Class Suspension Posts as Risk Communication during Typhoons in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Disasters brought by typhoons disrupt daily routines, such as going to school. In the Philippines, local governments tend to suspend classes as a precautionary measure. The social media hashtag "#WalangPasok," a Filipino term translated as "no classes" or "no work," is used to communicate the class suspension during typhoons and other similar calamities. This study explores how local government units in the Philippines utilize class suspension posts on social media as part of their risk communication during typhoons, with particular attention to the risk communication messages, multimedia attributes and framing strategies. Using qualitative content analysis, the study analyzed class suspension posts across multiple local government social media pages. Guided by Framing Theory, the text-based captions and visual graphics were analyzed to identify the frames used to communicate risk communication messages. Results revealed that social media posts embed three main risk communication messages into their class suspension posts, namely: weather and typhoon information; safety and precautionary measures; and rationalization of class suspension. This information is presented using either the politician frame, policy frame, or precautionary frame. Given the high engagement with these posts, local governments have a strong opportunity to leverage the platform to advocate for proactive responses during disasters.

Keywords: class suspension, disaster message, risk communication, social media, typhoon

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the occurrence of disasters, particularly typhoons, earthquakes, heatwaves, and volcanic eruptions, has become more frequent and damaging. The Philippines is one of the countries that is most heavily impacted by these natural hazards. Its location in the Pacific makes it prone to typhoons. In 2022, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) reported that five of the tropical cyclones that struck the country were classified as destructive (Santos 2021). Studies show that from 1951 to 2013, an average of 19 tropical cyclones annually entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (Cinco et al. 2016).

There are variations when referring to tropical cyclones depending on the geographical location or their intensity (Smith and Montgomery 2023). The term "typhoon" is used for tropical cyclones forming in the Northwest Pacific Ocean, while "hurricane" is used in the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific (Murnane and Liu 2004). The national weather bureau of the country, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), is responsible for providing weather-related information. PAGASA observes the five-level categorization of tropical cyclones, namely: Tropical Depression, Tropical Storm, Severe Tropical Storm, Typhoon, and Super Typhoon. In the Filipino language, there is no translation for each of these categories. Typhoons and storms are simply called "bagyo." Although there is no direct translation in Filipino, the weather agency assigns a local name for every tropical cyclone that enters the country's area of responsibility.

These weather-related hazards disrupt the normal daily flow of life. One of the primary activities impacted is school learning, with classes often suspended when these disasters occur. A national study found that around 32 school days are lost out of a 180-day school year due to calamities in the Philippines (EDCOM 2 2024). Class and work suspensions are regarded as essential government protocols, allowing the public to prepare for an impending disaster. Existing policies on the suspension of classes and work vary depending on the scope. Despite these disparities, Local Government Units (LGUs) are given full authority to declare the suspension of classes, including government work, at the city and provincial level when deemed necessary, especially in times of severe weather conditions.

Local authorities communicate class suspensions mostly on social media in the form of advisories, which are among the types of social media messages released by state emergency managers (Wukich 2016). The reach and immediacy of social networking sites make them suitable for releasing risk-related information (Saroj 2020), especially during typhoons. People now rely on online platforms to construct their perception of these natural occurrences. Government messages on social media can impact how the public perceives natural disasters.

Seeing the benefit of organizing disaster information on social media, the Philippine government institutionalized the use of #WalangPasok as the standard hashtag for posting class suspension-related information on social media. The hashtag "#WalangPasok," a Filipino term that can be translated as "no classes or work," became a familiar code among Filipino online users, especially young individuals (Vitug-Urrea 2018). Their power to attract engagement should be leveraged by local government units to advance disaster preparedness among communities.

While previous research has explored the use of #WalangPasok primarily on Twitter (Villamor et al. 2023; Ancheta et al. 2020), no studies have examined its role in disaster messaging on Facebook. This paper aims to address this gap by examining how class suspension posts on the Facebook pages of local government units function as tools of risk communication during typhoons. By analyzing the messages, multimedia attributes, and frames used by the local authorities, the study maximizes the power of social media in forming the public's perception regarding natural disasters. As an exploratory study, this research foregrounds the potential of class suspension posts on Facebook as a tool for risk communication and disaster preparedness during typhoons.

RISK COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Risk communication is defined as the ongoing sharing of information, advice, and perspectives between those with expertise and the public who are potentially affected by a hazard or threat (World Health Organization 2017). It aims to raise awareness and understanding of potential hazards among the public to ensure that individuals and communities are informed about the risks (Berg et al. 2021). Burger (2022) described risk communication as a two-way dialogue between the "communicator" and the "community member," sharing information on risky environmental events. The field is tied to crisis communication, alongside other areas, particularly reputation management and disaster communication (Coombs 2010).

