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Vietnam’s COVID-19 Strategy: Mobilizing Public Compliance Via Accurate and Credible Communications

*Hong Kong Nguyen and Tung Manh Ho**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A number of reasons have been offered for Vietnam’s success in containing the COVID-19 pandemic during the first four months of 2020, including Vietnam’s experience in fighting epidemics and its single-party system which allows for timely and aggressive infection control.
- Contentions that Vietnam’s measures, being dependent on its particular political and social structures, are not replicable elsewhere is incomplete, if not outright wrong.
- Vietnam’s successful pandemic control required a high level of preparedness and a host of coordinated efforts to provide accurate and credible information to the public about epidemic risks and ongoing infection control measures.
- A proactive communication strategy was in place from the very beginning, utilizing various platforms such as online news sites, low-cost text messaging, user-friendly apps, local community loudspeakers, and pandemic awareness campaigns.
- Open communication ensured public understanding of and support for the government response, thereby facilitating effective government-citizen cooperation. This is a lesson for other countries as much as for Vietnam in the post-pandemic period.

** Hong Kong Nguyen and Tung Manh Ho are researchers at the A.I. Lab for Social Data in Hanoi and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Social Research at Phenikaa University, Hanoi, Vietnam. The authors are also both graduate students at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Oita, Japan.*

INTRODUCTION

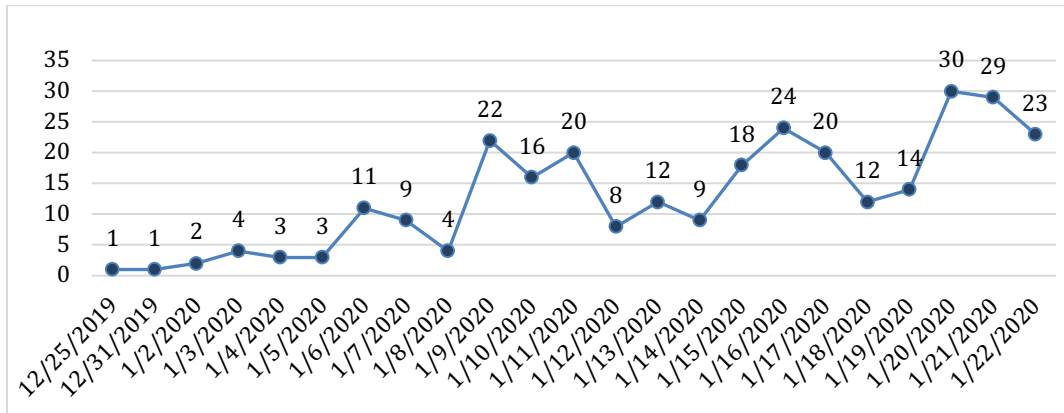
Vietnam's successful containment of the COVID-19 pandemic has attracted much international attention.¹ As of 11 June, the country has reported no new cases of community transmission for 56 consecutive days, while the number of confirmed cases stood at 332 with 320 patients recovered and zero deaths—a remarkable feat for a nation with limited resources but with a huge and growing population of nearly 100 million people. Experts have weighed in on how Vietnam has managed to accomplish this despite sharing a porous 1,300-kilometre-long border with China, where COVID-19 first broke out in December 2019. Key explanations include early risk assessment and preventive measures; comprehensive contact tracing; timely quarantine and isolation; a robust daily stream of information on confirmed cases, and government policies.²

This article reviews the communication strategies Vietnam took before its detection of the first COVID-19 cases on 23 January and until mid-May. The purpose is to show how early and adequate dissemination of correct information about the pandemic helped in mobilizing public understanding, and thereby slowing the disease. This aspect is often downplayed, if not entirely dismissed, on grounds that Vietnam's single ruling communist party has a unique control over all communication outlets. What is missing in this argument is how and why, although the state has the tools to control the flow and content of information, it has chosen to be transparent in this case. Writing off the timely government interventions on political grounds also means disregarding the commitment of frontline physicians and workers as well as the voluntary participation of members of society. Regardless of Vietnam's social and political structure, its early interventions, particularly clear and up-to-date communications, can provide a vital lesson for other countries in dealing with a public health crisis.

