

# An Influencer and Online Nationalism: The Case of the “Kimchi” Dispute on YouTube

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<https://doi.org/10.5392/IJoC.2023.19.3.085>

Manuscript Received 14 December 2022; Received 29 August 2023; Accepted 31 August 2023

**Abstract:** This study aimed to reveal the relationships between a Chinese influencer’s “kimchi” video content on YouTube, news reports about it in portals, and online nationalism, which will help explore how the issues of history and traditional culture in portal news reports are conveyed and understood. The results demonstrated that the correlation of nationalism and the Chinese Northeast Project, and responsibility frames was the largest in the Naver portal. The more the origin and pride of kimchi are emphasized, the more the kimchi issue is attributable to the Chinese Northeast Project, which is one of China’s policies. This is the responsibility of China and affects anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea. As Chinese government officials accelerate this issue, it is ultimately amplified to develop into public opinion. On the other hand, the correlation between the anti-Korean sentiment and conflict frames in the Baidu portal was the largest, which means that shifting the responsibility for conflict between Korea and China tends to enhance anti-Korean sentiment inside China, resulting in enhanced cohesion of the Chinese people.

**Keywords:** A Chinese Influencer; YouTube; Portal News; Online Nationalism; Frame Analysis

## 1. Introduction

The online debate over the “kimchi” dispute between Korea and China is currently heated. It started from reporting of the “indignity of the birthplace of kimchi” (Jan. 18, 2018) in an article by the *Yonhap News Agency* [1] and a report emphasizing the “merely nominal birthplace of kimchi” (Nov. 28, 2020) by *Global Times* [2], when the certification of *pao cai* from Sichuan Province was established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 2020 [3]. Additionally, a Chinese influencer and YouTuber, Li Ziqi, rushed to join this argument. Li Ziqi uploaded a video on YouTube, bearing hashtags like “#ChineseCuisine” and “#ChineseFood,” in which Korean kimchi was made, not Chinese pickle *pao cai*, and Korean kimchi stew was boiled using pork meat.

In general, influencers produce and provide various content, such as fashion, cosmetics, and so forth, on YouTube, Twitter, and Weibo, and many companies have focused on utilizing influencers as a means of brand marketing since, as celebrities, they have strong effects on users [4]. This can be seen in the case of Li Ziqi, an influencer whose videos on YouTube portray traditional Chinese culture and rural life and have a positive effect on the export of Chinese culture.

However, influencers’ videos on YouTube have also had a negative effect [5-6]. A survey by the Pew Research Center (2022) revealed that negative views of China are held by 80 percent of the Korean population. Anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea was 37 percent in 2015, rose substantially to 61 percent in 2017 alongside the turmoil related to THAAD, increased again due to COVID-19 to 75 percent in 2020, and now has risen to a high of 80 percent due to issues on historical and traditional culture, such as kimchi and *hanbok*. Korea is also the only country surveyed in which young people, called the “MZ generation,” have more unfavorable views of China than older people have [7].

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 A Chinese Influencer's Kimchi Video Content on YouTube

#### 2.1.1 YouTube and a Chinese Influencer

YouTube has rapidly developed over the last 17 years, and various content has appeared, especially as COVID-19 resulted in an increased demand for video consumption and a sharp increase in YouTube users. The number of monthly active users on YouTube is 41,640,000 (June 2022 data) [8], which is more than the 40,130,000 Naver users. The increase in usage time on YouTube and the change in the method of media usage have changed the terrain of traditional media. YouTube's influence is strong. YouTube has rapidly developed over a relatively short period and has greatly influenced users with its characteristics of broad, varied, and global content, as well as its ease of accessibility, content diversity, unlimited time and space, and convenience of expansive free usage, compared to traditional media.

An influencer on social media platforms like YouTube is defined as a "strongly influential person." Unlike "public figures" or "celebrities" receiving a degree of recognition in traditional media, today's influencers are "online celebrities" producing their own content, distributing it, and sharing information and experiences with users on social media. Possessing professional knowledge in specific areas, they have a strong influence on users' comments on YouTube [9-10].

Guinness World Records (2021) announced that Li Ziqi has reached 14,100,000 subscribers on YouTube (Jan. 25, 2021), breaking the Guinness World Records title for the most subscribers for a Chinese language channel on YouTube [11]. She had lived in a metropolitan area and returned home to a remote country village to live with her grandmother. She first uploaded live video content about self-sufficiency, with lyrical and antique background music, making traditional food, clothes, and handicrafts on Meipai (similar to YouTube) in 2016, which was popular among Chinese users. Li Ziqi originally started as a personal content creator, and then cooperated with Hangzhou Weinian Brand Management Company [12]. Their multi-channel networks (MCNs) extended her activity field to YouTube and Twitter (which are blocked and not able to be used inside China), in addition to Weibo, TikTok, and WeChat (which are able to be used inside China), and have strategically provided video services to targeted global users, creating popularity among global fans.

