

Civic Engagement and SDG 11: Communicating Urban Resilience to Citizens Empowering public participation through strategic messaging

Prof. Dr. Parin Somani¹, Mxin Tee², Xiaohui Yang³

¹CEO , London Organsation of Skills Development (LOSD)

²Faculty of Business and Communications, INTI International University, Nilai, Malaysia

ORCID [0000-0001-7990-8377](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7990-8377)

³Faculty of Education Shinawatra University

Email ID : xiaohuiyang9@163.com

ORCID [0009-0006-7884-8011](https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7884-8011)

ABSTRACT

The ability of cities to absorb and respond to environmental, social, and economic shocks, in other words, urban resilience, has since become a high priority under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Civic engagement is a key that is needed to make the strategies of urban resilience inclusive, responsive, and actionable. The current paper discusses using strategic messaging to increase citizen awareness and involvement in the approach to urban resilience. Taking a mixed-methods design consisting of literature review, survey analysis, and case study, the research will look into the effectiveness of specialized channels of communication and framing of the message on the interpretation of citizens, participation, and action. The results show that customized messages, the involvement of digital platforms, and engagement workshops highly enhance the view of urban resilience and readiness to participate in sustainability efforts by the citizens. The author of the study identifies practical implications of the research on municipal authorities, urban planners and policy-makers, e.g., how to shape successful communication strategies to promote civic participation. The drawbacks are presented by the limits in the size of the sample, geographical peculiarity, and fluctuating nature of the digital communication venues, which can influence generalizability. It is recommended that future research ought to be done on longitudinal effects, cross-cultural evaluation, and the inclusion of new technological changes, including AI capabilities in messaging and real-time feedback mechanism that can continue to contribute to increasing citizen engagement with their leaders..

Keywords: Civic engagement, urban resilience, SDG 11, strategic messaging, public participation, sustainable cities, urban communication, citizen empowerment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change, rampant population increase, infrastructural overheads and socio-economic disparities have proved to be unfathomably difficult challenges facing urban centers globally. Such problems not only endanger the physical structure of urban areas but also the health of the individuals. Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) points out the necessity to ensure that the cities are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Somewhat a multidimensional approach should be adopted that includes policy planning, technology innovation and also participation of citizens in making this a goal. One of the most important factors that have been promoting sustainable urban development is civic engagement, which involves citizen participation in urban planning, decision making and resilience efforts [17]. As the urban policies are not being delivered to the citizens, they are not simple receivers but stakeholders whose expertise, feedback, and activity can play a significant role in making the resilience strategy more effective [2].

Regardless of the acknowledged role of engagement, the issue of effective communication with citizens is a problem of most urban resilience programs. Conventional top-bottom urban governance systems lack the ingredient of urgency, relevance or actionable measures that the citizen can take to play a significant role. Lack of trust, low awareness, and misinformation further impede the participation process of the citizens [4]. This explains why strategic messaging is necessary- the approach will be to conduct focused, concise and culturally sensitive communication campaigns to inform,

motivate and mobilize citizens. There are various avenues through which the strategy of messaging can be utilized to close the gap between the urban planners and the citizens, among them being the social media, neighborhood workshops, municipal websites, and mobile applications.

This study lies in the initiative to expose the increasing awareness of the idea that the resilience of cities is much more than an infrastructural or a technical problem; it is socially and participatory. Cities with the ability to engage with their peers and enable them to participate in the resilience efforts have a higher possibility of realizing sustainable results. The given research aims at comprehending the role of strategic messaging in boosting civic engagement which will be explored through citizens awareness, perception and engagement in resilience programs. The research will analyze the survey data, case studies of the exemplary cities, and the current literature on communication strategy in order to define achievable methods of enhancing citizen engagement in the perspective of the city resilience [8].

This study will be four-fold, to address (1): examining the ways strategic messaging interacts with civic engagement with regard to urban resilience efforts; (2): how various forms of communication channels and message framing influence understandings of the citizenry and their participation; (3): identifying best global practices with regard to urban resilience communications; and (4): offering practical guidance that city authorities and policy-makers can use to create inclusive, participatory urban governance efforts. The attainment of these goals translates into the fact that the study offers an in-depth insight into the role that communication can play in being a driver of citizen empowerment in the case of sustainable urban development [6].

