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PUBLIC OPINION IN DISASTER CONTEXTS: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND THE SALIGAN FRAMEWORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

Public opinion in disaster contexts is shaped not only by official communication but also by cultural frameworks and indigenous knowledge that influence how warnings are interpreted, trusted, and acted upon. This study explores how local stakeholders in San Luis, Aurora, Philippines form opinions and responses to disaster messages within overlapping systems of institutional communication and community-grounded epistemologies. Drawing from interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis in a qualitative case study, the research highlights how residents and barangay leaders interpret messages through practices of *bayanihan* (collective solidarity), *pakikiramdam* (shared sensitivity), *kapwa* (shared identity and interdependence), and spiritual faith. Findings reveal an epistemic dissonance: while government messaging often follows technocratic templates, communities rely on culturally resonant cues and kinship-based trust networks to guide decision-making. To address this gap, the study advances the SALIGAN Framework, a seven-pillar model—Strategic Communication Modes, Aligning to Cultural and Linguistic Contexts, Local Participation, Integrated Knowledge Co-creation, Guidance Through Feedback, Anchoring in Governance, and Networking and Replication—that integrates scientization with indigenous epistemologies. By embedding cultural knowledge into formal communication processes, the framework reframes disaster messaging as a dynamic site of public opinion formation. This contributes to decolonizing communication scholarship and offers insights for enhancing trust, inclusivity, and resilience in public communication across Asia and the Global South.

Keywords: Public opinion, Indigenous Knowledge, Disaster Communication, Decolonization, SALIGAN Framework



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1. Introduction

Disasters are not only material events but also deeply communicative phenomena. The ways in which communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises are profoundly shaped by the circulation of information, the credibility of messengers, and the cultural frameworks through which risk is interpreted. In the Philippines, among the most disaster-prone nations globally, effective communication is often regarded as a linchpin for disaster risk reduction (DRR). Yet, mainstream approaches to disaster communication have largely been dominated by Western technocratic paradigms—frameworks that prioritize efficiency, accuracy, and the transmission of scientific information, while neglecting the cultural and epistemic realities of local communities (Gaillard, 2019; Alexander, 2014). This imbalance creates what Santos (2018) calls an “epistemic injustice,” wherein local and indigenous forms of knowledge are either sidelined or appropriated without proper recognition.

In recent years, critiques of disaster communication have pointed to the limitations of these one-size-fits-all, top-down models. Global scholarship has highlighted the dangers of “technocolonialism” in risk communication, whereby technologies and frameworks developed in the Global North are transplanted into contexts of the Global South without adaptation to local epistemologies (Madianou, 2015; Escobar, 2018). Such approaches risk producing communicative dissonance, where official warnings and scientific risk assessments fail to resonate with or be acted upon by communities, not due to ignorance, but because they do not align with lived realities, cultural logics, and locally trusted practices. The result is a recurring pattern: despite the proliferation of advanced technologies and standardized protocols, communities remain vulnerable, and communication gaps persist.

The Philippines provides a compelling site for interrogating these tensions. Known as the “most exposed country in the world to multiple hazards” (World Bank, 2020), the nation regularly experiences typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Within this national landscape, the municipality of San Luis in Aurora Province represents a microcosm of disaster vulnerability: a coastal community at the frontline of typhoon impacts, whose residents must negotiate between formal government messaging and longstanding indigenous practices for survival. The lived experiences of San Luis residents illustrate not only the practical challenges of disaster communication but also the epistemic clashes between institutional discourses of risk and community-grounded knowledge systems.

This study positions indigenous knowledge as central to addressing these tensions. Rather than treating cultural practices as supplementary to scientific communication, it argues for their integration into scientized disaster communication frameworks. The notion of “scientization,” as applied here, does not imply the domination of science over local knowledge, but rather the careful integration of scientific and indigenous epistemologies to produce communication strategies that are both rigorous and culturally resonant. Indigenous practices such as *bayanihan* (collective solidarity), *pakikiramdam* (sensitivity to social and environmental cues), *kapwa* (shared identity and interdependence), and spiritual



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faith are not merely cultural artifacts; they are active modes of resilience and trusted channels of meaning-making in times of crisis (Buelo, 2025).

