



# The Portrayal of the LGBTQ+ Community in Vietnamese Online Newspapers: A Content Analysis of Heteronormative Language

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**Abstract:** This article reports the findings of a study investigating the portrayal of LGBTQ+ identities in six of the most-read Vietnamese online newspapers. Adopting a mixed-methods approach grounded in queer linguistics and framing theory, the research group analysed 205 articles to identify the patterns of heteronormative language in LGBTQ+ portrayal. The analysis focuses on the frequency of representation, tone of voice, framing devices, and linguistic stereotyping. Quantitative results reveal significant disparities in portrayal: 38% of articles referred only to the general LGBTQ+ label, while subgroups, especially bisexual and transgender individuals, remain notably underrepresented. Stereotypes related to appearance, occupation, and social relations are prevalent, reinforcing generalized and heteronormative portrayal. The results of the framing analysis based on Entman's model reveal a limited narrative depth and a tendency to associate LGBTQ+ subjects with societal issues. The article also discusses the role of heteronormative cultural frameworks in shaping media discourse and discusses the possible impact of such heteronormativity in shaping public opinion on matters regarding the LGBTQ+ community. Findings underscore how mainstream media in Vietnam continues to both reproduce and challenge heteronormative norms, highlighting the dual role of media as both a site of marginalization and potential affirmation of queer identities.

**Keywords:** LGBTQ+ portrayal; Vietnamese online newspapers; heteronormative language; queer linguistics; framing analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

“If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door.”  
Harvey Milk

What do we think of when we think about queerness? Is our attitude towards the LGBTQ+ community shaped by acceptance and openness, or does it remain clouded by hostility and discrimination? In truth, public opinion toward the queer community or any other social group is heavily influenced by the media. As a historically marginalized group, the LGBTQ+ community has long

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been misrepresented, underrepresented, and, at times, overexposed in media narratives. In the Vietnamese media landscape, despite a growing number of positive portrayals, coverage of the LGBTQ+ community often remains entangled in heteronormative stereotypes.

Heteronormativity, by definition, is a social and cultural concept in which heterosexuality is considered the norm; it manifests itself through the creation of expectations of gendered behavior and self-expression. Originating from toxic binary concepts of masculinity and femininity, heteronormativity limits the freedom of self-expression among members of the LGBTQ+ community and creates false societal impressions. In Vietnam especially, a society strongly influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism, where social expectations are heavily linked to gender roles, LGBTQ+ individuals struggle within a narrowly framed narrative.

This research provides an in-depth analysis of the portrayal of this minority community in Vietnamese online newspapers in order to identify significant heteronormative language patterns that stereotype and marginalize the LGBTQ+ community in whole or in part. The findings reveal increased visibility, but not necessarily more positive representation; harmful stereotypes persist. Notably, the bisexual community continues to face erasure, while transgender individuals often experience disproportionate exposure. By highlighting these toxic framing devices, this study seeks to advocate for more nuanced, inclusive, and affirming representations of LGBTQ+ identities in Vietnamese media.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Representation in Media

The word “representation”, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, refers to “someone or something that represents”. Representation might take the form of an image, a statement, an act (Merriam-Webster 2024), or a person, especially in politics (Britannica 2024). The Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries define representation as “the act of presenting somebody/something in a particular way”, with “portrayal” as one of its synonyms (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries 2024). While the definition of representation, other than dictionaries’ meanings, is still of great debate among scholars, they agree on the core value of representation as something that stands in for something else.

In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall adopted the Oxford Dictionaries’ definition and broadened it: representation can be classified into two systems or two steps of a process: mental representations and lingual signs (1997: 17-19). Mental representation refers to the assigned meaning and interpretation in one’s mind of a particular object or person. The latter, the lingual sign, refers to the conversation and exchange of such meaning through language. Stuart Hall’s work has been considered one of the foundational studies in representation in the media.

While this literature provides valuable insights into representation in the media, it is generally Western-culture-focused. There remains limited understanding of how these portrayals apply to non-Western contexts such as Vietnam.

## 2.2. Heteronormativity in Media

As a historically marginalized minority, the LGBTQ+ community continues to face persistent political stigma, which has intensified in recent years. For instance, U.S. President Donald Trump recently signed an executive order threatening to ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth in several states (NPR 2025). In Europe, reports indicate that countries like Poland, Italy, and the Czech Republic are particularly lagging behind in protecting LGBTQ+ individuals, with many facing increased hostility and inadequate governmental support (Politico 2024). Despite making up less than 9% of the global population, this community is often subjected to systemic discrimination and societal pressures to conform to heterosexual norms. One of the most pervasive influences shaping public perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals is heteronormativity, which remains deeply embedded in media narratives. Numerous studies have examined how this framework affects the representation of LGBTQ+ identities, often reinforcing stereotypes or limiting authentic portrayals in popular culture.

By definition, heteronormativity is a social and cultural concept in which heterosexuality is considered the norm (Warner 1991: 3–17). Heteronormativity operates through expectations about "proper" gender expression, and news media can use specific language to frame certain gender performances as normative while others are framed as deviant. Heteronormativity views masculinity and femininity as rigid, binary concepts, with clear distinctions that correspond to biological sex (Butler 1990). Femininity is associated with passivity, emotional sensitivity, nurturing behavior, physical

attractiveness, and domesticity. Heteronormativity expects women to desire men and express their identity through heterosexual romantic and maternal roles. On the contrary, masculinity is associated with assertiveness, rationality, dominance, strength, and economic provision. Heteronormative norms pressure men to suppress vulnerability, exhibit heterosexual desire, and embody leadership or authority, especially within the family and society. This relates to the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1995).

The concept of heteronormativity marginalizes non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities and relationships by privileging relationships and identities that conform to traditional binary (male-female) ideals (Warner 1991). Heteronormativity is an ongoing social construct that is harmful and segregating for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Moreover, it is ingrained in many social institutions, such as government, religion, education, and media. Judith Butler (1991) maintains that heteronormativity operates through a system of gender performativity, where individuals are expected to conform to binary gender roles and social norms to achieve social recognition.

The media plays a crucial role in disseminating heteronormative ideals to the public. According to Goffman's framing theory, media and communicators can shape how audiences interpret social issues by highlighting certain aspects of reality while downplaying others. This theory states that media texts not only reflect reality but also actively construct meanings that shape how audiences perceive social groups. Newspapers can establish and strengthen specific frames to convey heteronormative ideas. Specifically, the media underrepresents non-heterosexual individuals and often stereotypes them

(Bond 2014). Even when LGBTQ+ characters or themes are included, storylines frequently revolve around heteronormative ideals, such as monogamy, traditional family structures, and assimilation into dominant cultural norms. This reflects both topical framing, where the focus is placed on familiar or limited narratives about queer lives, and generic framing, which draws on conventional storytelling structures rooted in heterosexual norms. Such framing practices may contribute to a restricted public understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences, privileging certain representations while marginalizing others.

Some examples of misrepresentation and under-representation of the queer community further strengthen the idea that the media has a history of promoting heteronormativity through semiotics. The emergence of the "sissy" archetype in cinema created an enduring association between male homosexuality and effeminacy, characterized by flamboyant behavior, flashy clothing, and stereotypically feminine mannerisms. As Russo argues, this representation reinforced heteronormative assumptions by suggesting that gay men inherently possess feminine qualities as a result of their same-sex attraction (1981).

Similarly, lesbian representation in media has historically relied on masculine-coded visual markers, such as wearing pants or having short hair, with the "butch lesbian" stereotype often portrayed as aggressive and predatory. Another common stereotype of lesbians, which is often portrayed in movies, is the "tragic lesbian". Russo's (1981) findings display a pattern of bad endings for lesbian characters in films, which further strengthens the point that lesbianism leads to suffering. While contemporary media has evolved to include more diverse representations, such as the masculine

"bear" subculture for gay men and more feminine depictions of lesbians (often catering to the male gaze), these historical stereotypes continue to influence societal perceptions.

Bisexuality remains one of the most misunderstood and marginalized identities within LGBTQ+ discourse. As Baker observes, bisexual individuals are often stereotyped as promiscuous, indecisive, or confused, contributing to harmful cultural assumptions. These reductive portrayals feed into bisexual erasure, where bisexual identities are either collapsed into gay or straight categories depending on their current relationships. Moreover, bisexuals face double marginalization from both heterosexual and homosexual communities, which further limits accurate representation in media and discourse (Baker 2008: 148-152).

