MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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USING VISUAL STORYTELLING METHOD IN CREATING ONLINE NEWS ARTICLE

DOCTORAL THESIS IN JOURNALISM

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INTRODUCTION

1.   **Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

1.1. With complex issues and large-scale events, a single article or news cannot fully convey the content, uniqueness, and visual appeal. This is why many new journalism trends have emerged and developed, such as data journalism, mobile journalism, creative journalism, and multi-platform journalism. With the form of Online News Article (ONA), news agencies have invested elaborately in both content and form to produce high-quality journalistic works (JW) that integrate multimedia elements and are defined by terms such as Mega Story, E-magazines, Spotlight, etc. For these JWs to be able to "retain" the audience for a long time, journalists/reporters (J/R) need to use creative content methods that meet the needs and tastes of the public. The visual storytelling method in JW content creation has emerged and has begun to be applied by some J/R and press agencies (PA) in their professional practice.

1.2. In Vietnam, the trend of producing multimedia forms of JW was pioneered by VietnamPlus in mid-2016. Following VietnamPlus, many PAs have also implemented it. First, there are large newspapers with financial potential and a strong technical-design team such as Nhan Dan, VnExpress, Thanh Nien, Tuoi Tre, etc. Other newspapers such as local Party newspapers, newspapers of Ministries and Sectors, etc. also joined in, although the implementation is still quite simple and not really invested in technology and aesthetics. This is considered one of the current strategies for building the brand of PAs, which means affirming themselves in high-quality journalism products that apply visual storytelling to convey messages to the public.

1.3. The question is how do ONAs use the visual storytelling method? What results have been achieved and what limitations need to be overcome? To what extent have journalists used this method in the JW creation process? What does it take to enhance using visual storytelling method in creating ONAs?...

Determining that the issues just presented above are all topical, have theoretical and practical significance, and have gaps that need to be researched to find a satisfactory answer, the author chose to research the topic ***"Using visual storytelling method in creating Online News Article"*** as the research topic for this thesis in Journalism with the aim of filling the gaps in theoretical and practical research.

2. Research Objectives and Tasks

2.1 Research Objectives

Based on theoretical and practical research, this thesis surveys and analyzes the current state of using visual storytelling method in Online News Article (ONA) on four

online newspapers, and from there, evaluates the successes and limitations and makes some recommendations and suggestions for better use of visual storytelling in creating ONAs for Vietnamese PA nowadays.

2.2 Research Tasks

First, comprehensively study the relevant literature from both the world and Vietnam, extracting the necessary scientific values to inherit for the thesis.

Second, the theoretical and practical foundations of using visual storytelling in creating digital media products will be systematized.

Third, the current state of using visual storytelling in creating digital media products in Vietnam will be surveyed, analyzed, and evaluated through a study of four digital media platforms: Nhan Dan, VNE, TTO, and Vietnamplus in 2023.

Fourth, based on the identified issues, a number of solutions and recommendations will be proposed to promote the use of visual storytelling in creating digital media products.

3. Research Subjects and Scope

3.1 Research Subjects

The research investigates the theoretical framework and practical implementation of visual storytelling as a technique employed in the creation of ONAs.

3.2 Research Scope

The problem of using visual storytelling in creating digital media content is broad, as the term "ONA" encompasses a wide range of traditional journalism genres (news, reports, interviews, features, investigations, commentaries, editorials, research papers, etc.) as well as new forms unique to digital media. This dissertation focuses on the use of visual storytelling in creating digital media content from the perspective of both content and form, and the steps and stages involved in the creation process.

Within the framework of this study, the author only chooses to study and survey the journalistic works published on 4 sections corresponding to 4 online newspapers: the E-magazine section on Nhân dân điện tử, the Spotlight section on VnEpress, the Megastory section on Tuoi Tre Online and the VietnamPlus Spotlight section on Vietnamplus, in the year 2023. The reasons for the author making this choice are because:

First, an ONA can use visuals as the only element to tell a story (e.g., photojournalism, video, infographic works that stand alone) or use visuals as an important element (in combination with text and other communication techniques) to tell a story (e.g., works that are defined as in-depth works, high-quality works...). Within the framework of this thesis, the author limits the research direction to the

aspect of using visuals as an important element (in combination with text and other communication techniques) to tell a story in ONAs.

Second, these are new sections compared to other sections on ONA, having their own unique characteristics in this form.

Third, the works published all use visuals as an important element (even the main element in some works) to participate in the process of Js/Rs telling stories to readers, with the strong support of modern technology, creating visual appeal, helping readers get as close to the truth as possible, understand the story context, nurture emotions and take action.

4. Research Hypotheses and Analytical Framework

4.1 Research Questions

Question 1: How does current online newspaper utilize visual storytelling in creating content and visual elements?

Question 2: How have journalists employed visual storytelling in the creation process of online news articles?

Question 3: What can be done to promote the use of visual storytelling in the creation of online news articles at Vietnamese news agencies?