At the same time, integrating indigenous epistemologies into disaster communication is not merely a technical exercise—it is a decolonial imperative. Decolonizing disaster communication entails recognizing the epistemic authority of local communities, challenging the hegemony of Western-centric models, and reframing the study of risk and resilience through Southern perspectives (Gaillard & Mercer, 2013; Escobar, 2018). By foregrounding indigenous knowledge in scientized frameworks, this study contributes to the ongoing project of decolonizing public opinion and communication research, extending debates beyond theory into practice.

The present paper builds on a mixed-methods study conducted in San Luis, Aurora, which examined the current state of disaster communication strategies, community perceptions and experiences, and the role of indigenous practices in shaping resilience. From this empirical foundation, the paper advances the SALIGAN Framework—a comprehensive model for disaster communication that integrates seven interdependent pillars: Strategic Communication Modes, Aligning to Cultural and Linguistic Contexts, Local Participation, Integrated Knowledge Co-creation, Guidance Through Feedback, Anchoring in Governance, and Networking and Replication. While the framework was originally developed as part of a doctoral dissertation, this article refocuses its significance for international communication scholarship by emphasizing its contribution to decolonization and epistemic justice.

Thus, the purpose of this article is threefold. First, it highlights the epistemic tensions in disaster communication by showing how official strategies often clash with community-grounded practices. Second, it demonstrates the resilience and adaptive value of indigenous knowledge systems in navigating disasters. Third, it advances the SALIGAN Framework as a decolonized, scientized approach to disaster communication, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical guidance for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners.

The central research question guiding this article is: How can indigenous knowledge systems be integrated into a comprehensive and scientized framework for disaster communication, and what are the implications for decolonizing risk communication in the Global South?

By answering this question, the study not only contributes to the scholarly debates on disaster risk reduction and communication but also provides pathways for reimagining crisis communication in ways that are culturally grounded, inclusive, and epistemically just. The Philippine case of San Luis offers insights that resonate with broader contexts across the Asia-Pacific and other disaster-prone regions of the Global South, where the integration of indigenous knowledge into formal systems remains a pressing but underexplored challenge.



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2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Framings of Disaster

Disasters are not merely natural or technological phenomena; they are also cultural events, shaped by how communities interpret, narrate, and respond to risk (Hewitt, 2013). Risk perception is mediated through cultural logics, social hierarchies, and symbolic systems that determine what is considered dangerous and how communities act upon warnings. For instance, Douglas and Wildavsky's (1982) seminal work on risk culture emphasizes that risk is socially constructed and embedded in power relations. In the Philippine context, disasters are often framed not only as meteorological or geological events but also as collective trials intertwined with spirituality, kinship, and community resilience (Bankoff, 2003).

Cultural framings matter because they determine whether official messages resonate with communities. A government-issued storm surge warning, for example, may be disregarded if it is communicated in highly technical language, but the same warning reframed through culturally familiar metaphors—such as invoking kinship ties or collective responsibility—may be more effective (Gaillard & Texier, 2010). Thus, cultural framings reveal the need for disaster communication strategies that go beyond scientific accuracy to embrace symbolic resonance and cultural humility.

2.2 Participatory Models of Communication

The limitations of top-down communication models have long been recognized in development and risk communication scholarship. Early diffusion models, which assumed that expert knowledge simply needed to be transmitted to passive publics, were critiqued for their linearity and exclusion of community voices (Rogers, 2003). In response, participatory communication approaches emerged, emphasizing dialogue, collaboration, and co-creation of knowledge (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 1999).

In disaster communication, participatory models advocate for the involvement of local communities not only as recipients of warnings but as active agents in knowledge production and dissemination (Cadag & Gaillard, 2012). Such approaches acknowledge that communities possess their own risk indicators, early warning systems, and resilience practices. For example, fisherfolk may rely on the color of the sea or bird flight patterns as environmental cues, which serve as functional equivalents to satellite forecasts. When these indicators are incorporated into official communication systems, disaster messages become more trusted and actionable.

Participatory models therefore highlight the importance of integrating local knowledge systems with institutional communication practices. Yet, the challenge lies in moving from tokenistic consultations toward genuine knowledge co-production, where communities exercise epistemic authority and shape the design of communication frameworks.