Risk communication is a critical component of disaster risk reduction (DRR). The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) emphasizes that communication is crucial for people to grasp, discuss, and manage various forms of risks in their lives, and take steps to deal with those risks (Safaie et al. 2017). Risk communicators use various forms of channels to communicate appropriate messages to the public. Traditional forms of broadcast platforms, like radio and television, are used as reliable sources for reaching broad audiences during emergencies, providing timely updates and warnings (Diallo et al. 2017). Online communication paved the way for the rise of social media as a platform for risk communication. Studies on the use of social media in disaster communication have elucidated its benefits and challenges as a channel for disaster-related information (Morelli et al. 2022; Malecki et al. 2021).

In a study of Facebook and Twitter pages among Metro Manila cities, Delos Santos and Alampay (2015) discovered that local government units (LGUs) use their social media platforms to post various types of disaster-related content. They also highlighted an emerging trend in which these posts increasingly focus on promoting disaster preparedness. This provides a solid baseline for research on how local government units use social media in their disaster management efforts. However, it did not explore the possibility of including multiple types of content in a single post or the messaging strategies that could be employed by social media pages. Another study analyzing content from Indonesian government social media pages applied a thematic content analysis of case-specific posts, identifying four themes: situational, government events, educational, and general information (Yudarwati et al. 2022). In that study, researchers also criticized the use of social media by local governments for disaster management by describing it as unidirectional and less collaborative (Yudarwati et al. 2022). Although the authors suggest that social media use for disaster risk communication may vary across different cultures.

#WALANGPASOK AND CLASS SUSPENSION POSTS

The popularity of class suspension announcements on social media can be traced back to the use of the hashtag "#WalangPasok (No Classes)." Hashtags are tagging tools used in social media content that consolidate messages of the same topic. The use of hashtags in posting disaster-related topics in social media can aid managers in filtering content during emergency situations (Young et al. 2020). Murzintcev and Cheng (2017) claim that government units can propose the use of specific disaster-related hashtags; however, they have no control over how internet users will use them. In 2012, the Philippine government formalized the use of uniform hashtags to monitor and retrieve information before, during, and after the onset of a disaster (PCDSPO 2014). Some of the hashtags that are standard during disasters are: #rescuePH (for rescue operations); #reliefPH (for relief operations); #floodPH (for contents related to flood); and #WalangPasok (for work and class suspensions).

Among these hashtags, the "#WalangPasok (No Classes)" became the most prominent and widely used on social media to disseminate information on the cancellation of classes and work during typhoons, extreme weather conditions, earthquakes, and even public holidays. Government agencies, media entities, and educational institutions have also used this keyword as a default banner headline to announce essential information on social media. In the same way, social media users utilize #WalangPasok to source out information for class suspension and disaster-related news. It is the most-anticipated local government announcement by the students that usually comes with the announcement of a typhoon update (Paladin et al. 2015).

In a study by Ancheta et al. (2020), natural language processing was used to analyze tweets containing the hashtag #WalangPasok. In their qualitative analysis, four key themes emerged: weather advisories, class suspension announcements, the role of local government, and users' sentiments and outlooks regarding specific situations. This establishes that the hashtag's usage extends beyond simply announcing class suspensions, and there is potential to utilize it as a risk communication platform. As Vitug-Urrea (2018) points out, the use of "#WalangPasok (No Classes)" can support organizations in their communication campaigns during calamities.

FRAMING THEORY

Guided by Framing Theory, this study examined how local government units employed risk communication frames in class suspension posts. Framing Theory posits that information can be presented in various ways called frames (Entman 1993). These frames are strategically packaged by message producers and received by audiences, who construct meaning from the presentation. As a communication theory, framing emphasizes that the form and emphasis of information influence how people perceive issues and make decisions (Arowolo 2017). Entman (1993) further explains that framing highlights specific aspects of reality, making them more salient in communication to guide interpretation and understanding of an issue. For instance, government officials can frame evacuation orders during flood warnings as an opportunity to safeguard families and property rather than as a forced displacement.

The use of framing has transcended into digital media, providing frameworks for understanding content creation, especially on social media. In the context of disasters, framing analysis has aided

in discovering media narratives of rapid and high-impact natural events like floods, earthquakes, and typhoons (Parida 2021). Although framing has been widely used in analyzing media news (Moncada et al. 2024; Ali and Gill 2022; Rausch 2012), social media has brought researchers to discover how disasters are framed by other social groups, chiefly the government (Liu and Boin 2020), humanitarian organization (Lee 2024), non-governmental organizations (Walton 2018), and the public (Saldaña 2024).

A study on state emergency management agencies' media releases in the United States identified ten disaster communication frames: human interest, disaster education, leadership, severity, anniversaries, seasonal contexts, special events, collaboration, and celebrity appearances (Fisher Liu 2009). Similarly, an analysis of tweets related to a hurricane revealed frames, namely political, destruction, victim/hero, military/humanitarian aid, and counter-narratives (Fogarty 2020). The variety of frames stems from the source's intentions and the context of the crisis situation.