4.2 Analytical Framework
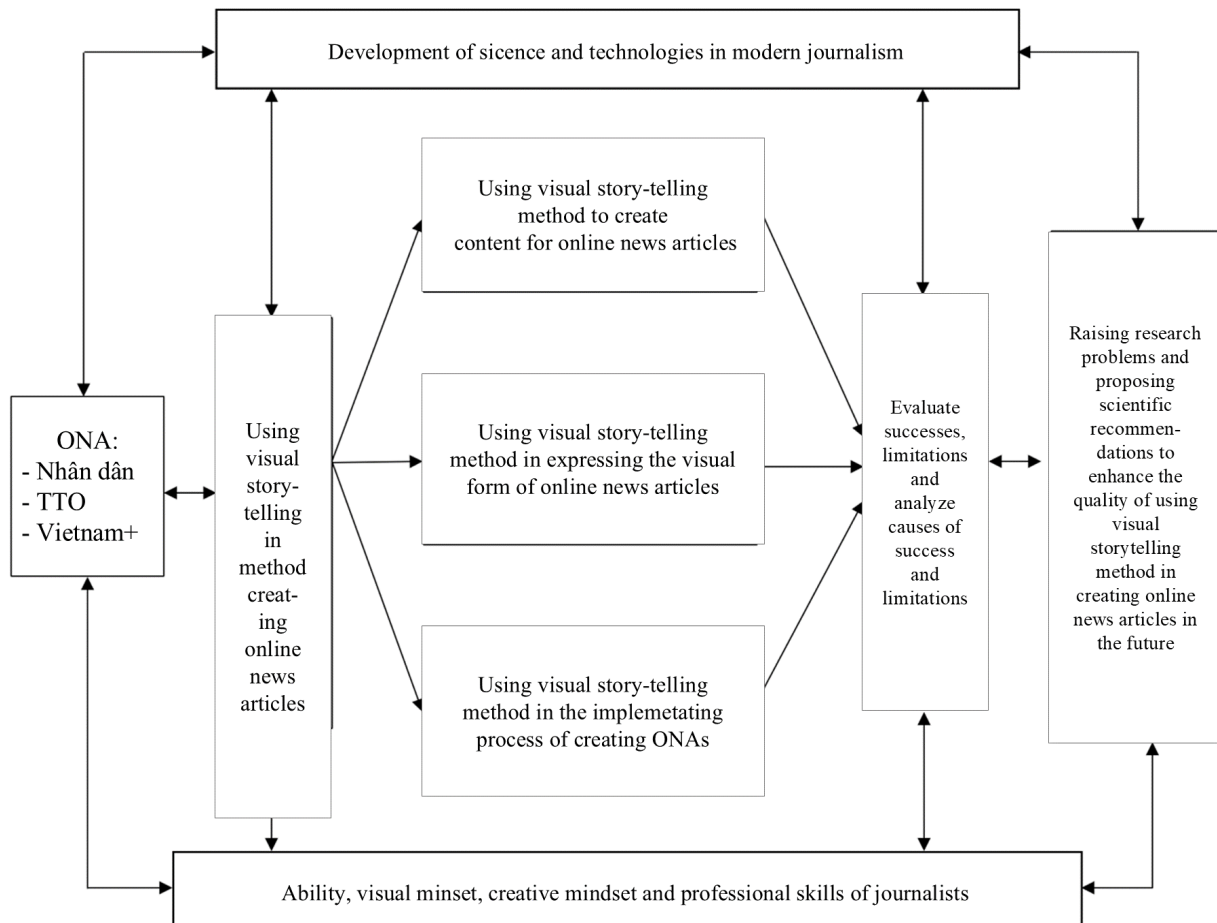
5. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

5.1 Theoretical Framework and Approaches

The thesis approaches the research objectives and tasks based on the following primary theoretical frameworks: Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought; Party and State Views, Guidelines, and Policies on the Role of Journalism; General Theories of Journalism and Communication: Definition, History of formation, Role, Function, Operating principles, Relationships amongs author - work - public.

The thesis also draws upon the following specific theories: Narrative Theory; Framing Theory; Visual Communication Theories; Public Visual Perception Principles considering the factors that influence how audiences perceive and process visual information in media content.

5.2 Research Methods

General Research Method: Based on the principles of dialectical logic, the thesis employs a combination of traditional and modern social science and humanities research methods to investigate the utilization of visual storytelling in ONA work creation.

Specific Research Methods:

- *Content analysis method, with the following implementation method:*

First, collect, systematize and research foreign and Vietnamese documents related to the research problem to collect necessary information for the thesis based on content analysis of the compiled documents.

Second, Content Analysis of Texts: Analyze all relevant texts (both explicit and implicit content) related to the thesis topic to systematically quantify the content, enabling generalization based on pre-defined criteria aligned with the thesis topic and to understand the value of existing materials and the messages conveyed in ONAs.

Third, Survey and Statistics: Employ this method to survey the practical application of visual storytelling in ONA work creation and to statistically analyze the frequency of ONAs published in four specific sections of four ONA outlets in 2023. This method utilizes an automated system based on the Selenium open-source library. Microsoft Visual Studio programming tool, C programming language, and JavaScript are used to extract all published articles in 2023 from the four selected sections. For each news outlet, specific jQuery query commands are established to extract article components (title, link, author, publication date, etc.). These commands are then integrated into the C-programmed automation software, which automatically scans each article to extract the required information.

Fourthly, a coding scheme will be used to categorize 760 works based on their

publication purpose, separating 642 journalistic works and 118 commissioned media works in newspapers. Content analysis will be conducted on the surveyed works to provide evidence for the research problem. Alternatively, a content analysis of scripts and outlines created by journalists will be carried out to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

Fifth, Automation Tool for Data Collection: Employ an automation tool to execute jQuery query commands to collect data on reader reactions (likes, shares, comments) at the end of each article. Analyze the content of reader comments using keywords, considering them as indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of visual storytelling in the surveyed works.

- *Expert Interview Method:* This method involves conducting in-depth interviews with 20 experts from three groups: (i) ONA Creators; (ii)Press Agency (PA) Leaders/ Leaders who's responsible for developing creative journalism products in the four selected sections of the four surveyed ONA outlets; (iii) Broadcast Media (BM) Experts/Scientists: Experts in the field of BM who can provide insights into the current state of visual storytelling in BM and suggest solutions to address related issues.