In addition to addressing bisexual stereotypes, Baker (2008) also highlights the problematic linguistic portrayal of transgender individuals in media discourse. He notes that trans people are often depicted through sensationalist narratives that focus disproportionately on their bodies and transitions, using language that pathologizes or exoticizes their identities. Such representations frequently construct transgender identities as deceptive or unnatural, reinforcing binary gender norms and contributing to their social marginalization (Baker 2008: 152).

These stereotypes have resulted in a complex system of visual and behavioral signifiers, where certain gestures, fashion choices, and mannerisms have become automatically associated with sexual orientation, regardless of an individual's actual identity. These media-constructed associations not only reinforce heteronormative expectations but also contribute to the stereotyping of individuals

based on their appearance or behavior, demonstrating the lasting impact of media representation on societal understanding of gender and sexuality. These representations matter because they create recognizable patterns embedded in viewers' mindset and affect how LGBTQ+ individuals are recognized and categorized in society.

As a powerful socializing force, the media can either harm queer individuals by reinforcing heteronormativity or support them by offering affirming representations crucial to identity formation. Considering the importance of media in queer individuals' identity formation, heteronormativity in media is dangerous because it harms not only public opinion of the LGBTQ+ community but also members of the community. In direct comparison to their heterosexual peers, LGBTQ+ individuals experience a unique process of identity formation and disclosure ("coming out of the closet"). Members of the community learn through questioning, observation, and personal experience. The media plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of the LGBTQ+ community as the narratives provided by the media can have a long-lasting impact on how queer individuals view themselves and their journeys (Golden 1997).

Cyberqueer spaces act as a point of resistance against hegemonic heteronormativity, while simultaneously facilitating the identity formation of queer individuals. On the one hand, these platforms offer queer individuals greater freedom to express themselves, build supportive communities, and share diverse identities beyond traditional norms. They allow for self-presentation and storytelling that can empower users and foster acceptance. On the other hand, the structure of these platforms—including algorithms and moderation policies—can still reflect

mainstream biases, sometimes limiting queer visibility or reinforcing dominant norms. Despite these challenges, social media remains a powerful space for resisting heteronormativity and amplifying queer voices (Sastimdur 2023).

### 2.3. Vietnamese Queer Discourse

In the Vietnamese media landscape, there has been little research on heteronormative language in newspapers. Given that queerness in Vietnam is constructed through complex essentialism, homonormativity, and social hierarchy (Yen Mai 2017: 393-409), it is vital to examine the way public newspapers, a major source of information in Vietnam, portray this minority community.

Religious and philosophical traditions in Vietnam, particularly Confucianism and Buddhism, play a significant role in reinforcing heteronormative values and marginalizing queer identities. Confucianism emphasizes filial piety (hiếu), promoting heterosexual marriage and procreation as moral duties essential for preserving family lineage and social order (Cheng 1944: 50-59; Wei-ming 1988: 32-50). The patriarchal family ideal enforces rigid gender roles, marginalizing those who deviate. While early Buddhism does not explicitly condemn homosexuality, cultural interpretations often view same-sex desire as a form of attachment that hinders spiritual progress (Jackson 2009). In some contexts, queer identities are even seen as karmic consequences of past misdeeds, deepening stigma. These frameworks help normalize and moralize heteronormativity across society. As a result, Vietnamese queer youth often adopt essentialist views of sexuality and gender, conceptualizing their identities as natural, unchangeable, and grounded in binary roles (Yen Mai 2017). These influences are consistent with Connell's

theory of hegemonic masculinity, which he defines as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 1995).

Over time, queerness has become less of a taboo topic and has started receiving more recognition. Once associated with “social evils,” the discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ community has come to be viewed through a more diverse lens, though issues regarding heteronormativity prevail. A brief timeline of the evolution in discourse can be found below.

In 1989, Vietnam's first public discussion of male same-sex sexuality emerged through “Tình Pêđê” (“Pede” Love), which framed homosexuality as a spreading disease (Richard Quang-Anh Tran 2014). This pathologization intensified in 1990 when Ho Chi Minh City reported its first HIV case, further linking homosexuality with disease. By 1995, homosexuality was officially categorized under “social evils” (tệ nạn xã hội) alongside issues like gambling and drug use (Colby et al. 2004; Khuat Thu Hong et al. 2009; Newton 2012; Nguyễn Thu Hương 2016).

Two significant events in 1997-1998 brought same-sex relationships into public discourse: a same-sex wedding party in Ho Chi Minh City and an attempted marriage registration in Vĩnh Long (Horton 2014; Horton and Rydstrom 2019; Nguyen Huong Thu 2016). These events prompted legal changes, with the 2000 Marriage and Family Law explicitly prohibiting same-sex marriage (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2000). Moreover, this period of time saw an increased institutional focus on HIV prevention, with the establishment of the

Committee for AIDS, Drugs, and Prostitution Prevention and Control (Khuat Thu Hong et al. 2004). The 2004 National Strategy and Decree 54 specifically identified MSM (men who have sex with men) as a high-risk group, further stigmatizing the LGBTQ+ community by associating homosexuality with disease (Blanc 2005; Colby et al. 2004).

The shift started with the 1999 Media Law revision, which resulted in increased coverage of homosexuality, though often negative. A study showed that 41% of newspaper articles from 2004-2008 portrayed homosexuality discriminatorily (iSEE 2011). However, this period also saw counter-narratives emerge through Vietnamese-language books, documentaries, and films (Horton and Rydstrom 2019).

Following the first Pride event in 2012, initiatives were taken to encourage the decriminalization of same-sex marriage and the destigmatization of the discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ community. In 2014, with the amendment of the Family and Marriage Law, the ban on same-sex marriage was removed, though same-sex marriage has still not been legalized. Despite these regulatory changes, societal stigma remains a major problem. This was highlighted by a 2014 study of more than 5,000 Vietnamese people that found that more than 50% of participants were against the legalization of same-sex marriage (Gay Asia News 2014; Tuổi Trẻ News 2014).

In Vietnamese media discourse, LGBTQ+ individuals have historically been portrayed through a range of harmful stereotypes. As Faludi (2016) highlights, early representations frequently associated homosexuality with deviance, portraying gay men as overly feminine, flamboyant, or predatory, while lesbians were often rendered invisible or depicted as simply going through a phase. These stereotypes

not only distort public understanding but also reinforce heteronormative gender expectations by portraying queer identities as unnatural, unstable, or socially threatening. Despite some progress in representation, these tropes continue to shape the broader narrative around LGBTQ+ people in Vietnam.

Given the complex nature of the discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ community in Vietnam, this study aims to examine the way heteronormative language reflects perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community in the Vietnamese press, identify patterns in the way this minority group is portrayed on online newspapers, and discuss the topic in light of these findings.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1. Theories

Framing theory and journalism on minority groups

Framing theory generally suggests a connection between the presentation of a matter to a receiver and the receiver's subsequent processing of that information. Framing theory was first outlined by Erving Goffman in his work "Framing Analysis" (1974). Framing analysis is a research approach that examines individual perspectives and interpretations of events by investigating various elements such as images, actors, and messages. Goffman highlights the importance of personal experience in perception within his theory, with little indication of societal effects (1974).

Frames, according to Goffman, are 'definitions of the situation [that] are built up under the principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them'

(1974). In other words, in framing analysis, frames are commonly viewed as different layers that are built upon each other and a primary layer, or primary layers. The core layers, or as Goffman calls them 'primary frameworks', are the most basic frameworks for other frames to be developed without restrictions regarding location, perception, or identity (1974). Goffman claims that these primary frameworks can be categorized into two broad classes: natural and social, with natural frameworks defining events as "undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided", and social frameworks providing a fundamental understanding that takes human beings into consideration (1974). As he concludes, primary frameworks take the form of the core or central understanding that is shared among a social class or group (1974), and he links primary frameworks to keys and keyings. These are frames that play the role of orienting and guiding one's perception toward a key, most prominent concept. Other than the primary frames, there might exist fabrications and keyings, all contributing to the organization and construction of meanings.

