National Image in International Relations: The Perception of China's National Image on Vietnamese Social Media: A case study of the VnExpress of 2019

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ABSTRACT: The paper aims to analyse the perception of the China's national image on Vietnam social media through a case study of VnExpress Online News. The study surveyed 901 articles with topics related to China from January 1, 2019 to December 31st, 2019 based on using content analysis and case study methods. The results show that the social media plays an important role in shaping China's national image in Vietnam. China's national image is received by the Vietnamese public both positively and negatively. The perception of Vietnamese public is more negative than positive on social media.

KEYWORDS: China's national image, VnExpress, Vietnamese public, social media, national image.

I. INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of information technology, the development needs of many countries require increasing influence and spreading ideals to the outside world. In which, most countries focus on building a strategy to position their national image in the eyes of the international public. In that context, the media is seen as a practical tool to promote the image of each country. If it succeeds in building a national image of goodwill, towards peace and cooperation, then global integration will become easier than ever. On the contrary, if there are wrong policies and methods, in addition to negatively impacting the national image, it also pushes them further away from integration and cooperation. National image building can serve a dual function if done effectively. It can not only generate domestic political support but also expand a country's international influence (Li, 2009). Therefore, the study of national image in international relations is meaningful in studying the strategy of each country as well as the relationship between countries in the current context.

In the practice of international relations, the construction and presentation of the national image to the public at home and abroad depends on the implementation method of each country. Some studies suggest that the national image is mainly opened up from three important areas, including: international relations [Boulding, 1959], economics (Dinnie, 2008) and media studies (Giffard, Rivenburgh, 2000). In it, media scholars mainly focus on describing the current national situation, discussing the relationship between national image and the circumstances affecting it, as well as related aspects. as communication strategies to disseminate the national image (Zhou, 2020). This clearly shows that communication has an impact on public perception, from awareness to public action and behaviour. Therefore, the leaders of each country pay attention to planning and building the national image in the media. Therefore, studying China's national image in Vietnamese media is one of the important factors to assess the position and relationship between Beijing and Hanoi.

Normalized in November 1991, Vietnam-China relations have reached new heights. With the continuous development cooperation of the two countries, up to now, China has become one of the leading partners of Vietnam, the first among the countries exporting goods to Vietnam and the third among the goods. imported goods in Vietnam (after the US and Japan) (Minh, 2016). In recent years, Vietnam-China relations have had tense moments because of conflicts over sovereignty in the East Sea, which it calls the South China Sea. This partly affects the image of this country in the world and Vietnam media. In the general trend, studies on the Chinese national image have attracted the attention of Western scholars. However, similar studies have not been interested and focused on Vietnam. Therefore, analysing how China's national image is framed in Vietnamese media and surveyed with the online newspaper VnExpress in 2019 is valuable in assessing the relationship between Vietnam and China in recent years. as well as supplementing studies on the image of the Chinese nation in general and countries in the Vietnamese media in particular.

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II. METHODOLOGY

1. Method of Content Analysis

The study performed coding to quantify the number of articles into data for further quantitative analysis in the following section (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 1980). The timeframe is defined as from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

In terms of national image research, the two most noticeable points are visibility and value. Visibility shows the coverage of objects covered in the media; this indicates the extent to which the content reflects either beneficial or unfavorable to the subject (Manheim, Albrition, 1983). The study uses how the media frames news about China through three levels of influence: positive, neutral, and negative. Accordingly, in the process of implementation, we will consider the exact context of the article being published and thereby determine the level of expression of each article based on the main emotional words used in the article. entire article

Thus, the above three levels of reflection are followed by the following principles:

(1) Positive news: news that receives high ratings on political fields; economy; education - science and technology and other fields of China. Elements related to China mainly use positive words: cooperation, success, achievement, development, beautiful, great, excellent, strong, modern, peaceful, commendable praise, effort, etc. Positive news can give the public a more sympathetic and peaceful view of China.

(2) Neutral news: the news is posted using only objective keywords or unexpected incidents, but the state has tried to improve.

(3) Negative news: news that criticizes China on its issues including human rights, environment, and non-traditional security issues. In it, highlighting Beijing's wrongdoings in international affairs, the negative effects it brings to countries. Words are mainly used such as: violation, illegality, protest, condemnation, crime, disaster, threat, corruption, anger, negligence, lagging, ... The news This may promote a more negative view of China, reducing the country's image in the eyes of the Vietnamese public.

After that, we continue to encrypt the collected information one more time to get more accurate results. Use a quantitative approach to analyze all articles collected after coding. After this process, we directly draw conclusions and use it to explain the hypotheses that have been made.

Finally, we use the factor of Vietnam - China relations together with the results obtained from the above process, to select articles related to the foreign relations of the two countries. When relevant data are available, we perform further case analysis. In the process of studying the framing of Chinese news in Vietnamese media, it will create an overall view for the Vietnamese public about the China's national image.

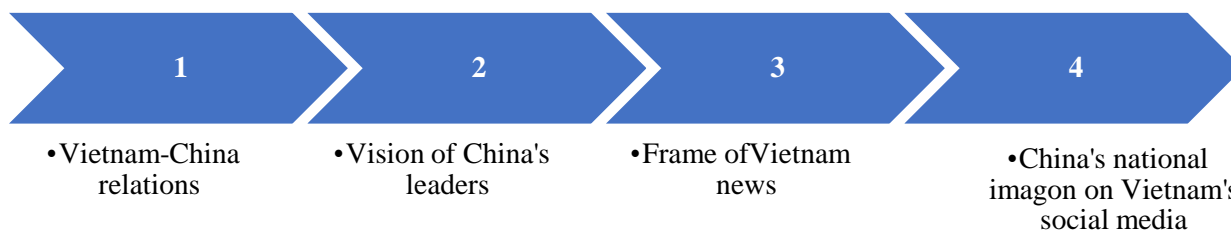### 2. Methods of Data Collection and Case Selection

VnExpress is highly appreciated for being a newspaper with the right direction in accordance with the development of science and technology, especially information technology, and well implementing the principle of purpose (VnExpress, 2010; VnExpress, 2020). For foreign researchers, this is considered the news release agency with the highest level of viewership (since 2016). For those three reasons, we choose VnExpress as the object to sample for research survey.

With VnExpress, after being selected, we begin the data collection process to conduct in-depth research. In which, in order to be scientific, we make 3 requirements, including: First, the articles are selected from the source of VnExpress with the search keywords being China, China, Beijing. Second, we look for articles that use Vietnamese as the primary language. The news in Vietnamese accounts for the majority and is always highly up to date. Third, the period selected for the survey is from January 1, 2019 to the end of December 31, 2019.

III. Hypothesizes

The national image of China is seen directly from the perspective of national image theory and resonates with the impact of the Vietnam-China relationship. The Party and State play an important role in controlling the coverage of China in the mass media. This clearly shows the role of the Vietnam-China relationship factor in Vietnam's reporting. The expression for this process can be generalized to levels from (1) to (4) as follows:

The process of framing news related China on Vietnamese media

- **1** •Vietnam-China relations
- **2** •Vision of China's leaders
- **3** •Frame of Vietnam news
- **4** •China's national imagon on Vietnam's social media

The study proposes three hypotheses about China's national image in the media that can be generated:

- H1: China's national image in the media is shown in four areas: (1) Politics, (2) Economy, (3) Education, Science and Technology, (4) Other fields.