- *Group discussions Method*: This method will be conducted with the fourth-year Multimedia Communication students at the Institute of Journalism and Communication, VNU-UJC, to gather their feedback on the challenges they face and their expectations regarding courses such as Digital Storytelling, Animation, Photography, and Data Journalism. This information will serve as a basis for making recommendations to research and training institutions in the field of journalism and communication.

6. Scientific Contributions of the thesis

The thesis stands as one of the first comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth studies on a specific ONA work creation method: visual storytelling. As such, it offers several novel scientific contributions:

Clarifies the Concept of Visual Storytelling: The thesis provides a clear and comprehensive definition of visual storytelling, outlining its role, characteristics, classifications, creation methods, and application principles.

Analyzes the Process of Visual Storytelling: The thesis delves into the process of visual storytelling, identifying the steps involved in creating effective visual narratives for ONAs.

Examines the Effectiveness of Visual Storytelling: The thesis employs various research methods to examine the effectiveness of visual storytelling in enhancing the appeal, credibility, and brand identity of ONAs.

7. Theoretical and Practical Significance of the thesis

7.1 Theoretical Significance

In the context of a rapidly evolving media landscape, the traditional elements that define journalism, such as journalistic genres, are undergoing significant transformations. The scientifically arguments and evidence presented in this thesis not only serve as a crucial foundation for emphasizing the necessity of employing visual storytelling in the creation of modern ONAs but also contribute to the body of theoretical and practical knowledge in journalism and communication.

The thesis supplements theoretical issues that are still lacking in the system of journalism and communication theory, including the concepts, characteristics, principles, and methods of telling a story through visuals—considered a particularly important skill for journalists in the digital age when creating new forms of journalistic works on digital platforms.

This thesis paves the way for further scientific research in the field of visual storytelling and its applications in journalism.

7.2 Practical Significance

The findings of this thesis hold significant practical value for news organizations, offering valuable insights into their current practices and areas for improvement. These insights can guide strategic investments in human resources and technological advancements to propel the future of journalism in Vietnam.

The thesis serves as a valuable resource for researchers, educators, and practitioners in the field of journalism, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing visual storytelling techniques. It also caters to a broader audience interested in this particular field.

8. Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured as follows: Introduction; Overview of the Research Situation; Main Content including 3 chapters, 11 sections; Conclusion; List of Published Works by the thesis author related to the thesis topic; References; Appendix

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH SITUATION
RELATED TO THESIS TOPIC

1. Overview of Research Related to the thesis Topic
1.1 Research Directions in Semiotics in Visual Communication

While semiotics has gained widespread popularity in recent times, it is a concept with a long history. In 397 AD, Augustine of Hippo, a Roman philosopher, linguist, and bishop of the Catholic Church, was the first to propose the study of signs.

Following World War II, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, semiotic research expanded into various fields, including literature, film, communication, art, and culture. Schools of thought such as structural semiotics and post-structural semiotics emerged and diversified research methodologies.

Today, semiotics is widely applied in media analysis, graphic design, cultural studies, and social media research. In communication, semiotics examines how messages are encoded (created) and decoded (understood) through signs such as words, images, sounds, and symbols.

In Vietnam, semiotics was pioneered by researchers Phan Ngoc and Hoang Trinh. However, it was not until recent years that semiotics has been translated and applied as a theory by researchers such as Tran Dinh Su and La Nguyen.

These theoretical foundations are crucial for the thesis author to reference and decode visual signs in JWs in general and ONAs in particular from a semiotic perspective.

1.2 Research Directions in Visual Communication and Visual Perception Principles

Group 1: International Works

Visual communication is a vast field of study with diverse approaches. When discussing visual communication theory, notable works include: *A History of Visual Communication* (1999) of the author Josef Muller – Brockmann*; The Power of Image and the Rise of Visual Culture* (2004) of the author Parsa, A. F; *Image-to-Print Graphic Design* (2009) of the author Arıkan, G; *Visual communication: Images With Massages* (2013) of the author Paul Martin Lester …

Research on visual communication continues to be perfected by Mustafa Günay (2021) in the research article *"Design in Visual Communication"* when he said: *"Visual communication is the exchange of information created through images between people without the need for words."*

Although viewed from many different angles, the views of the authors: Parsa, Arıkan, Szylko-Kwas, Kress, Leuuwen and Mustafa Günay... give the THESIS author important instructions to build create the most complete definition of visual communication and visual principles in the field of journalism and communication.

Chapter 1: Overview of Research Related to the THESIS Topic

Group 2: Vietnamese Works

In Vietnam, research on visual communication has gained momentum in recent years, with notable contributions from scholars such as: *Techniques and creation of photography* by the author Do Phan Ai, Theoretical basis of photo journalism by the author Nguyen Tien Mao, *Press photography* by the author Brian Horton, *Press photography* by the author Petr Tausk. In addition, the thesis also researches a number of projects that are theses and research articles related to the topic in specialized scientific journals such as: Doctoral thesis *Modern journalistic photojournalism genre of the author* (2018), Author Nguyen Thu Giang (2011) in the research paper *Visual communication under the reference of framing theory* published on Journal of Human Studies; The research paper *The Discomfort of Images* (2016) by Tran Trong Vu published on Journal of Fine Arts & Photography; Author Ngo Anh Co in the Doctoral thesis named *Visual communication from the perspective of modern Vietnamese graphic design*… The content presented in the above works provides foundational knowledge and suggests approaches to the research problem for the thesis author.

1.3. Research direction on visual storytelling in journalism from the aspect of production and creation of online news article.

Group 1: Theoretical and practical research on journalism in general and e-commerce in particular

The documents and books published around the world on the theory and practice of journalism in general and e-commerce in particular are extremely diverse, with a long history of research, providing the thesis author with a set of Extremely solid and clear theoretical framework for journalism in general and e-commerce in particular.