COMMUNICATING 'THE UNKNOWN'

Days before the first two confirmed cases in Vietnam, local news outlets had published 295 articles about a "strange pneumonia" in China, with the earliest report dated 25 December 2019 on the official website of Hanoi's Department of Health.³ The article surprisingly already covered: (i) the close coordination between Vietnam's Ministry of Health (MOH) and relevant authorities in monitoring the disease outbreak in China and at border gates to prevent potential transmission, (ii) the symptoms of an acute pneumonia illness, and (iii) concerns about a type of pneumonia as fatal as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that also surfaced in China and affected Vietnam in 2003. As Figure 1 shows, over the course of the next three weeks, the number of similar reports continued to rise steadily, averaging about 12 articles a day.

Figure 1: Number of Daily News Articles on “Strange Pneumonia” (bệnh viêm phổi lạ) on Vietnamese Media Outlets between 1 December 2019 and 22 January 2020

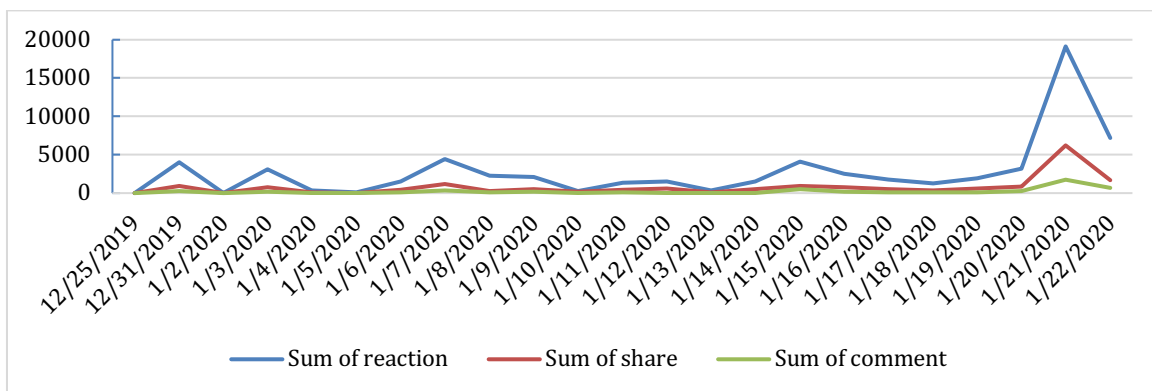


Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources

In addition to online articles, there were widely-circulated video items, such as one on 2 January by VTC Now, an over-the-top (OTT) streaming service of the state-owned Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC), and another on 3 January by the state-run VTV24 channel.⁴ All of the reports share three major characteristics, namely (i) the rapid rise in confirmed cases in China’s Wuhan city, (ii) the mysterious cause of the illness, and (iii) Vietnam’s early interventions such as the tightening of border control and a health quarantine.

As Figure 2 shows, these news reports found an early audience on Facebook, where nearly 60% of the population has an account. Articles published by the *Tuoi Tre* (Youth) newspaper, one of Vietnam’s most popular daily newspapers, received the most reactions, comments, and shares. For instance, on 21 January—four days before the start of the Lunar New Year celebration—the online newspaper published an article on six basic facts about the coronavirus, the new virus causing the acute pneumonia in China.⁵ This article had recorded 9,850 reactions, 913 comments, and 3,765 shares on Facebook, as of May 18, 2020.

Figure 2: Count of Facebook Engagement (Reaction, Share, and Comment) for the Articles on “Strange Pneumonia”, Published between 1 December 2019 and 23 January 2020 in Vietnam



Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources; data collected on 18 May 2020.

