

Vietnamese media coverage on the prevention and fight against illegal wildlife trade

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Abstract: *The journal article provides the thorough understanding of how Vietnamese media have reported the prevention and fight against illegal wildlife trade. The authors have conducted a survey on four main media outlets including print, online newspapers, radio and television (Thanh Nien newspaper, VnExpress online newspaper, programs on VOV1 of Voice of Vietnam, Anti-smuggling and Consumer Protection Program on VTV1 of Vietnam Television) from January 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018. By carrying out the pilot test (reading randomly selected and news of different items), the authors have classified the content of articles into 6 main types. Content analysis was chosen to analyse the media news/articles in the four main news items. This method is the mix method between qualitative and quantitative approach. Findings help to explain the number and frequency of news/articles coverage, content of news/articles, current formality of information (length, duration, title, sapo) on illegal wildlife trade on Vietnamese media. Findings also help to discover how Vietnamese media have paid attention to the topic. The findings show that the ratio of media coverage on this topic was not high enough in conderation with the urgency and importance of the issue. The majority of news instead of articles show that there is a lack of in-depth report about the topic which prevent readers, listeners or viewers from have a comprehensive understanding about the issues.*

Keywords: *media coverage; illegal wildlife trade; the prevention and fight against illegal wildlife trade.*

1. Overview

“By 2020, the number of current animals, including mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds ... will be reduced by 70 percent”, this is the result of a research⁽¹⁾ conducted by WWF and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), assessed on 14,152 populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles.

According to the IUCN Red List, the extinction rate and speed of the current species are 100-1000 times higher than the rate in nature determined by fossils. Many scientists believe that we are entering the sixth mass extinction

stage on Earth, which is also the first mass extinction of which human is the main trigger⁽²⁾.

In addition to over-exploitation of natural resources, which threatens the living environment, pushes plants and animals that play an important role in the ecosystem into genocide and destabilizes the global climate, the illegal hunting and trade of wildlife in the world is also a reason for the sharp decline in the number of wildlife species, directly threatening the ecological balance of the earth.

Illegal wildlife trade is a major business activity, conducted by transnational organized crime networks with dangerous nature. With a huge profit of at least 19 billions USD per year, according to a 2012 WWF report⁽³⁾, this is considered to be the “illegal global trade activity” that create the fourth largest profits in the world, after drug trafficking and transporting, counterfeit goods and fake money trade and human trafficking.

According to a 2016 UNODC report⁽⁴⁾, statistics from 120 countries around the world, the total number of arrests related to illegal wildlife trade from 1999 to 2016 was 164,000. In particular, the two key areas with this problem are North America (accounting for 46%) and Asia - Pacific (24%) during the period from 2005 to 2014.

Vietnam is becoming a consumer market and transshipment place of endangered wildlife such as tigers, bears, pangolins, freshwater turtles, snakes and varanids originating from other Asian countries; while products such as rhino horn and hooves horn originating in Africa are also traded for domestic consumers. In Vietnam, many wildlife species have been hunted and threatened with extinction, for example, the last Vietnamese single-horn-rhino was shot dead in Cat Tien National Park in 2010, or Saola became the wildlife species with extremely high risk of extinction in nature.

Facing the decline and extinction of wildlife species, the Government of Vietnam has made many important decisions over the past years to prevent illegal hunting and trade to conserve rare wildlife. In addition to the use of international binding and legal instruments to which Vietnam is a signatory, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)... Vietnam has made great efforts in completing the system of policies and laws on the conservation and management of endangered, precious and rare wildlife⁽⁵⁾. Currently, Vietnam has issued laws to regulate the state management of wildlife conservation such as the Law on Forest Protection and Development, the Law

on Fisheries and the Law on Biodiversity with their guiding documents in order to tackle difficulties, problems and unify state management related to wildlife conservation. However, although the current system of Vietnam's legal documents on wildlife conservation and management is plentiful, the process of implementing the law is still inadequate, difficult and problems overlapping; there has not been a clear assignment of management responsibilities among ministries and branches in management and protection of wildlife species.

Although Vietnam has continued to make important contributions in the transfer, rescue and conservation of valuable wildlife species, but with the above issues it can be seen that Vietnam is facing a long and difficult process which needs the participation of stakeholders in which the participation of press agencies is indispensable in the communication on policies and laws on wildlife conservation and prevention, timely inform about the situation, identify the causes and propose solutions for the problem.

