

## The Preference of Social Networking Sites and Uncertainty Reduction Strategies Towards Information on COVID-19 Vaccination

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### ABSTRACT

At the end of 2019, the world showcased a lethal outbreak of COVID-19, which was announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic in March 2020. As this outbreak has spread worldwide, including in Malaysia, several alternatives were undertaken by the government to curb this spread including introduce a vaccination program for the community. This program is believed to make most of the community worried or uncertain since it is still newly introduced. In reducing people's worries and uncertainties regarding COVID-19 vaccination, searching for information via social networking sites (SNS) will likely reduce their uncertainty. This study aims to determine the most preferred SNS used by people of middle age to reduce uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. This study also aimed to identify the factors that contribute to middle-aged people's preferences for SNS to reduce their uncertainty about COVID-19 vaccination, as well as the uncertainty reduction strategies (URs) used by middle-aged people over preferred SNS to reduce their level of uncertainty about COVID-19 vaccination. Uncertainty Reduction Theory was used as the underpinning theory for this study. This study employed a qualitative approach in which an in-depth e-interview was conducted over a Google Meet platform. The results showed that Facebook is the most preferred SNS the informants use to reduce uncertainty regarding COVID-19 vaccination. This study also found information authority to be the most important factor for SNS preference. Finally, the study also discovered that the passive strategy is the most commonly employed method used by informants to reduce information uncertainties regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, vaccination, social networking sites, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, information.*

### INTRODUCTION

As the whole nation has been shocked and impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 since the end of 2019, every single day, most people were living in uncertainty. Individuals are thought to have done several things to minimise their uncertainties about this issue, including seeking information on COVID-19 through social networking sites (SNS). According to Lu et al. (2020), SNS are among the most significant platforms for disseminating information about COVID-19 and have become the most preferred platform for society to keep informed about this situation. However, the problem with this approach in reducing uncertainty with COVID-19 is the issue of information transmission, which can sometimes lead to misinformation. When seeking information via online platforms such as SNS, the probability of the users being exposed to misinformation on COVID-19 is higher (Chou, 2020). According to Bridgman et al. (2020), there was an uncontrolled spread of online misinformation surrounding COVID-19, which significantly contributed to serious societal panic. As we all know, seeking information on SNS can drive us towards gathering more information to reduce our uncertainty. Nevertheless, not everything we learn on social media is from reliable sources. So, no matter how much we want to get information about COVID-19 through our personal SNS preferences to lessen our uncertainty, there is still a chance that we will be exposed and fall for COVID-19

misinformation. Next, another problem in conducting this study is the problem of vague or unspecific factors regarding the preferences of SNS used by teachers to reduce their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19. In general, there are significantly broad factors that contribute to SNS usage and preferences (Cha, 2010). Even in this study context, it has been mentioned that it specifically highlighted the preferences of SNS to seek information regarding COVID-19 in reducing one's uncertainty. However, the exploration of why the users prefers one SNS over another SNS will hardly be determined due to logical reasoning. According to Papacharissi and Ruben (2000), in their studies of "Predictors of Internet Usage," the usage factors of SNS include the activities of a wide range of interactive exchange of communication such as building interpersonal relationships, entertainment, learning, boredom relieve, escape as well as privacy concern motives. From here, we can see that several factors can contribute to the preferences of SNS usage, which are not just limited to SNS features but also the preferences vary according to their motives, which are hard to identify in the centred situation of seeking information regarding COVID-19 to reduce one uncertainty.

Another problem in conducting this study is determining which uncertainty reduction strategies (URs) are the most effective to be applied on SNS to reduce one's uncertainty. There were different perspectives on which of the three URs concluded to be the most effective strategy from the previous study. According to Hong, Steedle and Cheng (2020), there were several findings regarding the effectiveness of the UR strategies in the studies on communication strategies via SNS. URs in Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Charles Berger (1975) consisted of three different strategies, which include passive, active and interactive. According to Antheunis et al. (2010), the three strategies from the Uncertainty Reduction Theory have different styles of approach in dealing with information to reduce uncertainty. Active strategy is more towards asking for many resources to confirm their uncertainty, while passive is more towards being a silent reader, and interactive strategy is more towards establishing direct communication with the targeted person to resolve their uncertainty (Gu, Oh & Wang, 2016).