It can be inferred that using YouTube, which is blocked in China, for Li Ziqi's video content is a result of the global soft-power policy of the Chinese government in that it would be impossible without the Chinese government's approval and support [13-14]. In effect, the Chinese government uses YouTube as a platform for expanding and reproducing the issue of the origin of kimchi, originating from a Chinese influencer—and from something between Korea and China—to a global level.

#### 2.1.2 YouTube and Online Nationalism

Because the internet has a nonterritorial nature, issues between nations are accelerated beyond geographical limits of boundaries and territories. In particular, the fact that an issue of nationalism can be spread and amplified online is based on the important influence of social media such as YouTube [15-16]. The spread of issues among nations on the internet is called cyber nationalism, internet nationalism, or online nationalism [17-22]. Nationalism using digital media is referred to as digital nationalism [15], [23-26].

Ericksen (2007) insisted that Chinese nationalism was formed against the invasion of foreign powers in the nineteenth century but is currently enhanced, concentrating China's young online generation against criticism of Chinese human rights or the dislike of Chinese people [17], [19]. Korea has been one of the main targets of Chinese online nationalism for the past few years. It is necessary to remember that China's young generation began to experience increased favorability regarding Korea, and simultaneously there was an "anti-(or dislike-) Korean Wave" from the middle to late 1990s [27-31].

The diffusion of anti-Korean sentiment online in China resulted in anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea once again. In fact, the current online space is seen to be the space for internet users to do battle as keyboard warriors who represent their nation's position in conflict with other nations. The most acute online disputes between Korea and China are issues of history and the origins of traditional culture. This conflict began with the "Chinese Northeast Project" in 2002, and anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea was magnified by the registering of the Farmers' Dance of China's Korean ethnic group with UNESCO [32]. If the digital relationship between Korea and China worsens, the real relationship between the two nations will immediately bring bad outcomes [33].

This kind of anti-Chinese sentiment has become more prevalent on the online platform YouTube lately. The development of the internet places emotional, aggressive, and unlimited arguments online in cyberspace, where it is nonterritorial, and intensifies it. Likewise, in this study, it was noticeable that any topics, regardless of gender, age, nationality, time, and space, are possible on YouTube. YouTube's limitlessness shows slight differences in aspects of nation or race. Nationalistic issues, such as the "Chinese Northeast Project," which distorts real history in "their" position about "our thing" clearly existing in Korean history and is intended to reorganize into a new paradigm, still affect Koreans' lives. The issue of online nationalism with YouTube as the center assumes an aspect above and beyond the dimension of one race or one nation to East Asia and the world.

## 2.2 Korean and Chinese Portal News and Online Nationalism

News-delivering information emphasizes or omits social reality and supplies frames that influence news users' interpretations [34-37]. News users interpret a specific issue with frames provided by the media, and the diversity of supplied news frames makes users interpret a specific issue in various means and meanings [35], [38-41]. Construction of news frames that the media report makes changes to a culture, and cultural frames deliver social phenomena in more extensive ways, based on cultural understanding, in order to deliver implicative meanings [42-44]. Additionally, if it is delivered with an emphasis on a specific news frame, the news frame will influence users with a strong social effect, which has already been demonstrated by many studies [45-51].

This study focuses on internet portal sites because most news users consume news from internet portal sites. A survey by the Korea Press Foundation (2021) [52] revealed that, after COVID-19, usage of news media was ranked, with television as 83.4 percent, internet portals as 79.2 percent, and OTT services as 26.7 percent. The trend has been away from traditional media, such as television and radio, to internet portals and OTT services for news consumption. Therefore, it is assumed that news usage through internet portal sites has proliferated, except that television has the highest news usage rate, since news users have time to be at home because of social distancing and working at home under the special circumstances of COVID-19.

News users recognize social reality differently depending on the nationalism frame suggested by internet portal news [34-37], [53-55]. Additionally, online nationalism can be changed depending on the national identity in the historical and social context of a race [56]. Therefore, it is supposed that news reporting frames of Li Ziqi's kimchi video on YouTube have considerable influence on users' cognition. However, earlier studies on online nationalism in the portal news on YouTube [18], [21], [57-58] have not accumulated many results so far. In this respect, this study investigates how a recent special issue of online nationalism, which is again provoked by a kimchi video, is formed and establishes a media agenda through news frames in the portals.