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- H2: Positive and objective news group: Mainly derived from the common interests that can be achieved between Vietnam and China through the process of dialogue, cooperation, Along with spiritual development period of this country in all fields.

- H3: Negative news: Mainly appearing around disputes in the East Sea, interests that are difficult to reach consensus between the two countries, trade protection issues, etc.

III. RESULTS

1. General Results

The survey results from January 1, 2019 to the end of December 31, 2019 obtained 901 articles with topics related to China. On average, 2.47 posts are posted per day.
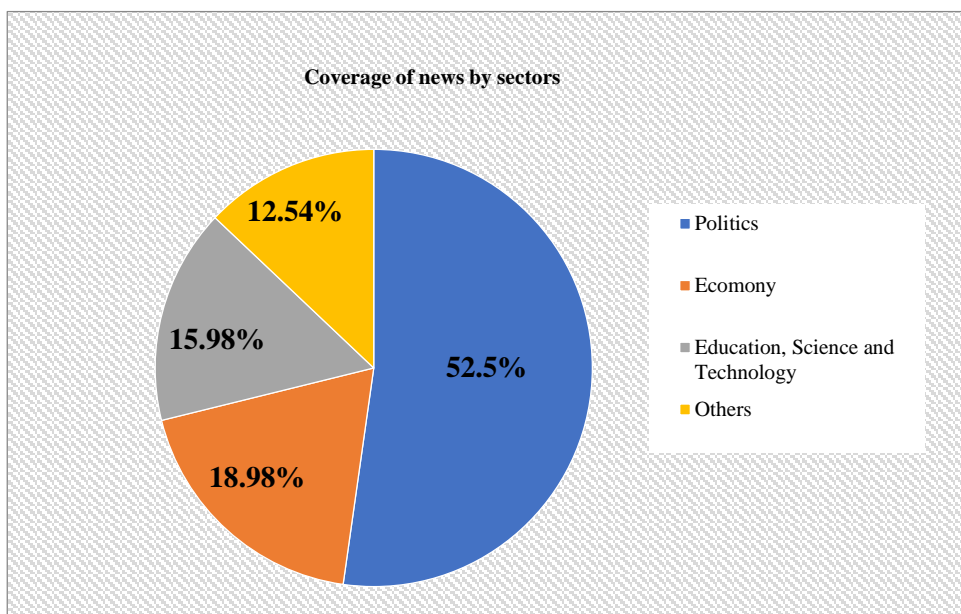
In 901 articles covering China divided into 4 areas including politics, economy, education - science and technology, others. The level of coverage of China in these 4 areas has a big difference in the political field compared to the other 3 groups of fields. Statistical and analytical results show that politics accounts for most of the content of articles with 473 articles out of 901 articles, accounting for 52.5%. This amount accounts for more than half of news content about China, 2.77 times more than the economy, 3.29 times more than education - science and technology, 4.19 times more than other fields. Meanwhile, the difference between the remaining 3 groups of fields is not too large, respectively 171 articles, accounting for 18.98% for the economic field, 144 articles, accounting for 15.98% for the fields of education - science and technology. technology, 113 articles, accounting for 12.54% for other fields.

According to the reflection of the news on China's national image, there is a large difference between the news groups according to statistics from the online newspaper VnExpress. This proves that news about China has been framed in the way that planners want to convey to the public.
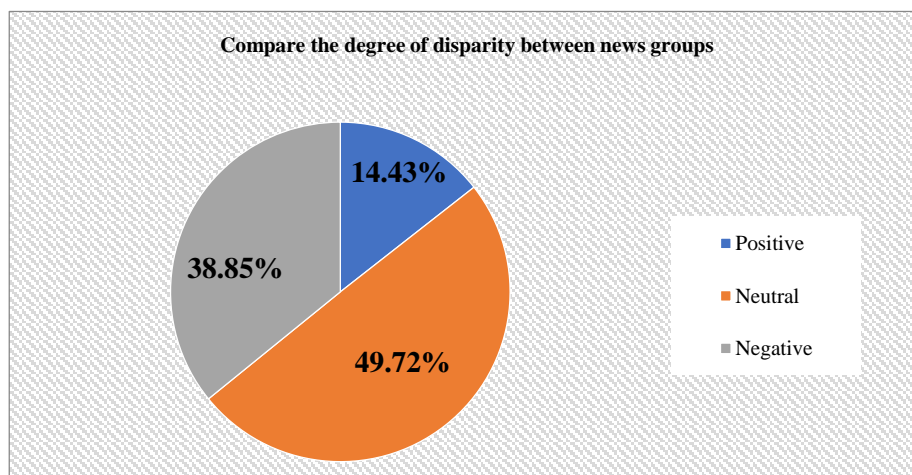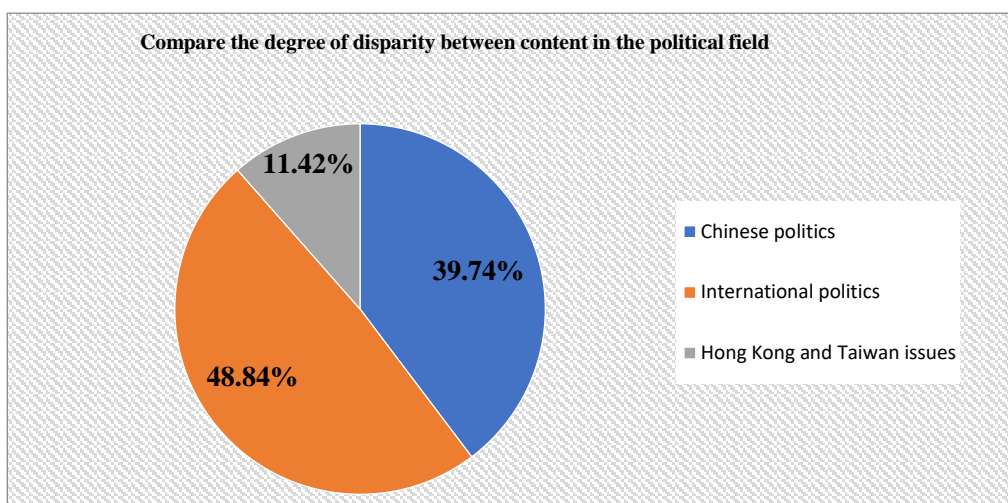
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From the above statistical results, it can be seen that the level of framing of news groups in VnExpress online newspaper has a small difference. Considering every 10 articles published, the ratio of positive - neutral - negative news is 1.5 - 4.9 - 3.6. Neutral coverage accounted for most of the content, with 448 articles, accounting for 49.72%. Meanwhile, negative news accounted for the second largest number, with 323 articles, accounting for 35.85% of the content. And positive news only accounted for 14.43% with 130 articles. Excluding neutral news, the amount of negative news is 2.5 times more than the amount of positive news. This may create a more negative view of the Vietnamese public towards China.