According to Ismajli and Morina (2018), in "Applying Interactive Strategies to Meet the Needs of All the Students", they have concluded that interactive strategies are the most effective strategy to feed the needs of individuals, especially communication prospects. However, in another study on "Instructional Utility and Learning Efficacy of Common Active Communication Strategies," it has been found that active communication strategies are the most effective approach in information seeking as they involve proactive effort from individuals to find several alternate information to demolish one's curiosity (McConnell et al., 2017). According to Cabrera (2020), in her studies on "Uncertainty Reduction in Initial Interaction," the findings show that passive strategy played the most significant and important role in reducing one's uncertainty effectively as it involved avoiding confrontation to resolve one's uncertainty. Previous research findings showed disparities in determining which of the three URs is the most successful in certain settings. As a result, it leads to challenges in determining or recognising which UR is the most effective within this study's framework, which entailed using URs in the context of information searching via SNS.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the research objectives, several research questions were formed. The research questions for the study are:

**RQ1:** What is the most preferred SNS used by middle age to reduce their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19?

**RQ2:** What are the factors that contribute towards the preferences SNS by middle age to reduce their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19?

**RQ3:** What uncertainty reduction strategy (URs) does the middle-aged use over preferred SNS to reduce their level of uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19?

#### METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach as a research design. According to Salmon (2012), an e-interview or online interview is used by researchers to collect or gather data needed for the studies using technology such as online communication tools or CMCs. For this study, e-interviews will refer to in-depth interviews conducted with CMCs to collect data. There are several relevant reasons for the researcher to use e-interviews as a medium to collect the data findings. This includes the researcher's wishes to investigate online behaviours or phenomena by investigating them in the context in which they occur. It might be because CMCs offer a way to discuss behaviours or phenomena unrelated to the internet that occur offline, and it might also be simply because there is a possibility that the researcher decides to conduct the interviews online because of the convenience it provides (Salmon, 2012). This study uses the target population, which consisted of teachers in Sekolah Menengah Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, between 36–55 years old or have been categorised as in the middle age group (Petry, 2002). In conducting this study, the interview was done with six informants. The relevancy of choosing six informants is because the number of informants for in-depth interviews for phenomenology-related studies requires 5 to 25 informants (Creswell, 1998; Morse, 1994).

#### UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION THEORY (URT)

URT is a social context theory developed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese in 1974. Griffin (2015) stated that this theory is about creating relationships when a person meets a stranger for the first time and has no idea about the other person's information. The absence of information here has contributed to the person's higher level of uncertainty throughout the initial contact. Whenever URT is proposed, it is necessary to reduce the uncertainties a person has to build a successful relationship. This is accomplished by applying specific communication strategies to predict better and explain their behaviour (Knobloch, 2005). In other words, people need to learn more about others to reduce their uncertainty regarding the relationship. The main assumption of this theory is that when people who do not know each other or strangers meet, their primary goal is to increase predictability while reducing uncertainty in one's behaviour as well as others who are involved in the contact, and only through this can a successful relationship be developed. According to Berger (1974), there are two types of uncertainties within the context of the initial interaction between strangers: cognitive uncertainty, attitudes and beliefs of other people and behavioural uncertainty, the action prediction of another person within the given context. According to Autheunis, Valkenburg and Peter (2010), Berger proposed three different kinds of strategies to help people find information on how other parties might react towards our messages which are through active, passive and interactive strategies. According to Emmers and Canary (1996), active strategies involve the process of seeking information about specific posts or messages without directly knowing the target and this involves proactive efforts to approach the

targeted person, without having to confront the person, for example, it might involve in the action of questioning other people as the third party. Passive strategy is more towards the pattern of gathering information about a target person or information by collecting information modestly or discreetly (Flanagin, 2007). Interactive strategies usually involve the process of searching for information in some specific form or direct contact with one another (Authenis, Valkenburg & Peter, 2010). In this study, URT focuses on the SNS that will be used by the informant to reduce uncertainty and the factors why the informant chooses the SNS. Based on past research, URSs were also studied among informants whether active, interactive or passive in searching for information related to Covid-19 vaccination using SNS.