The reports are consistent in highlighting the severity of the unknown disease and the urgency of early protection measures. In other words, COVID-19, before it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March, was never portrayed as just another flu in Vietnam. The assessment of risk is arguably driven by a distrust of China, particularly its reporting of new disease outbreaks. Since early January, health departments nationwide had been asked to watch out for the new illness originating from China, where a number of fatal epidemics such as avian influenza A (H7N9), plague caused by the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium, and SARS had emerged and affected Vietnam in recent years.⁶ Thus, in dealing with such a big unknown even amidst a looming national holiday, Vietnam has taken an active and cautious stance, informing authorities at all levels as well as the public, of the available facts without creating anxiety. This approach is in line with research on how accurate and credible dissemination of verified information about a viral outbreak could help decrease the pandemic spread and associated apprehension in the population.⁷

TURNING ‘UNPREDICTABLE’ INTO ‘UNDERSTANDABLE’

Given that scientists have only begun to unravel the mystery behind the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the strain of coronavirus causing COVID-19, developing a viable vaccine could take several months, if not years.⁸ Should the pandemic rage on for the next year and infect hundreds of thousands of people, Vietnam’s vulnerable health system will not be able to cope.⁹ That understanding is shared by both policymakers and the people and sets the foundation for cooperation at both the central-local and government-citizen levels. In fact, contrary to the barrage of information in Western media about the necessity of “flattening the curve” in order not to burden the health systems, reports in Vietnamese media have already accepted this premise.

This section looks at the dissemination of information through traditional and social media, both of which are not unique to Vietnam even though some may argue that the state’s control over the media plays heavily in its favour in being able to send targeted messages that reach a wide audience. This argument only captures one side of the matter and does not delve into the complexity of informing a population of nearly 100 million people about an evolving disease outbreak. In any case, top-down communication can only work in so far as there is willingness for bottom-up engagement. Given that individual behavior is crucial to the controlling of the spread of COVID-19, effective communication comprises not only the extent of its reach but also the importance of consistency and credibility.

Online Media

A quick dive into a sample of 344 media reports in the weeks between 23 January and 5 March — the period during which Vietnam detected, treated and eventually discharged the first 16 patients— highlights five major topics in mass communication (Table 1). The purposes are clear: to keep the population constantly informed of the outbreaks at home and abroad; and to raise awareness about ongoing pandemic mitigation measures, which include mandatory airport quarantine, health declaration, social distancing, maintaining a telemedicine centre, and school closure.

Table 1: Main content of news articles published on Vietnamese media outlets between 23 January and 5 March 2020

Major news content	Count of articles
anti-COVID19 measures	104
domestic situation report	102
economic concerns	28
health information	16
international situation report	94

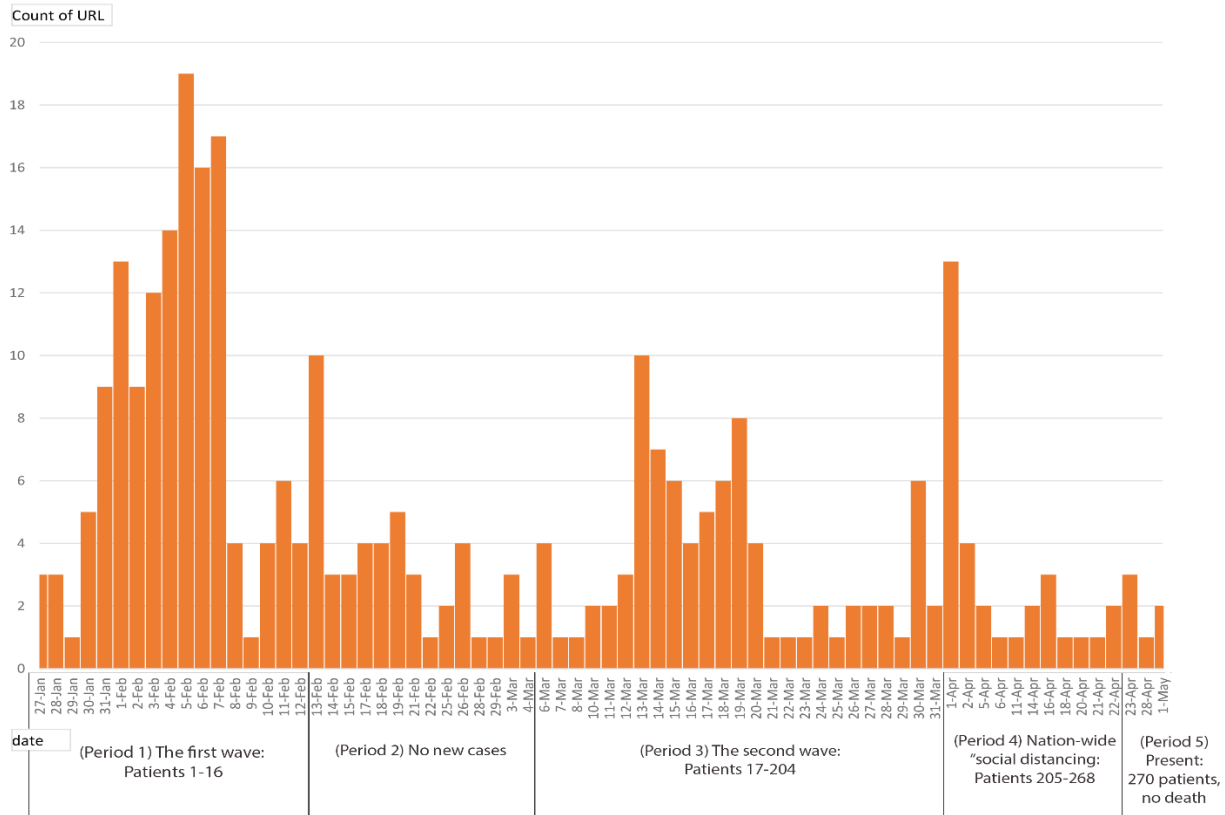
Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources

In the period after 5 March when an additional wave of newly-infected patients was confirmed, the volume of information in local media climbed even higher, reaching between 150-190 items a day. Nonetheless, the content of news coverage has remained consistent, with constant updates on the outbreaks at home and abroad as well as the corresponding government responses.

Media communication during this period also had to contend with the challenges of misinformation, a problem faced by other countries as well.¹⁰ According to official data, from the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak to 13 March, nearly 600,000 articles, posts, and videos related to the pandemic were shared on social media sites in Vietnam.¹¹ Many of these items were reportedly false or unverifiable.

There has been no systematic study on the scope and depth of misinformation on the epidemic in Vietnam yet. Here, we analyze 304 news items published between January and early May on the topic to find insights into the types of unverified and untruthful content as well as government responses. Four major types of misinformation stand out, namely: (i) suspected infections or community transmissions, (ii) patients' private information, (iii) offers for diagnostic tests, and (iv) suggestions for illness prevention and treatment. In one instance, there was even fake news on the United Nations applauding Vietnam as the first country to contain COVID-19. This immediately prompted Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to refute the information as incorrect.¹²

Figure 3: Number of Online Daily News Articles Addressing Mis/dis-information on COVID-19 in Vietnam from 1 January to 1 May 2020



Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources

It is noteworthy that the number of online articles addressing misinformation was the highest right at the beginning of the outbreak (Figure 3). This could be attributed to the implementation from early February of administrative fines for posting incorrect information about the pandemic on the Internet.¹³ In fact, many news headlines used strong words pertaining to the law enforcement realm, such as “to penalize,” “to fine,” “to prevent,” or “to deal with.” Table 2 summarizes the frequencies of these words in the headlines alongside the combined reactions, comments, and shares recorded on Facebook for such articles. The empirical evidence shows that Facebook users interact the most with articles in which the authorities “deal with,” “penalize,” and “fine” posters of false or unverifiable information on COVID-19.

Table 2: Recap of Major Subjects and Facebook Engagement with these Articles

	counts	reactions	comments	shares
<i>cảnh giác</i> (beware)	21	727	97	160
<i>xử lý</i> (deal with)	78	23,800	4,807	4,046
<i>xử phạt</i> (penalize)	61	7,764	1,411	1,044
<i>bị phạt</i> (to be fined)	25	12,120	2,941	1,193
<i>ngăn chặn</i> (prevent)	11	445	22	70
<i>xác minh</i> (verify)	2	20	9	3
<i>triệu tập</i> (summon)	7	287	55	30
<i>khởi tố</i> (prosecute)	1	0	2	1
others		4,731	1,949	1,348
TOTAL		49,894	11,293	7,895