In Vietnam, there are also hundreds of books researching the theory and practice of journalism. Among them are prominent books such as: *Theoretical basis of journalism, Journalistic works* of the same author Nguyen Van Dung, *Textbook of print journalism works* - author Nguyen Thi Hang Thu (editor); Reporter and editor - author Nguyen Quang Hoa; *World press development trends* – author Dinh Thi Thuy Hang; *Organization and activities of the editorial office* - author Dinh Van Huong; *Journalist labor - Theory and basic skills* - author Le Thi Nha; *Journalism in the modern media environment* - author Nguyen Thanh Loi; *Some new trends of modern media journalism* – group of authors Pham Chien Thang, Phan Van Kien, Phan Quoc Hai and Nguyen Dinh Hau… In particular, when mentioning the studies on online news article that has been published in Vietnam over the past many years, it is impossible not to mention author Nguyen Thi Truong Giang with a series of research projects of great academic value such as *Electronic online journalism - basic issues* (2011), *Creating journalistic works electronic network* (2014), *Journalism and Multimedia Communication* (2017),

Electronic online journalism - characteristics and creative methods, Textbook of Electronic ONAs (2020)… In addition, there are quite a few documents that have researched new JW formats appearing on ONA such as: Doctoral thesis *The trend of using multimedia news packages in electronic newspapers today* by the author Ngo Bich Ngoc (2019); research article *Development trends of journalism in the digital era* by Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nguyen Thi Truong Giang and research article "Mega story" and online stories by author Vu Thanh Hoa on Journalist Magazine. Based on access to these research articles, the thesis author can initially identify and distinguish the new work format Megastory - one of the formats considered to be the application of a visual storytelling method. the most powerful and frequent way.

Group 2: Research on Storytelling and Visual Storytelling in Journalism

In the 1960s-70s, authors such as Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, Gay Talese, and Hunter S. Thompson used narrative writing styles to create journalistic articles and non-fiction works. Their works became important practical foundations that helped journalist and educator Robert K. Manoff research and initially shape a theoretical framework for narrative news writing in modern journalism in his book *Reading the News* Subsequent research emerged, including *Storytelling, Branding in Practice* (2004), *The Digital Animation of Literary Journalism* (2015)... Although not directly addressing storytelling in journalism, Bùi Thị Ngọc Thu's book *Storytelling - The Art of Presenting Through Stories* (published in 2022) delves into analyzing storytelling as an effective method to persuade the audience from various perspectives: story ideas, structuring presentations as stories, presenting through stories, techniques to make stories interesting, and making data in stories meaningful...

Group 3: Research on Visual Storytelling in the Era of Multimedia Journalism

Mark Deuze, arguably the researcher who has studied the features of multimedia storytelling on news websites more than any other media scholar, evaluated news websites based on the quality of criteria such as hypertext, interactivity, and multimedia capability in his book "What is Multimedia Journalism?" published in 2004. Books like *"Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization"* (2006), *"Infographics: The Power of Visual Storytelling"* (2012), *"Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment"*, *"The Multimodality of Digital Longform Journalism"*, *"Feature and Narrative Storytelling for Multimedia Journalists"*, and *"Digital Transformation in Journalism and News Media"* delve into researching ways of conveying messages visually. The authors highlighted several multimedia storytelling methods in the digital age, emphasizing the integration of multimedia elements in long-form articles as a form of journalism with a narrative (or report) and multi-linear presentation, fundamentally different from traditional forms of journalism such as features and investigative reports (typically linear).

In Vietnam, the translated book "*Storytelling with data*" by Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic, translated by Ho Vu Thanh Phong in 2021, delves deeply into the method of storytelling through data. The book "*Brand Story - Thổi hồn thương hiệu làm triệu người mê*" by David Aaker, translated by Nguyễn Nụ (2020), although not directly addressing visual stories, is a rare Vietnamese work that deeply discusses brand storytelling. In the academic field, notable is the *Introduction to multimedia communication textbook* edited by Prof. Assoc. Dr. Đo Thi Thu Hang. The book "*The art of visualstorytelling*" (2024), translated by Nguyễn Thanh Bình, is considered the latest publication—according to the thesis author's observations—that directly researches visual storytelling in the field of cinema.

1.4. Approaching the Issue of Visual Storytelling from the Perspective of Audience Reception Research

Research works such as "Introducing the e-newspaper - Audience Preferences and Demands" (2007) by Carina Ihlström Eriksson and Maria Åkesson from Halmstad University, Sweden; the "Journalism Psychology Textbook" by Đỗ Thị Thu Hằng; "*Hình ảnh điều khiển tâm trí*" by Andrew, Van Leeuwen, and Van Baaren; and "*Đổi mới sáng tạo trong báo chí 2023 - Báo cáo toàn cầu*" - a special edition by Nhân Dân Newspaper, approach the issue of visual storytelling from the perspective of audience reception research.

2. General Evaluation of Research Works in the Overview of Research Situation and Issues to be Addressed in the Thesis

2.1. General Evaluation of Issues Addressed in the Research Works in the Overview

* In the Direction of Research on Semiotics in Visual Communication

First, semiotics is an ancient field of study. Research on semiotics is immensely diverse, extensive, systematic, and methodical in content, with no significant difference in the basic content of semiotic theory between foreign countries and Vietnam.

Second, nowadays, semiotics is widely applied in media analysis, graphic design, cultural studies, and social media research.

Third, the thesis author draws several important scientific arguments such as: (i) studying visuals as a sign plays a particularly important role; (ii) semiotics is closely related to visual communication analysis; (iii) from a semiotic perspective, there are four methods of visual analysis: content analysis, visual discourse analysis, context analysis, and reception behavior analysis; (iv) in media culture, there are three basic types of visuals: static visuals, moving visuals, and digital visuals, each of which needs to be analyzed in relation to other factors.