## 3. Research Questions

Based on the prior literature, the current study suggested the following three research questions (RQ):

RQ 1. What are the characteristics of kimchi video content on YouTube?

RQ 2. What are the characteristics of news frames in portals for kimchi video content on YouTube?

RQ 3. What is the relationship of each news frame in portals to kimchi video content on YouTube?

Regarding RQ 1, this study examined the Chinese influencer Li Ziqi's kimchi video content on YouTube. Regarding RQ 2, this study investigated the characteristics of news frames for kimchi video content on YouTube. Regarding RQ 3, the study explored the relationships among nationalism, the Chinese Northeast Project/historical research, conflict, economy, morality, and users' feedback. Content analysis was used to explore the content of kimchi videos on YouTube. Frame analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship of online nationalism to portal news reporting. The chi-square test was employed to explore the differences between Korean and Chinese news frames of portal reports. Factor analysis was used for the frames of portal news reports, and the relationships among rationales, spread, and evaluation of each news frame were analyzed and interpreted using correlation analysis.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Data Collection and Characteristics of the Analysis Data

The chosen analysis object is YouTube, where Li Ziqi, a Chinese influencer, uploaded kimchi video content on the platform, on which a YouTuber informs global users and creates sympathy with them for his or her racial or national opinions and claims, acquires an affirmative image [19], [59-60], and simultaneously obtains negative views. Li Ziqi's kimchi videos are, in total, two: the first was uploaded December 30, 2017, and the second was uploaded January 9, 2021.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that news articles were reported in the portals focusing on acute disputes between Korean Naver and Chinese Baidu. According to a recent survey by the Korean Press Foundation [52], Naver has the highest portal usage rate in Korea, accounting for 90.5 percent, and 86.7 percent of the internet portal news usage rate in Korea. Baidu has an internet portal usage rate in China of 71.1 percent [61]. Naver and Baidu were chosen as the channels for collecting the data.

Li Ziqi's kimchi video was first uploaded on December 30, 2017. Following that period, there were no news articles in the Korean media and, therefore, there were not any issues. But soon after the second kimchi video was uploaded on January 9, 2021, a variety of news reporting poured out in Korean media in relation to it. Simultaneously, the Chinese media reported on it with regard to Korean reporting, and the kimchi issue between Korea and China became serious.

This study analyzed a total of 328 news articles to explore the characteristics of online portal news: 247 searched in the Naver portal and 81 in the Baidu portal from January 9, 2021 to July 9, 2021 (for six months), after Li Ziqi's second kimchi video was uploaded and became controversial in Korea.

### 4.2 News Framing: Thematic vs. Episodic Frames

This study conducted a content analysis for kimchi video content on YouTube. For news coverage of kimchi video content, Iyengar's argument [34] was used, divided into a "thematic" frame—an interpretation approach, which constructs news stories in various social-structural aspects delivering concrete and deep information, such as historical evidence of facts and background, professional opinions, and statistical results—and an "episodic" frame, which focuses on an event itself and generally, superficially, and unsophisticatedly informs.

The research of Semetko and Valkenburg [62] was categorized into five frames: human interest, conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences. However, this current research combined an inductive approach with a deductive approach. This study used and revised four original frames—specifically conflict, morality, responsibility, and economy—and resulted in a total of eight frames, adding nationalism, Chinese Northeast Project/historical research, anti-Chinese sentiment/anti-Korean sentiment, and users' feedback, excluding human interest [Table 1].

First, the *nationalism frame* exposes ethnic superiority and pride and emphasizes "us" and "our thing." It stresses the self-respect, pride, and patriotism of an ethnic community or a nation, and history, and culture. Second, the "Chinese Northeast Project" is China's national research project on the history of the three northeast provinces in China (Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning), which entails distortion of Korean history. The *Chinese Northeast Project frame* emphasizes that kimchi video content is a product of the "Chinese Northeast Project." The *historical research frame* stresses "history," explaining that the origin of *pao cai* stems from Chinese ancient history, that kimchi is also a traditional food of the Korean-Chinese in northeastern provinces and other areas of China, and that Chinese people enjoy it in their life. Third, the *anti-Chinese/Korean sentiment frame* relates to a fear or dislike of China or Korea, or Chinese or Korean people or culture. Fourth, the *responsibility frame* is meant to attribute an event to Korea or China, in the form of the Korean or Chinese governments, media, related companies, or organizations [62]. Fifth, the *conflict frame* focuses on conflict itself, such as blame for Korea or China and unilateral arguments [62]. It includes a series of behaviors that amplify and spread arguments online with regard to the kimchi issue. Sixth, the *economy frame* emphasizes an effect on individuals, groups, organizations, regions, or nations [62]. It comments on economic interests and impacts in the industrial aspects of an enterprise and nation. Seventh, the *morality frame* covers aspects of issues of religious belief or moral prescriptions [62]. In other words, this covers moral behaviors, related opinions, and blames, such as theft, cultural extortion, and shameless and brazen lies in this research. Finally, the *users' feedback frame* treats feedback and specific activities related to kimchi video content on YouTube by online users, celebrities, and private organizations.