Applying framing analysis in his work on communication and how it might be developed, Robert M. Entman (1993) highlights the use and operation of framing in various contexts, from news media to political communication, and cultural and ideological contexts. His insights also help guide scholars in terms of analysing the media and the media's frames: "Journalistic objectivity: Journalists may follow the rules for 'objective' reporting and yet convey a dominant framing of the news text that prevents most audience members from making a balanced assessment of a situation" (Entman 1993). Moreover, Entman's (1993) academic work guides the analysis of frames through a set of four-level

framing categorizations: (1) problem definition, (2) causal interpretation, (3) moral evaluation, and (4) treatment recommendation.

Regarding the media's use of framing and journalism on minority groups, Todd Gitlin emphasizes the difference between normalization – incorporation into mainstream media – and marginalization – portrayal as threatening in media – as two primary ways of portraying minorities (1980). Written by Marilyn E. Gist in 1990, “Minorities in Media Imagery: A Social Cognitive Perspective on Journalistic Bias” explores partisanship in media content in depth. According to Gist, the media often portrays minorities either in negative or positive contexts, but with limitations to stereotypical roles, which can lead to underrepresentation or misrepresentation. Gist also elaborates further on the reasons behind or motives behind such representation: newsroom staff (journalists) and decision-makers often reflect the hegemonic group's values, therefore prioritizing their perspectives and interests (Gist 1990). Recognizing the significant influence of Goffman's framing theory on all aspects of daily life in general and communication specifically, the research group employs framing theory and framing analysis as one of its fundamental analytic lenses.

The analysis also employs theories from the journal article “The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In” by Van Gorp (2007). The essay provides an in-depth interpretation of framing, including framing constituents, devices, characteristics, and functions. According to Van Gorp (2007), framing is the typical manner in which journalists shape news content with a familiar frame of reference and meaning structure. The purpose of framing is to encourage the

audience to adopt and see the world through these frames and create a hegemonic narrative surrounding a particular problem. Journalists alone are not enough to change existing concepts, but they can use framing to utilize these phenomena and magnify them. Van Gorp also states that frames related to cultural phenomena are more easily imposed on readers as culture is the primary basis for constituting knowledge.

#### News language as a framing mechanism

Delving deeper into framing theory, especially in news reporting, the discussion of news language and frames is pivotal. Analysing news language is analysing news discourse. Discourse is commonly constructed from sentence forms, meanings, and speech acts (Van Dijk 1988). In 2008, Theo van Leeuwen described discourse as the recontextualization, or the redefining factor, of social practices (2008: 3-5), therefore bridging the gaps between linguistic elements, perceptions, and actions. Citing previous scholars, Leeuwen highlights the great importance of word and grammar choice in generating layers of meanings. Such integration of language consequently creates frames to be interpreted; these frames are specifically termed “media frames” by Dietram A. Scheufele (1997). As the media incorporates organizational pressures, ideologies, attitudes, and other factors into its mediated products, it is simultaneously building media frames that subsequently guide the audience's frames. The audience's frames, then, through their filters, shape their attitudes and behaviors. Journalists, who generate mediated content, can also be the audience with their own media-shaped frames and will utilize those subjective frames in their news language (Scheufele 1999: 115).

Understanding the link between news discourse and framing can guide the



development of research questions that align closely with the study's original objectives.

### 3.2. Research Questions

Considering the complex nature of the matters at hand, the research aims to answer the following three questions:

(i) What dominant frames emerge in the portrayal of the LGBTQ+ community in Vietnamese online newspapers?

(ii) What can be inferred about the general attitudes of Vietnamese online newspapers towards issues regarding the LGBTQ+ community?

(iii) How do these media frames potentially influence public perception of LGBTQ+ issues in Vietnamese society?

### 3.3. Methodology

The research group conducted quantitative content analysis using MAXQDA. Research subjects were chosen by analysing the 50 most visited Vietnamese websites in 2024. This list is provided by Similarweb (2025) – a global software development and data aggregation company specializing in web analytics, web traffic, and digital performance. Among those 50 websites, the six highest-ranked online newspapers were selected for further research. These online newspapers are: (1) *VNExpress*, (2) *Dan Tri*, (3) *Tuoi Tre*, (4) *Vietnamnet*, (5) *Thanh Nien*, and (6) *Tien Phong*. Then, the research group used Python to scrape the six websites for articles published in 2024 that contain the keywords “LGBT” and “xu hướng tính dục” (“sexual orientation”). After scraping the web, 205 articles were collected for analysis.

To determine the main themes of the articles, the content of the 205 articles (photos were excluded) was compiled into a WordCloud. Based on the frequency with

which each keyword appears in the articles, the research group combined similar keywords and identified six main thematic groups: entertainment, LGBTQ+ identity, familial relationships, social relations, legislation, and others. Afterwards, the articles were input into MAXQDA for content analysis, through which the following categories were examined: (1) mentions of each cluster of the LGBTQ+ community, (2) the general tone of voice used in each article, (3) the application of stereotypes on each group of the LGBTQ+ community, and (4) the level of framing in each article, according to Entman (1993). To ensure coding reliability, approximately 25% of the articles (53 out of 205) were coded by both coders, and an intercoder reliability check was conducted based on Krippendorff's Alpha measurement: Two Observers, Many Nominal Categories (Krippendorff 2004: 227-230).

To identify heteronormative language, this study focuses on recognizing gender stereotypes in each article. This approach is grounded in the understanding that heteronormativity is not only the presumption of heterosexuality as the societal default, but also the reinforcement of traditional, binary gender roles that dictate how men and women should look, behave, and relate to one another. As García and Martínez (2021) argue, these gendered expectations are deeply embedded within heteronormative frameworks. By identifying recurring patterns of gendered representation (such as associating gay men with fashion or transgender individuals with appearance and body transformation), this study highlights how heteronormative ideology operates subtly through stereotypical portrayals that marginalize non-conforming identities and normalize a rigid gender binary.

This article applies framing analysis, originally introduced by Erving Goffman, to

examine how LGBTQ+ issues are presented in Vietnamese online newspapers. By analysing the frames used in reporting, the study seeks to explore how these representations might influence public perception. Framing devices—such as headlines, leads, and recurring themes—are often found in prominent positions within news articles, where they help shape how readers interpret the content (Van Dijk 1988). Even when not prominently placed, some devices can still activate strong

interpretive cues or schemas. Therefore, this study analyzes all elements of a news article, including headlines, subheadings, and main content, to determine how LGBTQ+ topics are framed. It further identifies the specific techniques used, the rhetorical tools employed, and the depth of framing achieved. Drawing on Entman's (1993) framework, the study classifies framing into four levels: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Intercoder Reliability Results

**Table 1: Intercoder Reliability Statistics**

Variables	Percent Agreement	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Agreements	N Disagreements	N Cases	N Decisions
V01	100	undefined*	53	0	53	106
V04	100	undefined*	53	0	53	106
V05a	100	1	53	0	53	106
V05b	100	1	53	0	53	106
V05c	100	1	53	0	53	106
V06	92.45283019	0.84375	49	4	53	106
V07a	94.33962264	0.887218045	50	3	53	106
V07b	96.22641509	0.813829787	51	2	53	106
V07c	98.11320755	0.660194175	52	1	53	106
V07d	96.22641509	0.836956522	51	2	53	106
V07e	100	undefined*	53	0	53	106
V07f	100	1	53	0	53	106
V08	90.56603774	0.85675307	48	5	53	106
V09	84.90566038	0.763646595	45	8	53	106
V10a1	98.11320755	0.848484848	52	1	53	106
V10a2	96.22641509	0.867424242	51	2	53	106
V10a3	92.45283019	0.734848485	49	4	53	106
V10b1	98.11320755	0	52	1	53	106