*In the Direction of Research on Visual Communication and Visual Principles

First, materials related to visual communication and visual principles are quite

abundant and diverse in their approaches, such as psychology, journalism, sociology, and cultural studies.

Second, the content of theories on visual communication is discussed relatively methodically and in-depth.

**In the Direction of Research on Visual Storytelling in Journalism from the Perspective of Production and Creative Work in Journalism*

This group of works is approached from three perspectives: theoretical and practical studies on journalism in general and online journalism in particular, research on storytelling in journalism, and research on visual storytelling in the era of multimedia journalism.

**In the Direction of Research on Visual Storytelling Approached from the Perspective of Audience Reception Research*

Whether foreign or domestic, the materials consistently recognize the meaning and importance of studying the habits, needs, and preferences of the audience in receiving journalistic products in general and multimedia works in particular.

2.2. Issues the Thesis Needs to Continue Researching

2.2.1. Theoretical Aspects

The thesis author needs to build a theoretical basis for researching the use of visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs: (i) Systematize related concepts. (ii) Approach, analyze, propose new research perspectives, and inherit existing theories to study the characteristics, roles, and classification of visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs. (iii) Identify some factors affecting visual storytelling in creating ONAs. (iv) Develop principles for using visual storytelling methods in the creative process of ONAs.

2.2.2. Practical Aspects

Research is needed on the method of visual storytelling in creating ONAs in several online PAs to see the common and specific features of each of them, serving as a premise for future research.

Surveys, analyses, and evaluations of the current state of using visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs are needed. From there, assess the successes and limitations, establish the issues raised, and propose appropriate recommendations to improve the effectiveness of using visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs in the future.

Chapter 1
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BASIS
OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Basic Concepts Related to the Topic

1.1.1. Visuals and Visual Storytelling

1.1.1.1. Visuals

Visual refers to elements including such as still images, gif, videos, graphic design, illustrations/diagrams, etc.; indicates specific content, used to convey information or create a desired effect.

1.1.1.2. Storytelling

Storytelling is an interactive activity that uses text, visuals, sound, and other media techniques to recount a sequence of events/incidents/actions/details… in a specific order within a certain context, aiming to create an engaging, vivid story capable of evoking emotions in the receiver. Storytelling can appear in part or throughout the entire work.

1.1.1.3. Visual Storytelling

Visual storytelling is a method of collecting and using still images, gif, videos, computer graphics, illustrations/diagrams… to recount a sequence of events/incidents/actions/details… in a specific order within a certain context, aiming to create a vivid, engaging story capable of evoking emotions in the receiver.

1.1.2. Online News Article and Visuals in Online News Articles

1.1.2.1. Online News Article

Online News Article is the smallest component constituting an online journalism product, reflecting objective reality with social significance, expressing information through multimedia elements such as text, still images, moving images, videos, computer graphics, illustrations/diagrams… capable of applying technical effects to enhance interactivity, creating novel experience for readers.

1.1.2.2. Visuals in ONAs

Visuals in ONAs are visual elements that can be the sole or dominant factor (in combination with text and other elements) forming a specific message. They include basic components such as moving images, videos, computer graphics, still images, and digital-format illustrations/diagrams… used with technical effects to enhance visual appeal and attract public reception.

1.1.3. Creating Online News Article and Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating Online News Article

1.1.3.1. Creating Online News Article

This is the entire process in which a journalist uses thinking and professional skills (from the stage of ideation, production, to the completion of the work and its use by the public) to create a unique ONA in terms of content and form, conveying it to the public based on strict adherence to the principles of truthfulness, objectivity.

1.1.3.2. Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating Online News Article

Using visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs involves the journalist using moving images, videos, computer graphics, still images, and digital-format illustrations/diagrams… as the sole or important factor (in combination with text and other elements) to recount a sequence of events/incidents/actions/details… fully and deeply in a specific order within a certain context. The aim is to create a unique ONA in terms of content and form, applying technical effects and strictly adhering to the principles of truthfulness, objectivity, and non-fiction. At the same time, it enhances visual appeal, interactivity, and the ability to evoke emotions in the public when receiving the work.

1.2. Theoretical Approaches to the Research Problem

The theory of the characteristics, roles, and functions of journalism in general and online journalism in particular is considered the most important framework, providing the initial cognitive basis for conducting this research. Additionally, there are other theories to approach the research problem, such as:

1.2.1. Narrative Theory

In general, narrative theory is a complex, diverse field of study with a long history of development. Although some scholars have published research related to storytelling and visual storytelling in different works, they are relatively consistent in focusing on the structure and components of the story, including characters, setting/context, plot, and narrative perspective.

1.2.2. Theories of Visual Communication

Visual communication is a broad research field with various approaches that help decode the language of images, revealing the message and meaning of images through their form and content.

1.2.3. Framing Theory

This theory is applied to analyze how visual storytelling techniques are used to frame news topics or issues in a specific way, thereby shaping public perception and opinion.

1.3. Characteristics, Roles, and Classification of Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating Oline News Article

1.3.1. Basic Characteristics of Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating Oline News Article

First, visuals can be used as the sole or primary element, or in combination with text and other elements, to tell a story.

Second, it narrates a sequence of events, actions, or situations in a comprehensive and in-depth manner to convey information.

Third, graphic design software is used to create visual elements, but without altering the essence of the story.

Fourth, it reflects the journalist's creative thinking in conveying the message to the audience.

1.3.2. Roles of Visual Storytelling Methods in ONAs

First, using visual storytelling highlights information and attracts readers' attention.