**Table 1.** News Frames in the Portal Reporting of Kimchi Video Content on YouTube

News Frames		Contents
	Thematic	This frame focuses on the whys and wherefores of an event, and constructs news stories in interpretative ways on the basis of various social-structural aspects.
	Episodic	This frame focuses on the event itself, and constructs news stories in depictive and elucidative ways by delivering general and superficial information.
<b>Rationales</b>	Nationalism	This frame exposes ethnic superiority and pride, and emphasizes “us” and “our thing.” It stresses the self-respect, pride, and patriotism of an ethnic community or a nation, and history, and culture.
	Chinese Northeast Project/ Historical Research	The “Chinese Northeast Project” is China’s national research project on the history of the three northeast provinces in China (Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning). The <i>Chinese Northeast Project</i> frame emphasizes that kimchi video content is a product of the “Chinese Northeast Project”. The <i>historical research</i> frame stresses “history,” explaining that <i>pao cai</i> stems from ancient Chinese history and that kimchi is also a traditional food of the Korean-Chinese in northeastern provinces of China.
	Anti-Chinese Sentiment/ Anti-Korean Sentiment Responsibility	This frame is in regard to a fear or dislike of China or Korea or Chinese or Korean people or culture. This frame is meant to attribute an event to Korea or China, as the Korean or Chinese governments, media, related companies, or organizations.
<b>Spread</b>	Conflict	This frame focuses on conflict itself, such as blame to Korea or China and unilateral arguments. It includes a series of behaviors that amplify and spread arguments online.
	Economy	This frame emphasizes an effect on individuals, groups, organizations, regions, and nations.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Morality	This frame covers aspects of issues of religious belief or moral prescription. In other words, this covers moral behaviors, related opinions, and blames, such as theft, cultural extortion, and shameless and brazen lies.
	Users’ Feedback	This frame treats feedback and specific activities related to kimchi video content on YouTube by online users, celebrities, and private organizations.

In the current study’s measurements of news frames, rationales, spread, and evaluation of them all showed high internal consistency of “nationalism” ( $\alpha = .70$ ), “Chinese Northeast Project/historical research” ( $\alpha = .70$ ), “anti-Chinese/Korean sentiment” ( $\alpha = .70$ ), “responsibility” ( $\alpha = .70$ ), “conflict” ( $\alpha = .75$ ), “economy” ( $\alpha = .80$ ), “morality” ( $\alpha = .76$ ), and “users’ feedback” ( $\alpha = .80$ ) [Table 2].

**Table 2.** Descriptive Summary of News Frames in the Portal Reporting

News Frames		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>Cronbach’s <math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Rationales</b>	Nationalism	.88 (.32)	.70	328
	Chinese Northeast Project/Historical Research	.86 (.35)	.70	328
	Anti-Chinese Sentiment/Anti-Korean Sentiment	.87 (.34)	.70	328
	Responsibility	.87 (.33)	.70	328
<b>Spread</b>	Conflict	.65 (.48)	.75	328
	Economy	.20 (.40)	.80	328
<b>Evaluation</b>	Morality	.46 (.50)	.76	328
	Users’ Feedback	.61 (.49)	.80	328

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Characteristics of Kimchi Video Content on YouTube

Li Ziqi's kimchi videos are, in total, two [Table 3]. The first video [63] was uploaded on December 30, 2017. Its title is "Sour and sweet, a delicacy to warm your wintry days—spicy Chinese cabbage," and page views were 12,502,456 (Oct. 5, 2022). It displays a #ChineseFood hashtag, and its registration date was August 22, 2017. Li Ziqi starts by saying that "I make kimchi (spicy Chinese cabbage, 辣白菜, a traditional dish for Yanbian Chinese of Korean nationality) as usual. I harvest cabbage, make kimchi, and stew a pot of it with a few chunks of preserved meat. Hot, sour, spicy, with the special flavor of cured meat. It will warm your wintry days." In the first video, she clearly mentions kimchi as being "a traditional dish of Yanbian Chinese of Korean nationality."