The press plays an important role in supporting the State to govern the country more effectively and be more responsible with its citizens. According to Norris and Odugbemi (2010), the three ideal roles of the press that have a great influence on good national governance, increase the legitimacy of the state are: (1) Protect the fair interest by exposing the act of corruption, (2) Direct information by calling public attention and informing policy makers about people's concerns, and (3) Offer perspectives and multidimensional voices to debate issues of interest. The press then supports the development of key elements of good national governance, including people's participation, transparency, accountability, efficiency and equity.

From the above reasons, the author group made an article discussing the topic of media coverage on prevention and fight against illegal wildlife trade. The article was completed based on the results of a research on Vietnamese media informing the prevention and fight against illegal wildlife trade. The article provides readers with condensed information and knowledge about the illegal wildlife trade and investigative journalism skills on this topic.

2. Literature review

The illegal wildlife trade has not been a new issue in Vietnam. Many researchers, Vietnamese as well as foreign experts, have conducted a large number of studies to figure out the current situation of these illicit activities in the country then to give recommendations to deal with this pressing matter.

Regarding the diagnosis of illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam, a plenty of causes have been listed as direct and indirect reasons for the growth in this unlawful trade.

High domestic and international demands on wildlife products proved to be at top of the list: Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia, where wildlife traffic is a large, luxury, lucrative and well organised trade (Nooren and Claridge 2000; Broad et al. 2003; Robertson 2004)⁽⁶⁾. Asian people, China, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese and Taiwanese particularly, culturally believe that fauna products can help them to have better health and a longer expectation (Ha 2008)⁽⁷⁾. They consume these rare, precious and expensive goods as traditional medicine in the hope that it can boost their energy, help themselves or their parents to avoid or to fight diseases or to live longer. For example, bear bile is commonly used to cure some maladies like liver disease, burns, fever, diarrhea, internal blood, and stomach ulcers and some other diseases (Mills 1992). So using bear bile as a folk medicine has been accepted in many countries such as Korea, Japan, Vietnam and other countries in the area (Quyen 2010)⁽⁸⁾.

Beside cultural factors, the changes in economy have contributed to the fact that wildlife trade has rapidly developed in Southeast Asia in general, and in Vietnam particularly. Along with the national process from command economy to market economy, the improved living standards have led to an increase in wildlife product demand (Ha 2008)⁽⁹⁾. Indeed, people do not only buy groceries for daily needs but eagerly look for healthy foods in order to take care of well-being besides a manner to show off their wealth.

Corruption plays a part in illegal wildlife trade growth in two different but complementary ways. First, the majority of wild meat restaurant customers were reported to be state officers, company directors and businessmen (Drury 2009) who came regularly to those restaurants as part of their lobby activities. They invite people in high political positions to taste rare and precious rare meat as an expression of their respect. According to the study of Ha 2012 on the current situation of wildlife trade in Hanoi, 40% of the respondents confirmed that they eat wild meat as they are invited on professional or social or gatherings and not because they like to eat rare fauna. The Traffic Report - Traffic Southeast Asia (2007)⁽¹⁰⁾ shares the same opinion that wild fauna meat is usually consumed in a group as a social activity in which the meal is predominantly paid by one host rather than sharing the cost within all the participants.

Second, corruption got involved in wildlife trade in terms of the support from people in the management system. *“They are involved in the legal procedure for the confiscated goods—and can acquit or interfere with the illegal cases”* (Song 2008, The Journal of Environment & Development, p.159)⁽¹¹⁾. Typical cases came from the Vietnam-China border in Lang Son where authorities turn a

blind eye to let Vietnamese wildlife traders go through the frontier and enter China, the top wildlife product consumer in Southeast Asia.

In addition, the development of the wildlife trade network was due to **insignificant power given to wildlife protection and ineffectiveness of law enforcement**. Since fauna and flora products are always identified as rare, precious and expensive goods, the traffic of these merchandise becomes a very profitable and attractive activity. To efficiently manage this, a decent collaboration and cooperation within three responsible parties such as Local Ranger Division, State Wildlife Market Management and Police at different levels has to take place (Trang 2012)⁽¹²⁾. There is a lack of information database about the at-risk species in Vietnam shared on inside these organizations though. Therefore, not only the cooperation of institutions left much to be desired but also the policies for wildlife management and protection were applied unsystematically without any well-defined orientation.