#### THE USE OF PREFERRED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) TO REDUCE UNCERTAINTY REGARDING COVID-19 VACCINATION

A quantitative study was carried out by Mari et al. (2022) to determine the influence of using social media actively to minimise uncertainty surrounding political conspiracies and distrust among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to the study, active social media use is associated with avoiding ambiguity in political conspiracy and distrust. Facebook has the highest score on topics where informants wish to actively use social media to minimise confusion about political conspiracy and distrust. Due to social media, the community can grasp more opportunities to build and create strong bonds of social relationships, stay informed about their communities and stay informed within political self-expression engagement, all of which can help to reduce uncertainty.

Next, Gambo and Ozad (2020) carried out a study using a quantitative approach on the influence of uncertainty reduction strategies (URSs) over social network sites (SNS) preference. Unlike previous studies, this study found that WhatsApp is the most preferred SNS by international students to stay connected and reduce their relationship uncertainties with people back home. The finding of this study also revealed that there is a positive relationship between URSs and SNS preferences. According to the findings, the majority of students prefer to seek information via SNS using the interactive strategies of URSs, which involve the act of performing direct contact with the person involved with the uncertainties that they had, causing them to prefer the use of WhatsApp to reduce any uncertainties that they had, as WhatsApp allows users to contact the person directly. This study also found that, as the preferred SNS usage has managed to reduce their uncertainties, it has also become a reason for them to use the SNS continuously.

According to Oh, Lee and Han (2021), social media use during infectious disease outbreaks significantly impacts preventative activities, especially when it comes to emotions of self-relevant as well as the perception of public risk. This study found that social media positively correlates with self-relevant emotions. The finding of this study also shows that public risk perception is correlated with social media use. Lastly, this study has shown that with social media, the public's risk perception and self-relevant emotions have the greatest potential to significantly increase preventive behaviours in reducing uncertainty.

Furthermore, Gui et al. (2017) conducted a study on managing uncertainty using social networking sites (SNS) during Zika outbreaks. This study found that Twitter is the most frequent SNS used by people seeking information regarding the Zika outbreak. The findings conclude that social networking sites have been critical in providing a structured information system for the public to assess personal risk and make decisions when confronted with uncertainties during public health emergencies.

#### FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE (SNS) PREFERENCE

Several past studies were conducted to determine factors that influence SNS preference. Cho, Roh and Park (2019) conducted a study on whether it is possible to promote networking while still maintaining privacy in terms of the implications of defaults and regulatory attention on SNS users' preference settings using a quantitative method. The study concluded a correlation between the context of encouraging networking and protecting privacy when it comes to user preferences for SNS, with the more privacy-protecting and networking-promoting features offered by SNS being associated with increased user preference for SNS.

Mokhalles (2018) conducted a study to investigate the factors that influence the use of SNS. The findings showed that information source is the most significant element influencing undergraduate students' SNS usage, followed by relationships and skill improvement. The study also found that, for undergraduate students to favour using SNS, the SNS needs to serve as a credible source of transparent and highly interchangeable information. Lastly, it can be concluded that to enhance users' preferences for SNS, the platforms should provide relevant information and valuable content so that users will have more reason to use the platform.

Next, Shi et al. (2018) conducted a study based on the elaboration likelihood model perspective regarding SNS users' preferences and their behaviour of information dissemination over the platform using a quantitative approach. These findings indicate that the most important determinants of choice for information dissemination over social networking sites are factors linked to the information receiver and relationships. Whereas the least important determinants are those related to the information source. The findings also revealed that the majority of the informants are being categorised to favour the preference of information dissemination over SNS within the peripheral routes, which include determinants such as source attractiveness, value homophily and social tie strength compared to a central route, which consists of topical relevance, information richness and source trustworthiness.