2. Results by Field
Politics:
In the field of politics, the online newspaper VnExpress reported on content: Chinese politics, international politics and Hong Kong and Taiwan issues. In these 3 topics, the division is relatively even for "Chinese politics" and "international politics" with the number of articles being 188 articles (accounting for 39.74% of the political field) and 231 articles (accounting for 39.74% of the political field) respectively. accounting for 48.84% of the political field). Meanwhile, Hong Kong and Taiwan issues have a relatively smaller number of articles, with 54 articles (11.42% of the political field). The difference between the content with the most articles (international politics with 231 articles) and the articles with the least content (the issue of Hong Kong, Taiwan with 54 articles) is about 4.27 times.


Statistical results show that the level of negative news is the highest with 223 articles (accounting for 47.15% of political content). Meanwhile, positive news has only 52 articles (11%). And Neutral is about 198 articles, accounting for 41.86%. The difference between negative and neutral is a small distance of 1.13 times. However, negative news is 4.29 times more than positive news. Politics is the area with the highest number of articles and also the area with the highest amount of negative news. This will unintentionally frame China's national image with a negative perspective.
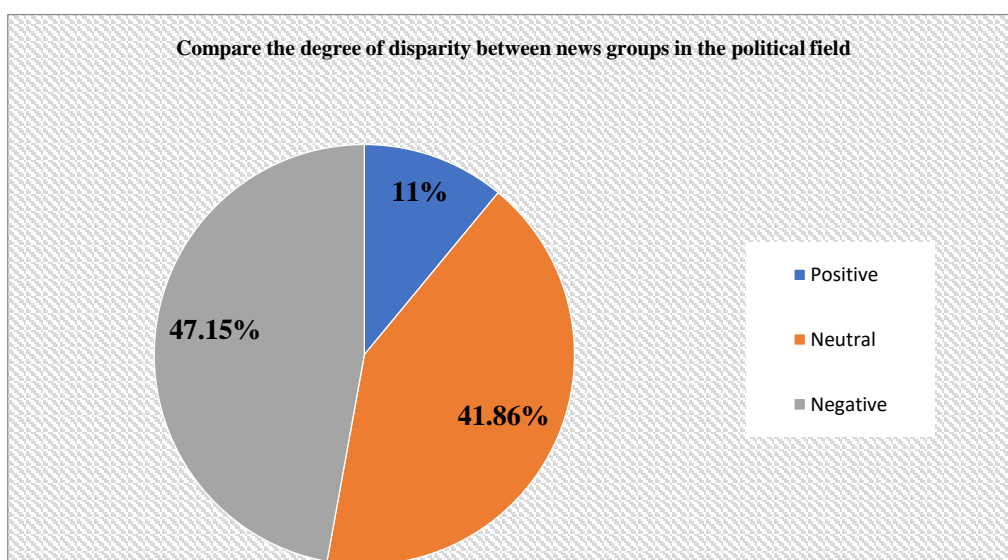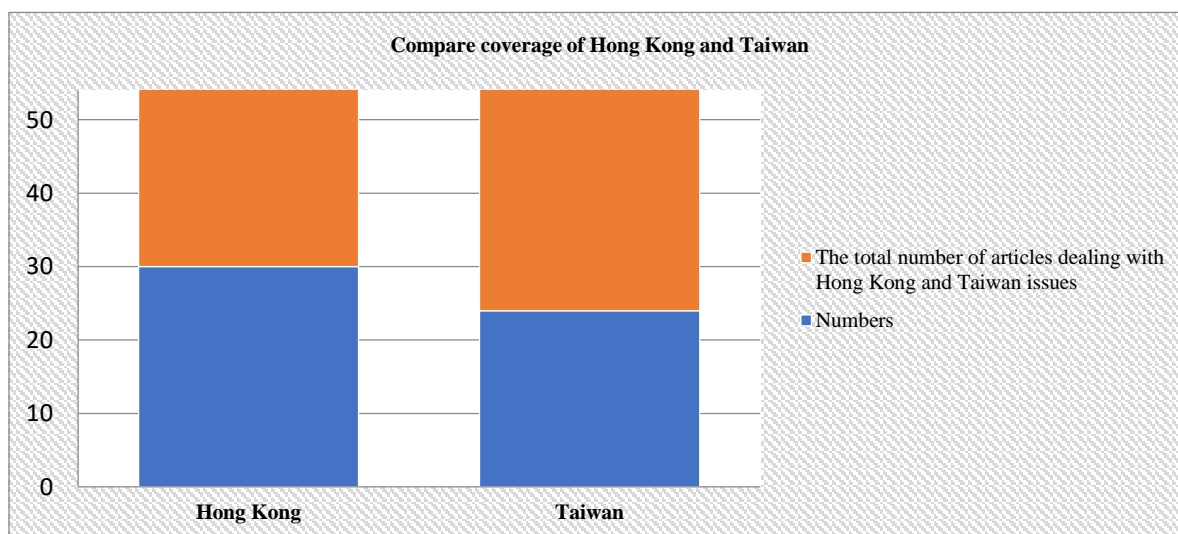
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Content on Chinese politics includes articles presenting internal issues in China, including 188 articles (accounting for 39.75% of political content). Emerging in 2019 is the economic slowdown, the US-China trade war, the protest movement in Hong Kong against the extradition law,... Including 17 positive articles (9.04%), 166 articles (88.3%) are neutral and 6 are negative (3.19%).

In terms of international politics, news about China's relations with other countries is unevenly distributed. According to the statistics table, it can be seen that news about China-US relations accounted for the largest amount, with 136 articles (accounting for 58.87% of the content). Negative news is also in first place, with 112 articles (accounting for 48.48% of the total content) and positive news about 9 articles (accounting for 3.9%). The relationship between China - Korea has the least number of articles, only about 3 articles, accounting for 1.3% of the entire content.
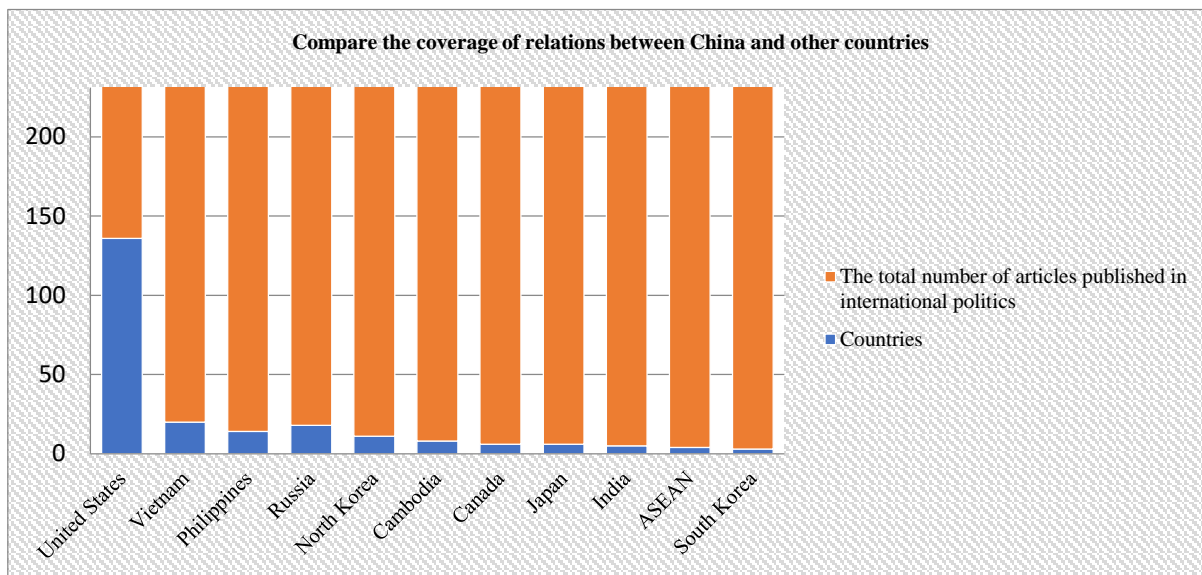
The relationship between Vietnam and China is second only to the United States and has 20 articles, accounting for 8.66% of the entire content. The number of neutral news is at 0 articles; meanwhile, negative accounted for 19 articles (8.23%) and positive only 1 post (0.43%). To explain this reason, comes from the dispute and conflict of common interests between Vietnam and China around the East Sea issue. While one positive article is describing the visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc to China to attend the "Belt and Road" Summit.

