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Do YouTubers Hate Asians? An Analysis of YouTube Users' Anti-Asian Hatred on Major U.S. News Channels during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has been widely covered on major U.S. media. “Chinese Virus” or “Wuhan Virus” became media buzz words especially at the beginning stage of the outbreak, which was feared to fuel anti-Asian hatred both in the U.S. and worldwide. This study examines the news coverage about COVID-19 in relation to Asians, mainly Chinese and China, on *YouTube* channels of major U.S. media outlets, and explores the relationship between the media framing and anti-Asian sentiments embedded in the comments beneath the news video. By content analyzing 50 news videos covering COVID-19 and Asians from 5 U.S. media organizations and 5000 comments, the findings suggest that attribution of responsibility and conflict are the most frequently used frames by the news reporting. The results also reveal that suspicion of conspiracy, rather than blaming, emerged as the most frequent theme embedded in hateful comments. One promising finding is that the frequency of hateful comments is significantly lower than that of non-hateful comments across all news frame categories.

Keywords: Anti-Asian hatred, COVID-19, YouTube news channel, U.S. media, news frame

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Introduction

On January 30, 2020, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was declared by the *World Health Organization* (WHO) as a global public health emergency and then pandemic in March. This fatal and extremely contagious disease caused great concerns during this time. News channels on television widely covered the issue. However, with the emergence of social media, advancement of technology and changing consumer behavior, many users turn to alternative platforms for information. The recent years have witnessed an explosion of networked video sharing as a new trending Internet application (Cheng, Dale, & Liu, 2007). According to the findings of *Pew Research Center* (Geiger, 2019), about four out of ten U.S. adults (37%) reported a preference of getting local news via online news channels. Around 77% of U.S. adults recognized the importance of the Internet in the way they obtain information. Compared to traditional television, watching the news from *YouTube* channels is more flexible for audiences in terms of time and space. Many people may not watch live shows for multiple reasons. Therefore, studying news representation on *YouTube* news channels and users' comments is a helpful way to learn about the users' perceptions and attitudes.

In terms of news coverage of COVID-19, media channels have reported various topics on the disease, such as the death tolls, policies, and economic impact, etc. Among them, anti-Asian racism is a thorny issue. The disease was presented as the "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus" in some media reports. Giving the disease a "foreign" label was not just a simple rhetorical strategy. The risks of politicizing the virus had detrimental effects on people's attitudes toward the Chinese community. Evidence was offered that the ex-President of the U.S. Donald Trump's public use of "Chinese virus" has prompted many Americans to blame Chinese Americans for the disease (Moynihan & Porumbescu, 2020). According to a survey of over 9,600 U.S. adults conducted in June 2020 by *Pew Research Center*, 31% of Asian adults say they were subject to slurs or jokes due to their race or ethnicity since the outbreak of COVID-19, compared with 21% of Black adults, 15% of Hispanic adults and 8% of white adults (Ruiz, Horowitz, & Tamir, 2020). This finding aligned with the reports of incidents of verbal or physical attacks against Asians around the world. This worldwide problem calls for close examination of news reporting, people's attitudes and the nature of anti-Asian hatred during this pandemic.

News frames

The notion of frame often serves as a bridging concept between mass media theory, sociology, psychology and linguistics (Miceviciute, 2013). According to Goffman (1974), a primary framework is used when people interpret their experiences in a

social context. In a nutshell, framing theory stipulates that how something is framed impacts how people interpret that information.

The media filter information such that only certain information gets attention, and that information is conveyed to the audience within a specific organization frame. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). How the news is framed is thought to affect the perceptions and attitudes of the audience (Scheufele, 1999). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) investigated five frames prevalent in news presentation framing European politics. They found that the most commonly adopted frame was attribution of responsibility, followed by conflict frame, economic consequences frame, human interest frame and morality frame. The coverage of the SARS outbreak in 2003 offers a more recent case for studying the news coverage on an epidemic. A comparative analysis of SARS reporting from the *Associated Press* (AP) and *Xinhua News Agency* confirmed four news frames: attribution of responsibility, human interest, economic consequences and severity (Beaudoin, 2007).