Meanwhile, Hou et al. (2018) used a quantitative method to evaluate if people prefer WeChat over Weibo and how personality and psychological variables play a role. This study's result has demonstrated a positive correlation between personality traits such as neuroticism, loneliness, and external locus of control towards the preference factors of SNS use. Meanwhile, the findings also revealed a negative correlation between psychological factors such as agreeableness, social support, and social interaction towards the preference factors of SNS usage. Lastly, this study concluded that people who are lonely and likely lack social support tend to prefer to use Weibo more than WeChat.

Athukorala (2018) conducted a quantitative study on the factors influencing social media usage by university students, with the study taking place at Wuhan University of China as its focal point. University students' use of social media is heavily influenced by concerns about the simplicity of information provided and the convenience features that social media can provide. The findings of this survey also highlighted that the aspects of copyright and legal issues are why university students are less concerned with and neglect when using social media. As a final point, the findings of this study show that university students use social media for various reasons that vary depending on the individual—all the criteria listed above impact university students' use of social media.

## THE APPLICATION OF UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES (URSS) OVER PREFERRED SNS IN REDUCING LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTIES

In the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, when disinformation about the viruses was circulating, Tandoc and Lee (2020) utilised a qualitative technique to discover how young Singaporeans dealt with ambiguity. The primary goal of this study is to evaluate how young Singaporeans dealt with the uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 epidemic, particularly in light of the problems posed by disinformation about the virus. This study's findings have shown that, majorly, students are being identified to use active information-seeking of URSS to reduce their uncertainty regarding the outbreak of COVID-19, which was driven by the concern that they have for their loved ones followed by the scanning of information which derived from the passive strategy where the students only read the information without reacting towards it. The result of this study also revealed that there are minorities of students who choose to avoid seeing the information to be perceived as a way to reduce their uncertainty because, to them, the less they know about information about the outbreak, the lesser their uncertainty level.

Meanwhile, Frampton and Fox (2018) did a study regarding social media's influence on the retroactive jealousy experienced by romantic partners in managing uncertainty, establishing information-seeking and implementing social comparison. The findings from this study have shown that the most common factor contributing to retroactive jealousy over SNS is when the participants employ too much information-seeking regarding their uncertainties over the relationship. Furthermore, according to this study's findings, seeking information using an interactive strategy about ex-partners and digital fact-checking have contributed to increasing uncertainties. However, it was discovered in this study that some participants actively avoided using SNS to prevent them from using it to seek information about their partner, which they believed would avoid an increase in uncertainties and any unnecessary conflict, such as irrelevant jealousy over some information over SNS.

A study by Kramer, Lee, and Guo (2018) examined how communication technologies may be used to control uncertainty throughout the information-seeking assimilation and how inside organisations implement information-giving. The findings of this study have found that, for the employees to manage their uncertainties during the organisation assimilation, the participants usually use social media to seek information through interactive and active strategies, which include information seeking of the company's official information, unofficial information and overall general information. Next, this study also found that employees' use of information-seeking over social media in managing their uncertainties has positively influenced impression management concerns. Lastly, this study has concluded that the fewer uncertainties the employee has regarding their company's information, the higher the potential for the employee to portray a positive impression to management.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

