

Reactions to School Violence in an Online Newspaper: A Thematic Analysis of VnExpress Users' Comments

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Abstract

This article aims to examine how online newspaper readers react to school violence through 4,364 comments extracted from 36 news articles tagged "bạo lực học đường" [school violence] from September to December 2023 in the Education category on VnExpress, which is the most-read online newspaper in Vietnam and is known to prioritize objectivity and "readers first" philosophy. This article is based on reception theory and uses the thematic analysis approach. The findings show nine types of reactions, each representing different viewpoints and connected by the nature of complex ideas in a comment. This research has offered valuable insights into the societal dynamics related to the issue of school violence, enriching the ongoing discourse on this topic and laying the groundwork for global policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to formulate well-informed strategies and initiatives to address this challenge effectively.

Keywords: School violence, thematic analysis, public reaction, comments on the news

School violence is a widespread issue worldwide, present in all corners of the globe, according to UNESCO (2019). According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2024), school violence disrupts learning and negatively impacts students, schools, and the wider community. Results from the Global Student Health Survey (GSHS) show that 36% of students have engaged in physical altercations with their peers at least once in 2021 (Thuy, 2022).

According to a UNICEF report, in parts of Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, and Vietnam, bullying is the most common type of violence reported in schools, combined with physical fighting (UNICEF, 2018). In Vietnam, from September 2021 to November 2023, there were 699 cases of school violence nationwide involving 2,016 students (TTXVN, 2023). This affects the tradition of respecting teachers, in which teachers are considered a "golden

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example" of morality and personality (Thanh, 2019), and studiousness and respect for teachers are always basic ethics (Nhanh, 2022).

In the current digital age, school violence appearing heavily in the mass media makes public opinion extremely painful and headaches for many educational managers (Hong, 2016), attracting much attention from the audience of online news. Despite this, there remains a gap in the understanding of how the public reacts to these incidents in the digital space. While previous research has examined public reactions to school violence through traditional media channels, such as print newspapers and television, fewer studies have explored the dynamics of public discourse on online news platforms.

Therefore, the primary concern of this research is to examine the public reactions to school violence in online newspapers via VnExpress subscribers' comments in the news articles tagged "bạo lực học đường" [school violence] in the Education category and discuss the role of those comments in helping solve the school violence and other similar issues. The research question that guided the study is:

RQ: What kinds of reactions do the subscribers have toward the message of school violence in online news articles?

Literature Review

Readers' Comments in Online Newspapers

Lewis and Westlund (2014) suggest that readers' comments have become integral to online news platforms, providing valuable insights, perspectives, and engagement opportunities for readers and news organizations. Moreover, comment sections can serve as a valuable source of feedback and interaction between journalists and their audience, contributing to the democratization of news production and consumption. Based on literature research in six countries, Glynn et al. (1997) found that exposure to comments via the Internet environment can have positive and negative effects on individuals' perceptions of social support for their opinions.

Although only a tiny fraction of readers actively participate in commenting and reading comments on news articles online, these platforms foster both debate and the dissemination of like-minded opinions (Ruiz et al., 2011), with commenters often drawing their conclusions from the articles' content (Laslo et al., 2011). Readers may offer a multitude of viewpoints that are challenging to encapsulate within a single editorial. This diversity of perspectives is vital in fostering public deliberation (Price et al., 2002).

In essence, when readers choose to comment, they perceive their viewpoint as contributing to the discussion. From a practical standpoint, it is evident that readers'

comments reflect how the public reacts to the news stories, and the comment section serves as a demarcation to monitor how news organizers convey their messages.

However, to date and the best of the researchers' knowledge, there needs to be more research on trends and patterns in audience reactions to news stories on news websites. The comment section is where they can better understand which topics resonate with their audience and generate the most discussion. Moreover, categorizing comments helps identify trends and patterns in audience reactions to news stories. For example, specific topics may consistently elicit emotional responses or lead to heated debates, while others may receive more thoughtful and nuanced commentary.

Therefore, contributing to understanding public perception patterns, this research focuses on the content of reader comments.

Public Reactions to School Violence

Public reaction refers to the response or feedback from the general population or community regarding a particular event, issue, or stimulus. Public reactions can involve the individuals directly affected by the event and those who are not directly involved but have an interest or stake in the outcome.