Notably, there is no positive news between China and Korea, Canada, and Japan. Neutral news also does not appear in the relationship between China and South Korea, ASEAN, Japan, Canada, Cambodia, North Korea, Vietnam, Philippines. Canada and Japan are the only two countries with no positive and neutral news about China. Meanwhile, North Korea is a country where there is no neutral and negative news with China. This shows that China's relations with other countries are in an unstable, contradictory and negative state with Western and Northeast Asian countries. More stable relations with countries in Southeast Asia.

The Hong Kong and Taiwan issues remain one of China's key agendas. Out of the number of articles about politics, there are 30 articles for Hong Kong content and 24 articles for Taiwan related content.

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Economy:

VnExpress electronic newspaper also has a relatively large amount of news on economic topics. It can be seen in the table below:

Number and percentage of content of articles in the field of economics

Economic relations	Number	Percentage
China – Vietnam	12	7.02%
China – US	51	29.82%
Chinese Econmy	108	63.16%
Total	**171**	**100%**
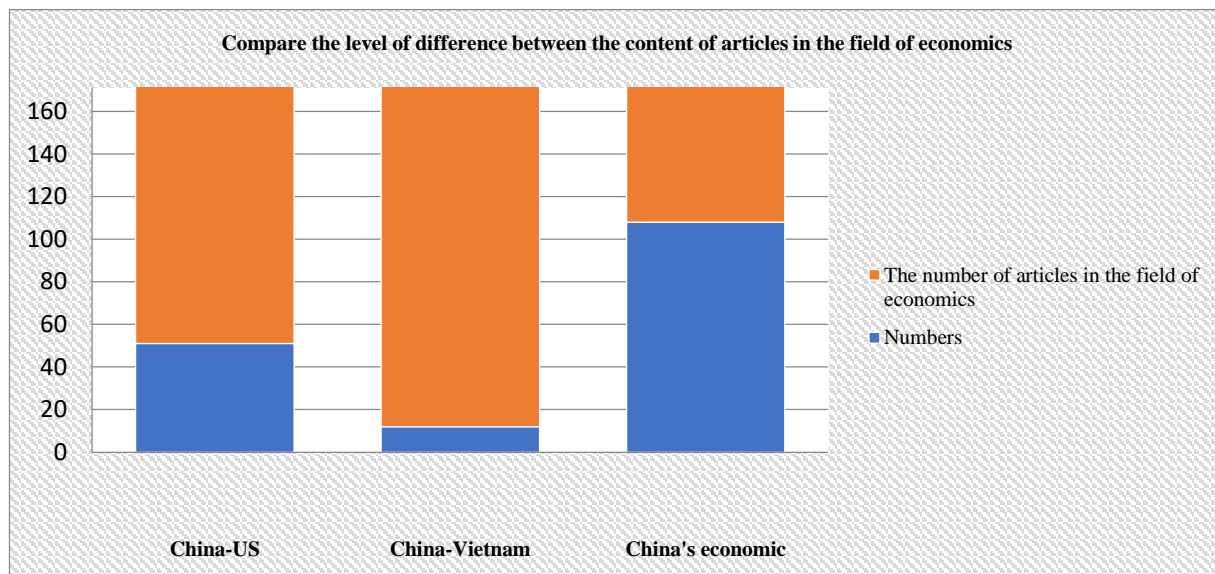
In the economic field, the content can be divided into three economic relations as follows: China - United States, China - Vietnam and China's economy. In this field, the number of articles on the Chinese economy accounted for the highest with 108 articles (63.16% of the field content). Next are articles on China-US economic relations with the number of 51 (accounting for 29.82%). And finally, China - Vietnam economic relations with 12 articles, accounting for 7.02% of the field content.
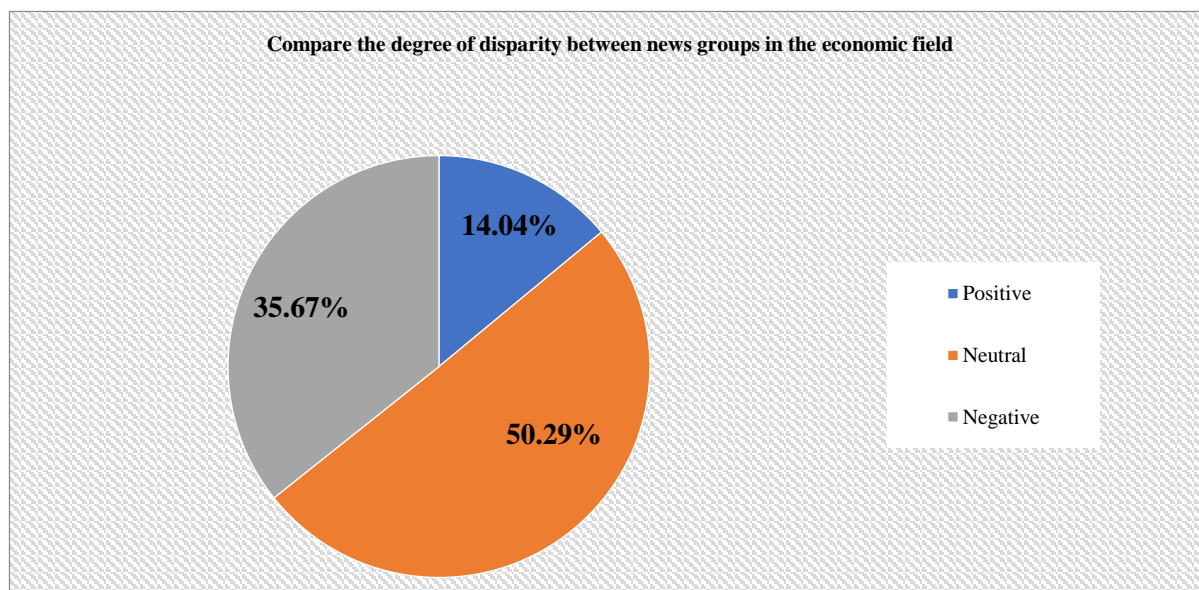

Table descriptions and graphs can show the disparity between positive, negative and neutral newsgroups. Accordingly, the negative and positive levels are relatively far apart (24 articles for positive, accounting for 14.04% and 61 articles for negative, accounting for 35.67%). The neutral newsgroup had the highest number of articles with 86 articles, accounting for 50.29% of the entire economic content. The difference between the highest group (neutral) and the lowest group (positive) is about 3.58 times.