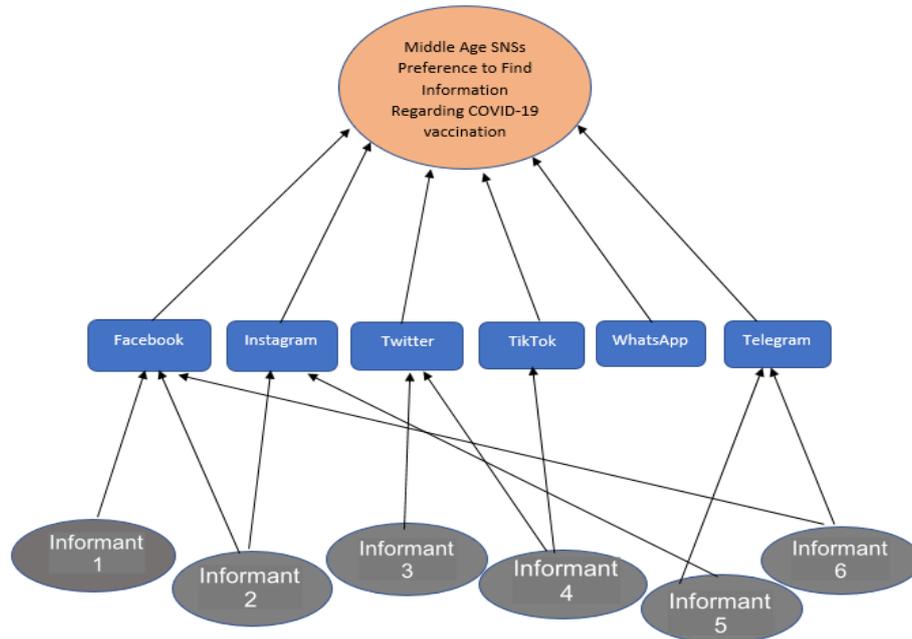


Figure 1: The most preferred SNS used by middle age in finding information regarding COVID-19 vaccination

Based on the research that was conducted, the results revealed that all the six informants who were interviewed stated that they have their own SNS preferences for finding information about COVID-19 vaccination, which include a variety of SNS preferences such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and WhatsApp.

The first type of SNS, Facebook, was revealed from the study's results to be the most common SNS preference among informants in reducing uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. The findings of this study are supported by the previous study conducted by Mari et al. (2022) on the use of SNS in reducing uncertainties regarding political conspiracy and distrust, which was conducted using a cross-country sample of 11 democracies parties from different culture context in Europe, America and New Zealand. The aims were to identify whether active use of social media positively correlates to avoiding uncertainty regarding political conspiracy and distrust. The final results revealed a positive correlation between social media towards uncertainty avoidance on political conspiracy and distrust issues. It was also revealed that Facebook has the highest score on items indicating which social media is the most preferred to be actively used by informants for uncertainty avoidance regarding this political conspiracy and distrust. Therefore, it can be concluded that this study supported the results of the study conducted by Mari et al. (2022) in using Facebook as an SNS preference in reducing uncertainties.

As for the second type of SNS, Twitter, the findings show that it is the second most common SNS preference among informants to minimise their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. The results are supported by the previous study conducted by Gui et al. (2017) on managing uncertainty using social networking sites (SNS) during the health crisis to assess risk through content analysis. This study investigates how individuals use social media to respond to the Zika outbreak within the context of travelling

decision-making. In this study, the researchers have stated a fixed SNS platform to run the content analysis: Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and TripAdvisor. In the end, the study revealed that to cope with the uncertainties and ambiguities regarding the Zika outbreak, they will use SNS to gather information and learn from others to assess their risk and make better decisions. The SNS that has the highest number of interactions regarding this content analysis is Twitter. The findings revealed that Twitter is the most frequent SNS used by people who want to seek information on the Zika outbreak and use it as a means to evaluate the risk when it comes to travelling decision-making as ways of managing uncertainty to travel during the Zika outbreak. Therefore, the results of this study support the results of the study done by Gui et al. (2017) in using Twitter as an SNS preference in reducing uncertainties.