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2.3 Epistemological Tensions in Disaster Communication

The intersection of scientific and indigenous knowledge produces both opportunities and frictions. On one hand, integrating scientific forecasts with local practices can enhance preparedness; on the other, epistemological tensions often arise when institutional actors dismiss indigenous knowledge as anecdotal, irrational, or unscientific (Mercer et al., 2010). These tensions reflect broader debates in science and technology studies (STS), where the privileging of Western epistemologies perpetuates epistemic hierarchies and marginalizes alternative ways of knowing (Santos, 2018).

In the Philippine case, epistemological tensions are evident in how disaster communication is delivered. Government agencies often rely on highly technical language (e.g., “storm surge” or “intensity scale”) that does not easily translate into community discourse. Residents may instead rely on vernacular descriptions (“*daluyong*” for tidal waves) or environmental cues that resonate more closely with lived experiences. The resulting gap is not merely linguistic but epistemological: whose knowledge counts, and whose knowledge is sidelined?

This tension underscores the need for frameworks that can **scientize without colonizing**—that is, integrate the rigor of scientific systems while honoring the validity and utility of indigenous epistemologies.

2.4 Critiques: Technocolonialism and the Call to Decolonize DRR

A growing body of scholarship critiques the dominance of Western, technocratic models in disaster risk reduction as a form of “technocolonialism” (Madianou, 2015). This critique argues that technologies such as early warning systems, mobile apps, and satellite data, while valuable, are often imposed without regard for local contexts. They risk creating dependencies on external expertise and sidelining community-based capacities (Escobar, 2018).

Decolonizing disaster communication requires more than the inclusion of indigenous knowledge as an “add-on.” It entails a fundamental shift in epistemic authority, where local communities are not only consulted but recognized as co-equal producers of risk knowledge. Gaillard and Mercer (2013) argue for a “bridging” approach, where indigenous and scientific knowledge systems are integrated to produce hybrid strategies that are both culturally relevant and scientifically robust. This decolonial turn resonates with broader calls in communication studies to provincialize Western frameworks and embrace Southern epistemologies (Chakrabarty, 2000).

For the Philippines, a decolonial lens is particularly urgent given its colonial history and contemporary vulnerability to global climate regimes. Disaster communication that fails to account for cultural heterogeneity risks reproducing colonial logics of control, where the state dictates preparedness without engaging communities in meaningful dialogue.



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2.5 Indigenous and Local Epistemologies in Disaster Communication

Indigenous knowledge is not static folklore but a dynamic system of practices, beliefs, and values that shape how communities engage with risk (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004). In the Philippines, coastal and upland communities have long relied on environmental indicators—such as wind shifts, animal behavior, or sea color changes—as warning signs. These practices, transmitted intergenerationally, remain vital even in the age of satellite forecasts.

Beyond environmental cues, indigenous epistemologies also encompass relational values that inform collective action. *Bayanihan* reflects mutual aid and solidarity in evacuation and recovery. *Pakikiramdam* fosters sensitivity to both environmental and social cues, allowing communities to anticipate risks before they are formally announced. *Kapwa* underlines shared identity and responsibility, ensuring that disaster responses are not individualistic but collective. Spiritual faith, another cornerstone of Filipino indigenous epistemologies, shapes how communities interpret disaster events as tests of resilience and as occasions for collective renewal.

Integrating these epistemologies into scientized frameworks allows for disaster communication that is both rigorous and resonant. Instead of positioning indigenous practices as supplementary, they can serve as core communicative logics that enhance trust, participation, and resilience. The proposed SALIGAN Framework advances this integration by formalizing indigenous practices into interdependent pillars that guide disaster messaging and policy.

2.6 Synthesis

The reviewed literature demonstrates that disaster communication is at once a technical, cultural, and epistemological process. Existing models often privilege Western scientific approaches, producing epistemic tensions that weaken trust and effectiveness. Participatory communication and indigenous epistemologies offer critical alternatives, but they must be framed within decolonial logics that shift epistemic authority to communities themselves. This study contributes to this growing body of scholarship by empirically grounding a scientized yet decolonized framework for disaster communication, rooted in the case of San Luis, Aurora, and informed by Filipino cultural values.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated into disaster communication frameworks in San Luis, Aurora. A case study approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth investigation of a bounded system—here, the municipality of San Luis—as a representative site where both institutional disaster communication and community-based practices intersect (Yin, 2014). Qualitative inquiry was central to capturing the lived experiences, narratives, and



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epistemologies of local actors, which cannot be adequately represented through quantitative measurement alone.