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Describe the disparity between news groups of economic content

Economic relations	Positive	Percentage	Neutral	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
China – Vietnam	2	1.17%	4	2.34%	6	3.51%
China – US	8	4.68%	15	8.77%	28	16.37%
Chinese Economy	14	8.19%	67	39.18%	27	15.79%
Total	**24**	**14.04%**	**86**	**50.29%**	**61**	**35.67%**

Moving on, the majority of articles in the table above tend to be in the neutral group (86 articles, accounting for 50.29%). Large numbers in this group include China-US economic relations (15 articles, accounting for 8.77%) and China's economy (67 articles, accounting for 39.18%). Economic relations between China and Vietnam tend to favor negative news when there are only 2 articles on positive news and 4 articles on neutral. Meanwhile, negative news is equal to the sum of the other two groups, accounting for 3.51%.

Education, Science and Technology:

Compare the level of disparity between newsgroups in the fields of education, science and technology
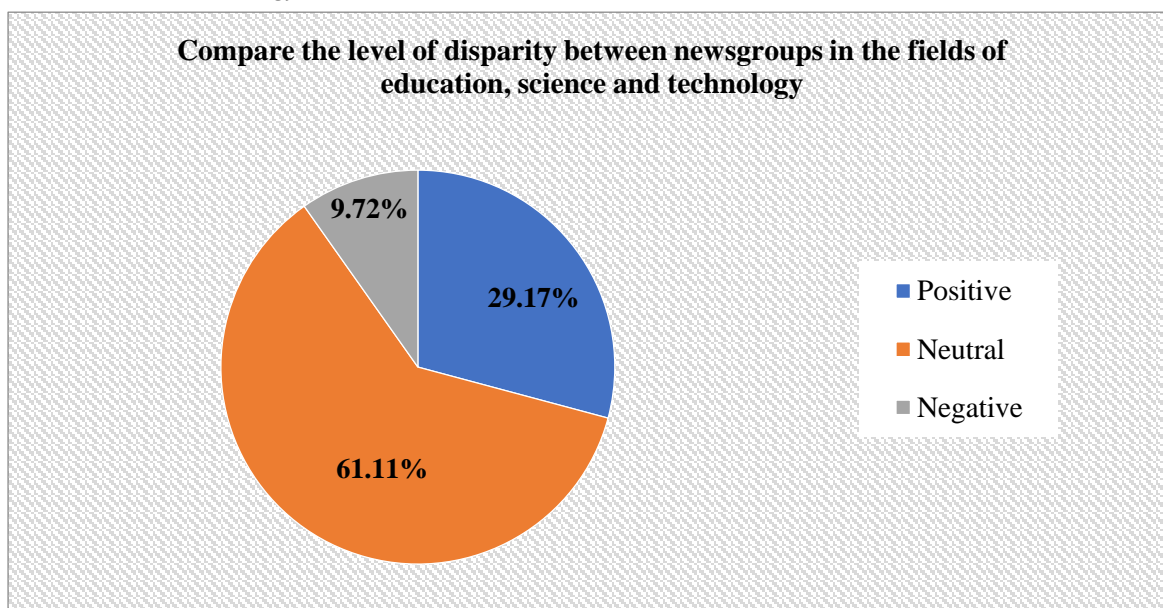
The level of coverage based on the table and chart shows that the highest number is still neutral news with 88 articles, accounting for 61.11% of the total content of the field. In this field, positive news prevailed over negative news, accounting for 42 articles with 29.17% of the total content of the field. Negative news includes 14 articles, which is a relatively small percentage of 9.72%. Accordingly, positive news is 4 times higher than negative news.

**Each content belongs to the field of education, science and technology**

Content	Number	Percentage	Positive	Percentage	Neutral	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
Education	10	6.94%	2	1.39%	7	4.86%	1	0.69%
Science	74	51.39%	34	23.61%	37	25.69%	3	2.08%
Technology	60	41.67%	6	4.16%	44	30.56%	10	6.95%
Total	**144**	**100%**	**42**	**29.17%**	**88**	**61.11%**	**14**	**9.72%**

In the field of education, science and technology, the number of positive news reported by VnExpress is much higher than the amount of negative news. Typically, positive news in the science section is the highest (34 articles, 23.61%), followed by technology (6 articles, 4.16%). Meanwhile, neutral news, technology outnumbers science. Negative news is still there, but the number is not significant, only 14 articles out of 144 articles, accounting for 9.72% of the total content of the field. This proves that the Vietnamese media has taken a more objective approach in how to view China's achievements and inventions. Most are large-scale projects such as bridges, roads, tunnels, space science, 5G networks, etc.

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Other fields:

For other fields, we have 113 articles with content about China. These news are in many different areas including law, life, sports, entertainment, fashion, humor…. So we put all the rest in this section.
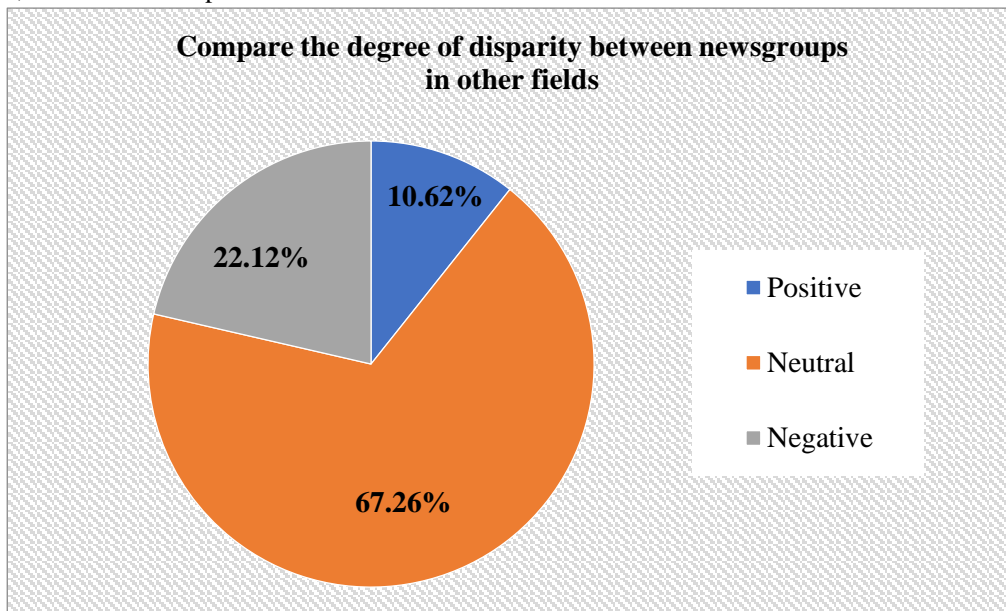
Based on the number of articles, we can determine the content of the table and the chart. Accordingly, the number of neutral news is still the highest with 76 articles, accounting for 67.26% of all content in other fields. Negative news ranked second with 25 articles (accounting for 22.12%) and positive news with 12 articles (10.62%). The amount of positive news is still quite limited compared to the negative news distribution, which is more than 2 times more negative than positive news.