The second video [64], controversial in Korea, was uploaded January 9, 2021, with the title "The last episode of the 'Life Series': The life of white radish!" Its page views were 17,064,642 (Oct. 5, 2022) and it displays #ChineseCuisine and #ChineseFood hashtags. There are no comments on kimchi or spicy Chinese cabbage in its introduction. However, watching this video, it includes preserved cabbage similar to Korean *BaekKimchi* (or white kimchi), kimchi with red pepper, dumpling filled with chopped preserved cabbage, and Chinese stew with added kimchi, which is very ambiguous as to whether it is a Chinese food or Korean kimchi stew. The second video, unlike the first video's introduction, does not portray Korean kimchi as a traditional food of the Chinese Yanbian region. But Korean users think of this dish as Korean kimchi, and Chinese users consider it as a dish of their traditional food. In spite of this ambiguity, the problem is the definition of kimchi with the display of #ChineseCuisine and #ChineseFood hashtags. The distinction between the first and the second video is only the expressed difference that the first was presented as a traditional dish of the Chinese Yanbian region, and the second displayed the hashtags of #ChineseCuisine and #ChineseFood, which is in fact the same implication.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Summary of Kimchi Video Content on YouTube

	Video 1	Video 2
<b>Title</b>	Sour and sweet, a delicacy to warm your wintry days—spicy Chinese cabbage	The last episode of the "Life Series": The life of white radish!
<b>Registration date</b>	Dec. 30, 2017	Jan. 9, 2021
<b>Page view</b>	12,502,456*	17,064,642*
<b>N of comments</b>	102,005*	294,547*
<b>Hashtag</b>	#ChineseFood	#ChineseCuisine, #ChineseFood
<b>Introduction</b>	"Mist after the frost swallows the landscape and refuses to disperse all day long! The Chinese cabbage that withstands the ice and frost is exceptionally fresh and sweet. The same as usual, I shred some to make spicy Chinese cabbage. It's a traditional dish for Yanbian Chinese of Korean nationality, but"	"Make pickles on Minor Snow, and cured meat on Major Snow. The freezing wintry days summon the Chinese New Year. Isn't it the best time to pickle the food you have around? Pickled mustard tuber, dried white radish, preserved chicken, meat, and sausages... Hang them up! Do you know how the recipe varies from family to family. For white radish flowers wither and leave their seeds deep in the ground? And how the little ones sprout and grow up into full, long tuberous roots? This is the last episode of the 'Life Series.' And farewell to 'The life of...'"
<b>Content related to kimchi</b>	Entire video content is a process for making kimchi and kimchi stew that harvests napa	One part of the content of the video is the process that napa cabbage is preserved in salt

cabbage in a vegetable garden, preserves it in salt, and brushes it with spices mixed with dried red pepper.	and makes a cabbage kimchi. She makes dumplings, putting preserved cabbage and stir-fried pork preserved in salt and dried slices of daikon in oil, and makes kimchi stew, putting in cabbage kimchi, and boiling.
<b>The differences</b> - using fine salt, not coarse salt.	- dumpling filling by wringing preserved napa cabbage out and finely chopping.
<b>from kimchi</b> - kimchi sauce mixed red pepper powder with hot flour paste and vague liquid doubtfully fish sauce.	- skipping the process that preserves in salt and makes kimchi sauce, she only describes the process of brushing napa cabbage.
<b>and kimchi stew</b> - kimchi stew adding preserved pork and freshly made kimchi.	- She makes kimchi stew, putting kimchi into Chinese food, stir-frying preserved pork and dried slices of daikon, and boiling it.

\*Oct. 5, 2022 Data

## 5.2 Characteristics of News Frames in Portals Regarding Kimchi Video Content

### 5.2.1 Thematic vs. Episodic Frames in Korean and Chinese Portal Reporting

Iyengar and Simon [65] divided the ways of constructing news stories into “thematic” and “episodic” frames. News stories in the portals Naver and Baidu mostly used “episodic” frames that cover a Chinese influencer Li Ziqi’s personal stories, making kimchi, users’ feedback, and lists of general and superficial reasons, not “thematic” frames, which are a deep analysis of facts and background with relation to kimchi video content on YouTube, such as the Korean or Chinese governments, media, related organizations’ announcements, and users’ feedback [Table 4].

In the case of Naver, “episodic” news frames were 91.5 percent of the total articles, and “thematic” news frames, which deeply discuss facts and background in relation to kimchi video content on YouTube, were just 8.5 percent. Conversely, in Baidu, “episodic” news frames were 51.8 percent of the total articles, and “thematic” news frames were a similar 48.1 percent. In other words, news reporting of kimchi video content on YouTube used “episodic” frames that mainly covered Li Ziqi’s personal stories, description of making kimchi, internet users’ feedback, and behaviors of people related to the Chinese government, media coverage, or celebrities more than “thematic” frames analyzing in-depth reporting of facts and background in the social and structural context.

