A Deep Dive into the Communication Effectiveness of Liaoning's "New Era Six Locations" Based on Grounded Theory: Insights and Breakthrough Strategies

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Abstract. This study investigates the "Six Areas" strategic positioning of Liaoning in the new era, adopting a concept-based theoretical sampling approach to conduct interviews with 17 citizens of Liaoning Province who come from diverse sectors, age groups, and hold at least a bachelor's degree. Through systematic open coding and axial coding, key categories are extracted to construct a model of factors influencing policy communication. The findings demonstrate that policy content, audience characteristics, and feedback mechanisms exert significant impacts on communication effectiveness. Based on these results, strategies for optimizing communication are proposed, including diversifying dissemination channels, innovating communication formats, and establishing feedback mechanisms, to support the construction of Liaoning's "Six Areas" in the new era and promote effective policy communication.

Keywords: Grounded theory; Liaoning "Six Areas in the New Era"; Communication Effectiveness

1 Introduction

On November 6–7, 2023, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 13th Communist Party of China (CPC) Liaoning Provincial Committee deliberated and adopted the Opinions of the CPC Liaoning Provincial Committee on Fully Implementing the Spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's Important Speech at the Symposium on Promoting the Comprehensive Revitalization of Northeast China in the New Era and Striving to Write a New Chapter of Chinese-style Modernization in Liaoning, which explicitly outlined the "Six Areas" strategic positioning for Liaoning in the new era[1]. Upgraded from its original formulation, the new-era "Six Areas" envision Liaoning as: 1) a strategic support base for major national strategies; 2) a core hub for major technological innovation; 3) a globally competitive new highland for advanced manufacturing; 4) a pilot zone for modern agricultural development; 5) a demonstration area for the integrated development of high-quality culture, sports, and tourism; and 6) a pivotal hub for Northeast Asian opening-up and cooperation. Since these goals were established, Liaoning has pursued the three-year action plan for breakthroughs in comprehensive

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revitalization, fully and accurately implementing the new development philosophy, integrating into the new development pattern, advancing high-quality regional development, and striving to exemplify Chinese-style modernization.

This study seeks to examine the dissemination effects and influencing factors of Liaoning's new-era "Six Areas" policy through a grounded theory approach, aiming to derive evidence-based communication optimization strategies. By diversifying dissemination channels, innovating communication formats, and establishing structured feedback mechanisms, the research intends to facilitate the effective implementation of the "Six Areas" strategy and enhance policy communication, thereby promoting Liaoning's comprehensive revitalization across economic, social, and cultural domains in the new era.

2 Methodology

This study applies grounded theory, utilizing a concept-based theoretical sampling framework to acquire data by systematically engaging diverse settings, participants, and contexts—aiming to derive concepts with maximized attribute richness and dimensional depth for explicating variables and inter-conceptual relationships. Following iterative rounds of engagement, data screening, and theoretical saturation checks, 17 interviewees were purposefully selected to represent varied sectors and administrative regions across Liaoning Province, as known in Table 1. Participants, holding at least a bachelor's degree and aged 20–55, spanned professions including manufacturing workers, government officials, community organizers, financial practitioners, and university students.

Table 1. Overview of Respondent Demographics

Participant ID	Name	Gender	Age	Education Level	Occupation
01	Ms. Wang	Female	20	Undergraduate student	Student majoring in Administration Management
02	Ms. Sun	Female	20	Undergraduate student	Student majoring in Journalism
03	Mr. Dai	Male	45	Bachelor's degree	Employee of a manufacturing enterprise
04	Ms. Guo	Female	41	Bachelor's degree	Community worker
05	Ms. Zhao	Female	43	Bachelor's degree	Employee of a weak current engineering company
06	Ms. Tong	Female	30	Master's degree	Employee of Dalian Meteorological Bureau
07	Ms. Wang	Female	32	Bachelor's degree	Financial practitioner
08	Mr. Fu	Male	47	Bachelor's degree	High school teacher

09	Ms. Zhang	Female	48	Bachelor's degree	High school teaching and research staff
10	Teacher Du	Male	38	Master's degree	President of Shenyang Chamber of Commerce
11	Mr. Wu	Male	23	Bachelor's degree	Student majoring in Intelligent Medicine
12	Mr. Li	Male	25	Master's degree	Staff member of Liaoning Provincial Department of Industry and Information Technology
13	Mr. Zhang	Male	55	Bachelor's degree	Member of the Expert Advisory Committee of Dalian Municipal Committee
14	Mr. Liu	Male	34	Bachelor's degree	Product manager of China Mobile
15	Mr. Li	Male	23	Master's degree candidate	Master's graduate student majoring in Land Resource Management
16	Mr. Li	Male	22	Master's degree candidate	Graduate student in the Department of Applied Mathematics
17	Mr. Li	Male	20	Undergraduate student	Student majoring in Computer Science and Technology