Lastly, as for WhatsApp, which is also categorised as an SNS in this study, the result revealed that none of the six informants opted to use WhatsApp as their SNS preference in minimising uncertainty about COVID-19 vaccination information. This finding contradicts the earlier study conducted by Gambo and Ozad (2020) on the influence of uncertainty reduction strategies (URs) on social network site (SNS) selection. This study aims to determine the association between URs and low levels of uncertainty, as well as network preference and low levels of uncertainty in terms of continuous use of preferred SNS. This study is centralised within the setting to maintain interpersonal relationships with the people from the home country, where 450 informants in one university in North Cyprus have been gathered as participants for the study. According to the findings, the importance of using WhatsApp as an SNS preference in staying connected and reducing relationship uncertainties with people back home is because WhatsApp allows users to contact the person who is directly involved with it, which is, in this case, if any relationship uncertainties occurred between them and people back home, the uncertainties can be effectively resolved by directly contacting them. As a result, it is possible to conclude that WhatsApp can be used to reduce uncertainties, but not in terms of finding and reducing information uncertainties on COVID-19 vaccinations, as demonstrated by the study's findings for this study.

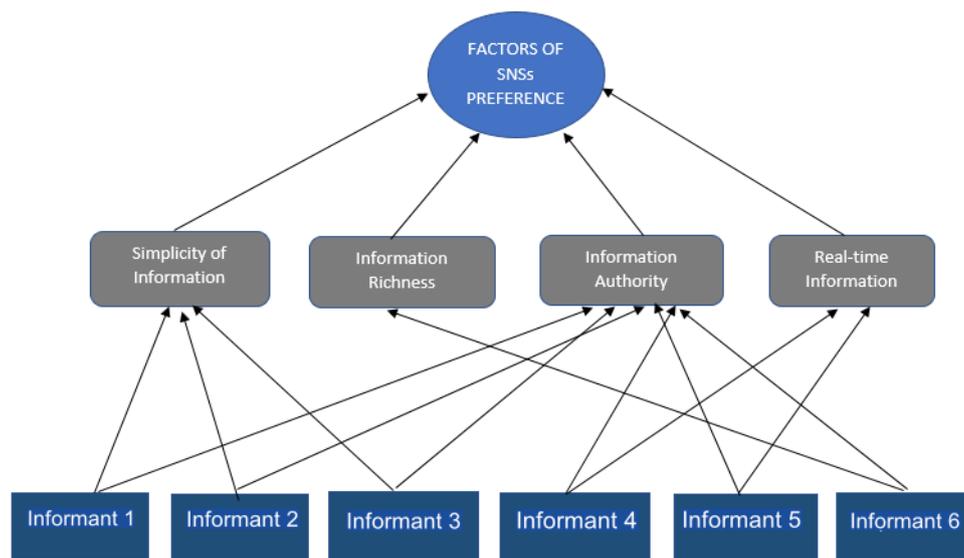


Figure 2: The factor of SNS preferences

Based on the research, the study's results revealed that all of the six informants who were interviewed stated they have personal factors of SNS preference, which is why they prefer those specific SNS over other SNS in finding information on COVID-19 vaccination. These involve several factors, such as simplicity of information, information richness, information authority and real-time information. The first factor for SNS preference, information authority, was revealed to be the most common factor for SNS by middle age to reduce their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. This finding is supported by the previous study conducted by Mokhalles (2018) regarding the factors that influence the usage of SNS. The primary goal of this research is to recognise and classify the variables that affect and influence undergraduate students' use of SNS in India. To accomplish this study objective, 115 undergraduate students in one university in India have been gathered to recognise and classify the variables that affect and influence their use of SNS. Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that information's source is the most significant element influencing undergraduate students' SNS use, followed by the elements of credible sources of information served over social media, transparency of information and highly interchangeable information. The study concluded that to enhance users' preferences for SNS usage, SNS platforms should provide relevant information and valuable content to give users more reason to use this platform. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this study support the results of the study done by Mokhalles (2018) regarding the factors of information authority as one of the factors for SNS preference.

The second factor for SNS preference, the simplicity of information, was revealed to be the second most common factor for SNS by middle age to reduce their uncertainty on COVID-19 vaccination. This study's result has been supported by the previous study conducted by Athukorala (2018) regarding the factors influencing social media usage by university students at the University of Wuhan in China. The primary goal of this research is to investigate the characteristics that influence students' use of social media platforms at the university stated above. There are 425 informants altogether, of which 209 are Chinese students and 216 are international students. This study studied nine characteristics of social media or issues: students' use of copyright, convenience features, simplicity of information, credibility of information, privacy concerns, risk, cost, time, and permanence. University students' use of social media is heavily influenced by concerns about the simplicity of information provided by social media as well as the convenience features that social media can provide to them because, according to them, the easier it is to use social media, the greater the influence on their active use of it. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this study support the results of the study done by Athukorala (2018) regarding the simplicity of information as one of the factors for SNS preference.