3.2 Setting and Context

San Luis, Aurora, is a coastal municipality along the eastern seaboard of Luzon, directly exposed to typhoons, flooding, and storm surges. The municipality's vulnerability is shaped not only by its geophysical location but also by socioeconomic reliance on fishing and agriculture, limited infrastructural resources, and cultural heterogeneity. San Luis is notable for the coexistence of formal government-driven disaster communication strategies, primarily through the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO), and longstanding indigenous practices such as reliance on environmental cues, kinship networks, and collective cultural values like *bayanihan* and *pakikiramdam*. This intersection of institutional and community-based systems provided a rich context for examining epistemic tensions and integration.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to capture diverse perspectives across stakeholder groups:

- Residents: Individuals from coastal community were interviewed to reflect varied ages, genders, and livelihoods. Their narratives centered on experiences of receiving, interpreting, and acting upon disaster communication.
- Barangay Officials: Local leaders were interviewed to provide insight into grassroots governance and the transmission of official communication.
- MDRRMO Staff: Municipal disaster managers offered perspectives on institutional communication practices and their challenges.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD): A session with marginalized stakeholders—including women, youth leaders, an LGBTQIA+ representative, and an indigenous community member—foregrounded perspectives often excluded in formal disaster communication.

This multi-stakeholder composition ensured that institutional voices, everyday community experiences, and marginalized viewpoints were all represented in the case study.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were gathered through multiple qualitative techniques:

1. Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with residents, barangay officials, and MDRRMO staff to explore communication practices, challenges, and perceptions of indigenous knowledge.
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Enabled dialogue among marginalized groups, eliciting collective narratives about disaster experiences and culturally grounded practices.



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3. Document and Social Media Analysis: Included review of local MDRRMO memoranda, advisories, and Facebook posts to contextualize institutional messaging.

This multi-method strategy allowed triangulation across data sources, strengthening credibility and depth.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Transcripts from interviews and the FGD were read repeatedly to identify patterns and codes, which were then clustered into themes that aligned with or challenged existing literature on disaster communication, cultural framings, and epistemological tensions. An inductive-deductive strategy was adopted: themes emerged from participants' narratives while also being informed by theoretical constructs such as decolonization, participatory communication, and scientization.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study prioritized ethical and culturally respectful engagement. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any time. Special care was taken in engaging marginalized groups, ensuring their perspectives were not tokenized but meaningfully represented. Findings were shared with community stakeholders in an accessible form, reinforcing reciprocity and acknowledging participants as co-producers of knowledge rather than mere informants.

3.7 Limitations

As a qualitative case study situated in a single municipality, findings are not intended to be generalized to all disaster contexts. Instead, they provide deep, contextualized insights that contribute to theoretical debates and practical frameworks in disaster communication. The reliance on narrative accounts may also reflect subjective biases, but the use of multiple data sources and triangulation helped to mitigate this.

4. Results

4.1 Strategic Communication Modes (*Sina-saayos na Paraan ng Komunikasyon*)

Findings reveal that San Luis relies on a multimodal communication ecology. Digital platforms such as Facebook posts and SMS advisories are paired with analog tools like VHF radios, handheld units, sirens, and the traditional *bandillo*. Residents emphasized that roving announcements remain the most reliable form of last-mile communication, especially when power or network connectivity fails. The MDRRMO reinforced this redundancy by distributing radios to barangays and maintaining satellite phones for coordination. The deliberate layering of channels ensures message consistency and reach, reflecting resilience rather than inefficiency.



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4.2 Aligning to Cultural and Linguistic Contexts (*Angkop sa Kultura at Wika*)

Residents reported difficulty understanding technical jargon in advisories, such as “storm surge” or “wind signal.” These terms were often mistranslated or misunderstood. Barangay officials and MDRRMO staff addressed this by reframing warnings into locally resonant terms, using metaphors, and incorporating cultural narratives. For example, waves were described as *daluyong* (giant surging waves), which carried stronger symbolic weight than the scientific term. These culturally calibrated adjustments improved comprehension, trust, and compliance.

4.3 Local Participation in Communication (*Lahok ng Mamamayan sa Diskurso*)

Community members actively participated in assemblies, drills, and neighborhood discussions. In schools, children became conduits of information, relaying preparedness lessons to families. Barangay consultations gave residents space to ask questions, critique communication methods, and suggest alternatives. Participation also extended to message dissemination: some residents volunteered as local announcers or message relays within kinship networks. These practices transformed disaster communication into a collaborative rather than purely top-down process.