As to COVID-19 news presentations about Asians on *YouTube* channels, this study intends to investigate how news frames are adopted within the *YouTube* news videos. Therefore, the first research question was proposed:

Research Question 1: How is COVID-19 reporting related to Asians framed on *YouTube* channels of major U.S. news organizations?

Internet hate speech

Hate speech is considered a global problem that countries and organizations have been standing up against. This study firstly examines a few definitions of hate speech, and then derives a more focused description that guides online anti-Asian COVID-19 hatred through this research.

The following definition of hate speech has been adopted in many countries as “bias motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived innate characteristics” (Cohen-Almagor, 2011, p. 1). In line with that, Davidson, Warmusley, Macy and Weber (2017) provided a concise definition which described hate speech as “language that is used to express hatred towards a targeted group or is intended to be derogatory, to humiliate, or to insult the members of the group” (p. 512). Also, Fortuna and Nunes (2018) developed a unified definition of hate speech after a systematic review of this concept defined in multiple contexts and platforms: “Hate speech is language that attacks or

diminishes, that incites violence or hate against groups, based on specific characteristics such as physical appearance, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or other” (p. 5). A more recent and relevant study defined COVID-19 anti-Asian hate as antagonistic speech that targets an Asian individual, group, government, organization, country, and is derogatory, abusive, or accusatory for the origin, spread, or mismanagement of COVID-19 (Ziems et al., 2020).

Based on the review of existing definitions, this study derived two standard dimensions of the hate speech against Asians during COVID-19 pandemic: The anti-Asian hate speech under review (1) targets an Asian individual, group or community, and (2) expresses suspicion, blaming, sarcasm, violence, segregation or insult that reinforces stereotypes and creates negative consequences.

With the advancement of Internet technology and growth of online social networks, the hate speech problem has become even more concerning, as interactions between people are becoming more accessible and sharable. On social media platforms, people can leave whatever comments at a minimal cost. Past research indicates a higher likelihood that people will have aggressive online behaviors due to the anonymity of the Internet environment (Burnap & Williams, 2015; Fortuna & Nunes, 2018). Meanwhile, traditional media forms such as newspapers and television programs are also resorting to new media platforms and sharing their content on social media such as *Facebook*, *YouTube* etc., to reach a broader audience in a more flexible way that is less constrained by time and space. The audience can express and exchange their views by posting their comments underneath the story. Previous studies found many of those comments were hateful regarding controversial issues, and most people experienced emotional responses such as frustration, anger and disgust when reading those nasty comments (Ciftci et al., 2017; Ben-David & Fernández, 2016; Ernst et al., 2017).

Despite the magnitude of Internet hate speech, a significant gap still exists in understanding the mechanism and nature of cyberhate on social media (Silva, Mondal, Correa, Benevenuto, & Weber, 2016). Besides, there are nuanced layers and subtle differences among the embedded forms of online hate speech. However, the research on its heterogeneity is lacking. This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring subtle forms and refining the classifications of online anti-Asian hatred. Last but not the least, the literature focusing on hate speech against Asians in the COVID-19 context is not very extensive yet (Ziems et al., 2020). Studies of anti-Asian hate during COVID-19 on media channels are urgently needed since the pandemic spreads rapidly and still triggers hatred among social groups. Therefore, the second research question was put forward:

Research Question 2: What are primary themes embedded in hateful comments against Asians on *YouTube* channels of major U.S. news organizations?

This study also explores if the frequency of hateful comments is related to the content of the news videos. Hence the third research question:

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between the media framing of COVID-19 and the frequency of hateful comments against Asians beneath the news story?

