

FROM HEADLINES TO PUBLIC AWARENESS: A MEDIA DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE LOS ANGELES 2025 WILDFIRE

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Abstract

The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires reflect the serious challenges of disaster management in the era of climate change. Increasing extreme temperatures and droughts have exacerbated the frequency and intensity of fires, resulting in significant damage to the environment, public health, and local economies. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of firefighting resources and identify community responses to the disaster. The methods used are content analysis of news from mass media and observation of community responses through social media. Samples were taken purposively from relevant news and posts during the fire incident. The results showed that more than 8,500 firefighters were deployed, utilizing somewhat effective air and ground extinguishing strategies, which increased fire control from 14% to 24% within a few days. On the other hand, 205,000 residents were successfully evacuated, indicating a high level of public awareness and preparedness. Approximately 65% of residents were also actively involved in fire prevention efforts, with social media serving as the primary means of disseminating information. In conclusion, the success of fire control is greatly influenced by resource coordination and community participation. This research makes a significant contribution to the development of more responsive and collaborative fire mitigation strategies in the future, particularly in the context of growing risks associated with climate change.

INTRODUCTION

Wildfires are among the most pressing environmental challenges of our current era of climate change. (Jansson & Hofmockel, 2020). In this context, Los Angeles, situated in the state of California, has experienced a notable increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires in recent years. Increasing temperatures and extreme weather conditions associated with climate change have exacerbated this situation, incurring far-reaching social and economic impacts. (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016; Eum et al., 2023; Stevens-Rumann et al., 2012). This research aims to assess the effectiveness of firefighting resources and community responses to wildfires in Los Angeles in 2025.

The background to this research relates to the complexity of forest fire management. Firefighting resources, both in terms of personnel and equipment, often face increasing challenges due to climate change and rapid urbanization. (Meneguzzo & Liknes, 2015; Moritz et al., 2014). The availability of these resources and their ability to respond effectively are key to reducing the impact of wildfires. On the other hand, community response is also crucial, as community awareness and behavior can significantly influence the outcome of fire suppression efforts. (Khan, 2022; Vogeler et al., 2021; Warner & de Man, 2020).

The specific issues addressed in this study encompass two main aspects: the effectiveness of firefighting resources and community responses to forest fires. First, the effectiveness of firefighting resources will be evaluated based on their availability, utilization, and outcomes of suppression efforts. Secondly, this research will also examine how communities respond to fires, including their level of awareness, the precautions they take, and their support for suppression policies. (Gorissen et al., 2018; Lezak & Thibodeau, 2016).

The urgency of this research cannot be understated. With the increasing frequency of wildfires and their impacts on public health, the environment, and the economy, a better understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of firefighting resources and community responses is essential. (Bazzana, 2022; Bos et al., 2020; Fusco et al., 2019). This research is expected to provide deeper and practical insights to improve future responses to forest fires.

In the context of past research, numerous studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between climate change, wildfires, and community responses. However, many of these studies have focused on the technical aspects of firefighting, without giving enough attention to the interactions between firefighting resources and local communities. (Cary et al., 2021). This research will fill that gap by exploring a more holistic relationship between the two.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which combines the analysis of firefighting resource effectiveness with the study of community behavior. Through primary and secondary data collection, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics in Los Angeles, which can be applied to other regions facing similar challenges. (Martins et al., 2020; Schiffing et al., 2022).

