

Review of: "The Consequences of Political and Economic Choices: Exploring Disaster Vulnerability with the Structure, Resource, and Behaviour Change model (SRAB)"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Abstract

While the abstract offers valuable insights into the topic, there are a few areas where further clarity and development could enhance its effectiveness.

1. Firstly, the abstract effectively highlights the series of unprecedented disasters in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta and their impact on agricultural sustainability and livelihoods. However, it lacks specific details regarding the extent of the damage caused and the consequences faced by the affected communities. Providing concrete examples or statistics would strengthen the abstract's ability to convey the severity of the situation.
2. The abstract briefly mentions the case study of Tan Hung commune in Soc Trang province as a representative example. However, it does not provide information on the selection criteria for this particular case study or the reasons for its significance.

Introduction

While the introduction effectively presents the context and research objectives, there are a few areas where further development and clarification could strengthen its overall effectiveness.

1. The introduction highlights the occurrence of two record-breaking saline intrusion and drought crises in 2015-2016 and 2019-2020, emphasizing their significance as evidence of a growing trend. However, the introduction fails to clearly explain the consequences of these events on the local communities and ecosystems. Providing specific examples or testimonies from affected individuals and outlining the ecological implications would strengthen the emotional and scientific impact of the introduction.
2. While the introduction briefly mentions the 2019-2020 disaster, it lacks specific details on its severity and implications. Expanding on the consequences of this event and comparing it to the 2015-2016 disaster would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ongoing challenges faced by the Vietnamese Mekong Delta.
3. The introduction effectively identifies a research gap by criticizing previous analyses for neglecting the link between historical disaster vulnerability and current farming behaviors. However, it would benefit from a more explicit explanation of the significance of this research gap. Expanding on the potential implications of understanding the relationship between vulnerability and farming practices would enhance the importance of the study.

The Root Cause of Disaster Vulnerability

1. The inclusion of quotes from various authors and researchers supports the points being made. However, it would be useful to provide more critical analysis and synthesis of the different perspectives presented.
2. In the discussion of the Pressure and Release Model (PAR), it would be helpful to provide a brief explanation of the model for readers who may not be familiar with it. Additionally, it would be beneficial to highlight any limitations or criticisms of the model to provide a more balanced perspective.
3. Consider including a concluding paragraph that summarizes the main points discussed and highlights the implications or significance of the proposed framework for future research and disaster risk reduction efforts.

Methodology

1. The description of the research setting is informative and provides relevant details about Tan Hung commune and Soc Trang province. However, it would be helpful to include more specific information about why Tan Hung commune was selected as the case study area. What criteria or considerations led to its selection? Providing this information would enhance the justification for choosing Tan Hung commune and increase the transparency of the research process.
2. The section adequately describes the data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders and key informant interviews. However, it would be beneficial to mention the approximate duration of the interviews and whether any specific interview protocols or guidelines were followed to ensure consistency across interviews. Providing these details would improve the transparency and replicability of the study.
3. The article mentions that 28 disaster-affected farm households were interviewed, but it does not provide details on how these households were selected. It would be useful to clarify the sampling strategy employed, such as whether it was a purposive or random sampling approach. Additionally, the article states that households were chosen based on vulnerability and ethnicity, but it does not specify the number of households representing each category. Including this information would provide a clearer understanding of the sample composition.

Current Farming System and Vulnerability to Natural Risks

1. The section is generally well-organized and presents information in a logical sequence. The introduction effectively establishes the context by highlighting the reliance on rice production and the prevalence of triple rice cropping in the VMD's coastal region. However, there is room for improvement in terms of sentence structure and clarity in a few places. For instance, in the sentence, "This system implies that farmers cultivate three rice crops a year: crop 1, or Summer-Autumn crop (April to August), crop 2, or Autumn-Winter (September to December), and crop 3, or the late Winter-Spring/ Spring-Summer crop (late December to mid-March)," rephrasing it for better readability would be beneficial.
2. The section effectively describes the 2015-2016 drought and increased saline intrusion, which had a significant impact on agricultural production in Soc Trang province. The inclusion of specific figures related to total rainfall, salinity concentration levels, and economic losses enhances the reader's understanding of the severity of the events. However, additional information on the specific impacts of the drought and saline intrusion on rice crops, vegetable

crops, sugarcane crops, fruit trees, and fishing areas would be valuable. This would provide a more detailed assessment of the vulnerability of the current farming system to these natural risks.

3. The source citation for Figure 3 is provided, but the reviewer suggests adding a brief caption or description explaining the information presented in the figure.

Structural Changes: Vietnam's Food Politics and Rice Intensification Policies

the section could benefit from more clarity and organization. The section covers a wide range of topics, from the French colonial period to the present day, and the transitions between these topics can be abrupt. More signposting and explicit transitions could help readers better understand the connections between the various historical and political developments discussed.

Discussions

1. Discussion section mentions several studies and researchers to support its claims, it lacks specific data or direct citations to back up the information presented. Including specific data points or direct references would enhance the credibility of the arguments made.
2. The discussions presents the state's politics and command economy as the primary factors keeping farmers engaged in rice farming. While it is acknowledged that the state plays a significant role, it overlooks other factors that may influence farmers' decisions, such as market dynamics, access to resources, and socio-cultural factors. A more balanced analysis that considers multiple factors would provide a more accurate representation of the situation.

Conclusion

The conclusion could benefit from a more cohesive synthesis of the main findings and their implications. It would be valuable to clearly articulate the overall contribution of the study and how it advances the existing knowledge on the subject.