A serious deficiency of necessary resources such as manpower and relevant equipment resulted in the development of an illegal trade network. It is clearly noticeable that a thin wildlife protection force, particularly in the Forest Protection Department, with unavailable equipment, would not be able to fight technically equipped wildlife offenders. For instance, every Forest Protection Department staff is responsible for an average of 1,400 ha of forest which is really strenuous, even impossible to manage (Ha 2008)⁽¹³⁾.

On the subject of recommendations to prevent and fight illegal wildlife trade, national and international experts did agree on two main points: raising public awareness about environmental damages of consuming wildlife products and strengthening the capacity of institutions responsible for managing and penalising (illegal) wildlife business.

Firstly, unlawful traffic would be prevented by **educating Vietnamese people to reduce their demand of wildlife products** (Drury 2009, Ha 2008, Trang 2012, Vinh et al. 2014 and Phan 2015)^{(14), (15)}. Various communication tools have been mentioned such as cooperating with popular news and entertainment websites on the Internet to input information about the issue, organizing wild animal trade campaigns, involving mass media like television, radio and newspapers to spread the message or calling for action of influencers in the community (Traffic Report 2007).

Wildlife farming has raised a debate among experts in terms of durable effectiveness. According to Drury (2008), the ability of farmed wild substitutes could satisfy consumer demand so that would be a permanent measure to fight illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam. On the contrary, WCS (2008)⁽¹⁶⁾ strongly

confirmed, at the Conference of the Association of Wildlife Conservation, Hanoi, Vietnam, that the idea of domesticating wild animal species for commercial purposes was not a great solution as consumers did not consider farm raised wild beasts as substitute for authentic wild faunas. Brief, it can be concluded that raising awareness plays the decisive role in fighting illegitimate wildlife traffic.

In parallel with educating Vietnamese people, **empowering responsible organisations and establishing economic regulators proved to be essential solutions for the issue**. Taxation, quota on wildlife trade, penalty regulation would be efficient measures to face the matter (Ha 2008). As part of the process of improving laws, policies and legal documents need to be scrutinized by the Government as some Decrees and Decisions are issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This would help to prevent shortcomings leading to the lack of synchronization or the fact that the content could be understood differently between the Forest Protection Departments and the police in charge (Quyen 2010)⁽¹⁷⁾. By doing so, the law enforcement would be very consistent and easy to track as well as blaming responsibility when problems occur.

Acknowledging the mounting importance of endangered and rare species conservation, the Party and State have developed multiple **policies and guidelines** to enhance the management of the wildlife trade in the country.

Firstly, through increasing the responsibility of local authorities in controlling, managing, and ending illegal wildlife trade and consumption in the area, as well as eliminating corruption and support for offenders.

Second, investigating and prosecuting the leaders of illegal wildlife trade networks. In 2017, the revised Penal Code coming into force from January 1, 2018, was an effective tool for tackling wildlife crimes. The penalties for wildlife crime offenses can be 15-year imprisonment; or a 5 billion VND fine for individuals; a 15 billion VND fine, suspension of operations for 6 months to 3 years, or permanently for legal entities (Ha, 2020).

Third, tightening regulations of commercial wildlife licensing by the following measures: When an effective management system has not been established and the authorities are not yet capable of monitoring and supervising, for commercial wildlife farms, authorities may not issue a license; or revoke permits for farms that do not have sufficient legal and transparent proof about the origin of wild animals in captivity or trade; and penalize corrupt local officials that help commercial illegal wildlife farming (Minh, 2019)⁽¹⁸⁾.

It is strictly forbidden to buy or sell rhino horns in any form; including the

sale of hunting trophies. Destroying confiscated rhino horn and ivory. Preserve a small amount of specimen for use in scientific research, DNA analysis, and for education and training. Closing private tiger farms. It is also strictly forbidden to breed tigers in any form if it is for scientific research, education and conservation (Ha, 2020)⁽¹⁹⁾.