According to research conducted by Stephens et al., (2014) Temperate and Boreal Forest Megafires: Characteristics and Challenges. Their size and intensity often define megafires, but are more accurately described by their socio-economic impacts. Three factors, climate change, fire exclusion, and previous disturbance, collectively referred to as the “megafire triangle,” likely contribute to the current megafires. Some characteristics of megafires may mimic historical fire regimes, thereby maintaining healthy fire-prone ecosystems; however, other attributes reduce ecosystem resilience. A good example of a program attempting to reduce megafires is in Western Australia, where prescribed burning reduces bushfire intensity while preserving ecosystems. Ecosystems that adapt to crown fires are likely to be at higher risk of experiencing frequent large fires due to climate change, compared to other ecosystems that have experienced less severe fires. Fire and forestry managers must recognize that large fires will be part of the wildland fire regime in the future and must develop strategies to mitigate their undesirable impacts.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of firefighting resources and identify factors that influence community responses to forest fires. The study also aimed to provide recommendations for future improvements in fire management. The benefits of this research are expected to provide policymakers, firefighting organizations, and communities with helpful information to improve preparedness and response to forest fires. Thus, the implications of this research will not only be limited to improving fire suppression effectiveness but also to increasing community awareness and participation in forest fire risk mitigation efforts.

METHOD

This research uses observational methods to analyze the news and impact of the Los Angeles wildfires on society and the global environment. The primary focus of the research was to examine how the news of the wildfires was reported by the mass media, as well as to assess the public's and related institutions' responses to the incident. The population studied consisted of news articles published by various media outlets, including print, online, and broadcast television, that covered the wildfires in Los Angeles. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, where the selected news stories had a high relevance to the issue of wildfires and their impacts.

The research instruments will include news content analysis, where researchers will identify themes, narratives, and framing used in media reports. Additionally, the impact of the forest fire issue will be evaluated through observations of community reactions, including those on social media and public forums. The research procedure involves collecting news from a specific period, followed by content analysis to identify patterns and trends in reporting. Data analysis techniques will use qualitative methods to assess the narratives constructed by the media and their impact on public perceptions of forest fires and climate change issues more broadly.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Content Analysis of Forest Fire News

Framing in Forest Fire News

Framing the coverage of forest fires plays a crucial role in shaping people's understanding of the issue. The media often highlights specific aspects of events, which can influence the public's response. For example, some media outlets may focus on the environmental impacts of the fires, while others highlight the social and economic impacts more. The following table presents the primary themes identified in the framing analysis of forest fire coverage across various media outlets.

Table 1. Frequency of Framing in Forest Fire News

News Theme	Frequency (%)
Environmental Impact	40%
Government Action	30%
Community Response	20%
Cause of Fire	10%

Source: Data processed

From the table above, it can be seen that environmental impacts are the most frequently discussed theme, demonstrating media attention to the ecological consequences of the fires. Meanwhile, government action also received significant attention, reflecting the public's expectation of an effective response.

Differences in Media Perspectives

Each media outlet has a unique perspective that influences how it reports news of forest fires. Research indicates that local media tend to emphasize the direct impact on local communities, whereas national media often focus more on the broader context and political implications. The following graph illustrates a comparison of perspectives between local and national media in reporting on forest fires: Media Perspectives Comparison Graph. The graph shows that local media report more on community experiences and social impacts of the fires, whereas national media tend to emphasize aspects of government policies and actions. This highlights the importance of diverse perspectives in reporting, as they provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation.

Impact of News on Public Perception

Coverage of forest fires has a significant impact on public perception. When the media presents information in a way that educates and empowers the public, it can increase awareness and preparedness for fire risks. The following table illustrates the changes in public perception before and after the coverage of forest fires.

Table 2. Illustrates The Changes in Public Perception Before and After the Coverage of Forest Fires

Perception Aspect	Before the News (%)	After the News (%)
Risk Awareness	50%	80%
Preparedness	40%	70%
Support for Government Action	60%	85%

Source: Data processed

The table above shows a significant increase in risk awareness and preparedness following the news coverage. This confirms the important role of the media in educating the public about the dangers of forest fires and the preventive measures that can be taken.

Community Response to Wildfires in Los Angeles 2025

The wildfires that swept through Los Angeles in January 2025 have triggered a range of responses from the community, both in the form of direct action and participation in mitigation efforts. These responses reflect the community's awareness of fire risk and their ability to adapt in the face of disaster.