The focus on individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher as the target demographic for analyzing public perceptions of policy communication effectiveness in Liaoning is justified by multiple rationales. theoretically, informed by Information Processing theory, this cohort demonstrates advanced information-processing and cognitive faculties, enabling nuanced evaluations of policy communication impacts and detailed examinations of how highly educated audiences engage with policy dissemination. Socially, their diverse, specialized information channels and high levels of civic participation position them as potential opinion leaders or pivotal nodes in policy communication networks, offering insights into dissemination pathways and influence mechanisms. Practically, this demographic is readily accessible via academic institutions and digital platforms, facilitating efficient, high-quality data collection—allowing concentrated resource allocation to avoid superficial analysis and address theoretical gaps. While acknowledging limitations, this approach provides a robust foundation for theoretical development and informs evidence-based policy communication optimization, contributing to both scholarly discourse and practical applications in the field.

3 Category Extraction

3.1 Open Coding

Open coding (first-level coding) entails the painstaking process of coding, labeling, and documenting the original interview data line by line. This process is aimed at generating initial concepts and identifying conceptual categories[2]. In order to reduce the

influence of researchers' subjective factors to the greatest extent, the original expressions of the interviewees were mainly used as labels. The rationality of these labels was verified by comparing them with existing theories and research questions, thus enabling the extraction of initial concepts.

Due to the large number of initial concepts and the existence of overlapping content among them, strict screening criteria were followed during the categorization process. Only those initial concepts with a repetition frequency of three or more were selected. Additionally, a small number of contradictory initial concepts were removed. Eventually, 85 initial codes were identified, such as "inadequate publicity", "political sensitivity", "absence of concreteness", and "low public attention".

3.2 Axis Coding

The axial coding stage makes use of the paradigm model with the objective of uncovering the latent logical linkages among the categories, thus giving rise to core categories and their corresponding subcategories. In this study, the process commences with a comprehensive and systematic review of the multitude of categories obtained from the open coding phase. The interrelationships among these categories are meticulously examined from the perspectives of conceptual connotations, denotations, and semantic dimensions. Subsequently, these categories are scientifically categorized according to logical progressions, causal associations, and patterns of co-occurrence. Throughout this endeavor, the roles, functions, and scopes of these categories within the policy communication process are carefully and thoroughly taken into account.

Through repeated processes of comparison, verification, and inductive reasoning, four core categories are eventually identified. Moreover, by leveraging the analytical framework of axial coding and building upon an in-depth exploration of the intricate and close connections among the initial categories, the integration and refinement of subcategories are successfully accomplished. For example, within the core category of "Audience Factors," through a relational analysis of the relevant initial categories, four subcategories are discerned: "Reception Mindset," "Feedback Mindset," "Acquisition Channels," and "Personal Factors."

4 Elaboration on the Influencing Factors Model for the Communication Effects of Liaoning's "New Era Six Regions" Initiative

Using grounded theory, the research team analyzed 17 interview transcripts through theoretical coding. The goal was to study the communication effectiveness and influencing factors of Liaoning's “New Six Regions” initiatives. This led to a model of policy communication influencers (Figure 1), with determinants grouped into policy - content, audience - centered, and feedback - related factors, all of which interact in policy dissemination, reception, and feedback.

Policy content is key to successful dissemination. Public - welfare policies attract more attention as they are relevant to daily life. But interviewees often felt policies

were "too formal," causing a sense of distance. They showed more interest in the "Culture, Sports, and Tourism Integration Demonstration Zone" than in advanced - manufacturing and opening - up policies. Most citizens had little understanding of the latter, reducing their motivation to spread information, which is a sign of "selective attention."

Audience receptivity impacts policy feedback. Policy researchers and grassroots civil servants actively engage with policy information, forming a "cognition - practice - feedback" cycle. Conversely, those who feel policies are not relevant to their lives show "information - blocking" behavior. For example, some educators find policies complex, hindering information sharing. Audience traits also affect channel choice: busy groups use internal communications, which may create "industry barriers," while interest - driven groups use social media, risking the "information cocoon" effect.

Policy communication feedback mechanisms, with various channels and presentation ways, boost public awareness and optimize policies. When communication is intense enough, policy info reaches audiences through multiple media, triggering secondary dissemination. For instance, Liaoning's cultural tourism sector promoted policies on Douyin, attracting more visitors. In the financial sector, the People's Bank of China used internal systems and professional media to announce interest - rate cuts. The cooperation between the meteorological and cultural tourism departments on integrated policies improved communication targeting, forming a "communication - practice - optimization" loop. Insufficient communication, though, limits access and weakens policy implementation.

Policy communicators refine their policy comprehension via bidirectional audience engagement, experiential learning, and incisive feedback analysis. The synergy between positive communication outcomes and direct, beneficial experiences forges a robust link between policy communication and regional development. This connection propels Liaoning's advancement in the new era.