Fourth, promoting international cooperation in the prevention of crime and violations against the endangered and rare species of wild fauna and flora conservation. Coordinating with diplomatic agencies, international police agencies, and non-governmental organizations on the protection of endangered, and rare wildlife. Developing and implementing international treaties and commitments; organizing and participating in endangered and rare wild animals' protection campaigns for elephants, tigers, rhinos... that Vietnam has previously participated in (Phong, 2020)⁽²⁰⁾.

Fifth, increasing the fight against cybercrime in wildlife trafficking, by taking the following measures: shutting down websites containing selling, trading, or advertising information; increasing monitoring and blocking social media sites used by the target group to sell wildlife products.

2. Research questions

Research question 1: *How many news and articles are published and what is the frequency of news/articles coverage?*

Research question 2: *What types of contents are there in the news or articles?*

Research question 3: *What are the forms of news or articles?*

3. Research methodology

In order to explore how the media is providing information on illegal wildlife trade, we have conducted a survey on Thanh Nien printed newspaper (TN), VnExpress online newspaper (VnE), Voice of Vietnam 1 (VOV1) – a channel of Vietnamese national radio broadcaster, Vietnamese Television 1 (VTV1) – a channel of Vietnamese national television broadcaster from January 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018.

These 4 newspaper represent the four types of journalism:

- TN is one of the print media that has the most viewers in Vietnam and has a tendency to report independently.

- VnE is the first official online newspaper and is the most popular in Vietnam, created on February 26, 2001 and with no print out version.

- VOV1 is the most important news channel of Voice of Vietnam - Vietnamese national radio broadcaster, with the motto of providing “fast – reliable – hot” information on political issues, diplomacy, economics, literature and art,... for viewers living in the country and abroad.

- VTV1 is the most important channel of Vietnamese national television broadcaster that reports news and current affairs. VTV1 has been identified as an essential national television channel, plays the leading role in providing information, owns a great reputation and has influence on the Vietnamese press and television system. The study is conducted based on the news items on the Anti-smuggling and Consumer Protection Program on VTV1 during the mentioned period of time. In this journal, the term VTV1 is used for short in order to refer to this Program on VTV1.

This study uses content analysis methods which mix both quantitative and qualitative approach:

- Quantitative approach in content analysis method is used to analyse the number of articles, frequency, genre, place of appearance and form of transmission,...

- Qualitative approach in content analysis method is used to analyse the content of articles on illegal wildlife trade in 4 media outlets.

4. Research findings

4.1. Number and frequency of news/articles coverage

Time	Number (Unit: News/Articles)				Sum
	TN	VnE	VOV1	Anti-smuggling and Consumer Protection Program on VTV1	
01/2017	2	1	1	6	10
02/2017	0	0	0	3	3
03/2017	3	4	1	10	18
04/2017	4	2	0	12	18
05/2017	6	10	1	13	30
06/2017	1	2	1	4	8
07/2017	5	6	0	8	19
08/2017	3	3	1	5	12
09/2017	3	5	0	9	17
10/2017	6	4	0	4	14
11/2017	2	6	0	11	19
12/2017	2	0	0	2	4

1/2018	8	5	0	14	27
Sum (articles)	45	48	5	101	199
Percentage (%)	23	24	2	51	100
Frequency (articles/ month)	3.4	3.7	0.4	7.8	15.3

Table 1: Number, percentage and frequency of illegal wildlife trade articles by month and by newspapers, programs

According to Table 1, it can be seen that, in all newspapers and programs from 1/1/2017 to 31/1/2018, there are a total of 199 articles on illegal wildlife trade with a frequency of 15 articles/month. Thus, compared to the total of 1.352 wildlife violation cases recorded in 2017⁽²¹⁾, this is a very small number, which hasn’t reflected the alarming situation of illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam.

The surveyed program on VTV1 of Vietnam Television owns the largest number of articles on illegal wildlife trade with 101 articles (accounting for 51%), the frequency is about 7-8 articles / month, double, or more than TN, VnE and channel VOV1.

4.2. Content of news/articles on illegal wildlife trade in current Vietnamese media

Order	Classification Symbol	Content
1	Type I	Cases of detecting and arresting illegal wildlife trade: Time, location, criminal identity, information about name, quantity, status, origin, value of arrested material evidences.
2	Type II	Name, characteristics of species identification, current status, critical level for an endangered species of wildlife.
3	Type III	How the prevention and control of investigations and handling of illegal wildlife trade case are supervised by relevant authorities.