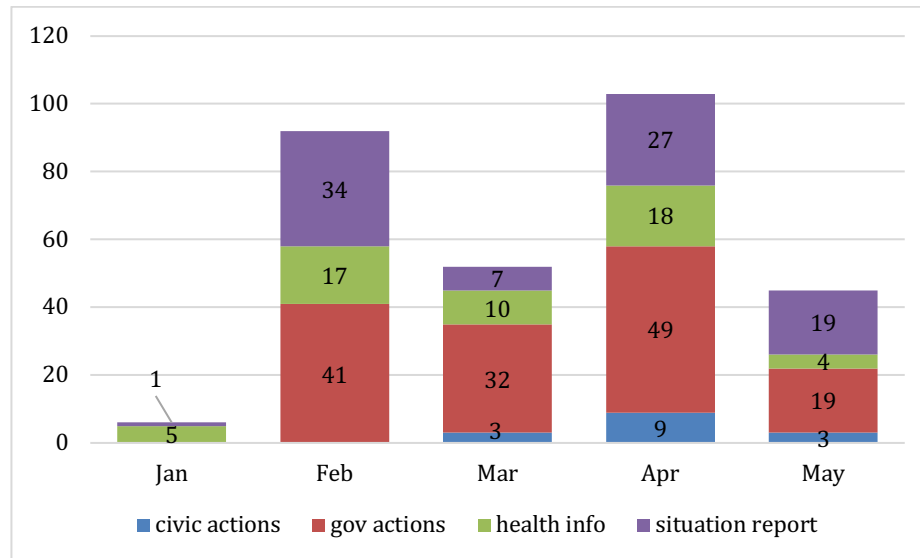
Source: Compiled by authors based on various public sources as of 2 May 2020

Social Media

In addition to online media outlets and conventional text messages, the MOH also utilized two Vietnamese social networks platforms, Zalo and Lotus, to disseminate information on combating COVID-19. According to local media reports, the ministry’s messages reached an average of 50 million users a day on Zalo and about 2.2 million active users on Lotus.¹⁴ Both platforms launched their own campaigns to raise awareness of the fight against COVID-19: Lotus’ posted 100,000 messages between 1 February and 19 March and recorded 400 million page views a month; while Zalo’s sent over 1.1 billion messages from the beginning of the outbreak to mid-March.

In analyzing a tranche of 298 Zalo messages sent by the MOH in the first five months, this study confirms the consistency in communication purposes—to inform the population of the outbreak situation and ongoing government measures. Figure 4 presents the four major types of Zalo messages during this period, with situation reports and government responses accounting for a combined 77% of the total messages.

Figure 4: Major Categories of SMS Content from Ministry of Health on Zalo between 28 January and 20 May 2020



Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources

Text messages aside, the government has been posting regularly on its official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/thongtinchinhphu/>), which has over 934,000 followers as of 23 May 2020. These posts are short, easy to read, filled with appealing emoticons and photos or infographics. The page reports up-to-date data and news on the outbreak, supplementing many of the Zalo messages sent by the MOH on government policies and, particularly, emergency contact tracing from March to early April.

ENGAGING FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Disseminating information through online news sites and social media channels is undoubtedly effective in reaching Vietnam’s young and tech-savvy population. At the same time, the fight against COVID-19 in the country has highlighted the equal importance of traditional communication platforms such as community loudspeakers and civic engagement campaigns.

Community Loudspeakers

During the wartime period in the 1960s-1970s, loudspeakers delivered news from the frontline, warning people in Hanoi when to take shelter from American aircraft bombing. In recent years, despite public debates on their fading role amid the digital age, the loudspeaker system has remained a trademark communication tool across Vietnam, especially at the grassroots level. It is important to note that, although the Internet penetration rate in Vietnam is quite high, at 70%, about 65% of the population still live in rural areas where loudspeakers continue to be a part of daily life. For this reason, loudspeakers have been advantageous in disseminating information on the COVID-19 pandemic at the community level.