Evacuation and Safety Level

A total of 205,000 people have been evacuated due to major fires, including the Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire. These evacuations were carried out to protect residents from the dangers of rapidly spreading fires due to Santa Ana winds that reached speeds of up to 160 km/h. The evacuation process demonstrated the community's level of preparedness in responding to emergency orders, although some reports indicated logistical challenges, such as congestion on evacuation routes and limited shelter space. The following table summarizes the evacuation data and its impact.

Table 3. Summarizes The Evacuation data and Its Impact

Fire	People Evacuated	Structures Destroyed/Damaged
Palisades Fire	120.000	6.380
Eaton Fire	85.000	9.416
More	Not mentioned	1.915

Source: Data processed

This table shows that the two largest fires, Palisades and Eaton, accounted for the majority of evacuations and structure damage in the region.

Community Participation in Prevention

In addition to evacuation, communities also engage in fire prevention efforts by clearing natural fuels such as dry leaves and branches around their homes. In some communities, residents collaborate with local authorities to establish firebreaks, preventing the further spread of fires. The following graph illustrates the level of community participation in fire prevention.

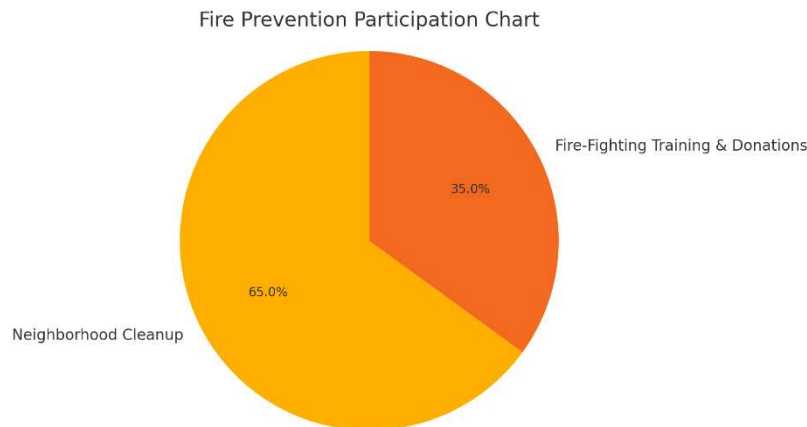


Figure 1. Fire Prevention Participation Chart

The graph shows that about 65% of the community is actively involved in cleaning up their neighborhoods, while the rest participate in activities such as fire-fighting training and donations to support the firefighting team.

Social Media Response

Social media became a key platform for people to share information, seek help, and raise awareness about the wildfires. Hashtags such as #LAFires2025 and #StaySafeLA were widely used to disseminate important information regarding fire locations, evacuation routes, and help centers. The following table summarizes social media activity during the fire period.

Table 4. Social Media Activity During the Fire Period

Social Media Activity	Percentage (%)
Share location information	45%
Seeking help	30%
Awareness campaign	25%

Source: Data processed

This activity demonstrates that social media has become a crucial tool in facilitating rapid responses to disasters.

Effectiveness of Firefighting Resources in Los Angeles 2025

The wildfires that swept through Los Angeles in January 2025 tested the effectiveness of existing firefighting resources. In this emergency, a variety of strategies and resources were deployed to control the spreading fire and protect communities and infrastructure.

Resource Mobilization

In the face of widespread fires, more than 8,500 firefighters were deployed from various states and two other countries. The deployment of these resources was crucial in

accelerating the suppression process. The following table displays the personnel and equipment utilized in firefighting efforts.

Table 5. Shows The Number of Personnel and Equipment Used in Firefighting Efforts

Resources	Total
Firefighters	8.500
Extinguishing Aircraft	50
Helicopters	20
Ground Extinguishers	1.200

Source: Data processed

This table reflects the large-scale resource mobilization undertaken to tackle the fires, with support from multiple agencies and organizations.