Second, visual storytelling plays a key role in conveying emotions to readers.

Third, visual storytelling helps explain complex events in an understandable, visual way.

Fourth, visual storytelling increases the interactivity of the article.

1.3.3. Classification of Visual Storytelling Methods in Oline News Article:

There are various ways to classify visual storytelling methods in ONAs. Classification by method of implementation can include forms such as linear storytelling, non-linear storytelling, and combined storytelling. Classification by primary elements used can be divided into: storytelling with still images, storytelling with moving images, storytelling with video, and storytelling with computer graphics.

1.4. Some Principles for Using Visual Storytelling Methods in the Creative Process of Online News Article

1.4.1. The Process of Creating Online News Article

The traditional process of creating ONAs basically goes through the steps in the general creative process of journalistic works. However, for more extensive, in-depth ONAs, the creative process has distinct points. This process includes the following basic steps: Finding and identifying the topic; Exploiting and processing data for the ONA; Creating the framework of the work and planning the use of technologies and techniques to present the work; Editing the work at various levels; Monitoring the publication process and handling feedback from readers and social opinion.

1.4.2. Principles of Using Visual Storytelling in Creating Content and Form

Elements of Online News Articles

First, the principles of using visual storytelling in creating content elements include: (i) The components of the visuals used should have diverse topics/themes, connecting with the text to create a complete digital media work; (ii) Visuals should use materials related to the topic of the work and accurately reflect the nature of reality.

Second, the principles of using visual storytelling in creating form elements include: (i) Using a narrative point of view; (ii) Telling stories through visuals using various methods; (iii) Building a story structure; (iv) Using technical effects.

Third, the conditions that promote the use of visual storytelling in the process of creating online news articles include: (i) The views and perceptions of the media organization's leadership; (ii) The professional competence of the journalists; (iii) The conditions of material and technical facilities.

1.5. Building Criteria for Research on Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating ONAs

* Basis for Building Criteria:

- ***Theoretical Basis:*** Building research criteria for using visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs should be based on: (i) Theoretical basis of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought on the role of online journalism in the information society; (ii) Theoretical basis of journalism on the functions, tasks of online journalism, and the process of creating ONAs; (iii) Theoretical basis of visual communication, narrative theory, framing theory in conveying messages to the receiving public.

- ***Practical Basis:*** Using visual storytelling methods in creating ONAs should also be based on practical foundations: (i) Based on the actual situation of ONAs applying new methods in creative work to meet the needs of the digital audience; (ii) Based on the environment in which online journalism operates, such as politics, economy, society, national cultural traditions…; the development of science, technology, and modern journalism techniques; (iii) Based on the capacity, visual thinking, creative thinking, and professional skills of journalists in the digital era; [iv] Based on the process of creating journalistic work in PAs.

* Criteria for Research and Evaluation of the Current State of Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Implementing the process of creating ONAs:

- ***Criterion 1:*** Providing a comprehensive and nuanced narrative of a sequence of events.

- ***Criterion 2:*** Employing a diverse range of visual elements that cohere with

the textual content to convey a clear message.

- ***Criterion 3***: Adhering to the established principles of visual storytelling in digital media production.

- ***Criterion 4:*** Constructing a coherent narrative structure.

- ***Criterion 5:*** Leveraging the observer's perspective to offer a comprehensive overview of the events.

- ***Criterion 6:*** Utilizing various visual storytelling techniques.

- ***Criterion 7:*** The various approaches journalists adopt in employing visual storytelling within the digital media creation process.

Chapter 2
CURRENT STATUS OF USING VISUAL STORYTELLING METHOD IN CREATING ONLINE NEWS ARTICLE

2.1. Overview of Surveyed Units

2.1.1. Nhan Dan Online (nhandan.vn)

The Electronic Department of Nhan Dan Newspaper, in addition to publishing a traditional digital newspaper, is also responsible for developing and producing multimedia journalistic products (published in the E-magazine section), primarily reflecting the political activities of the Party, the State, and prominent issues in social life.

2.1.2. VietnamPlus (vietnamplus.vn)

As the repository of high-quality journalistic products of VietnamPlus, the Vietnam+ Spotlight section was formed and developed with the slogan "high-quality journalistic products of VietnamPlus, a pioneering and creative unit in the digital transformation journey." Available at https://mega.vietnamplus.vn/, it features meticulously and systematically produced journalistic works, some of which have won international awards for creative communication.

2.1.3. Tuoi Tre Online (tuoitre.com.vn)

Started producing Megastory in 2015 with the first work titled "Mekong Delta and the Century-Old Salinity." During the production and creative process, TTO has learned from and accumulated experiences from the works of The New York Times, The Guardian, and The Telegraph to create uniquely marked and distinctive content for its readers.

2.1.4. VnExpress (vnexpress.net)

Currently the most widely read Vietnamese newspaper, VnExpress emphasizes high-quality journalistic content with exclusive works, data usage, modern journalism technology applications, and significant practical value to the community. VnExpress is also a leader in the trend of digital transformation in journalistic activities.

2.2. Current Status of Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating ONAs

2.2.1. The current state of using visual storytelling in creating content elements of digital news articles.

Firstly, the topics and purposes of visuals usage in the surveyed works exhibit a wide range of diversity.

Secondly, the visual elements employed are flexible and integrated with the text to convey a clear message.

Thirdly, regarding the adherence to principles of visual storytelling, several trends were observed:

* The two most prevalent principles of visual storytelling in the surveyed newspapers are: treating reality as the subject of reflection and utilizing visuals to create multiple entry points for the audience.

* VNE demonstrates a remarkable ability to narrate a comprehensive visual story, complete with context, progression, climax, and resolution. Notably, each narrative is anchored by at least one compelling visual that, in conjunction with significant content, evokes strong emotional responses in the audience.