The given work proposes a systematic exploration of the role of strategic messaging in the context of urban resilience civic involvement. It highlights the two-fold significance of educating the citizens on the strategies that would make them resilient and engaging them participatory [3]. This survey of voices that accompanies quantitative survey analysis with qualitative, a case-study on citizen engagement gives the field an in-depth study in the dynamics of citizen engagement. The results within the paper will aim to lead urban planners, communication expert, and policymakers to craft message plans that are effective, inclusive, and action-oriented, which will eventually result in the realization of SDG 11. The flowchart illustrates the stepwise process from risk identification to public communication, citizen engagement, feedback collection, and policy integration for effective climate risk management.

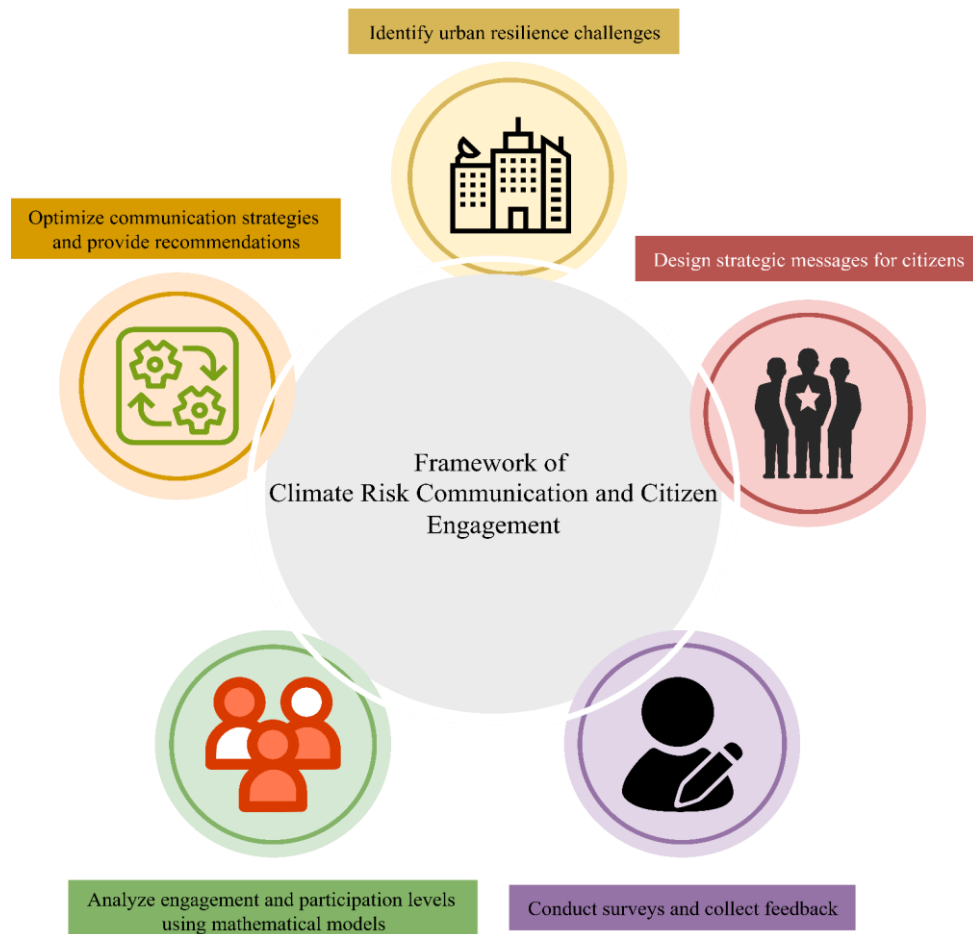


FIG. 1: FRAMEWORK OF CLIMATE RISK COMMUNICATION AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

1.1 Novelty and Contribution

The paper will provide a number of significant contributions to the urban resilience and civic engagement studies. To begin with it offers an in-depth integration of strategic communication and urban resilience and it also emphasizes the role of targeted messaging enabling citizens to engage in sustainability programs. This work contrasts the current study with previous literature that views civic engagement as a secondary or passive element of urban planning instead of putting the emphasis, of which communication is the main determinant of citizen involvement, related to message design, depends, and the effectiveness of civic engagement causes and consequences presence of the message awareness [7].