3. Results of Data Analysis Based On Time

Based on the conducted surveys, we conduct research and data analysis on a monthly basis. This section can provide a more holistic view of how Vietnamese media have framed Chinese news month by month.
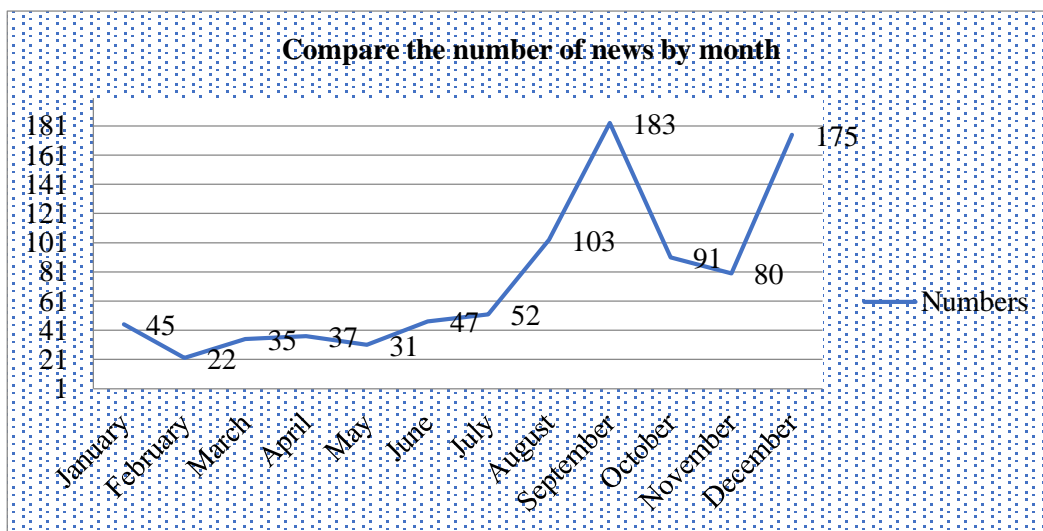
From the statistical table of the amount of news by month, it can be seen that there is a relative difference in the distribution of news each month. Out of 901 articles, an average of 78.05 articles will be published per month, and this is a relatively reasonable number. However, when considering the reality, within half a year, from January to June, the number of articles published does not exceed 50 articles, ranging from 22 articles to 47 articles. The lowest amount of news in the first 6 months of the year belonged to February with 22 articles, accounting for 2.44% of the whole year news. Looking at the chart, it can be seen that the difference is not much between the months and the increase and decrease is not significant.

The next 3 months, the number of news spiked and peaked in September with the highest number of 183 articles, accounting for 20.31% of the full year news volume. From June to July, the amount of news remains the same as in the first 6 months of the year, the news has little spike in volume. But from July to August, the number nearly doubled, from 52 articles to 103 articles. VnExpress's

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reporting trend in July-August-September tended to increase sharply. In the last three months of 2019, the trend of news coverage was relatively high. October and November have a decreasing amount of news, but not too large with the order of 91 articles and 80 articles. But by the end of the year, the number of articles increased dramatically, from 80 articles in November to 175 articles for December, which doubled. And the number of year-end news also accounts for the second highest (after September), with 19.42% of all news in 2019.

Thus, in 2019, the amount of news about China was reported by VnExpress newspaper in different quantities and the difference increased gradually towards the end of the year. In the first 6 months of the year, the level of news coverage is not high, each month ranges from 22 to 47 articles. The breakthrough in news coverage was mainly shown in the last 6 months of the year. The most significant are September and December with the highest number of articles, accounting for 20.31% and 19.42% respectively for the whole news in 2019. Here, the difference also increases dramatically. Specifically, the highest number of news belongs to September and is about 3.9 times higher than the highest number of the first month of the year, June. And in 2019, the difference between the month with the highest number of articles (September) and the month with the lowest number of articles (February) is about 8.3 times. That is, roughly equal to the amount of news in November alone.

Next, we divided the amount of news by month by each field and got the following results.
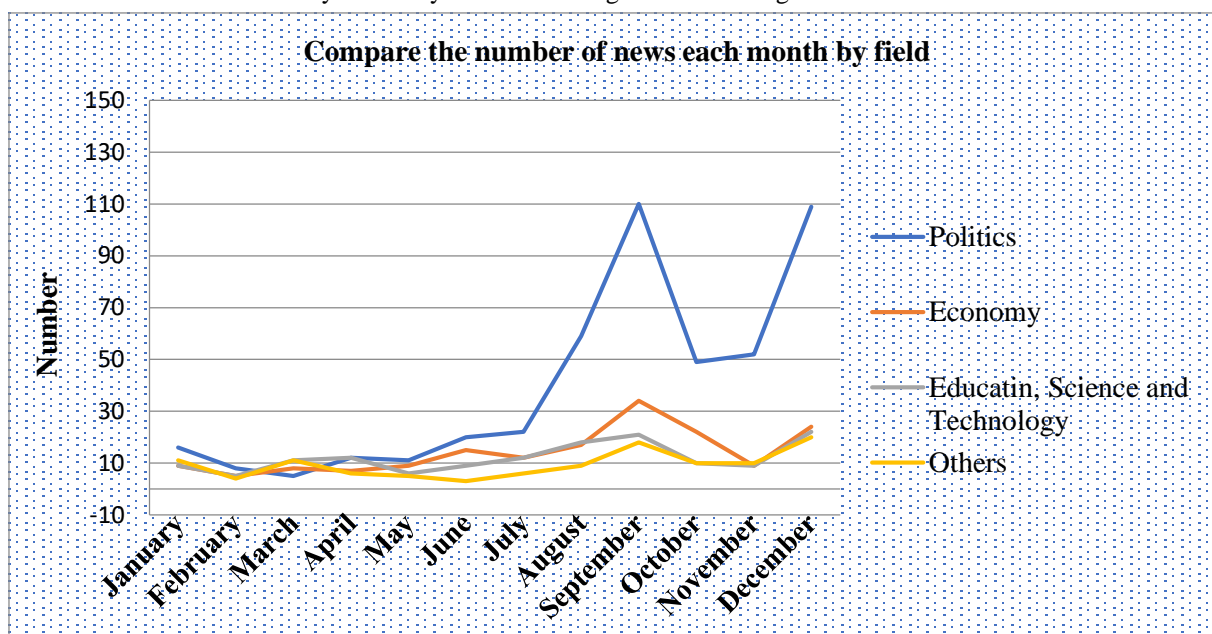
Based on the survey results, it shows that the distribution of news each month by each field is not uniform. In each month, the popularity of political news always accounts for the high volume that overwhelms the rest of the fields.

For political news, the number tends to increase gradually until September, and from September onwards, the increase and decrease is uneven. In the first 7 months of the year, the number of news articles does not exceed 50 articles per month, but still accounts for a high proportion compared to economic news, education news - science and technology, other fields. However, from August onwards, the level of more than 50 articles per month has a large number and the highest concentration is in September with 110 articles. Political news tends to increase and peak in September mainly around the issue of the US-China trade war. At this time, a series of news reports on the issue of the trade deficit, Trump's increase in sanctions as well as China's retaliation against the US were brought in dense numbers. The difference between the highest month (September) and the lowest month (May) is about 22 times, a relatively large difference. The data clearly reflects the high level of public interest and choice of VnExpress newspaper in Chinese politics.