Overall, many other studies on how media depict school violence are similar. Reports of school-related incidents are frequently featured in online news articles. De Wet (2015) found that Volksblad, a media channel, describes this issue as a severe problem in the Free State, South Africa, and teachers and students are under the effects of emotional, sexual, and physical violence, which is increasing and possibly uncontrollable. Kupchik and Bracy (2009) saw that print news stories from *The New York Times* and *USA Today* "frame school crime as bad or getting worse," (p. 136) and that these two media outlets have consistently informed readers about the probability of a tragedy at school by "emotional responses," (p. 136) rather than "objective sources of information" (p. 136).

Studies have documented a range of immediate reactions to incidents of school violence, including shock, fear, anger, and grief. Bradshaw et al. (2007) researched distinctions between staff's and students' perceptions of school bullying based on a large-scale school-based study of bullying and attitudes toward intervention and retaliation. They found that middle and high school students regard school violence as feared and famous, while the staff is likely to perceive the bullies to be feared "but less likely to perceive them as disliked" (p. 369). A similar study carried out by Hawkins et al. (2004) on the Columbine High School attack revealed that "all students and most parents said their initial reactions entailed confusion and disbelief," (p. 204) while most of them felt scared and panicked. Moreover, some witnesses consequently distanced themselves from helping while "adults themselves estimate highly their readiness and the ability to react to violence" (Plut et al., 2007, p. 365).

However, previous studies focus solely on the real-life reactions to school violence of the students, school staff, and others directly or to some extent related to school-violence individuals. To date of this manuscript, there has been no exact study on how the audience will react to school violence in the digital realm. Therefore, this study analyzes public perceptions of violence in school frames through news stories on online newspaper websites.

Theoretical framework

The theories of reception support this study. Reception theory, first developed by Hans Robert Jauss, also known as reader-response criticism, is a literary theory that focuses on the reader's interpretation and response to a text. Unlike traditional literary criticism, which emphasizes the author's intentions or the text's inherent meaning, reception theory focuses on the reader's role in creating meaning through their interaction with the text.

Jauss also introduced the concept of the "horizon of expectations," which refers to the assumptions, norms, and experiences that influence how an audience perceives and interprets a message. This theoretical framework shifts the focus from the author's intent to the interaction between the text and the audience, recognizing the diversity of interpretations based on individual and collective experiences (Jauss, 1982). This approach has proven suitable for analyzing media reception, including literature, film, and digital content. For example, Holub (1984) explores the application of reception theory to literary works, highlighting how readers' cultural and historical contexts shape their interpretations. Holub argues that meaning emerges not solely from the text itself but from the interaction between the text and its audience. Similarly, Middeke (2012) demonstrates how reception theory helps explain varying audience reactions to literary texts over time, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between societal norms and textual meaning.

In the context of digital media, reception theory has been employed to understand how audiences engage with and respond to online content, including news articles and social issues. For instance, Ruiz et al. (2011) applied the theory to study comment sections of online newspapers, identifying how public discourse reflects collective interpretations of news stories. Their findings show that audience reactions are shaped by their cultural and social contexts, often leading to dominant narratives that overshadow minority viewpoints. This aligns with the "horizons of expectation," where shared societal norms influence public discourse.

Additionally, it will possibly happen that many people have a similar opinion on school violence, which is called public perception. To illustrate, Weaver et al. (2007) utilized reception theory to analyze how repetitive exposure to opinions in digital forums shapes audience perception. They found that an opinion is more likely to be assumed to be the majority opinion when multiple group members express their opinion, which

means the frequency and familiarity of an opinion often leads to its acceptance as the majority view, reinforcing the interactive and evolving nature of audience interpretation as theorized by Jauss. Therefore, several ways of receiving information can combine to form a stream of discourse. As a result, many different opinions create different discourse streams.

In essence, these insights align with the premise that the audience's engagement shapes the meaning and impact of digital media content, making reception theory a suitable lens for analyzing online reactions to social phenomena like school violence. Thus, this study adopts reception theory to explore how audiences perceive and respond to incidents of school violence reported in online news. By analyzing user comments on VnExpress, the research aims to uncover the interplay between individual interpretations and societal norms, offering a nuanced understanding of public reactions within the Vietnamese context.