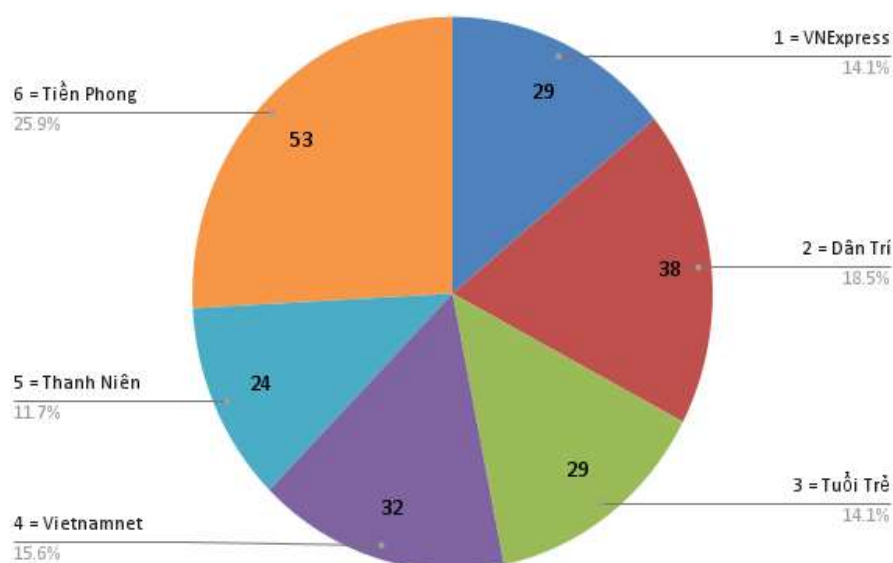
<b>V10b2</b>	98.11320755	0.879725086	52	1	53	106
<b>V10b3</b>	100	1	53	0	53	106
<b>V10c1</b>	98.11320755	0.660194175	52	1	53	106
<b>V10c2</b>	98.11320755	0.792079208	52	1	53	106
<b>V10c3</b>	96.22641509	0.836956522	51	2	53	106
<b>V10d1</b>	100	undefined*	53	0	53	106
<b>V10d2</b>	98.11320755	0.660194175	52	1	53	106
<b>V10d3</b>	100	1	53	0	53	106
<b>V10e1</b>	100	1	53	0	53	106
<b>V10e2</b>	100	1	53	0	53	106
<b>V10e3</b>	98.11320755	0.792079208	52	1	53	106
<b>V11</b>	86.79245283	0.80021745	46	7	53	106

The table presents agreement statistics between the two separate coders on one dataset.

Firstly, the average agreement percentage is approximately 97%. This high percentage reveals that overall, the coded dataset is reliable. Secondly, based on Krippendorff's Alpha measurement for reliability, 22 out of 30 numerical variables had an alpha of at least 0.80, the benchmark for trustworthy variables. Most of the remaining statistics ranged from 0.66 to 0.79, meaning that conclusions can be drawn for exploratory studies (Krippendorff 2004: 241-243). Collectively, these data signify that the coding process in this study was scientifically reliable.

#### 4.2. Quantitative results

**Figure 1:** Samples Distribution by Vietnamese Online Newspapers



This research was conducted on the six most-read online newspapers in Vietnam: (1) *VNExpress*, (2) *Dan Tri*, (3) *Tuoi Tre*, (4) *Vietnamnet*, (5) *Thanh Nien*, and (6) *Tien Phong*. Among the 205 articles, the number of news items from *Tien Phong* was 53, which accounted for over a quarter (see Figure 1). While *Tien Phong* had the most articles, other sites had roughly the same number, from 24 to 38 articles each. This indicates no significant disparity between the frequency of the LGBTQ+ community’s appearances across these newspapers.

Figure 2: News Article Type

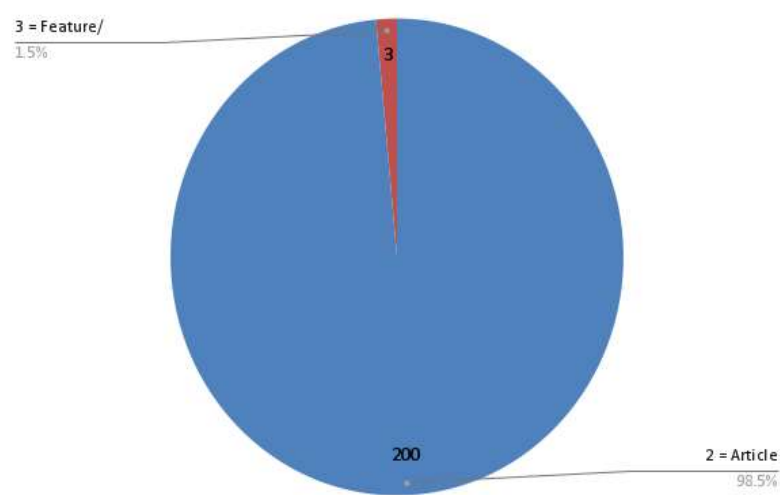
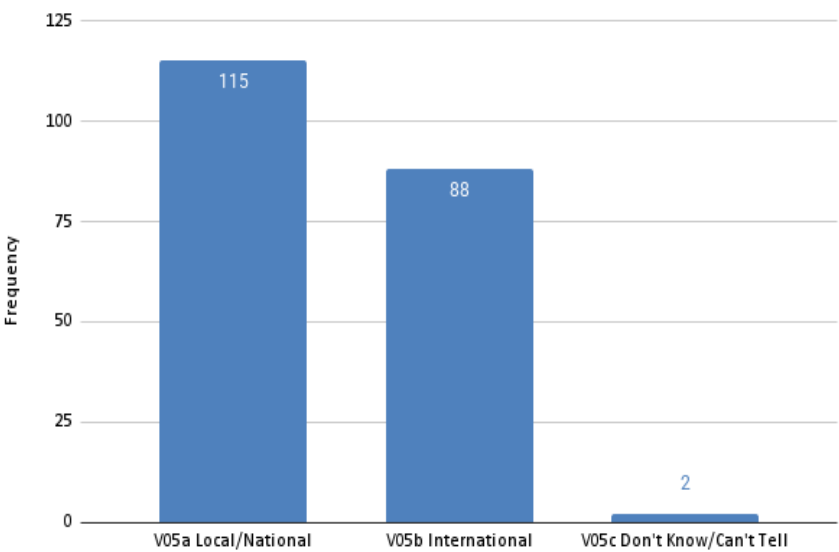
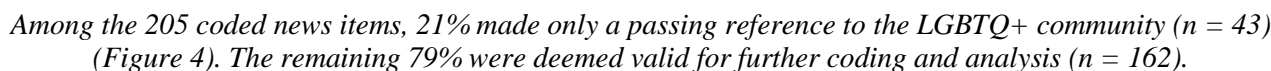


Figure 2 classifies the coded news items into four types: (1) brief, (2) article, (3) feature/chronicle, and (4) others. Of the 205 items, 98.5% (n = 200) were articles, while only 1.5% were features or chronicles (n = 3). Two news items did not belong to any of the categories. Therefore, “news items” and “articles” will be used interchangeably from this point onwards.

Figure 3: Geographical Focus Frequency of Samples



**Figure 4:** *Proportion of Samples with Passing References to the LGBTQ+ Community*

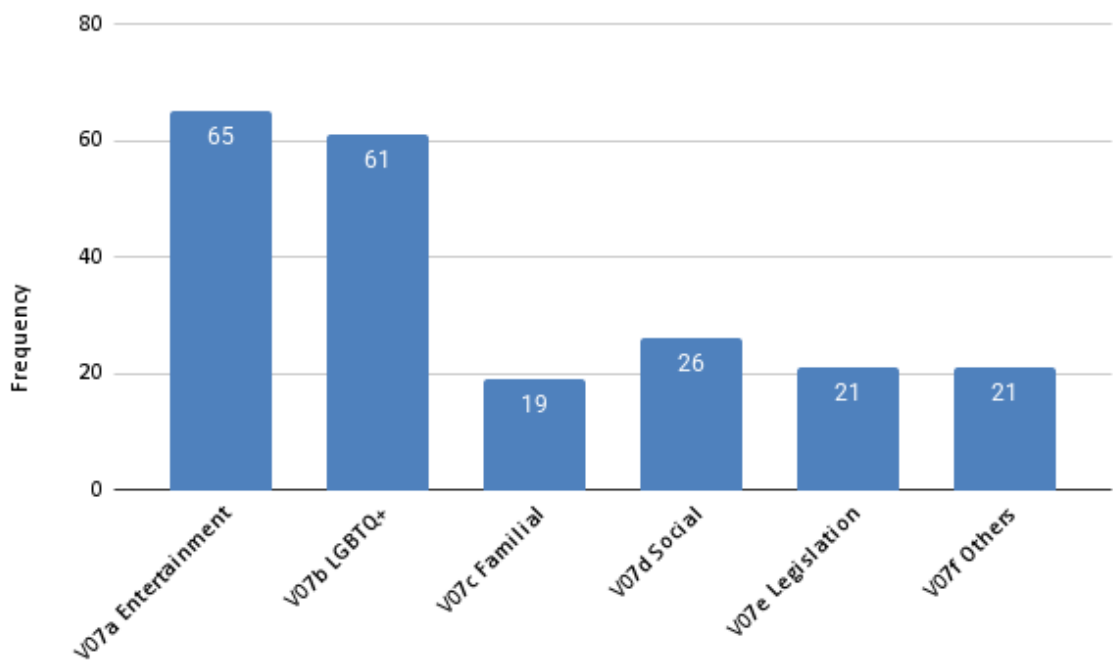


Python was used to scrape and compile the most frequently used words in the 205 online articles. After compiling the list, the research team grouped words belonging to the same category to determine the main themes of the articles.