### 5.2.2 The Differences between Korean and Chinese Portal News Frames

A factor analysis extracted four factors for the rationales of news frames in portals to kimchi video content on YouTube: “nationalism” ( $M = .88$ ,  $SD = .32$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .70$ ), “Chinese Northeast Project/historical research” ( $M = .86$ ,  $SD = .35$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .70$ ), “anti-Chinese/Korean sentiment” ( $M = .87$ ,  $SD = .34$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .70$ ), and “responsibility” ( $M = .87$ ,  $SD = .33$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .70$ ). There were two factors for the spread of news frames in portals to kimchi video content on YouTube: “conflict” ( $M = .65$ ,  $SD = .48$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .75$ ) and “economy” ( $M = .20$ ,  $SD = .40$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .80$ ). And there were two factors for the evaluation of news frames in portals to kimchi video content on YouTube: “morality” ( $M = .46$ ,  $SD = .50$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .76$ ) and “users’ feedback” ( $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .49$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .80$ ). The explained variance of rationales (51.8%) was much higher than that of spread (13.2%) and that of evaluation (15.1%). It is interpreted that the rationales factor of news frames was much more reported than spread and evaluation factors.

The chi-square test was conducted to analyze the differences among news frames for reporting in Naver and Baidu. News frames in the Naver portal were ranked by “nationalism” as 85.0%, “Chinese Northeast Project” as 85.0%, “responsibility” as 85.0%, “anti-Chinese sentiment” as 84.2%, “conflict” as 54.3%, “users’ feedback” as 48.6%, “morality” as 31.6%, and “economy” as 18.2%. On the other hand, those of the Baidu portal were ranked by “users’ feedback” as 98.8%, “nationalism” as 97.5%, “conflict” as 96.3%, “anti-Korean sentiment”

as 95.1%, “responsibility” as 93.8%, “morality” as 90.1%, “historical research” as 88.9%, and “economy” as 25.9%.

**Table 4.** The Differences among News Frames of Portals to Kimchi Video Content

News Frames	Naver	Baidu	N (%)
Thematic	21 (8.5)	39 (48.1)	60 (18.3)
Episodic	226 (91.5)	42 (51.9)	268 (81.7)
<b>Rationales</b>			
Nationalism	210 (85.0)	79 (97.5)	100
Chinese Northeast Project/ Historical Research	210 (85.0)	72 (88.9)	282
Anti-Chinese Sentiment/ Anti-Korean Sentiment	208 (84.2)	77 (95.1)	285
Responsibility	210 (85.0)	76 (93.8)	286
<b>Spread</b>			
Conflict	134 (54.3)	78 (96.3)	212
Economy	45 (18.2)	21 (25.9)	66
<b>Evaluation</b>			
Morality	78 (31.6)	73 (90.1)	151
Users' Feedback	120 (48.6)	80 (98.8)	200

$\chi^2 = .536$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 1.904$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

### 5.3 The Relationships among Rationales, Spread, and Evaluation of News Frames

A correlation analysis was conducted to answer RQ 3 [Table 5]. There were significant associations among the rationales, spread, and evaluation of news frames in Naver portal reports. “Nationalism” of the rationales category had a positive relation with “Chinese Northeast Project” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “anti-Chinese sentiment” ( $r = .97$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “responsibility” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “conflict” ( $r = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and “morality” ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ). “Chinese Northeast Project” had a positive relation with “anti-Chinese sentiment” ( $r = .97$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “responsibility” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “conflict” ( $r = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and “morality” ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ). “Anti-Chinese sentiment” had a positive relation with “responsibility” ( $r = .97$ ,  $p < .01$ ), “conflict” ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and “morality” ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ). “Responsibility” had a positive relation with “conflict” ( $r = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and “morality” ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ). “Conflict” of the spread category had a positive relation with “economy” ( $r = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and “morality” ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ). “Morality” of the evaluation category had a positive relation with “users’ feedback” ( $r = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The correlation of “nationalism”, “Chinese Northeast Project” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and “responsibility” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and that of “Chinese Northeast Project” and “responsibility” ( $r = 1.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were the largest.