Materials and Methods

VnExpress is chosen as the primary source of information. According to the international measurement system Similarweb, in 2023, VnExpress was Vietnam's No. 1 online newspaper. Its analytics data system recorded a 7% increase in readership and is regularly present in 173 countries and territories.

In addition, Eek and Ellström (2008) showed in their research that VnExpress acquires the reader first philosophy and an objectiveness characteristic. While delivering objective news compared to its competitors in the Vietnamese media landscape, VnExpress tries to reduce the impact and pressure from many other parties on what should be published and what should not and stays loyal to the readers' demands. These traits make VnExpress's reporting on school violence honest and objective.

Regarding the material, this research analyzed comments in articles about violence on the online newspaper VnExpress in the Education category from September to December 2023. The tag "bạo lực học đường" [school violence] was used to search for articles, and the outcome was 37 suitable articles, revolving around 22 cases of school violence, one article about regulations to stop checking students' backpacks, and two articles about school violence in Korea. One article about searching students' school bags is excluded due to its not matching with the definition of school violence. Therefore, there are 36 valid posts containing a total of 4,364 comments and replies which were collected in the first two months of the year 2024.

The study used the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns or themes within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involves systematically organizing and interpreting qualitative data to uncover

underlying themes or patterns of meaning. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that this method can be a means to reflect reality and to unravel the surface of reality. Therefore, it provides a flexible and valuable research tool, potentially providing a rich, detailed, complex data account.

In this research, the underlying meanings of comments were examined to see the attitudes of the online audience toward school violence and related incidents. Hence, the thematic analysis applied here is appropriate.

Moreover, this research will use the six-step model developed by Braun and Clarke in 2006. The six steps include: (1) Becoming familiarize with the data, (2) Generating the initial code, (3) Searching for themes, (4) Reviewing themes, (5) Defining and naming themes, and (6) Producing the report.

In the first step, comments and replies were gathered, excluding their contexts, removing the names of the users, and reading through the dataset. In the second and third steps, keywords that indicate the meanings and tones of the comments were rigorously searched and then categorized into sections slowly developed by the flow of the dataset. In the fourth and fifth steps, items were grouped and named to prepare the final step of report production. All of these steps were conducted manually.

The primary method for doing thematic analysis is inductive. In this approach, data coding is not affected by researchers' subjective presumption or theoretical interest in the topic as it enables the themes to be strongly linked to the dataset (Patton, 1990), and it is expected to "read themes emerging from the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). It is totally data-driven without trying to fit any data into any preset codes, denying the researchers' active role in identifying themes/patterns and selecting and reporting suitable topics to the readers (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Therefore, this research attempts to avoid the researchers' stereotypes and biased views toward school violence, focusing on analyzing the underlying public perceptions in a digital context.

Findings

Addressing the RQ, the results show that there are nine main themes of reactions to school violence in VnExpress, as described in Table 1. We found that the most popular reaction theme among the public is criticism, used in 2,105 comments, accounting for 48.2%, followed by a solution (29.0%), and experience (10.1%). The theme that was least often shown in users' comments was approval (1.8%). Fifty-two comments, (1.2%), could not be categorized.

Criticism and solution are two themes that have sub-themes. Wrong behavior is responsible for the most in the former, which included 738 comments. Calling for changes is ranked first in the latter category, accounting for 332 comments.

Table 1

Descriptions of necessary nine categories (N=4,364)

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	n	%
Criticism		Criticizing school violence as bad	2,105	48.2
	Wrong behavior	Criticizing behaviors of people involved in school violence incidents as unacceptable	738	16.9
	Inappropriate measures	Criticizing the way to deal with and managing school violence and other school problems is not useful, not strong enough or inappropriate	503	11.5
	Family upbringing	Family upbringing is the cause of school incidents and problematic student behavior	338	7.7
	Argument	Refuting other commenters but not giving other ideas	290	6.6
	Negative expression	Expressing disapproval, anger, incompetence, disappointment, and worry about problems in school environments	160	3.7
	Status quo	Criticizing school environment as becoming worse and student education is not the same as in the past	137	3.1
	Internet	The problem of school violence occurs because children use phones, social networks, and are exposed to a lot of violent content	37	0.9
Solution		Suggesting possible temporary or long-term answers to school violence	1,264	29.0
	Calling for changes	Calling for change or introduction of new and stricter rules, laws, and school regulations to help address school violence better	332	7.6
	Re-education	Those who commit school violence need to go to reform schools, be placed in special environments, or educational centers	270	6.2

Table 1

Descriptions of necessary nine categories (N=4,364) (Contd.)