4.4 Integrated Knowledge Co-creation (*Impormasyong Sama-samang Binubuo*)

San Luis residents continue to rely on indigenous knowledge systems such as observing animal behavior, shifts in sea breeze, or changes in cloud patterns as signals of impending typhoons. Barangay leaders and MDRRMO staff acknowledged these local cues and, in some cases, synchronized them with scientific forecasts to strengthen message legitimacy. For example, warnings issued when both PAGASA advisories and observable environmental changes aligned were perceived as most trustworthy. This integration illustrates co-production, where scientific and local epistemologies inform one another.

4.5 Guidance Through Community Feedback (*Gabay mula sa Tugon ng Komunidad*)

After every typhoon, barangay officials conducted assemblies to review communication effectiveness. Residents critiqued timing, language, and delivery methods. Feedback such as “*masyadong teknikal*” (too technical) or “*late dumating ang text*” (the text arrived late) informed adjustments in subsequent events. Informal feedback loops also occurred in everyday conversations, where community members shared opinions on which channels worked and which failed. These feedback mechanisms created iterative learning, gradually refining the disaster communication system.

4.6 Anchoring in Governance and Policy (*Angkla sa Pamahalaan at Plano*)

Institutional readiness reinforced community practices. The MDRRMO implemented 24/7 hotlines, standard operating procedures for evacuations, and mandatory training on radio communication protocols. These practices were codified in local DRRM plans, ensuring sustainability across leadership changes. By embedding communication practices into



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governance, San Luis prevented reliance on individual champions and instead institutionalized disaster communication as a municipal responsibility.

4.7 Networking and Replication (*Naipapasa at Naisusulong sa Iba*)

San Luis's disaster communication practices have begun influencing other municipalities in Aurora. MDRRMO staff shared strategies during provincial meetings, encouraging replication of redundancy models and participatory approaches. Neighboring barangays adopted practices such as integrating indigenous knowledge into warnings and conducting feedback-driven assemblies. This outward diffusion demonstrates how localized innovations can travel horizontally across LGUs, contributing to broader resilience within the province.

4.8 Synthesis of Findings

The results collectively illustrate how disaster communication in San Luis embodies the seven SALIGAN pillars: redundancy ensures reach, cultural calibration fosters comprehension, participation builds ownership, knowledge co-creation strengthens trust, feedback drives adaptation, governance anchoring ensures sustainability, and networking promotes scalability. Together, these findings demonstrate that disaster communication is not a linear transfer of information, but an evolving, culturally grounded ecosystem rooted in both institutional rigor and community epistemologies.

5. Discussion

5.1 Rethinking Disaster Communication Through a Decolonial Lens

The case of San Luis illustrates the limitations of top-down, technocratic approaches to disaster communication that privilege speed and accuracy while neglecting cultural resonance and epistemic diversity. While local government agencies rely on digital alerts, radios, and official briefings, residents continue to draw from indigenous epistemologies — reading environmental cues, mobilizing kinship networks, and grounding responses in collective values such as *bayanihan*, *pakikiramdam*, and *kapwa*. This duality underscores the persistence of epistemic injustice (Santos, 2018), where local knowledge is frequently undervalued, despite its effectiveness. The findings confirm that disaster communication is not only about transmitting risk information but also about shaping public opinion regarding trust, credibility, and urgency. In this way, the SALIGAN Framework can be read as a model of opinion formation in crisis contexts.

By integrating indigenous knowledge into formal systems, San Luis offers a model of scientization without colonization: combining the rigor of institutional communication with the resonance of community epistemologies. This integration is articulated through the SALIGAN Framework, which consists of seven interdependent pillars. Together, these pillars reflect a decolonized, culturally grounded approach to disaster communication, offering lessons for both practice and theory



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5.2 Interpreting Results Through the SALIGAN Framework

5.2.1 Strategic Communication Modes (*Sina-saayos na Paraan ng Komunikasyon*)

San Luis demonstrates the effectiveness of multimodal, layered communication. Facebook posts, SMS alerts, and radio advisories coexist with traditional *bandillo* announcements, roving messengers, and interpersonal networks. This redundancy ensures message delivery even when power outages or signal interruptions occur. Far from inefficiency, strategic redundancy embodies resilience: communities are assured that messages will arrive through multiple trusted pathways.