The word cloud (Image 1) reveals key patterns in how Vietnamese newspapers portray the LGBTQ+ community, with frequent references to identity-related terms such as “LGBT”, “*đồng tính*” (homosexual), and “*chuyển giới*” (transgender), suggesting increasing visibility in the media landscape. These identities are often situated within broader social contexts, as evident in high-frequency words like “*xã hội*” (society), “*gia đình*” (family), and “*cộng đồng*” (community), reflecting ongoing discussions

about the community’s place within traditional structures. The presence of terms related to entertainment, such as “*phim*” (film), “*diễn viên*” (actor), and “*giải trí*” (entertainment), indicates that LGBTQ+ representation is frequently mediated through pop culture, potentially shaping public perception through celebrity narratives. While supportive terms such as “*chia sẻ*” (share) and “*ủng hộ*” (support) appear, the coexistence of conflict-laden words like “*gây*” (cause) and “*khó khăn*” (difficulty) suggests a dual framing that balances visibility with continued struggle or controversy. Overall, the language used highlights both progress in representation and the persistence of heteronormative framing in Vietnamese media discourse.

**Figure 5:** Main Themes of the News Items



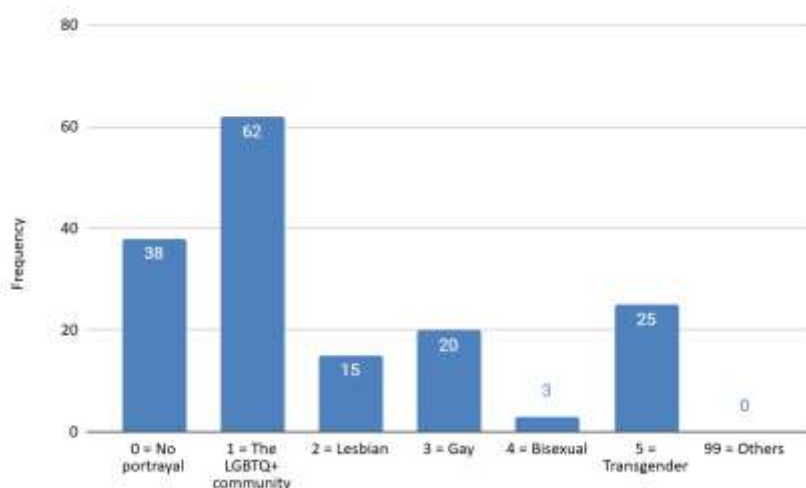
A WordCloud analysis was conducted for the 205 articles to compile the most used words. The main themes were identified by grouping similar words (Figure 5). There were six major themes: (1) entertainment,

(2) LGBTQ+ identity, (3) familial relationship, (4) social relations, (5) legislation, and (6) others (for articles that do not correspond to any category above). Each article can be listed with up to two

main themes, resulting in a total of 213 themes picked. The majority of the 162 valid news items fell under the thematic category of either “entertainment” (n = 65) or “LGBTQ+ identity” (n = 61). The least

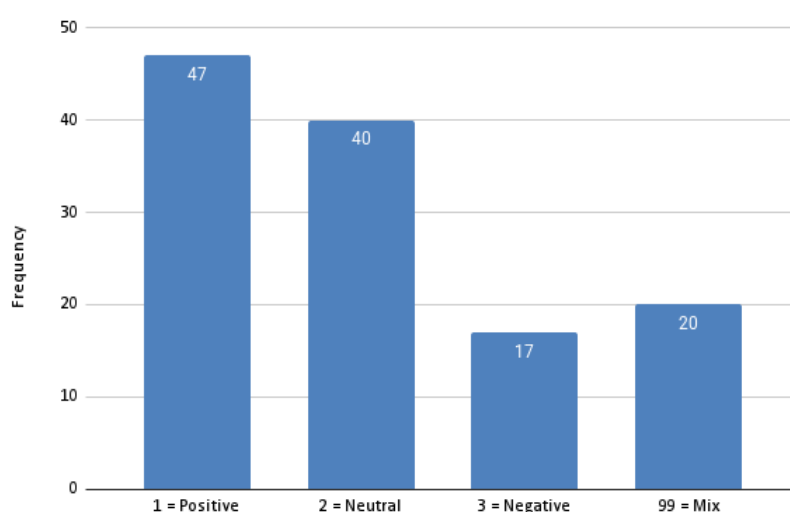
mentioned theme was “familial relationship” (n = 19). The other three categories, “social relations” (n = 26), “legislation” (n = 21), and “others” (n = 21) had approximately the same frequencies.

**Figure 6:** *Frequency of LGBTQ+ Segments Mentioned in Items*



Among the 162 valid articles analyzed, the research group measured the frequency at which different segments of the LGBTQ+ community were portrayed in Vietnamese online newspapers. The five primary groups identified were: (1) the LGBTQ+ community as a general category, (2) lesbians, (3) gay men, (4) bisexual individuals, and (5) transgender individuals. The majority of articles referred only to the LGBTQ+ community (n = 62). The transgender community was the second most portrayed group (n = 25), followed by gay men (n = 20). The bisexual community was the least visible, with only three mentions, accounting for only 1.46% of the dataset. Thirty-eight articles categorized as “No portrayal” were removed from the analysis.

**Figure 7:** *Tone of Voice in Items*





The general tone of voice used throughout the articles is another factor analyzed to reveal the attitude of Vietnamese online newspapers toward matters regarding the LGBTQ+ community (Figure 7). To be considered “positive,” the article must utilize affirming, inclusive language, like “*ủng hộ*” (support) or “*hạnh phúc*” (happy), and avoid exaggeration or derogatory terms, such as “*kỳ thị*” (discriminate) or “*ghét bỏ*” (hate on). A “positive” article tends to frame LGBTQ+ topics as normal, accepted, and worthy of rights and representation. Among the articles analyzed, 47 were regarded as positive.