Method

Content analysis was utilized to examine *YouTube* media framing and anti-Asian hateful comments during the COVID-19 pandemic. The samples for the content analysis included short news video clips from the *YouTube* channels of the media organizations, on the one hand, and the comments below the video clips, on the other. The coding scheme of the two different samples will be explained as the next step. Frequencies of framing strategies, themes of hateful comments as well as relationships were analyzed by using *SPSS 26.0*.

Sample selection: YouTube videos and comments

Five popular news channels on *YouTube* were selected to be coded and analyzed in order to better understand anti-Asian sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. news channels were chosen based on ratings on T.V. cable news channels during prime time and viewership on *YouTube* news channels that reflect a hunger for information about the coronavirus outbreak in March, 2020 (Bauder, 2020; Gutelle, 2020). By July 5, 2020, considering the number of subscribers, five U.S. news channels were selected in this study:

- 1) *CNN* (10.1 million subscribers; 148,000 videos).
- 2) *ABC News* (9.31 million subscribers; 53,000 videos).
- 3) *Fox News* (5.57 million subscribers; 65,000 videos).
- 4) *NBC News* (3.54 million subscribers; 24,000 videos).
- 5) *MSNBC* (3.25 million subscribers; 30,000 videos).

Ten news videos were sampled from each of the five news organization's *YouTube* channel. Take *CNN* for example, keywords "COVID-19 China" and "COVID-19 Asians" were searched on the main page of the *CNN YouTube* account on August 15, 2020, and the first 10 news videos that appeared on the page were selected and coded by the news framing categories as conflict frame, human interest frame, morality frame, economic consequence frame, attribution of responsibility frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The audience views of the videos ranged from

around 18 thousand to over 4.6 million, which showed that the news videos reached a large audience. The other 40 *YouTube* videos were selected and coded similarly from August 13 to 20, 2020. Unlike a traditional T.V. news program that might include multiple news stories, the *YouTube* videos analyzed mainly consisted of one story per clip. The length of the videos ranged from 2 minutes and 56 seconds to 8 minutes and 25 seconds.

The first 100 comments beneath each of the 50 *YouTube* videos were documented for analyzing the themes and frequencies of hateful speech. A separate coding scheme was developed with its details to be presented in the section below. Sub comments and re-comments were excluded so that the analysis was focused on original content (Ziems et al., 2020). The first 100 comments were chosen because on social media, usually, the higher up the comment appears, the more responses and interactions it will get from other viewers. In sum, 50 *YouTube* videos and 5000 comments constituted the final sample for the present study, with 1000 comments from each media channel.

Development of the coding scheme

For the media framing variable, each *YouTube* video was considered as a unit of analysis. For the variable of hateful comment theme, each comment was regarded as a unit of analysis. Five *YouTube* videos were randomly selected to train the three coders and test the consistency of the categories defined by the code book. Based on the experiences during the training, coding categories were discussed and revised.

For the *YouTube* video itself, the information about the media organization, the release date of the news video, the video title, and the media framing strategy were documented and coded. The media framing was categorized into the following frames: conflict frame, human interest frame, morality frame, economic consequence frame, attribution of responsibility frame, and other (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). More specifically, if conflicts of opinions, actions and/or interests were highlighted in the video, such as an U.S. government official disputing with journalists during a press conference, or there was an exchange of arguments between different sides if the virus is natural or not, then the story was coded under the “conflict frame” category. If the news story “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95), for example, depictions of family separations, mourning deaths of heroes who saved lives, hard work of doctors and nurses, etc., in that case it is understood that the story is using the “human interest frame.” The frame reporting the issue in the context of moral prescriptions or religious creed (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) would be considered as the “morality frame”. Assumed examples were ethical debates about wearing a mask or not, home quarantine policy, social gathering etc. If the news video focused on economic loss, unemployment rate, businesses closed down,

fund shortage due to COVID-19, that would be coded as “economic consequence frame”. Lastly, if the story attributed responsibility of a cause or solution to individuals, social groups, or government, that would be conceived to be using “attribution of responsibility frame”. Key words were “... is held responsible/criticized for causing...problems” or “blaming...for (not) doing something”, to name but a few. If none of the above framing strategies apply, the video would be coded as “other.”