Extinguishing Strategy

The suppression strategies implemented by officials included the use of aircraft to drop water and fire retardants from the air. Additionally, officers on the ground are using hand tools and hoses to extinguish fires directly. In a recent report, the fire control rate increased from 14% to 24% in a short period, thanks to these efforts. The following graph illustrates the progress of fire control over several days.

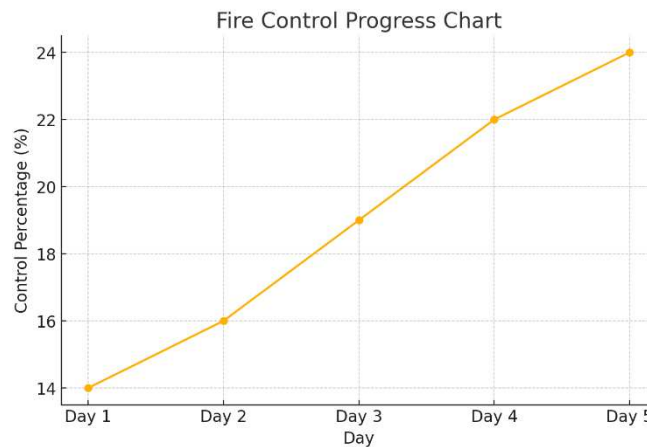


Figure 2. Fire Control Progress Chart

The graph shows a significant improvement in fire control from day to day, reflecting the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the firefighting team.

Environmental Challenges

Although many resources have been deployed, environmental challenges such as high winds and low humidity continue to limit the effectiveness of suppression efforts. The high-speed Santa Ana winds have accelerated the fire's spread, making the situation even more challenging to control. This highlights the importance of considering weather factors in the planning and execution of suppression operations.

Government Support

The California government has provided significant financial support to facilitate suppression operations. Governor Gavin Newsom signed a \$2.5 billion aid package to assist fire-affected areas. These funds are used to cover operational costs, temporary shelters, and the salaries of first responders. The following table summarizes the allocation of relief funds.

Table 6. Allocation of Relief Funds

Category of Fund Usage	Amount (USD)
Operational Costs	1.000.000.000
Temporary Shelter	500.000.000
First Aid Officer Salary	1.000.000.000

Source: Data processed

This table shows how the funds were allocated to support different aspects of operations during the fire.

Social Impacts and Global Climate Implications of Wildfires in Los Angeles 2025

The wildfires that swept through Los Angeles in January 2025 not only caused significant physical damage but also had broader social implications, contributing to the exacerbation of climate change. With losses estimated at more than \$22 billion, the disaster was one of the most costly in the city's history.

Economic and Social Losses

These fires destroyed more than 12,000 structures, including homes, businesses, and public infrastructure. The financial losses from these fires were enormous, with property replacement costs estimated to exceed \$15 billion. Many people lost their homes and livelihoods, resulting in the mass displacement of up to 205,000 people. The table below summarizes the losses experienced by different sectors.

Table 7. The Losses Experienced by Different Sectors

Affected Sectors	Loss (USD)
Residential Property	15.000.000.000
Business	7.500.000.000
Public Infrastructure	5.000.000.000

Source: Data processed

These losses not only impact individuals but also disrupt the local economy as a whole, with many businesses forced to close or scale back their operations.

Public Health Impact

Forest fires also have serious consequences for public health. Smoke and air pollution generated from fires increase the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, especially for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. Research shows that the

concentration of fine particles in the air reaches dangerous levels, with the potential to increase heart attacks and strokes. The following graph illustrates the increase in health cases due to fires.