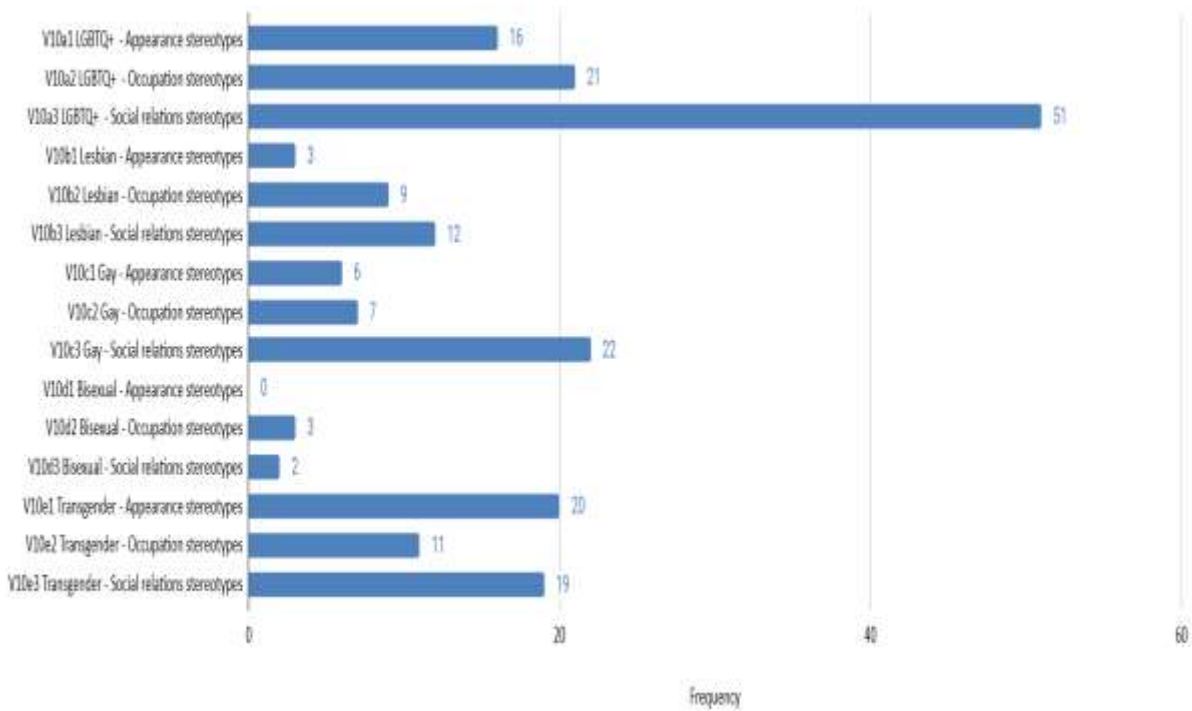
Neutral articles use objective and fact-based language, avoiding emotionally charged or judgmental terms. They present LGBTQ+ topics with balanced wording, such as “*same-sex marriage legalization*” rather than “*controversial gay marriage law*”. The articles categorized as “neutral”

are usually simple reports of events, with little to no opinion expressed by the author. There were a total of 40 articles in this category.

To be classified as having a negative tone of voice, the articles had to use derogatory, exaggerated, or discriminatory language, framing matters regarding the LGBTQ+ community as controversial, unnatural, immoral, or a societal threat. There were a total of 17 articles classified in this category, the least frequent among all types of articles.

The articles with a mixed tone of voice provide both positive and negative views of the LGBTQ+ community, using affirming language in certain parts of the articles and stigmatizing language in others. These articles usually offer different viewpoints. The number of articles falling into this category is 20, accounting for roughly 10% of the entire dataset.

**Figure 8:** Frequency of Stereotypes by LGBTQ+ Segment and Type



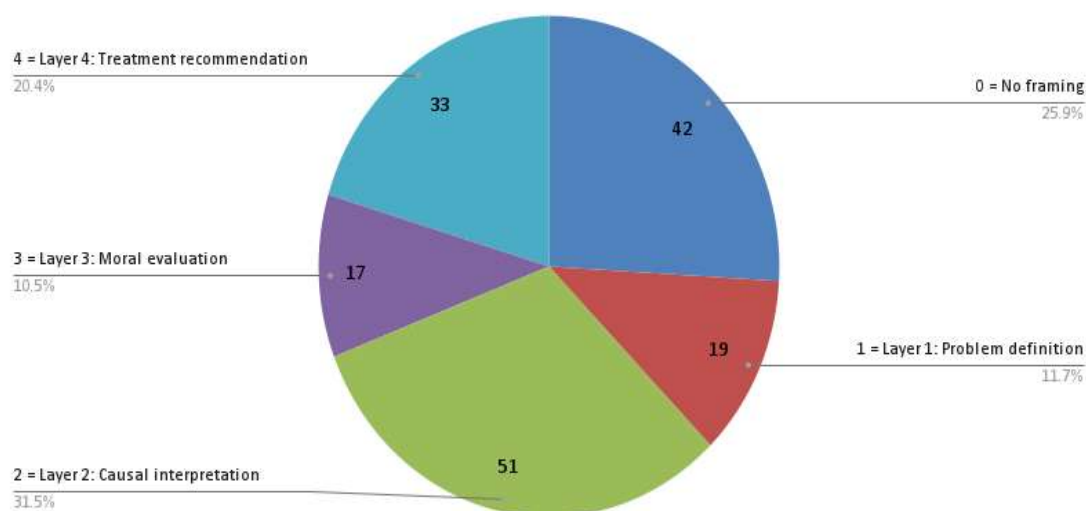


The research group also examined the frequency at which different types of stereotypes for the five groups of the LGBTQ+ community were mentioned in every article (Figure 8). Three kinds of stereotype were analyzed in the research, namely those relating to appearance, occupation, and social relations. Among these, the most prevalent stereotype concerns social relations (interpersonal connections, societal perceptions, and community interactions with the LGBTQ+ community). As for the results, social relations stereotypes were the most common across all groups, with the LGBTQ+ community in general being most heavily associated ( $n = 51$ ), followed by gay individuals ( $n = 22$ ) and transgender individuals ( $n = 19$ ). Transgender people were the only group to be significantly

stereotyped across all three dimensions, with 20 mentions for appearance, 11 for occupation, and 19 for social relations.

In contrast, bisexual individuals were the least portrayed overall, with only three mentions in occupation, two in social relations, and none in appearance, reflecting a high level of invisibility in media discourse. Lesbian individuals were more frequently associated with social relations ( $n = 12$ ) and appearance ( $n = 9$ ). Occupational stereotypes were generally less common, though the LGBTQ+ group ( $n = 21$ ) and transgender individuals ( $n = 11$ ) were more frequently targeted. Overall, the data suggests a pattern of unequal representation, where some identities are disproportionately visible and stereotyped while others, particularly bisexuality, remain underrepresented or erased.

**Figure 9:** *Distribution of Framing Levels*



Based on Entman's (1993) framing function categories, items were coded according to the deepest framing layer the article might have employed relating to the LGBTQ+ community or any segment of the community (Figure 9). There were five variables: (0) no framing, (1) layer 1:

problem definition, (2) layer 2: causal interpretation, (3) layer 3: moral evaluation, and (4) layer 4: treatment recommendation. Each article was assessed thoroughly. The following examples illustrate the coding process.

To be coded as *layer 1*, the article must mention and analyze a certain problem relating to the LGBTQ+ community or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender subjects – for example: “Ở Trung Quốc, vấn đề pháp lý liên quan đến các liệu pháp "chuyển đổi giới tính" cho người LGBTQ+ vẫn còn mơ hồ” (In China, legal issues related to “gender conversion” therapies for LGBTQ+ individuals remain ambiguous) in the article “Người chuyển giới thắng kiện sau khi bị ép điều trị sốc điện” (Trans person wins lawsuit after being forced into electrical shock therapy) published on *VnExpress*;

To be coded as *layer 2*, the article must attribute the causes to such problems, such as “Chính phủ đã loại bỏ đồng tính luyến ái khỏi danh sách các rối loạn tâm thần chính thức vào năm 2001, nhưng giữ lại triệu chứng liên quan đến rối loạn xu hướng tình dục. Điều này tạo điều kiện cho các bác sĩ tâm thần rao bán gói điều trị "đảo ngược xu hướng tình dục" cho người thuộc cộng đồng LGBTQ+” (The government officially removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 2001, but retained symptoms related to sexual orientation disorders. This has allowed psychiatrists to promote “sexual orientation reversal” treatment packages for LGBTIQ+ individuals), which also appeared in “Người chuyển giới thắng kiện sau khi bị ép điều trị sốc điện”.

To be coded as *layer 3*, the article must discuss moral issues of the LGBTQ+ community, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender subjects, as is evident in “Cô mong muốn cộng đồng người chuyển giới sớm được bảo vệ về quyền con người cơ bản, không còn bị đối xử bất công trong lĩnh vực y tế” (She hopes that the transgender community will soon be protected in terms of basic human rights and no longer face discrimination in healthcare).

To be coded as *layer 4*, the article must suggest possible solutions to the problems presented, as in “Ling'er hy vọng trải nghiệm của mình sẽ mang đến thay đổi cho cộng đồng LGBTQ+ ở Trung Quốc” (Ling'er hopes that her experience will bring change to the LGBTQ+ community in China) (Thuc Linh 2024).