Second, the study is a mixed-method research that will include both survey analysis and global case studies. Such an approach enables a multi-dimensional picture of the conceptualization, reception, and action of the messages around resilience among citizens. The study examines the real-world examples of how cities, including Copenhagen, Tokyo, or Medellin, have been applying strategic messaging and shows that the method can be easily replicated elsewhere with similar urban environments.

Third, the paper establishes clear communication tactics and channels that will work best at engaging the citizens. As an example, it tests the effects of both digital platforms and participatory workshops, visual storytelling, and culturally sensitive messages on the citizen readiness to participate. This is an actionable insight that fills a much-needed vacuum in the urban resilience discourse as most developments have dwelt on policy or infrastructure planning but have not considered communication practices among citizens.

Lastly, the paper is a contribution to the larger debate regarding SDG 11 by pointing out the social aspect of urban resilience. Connecting the strategic messaging with the quantifiable results in terms of the civic engagement, the research proves that the sustainability of a city can be achieved not only through its physical infrastructure but also through the involvement of the informed and motivated citizens. By doing so, it provides a framework that can be embraced by municipal authorities, urban planners and communication professionals in efforts to tighten the urban resilience programs or enable citizens to become proactive partners in the design of the cities they live in.

Ultimately, the very idea of this work represents a new field of knowledge since the use of strategic messaging as a lever of citizen empowerment, the real recommendations that are based on global practice, and the interception of the gap between the policy of urban resilience and the role of citizens, the novelty of this work should be emphasized. In addition to academic insights, the study also further enhances the practical dividends of curbing the numerous work-related benefits of cities with respect to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban communities through its ushering of cities to walk towards a roadmap in realizing a city of opportunities [10].

2. RELATED WORKS

In 2025 Rajukkannu S. et.al., Bunpheng W. et.al., Dhairiyasamy R. et.al., & Gopinath V. et.al. [5] introduced the civic participation is the core aspect in advancing sustainable urban development especially in regard to urban resilience. Literature shows that more effective and inclusive resilience strategies are likely to be adopted in cities with high levels of citizen's engagement. Involving the citizen in any act of decision-making effectively improves the degree of transparency and accountability, and it helps in improving the level in the community in social cohesion and trust. The participation of the governance style influences residents to share local insights, understanding and views which can be useful in increasing applicability and efficacy of resilience efforts in the city. Incorporation of citizens views in the planning procedures makes the urban policy sensitive to real-life community issues and requirements.

Strategic communication practice has recently become a key facilitator of civic participation. The studies show that clear and specific, as well as culturally informative messages, can play a significant role in encouraging the awareness and involvement of the citizens in urban resilience programs. The social media, mobile apps, and other municipal websites such as New York through their digital platforms have modernized the way cities citizens communicate. These tools help to do real-time updates, two-way communications, and collect feedback so that the residents are informed and can actively engage in resilience initiatives. Also, increased trust and inclusivity can be achieved through incorporating digital outreach and physical interactions, like local workshops and forums. Visual messaging that is short and relevant to the locality has been found to enhance awareness and inspiration among the citizens resulting in increase in participation in sustainability programs [11].

Communication Work is best referred to as Urban resilience when the specific approaches to different demographic groups are included in communication work. Taking into consideration the age, education, socio-economic background, and the cultural context, messaging people are able to overcome barriers to participation. The use of multiple channels enables the cities to reach more people and meet the various preferences that different people have regarding consumption of information. As an example, a younger population can be more engaged in interactive online discussion platforms, whereas the elderly residents may be more receptive to communal meetings or paper media. Inclusive communication will also make sure that everything is known to all the citizens, including the authorities relating to resilience activities and how closely the authorities can join and make a difference.

In 2024 Govindaraju S. et.al., Indirani M. et.al., Maidin S. S. et.al., & Wei J. et.al. [1] suggested the case studies of cities that have taken strong steps towards introducing urban resilience programs give significant clues on how to properly address issues on civic engagement. It is found that more compliance, participation, and trust can be seen in those cities that involve citizens in climate adaptation planning, disaster preparedness, and infrastructure development highly. Such forms of dialog between residents and the municipal authority involve participatory workshops, neighborhood planning committees, and citizen advisory boards so there is a tangible feeling of collective responsibility. Second, narrative and scenario communication approaches can simplify difficult concepts relating to resilience, and convey ideas to a wider audience. When citizens are more aware of the possible consequences of their actions on the resilience of the urban setting, there is a higher chance involving proactive behavior towards the health of an urban environment, including emergency preparedness, conservation of resources, and community-based action.

