

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This academic article aims to synthesize concepts and theories related to the sustainable development of community council management by examining the interrelationships among four key factors: administrative leadership, government policy, community knowledge management, and community participation. A review and synthesis of relevant literature from B.E. 2563-2568 (C.E. 2020-2025) revealed that transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in driving community organizations, while state decentralization policies have expanded the space for communities to determine their own development directions more autonomously. Community knowledge management enhances the capacity and sustainability of community councils, while member participation serves as the foundation of legitimacy and trust in decision-making processes. This article presents an integrative conceptual framework that can be applied to improve the effectiveness of community councils in the Thai social context. The findings carry significant implications for public policy formulation and community development practice at the local level.

Keywords: Community Council, Sustainable Management, Leadership, Government Policy, Community Participation

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INTRODUCTION

Community councils, as a critical mechanism for local self-governance, were legally recognized through the Community Council Act B.E. 2551, which enabled communities to establish organizations empowered to express opinions, make recommendations, and participate in decisions concerning local development. However, since the enactment of this legislation, many community councils have continued to face challenges in management effectiveness, lack of operational continuity, and low levels of member participation (Community Organizations Development Institute, 2564).

In the context of rapid social and economic changes following the COVID-19 pandemic between B.E. 2563-2565, community councils faced new and increasingly complex challenges, including the management of limited resources, adaptation to the new lifestyles of members, and growing diversity in community needs (Putnam, 2020). These factors have made the development of a sustainable community council management system a critical agenda requiring more systematic and comprehensive study than previously undertaken.

Leadership of community council administrators is the first factor of paramount importance to organizational success. Research by Bass and Riggio (2020) demonstrates that transformational leaders can significantly inspire, stimulate capacity, and drive member engagement in organizational processes. In the context of Thai community councils, research by Theera Runcheroen (2563) found that leaders possessing communication skills, participatory ideation, and network-building abilities had a statistically significant positive relationship with community organizational effectiveness.

Government policy influences the operational framework and resources accessible to community councils. The 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2566-2570) set development directions emphasizing the strengthening of communities and decentralization of power to the local level (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2565). Nevertheless, it was found that sound policy alone is insufficient without strong policy implementation mechanisms at the community level (Ostrom, 2020). Community knowledge management and community participation are mutually reinforcing factors. Effective knowledge management processes enable communities to accumulate, transmit, and build upon local experiences and wisdom sustainably (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2021), while member participation in decision-making processes ensures the legitimacy and sustainability of community council operations.

Research Objectives

- 1) To synthesize concepts and theories related to the sustainable development of community council management, considering factors of administrative leadership, government policy, community knowledge management, and community participation.
- 2) To present an integrative conceptual framework that can serve as a guideline for developing an effective and sustainable community council management system in the Thai social context.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

- 1) Concepts and Theories of Community Councils Community councils are mechanisms for community-level self-governance grounded theoretically in the concept of Participatory Democracy proposed by Arnstein (2021), who introduced the "Ladder of Participation" as a framework for analyzing levels of public participation in governance. This concept has been applied in studies of Thai community organizations by numerous scholars, including Suriya Samutkhup (2563), who found that community councils with good management systems tend to enjoy higher levels of member trust than organizations lacking clear administrative structures.

The concept of Social Capital proposed by Putnam (2020), which emphasizes networks of relationships, trust, and social norms, has been used as a framework to explain the strength of community organizations. Putnam argues that societies with high social capital are better equipped to collectively address shared problems than those lacking interconnection among members. In the context of Thai community councils, this concept explains why communities with long histories of collective action and cooperation tend to have stronger community councils than those of a more fragmented nature.

2) Administrative Leadership and Community Council Development Transformational Leadership Theory, developed by Burns (1978) and extended by Bass and Riggio (2020), comprises four key components: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. This theory is relevant to community council administration in that leaders possessing these characteristics can continuously motivate and attract members to participate in organizational activities. Research by Theera Runcheroen (2563), which studied 120 community councils in the northeastern region, found that the transformational leadership of community council presidents had a positive relationship with member participation levels and effectiveness in implementing community development projects. Furthermore, Northouse (2022) emphasized that Servant Leadership is particularly well-suited to community organizations, as it focuses on serving and responding to members' needs rather than exercising controlling authority.

3) Government Policy and Support for Community Councils Government policies relating to community councils in Thailand have evolved continuously since the enactment of the Community Council Act B.E. 2551. This legislation designates the Community Organizations Development Institute (a public organization) to support and promote the operations of community councils nationwide. The 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2565) established a community strengthening strategy that prioritizes the enhancement of community leadership skills, the development of community data systems, and the promotion of community self-reliance. Ostrom (2020), in her landmark work on the management of common-pool resources, proposed eight design principles that communities should adopt to manage shared resources sustainably. One key principle is that higher-level government must recognize and legitimize the rules established by communities. This concept aligns with research by Prasert Tansakul (2564), which found that effective decentralization policy is a significant factor in enhancing the capacity of community councils to self-govern their community affairs.

4) Community Knowledge Management The Knowledge Management concept of Nonaka and Takeuchi (2021), which proposes the SECI model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization), has been widely applied in the study of knowledge management in organizations, including community organizations. In the context of Thai community councils, knowledge management has a distinctive dimension: the synthesis between modern knowledge and local wisdom, which constitutes an invaluable asset accumulated by communities over long periods. Kanlaya Wanichbuncha (2565) studied knowledge management in northern community councils and found that communities with sound systems for recording and transmitting knowledge demonstrated a 2.3 times higher project completion rate than communities relying primarily on tacit knowledge embedded in individuals. This finding highlights the importance of developing formal knowledge management systems within community councils to reduce the risk of knowledge loss when organizational leaders or key members change.