Implication: Disaster communication systems should institutionalize redundancy as a cultural strategy of resilience, balancing digital innovation with analog continuity.

5.2.2 Aligning to Cultural and Linguistic Contexts (*Angkop sa Kultura at Wika*)

Residents reported confusion when official messages employed highly technical terms (e.g., “storm surge”), which lacked resonance in the local dialect. By reframing warnings into culturally familiar language or metaphors, officials improved comprehension and trust. This reflects Reception Theory’s insight that messages are decoded through cultural codes rather than passively absorbed. Implication: Communication must be culturally calibrated, translating not only language but also tone, symbols, and values to align with community logics of meaning-making.

5.2.3 Local Participation in Communication (*Lahok ng Mamamayan sa Diskurso*)

Assemblies, school-based drills, and barangay consultations enabled residents to actively shape communication strategies. Rather than being treated as passive recipients, community members participated in decision-making about dissemination channels, timing, and phrasing. This participatory practice resonates with Freire’s dialogic pedagogy, where empowerment arises from inclusion in dialogue. Implication: Disaster communication should formalize participatory mechanisms where communities co-design warnings and preparedness plans, embedding ownership into the communicative process.

5.2.4 Integrated Knowledge Co-creation (*Impormasyong Sama-samang Binubuo*)

Knowledge co-production emerged when barangay officials incorporated local cues (e.g., animal behavior, shifts in wind and sea) into warnings alongside scientific forecasts. This blending of epistemologies created hybrid strategies that were both trusted and actionable. As Norström et al. (2020) argue, co-produced knowledge is more usable because it reflects the realities of end-users. Implication: Risk communication must not treat



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indigenous knowledge as supplementary but as a co-equal system that strengthens scientific communication and enhances legitimacy.

5.2.5 Guidance Through Community Feedback (*Gabay mula sa Tugon ng Komunidad*)

After disasters, barangay assemblies and informal reflections allowed residents to provide feedback on message clarity, timeliness, and accessibility. This feedback informed revisions in subsequent communication, such as replacing jargon with local terms or adjusting delivery methods. In effect, disaster communication became a learning system, capable of evolution through iterative feedback loops. Implication: Institutional frameworks should embed structured feedback mechanisms, ensuring communities continuously shape and refine communication strategies.

5.2.6 Anchoring in Governance and Policy (*Angkla sa Pamahalaan at Plano*)

The success of San Luis's communication practices depends on their institutional anchoring. Radios distributed across barangays, municipal training on radio etiquette, and established hotlines illustrate how communication strategies are embedded into official DRRM structures. Without governance integration, community-driven practices risk being fragmented or unsustainable. Implication: Scientized frameworks must be codified in DRRM plans and supported by governance structures to ensure sustainability and legitimacy.

5.2.7 Networking and Replication (*Naipapasa at Naisusulong sa Iba*)

San Luis's practices extend beyond local boundaries. By documenting and sharing communication strategies with other municipalities, the community contributes to a culture of replication and adaptation. Networking across LGUs fosters learning, scalability, and sustainability. This pillar emphasizes that resilience is not only local but also regional and collective. Implication: Disaster communication models must include mechanisms for networking and replication, ensuring innovations are transferable and adaptable across contexts.

5.3 Contributions to Decolonizing Communication Scholarship

The SALIGAN Framework challenges the hegemony of Western-centric crisis communication models by foregrounding indigenous epistemologies as central to resilience. Rather than rejecting science, it advances a plural epistemology where scientific rigor and local wisdom converge. In doing so, it operationalizes the decolonization of communication research, offering a pathway for epistemic justice in DRR.

This contribution is significant for Global South scholarship, where disaster communication often remains framed by imported models. By systematizing community-grounded practices into a framework, this study provincializes Western theories and asserts Filipino values — *bayanihan*, *pakikiramdam*, *kapwa* — as valid theoretical categories.



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5.4 Practical Implications

- Policy: Embed SALIGAN's seven pillars into local DRRM plans to ensure inclusivity and resilience.
- Practice: Train disaster managers to engage with indigenous epistemologies, translating technical forecasts into culturally resonant messages.
- Education: Incorporate indigenous risk knowledge into disaster preparedness curricula in schools.
- Global Application: Encourage LGUs to share practices regionally, promoting scalability and adaptation of localized models.