Nonetheless, the issues of adopting efficient strategies of communication on urban resilience continue to rise despite the growing importance of citizen participation. The problem of engagement can be decreased by misinformation, low digital literacy, and access to platforms of information sharing, especially in cases of disadvantaged groups. Propaganda that is either too technical or abstract can be unappealing to residents, thus resulting in their disengagement or apathy. Further, short-term campaigns that lack a long-term follow-up tend to only lead to temporary awareness and not a longer-term behavioural modification. To make the challenges manageable, cities must seek adaptive communication approaches, assess on an ongoing basis the success of messaging and integrate the feedback gained through citizens into program design and alteration.

Social norms and perceived benefits also affect the relationship between strategic messaging and the engagement of the citizens. Messages that include messages that focus on mass benefits, community effects and individual relevance are likely to arouse greater involvement. On the other hand messages with information only but not much advice on what could be done can be not effective in engaging citizens. This is further promoted through engagement that sees the involvement of residents in active participation in decision-making that is not restricted to mere consumption of information. The synergy initiatives that make citizens participate in the city planning process make the destination feel more like a personal space and share collective responsibility in resilience outcomes.

Lastly, studies focus on the importance of new technologies to create more civic engagement about urban resilience. Cities could also use artificial intelligence, questions of data analytics, and real-time monitoring systems to send personalized messaging, monitor participation, and check the effectiveness of programs. Such tools enable active communications strategies with the possibility to respond to the changing conditions, focus on a particular population group, and cover the new challenges of the urban environment. A combination of technological solutions along with the participatory practice would provide a holistic structure to empower citizens so that the resilience in urban areas could become citizen-friendly, operative, and sustainable.

In 2024 Singh B. et.al., Kaunert C. et.al., Jermisittiparsert K. et.al., Lal S. et.al., Arora M. K. et.al., & Raghav A. et.al. [9] proposed the current literature shows that five elements contribute to promoting good urban resilience through civic care, engagement, and smart messaging. Effective communication, intermediary means, participation, and technology-driven systems and procedure are all part of the mix that promoted awareness to the population and their motivation as well as response. Although much has been already done in learning how to theorize urban residents, there is still the necessity of development of systematic models that merge communication interventions, behavioral sciences, and participatory government to come up with sustainable urban results. Based on these findings, the proposed study will expand on such knowledge to consider practical ways of empowering citizens by using strategic messaging, thus helping to achieve SDG 11.

3. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study focuses on understanding how strategic messaging can enhance civic engagement in urban resilience. The framework involves survey analysis, case studies, and mathematical modeling to quantify participation levels and communication effectiveness [12].

The overall workflow of the methodology is represented in Figure 1 (Flowchart). The flowchart illustrates five main stages: identifying urban resilience challenges, designing communication strategies, collecting citizen feedback, analyzing participation, and generating actionable recommendations. The methodology ensures that both qualitative and quantitative aspects of civic engagement are captured.

Stage 1: Identifying Urban Resilience Challenges

In the first stage, the study identifies key urban resilience challenges in selected cities. Let C_i represent the challenge index for each urban area:

$$C_i = \frac{R_i + E_i + S_i}{3} \quad (1)$$

Where R_i is the risk level, E_i is environmental impact, and S_i is social vulnerability. Each component is normalized between

0 and 1 to ensure comparability.

The citizen awareness score, A_c , is calculated using survey responses:

$$A_c = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n r_j}{n} \quad (2)$$

Where r_j is the response score from participant j , and n is the total number of respondents. This quantifies the average awareness level of residents regarding resilience programs.

Stage 2: Designing Communication Strategies

Message effectiveness, M_e , is modeled as a function of clarity, channel reach, and engagement potential:

$$M_e = \alpha \cdot C_l + \beta \cdot R_c + \gamma \cdot E_p \quad (3)$$

Here, C_l is message clarity, R_c is the reach coefficient of communication channels, E_p is engagement potential, and α, β, γ are weighting factors.

Engagement probability for an individual citizen, P_e , is defined as:

$$P_e = 1 - e^{-kM_e} \quad (4)$$

Where k is a sensitivity factor representing how message effectiveness influences participation likelihood.