Last but not least, another factor for SNS preference, which is the simplicity of information, has been revealed from the study's results to be the least common factor for SNS by middle age to reduce their uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. The findings of this study are corroborated by a prior study conducted in India by Mahapatra (2016) on the empirical examination of young people's choice of social networking platforms. The primary goal of this study is to discover how young people or youth in India perceive, prefer, and use social networking sites to answer the study's purpose of identifying the reason why youth prefer specific SNS, determining the main reason for the use of specific SNS, and investigating the factors that influence the popularity of specific SNS. The outcomes of this study demonstrated that informants' perceptions and preferences regarding the use

of social networking sites were mostly based on the association dimension, such as the number of people who used the SNS and also on the functional dimension, such as how the news, announcement or information been published over SNS. This also includes whether the news is simple, interactive or rich. Following that, the outcomes of this study revealed that the functional dimension of characteristics of social networking sites, which are on how the news, announcement, or information is published over SNS, including whether the news is simple, interactive, or rich, are the most important elements that influence the choice for SNS. In terms of those three different preferences of published news, announcements, or information, the study found that most youth in India prefer detailed news, announcements, or information. As a result, the findings of this study support the findings of Mahapatra (2016), who identified information richness as one of the factors influencing SNS choice.

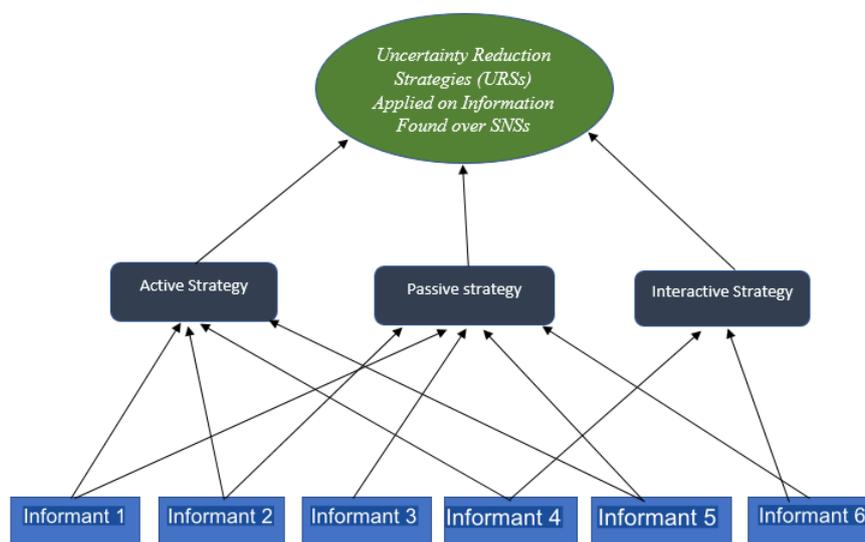


Figure 3: Uncertainty Reduction Strategies (URSs)

Based on the research that has been conducted, the study's results revealed that all of the six informants who were interviewed stated that they have their URSs that have been applied over their SNS preference to reduce their level of uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination.

The first strategy of URSs, the passive strategy, has been revealed to be the most common strategy practised or applied over the informant's preferred SNS to reduce their uncertainty regarding the information on COVID-19 vaccination. This study's result is supported by the previous study conducted by Fox and Anderegg (2014) regarding ways to reduce ambiguity and the perceived relational norms on Facebook in the phases of romantic relationships. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether or not social networking sites (SNS), specifically Facebook, are utilised for information searching about a future or current love relationship. This whole study context is centred towards applying uncertainty reduction strategies (URSs) for information seeking regarding their romantic partner, including active, passive, and interactive strategies. This study was conducted centred on Midwestern University, where 517 informants consisted of 251 males and 256 females. This study's findings have shown that most female informants used a more passive information-seeking strategy than male informants. However, this study's result also revealed that the

information-seeking strategy might differ as the relationship progresses. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this study support the results of the study that has been done by Fox and Anderegg (2014) regarding the strategy of URSs, which is the passive strategy as one of the strategies used among the informants to reduce their level of uncertainties regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination.