5.5 Theoretical Contributions

The study extends Crisis Communication Theory by demonstrating how crisis messaging is enacted in plural epistemic fields, not solely within institutional discourse. It also contributes to decolonial communication theory by operationalizing epistemic justice, showing how scientized communication can be rooted in indigenous logics. Finally, the SALIGAN Framework offers a replicable model that bridges practice and theory, advancing both communication scholarship and DRR policy.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated into disaster communication frameworks, using the case of San Luis, Aurora, Philippines. The findings revealed that while institutional strategies emphasize efficiency, digital platforms, and standardized protocols, communities continue to rely on epistemologies rooted in culture, kinship, and environmental attunement. Rather than being oppositional, these systems are complementary. When integrated, they generate disaster communication that is not only scientifically rigorous but also culturally resonant, trusted, and actionable.

The SALIGAN Framework, composed of seven interdependent pillars, emerged from this integration as a scientized yet decolonized model of disaster communication:

1. **Strategic Communication Modes (*Sina-saayos na Paraan ng Komunikasyon*)**
– Multimodal, layered channels ensured redundancy and resilience, balancing digital tools with analog and interpersonal pathways.
2. **Aligning to Cultural and Linguistic Contexts (*Angkop sa Kultura at Wika*)** – Messages became effective when translated into local idioms, metaphors, and culturally meaningful symbols, overcoming barriers of technical jargon.
3. **Local Participation in Communication (*Lahok ng Mamamayan sa Diskurso*)**
– Residents actively shaped communication processes through assemblies, drills, and neighborhood dialogues, transforming disaster messaging into a collaborative endeavor.



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4. **Integrated Knowledge Co-creation (*Impormasyong Sama-samang Binubuo*)** – Scientific forecasts gained legitimacy when paired with indigenous cues, creating hybrid knowledge that communities trusted and acted upon.
5. **Guidance Through Community Feedback (*Gabay mula sa Tugon ng Komunidad*)** – Post-disaster assemblies and informal evaluations enabled iterative learning, refining communication strategies over time.
6. **Anchoring in Governance and Policy (*Angkla sa Pamahalaan at Plano*)** – Institutional protocols, training, and codified DRRM plans embedded practices into governance systems, ensuring sustainability beyond individual actors.
7. **Networking and Replication (*Naipapasa at Naisusulong sa Iba*)** – San Luis’s practices diffused outward, demonstrating the potential for horizontal learning and adaptation across LGUs, scaling localized resilience strategies.

Taken together, these pillars illustrate that disaster communication is not simply the transfer of official information but the co-construction of meaning and action between institutions and communities. The SALIGAN Framework operationalizes this integration, bridging scientific rigor and indigenous epistemologies while affirming the communicative authority of local actors.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the decolonization of communication scholarship by provincializing Western-centric crisis models and foregrounding Filipino epistemologies — *bayanihan*, *pakikiramdam*, *kapwa*, and faith — as valid categories of analysis. It extends Crisis Communication Theory by demonstrating that crises are mediated through plural epistemic fields, not solely institutional discourse. Furthermore, it enriches science and technology studies (STS) debates on epistemic justice, offering an example of scientization that integrates rather than erases indigenous knowledge.

Practically, the framework provides guidance for policy and practice. Local governments should embed the seven SALIGAN pillars in their DRRM plans, ensuring inclusivity, adaptability, and sustainability. Training modules for disaster managers should prioritize cultural calibration, participatory processes, and engagement with indigenous knowledge systems. Schools and community organizations can facilitate the intergenerational transfer of disaster knowledge, blending scientific education with local wisdom. Finally, networking mechanisms across LGUs should be strengthened to replicate and adapt successful practices beyond their points of origin.

This study reaffirms that building disaster resilience in Asia is not only a matter of scientific accuracy but also of shaping inclusive public opinion rooted in cultural epistemologies and trust networks. In conclusion, the case of San Luis demonstrates that disaster communication is strongest when it is scientized yet rooted in culture, decolonized yet institutionalized, local yet replicable. By positioning indigenous knowledge as central rather than peripheral, the SALIGAN Framework offers both a scholarly contribution to communication theory and a practical roadmap for communities navigating the



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uncertainties of a changing climate. It affirms that resilience is not merely about technologies and protocols, but about the communicative lifeworlds that enable people to anticipate, survive, and recover — together.

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