After defining the problem, almost 12% (n = 19) of news items ended, while almost a third of the samples assigned causes to the mentioned problems (n = 51), and only about 10% of the news items reached *layer 3* by morally evaluating the subjects (n = 17). Just over 20% of items (n = 33) offered solutions.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Visibility Frame

The quantitative results from the 205 items confirm one consistent umbrella frame employed for the Vietnamese online newspaper landscape in 2024: the *visibility* frame. As quoted in the Oxford Dictionary, “visibility” refers to the degree to which something is seen by the public (2024). Therefore, in this paper, we adapt the definition above and further expand it: visibility can be defined as one’s appearance in the view of others. In this case, it is the perception of the LGBTQ+ community through the public’s eyes. Thus, the visibility frame refers to the frame, or preconception, regarding the public presence of the community.

First, the dominant visibility frame is deduced primarily from the thematic and mention-frequency findings, which have been analyzed above. The two main themes – “entertainment” and “LGBTQ+ identity” – account for over half of the data recorded (about 51.5%), contributing to a tendency in

news reporting in Vietnamese online newspapers and proving the existence of an umbrella frame related to the community's visibility in the media. The frame is further enhanced through the disparity in the frequency of appearance between different segments of the LGBTQ+ community.

Second, the umbrella frame includes more specific *cultural portrayal*, *identity portrayal*, and *selective portrayal* sub-frames.

The first sub-frame, cultural portrayal, is derived from the “entertainment” theme: it is clear that the LGBTQ+ community was portrayed as part of the cultural landscape through entertainment contexts. Most LGBTQ+ individuals in the Vietnamese press are depicted in entertainment settings: in the “Trào lưu soi 'người ta yêu nhau” (The trend of peeking in others' relationships) article on *Tien Phong*, out of the four mentioned couples, the author cited one LGBTQ+ couple as a prime example of the community, with comments from their fans celebrating the relationship (“Người hâm mộ vây kín, mang cả băng rôn, poster cổ vũ hai chàng trai”) (Nong Hong Dieu 2024). Stemming from the dominance of the LGBTQ+ identity theme, the second sub-frame, identity portrayal, focuses on the community's identities. Specifically, while only a few of the items delved deeper into the social issues along with the existence of the community, like “Ép con chữa 'bệnh' đồng tính” (Forcing your child to cure gayness) (Thuy An 2024), the large proportion of articles still relate their subjects to the characters' journeys – for example: “Hành trình chấp nhận giới tính của 'công chúa tóc mây” (Sexuality-acceptance journey of Vietnamese Rapunzel) published on *VnExpress* (Phan Duong 2024). Analysing the mention frequencies of different segments of the LGBTQ+ community, the *selective*

*portrayal* sub-frame was identified. These three sub-frames were used by the Vietnamese online press to organize and generate perceptions regarding the LGBTQ+ community in general, and each segment specifically.

Finally, the *visibility* frame organizes the Vietnamese newspapers' portrayal around the concept of visibility, or presence, of the LGBTQ+ community. This conclusion is consistent with previously published academic work by Laura Faludi, in which queer movements in Vietnamese media were assessed, revealing a tendency in portrayal framing (2016). The cultural portrayal sub-frame highlights the LGBTQ+ community's role in popular culture, emphasizing their inclusion in entertainment while simultaneously excluding them from diverse cultural backgrounds and fields beyond it. This sub-frame has been mentioned and analyzed by Katherine Sender in her work on American gay visibility and its “higher than ever” relationship with the entertainment industry (2004: 40). Next, the narrative originating from the *identity portrayal* sub-frame constructs a path towards identity formation, shaping how the LGBTQ+ community is understood and perceived through personal recognition and limiting the audience's understanding of the community to only identity-related dialogues. The *selective portrayal* sub-frame includes how the community was normally referred to as a whole, instead of being discussed individually. Furthermore, there existed an imbalance in the portrayal frequencies of different segments. These data reflect a *selective portrayal* sub-frame with three main agendas: (1) generalizing the community under one umbrella “The LGBTQ+ community” term, (2) selectively allowing for more emergence of “gay” and “transgender”, (3) erasing the appearance of “bisexual”, which will be further analysed.

Specifically, there were only three articles that mentioned bisexuality compared to the large number of items that featured gay (20 articles) or transgender (25 articles) (See Figure 6). On the one hand, the subjects of gay identity and gender transition allow more space for journalists to exploit, with diverse angles, characters' journeys like "Cô giáo LGBT dạy tiếng Anh thu hút hàng triệu lượt xem là ai?" (Who is the million-view LGBT English Teacher?) on *Dan Tri* (Tien Bui 2024), to social issues like "Nửa triệu người Việt có nhu cầu chuyển giới" (Half a million of Vietnamese with demands for transitioning) on *Dan Tri* (Tu Anh 2024). On the other hand, the subject of bisexuality in the Vietnamese journalism landscape still lacks depth, with only articles on bisexual presence in entertainment – for example: "Ha Kino viết tâm thư xúc động hậu công khai lưỡng tính" (Ha Kino's emotional letter post-coming out) on *Tuoi Tre* (Thuy Minh 2024), or "Người đẹp song tính mua lại bản quyền Hoa hậu Hòa bình Mỹ" (Bisexual beauty buys copyright of Miss Grand USA) on *Tien Phong* (Duy Nam 2024).

In conclusion, the dominant frame influencing the Vietnamese online newspapers' audience is *visibility*, with the amplification of three sub-frames: (1) *cultural portrayal*, (2) *identity portrayal*, and (3) *selective portrayal*. The overall frame constructs a narrative about the presence of the community among the public by emphasizing their visibility as a cultural and identity-based situation, while failing to inclusively portray all individuals of the community.

## 5.2. Complicated Attitudes and Underlying Heteronormativity

Whether it is inclusivity, openness, or underlying heteronormativity, it is clear that the overall attitude of the Vietnamese press towards the LGBTQ+ community is

complex, and assumptions of heteronormativity are deeply embedded in press narratives.

Firstly, the statistics show that the overall attitude of the Vietnamese online press towards the LGBTQ+ community is gradually becoming more inclusive and accepting. This suggests a media environment that, while not uniformly affirming, is increasingly treating LGBTQ+ topics as legitimate and worthy of coverage. However, this shift is discursive rather than comprehensive. The majority of the articles only reached the first level of framing (Entman 1993), suggesting a surface-level normalization of LGBTQ+ identities while still upholding heteronormative frames. In addition, as LGBTQ+ issues are often framed within the first layer (problem definition), LGBTQ+ identities are framed as "problems" or "controversies." This tendency continues to reinforce heteronormativity through subtle, structural means. Among the 205 articles analyzed, one passage stood out in the article titled "Tiền truyện 'Star Wars' gây tranh cãi vì cốt truyện vô lý, lạm dụng diễn viên LGBTQ+." "After releasing the trailer for the prequel titled 'The Acolyte', Disney sparked outrage among Star Wars fans, who claimed that the producers were excessively incorporating LGBTQ+ elements and content that deviated from the original films." The elements related to the LGBTQ+ community were deemed excessive and outrageous. The article went on without any further elaboration or explanation.

Moreover, an absence of negative language does not necessarily mean LGBTQ+ subjects are freed from bias, especially when heteronormative language is still dominant in the majority of articles. Rather, this can signal a shift to coded language or repressive tolerance, where LGBTQ+ subjects are accepted only under

certain terms. These conditions include requirements that they establish a family, bear children, or have socially respected occupations. Transgender individuals are usually associated with roles of pageant queens, and even when portrayed with another occupation, their appearance is usually under scrutiny. This can be seen in the article of “The stunning appearance of the transgender doctor in Ho Chi Minh City”:

“Besides her beautiful appearance and height of 1.68 meters, the transgender beauty also boasts an impressive academic record”

“The transgender doctor expressed joy upon receiving public affection”

“Currently, the greatest goal of the transgender beauty is to win the crown at Miss International Queen Vietnam 2025”

“The stunning appearance of the transgender doctor in Ho Chi Minh City”

The most frequently portrayed subject in the dataset is the LGBTQ+ community as a general category, and it is also the most stereotyped group. This suggests that although the community receives significant media attention, that visibility does not necessarily equate to affirming or accurate portrayals. Instead, the community is often portrayed through repetitive and reductive frames, reinforcing common tropes rather than fostering deeper understanding. This aligns with critiques in queer media studies that warn of “visibility traps” – where increased representation, if framed through normative or pathologizing lenses, can entrench rather than dismantle societal biases (Dhaenens 2012). In this context, visibility may become a double-edged sword: affirming the existence of the LGBTQ+ community while simultaneously reproducing heteronormative assumptions through stereotypical coding.