Economic news is relatively more evenly distributed than political news. In the first 5 months of the year, the amount of news is only in single digits. In the remaining months, the number of posts is in the double digits and does not exceed 35 posts per month. This shows that the level of concern about China's economic issues is still lower than the political one. The difference between the highest month (September) and the lowest month (February) is about 6.8 times.

The news in the fields of education - science and technology has a relatively uniform level of coverage each month. The difference between the highest month (December) and the lowest month (February) is about 4.4 times, the difference is not large. In addition, the news of this field each month does not exceed 25 articles. Months 1, 2, 5, 6, and 11 have 1-digit news numbers. The news above 2 numbers makes up most of the rest, but the difference is not high.

Finally, news in other areas has the least amount of news in the remaining three areas. The reported news should not exceed 20 articles for the highest month. The small number of this sector shows how little interest the Vietnamese public has in China. The

difference between the month with the highest number of news (December) and the lowest month (June) is about 6.7 times. Although news has the most limited number of articles compared to other fields, the difference is higher than in the fields of education - science and technology, closely following the economic sector.

In the next section, we further break down the news by coverage per month. This may reflect the extent of framing and approach of the Vietnamese public towards the Chinese national image.

Compare news each month by level
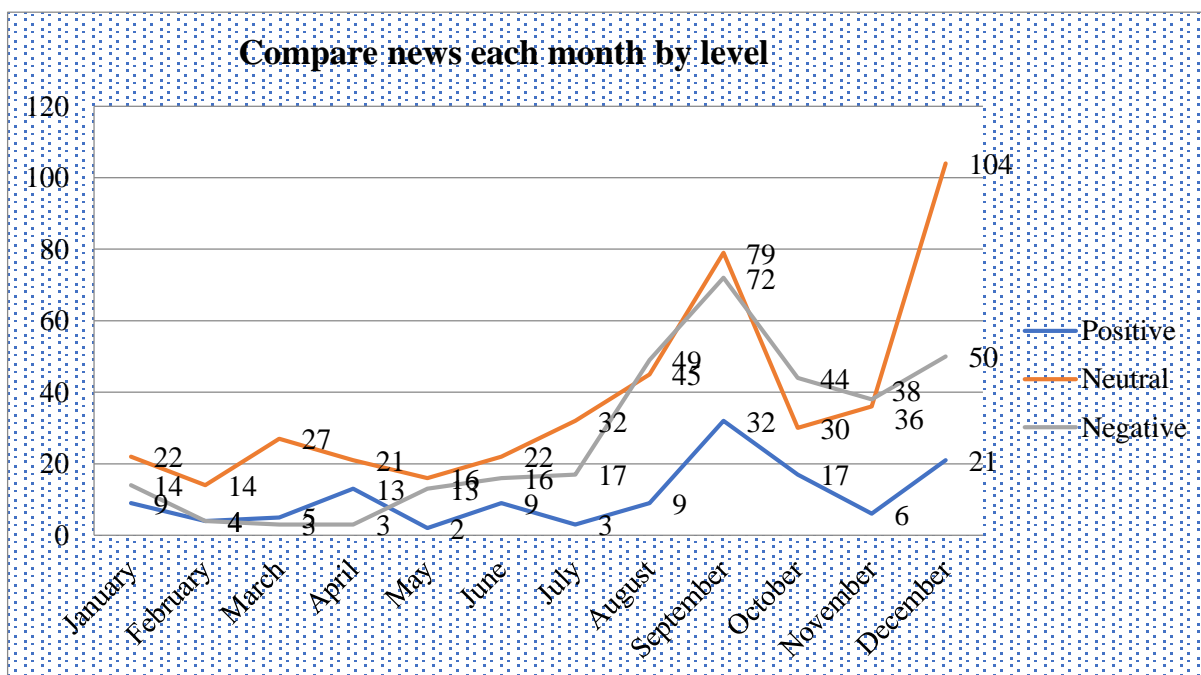
The survey results show that the news each month is unevenly distributed. Accordingly, neutral news accounted for the largest number of all the months surveyed. The highest neutral news was in December with 104 articles, nearly 4.95 times the number of positive news and 2.08 times the number of negative news in the same month. The difference between the month with the highest amount of neutral news (December) and the month with the lowest amount of neutral news (February) is about 7.43 times. In the first 5 months of the year, the level of increase and decrease of neutral news was not significant. However, from May to September, the level of neutral news tends to increase significantly and steadily. There was a decrease in October, but from October to December the number continued to increase strongly and peaked in December. Thus, the number of neutral news still prevails over positive and negative news. This level tends to increase gradually from about the middle of the year, then decrease slightly and continue to increase. Looking at the chart, it can be seen that the shape of this news is distinctly different from the rest. Almost the entire chart is above the other two news, especially far away from the positive news.

Over 12 months, the number of positive news stories surveyed and still found to be present is not significant in the reporting process. Accordingly, in 12 months, there are only 4 months where the number of news lies in double digits, that is April 9, 10, 12. Looking at the chart, it can be seen that the shape of positive news is almost same in every month of the year. There was a brief period of upward change (August through September), but not much. The survey shows that the difference between the month with the highest amount of positive news (September) and the month with the lowest amount of positive news (May) is about 16 times. Although there is a small amount compared to neutral and negative news, the difference is quite large, almost twice the difference of neutral news. Considering in 3 months, there is a steady increase in the amount of news every month, showing the level of interest of Vietnamese media in China. Although the increase in number is not too much, during this period most of the news about the Beijing government's efforts to find a solution to the US-China trade war, the achievements have been achieved. in the high-tech, 5G, essential infrastructure industries. At the same time, the news also aims to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949-2019).

The number of negative news is only behind the neutral news, and the months with the number of news above double digits account for 9 months. From January to April, the number of negative news continuously decreased, staying at double digits. However, from April to September, the trend of negative news is continuously increasing and keeping a distance from positive news. The remaining months tend to increase and decrease unevenly. The difference between the month with the highest negative news (September) and the month with the least amount (March, April) is about 24.33 times. This level of difference is considered quite large, having a higher number than the other two news. The steady increase and sharp increase in negative news from April to September mainly

revolved around the trade war with the US, China continuously took many actions in response to the Washington government, Hong Kong and Taiwan issues.

In general, through data table 4.3c and chart 4.3c, it can be seen that the distribution is uneven among news groups. Neutral news still accounts for the majority of coverage, with negative news having the second largest number and lastly positive news. The chart shows that positive news is almost far from the rest. The similarity of these three news groups is that in the three months of July-August-September and the last two months of the year, the number in each group tends to spike.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

News framing is seen as a strategy by Western image makers in the media to promote public interest [Reese, 2001]. With the recognition that national image plays an important role in international public recognition and international relations [Anholt, 2009; Anholt, 2011]. It can be inferred that VnExpress has approved the reporting of events related to China in order to present the image of this country to the Vietnamese public.