Next, the active strategy, the URS's second strategy, has been revealed in the study's result to be the second most commonly practised or applied over the informant's preferred SNS to reduce uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. This study's result has been supported by the previous study conducted by Tandoc and Lee (2020) regarding how young Singaporeans dealt with ambiguity in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak when misinformation about the viruses was circulating. This study aims to evaluate how young Singaporeans dealt with the uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in light of the problems posed by disinformation about the virus. This study focuses on identifying and managing ambiguity and uncertainties regarding the COVID-19 outbreak utilising three strategies: URSs through active, passive, and interactive strategies. This study is based on eight focus group discussions with 8-12 participants for each group, with 89 student participants from universities in Singapore. The findings of this study show that, in general, students are identified to use an active strategy of information-seeking of URSs to reduce their uncertainty regarding the outbreak of COVID-19, which is driven by the concern that they have for their loved ones followed by the scanning of information over SNS platforms. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this research support the findings of Tandoc and Lee (2020) on the strategy of URSs, which is the active strategy as one of the strategies used among the informants to reduce their level of uncertainties regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination.

Lastly, the third strategy of URSs, the interactive strategy, has been revealed in the study's result to be the least strategy practised or applied over informants' preferred SNS to reduce uncertainty regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination. This study's result has been supported by the previous study conducted by Kramer, Lee, and Guo (2018) on how communication technologies may be used to control uncertainty throughout the strategy of URSs in information-seeking assimilation and how inside organisations implement information-giving. The process of URSs in the study includes active, passive, and interactive. This study's main objective is to learn how Chinese and American employees used internal and external social media to manage their uncertainty during the anticipation and assimilation phases of the information assimilation process, respectively. To conduct this study, 25 Chinese and 25 American employees, 14 males and 11 females, were gathered. The study's findings revealed that, for employees to manage their uncertainties during the organisation's assimilation, the participants typically use social media to seek information using the interactive strategy, which includes information seeking of the company's official and unofficial information and overall general information. This is done by searching and asking about it directly to the parties who are well-versed about that information as a way to affirm their understanding. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this study supported the study done by Kramer, Lee, and Guo (2018) on the strategy of URSs, which is the interactive strategy as one of the strategies used among the informants to reduce their level of uncertainties regarding information on COVID-19 vaccination.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the results obtained, the correct choice of SNS preference can play a major role in users searching for and obtaining information on COVID-19 vaccination. Choosing the right SNS preference can also significantly reduce one's information uncertainties, which in this study focuses on the information uncertainties regarding COVID-19 vaccination. The factors for SNS preference also played a major role in determining the preference of SNS, where from the study's findings, it has been claimed that the offered forms of information served over the SNS platforms are relevant toward the preference and needs of the users. Some users need information in the form of simple, rich, credible and real-time, all of which play a significant role in influencing the preference of individual SNS use. Last but not least, the uncertainty reduction strategy which was the main strategy examined to be utilised by informants in this study, played a significant role, especially as a strategy to reduce and overcome uncertainties about COVID-19 vaccination. It is hoped that this study will eventually assist many parties in deciding and setting the right and appropriate SNS preferences as well as the correct and appropriate uncertainty reduction strategies as a medium to reduce online information uncertainties as well as to find information, particularly regarding the most pressing issue now, which is the COVID-19 vaccination and the COVID-19 scenarios as a whole. As for the limitations of the study conducted, this study has offered some suggestions that can be implemented by other researchers in the future to overcome the problems and to make improvements towards the implementation of the study.

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