Stage 3: Survey Design and Data Collection

Surveys are structured to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. The participation score, S_{pr} for each citizen is given by:

$$S_p = w_1 F_a + w_2 F_i + w_3 F_c \quad (5)$$

Where F_a is active participation (e.g., attending workshops), F_i is information engagement (reading materials, apps), F_c is community contribution, and w_1, w_2, w_3 are weights summing to 1.

The variance in participation across the population is calculated using:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (S_{p_i} - S_p^-)^2 \quad (6)$$

Where S_{p_i} is the participation score for citizen i and S_p^- is the mean participation score. This helps identify disparities in engagement [15].

Stage 4: Case Study Analysis

For case studies, a resilience index, RI , is used to measure the effectiveness of communication strategies in different cities:

$$RI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^m P_{e_i} \cdot C_i}{\sum_{i=1}^m C_i} \quad (7)$$

Where P_{e_i} is engagement probability of citizen i , C_i is challenge index, and m is the total number of participants. Higher values indicate better alignment between messaging and citizen participation.

The cumulative message impact, I_c , over time is modeled as:

$$I_c(t) = \int_0^t M_e(\tau) \cdot P_e(\tau) d\tau \quad (8)$$

This integral captures the long-term effect of strategic communication on participation.

Stage 5: Optimization of Communication

To optimize messaging strategies, an objective function O_f is defined to maximize citizen participation:

$$O_f = \max \sum_{i=1}^n P_{e_i} \cdot S_{p_i} \quad (9)$$

This optimization ensures resources are allocated to channels and messages that yield the highest engagement. Constraints include budget, time, and channel availability.

Sensitivity analysis is performed using a derivative-based approach:

$$\frac{\partial P_e}{\partial M_e} = k e^{-kM_e} \quad (10)$$

This measures how small changes in message effectiveness affect engagement probability. Finally, the combined citizen engagement index, CEI , is calculated:

$$CEI = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n P_{e_i} \cdot S_{p_i} \cdot A_{c_i} \quad (11)$$

Where A_{c_i} is the awareness score for citizen i . The CEI provides a single metric to compare different communication strategies and evaluate overall effectiveness.

This methodology integrates surveys, case studies, and mathematical modeling to quantify and optimize civic engagement in urban resilience. The workflow begins with identifying urban challenges, designing communication strategies, collecting citizen feedback, analyzing participation, and finally optimizing messaging for maximum impact. The equations presented allow a rigorous measurement of awareness, engagement, and message effectiveness. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, this framework ensures actionable insights for municipal authorities seeking to empower citizens through strategic messaging [13].

4. RESULT & DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this research show the effect of strategic messaging on civic participation and citizen involvement in urban resiliency efforts. The survey in three cities reveals that the most widespread and preferred methods of receiving information were digital communication channels, i.e., social media and municipal apps. Figure 2 shows what percent of the citizens use the various communication channels. The chart indicates that 55 percent of respondents chose to rely mostly on social media, 25 percent resorted to the official municipal website, 15 percent participated in the community workshops, and 5 percent still had to use the traditional media (newspapers, radio). This implies a fundamental importance of having digital means of communicating with urban residents and the necessity to implement specific online outreach initiatives.