These frames are extracted from text-based content, a common practice in framing analysis studies. Given the multimedia nature of social media, scholars have also studied the visual component, extending framing analysis to graphical content. For instance, visual frames were identified in humanitarian aid organizations' disaster-related social media posts, highlighting different aspects of disaster narratives, such as victims in distress, relief efforts, disaster damage, recovery, preparation, community resilience, symbolic objects, and normal scenery (Lee et al. 2024). However, Omondi (2024) asserted that scholarship on the visual framing of crises remains in its exploratory stage and is largely concentrated in North America. Within this context, the present study contributes to the growing literature on visual framing in disaster situations.

The presence of text-based content and visual content on social media makes it necessary to integrate two forms of framing to operationalize a Multimodal Social Media Framing framework, which this study puts forward. Framing analysis in social media provides an avenue for researchers to study how communication evolves rapidly within online communities (Güran and Özarslan 2022). Combining text-based framing and visual framing to create the multimodal framing analysis for social media platforms would provide a more comprehensive characterization of disaster messages employed by local government units in communicating class suspension during typhoons. In this study, Multimodal Social Media Framing takes into account various multimedia elements embedded within online content. As Geise and Xu (2024) noted, multimodal framing allows simultaneous analysis of visual, textual, and auditory communication, thereby providing more insight into online risk communication.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach to systematically analyze class suspension posts made by local government units on Facebook during tropical cyclone events. Qualitative content analysis is described as a systematic approach for the subjective interpretation of content (Selvi 2019). It uses an inductive approach, where categories are derived from the data (Elo and Kyngas 2008). By analyzing the posts related to class suspension, risk communication-related content has been identified.

The study included nine out of 16 cities in Metro Manila, the capital region of the Philippines. The local government units included are Quezon City, Pasig City, Manila City, Pasay City, Marikina City, Muntinlupa City, Valenzuela City, Caloocan City, and Las Piñas City. These cities were chosen for their active use of #WalangPasok and their consistent online engagement in sharing class suspension information during typhoons.

After identifying the official Facebook pages of these LGUs, class suspension posts were extracted using the search function feature found on Facebook profile pages. Keywords "#WalangPasok," "Walang Pasok," "class suspended," and "class suspension" were used to filter posts for inclusion in this study. Only class suspension announcements related to typhoons from January to November 2024 are covered in the analysis, while class suspension posts related to holidays, heatwaves, and other non-typhoon-related events were excluded.

Following the seven phases of Structuring Qualitative Content Analysis by Kuckartz and Rädiker (2023), the sampled posts underwent preliminary and secondary coding to identify and describe meaning codes from both the text-based captions and multimedia visuals of the posts. Categories, themes, and frames generated in the first phase of the analysis were used to develop the codebook that was utilized for this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Risk Communication Messages

The thematic analysis identified three core risk communication messages embedded in class suspension posts: 'What is happening?' (typhoon and weather information), 'What should you do?' (safety measures for the public), and 'Why are we doing this?' (rationale for class suspension). These themes provide a description of the risk communication-related contents found on class suspension announcements posted on social media by local governments in the Philippines.

The theme of "What is happening?" provides situational information that allows the public to understand the risk and disaster context, particularly in the presence of typhoons and the prevailing weather conditions. Posts often included basic details about the tropical cyclone: its local name, intensity, and location. The use of local names of the tropical cyclone officially assigned by the national weather bureau is consistent across all posts. In some instances, posts followed the national government-mandated format of using hashtags to identify storms, combining the pound sign, the typhoon's local name, and "PH" (e.g., #PepitoPH, #YolandaPH). Warning signals (e.g. Signal Nos. 1–5) were sometimes included to indicate severity. Additionally, the posts include references to PAGASA bulletins in mentioning other meteorological information to reinforce accuracy and credibility.

Although such details are essential in terms of communicating the risk situation, they were not consistently present across local government posts. The way typhoon information is presented varies across local government pages and at times, within a single page itself. One critical element to consider is the timeliness of disaster information as typhoon conditions change rapidly throughout the day. Because of this challenge, some local governments addressed this by including timestamps to clarify the validity of information, as in one case on the post of the Pasig City page.

Others adopted a simpler approach by providing general descriptions of prevailing weather conditions to minimize confusion in the event of sudden changes in the typhoon's intensity.

In terms of weather information, class suspension posts provided specific situational updates describing the general atmospheric conditions, encompassing phenomena like rainfall, landslides, and flooding. Local authorities often simplify the weather conditions on their posts by describing the possible amount of rain or expected flooding as an effect of the typhoon. This allows the public to visualize and understand the threat posed by the disaster. Some posts mentioned technical weather alerts released by PAGASA, such as the Red Rainfall Warning, which indicates that torrential rain and massive flooding are expected. By contextualizing meteorological updates, class suspension posts enabled audiences to better grasp the risks posed by the disaster.

Another theme focused on "What You Should Do?" emphasizes the messages intended for the public that will guide them in taking proactive actions during typhoons. Class suspension posts include directives for schools wherein three central messages were observed: an appeal to comply with suspension advisories; recommendations to adopt alternative learning modalities; and reminders to prioritize student safety. Local authorities encouraged other schools that are not covered by the automatic class cancellation to implement the suspension as a precautionary measure. Also, they advise schools to take alternative learning modality, specifically online classes or makeup sessions, to ensure continuity of education despite the disruption brought by the typhoon. For midday suspensions, schools were directed to ensure the safety of the students who may still be on campus during severe weather conditions.