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	n	%
	School expulsion	Those who commit school violence must leave school or transfer to other schools	206	4.7
	Community service	School violence can be addressed when the criminals have to do community service, such as sweeping.	150	3.4
	Authority	School violence should be handled by a task force and authorized law agencies	98	2.3
	Family education	Problems can be solved by parents' teaching methods at home and parents are punished for what their children have done	70	1.6
	Increase morality	Applying educational or propaganda measures to increase awareness and morality among those who commit school violence	64	1.5
	Reconsider	The school violence case needs to be reviewed	41	0.9
	Calling for cooperation	Calling for different sides to mutually address school violence	39	0.9
	Physical measures	Physical punishment to children's bodies	24	0.6
	Parent punishment	Parents are punished for what their children have done	16	0.4
	Internet control	Controlling the use of cellphones, Internet and social media	12	0.3
	Others	Other measures that can be applied to address school violence	35	0.8
Experience		Telling an experience a user has experienced, having similarities to the issue of school violence	442	10.1

Table 1

Descriptions of necessary nine categories (N=4,364) (Contd.)

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	n	%
Responsibility		Identifying who or what is responsible for handling school violence	424	9.7
Morality		Moral decline of all involved, including students, families, and schools leads to school violence	281	6.4
Sarcastic		Satirizing the attitudes and behaviors of those involved in school violence and parents who always defend their children	203	4.7
Altruism		Showing sympathy to the people involved in school violence	117	2.7
Informative		Providing additional information related to school violence	113	2.6
Approval		Showing approval of others' ideas or a detail in the incident	80	1.8
Uncategorized		These comments still provide valuable discussion. However, they cannot form or belong to any specific category.	52	1.2

Note. Figures may not sum to 100% due to the overlap

Table 2

Comments that can be categorized in more than one theme (unit: comment)

Number of themes	Number of comments (n = 4,364)	%
1	3,638	81.3
2	626	14.0
3	45	1.0
4	1	0.0

A comment with more than one theme is not unusual because a person can have more than one thought on an issue. As seen in Table 2, 3,638 comments only have one theme, accounting for over 83.3% of the total, while comments with two themes account for 14.0%. Only 1.0% contained three themes, and only one comment included four different themes. This explains why the figures in Table 1 may not sum up to 100%.

Themes

Criticism

Commentators critique lax school discipline, citing inconsistency and declining education quality. They condemn student disrespect toward teachers and peers, noting incidents of parental involvement resulting in teacher injuries. Teacher-on-student violence is strongly condemned.

“...Suspension from school for 1 week for exceptional students is a reward, not a punishment...”

“...The teacher wants the students to improve, but her slapping the student (even once) can be considered a wrong action. The fact that the student's grandmother and father rushed into the school, cursed vulgarly, and beat the teacher until her mouth bled was an act of hooliganism and revenge, not because they wanted her to improve. Don't defend what's wrong!”

Secondly, many commenters express widespread frustration and sadness regarding school violence and the breakdown of teacher-student relationships. They reminisce about when teachers had more authority approved by society while acknowledging the shift of the dynamics between students and teachers in which teachers often feel powerless in front of disruptive behaviors.

“...Blood boils. The little girl was a thug...”

“...Now teachers just need to pinch students' ears and maybe tomorrow the whole country will know. In the past, I was fed a ruler all the time, but I always respected my teachers. Now on the contrary, I see that teachers are the ones who should be afraid of their students...”

Also, many commenters express frustration with parents who fail to discipline their children or are too protective because family upbringing is an influencing factor to adolescents' psychology and behaviors.

“...Why has the morality of today's children degraded so severely? Maybe it's because the family is too pampered and not well educated!...”

Moreover, commenters expressed concern about the detrimental effects of social networks and technology possibly leading to negative behaviors such as rudeness, disrespect, and even violence.

“...The downside of technology development - Uncontrolled social networks. Children learn very quickly and follow very quickly. They always want to show things without knowing what is right or wrong!...”

Interestingly, there is also debate among commenters. They express various opinions on the behavior of both students and teachers, discussing topics such as the use of violence in education and questioning others about their viewpoints.

