PERSUASION IN COVID-19 HEALTH MESSAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

PERSUASION IN COVID-19 HEALTH MESSAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

Manhong Li

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Author: Manhong Li

Independent Study Committee:

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond

Field Specialist: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pacharaporn Kesaprakorn

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine persuasion strategies used in the Covid-19 prevention messages to find out what type of persuasive messages the government agencies and civil organizations in China used to promote to their target audiences, and whether both organizations used them differently. With the use of purposive sampling, health prevention messages published by 10 Weibo accounts of government officials and 10 Weibo accounts of private organizations during January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020 were quantitatively analyzed based on six persuasion strategies proposed by Ojanen (1996). The analysis results revealed that significant differences in the use of persuasion strategies were used by both government offices and private organizations to varying degrees. Government offices used more "Coercion", “Threat”, “Offer” and “Guidance” strategies than private organizations. And private organizations used more "Appeal" and “Appreciation” strategies than government departments. These findings provide useful implications not only for communication scholars and practitioners, but also for organizations responsible for disease prevention.

Keywords: Health Prevention, Health Message, Persuasion Strategies, Social Media, COVID-19, China

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Manhong Li

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the rationale and problem of the research, research questions, research objectives, and the scope of the study. It also provides the significance of this study and operational definition of the important terms.

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

In past research, Trilla, Trilla and Daer (2008) pointed out the "Spanish flu" epidemic of 1918-1919 was the most devastating epidemic in modern history. However, as far as the current situation is concerned, the worldwide impact of Covid-19 is expected to exceed the 1918 influenza pandemic. Since December 2019 (World Health Organization, 2020), Wuhan City, Hubei Province has continued to carry out influenza and related disease surveillance, and multiple cases of viral pneumonia have been found, all of which have been diagnosed as viral lung infections. On January 12, 2020, the World Health Organization officially named it COVID-19. The sudden appearance of the new coronavirus threatens people's lives and health. Since the founding of New China, this new type of coronavirus pneumonia epidemic has been a major public health emergency. Sun, et al. (2020) found it spreads fastest in China, has the widest range of infections, and is the most difficult to prevent and control. China has not only been greatly affected, but the epidemic has spread rapidly around the world, affecting the lives and work of people all over the world.

Facing the challenge of the new coronavirus epidemic, the Chinese government has adopted the most comprehensive, strict, and thorough prevention and control measures, with a highly responsible attitude, and firm treatment of the lives and health of the Chinese. Although different countries around the world have launched a strategic struggle against the new crown virus in different ways, as we

have seen (World Health Organization, 2020), publicizing and encouraging the public to take effective preventive measures is one of the important measure citizens and people around the world. Although effective vaccines to prevent new coronaviruses have recently come out, the new coronaviruses around the world are also constantly mutating, which challenges the effectiveness of new coronavirus vaccines. Therefore, prevention of transmission and infection is the only feasible and effective intervention to deal with such public health emergencies (Sun, et al., 2020)

In mainland China, after hard work, the situation in China has shown that the epidemic prevention the other hand, the media play a key role in improving public health by making people fully aware of health information and encouraging people to take preventive measures (Bokemper, Huber, James, Gerber, & Omer, 2020) on and control situation continues to improve, and the order of production and life is quickly restored. The prevention and control of the pandemic has also changed from an emergency to a normal state. Undoubtedly, before the epidemic is over, protective measures, including personal protection, may last for a long time. Therefore, Shen, et al. (2020), and Bokemper, et al. (2020) found that it is particularly important to establish and maintain public protection.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), and Zhang (2014) pointed out the emergence of social media has brought huge opportunities and challenges to the practice of information dissemination. On the one hand, in social media, everyone is not only a publisher of information, but also a receiver and disseminator (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). It has been a new trend of popularizing information dissemination, that is, the control of information dissemination has changed from the previous mass media to individuals in each platform. In addition, due to the real-time and cross-regional nature of social media, users' platform access restrictions are reduced. Therefore, users are less restricted by external conditions in information processing. On the other hand, some new features of social media have also brought

huge challenges to users' information acceptance, such as excessive information. It is impossible for users to browse all information on social media platforms. Therefore, most information may not be effectively disseminated. The information provided by the media may also affect people's emotions and subjective norms, which in turn affects public protection behavior.