4	Type IV	Propagating paths, policies and laws of the Party and the State on the protection of wildlife species and sanctions against violations.
5	Type V	Subtle ruse to conceal crime together with difficulties and shortcomings in the prevention and combat of illegal wildlife trade.
6	Type VI	Warnings about the consequences of wildlife trade to the environment, society and human.

Table 2: Content classification of information on illegal wildlife trade in Vietnamese newspapers

Type	TN	VnE	VOV1	Anti-smuggling and Consumer Protection Program on VTV1	Sum	Percentage
I	45	43	4	100	192	96%
II	17	20	2	4	43	21.6%
III	43	41	4	30	118	59.3%
IV	15	7	1	0	23	11.6%
V	10	16	4	6	36	18.1%
VI	1	1	2	0	4	2%

Table 3: Number of news/articles from 4 newspapers and programs in the survey according to each type of information content (Unit: articles)

Type I: Information on cases of detecting and arresting illegal wildlife trade

Content of Type I is the most popular, accounting for 96% of the total number of articles in 4 newspapers and survey channels, TN with 45/45 articles, VnE with 43/48 articles, VOV1 with 4/5 articles and 100/101 articles for VTV1. Content of Type I focuses on relevant information such as: time, location, criminal identity, material evidence, exhibits,... briefly and with simple reporting language mainly for the purpose of notification. For example, “Customs Sub-department at Tan Son Nhat International Airport last afternoon (15.6) reports that on 13. (at night), this unit and the Customs Control Team of Ho Chi Minh City Customs Department coordinated with function units have discovered and arrested 2 people (36-year-old Male and 32-year-old Female)

on a flight from Africa to Vietnam. Through examination of personal luggage, it's been found that these 2 people illegally transported 8 pieces of rhino horn with a total weight of 4kg⁽²²⁾. Basic information of the case including time, location, criminal information, relevant functional unit and arrest situation, information on evidences including 8 rhino horn pieces weighing 4kg have been revealed to general public.

Type I content is topical, updated with new and hot issues, in order to provide main information and attract viewers' attention. Depending on the facts and information collected from & verified by the authorities, the details on time, location, evidences, criminals and arresting unit,... are informed in different ways.

Type II: Information on specific wildlife species including name, identification characteristics and endangered level

Type II (accounting for 21.6% of the total of articles) includes information on biological characteristics (such as: scientific name, origin, prominent features), endangered level, commercial value, number of individuals alive,... helps the public to both understand the urgency to protect endangered wildlife species and identify them as being protected species when encountering illegal trade.

Type III: Updated information on prevention, investigation and handling of illegal wildlife trade cases by relevant authorities

This type of content can be found in nearly 60% of all articles on illegal wildlife trade surveyed and is also the content type with second highest number of articles, after Type I in all 4 newspapers and channels. Specifically, TN printed newspaper with 41/45 articles, VnE online newspaper with 41/43 articles, channel VOV1 with 4/5 articles and 30/101 articles for VTV1.

This type of content helps the public see how the authorities handle and solve a case. If information from Type I raises an issue, then type III provides information about the handling of that issue, how the media monitors the response, how the agencies tackle the issue, performing their social monitoring function in order to ensure that authorities fulfill their responsibilities and obligations in the fight against illegal wildlife trade. In addition, content type III also reflects the prevention and control of wildlife trade by authorities.

Type IV: Information on international conventions and current Vietnamese legal documents on wildlife trade

Compared to other types of information content, Type IV & VI have the lowest rate, at 11.6% & 2% respectively. Content type IV refers to information that addresses domestic and international laws and regulations on wildlife trade, which helps both raise the awareness of public about the law and have

a deterrent effect to those who have been, are and are likely to commit illegal hunting, trading, transportation or consumption of illegal wildlife products. For example, a work on VOV1 namely *“Preventing the auction of rhino horns to avoid risks from illegal trading activities”* quoted *“According to the Law amending and supplementing a number of terms from the Criminal Code of Vietnam 2015 approved by the Vietnamese National Assembly in June 2017, people who smuggle rhino horns into Vietnam will be subjected to a fine up to 15 years in prison.”*⁽²³⁾

Type V: Information on subtle tactics of trading suspect together with difficulties and shortcomings in the prevention and combat of illegal wildlife trade from authorities