For the public, precautionary measures messages are integrated in class suspension posts to foster informed and proactive citizens. Posts from local government units urged the public to verify information on class suspension, review relevant policies on class suspension, monitor typhoon progress, and remain connected to emergency hotlines. These messages emphasize the crucial roles of information during disaster situations. These kinds of posts advocate for informed citizens. Further, general reminders, including "be safe and prepared," "stay indoors," and "ensure the safety of your homes," were recurring contents. Collectively, these precautionary messages reinforced fundamental principles of disaster preparedness and highlighted the value of class suspension posts as vehicles for communicating basic safety practices during typhoons.

The third theme, "Why are we doing this?" focuses on rationalizing the mode of suspending classes during typhoons. Such messages contribute to the public's perception of both the risk brought by the typhoon and the government's role in disaster reduction. Class cancellation posts are commonly situated as institutional decisions, attributing them to recommendations from disaster risk reduction and management councils, executive orders by city mayors, or adherence to established protocols. These explanations reinforced the authority of local government units as key decision-makers during emergencies, which is common for government messages. Beyond institutional justifications, many posts rationalized suspensions as precautionary measures, citing public safety as a priority. Some reasoned the need to prepare for possible rescue operations, while others emphasized time for recovery following the typhoon. These explanations positioned class suspension not merely as an administrative directive but as a deliberate action of risk reduction and management.

The three themes of risk communication-related messages found in suspension advisories signify that local government units incorporate disaster messaging. Information in these social media posts aligns with the Warning Response Model by Mileti and Sorensen (1990). That model outlines five key elements for an effective warning message: a clear description of the threat, specific protective action guidance, identification of at-risk locations and populations, a timeframe for action, and a clear identification of the message source. Although not all elements are present in all the posts, their inclusion suggests local government units are approaching a more standardized approach in communication class suspension within the context of risk communication.

Multimedia Attributes

Social media has become a platform for integrating multimedia elements into disaster communication. In the context of class suspension posts, multimedia attributes refer to the text and visual components used by local government units to reach the public during typhoons. The text-based elements are primarily focused on interactive elements found in posts' captions, while visual components consist of media-based content, for example, graphics, photos, and videos. These features enhance the delivery of risk communication messages and take advantage of the social media affordances of the online platform Facebook.

In terms of text-based features, hashtags, tagging, and external links were the most common. Hashtags are the prominent feature among all the posts analyzed. Aside from the usual #WalangPasok, local government units incorporate other standard disaster-related hashtags, particularly those mentioning the name of the typhoon. Some local government units incorporate customized hashtags, for example #StaySafeQC for Quezon City and #AlertoMuntinlupeño for Muntinlupa City. These practices allow risk communicators to maintain a consistent system for announcing class suspensions, enabling social media users to quickly locate related content across various platforms.

Tagging also appears to be a significant textual strategy in class suspension posts, taking the form of either page tagging or location tagging. Page tagging was used for linking the social media pages of a specific person or office on the post establishing legitimacy on the post. This approach directs users to other reliable sources of information increasing the visibility of local authorities as a disaster responder. The official Facebook page of the local disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) office is also mentioned and tagged in the posts connecting social media followers to other institutional sources.

Location tagging, or geotagging, is another strategy employed by local authorities in their class suspension posts. This process of adding geographical information directly to social media posts provides additional context in social media announcements by strategically identifying the locality. Based on the sampled contents, posts from Muntinlupa City combine both page tagging and geotagging, making their posts more interactive and context-specific. Another textual feature observed in the captions was the use of external weblinks, directing the public to supplementary materials and information.

The visual attributes of class suspension posts reveal another layer of communication practices. According to King (2015), there are two main types of visuals that are generally used in risk communication: graphical visuals, presenting quantitative or data-driven information, and illustrative visuals, conveying non-numeric information through images or design. In the case of class suspension posts, social media art cards dominated as the commonly used visual element, which can be classified as illustrative visuals. Social media art cards, or sometimes referred to as social cards or social previews, are images that appear when sharing content on social media (Gould 2024). As King (2015) noted, the informative display of risk information serves not only to convey information but also to evoke emotions and establish a recognizable style. In this sense, graphics of cancelation suspension posts act as informative content and a stylish element to aestheticize social media advisories.

Analysis revealed three styles of art cards: banner graphics, bulletin graphics, and statement graphics. These visuals are text-based graphics but differ in terms of placement, design, and aesthetic using different design principles. Common among these visuals is the prominent use of the text "#Walang Pasok (No Classes)," acting as an identifier and attention grabber for social media users to accompany the text-based caption of the post. Banner graphics were the simplest, typically consisting of bold "#Walang Pasok (No Classes)" text overlaid on the city's official color scheme, seal, or logo. Their minimal design ensured quick recognition and visibility on social media feeds, though they usually lacked detailed information. The captions accompanying these visuals contain the important details needed by the public. Such templates were easy to produce and replicate, making them efficient for rapid dissemination.