**Table 5.** Pearson Correlations among Rationales, Spread, and Evaluation of News Frames to Kimchi Video

	Naver							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	-							
2	1.00**	-						
3	.97**	.97**	-					
4	1.00**	1.00**	.97**	-				
5	.30**	.30**	.27**	.30**	-			
6	.08	.08	.09	.08	.14*	-		
7	.21**	.21**	.20**	.21**	.20**	-.03	-	
8	.02	.02	-.00	.02	-.03	-.12	.16*	-



Baidu								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	-							
2	.45**	-						
3	.70**	.65**	-					
4	.62**	.73**	.65**	-				
5	.39**	.56**	.86**	.49**	-			
6	.09	.21	.14	.15		-		
7	.48**	.28*	.50**	.26*	.37**	.20	-	
8	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.02	.07	.34**	-

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

(1 = Nationalism; 2 = Chinese Northeast Project/Historical Research; 3 = Anti-Chinese Sentiment/Anti-Korean Sentiment; 4 = Responsibility; 5 = Conflict; 6 = Economy; 7 = Morality; 8 = Users' Feedback)

There were significant associations among the rationales, spread, and evaluation of news frames in Baidu portal reporting. "Nationalism" of the rationales category had a positive relation with "historical research" ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ), "anti-Korean sentiment" ( $r = .70, p < .01$ ), "responsibility" ( $r = .62, p < .01$ ), "conflict" ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ), and "morality" ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ). "Historical research" had a positive relation with "anti-Korean sentiment" ( $r = .65, p < .01$ ), "responsibility" ( $r = .73, p < .01$ ), "conflict" ( $r = .56, p < .01$ ), and "morality" ( $r = .28, p < .05$ ). "Anti-Korean sentiment" had a positive relation with "responsibility" ( $r = .65, p < .01$ ), "conflict" ( $r = .86, p < .01$ ), and "morality" ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ). "Responsibility" had a positive relation with "conflict" ( $r = .49, p < .01$ ) and "morality" ( $r = .26, p < .05$ ). "Conflict" of the spread category had a positive relation with "morality" ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). "Morality" of the evaluation category had a positive relation with "users' feedback" ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ). The correlation of "anti-Korean sentiment" and "conflict" ( $r = .86, p < .01$ ) was the largest.

## 6. Discussion

This study paid attention to the current kimchi video content on YouTube and the sharp debate about it between Korea and China. The main purpose of this research is to reveal the relationships between a Chinese influencer's kimchi video on YouTube, news frames in Naver and Baidu portal reporting, and online nationalism, investigating the characteristics and the relationships of the rationales, spread, and evaluation of news frames in regard to kimchi video content on YouTube, especially in light of the increase in internet portal usage rates and portal news usage rates due to social distancing after the proliferation of COVID-19.

The results of analyzing a total of 328 news articles of the Korean portal Naver and the Chinese portal Baidu in relation to the Chinese influencer Li Ziqi's kimchi video content on YouTube were as follows: First, 81.7 percent of both portals' news articles covered "episodic" frames, which means shallow, superficial, and fragmentary information, ranking Naver as 91.5 percent and Baidu as 51.9 percent. This is consistent with previous studies [66-69] that showed that "episodic" is more prevalent than the "thematic" frame of news coverage. Conversely, the "thematic" frame, concretely and deeply discussing the facts and background, was just 18.3 percent of total news articles, with Naver as 8.5 percent and Baidu as 48.1 percent. In other words, news reporting of kimchi video content on YouTube used an "episodic" frame that mainly covered Li Ziqi's personal stories, descriptions of making kimchi, internet users' feedback, and behaviors of people related to the Chinese government, media coverage, or celebrities more often than a "thematic" frame analyzing in-depth reporting of facts and background in the social and structural context. The difference between Naver and Baidu is that Baidu used a "thematic" news frame more often than Naver did. Baidu reported news about anti-Chinese sentiment in the Korean media in relation to kimchi video content and simultaneously deeply covered historical research on *pao cai* in order to raise an objection to the kimchi issue in Korea. Consistent with previous studies [67], [70], this study also showed that Baidu chose a "thematic" news frame, analytically interpreting the reason and result according to a cause-and-effect relationship exposing historical superiority and pride, and it resembled deep reporting that ultimately seemed to intend to enhance the credibility of the news.

Second, the results of the difference between Korean and Chinese portal news reporting were as follows: In the Naver portal, “nationalism,” “Chinese Northeast Project,” and “responsibility” frames were the most frequently used for reporting, and “anti-Chinese sentiment,” “conflict,” “users’ feedback,” “morality,” and “economy” were ranked next in order. Naver reported that kimchi is a historically Korean traditional food and a fermented food different from Chinese *pao cai*, and the kimchi video issue is defined as “The Kimchi Project” by China, which indicates another historical distortion of Korean culture originating from the “Chinese Northeast Project.” In addition, responsibility for the kimchi issue is attributed to the Korean government, which took easy actions, such as labeling “Korean *Pao Cai* (韩式泡菜)” on Korean kimchi export products, as well as the Chinese government’s responsibility.