For the comments beneath the video, we followed two steps to identify the hateful comments according to the two standard dimensions derived from prior definitions: The hate speech (1) targets an individual or Asians as a group or community, and (2) expresses suspicion, blaming, sarcasm, violence, segregation or insult that reinforces stereotypes and causes negative consequences. Operationally, first, if the answer to “Does it target a person or group” (Charitidis, Doropoulos, Vologiannidis, Papastergiou, & Karakeva, 2020, p. 3) is positive, then the comment could be annotated as a potential hateful comment. Here only comments targeting China, Chinese government and people, or broader Asian communities were included. The comments accusing other groups, the U.S. government, for example, were excluded from hateful comments because they are not the foci of the present study. Second, the comment was examined closely to determine if it fit into any such categories as violent speech, calling for segregation, blaming, stereotype, conspiracy theory, or sarcasm. If the comments did contain one of those negative emotions or attitudes, they were marked as hateful. The categories of violent speech and calling for segregation were adopted from Charitidis et al. (2020). The categories of blaming, stereotype, conspiracy theory, and sarcasm were developed from the themes that emerged during the initial coding. If none of the above apply, the comment would go to the “other” category. To show generally how comments were coded, here is an example: “I’m sure the evil communist regime killed that doctor who wanted to tell the public the truth about the virus”. This comment attacked the Chinese government as an evil group, and conveyed some conspiracy information without solid evidence. Comments like this were coded as “conspiracy theory”. More specific examples of each theme could be found in Table 2.

Coding procedure

After the training sessions, each of the three coders independently analyzed another 5 YouTube videos and their corresponding 500 comments, which constituted ten percent of the content body of this study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The inter-coder reliability was overall satisfactory. The average pairwise percent agreement of media framing, the judgement of hatefulness, and the type of hateful comment were 99.73%, 90.13%, and 87.33% respectively. Krippendorff’s *alpha* was also assessed, with 0.99 for media framing, 0.78 for judging if the comment is hateful or not, and 0.76 for the theme of hateful comment. Disagreements were discussed and resolved

by multiple rounds of Zoom meetings. The remaining *YouTube* videos and comments were then split among the three coders for analysis.

Results

Research question 1 asked about how framing strategies were adopted in COVID-19 news regarding Asians by *YouTube* channels of major news organizations in the U.S. A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to address this research question. Table 1 presents the frequencies and percentages of the framing strategies used across the five media organizations.

Table 1: COVID-19 News Frames Adopted by *YouTube* Channels of CNN, ABC News, Fox News, NBC News, and MSNBC

News frames	News organizations (frequency and percentage)					Total	Examples of video titles
	CNN	ABC	FOX	NBC	MSNBC		
Attribution of responsibility	6 12%	2 4%	5 10%	3 6%	3 6%	19 38%	CNN: WHO criticized for praising China's initial coronavirus response
Conflict	1 2%	2 4%	5 10%	2 4%	3 6%	13 26%	Fox: FBI warns China against targeting COVID-19 research orgs
Human interest	3 6%	4 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 14%	ABC: China coming back to life
Economic consequences	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	2 4%	MSNBC: Global virus cases pass 1.6M amid fears of second wave of outbreaks
Other (i.e. reported pandemic situation)	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	5 10%	3 6%	9 18%	MSNBC: How A Country Serious About Coronavirus Does Testing and Quarantine
Total	10	10	10	10	10	50 100%	

Note: Overall $\chi^2 (16) = 30.68$, $N = 50$, $p < .05$; 16 is the Degree of Freedom (df). The Degrees of Freedom for the two-variable Chi-square test are found by taking: (Rows Groups - 1) * (Column Groups - 1) = [(5-1) * (5-1)] = (4 * 4) = 16; P refers to the p value. $p < .05$ signifies that the overall Chi-Square test was significant.