* The use of visuals in digital media is subject to legal and ethical considerations, such as proper visuals sourcing. AI has emerged as a valuable tool, enabling journalists to produce high-quality visuals efficiently.

2.2.2. The current state of using visual storytelling in creating the formal elements of digital news articles

- Regarding story's structure: While both horizontal and vertical structures are employed, the horizontal structure for visual storytelling is significantly more prevalent in the surveyed digital news articles.

- Regarding story's point of view: The surveyed works predominantly utilize the third-person perspective, offering an observer's viewpoint. A combination of first and third person perspectives is often found in interview articles, particularly in Nhân Dân điện tử, where this combination is used in 35.5% of articles. The second-person perspective, allowing the narrator to tell the story from the "you" perspective, is not

utilized in the surveyed works.

- Visual Storytelling implemetation: Journalists/Reporters employ a variety of storytelling techniques, with non-linear storytelling being the most common at 65.7%. Linear storytelling accounts for 20.9%, while 13.4% of works combine both approaches.

2.2.3. The current state of using visual storytelling in the creative process of digital news articles

• First: The process of selecting and discovering topics for digital news articles is primarily influenced by the editorial direction of the publication, the availability of data and visualss, and the journalist's ability to source material. Not all topics are suitable for in-depth, multimedia productions.

• Second: Journalists leverage the unique strengths of different visual formats to convey their message. Data processing, including both visuals and text, varies across news organizations and is often dependent on the available technological tools.

• Third: Creating frames and using technical effects for visual storytelling is a collaborative process involving a dedicated team, and it is contingent upon the specific resources of each media organization.

2.3. Current Status of Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Online News Article

2.3.1. Success and Reasons for Success of the Surveyed Newspapers in Using Visual Storytelling Methods

These are pioneering news agencies in applying, innovating, and creatively adopting modern journalism practices.

The visual storytelling method has initially been recognized and invested in.

Visual storytelling has been used for a wide variety of topics.

The combination of visual elements to tell stories has initially shown effectiveness and attracted the public.

Graphics in these newsrooms are increasingly being improved in terms of quality.

2.3.2. Limitations and Reasons for the Limitations of the Surveyed Newspapers in Using Visual Storytelling Methods

The use of narrative perspective in storytelling has been monotonous.

Constructing coherent, multi-layered visual story structures on the surveyed newspapers has not received much attention.

The full potential of video in visual storytelling has not yet been fully utilized.

There are certain limitations in adhering to the principles of visual storytelling.

The formats of visual stories have not been designed for multiple platforms, with most being only formatted for websites.

Chapter 3
PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROMOTE THE USE OF VISUAL STORYTELLING METHODS IN CREATION OF ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPER WORKS

3.1. Issues raised with the use of visual storytelling methods in creating electronic online newspaper works

3.1.1. Requirement of uniformity in principles and procedures for using visual storytelling methods in creating e-commerce works

These newspapers are pioneers in applying, innovating, and creating modern journalism formats.

Visual storytelling methods have initially been identified and invested in.

Visual storytelling methods are used for a variety of topics.

The combination of visual elements to tell stories has initially proven effective and attractive to the public.

Graphics in these newspapers are increasingly being invested in for quality.

3.1.2. The quality of journalistic works using the visual storytelling method is not commensurate with the number of published works

There is a large disparity in the number of published works between the surveyed newspapers. The quality of works using the visual storytelling method is not commensurate with the number of published works. This is reflected in the fact that the works have not taken full advantage of some visual formats to convey the story.

3.1.3. Requires high quality human resources, synchronization, and ability to coordinate well

The human factor is still the core element in the work creation process. Especially with high-quality, in-depth e-commerce works, the requirements for multimedia operations skills, level of understanding of issues/issues/events/characters..., visual thinking, thinking Creativity... are important requirements that determine the quality of the work.

3.1.4. Using a variety of visual elements combined with effects brings challenges in terms of storage capacity and display speed on the page.

The issue faced by digital news products that use a variety of visual elements combined with technical effects in their presentation poses technical challenges related to storage capacity and display speed on the pages. Currently, not all news agencies have sufficiently strong technological platforms; in some cases, the software in use only supports one aspect of the modern journalism process, lacking large storage systems and powerful display technology. This results in "inconveniences" in user experience when accessing digital news products rich in vivid, visual data.

3.1.5. Financial pressure and time to produce works using visual storytelling methods

Financial pressure, revenue, and production time are ongoing challenges with no clear solution when using visual storytelling methods in digital content creation.

3.2. Some solutions to promote the use of visual storytelling methods in creating electronic online newspaper works

3.2.1. A group of solutions to unify and synchronize the principles and processes of using visual storytelling methods in creating electronic newspaper works

Establish principles for using visual storytelling methods in creating electronic newspaper works.

Build and standardize the process of using visual storytelling methods in creating electronic online newspaper works.

3.2.2. The solution group strengthening skills in managing the production of journalistic products that use visual storytelling in newspaper editorial offices

Build an indicator of the advantages of each visual format

Organize a specialized department/team/group responsible for producing journalistic products that tell stories through images

Create a mechanism and department to monitor and measure the effectiveness of works using visual storytelling methods

3.2.3. A group of solutions to enhance journalists' visual storytelling skills in content creation and journalistic work format.

First, organize short-term training courses at the editorial office.

Second, organize seminars and exchange domestic and international experiences on applying visual storytelling methods in creating e-commerce works.

Third, organize a tour to study experience in producing multimedia journalism projects applying visual storytelling methods in domestic and international newspaper offices.