Bulletin graphics, on the other hand, carried more details, resembling traditional announcements in visual form. These kinds of visuals contain essential information including the dates of suspension, specific school levels affected, and the basis for suspension. The phrase "Walang Pasok (No Classes)" acts as a headline with branding elements, such as logos, and other social media pages present in the art card. In terms of layout, the details of the class suspension are spread across multiple sections of the graphic, offering compartmentalized information for easy recognition by users. Unlike banner graphics, bulletin-style posts could stand alone as informative content, although captions often added supplementary risk messages. In this approach, the text-based caption and visual layout complement each other in announcing the class suspension.

Statement graphics take different forms by embedding longer blocks of text directly into the visual. These graphics contained full statements or paragraphs explaining the scope, rationale, and official basis for suspensions. The layout typically combined the "*Walang Pasok* (No Classes)" headline with city identifiers: logos, official colors, and, in some cases, the mayor's photograph, or signature. Statement graphics essentially functioned as a visual transcription of the caption, providing the public with a self-contained post that combines authority and substantive information. Aside from the use of social media art cards, local government units also took advantage of the multimodal features of Facebook by using other visual content, for instance, data visualization and videos. Data visualizations found in class suspension posts are graphics that provide additional information beyond the details of class suspensions. Videos are also used as

main visuals in class suspension posts, where the city mayor is featured making statements and declaring the cancellation of classes.

Frames of Class Suspension Posts

The analysis of risk communication messages and the examination of the multimedia elements found in the class suspension posts of local government units paved the way to identify and interpret the prominent frames. Three frames emerged in the class suspension posts: the Politician Frame, the Policy Frame, and the Precautionary Frame. These frames reveal how local government units construct and present information in class suspension posts to emphasize aspects of a risk disaster situation.

The Politician Frame emphasizes the role of government leaders, especially city mayors, in making decisions on class suspensions. It positions the city mayor as a visible authority in disaster response and management. Analysis of the class suspension posts proves that the Politician Frame can be seen in both text captions and visual contents. Posts identified with this framing mention the mayor's name, either at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize them as the central authority of the action or at the end of the message to signify that the announcement is attributed to their office. The use of action verbs, including "declared," "ordered," and "suspended," reinforces the mayor's role in announcing suspensions. Safety reminders directed at the public are also attributed to the mayor, establishing their image as a leader who provides guidance and protection. An example of this kind of messaging would be a class suspension post from Pasay City that includes a call to action presented as a reminder from the "Mother of the City," reinforcing the politician's image as a caring and protective figure during the disaster. Part of the post reads:

> Nagpapaalaala rin ang Ina ng Lungsod, Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano na paigtingin ang pag-iingat at manatili sa mga tahanan kung walang mahalagang pakay sa labas. [Transl.: The Mother of the City, Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano, also reminds everyone to exercise extra caution and stay at home if there is no essential reason to go outside.] (Pasay City Public Information Office, Facebook, October 23, 2024)

The politician's presence is equally visible in the social media art cards, with elements such as names, logos, caricatures, and signatures of the official included in the visuals (see Figure 1). In a post by the Marikina City Government, the picture of the mayor is present in the graphics, together with his name and signature, forming a part of the statement that declares the cancellation of classes. In a separate no-class advisory by the Muntinlupa City Government, a caricature of the city mayor is seen at the footer of the graphics.

Aside from graphics, all the class suspension posts that utilized videos as their visual content feature the city mayor addressing the public and making an announcement on the suspension of classes. The use of video increases the visibility of the city mayor, who is seen in action and speaking.
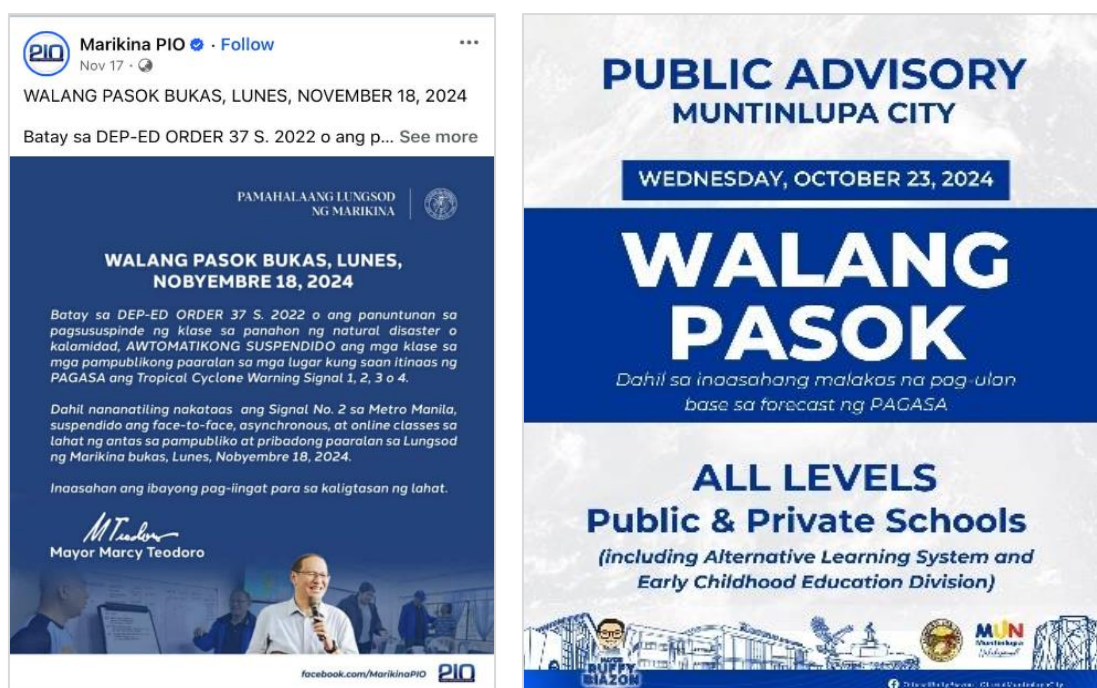
Figure 1. Social media art cards in class suspension posts using the Politician Frame.
Sources: (a) Marikina PIO Facebook Page; (b) City Government of Muntinlupa Facebook Page.