Content type V accounts for 18.1% of the total number of articles surveyed, stating the criminals’ practices, and the gaps existing in the law for illegal wildlife trade. These are difficulties that hinder the implementation of prevention and control of illegal wildlife trade by authorities. If the tricky tricks aimed at crossing the eyes of the authorities are objective difficulties, then the gaps in the law are subjective challenges. Information about these subtle tricks such as: *“hide in salmon’s stomach”*, *“hide in cosmetic box, kettle made from terracotta, biscuit boxes”*, *“hide in asphalt”*, or to avoid authorities’ attention by changing flight route,... help the public to better understand the mischief of these criminal objects. What is more difficult in the prevention effort for this type of crime also comes from the abetting and colluding of corrupt officials to help these illegal traders carry out the criminal acts.

The article *“Arresting customs officials who took part in exchanging more than 150 kg of ivory”* in the TN newspaper, issued on August 16, 2017, gave brief information about a government official abusing his position and colluding with traders to smuggle confiscated ivory for sale: *“Hanoi police has arrested a customs official for fraudulently exchanging over 150 kg of ivory as evidence material in a case. According to initial information, the arrested suspect was the storekeeper of the Hanoi Customs Department. The case was particularly serious, as the official used fake ivory to replace the real ivory, which was seized by the Hanoi Customs.”*⁽²⁴⁾

Type VI: Information about the consequences of wildlife trade

Content type VI states the status of gradual wildlife extinction and warns about the consequences on human habitat. This is an important content yet has not received concerns from the press, when only 2% of news articles contain this type of information.

4.3. Forms of news or articles on illegal wildlife trade on Vietnamese media

About length and duration

The table below provides the results of a survey on the length, duration of news, articles about illegal wildlife trade in TN printed newspaper, VnE online newspaper, channel VOV1 and channel VTV1 from 1/1/2017 to 31/1/2018

	TN	VnE
Length (Unit: words)	18114 words/45 articles	10160 words /48 articles
Average length (Unit: words/article)	402 words/article	212 words/article
	VOV1	Anti-smuggling and Consumer Protection Program on VTV1
Duration (Unit: minutes)	45,2 minutes/5 broadcasts	7,9 minutes/23 shows
Average duration (Unit: minutes/program)	9,04 minutes/broadcast	0,34 minute/show

Table 4: Length, duration of articles and programs on 4 newspapers, channels covered in the survey

The average capacity of an article on illegal wildlife trade in TN newspaper is 402 words / article, nearly double the size of an article in VnE online newspaper. Articles on VNE rarely exceed 400 words, while the number of articles with more than 400 words of TN newspaper is very high. This is due to the media characteristic and habit of readers, when readers of printed newspaper “read”, the public of online newspaper often “surf”. In addition, due to the advantages of multimedia of online newspaper, VnE minimizes information in the form of writing, and instead makes use of images and videos.

VTV1 has an average duration of 0.34 minutes/post, at the same time, despite the number of articles along the 13 months the survey is done on VOV1 is only 5, the total duration reaches 45.2 minutes, leading to the average duration of one broadcast on VOV1 channel (9.01 minutes/post) being much higher than on VTV1.

Tilte

The survey results show that, most works on illegal wildlife trade in newspaper and channels share the same headlines kind: “Arrest/ Detect/ Detain/

Investigate/ Prosecute/ Stop, combined with information such as quantity, species name, wildlife products, commercial value, location, suspects,... For example: *“Seizing over 100 kg of suspected rhino horn at Noi Bai airport”⁽²⁵⁾, “Prosecuting the case of illegal transportation of nearly 1.4 tons of ivory”⁽²⁶⁾, “More than 1600 ivory products were seized in Gia Lai”⁽²⁷⁾, “Tan Son Nhat Customs seized 4kg of ivory”⁽²⁸⁾, “The authorities discovered more than 100 kg of suspected rhino horn at the border gate of Noi Bai airport”⁽²⁹⁾...*

Sapo

Sapo of illegal wildlife trade articles often covers the content, giving the hottest and most important information from the whole article. Sapo parts in TN and VnE newspapers' articles are often short, ranging from 30 to 40 words, go straight to the main information rather than presenting a lengthy lead. Meanwhile, the sapo on VOV1 channel is long, ranging from 30 seconds - 1 minute and often leads in longer than TN and VnE newspapers.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Firstly, information on illegal wildlife trade has been paid attention by the Vietnamese press and has a certain foothold in the regular press topics (about 15 articles per month on average), creating a regular and steady stream of writings. This shows the efforts of press agencies during the fight against illegal wildlife trade, facing increasingly serious illegal wildlife trade, while Vietnam is an important link in the cross-border wildlife and wildlife products supply chain.