“...Oh, so why don't students in other classes do that, just that class? Please explain to me?...”

Solution

To address school violence, the need for stricter enforcement of laws and policies is highlighted. Many comments suggest that students who engage in violent or aggressive behavior should be permanently isolated from the regular educational environment and placed in reformatories or special educational centers.

“...Unacceptable. These children need to go to a reformatory for re-education...”

Similarly, many commenters think students involved in incidents should be expelled rather than suspended. They should be also required to perform community service like cleaning toilets and sweeping streets. Traditional physical measures like caning or spanking might be also applied.

“...I recommend that these students be forced to drop out of school forever...”

“...Punish them severely, force them to do community service, sweep the streets, clean the toilets...let them know what human dignity is, punish them severely and serve as a strong deterrent...”

Moreover, it is advisable to implement legal measures and criminal prosecution for the assault on the student, emphasizing the consideration of legal responsibility and demanding severe punishment for those who carry out the attacks.

“...In this case, the family can sue [the teacher] for intentional injury. The situation is aggravating because this is with young children...”

In accordance with physical methods, many commenters emphasize the importance of ethics and moral education lessons to promote values like compassion,

love, and respect. Families also play an essential role in equipping their children with appropriate behavior and they should be punished for what their children did.

“...We need to focus on teaching ethics carefully and a lot, then teach culture...”

“...In the case of such a brutal and insensitive assault, the parents of these teenage students must also be held responsible, warned, and fined heavily...”

In addition, in the digital realm, many suggest banning or restricting social media use in schools to prevent exposure to harmful content, which could lead to school violence incidents. Other solutions for school violence are also mentioned, including reading, martial arts, and injury examination camera installation.

“...All videos of school violence or violent trends should be banned on social networks...”

Experience

Many commenters express nostalgia for a time with stricter discipline when teachers were more respected. Many individuals have had personal similar experiences which left a lasting impact. They seem to reflect on the changing dynamics of discipline, education, and societal values, particularly regarding school violence and students' behavior compared to the previous education system. In the past, when I went to school, my teacher beat me with a whip. Now I am over 40. I still remember, love, and respect him when I see him again. Now teachers don't dare touch students. Touching is also a form of violence.

Responsibility

These comments highlight shared responsibility among schools, families, and society in addressing issues related to student behavior, discipline, and education. It's not normal for a teacher to be assaulted by this group of students until she faints. This responsibility is no longer that of individual teachers but of schools, families, and the whole society. That's how we understand the educational philosophy, “..First learn rituals, then learn literature...”

Morality

The theme discusses concerns about declining moral standards among students. Then, there is a call for upholding standards of behavior and mutual respect, maintaining traditional values in education, and acknowledging the influence of families and schools on students' moral character. I don't know if it's because I'm strict or because society has changed too much. We see more and more acts contrary to good customs and traditions. Teachers curse at students, and students lack respect for teachers. Degraded morality.

Sarcastic

Many comments exhibit sarcasm, revealing cynicism or discontent with the education system, disciplinary measures, parental attitudes, and societal norms regarding student behavior. This sarcastic tone reflects frustration and incredulity towards inadequacies or inconsistencies in addressing these issues.

“Oh! After hitting your friends, you will be "rewarded" to miss a few days of school!”

“My child is very well behaved at home!”

Altruism

The overarching theme of these comments revolves around empathy, concern for the victims. There is a strong emphasis on the emotional impact on both the victims and their families.

“I feel so sorry for the beaten child, it's so heartbreaking”

“I feel sorry for the teacher.”

Informative

The comments give information about the legal aspects of disciplinary actions within the education system. They emphasize the need for a thorough understanding of laws and regulations, and some people speculate about the nature of the incidents.

“You [another commenter] should review the law properly and carefully before speaking publicly like this. And the Decree you need to review is 112/2020/ND-CP on handling civil servants (not employees and employers): Warning is level 2 of the 3 forms of discipline, and it is very heavy, not light like you said.”

Approval

These comments show approval of what other commenters say.
“You said it so well.”

In general, the surveyed comments could represent thoughts about school violence. To begin with, people tend to express anger and complain about the problem of school violence. They believe that school violence is evil, worthy of condemnation, and needs to be eliminated from society. In the second stage, they begin to make practical connections with traditional moral values, social norms, experiences they have had, and background information to identify responsibility and complain about the decline in the quality of education today, thereby expressing sympathy for victims and mock misdeeds.