The use of the Politician Frame highlights the mayor as a key figure in the government's disaster response, reinforcing their authority in declaring class suspensions. From the perspective of the government, the Politician Frame aids in building trust in government actors by establishing who is in charge of managing the disaster situation. Furthermore, it strengthens the image of local government units as proactive leaders. Although referencing the city mayor in class suspension posts builds authority for suspension orders, excessive visibility of the mayor may shift the audience's attention away from the core message. Disasters pose both threats and opportunities to politicians, as political actors often exploit crises to launch initiatives aimed at enhancing their public image (Liu and Boin 2020). Due to the increased visibility of the public official, the official tends to benefit more than the intended audience of the posts.

The Policy Frame, in contrast, positions class suspensions as part of established protocols, policies, and rules during crisis situations. Posts adopting this frame draw from official guidelines issued by the Department of Education (DepEd) or from recommendations by the local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (DRRMC) to justify class cancellations. Almost all local government units sampled in this study have used this type of message framing in at least one of their class suspension posts. Given that cancellation of classes is itself a form of policy, this kind of framing is expected due to the nature of the content. Although these are established procedures during typhoons, the public still anticipates the official declaration of class suspensions through these social media posts.

Posts within this frame often include linguistic markers like "based on," "in accordance with," or "following the protocol," emphasizing compliance with official procedures during disasters. Aside from referencing the policies on class suspension, these posts educate the public on existing protocols during typhoons. Posts contain messages detailing these policies to inform citizens,

including reminders to verify information on class suspensions. In a post by the Pasig City Government, they include external weblinks in their post to provide public access to the issuances that govern class suspensions. This practice is illustrated in the following excerpt from their post, where Pasig City anchors its announcement post on a specific executive order:

> PAALALA: Sa Lungsod ng Pasig, ipinapatupad ang Executive Order No. PCG-048, s. 2024 na pinamagatang Executive Order Localizing the Department of Education Order No. 37, s. 2022, and Instituting Guidelines on the Cancellation or Suspension of Classes and Work in SCHOOLS in the Event of Natural Disasters and other Calamities. I-check ang kopya ng EO sa link na ito: https://bit.ly/EO_PCG_48_s2024.
>
> [Transl.: REMINDER: In Pasig City, Executive Order No. PCG-048, s. 2024, titled Executive Order Localizing the Department of Education Order No. 37, s. 2022, and Instituting Guidelines on the Cancellation or Suspension of Classes and Work in SCHOOLS in the Event of Natural Disasters and Other Calamities, is being implemented. You can check a copy of the EO through this link: https://bit.ly/EO_PCG_48_s2024.]
>
> (Pasig City Public Information Office, Facebook, November 10, 2024)