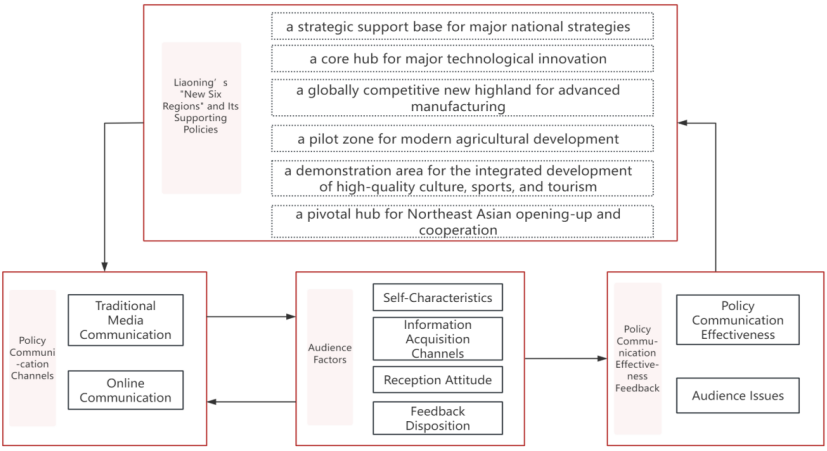

Fig. 1. Construction of a Model for Influencing Factors of Policy Communication Effectiveness in Liaoning's "New Six Regions" Initiative

5 Optimization Strategies for the Dissemination of Liaoning's "New Six Areas"

5.1 Diversification of Dissemination Channels: Integration of Online and Offline Approaches

The government should diversify dissemination channels, capitalizing on multiple communication means. As noted by Zhang Chengliang and Wu Jing in "Research on Enhancing the Communication Power of Rural Revitalization Based on the Perspective of New Media Audiences"[3], mainstream media occupies a crucial position in China's news dissemination ecosystem. It serves as a "macro - ruler," dominating and maintaining the media ecosystem while embodying the national ideology's discourse.To promote Liaoning's "New Six Areas," mainstream media must be effectively harnessed. Liaoning's official news websites, newspapers, television stations, and radio stations should establish special columns or series of reports. These platforms should conduct in - depth interpretations of "New Six Areas" policies, covering aspects such as policy background, objectives, specific measures, and implementation progress. This will enhance public understanding. Moreover, the Liaoning Provincial Government's government service website and the official websites of relevant departments should create dedicated sections for "New Six Areas" policies. These sections should provide policy document downloads, online consultation services, and policy interpretations, ensuring convenient information access for enterprises and the public.

The government should strategically use social media platforms to quickly spread policy information, boosting the visibility and influence of the "New Six Regions" initiative. Set up official accounts on Weibo, WeChat, and Tiktok, and regularly post relevant content in various formats—text, images, videos, and live streams. Use plain language and eye - catching visuals to highlight policy features, making complex policies more understandable and attractive. Improving the social communication effectiveness of local government social media accounts helps build an image of equal dialogue with the public, generating public resonance[4]. Also, train government new media staff to enhance their professional and operational skills, ensuring high - quality policy communication.

5.2 Innovate Promotional Strategies for Dissemination Breakthroughs

Explore exemplary cases and narratives in Liaoning's "New Six Regions" initiative. Look at enterprises' technological innovation hub - building and modern agricultural pilot - zone successes. Promote policies via storytelling to improve understanding and acceptance. Link the initiative to current affairs and social concerns for strategic promotion.

Create visual materials like posters, brochures, animations, and H5 pages. Use concise language, vivid images, and charts to emphasize key policy elements and outcomes. Employ various promotional formats to draw audience attention, pique interest in the "New Six Regions" initiative, and expand its reach.

5.3 Establish Feedback Mechanisms for Public Engagement

In an era of diversifying public interests and growing policy participation awareness, governments must establish robust feedback mechanisms to address citizen needs. During policy dissemination, systematically collect public opinions on the "New Six Regions" initiative via surveys, online feedback portals, and hotlines to identify concerns and adapt dissemination strategies promptly. Timely responses to public input foster two-way communication, enhancing motivation for civic engagement, cultivating a positive information environment, and proactively mitigating risks to maintain social stability[5].

6 Conclusion

This study employs grounded theory to construct a model of influencing factors for the communication effectiveness of Liaoning's "New Era Six Locations" policy, revealing the interactive mechanisms among policy content characteristics, audience attributes, and feedback mechanism efficiency. Key findings highlight that the "formal distance" of policy presentation and "content selectivity" in audience attention constitute dual dimensions of cognitive engagement, while "industry barriers" and "information cocoons" formed through differentiated information channels among diverse stakeholders underscore the necessity for precision in communication strategies. The proposed optimization strategies—channel integration, narrative innovation, and feedback mechanism construction—offer actionable pathways for local policy dissemination, theoretically expanding the research dimensions of interactions between regional development policies and public cognition. Future research could incorporate longitudinal data to track dynamic changes in communication effects or adopt cross-regional comparisons to deepen generalizable insights into policy communication laws, providing more forward-looking academic support for the effective implementation of regional development policies in the new era.

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