In the end, thanks to awareness and experience, they provide solutions to the problem of school violence.

Theoretically, the findings of this study align with and expand upon the concept of the "horizon of expectations" in reception theory. The dominant theme of criticism, accounting for 48.2% of comments, reflects a collective discontent rooted in traditional Vietnamese values, such as respect for teachers and moral upbringing. This is because in the Vietnamese audience's shared perspective, humane education by fostering moral character and developing talents is beneficial to the nation (Tho, 2016), and the tradition of respecting teachers should be promoted. This reaction highlights how cultural norms shape audience responses, as public discourse frequently draws upon shared historical and ethical frameworks to interpret and evaluate incidents of school violence.

Moreover, the diversity of reactions—ranging from criticism to solution-oriented suggestions—illustrates the multiplicity of "horizons" within the audience. For example, comments advocating stricter regulations or moral education emphasize how societal expectations influence perceived solutions. This diversity supports Jauss's assertion that content meaning evolves through its reception, shaped by the varied experiences and values of its audience.

Importantly, the study extends reception theory by demonstrating its applicability to digital platforms, where audience interactions are not only individual but also collective. The clustering of themes, such as criticism and solutions, indicates a convergence of individual interpretations into broader societal narratives. Furthermore, the application of reception theory to digital discourse highlights the potential of online platforms as spaces for raising awareness and fostering community engagement. Media outlets and educational institutions can leverage these interactive platforms to facilitate constructive dialogue, promote empathy, and disseminate preventive strategies with community.

While the results depict the audience's reactions towards school violence in Vietnam, they do not represent public discourse in other nations or regions where media, historical, and cultural contexts are different. Nonetheless, this study could serve as a model for evolving research into audience responses towards school incidents across various sociocultural contexts, thereby creating a big picture in which reactions to the school violence issue are viewed comprehensively.

Adding more value to the literature, this study provides insight into the broader meaning and patterns of school violence, considering factors such as the extent and seriousness of the incident, the age group involved, and feedback from various stakeholders. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding school violence and its impact on different sectors of society.

School violence is not just a problem of a particular country, culture, or religion. It is a global phenomenon, affecting millions of students worldwide. Although previous similar studies emphasized the focus on explaining the causes and proposing solutions to the problem of school violence, they did not consider public opinion. Meanwhile, public opinion and media discourse, especially in the press, can influence national policy. Over the decades, various events have demonstrated that public perception is vital in informing policy responses.

The strength of this research is that it collects views of people without restrictions on age, gender, job, or interests, which may represent public opinion. Because the level of feedback from the community can provide early indicators to policymakers and teachers about what issues need to be prioritized and addressed effectively, this research can provide valuable insights into the social and cognitive dynamics surrounding school violence, enhancing the effectiveness of proposed policy solutions and interventions and help policymakers and teachers come up with appropriate measures to prevent and solve the problem of school violence effectively by understanding the audience's reactions and aligning policy interventions with the cultural and social expectations of the audience. For example, the solutions focusing on moral education and stricter regulations found in the comments suggests a need for reforms that balance disciplinary measures with ethical and character development.

This study's public response measurement model explained how the audience reacts to an adverse social event. Thus, it can help researchers and non-academic individuals distinguish between positive and negative phenomena, thereby producing warnings of what is pleasing to follow and what is wrong to avoid. To illustrate, with the recent constant development of trends on social media, such as TikTok trends, by examining Internet users' reactions based on this research's themes, insightful social media managers can decide what they should and should not spread and promote to eliminate harmful content and avoid backlash.

This study does not consider political factors and only partially addresses cultural factors. Therefore, future research should consider both cultural and political factors more completely. Ideally, this kind of research should also be conducted in other countries. Continuing this kind of research on this topic could create an opportunity to share knowledge between countries and communities and help raise awareness and interest in the issue of school violence on a large scale, thus helping to build a safe and positive learning environment for students worldwide.

However, this research only focuses on physical violence without mentioning other types of school violence listed in five levels (Henry, 2000). In addition, it does not consider the context of comments and responses to comments but focuses on the meaning of words to identify themes and meanings. Another limitation that emerged was that the comments had many different topics, so some items needed to be classified. However, this does not significantly affect the research as each person's opinion is

evaluated differently. Another point is that the editorial board can tailor the comments to avoid harsh, offending, and controversial writing presented to the public.