In terms of visual content, social media art card posts would provide details regarding the class suspension, like the covered dates, levels, and the policy used as a basis for the suspension (See Figure 2). This is evident in a bulletin-style graphic used by the Manila City Government, where a DepEd Order is mentioned. For the Marikina City Government, a graphic visualization of the rules on class suspension, aimed at educating the public, has been added to the social media art card.
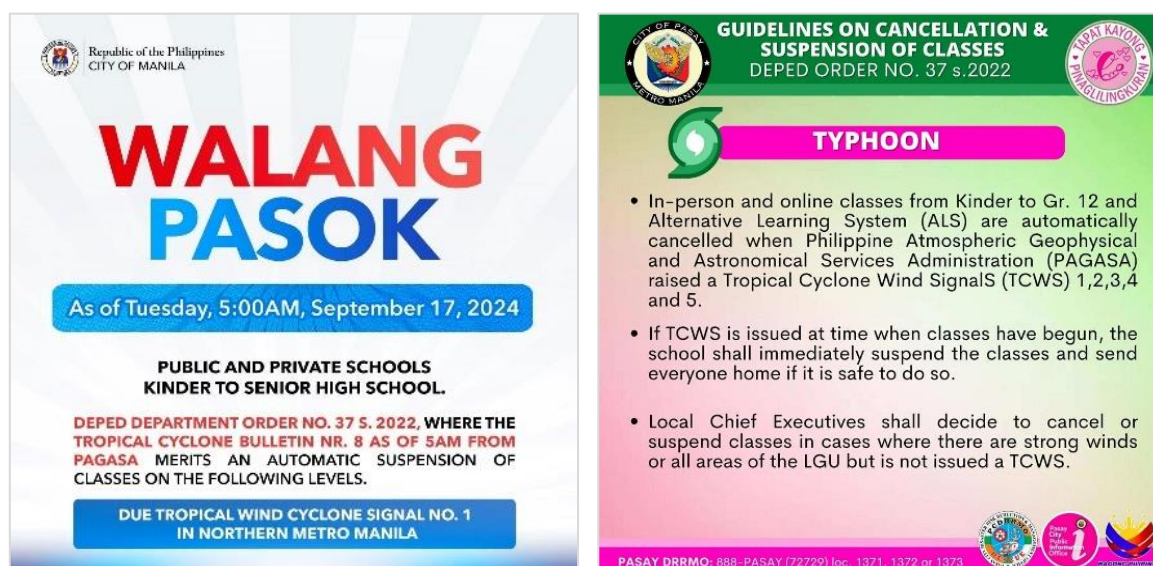

Figure 2. Social media art cards in class suspension posts using Policy Frame. Sources: (a) Manila City Public Information Office Facebook Page, (b) Pasay City Public Information Office Facebook Page.

The use of the Policy Frame in class suspension posts helps establish authority on the action and build trust in the government's response. Furthermore, referencing the local disaster management council establishes that the local government has structures and systems for disaster

management. This enhances transparency on disaster management-related decisions and actions, benefiting both the public and the government. Trust and transparency are key elements in risk communication, aiding in managing public fear and panic (Menon and Goh 2005). Beyond information disclosure, the government should prioritize reducing public uncertainties to establish transparency (Luo et al. 2024).

Both the Politician Frame and the Policy Frame are government-centered approaches to disaster messaging and can be understood as strategies for image building. Studies have shown that public trust in government during disasters positively influences the government's overall image (Mata et al. 2023). Compared with the Politician Frame, which focuses on individual leadership, the Policy Frame highlights the institutional legitimacy of the action.

Finally, the Precautionary Frame positions class suspensions as a safety measure to mitigate the impacts of a typhoon. Highlighting the risky situation, it encourages the public to prepare for the potential effects of the typhoon. Posts under this frame go beyond merely announcing class suspensions; they create a sense of urgency for the public during this time of crisis. For instance, local government units justify class cancellation as a means of preparation for the impact of the typhoon, as seen in this excerpt from the Marikina City Government:

> Bilang paghahanda sa magiging epekto ng Bagyong #KristinePH, suspendido ang klase sa pampubliko at pribadong paaralan (face-to-face at asynchronous) sa lahat ng antas bukas, 23 October 2024, Miyerkules.
> [Transl.: As preparation for the anticipated effects of Typhoon #KristinePH, classes in both public and private schools (face-to-face and asynchronous) at all levels are suspended tomorrow, Wednesday, October 23, 2024.]
> (Markina PIO, Facebook, October 22, 2024)

Further analysis of captions reveals that local governments use straightforward descriptions of the typhoon to help the public make sense of the situation. In their posts, local authorities often describe the expected intensity of rainfall or outline possible scenarios to help residents anticipate the storm's effects. A sample text extracted from class suspension posts that provide situational information about the expected rainfall during the typhoon is presented below:

> Inaasahan ang paghagupit ng bagyo at malakas na pag-ulan simula bukas, Wednesday, dahil sa typhoon #KristinePH.Bilang pag-iingat, suspended ang pasok sa lahat ng antas, kasama ang ECED at Alternative Learning System, public and private schools sa Muntinlupa bukas, October 23, 2024.
> [Transl.: Heavy rains and strong winds are expected starting tomorrow, Wednesday, due to Typhoon #KristinePH. As a precaution, classes at all levels, including ECED and the Alternative Learning System, in both public and private schools in Muntinlupa are suspended tomorrow, October 23, 2024.]
> (City Government of Muntinlupa, Facebook, October 22, 2024)

Aside from providing weather information, simple and direct safety messages are included in the class suspension posts. Phrases including "stay at home," "be safe," and "ensure your safety" are prominently included in class cancellation posts. This direct call to action reminds the readers of the post that suspending classes is a time for preparation for the incoming typhoon.

Visual elements strengthen the Precautionary Frame by utilizing visual cues that convey a clear sense of an impending disaster to the public. While the use of text-based social media art cards is the most common practice, local government units also incorporate imagery that visually represents the impact of a typhoon. For example, art cards of class suspension posts utilize images of trees being blown by strong winds as a background (See Figure 3). These visual elements help readers quickly comprehend the gravity of the situation and emphasize the urgency of taking precautionary measures.