Since the beginning of the epidemic in Vietnam, terms such as “acute pneumonia,” “coronavirus,” “social distancing,” or “COVID-19” have appeared frequently in media reports, to which community loudspeakers are no exception. Thanks to the timely and credible reports of the disease from the onset, the people, online or offline, have been able to comprehend the new public health threat and to take appropriate preventive measures.¹⁵ Small communes throughout the country, including those in remote areas, have shared the view that, as the pandemic became complicated, loudspeaker broadcasting increased in frequency and content diversity (e.g., an additional Q&A section or tips for staying healthy).¹⁶

The loudspeaker system, which works as a community radio, helps deliver emergency messages on matters such as communicable disease outbreaks, as well as early natural disaster warnings. It need not be stigmatized due to its outdated appearance and/or historical usage. During COVID-19, with many parts of the world locked down or enforcing social distancing, utilizing loudspeakers in Vietnam has helped in raising public awareness about the pandemic.

Pandemic Awareness Campaigns

Active civic engagement as an anti-COVID-19 measure is another notable feature in Vietnam’s handling of the pandemic. The handwashing song, “*Ghen Cô Vy*,” is a well-known global product by now after having been featured on the show Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. The song is one of many pop culture products born out of Vietnam during this period. Remarkably, campaigns to promote public service announcements (PSAs) have drawn in the participation of healthcare workers and military officers (e.g. “We stay at work for you. Please stay at home for us”), musicians, singers, and artists. Table 3 summarizes the top nine popular campaigns and their outcomes during this period.

Table 3: Popular Campaigns to Raise Public Awareness and Support in Combating COVID-19 in Vietnam

Activity	Type	Date	Created by	Outcome
1 “Joining hands to push back COVID-19” (“ <i>Đồng hành cùng đẩy lùi dịch Covid-19</i> ”) ¹⁷	Propaganda poster design contest	10-15 March	The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, with financial sponsorship worth VND5 billion from Eurowindow Holding	23 artists submitted 103 posters; 700,000 posters printed and delivered to 10,732 commune-level committees.
2 “Every citizen, let’s support the fight against COVID-19” (“ <i>Toàn dân ủng hộ phòng, chống dịch Covid-19</i> ”) ¹⁸	SMS donation (VND20,000 for one message)	19 March	The Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC), MOH, Vietnam Fatherland Front, and Vietnam Red Cross Society	As of 9 April, a total of 2.2 million text messages were received, with the donation estimated at VND133 billion. ¹⁹
3 “Let’s sing, Vietnam!” (“ <i>Hát lên Việt Nam ơi!</i> ”) ²⁰	Music challenge	23 March - 15 April	Minh Beta and Sendo with support from the MOH	Music video with over 300,000 views on YouTube as of 25 May since its release on 5 April. ²¹

4	“Stay strong Vietnam in fighting COVID-19” (“ <i>Vững vàng Việt Nam phòng, chống dịch COVID-19</i> ”) ²²	Community support programme	30 March	Unilever Vietnam in collaboration with the MOH and the Ministry of Education and Training	Providing support packages to healthcare and quarantine facilities nationwide
5	“Vietnam will win” (“ <i>Việt Nam sẽ chiến thắng</i> ”) ²³	Music collaboration	4 April	Composers Nguyen Hai Phong, Phuc Bo	Nearly 30 million views on YouTube since its release. ²⁴
6	“Farewell COVID” (“ <i>Tiền COVID</i> ”) ²⁵	Music collaboration	9 April	Singer Le Thien Hieu in collaboration with the MOH	Over 70,000 views on YouTube since its release. ²⁶
7	“Proud of Vietnam” (“ <i>Tự hào Việt Nam</i> ”) ²⁷	Music collaboration	24 April	Composer Nguyen Xuan Tri with sponsorship from the MOH and the participation of 200 artists, doctors, military officers across five big cities	Over 114,000 views on YouTube within first month of release. ²⁸
8	“Thank you, my Vietnam” fund (“ <i>Cảm ơn Việt Nam tôi</i> ”) ²⁹	Facebook-based hygiene awareness campaign	11 April - 10 May	Malaysia-investor Gamuda Land Vietnam opened the fund and donated to the Vietnam Fatherland Front	10,000 Facebook shares about individual practices to prevent COVID-19 equivalent to VND1 billion to the fund;
9	“Drawing kindness, COVID-19” (“ <i>Ký họa lòng tốt, COVID-19</i> ” #long_tot_de_lay) ³⁰	Drawing contest	6 May - 30 June	UNICEF Vietnam in collaboration with the MOH, with support from WHO, UNESCO, Zalo, and Tiktok	The final result will be announced on 15 July 2020.

