting the community. It also includes inviting community members to participate in important discussions relevant to the village.

Based on the proposed guidelines for public participation in local development in Ban Lung Village, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, the researchers have suggested a participatory communication framework comprising sender, content, communication channel, and receiver components. These guidelines stem from the results of a quantitative study on public participation in local development. The researchers believe that enhancing participatory communication will significantly improve the effectiveness of community participation, as communication is a critical tool in disseminating information and encouraging involvement in local development activities.

Discussion of Results

Based on the study on public participation in local development, conducted in Ban Lung Village, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, the findings are discussed as follows:

1. Level of Public Participation in Local Development

The study revealed that the overall level of public participation in local development in Ban Lung Village was high (Mean = 4.17, S.D. = 0.68). When examining each aspect, the highest average score was for collaborative

engagement (Mean = 4.29, S.D. = 0.68), followed by empowerment of citizens (Mean = 4.18, S.D. = 0.70), information sharing (Mean = 4.17, S.D. = 0.70), consultation (Mean = 4.12, S.D. = 0.79), and active involvement (Mean = 4.10, S.D. = 0.77), respectively (see Table 4.3). These results are consistent with the framework of public participation in local development as proposed by Rattanarojmongkol (2010), which includes the dimensions of information dissemination, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment.

2. Factors Related to Public Participation in Local Development

The research found that participatory communication is significantly correlated with public participation in local development at the 0.01 level of statistical significance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.830. When examining by component, the sender aspect had a correlation coefficient of 0.796, message/content had 0.845, communication channels had 0.838, and receiver had the highest correlation at 0.876. These findings align with the assertion by Puksawadde (2021), who noted that participatory communication is associated with public participation.

Recommendations

1. This study focused on public participation in local development using a case study of Ban Lung Village, Sachorakhe Subdistrict, Dan Khun Thot District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. Data were collected from community members holding local positions. Therefore, future studies should include the remaining 12 villages within the same subdistrict (which comprises 13 villages in total) to ensure more comprehensive and representative data, which can better inform strategies for enhancing public participation.

2. This research employed participatory communication and public participation frameworks to assess the level of involvement among residents in local development. It is recommended that future research incorporate additional theoretical frameworks or related factors that influence civic engagement in development. Doing so will help deepen understanding of public participation levels and their determining factors, and will yield diverse and effective strategies for encouraging citizen involvement in local development initiatives.

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