Figure 3. Class suspension art cards with windblown trees as background.
Sources: (a) Caloocan Public Information Office Facebook Page, (b) City of Las Piñas Facebook Page.

In one example from the Manila City Government, an advisory combined a "#WalangPasok (No Classes)" art card with a separate data visualization of the typhoon. The use of icons and layered visual elements helps users process information quickly and understand the risks at a glance. However, relying heavily on visuals also presents limitations. Residents with limited or unstable internet connections may only access text-based content, thus restricting the reach of these visual materials. To address this, risk disaster communicators need to balance text and visuals, ensuring that information remains accessible to all.

The use of the Precautionary Frame in class suspension posts could be considered an ideal strategy if the government's intention is to build a culture of disaster preparedness among communities. Local government units using this frame leverage the popularity of "#WalangPasok (No Classes)" on social media and take advantage of the platform to disseminate safety messages.

As literature points out, the framing of messages and narratives during crisis situations contributes to sense giving (Logemann et al. 2019). The practice of framing disaster messages is a form of sense giving where local authorities attempt to influence the audience on what to think about the risk situation. To ensure that the use of this frame is maximized, local government units must ensure that precautionary messages are true, clear, and realistic. This is to avoid creating fear or confusion among the public.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study examined how local government units in the Philippines utilized Facebook posts to communicate class suspensions during typhoons, focusing on the multimedia attributes of these posts and the framing strategies. Through qualitative content analysis, the study surfaced how these announcements become functional notices that go beyond class cancellations and transform into platforms of risk communication.

Findings of the study revealed that local authorities strategically combine text-based features and visual components in communicating class suspension. Text-based captions of class suspension posts contained essential information that could be utilized by the public for disaster preparation and response. The inclusion of typhoon and weather information, as well as safety messages, proves that cancellation notices go beyond merely announcing class cancellation details. Hashtags, tagging, and weblinks in text-based captions demonstrate how these posts employ multimedia and interactivity features of social media to communicate disaster-related information. These practices are beneficial to both the local government as the sender and the social media user as the audience.

Risk communication messages are also embedded in the visual contents, as in the case of art cards, graphics, and videos, in class suspension posts. The use of social media art cards as accompanying visual elements is a widely employed practice for announcing the cancellation of classes. Variations in the forms and layout of social media art cards indicate that local government units apply different approaches to announcing class suspensions, depending on the context of the risk situation. Hence, the use of graphics, particularly banner, bulletin, and statement layouts, functions as both communicative tools and stylistic devices that reinforce official branding. The deliberate application and customization of text and visual elements improve the reach and visibility of these messages and establish a grounding for a consistent multimodal framing for the social media content.

A key finding of this study is the three frames used in class suspension posts: the Politician Frame, the Policy Frame, and the Precautionary Frame. It was found that these frames in cancellation advisories are not mutually exclusive, as some posts combine and manifest elements of all three. Situating these frames within the context of disaster communication provides a broader implication of cancellation of classes in government risk communication efforts and disaster management practices in general. Closer analysis of the multimodal dimension of class suspension advisories reveals that text elements and visual content complement one another and remain consistent with the dominant frame of each social media post.

Using the lens of framing, this study contributes to an understanding of how local government units emphasize particular aspects of the risk situation, mainly political leadership, institutional legitimacy, or precautionary measures. Cognizant that the government's framing of class suspensions could shape public perception of government responses to disasters and influence how communities prepare for typhoons, the frames found in the posts present both benefits and drawbacks. The use of government-centered frames could potentially overshadow the central message of disaster preparedness and mitigation. Although seen as normal practice in government communication efforts, local government units should consider adopting a more proactive, risk-centered messaging strategy that could better benefit the public. These practices highlight the role of local government as key communicators during disaster situations. Furthermore, the results of the study could serve as a springboard for developing social media risk communication guidelines for local government units.

Although the results describe how local government units leverage the affordances of Facebook for class suspension posts, the analysis reveals that the messages are unidirectional. This means that social media platforms are primarily used to announce information to the public rather than to engage the public in a dialogue or facilitate a transactional form of communication, thereby missing the opportunity to maximize the power of social media.

As an exploratory work, the study is limited to the analysis of selected Facebook posts and does not account for audience reception. Social media metrics, particularly user engagement, manifested through comments, likes, and shares, were not considered in the study. Future research could also expand this line of inquiry by incorporating audience perspectives on various frames and integrating concepts of sensemaking and trust to surface communicative nuances.

Integrating the concept of multimodal framing in analyzing the textual and visual dimensions of class suspension posts highlights the key role of social media as a public communication tool for the government's disaster management efforts. The establishment of #WalangPasok as a uniform hashtag proves to be an effective starting point for standardizing risk communication practices. By leveraging class suspension posts on social media, other local government units can maximize the use of the platform and foster a culture of preparedness in their localities.

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