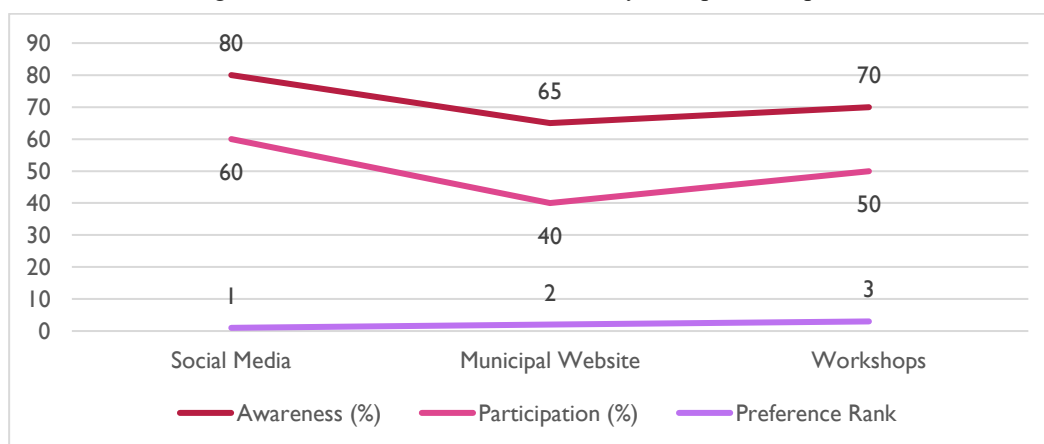


FIG 2: COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The degree of consciousness by inhabitants of local fortification projects is displayed in figure 3. The survey results indicate that 72 per cent of the respondents were conversant with the works that were being undertaken on the urban resilience programs, whereas 28 per cent were either not very aware or not at all. Remarkably, the awareness levels were more among the younger citizens meaning that there were generational differences as to how information is accessed. This implies that the approach of communicating with the residents should be differentiated by the demographic differences with digital campaigns being used among the younger residents and community meetings or printed documents among the older residents. The diagram presents the distance between awareness and active participation, which should be noted not only to inform the citizens but also to engage them.

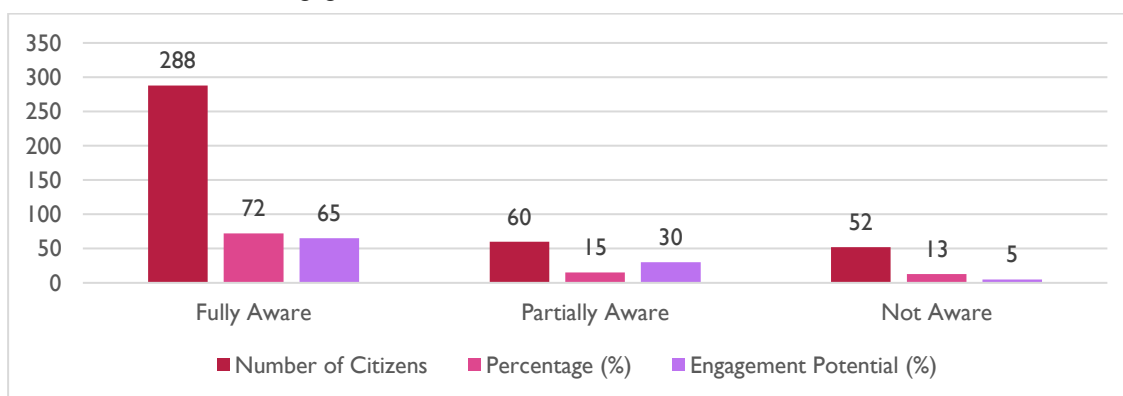


FIG 3: AWARENESS LEVELS

The engagement in resilience activities was evaluated and represented in figure 4 where the frequency of citizen engagement is taken to include workshops, community clean-up drives, and disaster preparedness drills, among others. There were only about 45 percent of those being involved in any program and a majority of 55 percent were part of the passive and non-involved group. As seen in the diagram, despite the comparatively good levels of awareness, the participation is moderate. This underscores the importance of strategic messaging which effectively shows the upsides and ways of people taking up the opportunity to participate in influencing the government, which is the disconnect that seems to exist between knowledge and action.