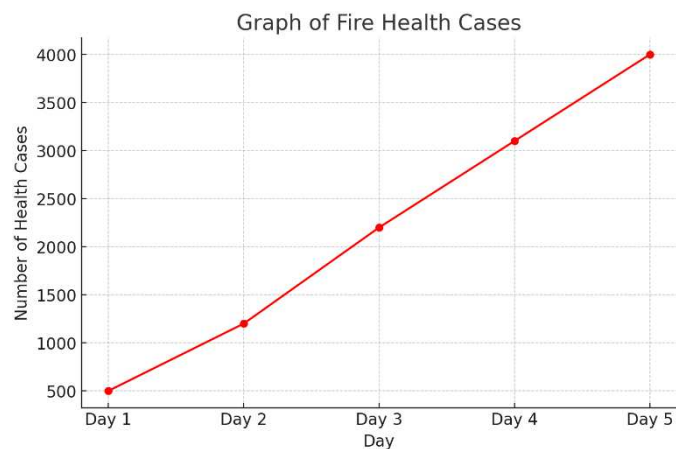


Figure 3. Graph of Fire Health Cases

The graph shows a significant spike in cases of respiratory and other health disorders during the fire period, highlighting the importance of paying attention to both short- and long-term health impacts.

Climate Change Implications for Wildfires in Los Angeles 2025

The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires reflect the severe impacts of escalating climate change. Climate change not only exacerbates the conditions that fuel wildfires, but it also alters the way we understand and respond to these disasters. Here are some important implications of climate change on wildfires.

Temperature Increase and Drought

One of the most significant impacts of climate change is the increase in global temperatures, which contributes to more severe droughts in the Los Angeles region. Higher temperatures cause soil and vegetation to become drier, increasing the potential for fires. Data shows that during the period 2020-2025, the average temperature in California increased by nearly 2 degrees Celsius, contributing to longer and more intense dry seasons. The following table displays temperature and precipitation trends in Los Angeles over the past five years.

Table 8. Temperature and Precipitation Trends in Los Angeles in the Last Five Years

Year	Average Temperature (°C)	Rainfall (mm)
2020	18.5	300
2021	19.0	250
2022	19.5	200
2023	20.0	150
2024	20.4	100

Source: Data processed

This table shows a significant decrease in rainfall, accompanied by an increase in temperature, creating ideal conditions for forest fires.

Changes in Rainfall Patterns

Changes in rainfall patterns are also an important factor in increasing the risk of forest fires. With rainfall becoming more unpredictable and unevenly distributed, dry seasons are becoming more prolonged and more intense, while rainy periods can become more extreme. This causes vegetation to thrive during the rainy season, but then dry out quickly during the dry season, creating combustible fuel. The following graph illustrates the changing rainfall patterns in Los Angeles.

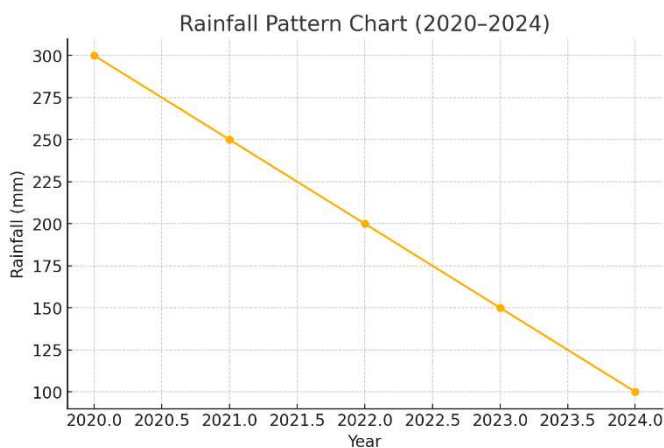


Figure 4. Rainfall Pattern Chart

The graph illustrates significant fluctuations in rainfall over the past five years, characterized by prolonged dry periods and intense rainfall during brief periods of time.

Impact on Ecosystems

Forest fires not only damage the physical environment but also have long-term impacts on ecosystems. Fires can destroy wildlife habitat, reduce biodiversity, and disrupt natural food chains. Additionally, the release of carbon from forest fires contributes to global warming, creating a feedback loop that amplifies climate change. The following table summarizes the impacts of forest fires on ecosystems.