Conclusion

This research aims to identify types of public reactions to school violence in an online newspaper using an inductive thematic analysis approach put in the theoretical framework of reception theory; it can be concluded that there are nine themes of how online audiences respond to school incidents. These themes are categorized based on the underlying meaning in words, phrases, and sentences, leading to clear different viewpoints. However, they still have a strong correlation as one user can have different opinions on the same problem.

This research has provided valuable insights into the societal dynamics surrounding the issue of school violence by analyzing public reactions to incidents. By categorizing and examining various themes within these reactions, we have gained a deeper understanding of the public's perceptions, concerns, and expectations regarding this critical issue.

Despite some limitations, such as the challenge of categorizing diverse comments and themes, this research has maintained the integrity of individual perspectives while presenting them respectfully and avoiding controversy. The findings of this study contribute to the ongoing dialogue on school violence and provide a model for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to develop informed strategies and initiatives to address this global phenomenon effectively.

It is imperative to prioritize students' safety and well-being and foster a positive learning environment. By leveraging the insights gained from this research, it is feasible for everyone to work collaboratively to implement evidence-based approaches and policies that promote tolerance, respect, and non-violence in schools worldwide.

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Appendix

Original Vietnamese Version of Selected Comments

Themes	Vietnamese	English
Criticism	Đình chỉ nghỉ học một tuần đối với học sinh cá biệt là phần thưởng không phải xử phạt.	Suspension from school for 1 week for exceptional students is a reward, not a punishment.
	Cô giáo muốn cho học sinh tiến bộ, nhưng việc cô tát học sinh (dù chỉ 1 cái) cũng có thể xem là hành động sai. Còn việc bà nội và bố học sinh ấy xông vào trường, chửi bới thô tục, đánh cô giáo đến chảy máu miệng là hành động côn đồ, trả thù, chứ không phải vì muốn cô tiến bộ. Đừng bênh vực cho cái sai trái!	The teacher wants the students to improve, but her slapping the student (even once) can be considered a wrong action. The fact that the student's grandmother and father rushed into the school, cursed vulgarly, and beat the teacher until her mouth bled was an act of hooliganism and revenge, not because they wanted her to improve. Don't defend what's wrong!
	Sôi máu thiệt. Bé tí đã côn đồ	Blood boils. The little girl was a thug.
	Giờ thầy cô chỉ cần nhéo tai học sinh thôi là có khi ngày mai cả nước đều biết. Tôi ngày xưa bị ăn thước kẻ suốt, nhưng trước sau vẫn kính trọng thầy cô mình. Giờ thì ngược lại, tôi thấy giáo viên mới là người phải sợ học sinh của mình	Now teachers just need to pinch students' ears and maybe tomorrow the whole country will know. In the past, I was fed a ruler all the time, but I always respected my teachers. Now on the contrary, I see that teachers are the ones who should be afraid of their students.
	đạo đức của bọn trẻ nhỏ thời nay sao lại xuống cấp trầm trọng đến như vậy? phải chăng là do gia đình quá nuông chiều và không được giáo dục tốt!	Why has the morality of today's children degraded so severely? Maybe it's because the family is too pampered and not well educated!
	Mặt trái của sự phát triển Công nghệ - Mạng xã hội không kiểm soát Bọn trẻ học rất nhanh làm theo rất nhanh Chúng sẽ luôn áp ú để thể hiện ra không biết đúng sai !	The downside of technology development - Uncontrolled social networks. Children learn very quickly and follow very quickly. They always want to show out without knowing what is right or wrong!
	Ừ, vậy sao hs lớp khác nó ko làm thế hả bạn mà chỉ mỗi lớp đó? Giải thích với?	Oh, so why don't students in other classes do that, just that class? Please explain to me?
Solution	Không thể chấp nhận được. Lũ trẻ này cần vào trại giáo dưỡng để rèn luyện giáo dục lại.	Unacceptable. These children need to go to a reformatory for re-education.
	Tôi đề nghị buộc thôi học vĩnh viễn.	I recommend that these students be forced to drop out of school forever.

Appendix

Original Vietnamese Version of Selected Comments (Contd.)