Through the survey, it shows that VnExpress's neutrality when reporting on China accounts for the majority. However, the negative news still has a large amount in this company's newsletter. In 901 articles, the number of negative news accounts for 323, while there are only 130 positive articles, which is about 2.5 times more negative than positive. Vietnam - China relations around the East Sea issue still occupy the majority of VnExpress's reporting program for the relationship between the two countries. There, the level of negativity towards China's actions reached a high level, with almost no positive trend. Neutral news also reached zero (table 4.3.2a). Tensions in the region are often caused by two types of disputes: (1) sovereignty disputes over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos belonging to Vietnam (including Vietnam, China, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei). and part of Taiwan); (2) dispute over the delimitation of the boundary between the overlapping areas of adjacent or opposite states around the South China Sea. Another aspect that also affects ASEAN's common perception on the East Sea issue is the basis of sovereignty. Not all members of the bloc are involved in sovereignty disputes in the region. Typically, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia are countries that belong to this organization but have no conflicts with either party in the East Sea. Meanwhile, the extent of coverage of disputes between China and other parties such as the Philippines is also rarely mentioned by the Vietnamese press.

Recognizing such a Chinese national image, Vietnam has become increasingly assertive in the disputed area in the East Sea. Hanoi began to seek, preserve and promote further with partners in Asia and the West. Vietnam promotes cooperation with the United States; strengthen security cooperation mechanisms with Japan, Australia, India; promote relations with Southeast Asian countries. Vietnam's growing participation in the international arena will lead to a balance of power in the region. However, in trade relations, China is still Vietnam's leading partner in the region. Vietnam's total trade turnover with China has increased more than 2,220 times in nearly 25 years, from more than 30 million USD in 1991 to 66.6 billion USD in 2015 [Minh, 2016]. This shows that despite the negativity surrounding the East Sea issue, Vietnam still maintains a good relationship with China. And that if this relationship cracks, Vietnam could lose a leading partner in the region.

Relations between China and Western countries also make the image of this country go into a negative level. Out of 231 articles on China's relations with other countries, the amount of news on US-China relations accounted for the most with 130 articles. However, 2019 can be seen as a bleak year in relations between the two countries. The trade war coupled with a severe slowdown in the domestic economy has thrown China off balance. Even, the number of negative news with the US accounted for nearly 112 articles, or 48.48% of the content of relations with other countries. The large amount of news about Sino-US relations can partly explain the Vietnam-US relationship. Over the past 25 years, Vietnam-US diplomatic relations have become increasingly warm. Immediately after taking office as the 45th US President, Mr. Donald Trump made a trip to Southeast Asia to attend the 2017 APEC Summit in Da Nang. In his speech, the President repeatedly mentioned the importance of the Indo-Pacific region: "It is an honor to be present in Vietnam - at the heart of the region. Indo-Pacific to chat with the people and business leaders of this region" [Trương, 2018]. With its strategy, the United States is said to be strengthening links with allies, including former enemies, to prevent China in the South China Sea. In particular, Vietnam is one of the strategic focus of the United States in the region.

Besides, China's successes are recognized by Vietnam and the level of positive news is high. In the field of education - science and technology, positive news (42 articles) was higher than negative news (14 articles) for the first time, ie 3 times. China's successes are often described with the words "good", "successful", "best". The coverage is mostly focused on the country's successes in bridges, tunnels, roads, space science.

V. CONCLUSION

In recent years, the Chinese government has always focused on shaping the country's image in the eyes of the international public. Generations of supreme leaders have promoted programs to represent a good and peaceful China. For more than 40 years of development, Beijing has been trying to establish a Chinese national image in international affairs: a peace-loving country, victim of foreign invasion, socialist with special characteristics. , a fortress of revolution, a nation against hegemony, a developing country,

with great power, an international cooperator and an autonomous institution [Wang, 2013]. Media plays an important role, becoming an effective tool in shaping the national image, becoming one of the more studied contents.

From the research results, the topic confirms the role of the media in shaping the Chinese national image in Vietnam. Specifically, we applied the hypothesis that the Vietnamese government would control all posted information about Chinese content. Accordingly, the image of this country will be framed in the way that the Vietnamese government wishes. From there, it regulates the perception of the Vietnamese public towards China. With this hypothesis, we use VnExpress electronic newspaper to survey research. The time taken is from January 1, 2019 to the end of December 31, 2019. Use the company's search engine and the keywords "China", "Beijing", "China" to code data for research purposes. The topic has successfully collected 901 articles about China, with different levels of positive - neutral - negative. We divide into 4 main groups of fields to facilitate the survey including politics, economics, education - science and technology, other fields. These areas are considered in two aspects: the direction of news coverage and the level of attention.

The results from the study show that VnExpress tends to report more neutral news about China than negative or positive news. However, the level of negative news remains high in the surveyed areas. The political field group accounted for the highest number of articles and the lowest was the group of other fields. At the same time, the negative level for the political field is also high compared to other fields. This presents a negative national image of China in international affairs. However, the most positive news is in the field of education - science and technology. This sector accounts for the overwhelming amount of negative news. Bring a lot of confidence about a developed China with encouraging achievements in construction engineering or space science.

After conducting the survey, it can be seen that the image of the Chinese nation in the eyes of the Vietnamese public is perceived in both directions. However, in Vietnam - China relations, the level of reporting tends to be more negative than positive. Mainly stemming from contradictions and conflicts between the two sides in the East Sea area. In addition, the positive news still exists on the economic side, but the number of accounts is not high and so is the neutral news. The significant impact of foreign relations can be seen on the level and direction of coverage of China in Vietnamese media. Despite the South China Sea issues, cooperation between Vietnam and China has continuously increased in recent years. Confirming that this country is still one of Hanoi's major and leading partners in the region. Specifically, Vietnamese media has taken a positive approach to scientific achievements and new trends made by China. Beijing's success is properly commented and reported. But as we have mentioned, none of this has changed the tense situation and the somewhat more negative approach of the Vietnamese public. This poses a requirement that China needs to have more appropriate actions, views and policies towards Vietnam. If Beijing does not do these things, relations between the two countries may go into a rut and the positive trend will disappear. In the context of regionalization and globalization, both countries pay attention and consider the rest as important partners. Therefore, improving diplomatic relations is necessary and urgent now.

An ingenious approach of the Vietnamese press when it tends to keep a neutral view on international issues, where Vietnam and China hardly exist in terms of common interests. Vietnamese media rarely mentions negative news about the conflict between India and China or its relationship with South Korea and North Korea. Meanwhile, the focus is mainly on the content of China's internal politics and economy. Focus on analysing the situation with the words "problem", "crisis", "trouble". For Western countries, Vietnamese media has uneven coverage, mainly the United States with 130 articles. The content of US-China relations is related to Vietnam's balancing policy in relations with both Washington and Beijing. It is a fact that the news framework about China in the West is almost always labelled negative and therefore, when reporting, Vietnamese media almost has a relatively more moderate approach, but the level of negativity is still at a low level. high. Thus, the image of the Chinese nation in matters related to common interests with Vietnam is almost positive. Meanwhile, negative news often targets content that the two sides are in conflict with, conflicting on common voices and common interests. Left where Hanoi and Beijing have no common interest is usually neutral news.

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