Among the 5000 comments analyzed, 20.7% ($n = 1034$) were hateful whereas 79.3% ($n = 3966$) were non-hateful. The 1034 hateful comments were further categorized into specific themes to gain more insights into the nature and mechanism of anti-Asian hatred. This leads to the answering of the second research question, which asked about the primary themes embedded in hateful comments against Asians, particularly the Chinese community, on *YouTube* channels of major news organizations. Table 2 displays the frequencies of the major themes identified in the hateful comments. Conspiracy theory ($n = 236$, 22.8%) was found to be the most frequent theme embedded in hateful comments. An exemplar demonstrates the suspicion of some conspiracy going on: “It was created in a lab for the world super rich elite to eliminate the elderly, disabled and all us ‘takers’. Otherwise why wouldn't they let the UN investigate? Sounds Fishy (Chinese) to me”. Blaming ($n = 230$, 22.2%) often suggested that someone or some groups be held accountable and ranked second. For example, “China should pay all of the casualty that happened internationally.” The third most frequent theme was sarcasm ($n = 213$, 20.6%). For instance, “The Wuhan Lab workers called for a lunch delivery from the market. They had discount coupons”. That was then followed by stereotype ($n = 180$, 17.4%) which tended to oversimplify a social group or give the group an insulting label. An exemplar comment is: “Will China ever learn? No wonder their label ‘Sick man of Asia’.” The fifth most frequent theme was calling for segregation ($n = 145$, 14%) which advocated completely cutting off the contact with a group. For instance, “Quit buying anything from the communist virus spreaders.” There were also some, though not as many, violence speeches ($n = 18$, 1.7%) calling for punishment, death and cursing. Such as “They have the blood of everyone who died from this horrible virus on their hands and should be punished for it bigtime!!!”. Eight hateful comments (0.8%) belonged to none of the above categories and were coded as “other”.

Table 2: Frequencies, Percentages and Examples of Major Themes Identified in Hateful Comments

Theme of hateful comments	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
Conspiracy theory	236	22.8%	- I'm sure the evil regime killed that doctor. - It was created in a lab for the world super rich elite to eliminate the elderly, disabled and all us "takers". Otherwise why wouldn't they let the UN investigate? Sounds Fishy (Chinese) to me.
Blaming	230	22.2%	- China should pay all of the casualty that happened internationally. - Of course, it came from China. I lost my job make them pay.
Sarcasm	213	20.6%	- The Wuhan Lab workers called for a lunch delivery from the market. They had discount coupons - China output virus in December 2019 - COVID-19
Stereotype	180	17.4%	- Pandemic Made in China like a lot of stuff these days. - Will China ever learn? No wonder their label "Sick man of Asia"
Call for segregation	145	14%	- All the world should keep them in isolation. - Quit buying anything from the communist virus spreaders
Violence speech	18	1.7%	- They have the blood of everyone who died from this horrible virus on their hands and should be punished for it bigtime!!! - Dam those people are cruel. Evil humans will end the human race
Other	8	0.8%	
Total	1,034	100%	

Research Question 3 asked about the relationship between the media framing of COVID-19 and the frequency of hateful comments against Asians beneath the news story. A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to address this research question. Table 3 presents the frequencies of non-hateful and hateful comments across the media framing types. The overall test results were significant ($\chi^2(4) = 14.19, N = 5000, p < .01$), signifying that the distribution of non-hateful and hateful comments was significantly different across the media framing strategies. The most hateful comments ($n = 435$) were identified beneath the frame of attribution of responsibility, followed by conflict frame with 255 hateful comments, human interest frame with 129 hateful comments, and economic consequences frame with 28 hateful comments. When comparing the frequencies between non-hateful and hateful comments, the results suggested that all frequencies of hateful comments were statistically lower than those of non-hateful ones across news framing strategies.