Source: Compiled by authors from various public sources

These campaigns are undoubtedly led, sponsored or supported by a ministerial-level organization (e.g. the MOH or the MIC). One cannot deny the effectiveness of their outreach and societal influence. These public awareness campaigns all build on a dominant sense of positivity—national unity, patriotism, and mutual kindness. In particular, to reinforce this strong sense of national solidarity, the government has deployed a militaristic rhetoric in which every Vietnamese is called on to fight against COVID-19, a foreign and fatal threat. In this anti-virus battle, age-old slogans from the wars against the French and the Americans have regained their footing. With the epidemic being the new enemy, now “Every citizen is a soldier” and “So long as there is a single invader left in our country, we have to wipe it all out.”³¹ These messages were most prevalent in the local media in the second half of March when the number of new cases kept on rising and prompted Vietnam to suspend entry to all foreigners. In response, there was positive public reception and even a willingness to embrace the same rhetoric. One poster went viral with the message: “To stay home is to love your country.”³²

Media rhetoric aside, it is important to note that only a shared understanding of COVID-19 as a major public health crisis could have yielded this widespread voluntary civic engagement in Vietnam. The results are not simply catchy tunes, appealing music videos,

or memorable artworks, but also collective compliance with sometimes restrictive and tough pandemic measures.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined four major communication channels used in the fight against COVID-19 in Vietnam, namely online news outlets, social networking sites, community loudspeakers, and public awareness campaigns. First, the data and analysis highlight how the broad and timely dissemination of reliable information on the pandemic influenced individual behaviour, and thereby, facilitated community compliance. Second, given that COVID-19 is a new disease, the population needed time to absorb all the information about it. The case of Vietnam suggests that, an effective use of pre-existing information dissemination channels, whether they be traditional or digital outlets, can help raise public understanding of a pandemic in a short time.

Last but not least, while clear and open communications do not make up the sole factor to explain Vietnam's successful containment of COVID-19, its absence or failure would nonetheless mean public anxiety and panic. An equally undesirable scenario during a public health crisis is the pervasiveness of a cavalier attitude and a disregard for early preventive measures because the population is poorly informed of the risks and the fatal consequences involved. In short, open communication ensures public trust in and support for government response—a lesson for other countries as much as for Vietnam to learn in facing the post-pandemic period.

¹ According to data compiled by the authors using Web Scraping on Google, from 1 January to 15 May 2020, international English-language news outlets have published about 118 articles on the Vietnam case. In particular, the number of English-language news articles on this topic doubled to 40 between February and April.

² A few notable studies include: (a) Ha-Linh Quach and Ngoc-Anh Hoang, "COVID-19 in Vietnam: A lesson of pre-preparation," *Journal of Clinical Virology* 127 (2020/06/01/ 2020), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcv.2020.104379>, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1386653220301219>; (b) Adam Taylor, "Vietnam offers tough lessons for U.S. on coronavirus," *Today's World View - Analysis*, The Washington Post, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/04/30/vietnam-offers-tough-lessons-us-coronavirus/>; (c) Thai Quang Pham et al., "The first 100 days of SARS-CoV-2 control in Vietnam," *medRxiv* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.12.20099242>, <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/medrxiv/early/2020/05/16/2020.05.12.20099242.full.pdf>; (d) Viet-Phuong La et al., "Policy Response, Social Media and Science Journalism for the Sustainability of the Public Health System Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Vietnam Lessons," *Sustainability* 12, no. 7 (2020), <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/7/2931>.

³ This finding is based on data scraping on Google by the authors for Vietnamese news articles on "bệnh viêm phổi lạ" ("strange pneumonia") between 1 December 2019 and 22 January 2020—one day before Vietnam confirmed its first two cases. The first article is published on 25 December 2019 by: Hanoi Department of Health. "Giám sát chặt cửa khẩu ngăn bệnh viêm phổi cấp lạ xâm nhập [Tight monitoring of border gates to prevent transmission of strange pneumonia]," Hanoi

Department of Health, 2019, accessed May 18, 2020, https://soyte.hanoi.gov.vn/benh-truyen-nhiem/-/asset_publisher/4IVkx5Jltnbg/content/giam-sat-chat-cua-khau-ngan-benh-viem-phoi-cap-la-xam-nhap-vao-nuoc-ta?_101_INSTANCE_4IVkx5Jltnbg_viewMode=view.