During a public health crisis, Liu, Xie, Li, and Ji (2020) found that people can search and access a large amount of information through various channels, including traditional media, interpersonal communication, and new media. This information is essential to correctly construct risk perceptions and promote countermeasures. However, according to different information dissemination tasks, individuals can choose different media. When the message is very simple or clear, concise media is most effective. However, when the information is complex, vague, or has emotional factors, people need to use richer media so that the information publisher can get feedback immediately and ensure that the information is released more effectively (Liu, et al., 2020). Based on the research by Pennycook, McPhetres, Zhang, Lu, and Rand (2020), it is found that greater cognitive reflection and scientific knowledge are related to stronger recognition ability. Therefore, the information released by the official media (formal channel) has higher credibility.

Since 2007, with the development of Web 2.0 technology, the concept of "social media" has been formally put forward (Kietzmann, et al., 2011). Combined with new developments in information dissemination theory, such as information credibility, Sundar (2008) found especially falsehood and misleading in social networks. Sexual information may also lead to misunderstandings about public health risks. According to research results by Wang and Mark (2013), different social groups are attracted by the official and unofficial news media, and different groups use different methods to evaluate the credibility of news. It can be seen that the public will choose the news media sources with high credibility to obtain information.

Therefore, when we use social media, it is necessary to study the impact of social media on public prevention behaviors in the context of the new coronavirus pandemic (Liu, et al., 2020).

As a Chinese citizen who study in oversea can also learn about this health crisis in China through the Internet and social media. How China can quickly take active and effective measures to deal with this new coronavirus in a very harsh environment is also beneficial to other countries in the world (Shen, et al., 2020). At present, studies have found that the new coronavirus epidemic spreads the fastest in China, has the widest range of infection, and is the most difficult to prevent and control. Different regions are strictly divided; isolation and control measures are implemented (Tian, et al., 2020; Zhu, Wei, & Niu, 2020 and Yang, et al., 2020).

In addition, publicizing and encouraging the public to take effective preventive measures is important for citizens and one of the important measures for them. Although these studies also provide some insights into how some government offices, private organizations or most citizens can learn and take preventive measures from the Covid 19 epidemic or other epidemics in the future. Government offices and private organizations are actively involved in preventing the new coronavirus epidemic, but they play different social roles and have different responsibilities. However, researchers have rarely compared the practices by government departments and private organizations as research objects together and rarely examined the use of combined persuasion strategies to remind people to actively prevent epidemics.

1.2 Objectives of Study

This study aims to achieve the following three research objectives:

1.2.1 To examine types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China.

1.2.2 To examine types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by private organizations to promote prevention practice in China.

1.2.3 To examine whether persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China are different from persuasive strategies used by private organizations.

1.3 Scope of Study

The focus of this research is to understand some of the persuasive strategies used on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic by Chinese government offices and private organizations to promote effective protection measures to Chinese citizens under unknown circumstances. Quantitative content analysis was used to examine the collected secondary data from Weibo regarding persuasion strategies during 2020 to determine which kind of persuasion strategies were used by both types of organizations, and whether they used those persuasion strategies differently.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the rationale and problem statement above, this study poses the following three research questions:

RQ#1: What types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media are used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China?

RQ#2: What types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media are used by private organizations to promote prevention practice in China?

RQ#3: Are persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China different from persuasive strategies used by private organizations?

1.5 Significance of Study

In the context of the current era of globalization, some health messages persuasive strategies adopted by Chinese government offices and private organizations on social media show that the prevention and control of the new crown epidemic has continued to improve, and the production and living standards have quickly recovered. These health information persuasive strategies are a reference point for other countries currently fighting the new coronavirus epidemic.

For readers, as our understanding of the spread of the virus continues to deepen, this will help to further follow the importance of WHO's self-protection measures by disseminating health messages through the media. The public must remember that most people are still vulnerable to this virus. As long as it continues to spread, everyone is in danger. Each of us has a responsibility to protect ourselves and others and take proactive precautions.

1.6 Definition of Terms

This section gives operational definitions of the important variables being examined in this study.

1.6.1 Persuasion

Persuasion refers to a form of communication that uses argument or emotion to make the receiver believe what the sender is saying. It aims to influence a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations, or behaviors such as persuading others to change their views, to agree to promises, to purchase products or services, or to take a

particular desired action. Based on O'Keefe (2015), different recipients may be persuaded by different types of information.