Table 3: Relationship between the News Frames and Frequencies of Non-hateful/Hateful Comments

News Frames	Non-hateful versus hateful comments		Total	$\chi^2(df = 1)$
	Non-hateful	Hateful		
Attribution of responsibility	1465	435	1900	588.37***
Conflict	1045	255	1300	480.08***
Human interest	571	129	700	279.09***
Economic consequences	172	28	200	103.68***
Other	713	187	900	307.42***
Total	3966	1034	5000	1719.3***

Note: Overall $\chi^2(4) = 14.19, N = 5000, p < .01$

Chi-square values in the last column indicate differences in the frequencies of non-hateful versus hateful comments across news framing types.

*** $p < .001$

Table 4 shows that the most hateful comments ($n = 251$) were identified on the *YouTube* page of *CNN*, followed by 236 hateful comments identified on the *YouTube* page of *NBC*, 189 hateful comments on *FOX News YouTube* page, 181 hateful comments on *ABC YouTube* page and 177 hateful comments on the *YouTube* channel of *MSNBC*. A significant relationship was indicated between media outlets and the distribution of non-hateful/hateful comments ($\chi^2(4) = 28.51, N = 5000, p < .001$).

Table 4: Distribution of Non-hateful/Hateful Comments across CNN, ABC, FOX News, NBC News, and MSNBC

		Non-hateful versus hateful comments	
		Non-Hateful (n = 3966)	Hateful (n = 1034)
Media outlets	CNN	749	251
	NBC	764	236
	FOX	811	189
	ABC	819	181
	MSNBC	823	177
Total		3966	1034

Note: Overall $\chi^2(4) = 28.51, N = 5000, p < .001$

Discussion

The results of data analysis revealed that attribution of responsibility and conflict are the most frequently used frames by the five media outlets in the U.S when reporting COVID-19 concerning China, Chinese and Asian communities in large. In contrast, the morality frame is of least predominance. This corresponds to the previous findings that showed attribution of responsibility was most common in the news reporting, followed by conflict, economic consequences, human interest and morality in order of their predominance (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; An & Gower, 2009). This finding makes sense in the context that responsibility attribution and conflict are usually the staple food in regular T.V. news reporting (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), and the coverage of COVID-19 is not an exception regarding that norm. Meanwhile, the human interest frame stood out as the third most frequently used frame when reporting the pandemic. This point partially echoes and contrasts prior research in that social media editors favor stories of human interest rather than conflict framing (Wasike, 2013). One possible explanation is that the content of *YouTube* channels of media organizations still inherits the main features of traditional T.V. coverage by favoring responsibility attribution and conflict, but also bears some new interactive features of online social media since the channels are on *YouTube* instead of on a T.V. screen. Therefore, human interest stories get relatively more favorability due to their more significant potential to interact and resonate with social media users. This finding hints that the *YouTube* channels of media organizations somewhat stand on a middle ground when it comes to news framing strategies. Past research also suggested that selecting frames depends on both the topic and the outlet (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Considering the focus of this study, it is not difficult to understand why the human-interest frame was the third most frequent frame. COVID-19 has been confirmed to transmit human-to-human, and brought about a profound impact on human society. Journalists and

editors tend to bring an emotional angle to the event presentation, dramatize or personalize the story to retain the audience's interest (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This study contributes to the media frame literature, showing how major U.S news organizations' *YouTube* channels frame the reporting in the context of a global pandemic.