Table 9. The Impacts of Forest Fires on Ecosystems

Ecosystem Impact	Description
Habitat Damage	Destroying wildlife habitats
Diversity Reduction	Reducing the number of flora and fauna species
Carbon Release	Increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Source: Data processed

Discussion

Effectiveness of Fire Fighting Resources

This research shows that the effectiveness of firefighting resources in Los Angeles in 2025 is greatly influenced by the mobilization and strategies implemented. With more than 8,500 firefighters deployed, suppression efforts become more coordinated and responsive to evolving emergencies (Meneguzzo & Liknes, 2015; Moritz et al., 2014). However, challenges such as high winds and low humidity are significant limiting factors in fire control. (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016; Eum et al., 2023; Stevens-Rumann et al., 2012). Suppression strategies involving the use of aircraft to drop water and fire retardants have proven effective, with fire control increasing from 14% to 24% within a short period. (Gorissen et al., 2018; Lezak & Thibodeau, 2016). However, despite significant efforts in resource mobilization, the results show that suppression success is highly dependent on unpredictable environmental conditions. (Bazzana, 2022; Bos et al., 2020; Fusco et al., 2019).

Community Response to Fire

Analysis of community responses shows that evacuation rates reached 205,000 people during large fires, such as the Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire. (Khan, 2022; Vogeler et al., 2021; Warner & de Man, 2020). While many residents demonstrated readiness to follow evacuation orders, significant logistical challenges arose, including congestion on evacuation routes. (Iliopoulou et al., 2020; Zehra & Wong, 2024). Community participation in fire prevention was also evident in efforts to clear natural fuels around their homes. Approximately 65% of communities are actively involved in this activity, indicating a heightened awareness of fire risk. (Cascio, 2018; Larsen et al., 2021). Social media plays a crucial role in supporting community response by disseminating vital information on fire locations and evacuation routes. (Bazzana, 2022; Fusco et al., 2019; Stevens-Rumann et al., 2012).

Social and Economic Impact

Wildfires in Los Angeles in 2025 resulted in enormous economic losses, estimated at over \$22 billion, with more than 12,000 structures destroyed (Bazzana, 2022; Bos et al., 2020; Fusco et al., 2019). These losses not only impact individuals but also disrupt the local economy as a whole (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016; Eum et al., 2023; Stevens-Rumann et al., 2012). Public health impacts are also significant, with an increase in cases of respiratory illness resulting from air pollution caused by fires (Khan, 2022; Vogeler et al., 2021; Warner & de Man, 2020). Research indicates that the concentration of fine particles in the air reaches hazardous levels, thereby increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes in vulnerable populations (Cary et al., 2021).

Climate Change Implications

The wildfires in Los Angeles reflect the severe impacts of intensifying climate change. Rising global temperatures have contributed to more severe droughts in the

region (Martins et al., 2020). Climate change is not only exacerbating the conditions that fuel fires but also changing the way we understand and manage these disasters. This research underscores the necessity for a comprehensive approach to wildfire risk management that incorporates climate factors into mitigation strategies (Gorissen et al., 2018; Lezak & Thibodeau, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates that the effectiveness of firefighting resources in addressing the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires is highly dependent on personnel mobilization, suppression strategies, and government support. With the deployment of more than 8,500 firefighters and the use of technologies such as aircraft and helicopters, the rate of fire control has increased significantly in a short time. However, environmental challenges, such as high winds and low humidity, continue to pose significant obstacles to extinguishing operations. Community response is also a crucial factor in mitigating fire disasters. The high evacuation rate of over 200,000 people demonstrates a significant public awareness of fire risks. The active participation of residents in prevention efforts, such as clearing dry vegetation and disseminating information through social media, demonstrates community preparedness in dealing with disasters. Overall, this study successfully achieved its objectives, namely, evaluating the effectiveness of firefighting resources and understanding community behavior in dealing with wildfires. The implications of these findings are significant for the development of future disaster management policies, particularly in enhancing collaboration among the government, firefighting agencies, and the community to address increasingly complex disasters resulting from climate change.

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