However, the frequency of news articles on this topic is not high as only 199 works in all 4 newspapers and channels have been surveyed compared to the serious situation of illegal wildlife trade. As for VOV1 channel, after 13 months of survey, there are only 5 articles, which were too small of a number compared to a title of the national key radio broadcasting channel.

Secondly, the press reported on the illegal wildlife trade relatively quickly and promptly. For example, 33/45 articles on this topic in Thanh Nien newspaper were published one day after the case. Meanwhile, VnE, VOV1 and VTV1 with their special characteristics can quickly update information, therefore most of the articles are published on the same day, or the next day. Specifically, for VnE newspaper, 21/48 articles were posted on the same day the case occurred, 11/48 articles were reported the next day, 16/48 articles were reported after 2 days.

Thirdly, when reporting on illegal wildlife trade, the Vietnamese press provided basic information about the cases such as time, location and event occurrence, number of evidences, with 96% of the survey items containing this content. However, the information is still “superficial”, hasn't deeply analyse the problem.

Most articles only provide only about 1-3 types of information (in which, the number of articles containing 1-2 types accounts for 140/199 articles (70%), the number of articles containing 3 types accounts for 37/199 articles (19%), the number of songs containing more than 3 types only accounts for a small number of 22/199 articles (11%). In particular, on VnE and VTV1, most of the information only briefly updated on new cases (type I) such as the time, location of the incident, the number of evidences. Meanwhile, information on the handling of authorities (category III) is often summarized in one sentence: “Authorities are conducting investigations and clarifications”, the detailed developments of the cases are rarely fully reported. The information on the endangered status of wild species, the spreading of legal regulations, the downside of wildlife trade prevention, the consequences to human, the society and the environment have not been analysed and “studied” properly. This shows that the investment of newspapers and radio on this topic is not adequate.

Fourthly, up to 95% of the survey articles belong to the genre of news and there are only 2% of the surveyed articles are reportage investigations, which shows the hardship of reporters while “diving in” to reflect the hidden corners that society has not seen about this issue. The strength of the news genre is quick to update but it’s difficult for this genre to fully reflect every corner of the problem; while the investigative genre requires journalists to infiltrate trade lines, participate in investigations to gather information and expose criminals. This is a very dangerous job, using a lot of skills to not only exploit information but also protect the life of the information source and themselves. In addition to professional skills, investigation skills, life experiences, social relationships, investigating journalists must be really professional, brave and dare to fight against law violations. Therefore, illegal wildlife trade is a “picky” topic and always lacks writers.

Fifth, through the survey, both TN and VnE newspapers pay attention to the use of images, the percentage of articles with photos from these two newspapers is nearly the same: 66.7% for TN and 67% for VnE. Especially, VnE is an online newspaper, capable of multimedia integration, so there are 19/48 articles with videos. However, not all articles have photos, TN has 33 photos/45 survey samples, VnE newspaper has 39 photos/48 survey samples. Especially, although it is television, only 23/101 works on VTV1 are made in the form of videos, the rest are brief news without images. This shows the limitation of information on this issue from Vietnam national television.

Sixth, all 4 newspapers and channels have no particular categories or pages on this issue, but information on illegal wildlife trade is always included in the

“hot news” categories such as current affairs and laws, therefore drawing more public attention. Both VOV1 and VTV1 cover this issue in News programs, 90% of news and articles of TN are classified in the News section, only in VnE newspaper there is about 70% of news and articles included in the Legislation category- the most popular and most followed-up section of VnE.

NOTES

(1) Colin Fernandez, Emily Kent Smith (2018), Wiped out – and it’s all our fault: World wildlife population will have plummeted by 70% between 1970 and end of this decade... as we face first mass extinction since dinosaurs, Daily Mail, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3876740/Wiped-s-fault-World-wildlife-population-plummeted-70-1970-end-decade-face-mass-extinction-dinosaurs.html>.

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