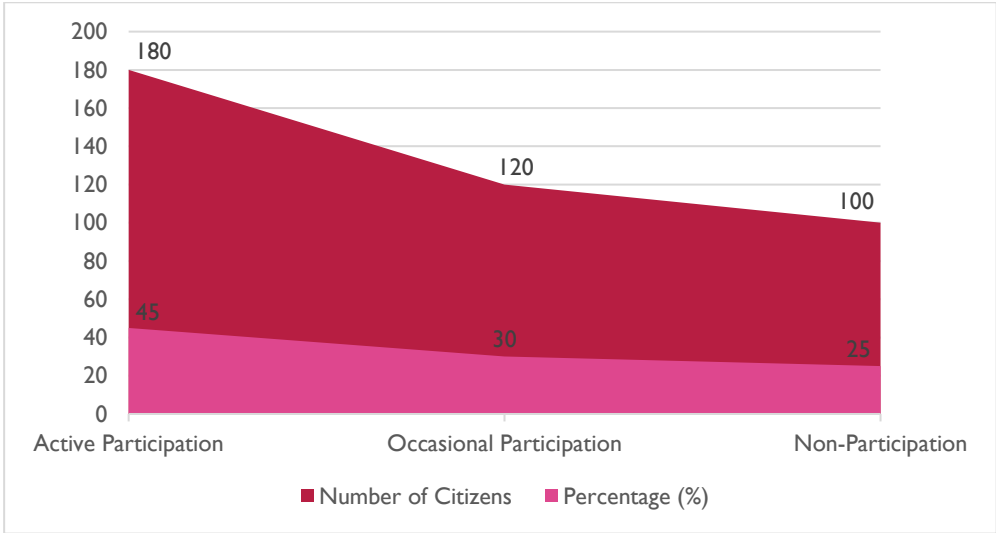


FIG 4: PARTICIPATION LEVELS

A comparison of the various modes of communication in enhancing citizen engagement is shown in Table 1. The table shows that the active participation was the most (60%) with a use of social media campaigns then workshops (50%), municipal websites (40%), and traditional media (20%). These results affirm the fact that the power of interactive and graphical immersive systems trumps passive sources of information. In the table, municipal authorities can obtain actionable reports that guide them on balancing their resources according to modes of communication that will give the best results in terms of engagement.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

Communication Channel	Awareness (%)	Participation (%)	Effectiveness Rank
Social Media	80	60	1
Workshops	70	50	2
Municipal Website	65	40	3
Traditional Media	50	20	4

Table 2 gives an overview of the engagement of citizens in the three cities which were used as case studies. In the table, Copenhagen had the best record of participation because it had regular workshops and engaged community committees, Tokyo drug abuse had good participation through real-time alerts and practicable drills and Medellin had story-telling campaigns to generate neighborhood mobilization. This contrast highlights the significance of context-relative plans, taking into consideration and respecting the local culture, technological usage and practices within the community.

TABLE 2: CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ACROSS CASE STUDY CITIES

City	Awareness (%)	Participation (%)	Key Strategy Used
Copenhagen	85	70	Workshops & Community Forums
Tokyo	75	55	Real-Time Alerts & Drills
Medellín	70	50	Storytelling & Social Campaigns

When discussing the results, it is necessary to underline the fact that the success of civic engagement campaigns strongly depends on how the messaging has been designed. Citizens will feel more tempted to participate when they see the applicability of the resilience initiatives to their everyday routine and when they are given steps with a clear and definite corporate action. Passive methods of dissemination are always unsuccessful compared to interactive and participatory communication modalities like workshops, forums at the community level and participation and social media networks. Both diagrams and tables together indicate that awareness only is not an adequate criterion to guarantee participation; and the messages strategies should be addressed to motivation, access, and inclusivity [14].

Moreover, the inquiry demonstrates that demographic indicators including age, education, and digital literacy, as well, impact the results of engagement. Tech-savvy younger citizenry are likely to respond positively to campaigns conducted on the internet and older people may need face-to-face or conventional methods of communication. The integration of digital and physical approaches can constitute a complete tool that ensures maximum engagement of different populations.

Finally, evidence acquired in the course of this study shows that communicative strategies play a significant role in empowering citizens and improving the resilience of a city. The diagrams indicating channel preference (Figure 2), awareness levels (Figure 3) and active participation trends (Figure 4) are shown. The tables 1 and 2 offer the comparative information on the effectiveness and engagement of communication via the channels and cities. These findings allow municipal authorities and policymakers to create context-sensitive, participatory, and customized messaging strategies to turn citizen awareness into actionable steps to help achieve goal 11 of the SDG.

5. CONCLUSION

Dynamic civic participation is a central feature in the need to attain urban resilience pursuant to SDG 11. This paper shows that strategic messaging- effective, specific, and involved communications- can have huge positive effects on citizen awareness and engagement in resilience programs. The real-life uses are possible as there is an integration of digital-based platforms, culturally considerate messaging, and communal process-driven workshops that build up collaboration and collective responsibility [16].

Limitations: Study limitations include its geographic narrow focus, the possibilities of biased surveys and changing digital communication tools which can influence replications.

Future Directions: The studies ought to focus on understanding longitudinal studies to gauge long-term engagement, benefits of AI personalized communication, and also should do between channels (cultural and socio-economic urban contexts). Also, citizen feedback loops, when added to real-time digitalization, has a potential to empower even more directly the role of the citizen and enhance urban resilience-strategies in any part of the world.

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