1.6.2 Persuasive Strategies

Persuasive strategy refers to a particular way to influence people's thoughts (beliefs, likes, etc.) and behaviors (purchase, actions, etc.) through some techniques to achieve the desired purpose(s). During the pandemic, both the Chinese government and private organizations have used various persuasive strategies to promote prevention measures among Chinese citizens to prevent the new coronavirus. This study applies the following six persuasive strategies proposed by Ojanen (1996):

Coercion: The act of forcing someone to do something that ones are unwilling to do.

Coercion means there is no choice other than a specific (A) Coercion need not be enforced by force.

Threat: The act of threatening that someone will be hurt or harmed, especially if the person does not do something as requested.

Threat means that an option is highly visible and/or possible but should be avoided. In this case, the threat is that a particular choice may lead to negative consequences.

Offer: The act of proposing to give someone something if he or she accepts to do something as requested.

Offer is the most specific information about a selection. One choice leads to good results, while the other leads to nothing or negativity. Offer is defined as the result of an express statement of a particular choice of circumstances

Guidance: The act of giving directions about how to do something or about how to deal with problems connected with someone's work, education, or personal relationships.

Guideline describes the consequences of the choices. If described, option A has positive consequences, while option B has negative consequences. Guidance in this particular sense is defined as a description of the outcome of a choice.

Appeal: The act of presenting the quality of someone or something that makes ones or such thing attractive or interesting.

Appeal makes one of the possible alternatives positive, natural or necessary. There may be another option, which may be stated or may only be implied. Appeal refers to the message that a particular choice may lead to positive consequences

Appreciation: The act of recognizing or acknowledging that someone or something is valuable, important as described.

Appreciation conveys the impression that every choice is good. 'You do what you think is right'. "Everything will be fine." Appreciation is defined as making all choices worthwhile and ultimately leading to positive consequences.

1.6.3 Epidemic of COVID-19

Officially named "COVID-19" by the World Health Organization Director-General Tan Desai (Thacker, 2020), it was firstly detected in China on December 1, 2019. It can be spread mainly through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other (within about 6 feet). People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). This virus has been spreading around the globe until the present time. As of April 4, 2021, a total of 128,555,262 cases have been diagnosed globally (World Health Organization, 2021).

1.6.4 Health Messages

The term "health messages" can be applied to persuasive messages that refer to messages about health intended to change receivers' perception toward particular health behavior and/or health behavior in the health care field. According to research

conducted by Morrison, Kukafka, and Johnson (2005), health messages have become an important tool to help patients change their behavior. Health messages for changing behavior can target not only patients to change unhealthy behaviors such as smoking or physical exercise, but also caretakers to change behaviors such as insisting on preventive care reminders or reporting illness to the public health department (Maibach & Parrott, 1995).

1.6.5 Social Media

Social media refers to a content production and exchange platform based on users' relationships on the Internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Due to its ability to provide both sight and sound, together with interaction between users, it is a tool and platform that people use to share emotions, opinions, insights, and experiences with each other (Perrin, 2015). For this study, it mainly includes social networking sites in China such as Weibo.

1.6.6 Prevention Practices

Preventive practices are actions taken to eliminate the cause of a potential non-conformance or other potentially undesirable situation. They are measures that have been taken before the problem occurs and can deal with the proposed measures to a certain extent. Concrete examples include getting a vaccine, doing some screening tests for a particular disease (e.g., mammogram).

1.6.7 Governmental Office

In China, governmental offices are the executive organs of state power organs. They have the power to formulate administrative regulations, issue decisions and orders, and guide the administrative activities of various departments, subordinate state administrative agencies, enterprises, public institutions, and social organizations.

1.6.8 Private Organization

A private organization is any partnership, firm, person, or institution that is not run by a for-profit or public body. It includes all for-profit businesses that are not owned or operated by the government. For example: hospitals, hotels, enterprises, etc.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews related literature and previous studies on concepts including persuasion in health communication, persuasive strategies, forms of argument in persuasion, and health messages for prevention practices. Review of related theories is also provided. Both reviews provide a foundation to develop a conceptual framework of this study.

2.1 Review of Related Literature and Previous Studies

This section provides a review of literature and previous studies on four related concepts as followings.