On the contrary, Baidu portal reporting was ranked in the order of “users’ feedback,” “nationalism,” “conflict,” “anti-Korean sentiment,” “responsibility,” “morality,” “historical research,” and “economy.” Baidu primarily and concretely quoted Korean users’ feedback and reported with a historical time sequence that *pao cai* was derived from Chinese history. Additionally, Baidu covered announcements and interviews of Korean or Chinese government or related organization officials, which incited and spread the kimchi dispute between Korea and China, and it was crafted to amplify the anti-Korean sentiment of internet users in China. This is the same result as previous studies [71-73] that used different frames of an event by internet portal site classification, in that “nationalism,” “Chinese Northeast Project,” and “responsibility” frames were dominantly reported in Naver, and the “users’ feedback” frame was predominantly reported in Baidu.

Third, there were significant associations among the rationales, spread, and evaluation of news frames in Naver portal reports. The correlation of “nationalism,” “Chinese Northeast Project,” and “responsibility,” and that of “Chinese Northeast Project” and “responsibility” were the largest. It is interpreted that the more the “nationalism” frame, which is the origin and pride of “our” kimchi, is emphasized, the clearer it is that the dispute about kimchi results from a policy of the “Chinese Northeast Project” and is attributed to China, which also provokes anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea and Chinese government officials or media supporting this dispute of kimchi, and ultimately has a leading role in more spread and elevation of this argument in Korea.

There were significant associations among the rationales, spread, and evaluation of news frames in Baidu portal reporting. The correlation between the “anti-Korean sentiment” and “conflict” frames was the largest. It is interpreted that giving historical evidence as a means of emphasizing “nationalism,” which reveals the origin and pride of *pao cai*, attributes conflict between Korean and China to Korean media, elicits anti-Korean sentiment in China, reports announcements and interviews of Chinese government officials, and ultimately reinforces greater cohesion among Chinese internet users. The character of Baidu portal news reporting was different from that of Naver. It degraded Korea’s assertion of kimchi’s origin as a moral deformity, such as theft, extortion of Chinese culture, and lies, and drove the kimchi dispute to a substandard argument.

The overall findings imply the practical importance of coping strategies for issues between nations in relation to history and traditional culture. It is revealed how news framing between Korea and China was developed on Korean and Chinese portal sites, and the characteristics of news frames in analyzing news articles in Korean Naver and Chinese Baidu about kimchi video content on YouTube were described in this empirical study. Whenever problems between Korea and China and their issues in relation to history and traditional culture occur, similar reactions and measures are repeatedly taken, and a fundamental problem will not visibly be resolved. In this respect, this study implies that more concrete and systematic research is needed. Also, the findings imply that the Korean government’s handling of the aggressive and systematic “Chinese Northeast Project” is very passive today. Refutation on the individual level can bring a few effects, but it is significantly urgent to prepare active plans within the levels of power, such as government and companies. A foundation should be laid for an opportunity to actively disseminate research on Korean history and traditional culture to the world by providing historical facts and evidentiary materials [74]. As shown in this study, it is also important that there should be social discussion with related organizations about how kimchi is translated into the Chinese language. According to a report by the Korea Customs Service, the kimchi import amount from China is USD 109,862,000, compared to the export amount to Japan of USD 42,920,002,000, which is the largest export nation for Korea, of the total kimchi export amount of USD 99,000,000 in 2022 [75]. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to establish active countermeasures with related organizations, such as proposing a fundamental revision for labeling “Korean *Pao Cai* (韩式泡菜)” on export kimchi product containers to the China market.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, given the nature of the analysis sample in Naver and Baidu and only included the case of “kimchi” dispute on YouTube used in this study, the findings cannot be generalized to all internet portal sites and all cases of online nationalism because of specific portal

site and case bias. It has significance for the target portal sites of Naver and Baidu and the case of “kimchi” dispute over historical or cultural issues but requires attention when being interpreted. Therefore, future research can explore a variety of media and disputes and consider generalization of the results. It can expand the data sources to include other major media outlets or platforms from both countries, which could offer a more comprehensive insight. Data sources from other countries would help to enrich the discussion. A comparison with other international disputes would be also beneficial. Drawing parallels with other international disputes over cultural or historical topics might provide a broader perspective on how these situations develop and are addressed by the media. Second, from the methodological perspective, this study applied both deductive and inductive approaches for the characteristics of news coverage of kimchi video content on YouTube, which may be limited with regard to the generation of the results and should be supplemented to enhance validity and credibility. Finally, it is also important to examine YouTube users, in that YouTube is the cyberspace where users’ feedback animates. Future studies should thus focus on users in order to reveal these effects more explicitly.

**Acknowledgments:** This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2021S1A5B5A17055216).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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