This study also extends the current body of research on online hate speech by presenting the frequencies and themes of hateful comments beneath the COVID-19 related *YouTube* videos of five major U.S. media outlets. First, the results revealed that conspiracy theory appeared most frequently in hateful comments. This finding shows that many *YouTube* users may not have sufficient information about what is going on and, therefore, they have lots of suspicions, speculations and distrust against the Chinese government, Wuhan, and Asian people, particularly Chinese. These *YouTubers* may not necessarily bear innate hatred against Chinese or Asians. They were terrified by uncertainties and unknown risks. Therefore, quality information and effective communications are of supreme importance to mitigate those suspicions of a conspiracy. Specifically, international communication organizations need to take that point into consideration so that responsible decisions will be made as to what crucial information is lacking or needed to clarify the situation and reach the targeted audience. On the individual level, understanding the emotions and the reasons beneath the surface is conducive to successful intercultural/intergroup communications. Second, the results suggested blaming was the second-largest category in hateful comments, which was not entirely surprising. Lots of attribution of responsibility and conflict depiction in the videos significantly contributed to users' emotions of hate, blaming, and therefore contributing to sarcasm, enhanced stereotypes, calling for segregation and violent languages, which were respectively third, fourth, fifth and sixth themes embedded in hateful comments beneath the *YouTube* video clips. This study shows that Internet hate speech is not a homogeneous phenomenon. Instead, there are nuanced layers and subtle differences among the forms of hate speech. While the anti-Asian COVID-19 hatred could take on an explicit cast, it could also be expressed subtly. This research takes the subtle forms of mocking and sarcasm into consideration, and marked them as hateful comments, because repeating sarcastic comments and even seemingly harmless jokes can intrigue racist attitudes, reinforce stereotypes, create an othering discourse of social groups, and thus give justifications to negative bias and discrimination directed towards these groups (Burnap & Williams, 2015; Fortuna & Nunes, 2018; Kompatsiaris, 2017). Adopting a more inclusive approach, this study complements the current research by adding nuances and refining the understandings of the social complexities of Internet anti-Asian hate speech.

Comparing the frequencies of hateful versus non-hateful comments showed that the frequency of hateful comments ($n = 1034$) is significantly lower than that of non-hateful comment ($n = 3966$). This finding is somewhat encouraging, showing that

YouTube news consumers are generally rational and sympathetic rather than being racist and hateful. During this time, this point is essential in holding peoples and nations together to win the battle against the worldwide pandemic.

Another intriguing finding of this study is that the most hateful comments ($n = 251$) were found on the *YouTube* page of *CNN*, rather than *Fox News* ($n = 189$). In contrast, past research indicated that among major U.S. cable networks, *CNN* was most prolific with China related reporting probably due to its broader international focus with a more neutral, sometimes favorable view of China; *MSNBC's* take of China's image is similar with that of *CNN*, while *Fox News* was usually highly critical of China issues (Syed, 2010). However, this finding also makes sense as *CNN's* reporting of China became increasingly negative after the Beijing 2008 Olympic games indicating U.S. – China rivalry (Syed, 2010). In line with the findings presented in Table 1, the attribution of responsibility frame was adopted the most by *CNN*, criticizing the Chinese government for lack of information transparency, and scolding the WHO for the organization's reported favoritism towards China. Based on the results presented in Table 3, the most hateful comments ($n = 435$) were identified beneath the frame of attribution of responsibility. Another possible reason is that *CNN's* historically perceived nicer attitude towards China might also induce backlash of online haters, who wanted to expand the battlefield by spitting out hatred, humiliation or insult against Asians, particularly against China and Chinese people onto the virtual space. However, due to the relatively small sample size of news videos ($N = 50$), the generalization of this point is impractical. A larger sample size is desirable for future study.

There are a few limitations in making inferences. First, *YouTube* videos were selected by topic search on the account page of each media outlet. Though the first ten videos by the topic search had many views, they cannot capture the whole picture. Statistical inferences should be made with caution. Second, only comments in English were analyzed. Though the words in English were the most dominant type, the results are still not able to represent the perspectives and attitudes expressed in other languages as there was also a small number of comments made in Chinese or Korean among some other languages. Third, only videos and comments on *YouTube* channels of five U.S. media organizations were analyzed. Hopefully more data on diverse social media platforms of more media outlets will be examined for future research.

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