3.2.4. Solution group to overcome technical and technological difficulties

Including specific solutions: (i) Building a team of technicians and programmers

familiar with communication technology; (ii) Timely and effective investment in technical infrastructure in the production of high quality journalistic products; (iii) Invest in equipment to collect and create images; encourage Journalists and Reporters to use supporting tools as a way to tell stories with visuals.

3.2.5. *The solution group aims to optimize the budget and time to execute the work using the visual storytelling method*

Take advantage of artificial intelligence (AI) in some stages and steps in the work creation process to minimize costs and shorten the time to complete the work.

Clearly delineating what types of works have the characteristics, you should use the visual storytelling method and vice versa to make investment decisions accurately, quickly and effectively.

3.3. Issues raised and some recommendations to improve the quality of using visual storytelling methods in creating online news articles

3.3.1. *For PAs*

It is necessary to be properly aware of the role and meaning of using visual storytelling methods in creating TPBC content.

Focus on promoting digital transformation, creating a premise for building a digital newsroom and developing digital journalism.

Build a suitable royalty regime, worthy of the effort and intelligence that NB/PV spends.

Proactively and actively build training and cooperation mechanisms with domestic and foreign press and training organizations to strengthen relationships and expand the vocational training environment for the court's staff/reporters. compose.

3.3.2. *For creators of online news articles*

Promote creativity and closer cooperation across stages in the implementation process.

Combining visual signs skillfully when telling a story, visual signs need to support each other and supplement each other's information, not simply repeat information or illustrate.

Reduce the amount of text, increase the use of high-quality visuals with informational value and visual appeal.

For the position of a full-time editorial photojournalist (if any), the most important requirement is to constantly improve the level of visual thinking and professional expertise.

Practice professional journalism style through planning, making a detailed script/outline of the work and following the plan.3.3.2. Some scientific

recommendations to improve the quality of using visual storytelling methods on online newspapers

3.3.3. For media research, training and fostering facilities

Strengthen scientific research on visual communication in general and visual storytelling in message transmission in particular.

Consider building the subject "Visual story telling - Theory and basic skills". Positioning this subject in the group of Industry Knowledge subjects of the Multimedia Communication industry, before equipping students with specialized knowledge and skills in Photography, Graphic Design... to produce Super Products Numbers, Animation...

Investing in upgrading the system of websites - student practice products, capable of applying modern journalism technologies, helping the student training process approach the staff recruitment requirements of editorial offices. reporting in the context of digital transformation.

Investing funds to buy newspaper reading accounts of some newspapers around the world that are strong in visual storytelling in TPBC creativity helps students have the opportunity to access modern, exemplary SPBCs, thereby drawing lessons. Lessons learned for yourself.

CONCLUSION

1. Conducting theoretical and practical research to identify existing challenges and propose scientific recommendations for improving the use of visual storytelling in multimedia journalism is crucial in today's highly competitive media landscape between traditional media and social media.

2. This dissertation has successfully achieved its objectives and research tasks.

Firstly, it has compiled and analyzed a large number of research works, including books, dissertations, and scientific articles from both domestic and international sources, following four main research directions.

Secondly, based on theoretical research, the author concludes that visual storytelling is a method used by journalists *to employ animations, videos, computer graphics, still images, and digital illustrations/charts as the sole or primary element (in combination with text and other elements) to narrate a sequence of events, actions, or situations in a comprehensive and in-depth manner within a specific context. The aim is to create unique multimedia journalism works in terms of content, with innovative forms of presentation that enhance visual appeal, interactivity, and emotional engagement with the audience.* Applying this method requires adherence to specific principles of visual storytelling in the multimedia journalism creation process.

Thirdly, based on a solid theoretical foundation and the use of appropriate research methods, the author has conducted a comprehensive, objective, and scientific analysis of the current state of visual storytelling in multimedia journalism through a case study of four multimedia journalism works in 2023.

Fourthly, the dissertation identifies five key challenges and proposes five sets of solutions (with 13 specific recommendations), along with scientific recommendations for news organizations, multimedia journalism creators, and journalism education institutions to promote the use of visual storytelling in creating multimedia journalism content in Vietnamese newsrooms.

3. The research questions initially posed by this thesis have been satisfactorily answered based on scientific evidence and are in line with the current practical applications of visual storytelling in creating ONAs.

Question 1: Verified. The thesis has clarified the current state of visual storytelling in terms of content elements (topics/themes; purposes of using visual

components; adherence to usage principles) and formal elements (structure, narrative perspective, execution methods) in the surveyed ONAs.

Question 2: Verified. The research findings have demonstrated that journalists have employed visual storytelling in various stages of the ONA creation process, including topic selection, data handling, and the use of technical effects to enhance visual narratives in surveyed journalistic works.

Question 3: Verified. The thesis has identified key challenges and proposed five sets of solutions to promote the use of visual storytelling in Vietnamese newsrooms. Based on these findings, the study offers scientific recommendations for news organizations, multimedia journalism creators, and journalism education institutions.

4. The research results and proposals in the thesis open up new research directions, such as using visual storytelling methods in marketing strategies, in photojournalism, and in the field of cinema.

5. The thesis on "Using Visual Storytelling Methods in Creating Online News Article" is an independent scientific research project by the author, completed under the scientific guidance of Prof. Asoc. Dr. Do Thi Thu Hang and Prof. Asoc. Dr. Bui Thu Huong, with the support of various organizations, units, and individuals across the country, and the intellectual inheritance of human scientific achievements and previous scholars. Despite earnest efforts to work diligently, thoughtfully absorbing and revising according to feedback from teachers, scientists, friends, and colleagues…, the thesis undoubtedly still has shortcomings. The author sincerely welcomes further feedback to make the thesis more complete. Thank you with regards!

**LIST OF PUBLISHED SCIENTIFIC WORKS OF THE THESIS
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