Secondly, there is a clear underrepresentation of the bisexual community. The stark underrepresentation of bisexual individuals (only 1.46% of all mentions) reflects a longstanding pattern of bisexual erasure in media discourse (Yoshino 2000). This invisibility reinforces harmful myths about bisexuality being illegitimate, transitional, or irrelevant, despite bisexual people comprising a significant portion of the LGBTQ+ population. This erasure contributes to the lack of representation, policy inclusion, and scholarly attention given to bisexual people and helps explain why, despite existing within the LGBTQ+ umbrella, bisexuality remains marginalized even within queer discourse. The keyword “bisexual” was mentioned in only three articles – for example in one article (“Ha Kino viết tâm thư xúc động hậu công khai lưỡng tính”): “Ha Kino writes an emotional letter after coming out as bisexual.” However, the title severely misuses the word for “bisexual,” which turned out to mean bisexual animals in Vietnamese (*lưỡng tính*).

Finally, the results suggest existing hostility towards the transgender community, as they are stereotyped across all three dimensions: appearance (n = 20), occupation (n = 11), and social relations (n = 19). A prime example of such stereotyping can be seen in an article entitled “Male student in Hanoi goes viral for his beauty, feels like crying when being called during roll call.” (Nam sinh ở Hà Nội Gây Sốt vì xinh đẹp, ‘Đỏ Khóc’ khi điểm danh ở lớp). The subject of this article is a trans woman, using the pronouns she/her. Even though it is mentioned throughout the article that the subject is a woman, the text still misgenders her: “Transgender female student hopes that Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) with stories like hers can live happily with their decisions and never have to regret

anything.” Coupled with stereotypical occupations and appearances, this suggests that transgender individuals face the most comprehensive stereotyping, pointing to deep social discomfort or fascination with gender non-conformity. The pattern also suggests that while transgender visibility has increased, it is often accompanied by reductive and stigmatizing narratives. Such portrayals reinforce existing societal biases and undermine the authenticity of transgender experiences in the media.

Together, these findings reveal the uneven portrayal and presence of the LGBTQ+ community in Vietnamese media, where visibility does not necessarily equate to positive portrayals, and invisibility signals deep systemic exclusions.

### **5.3. Potentially Uneven Public Perception**

By analysing the dataset, this study suggests that there may be two main impacts on public perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community, which are (1) fostering a non-inclusive viewpoint and (2) limiting the public's awareness of and actions on certain LGBTQ+ topics. This unbalanced awareness is reinforced through heteronormativity and a lack of reporting depth, resulting from the impact of the attitudes and framing mentioned above.

Firstly, the *visibility* frame, as assessed earlier, generates particular perceptions restricting an inclusive understanding of the community's diverse backgrounds and individuality. The underlying heteronormativity, related to the construction of the *visibility* frame, impacted the public's perception to an extent: the community was excluded from other news themes, with focus on specific queer groups. This over-prioritization not only highlights the presence of specific cases of individuals from the community but also limits the

appearance of others like bisexuals or lesbians in matters like legislation or familial relationships. Specifically, the three articles mentioning bisexuality did so only in entertainment settings, limiting depth in perception of the bisexual segment of the community. This puts the audience under the impression that in specific contexts, bisexuality rarely exists and is normally not spoken about, and in general, the LGBTQ+ community should not be celebrated if they do not meet the standards of a queer celebrity individual.

Secondly, a lack of framing depth, along with the previously identified *visibility* frame, not only limits an all-inclusive public perception of the community, but also further reinforces such uneven perceptions by consistently addressing LGBTQ+ individuals on a surface level. Through the 'levels of framing' dataset, it is significant that a limited depth of framing emerges in the Vietnamese media landscape's viewpoint on the LGBTQ+ community. On the one hand, after categorizing the 162 items using Entman's framing levels (1993), the researchers recognize that the percentages reveal a cause-attributing tendency in Vietnamese media. On the other hand, the data reflects the preference of 2024 Vietnamese newspapers not to push forward with a clear moral and practical agenda when mentioning the LGBTQ+ community. Linking this with the language use dataset, it can be seen that the stereotypes enhanced were not discussed with full and thorough contexts, resulting in a lack of comprehensive understanding of the community and avoiding directly pointing to causes and suggesting actions towards matters regarding queer individuals.

Thirdly, the unbalanced agenda pushed forward to the audience might continuously reinforce pre-existing heteronormative lenses. The limited stereotypes and traits

repeatedly mentioned further confined the public's opinions to a set of heteronormative assumptions. In addition, while the shallow framing of the community might appear harmless, in reality, it allows heteronormativity to remain intact, with little to no threat of being countered due to few mentions of morality or solutions.

As a final point, a limited depth of framing, along with the *visibility* frame, and underlying heteronormativity, restricts the Vietnamese public engagement with LGBTQ+ issues by promoting uneven perceptions of restricted surface-level recognition, which in turn maintains the existing heteronormative path against the community among the public. The findings of this research serve as a medium to encourage Vietnamese media to foster more inclusive, multi-faceted, and in-depth representation of the LGBTQ+ community. By adopting non-heteronormative language in media products, Vietnamese journalism can help counter negative opinions and nurture respectful acknowledgment of the community. Specifically, journalism agencies should study the *visibility* frame, along with its three sub-frames and introduce guidelines for appropriate language for LGBTQ+ community reporting to avoid facilitating and reinforcing readers' internalized heteronormativity.

#### 5.4. Limitations

This study has several limitations related to data selection, methodology, and potential researcher subjectivity, which may influence the results. Firstly, the chosen samples were restricted to articles from the six most-viewed Vietnamese online newspapers in 2024. Selected on this basis, the 205 samples may reflect the perspective of Vietnamese online news but might not fully represent the broader Vietnamese media landscape. To build upon this research,

further studies should be conducted exploring other types of Vietnamese media, such as television, print news, and books. Another limitation related to the dataset was its temporal scope: analysing news items from a single year, 2024, limited the researchers' ability to compare changes or construct a timeline of possible trends in reporting of the LGBTQ+ community in Vietnamese online newspapers.

Secondly, the research methodology presented certain constraints. This study was confined to the use of framing theory and quantitative analysis. On one hand, framing theory allowed the researchers to achieve great depth in analysing the news language from Vietnamese media concerning the community. On the other hand, the quantitative findings, without accompanying qualitative results, limit this study mainly to measuring frequencies, and lacking definitive discussions. Furthermore, the study could only deduce possible, not definite, impacts on the audience, as no audience reception analysis was conducted. This opens up avenues for future research in the field. In addition, the researchers' prior knowledge of the matter might have had a slight, though not significant, impact on the construction of this study.

#### 6. Conclusion

This study aimed to identify use of heteronormative language in articles relating to the LGBTQ+ community published in the Vietnamese online press. Based on quantitative analysis of 205 articles from 2024's six most visited online newspapers, it can be concluded that (1) the *visibility* frame is dominant in coverage of the community, (2) the attitudes of the press towards individuals in the community are complex, with a mix of positive and negative language

and an underlying heteronormative portrayal, and (3) this may foster uneven awareness regarding the LGBTQ+ community among the public.

The study illustrates the Vietnamese online media landscape's viewpoints on a controversial social issue: the portrayal of LGBTQ+ individuals, which is still a new academic field among Vietnamese scholars. The quantitative content analysis method used was appropriate for defining results regarding a large sample and complicated variables. It categorized the dataset efficiently, ensuring objectivity and generalizability, which then acted as the foundation for further discussions in the analysis. While the findings suggest in-depth insights into online heteronormative language in Vietnam and its implications, they are applicable only to a limited temporal and media scope. Further research is needed. Overall, this study addressed the geographical and temporal gaps of prior research in the field, providing insights into the media and its possible impacts on the local public.

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