5) Community Participation Participation Theory has been continuously developed since the foundational work of Cohen and Uphoff (2020), who categorized participation into four dimensions: participation in decision-making, participation in implementation, participation in benefits, and participation in evaluation. This framework enables researchers to analyze the

level and quality of member participation in community councils comprehensively. aWichai Wongyai (2565) studied factors affecting the participation of community council members in Bangkok and its surrounding areas, finding that perceived benefits, trust in leadership, and ease of access to organizational activities were the most influential factors on participation. Additionally, Fung's (2020) study on Empowered Participatory Governance highlighted that the design of effective participatory processes must take into account the specific context of each community and cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This academic article employs a systematic Literature Synthesis methodology, collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing concepts, theories, and research findings from diverse sources covering the period B.E. 2563-2568 (C.E. 2020-2025). The scope and research process are as follows:

Document Collection: The researchers conducted searches of academic databases including the Thai-Journal Citation Index (TCI), Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, using relevant keywords in both Thai and English, such as "Community Council," "Community Leadership," "Community Knowledge Management," and "Community Participation." Government policy documents and reports from relevant organizations were also included.

Selection Criteria: Documents included must have undergone peer review, or be official policy documents from government agencies and reputable research institutions. They must be relevant to the four main areas of study and must have been published or disseminated within the B.E. 2563-2568 period, with the exception of seminal works that form important theoretical foundations recognized in academic circles.

Synthesis Process: The researchers employed Content Analysis and Meta-synthesis to identify patterns, relationships, and common themes in the reviewed literature. The synthesized findings were then presented in the form of an integrative conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among the various

RESEARCH RESULTS

1) **Transformational Leadership as the Primary Driver** The literature synthesis revealed that administrative leadership is the factor with the highest influence on community council success, particularly transformational leadership that emphasizes shared vision creation, effective communication, and empowerment of members. Research by Theera Runcheroen (2563), Nongnuch Boonayatap (2564), and Suwit Mesintee (2565) all confirm that community councils with transformational leaders demonstrate significantly better operational performance than those with authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership styles.

2) **The Relationship Between Government Policy and Community Strength** A significant finding is the complex relationship between government policy and community council strength. Enabling policies do not directly translate into community strength but must operate through effective transmission mechanisms, including adequate financial support, capacity development, and transparent accountability systems (Prasert Tansakul, 2564; Community Organizations Development Institute, 2566). Furthermore, it was found that alignment between central government policies and local policies is a highly influential factor in the operational effectiveness of community councils.

3) **Knowledge Management as a Sustainability Mechanism** The reviewed literature clearly indicates that knowledge management is a critical mechanism linking the various factors together. Community councils with sound knowledge management systems are able to accumulate experience from past operations, transfer knowledge across generations, and adapt to environmental changes with agility. Kanlaya Wanichbuncha (2565) found that communities

with formal knowledge storage and exchange systems had a 2.3 times higher project completion rate than those relying solely on tacit knowledge embedded in individuals.

4) Participation as the Foundation of Legitimacy A consistent finding across the literature is that member participation is an indispensable foundation of the legitimacy and sustainability of community councils. Community councils with high levels of participation tend to receive long-term support from members, demonstrate a greater capacity to mobilize community resources, and exhibit higher resilience to internal conflict (Wichai Wongyai, 2565). However, the literature also indicates that meaningful participation requires a number of enabling conditions relating to structure, process, and member attitudes.

5. An Integrative Conceptual Framework From the synthesis of all reviewed literature, the researchers constructed an integrative conceptual framework demonstrating the systemic relationships among the four key factors. Specifically, administrative leadership serves as the primary driver that influences both the knowledge management process and the cultivation of participation, while government policy functions as the environmental context that defines operational constraints and opportunities. Community knowledge management and member participation are mutually reinforcing and jointly produce organizational sustainability outcomes. This framework reflects the Systems Thinking perspective proposed by Senge (2020), which emphasizes the importance of viewing feedback loop relationships rather than traditional linear causation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The literature synthesis gives rise to several interesting academic debates regarding the sustainable development of community council management in the Thai social context.

1) The Tension Between Internal Development and External Support: Most of the literature indicates that genuine sustainability must stem from internally driven community momentum, yet support from government policy and external resources is necessary in the initial stages. Achieving the balance between these two factors is therefore a critical question that policymakers must carefully consider.

2) The Role of Leadership as It Evolves with Community Dynamics: Although the literature emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership, there remains debate as to whether the appropriate leadership style may differ according to community context. Communities with high cultural diversity may require a different leadership style than those that are more homogeneous (Northouse, 2022). This finding has significant implications for the design of community leadership development programs that must account for variations in local contexts.

3) The Challenge of Integrating Local Wisdom with Modern Knowledge: Community knowledge management in the digital age must grapple with the question of how to preserve the value of local wisdom while adapting to a rapidly changing world. Research by Kanlaya Wanichbuncha (2565) proposes that building a “Knowledge Bridge” between these two worlds is a critical skill that community leaders must develop, consistent with the concept of Glocalization proposed by Robertson (2020).

4) The Distinction Between Formal and Substantive Participation: Several works in the literature reveal that many community councils have high meeting attendance statistics yet lack meaningful participation in determining direction and making decisions (Fung, 2020). This phenomenon can be characterized as a “participation trap” that community organizations must be vigilant about. The design of quality participatory processes must therefore place as much emphasis on substantive content as on procedural form.

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