⁴ The two reports are available at: (a) VTV24. “Trung Quốc xác nhận 44 ca bệnh viêm phổi lạ [China confirmed 44 cases of strange pneumonia illness],” VTV, 2020, accessed 18 May 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIVv-B9DoCQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIVv-B9DoCQ;); (b) VTC Now. “Bệnh viêm phổi “lạ” ở Trung Quốc muốn qua cửa khẩu Việt Nam [“Strange” pneumonia in China wants to pass through Vietnam border gates],” VTC Now, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cMV99i3tCs>.

⁵ D. Kim Thoa. “6 điều cần biết về coronavirus, chủng virus mới gây viêm phổi cấp [6 must-know facts about coronavirus, the new type of virus causing acute pneumonia],” Tuổi Trẻ, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://tuoitre.vn/6-dieu-can-biet-ve-coronavirus-chung-virus-gay-benh-viem-phoi-la-20200121173624894.htm>.

⁶ In 2003, Vietnam was the second country to suffer a SARS outbreak after China, and in April that year became the first country to successfully contain SARS. Source: WHO. “Viet Nam becomes first country to be removed from WHO's SARS list,” World Health Organization, 2003, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2003/04/66012-viet-nam-becomes-first-country-be-removed-whos-sars-list>.

⁷ Please see: (a) Megha Sharma et al., “Zika virus pandemic—analysis of Facebook as a social media health information platform,” *American Journal of Infection Control* 45, no. 3 (2017/03/01/2017), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajic.2016.08.022>, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019665531630918X>; and (b) Ambarish Pandey et al., “YouTube As a Source of Information on the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 38, no. 3 (2010/03/01/2010), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2009.11.007>, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S074937970900806X>.

⁸ Tina Hesman Saey. “As we wait for a vaccine, here’s a snapshot of potential COVID-19 treatments,” *Science News*, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-covid19-accelerated-vaccines-treatments-drugs>.

⁹ Vietnam is reportedly prepared for five levels of COVID-19 threat, with the worst-case scenario of between 3,000 and 300,000 cases of community infection. Source: <https://plo.vn/dich-covid-19/quan-doi-dien-tap-chong-dich-covid19-co-30000-nguoi-nhiem-893931.html>.

¹⁰ See: (a) Ramez Kouzy et al., “Coronavirus Goes Viral: Quantifying the COVID-19 Misinformation Epidemic on Twitter,” *Cureus* 12, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.7255>, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32292669>. And: (b) Gordon Pennycook et al., Fighting COVID-19 misinformation on social media: Experimental evidence for a scalable accuracy nudge intervention, 2020, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

¹¹ Ministry of Public Security. “Người dân cần cảnh giác với thông tin xấu, độc, sai sự thật về dịch bệnh COVID-19 [Beware of false, toxic, untruthful news about COVID-19],” *Bao Chinh Phu*, 2020, accessed May 20, 2020, <http://baochinhphu.vn/Tin-noi-bat/Nguoi-dan-can-can-giac-voi-thong-tin-xau-doc-sai-su-that-ve-dich-benh-COVID19/389916.vgp>.

¹² Quynh Duong. “Ngăn chặn tin giả trong đại dịch Covid-19: Cuộc chiến gian nan [Preventing fake news amid COVID-19 pandemic: a challenging battle],” *Ha Noi Moi*, 2020, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://hanoimoi.com.vn/tin-tuc/The-gioi/965889/ngan-chan-tin-gia-trong-dai-dich-covid-19-cuoc-chien-gian-nan>.

¹³ One of the earliest reports on penalties for posting misinformation on COVID-19 stated that the administrative fine ranges between VND10 million and VND15 million, and in the worst case, a jail time of up to three years. See: <https://suckhoedoisong.vn/dua-thong-tin-that-thiet-ve-dich-benh-do-virus-corona-co-the-doi-dien-khung-hinh-phat-3-nam-tu-n168437.html>.

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