Themes	Vietnamese	English
	phạt thật nặng bắt đi lao động công ích , quét đường, dọn vệ sinh ...hãy để các em biết thế nào là nhân phẩm , phạt thật nặng mang tính răn đe mạnh.	Punish them severely, force them to do community service, sweep the streets, clean the toilets...let them know what human dignity is, punish them severely and serve as a strong deterrent.
	Cái này gia đình có thể kiện hành vi cố ý gây thương tích. Tình tiết tăng nặng vì đây với trẻ nhỏ.	In this case, the family can sue [the teacher] for intentional injury. The situation is aggravating because this is with young children.
	Cần chú trọng dạy đạo đức thật kỹ, thật nhiều sau đó mới tới dạy văn hóa	We need to focus on teaching ethics carefully and a lot, then teach culture
	Trong trường hợp hành hung bạn quá tàn bạo, vô cảm như vậy thì bố mẹ các HS còn tuổi vị thành niên này cũng phải chịu trách nhiệm, bị cảnh cáo, phạt tiền thật nặng.	In the case of such a brutal and insensitive assault, the parents of these teenage students must also be held responsible, warned, and fined heavily.
	Nên cấm tất cả các video bạo lực học đường hay có xu hướng bạo lực trên MXH	All videos of school violence or violent trends should be banned on social networks.
Experience	Ngày xưa đi học được bị thầy đánh bằng roi. Đến giờ hơn 40. Vẫn nhớ, yêu quý và kính trọng khi gặp lại thầy. Giờ giáo viên kg dám đụng đến học sinh. Đụng vào là vi phạm bạo hành.....	In the past, when I went to school, my teacher beat me with a whip. Now I am over 40. Still remember, love, and respect him when I see him again. Now teachers don't dare touch students. Touching is also a form of violence...
Responsibility	Cô giáo bị nhóm học sinh này hành hung đến ngất đi thì không bình thường rồi. Trách nhiệm này không phải là của cá nhân thầy cô nữa mà là của nhà trường, các gia đình và toàn xã hội. Thế mới thấm triết lý giáo dục "Tiên học lễ hậu học văn".	It's not normal for a teacher to be assaulted by this group of students until she faints. This responsibility is no longer that of individual teachers but of schools, families, and the whole society. That's how we understand the educational philosophy, "First learn rituals, then learn literature".
Morality	Không biết do mình khắt khe hay do xã hội thay đổi quá nhiều. Càng ngày càng thấy nhiều hành vi trái ngược thuần phong mỹ tục. Giáo viên văng tục học sinh thì thiếu tôn trọng giáo viên. Đạo đức xuống cấp.	I don't know if it's because I'm strict or because society has changed too much. We see more and more acts contrary to good customs and traditions. Teachers curse at students, and students lack respect for teachers. Degraded morality.

Appendix

Original Vietnamese Version of Selected Comments (Contd.)

Themes	Vietnamese	English
Sarcastic	ôi! Đánh bạn xong còn được "thưởng" cho nghỉ học mấy ngày!	Oh! After hitting your friends, you will be "rewarded" to miss a few days of school!
	Con tôi ở nhà cháu nó ngoan lắm cơ!	My child is very well behaved at home!
Altruism	thương bé bị đánh quá, thật đau lòng	I feel so sorry for the beaten child, it's so heartbreaking
	Tội và thương cho cô giáo.	I feel sorry for the teacher.
Informative	Bạn nên coi lại luật cho đúng và kỹ trước khi phát ngôn công khai thế này. Và Nghị định bạn cần coi lại là 112/2020/NĐ-CP về xử lý công chức (chứ không phải người lao động và sử dụng lao động): Cảnh cáo là mức 2 trong 3 hình thức kỷ luật rồi, và nó rất nặng chứ không nhẹ như bạn nói đâu.	You [another commenter] should review the law properly and carefully before speaking publicly like this. And the Decree you need to review is 112/2020/ND-CP on handling civil servants (not employees and employers): Warning is level 2 of the 3 forms of discipline, and it is very heavy, not light like you said.
Approval	Bạn nói quá chuẩn	You said it so well.

Note. Selected comments were translated using Google Translate. For instances involving Vietnamese dialects, we have adjusted the word choices to ensure clarity in English while preserving their original meanings.

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