2.1.1 Persuasion in Health Communication

The persuasion refers to the communication activities in which the disseminates tried to influence and change the attitude, concept, value, and behavior of the receiver by transmitting some information (Liu, 1993). Different definitions were given for persuasion. On one hand, Brembeck and Howell (1976) put forward that persuasion is to consciously change people's thoughts and behaviors, so as to achieve the predetermined purpose. This definition emphasized the internal motivation of the audience. On the other hand, Scheidel (1967) had an idea that persuasion was a combination of the speaker and the listener such that the speaker tried to influence the listener's behavior by transmitting sound and visible symbols. Later, Tuija and Halmari (2005) defined "persuasion" as meaning when individuals or groups used language strategies or visual images to make the audience agree with them. These two definitions thought highly of the important position of communicators and audiences in the persuasion process and combined the concepts of channel and behavior change. And the significant embodiment of the persuasion

effect was the change of attitude, and there was a significant difference between "attitude" and "point of view". What is more, "viewpoint" referred to a wide range of expectations and expectations, while "attitude" appertained to an avoidance tendency. Opinions can be expressed verbally, while attitudes were sometimes "unconscious". In conclusion, persuasion was to use communication means in a specific social environment to make the audience reach the response expected by the informant after receiving the information.

Perloff (1993), a famous American persuasion Professor, defined persuasion in his famous book the dynamics of persuasion that persuasion was an activity or process in which the disseminates tried to induce others with a certain degree of freedom to change their attitudes through the transmission of information. He considered that the ways of persuasion can be divided into two categories. One was to state the content and reasons of persuasion positively. While the other one was to provide clues on the side to let the other parties experience the persuasion content. In addition, he proposed that persuasion had four basic elements, namely, 1) information communicator, 2) information content, 3) information media, and 4) information receiver.

In the development of health communication, Rogers, Storey, Berger, and Chaffee (1987) proposed to improve the effectiveness of health communication by controlling the change of individual attitudes and behaviors. The wooden body of health communication has the connotation of advocating the public to actively choose health behavior, and the measurement standard of communication effect is to test the change and tendency of individual attitude, so it is necessary and appropriate to use the persuasion theory in the research of health communication. The reason why health communication scholars put attitude in such an important position is that attitude is the main driving factor of behavior, and the choice of health behavior is subject to individual cognition of disease and sense of prevention.

A study by Xu (2002) predicts that after about 15 years, bad lifestyle would become the number one threat to personal health. Another expert Ma (2006) believes that an essential means to promote health and improve life expectancy will be changes in individual and collective lifestyles. The development of Health Science in the future is likely to come more from social science and behavioral science than biomedicine.

Therefore, the change of behavior plays an important role in disease prevention. Facing the complex society and the public, the media need to adopt different communication strategies for different individuals, which would involve all aspects. And the process of health communication is included in the process of mass communication and has the same five elements, including listener, information, channel, audience, and effect, which is also highly consistent with the elements of the process of the persuasion theory. Therefore, "communication and persuasion" can become the adhesive of health communication activities and elements of media information. In addition, the influence and control, organization and public attitude cognition is the focus of the whole process of health communication. Media information and media organizations are located at the end of the huge social lever, which plays a vital role in balancing the level of public health cognition and even the level of development of social health.

2.1.2 Persuasive Strategies

Binder, Naderer, and Matthes (2021) found that in the three aspects of cognition, attitude and behavior about the impact of healthy food on children, resources and information have more impact on them, while works have less impact. Content creators with strategies can choose effective persuasion strategies such as “celebrity endorsements, peers, experts, threats or fear appeals, rewards and punishments” for new content creation, or combine two or more effective strategies

for content creation to promote healthy food among children. Existing research types can be extended to a wider range of content.

For the purpose of preventing Covid-19, both official and unofficial information published in the media employ some persuasion strategies, and this study uses the following six persuasion strategies proposed by Ojanen (1996) coercion, threat, offer, guidance, appeal and appreciation to analyze their health promotion messages on social media.

1) Coercion means that there is no choice other than a specific choice. Coercion need not be enforced by force. A specific situation is arranged so that no alternative exists. Example: When a hospital ward is closed, it is impossible for patients to stay in that ward.

2) Threat means that an option is highly visible and/or possible but should be avoided. Example: "Don't do this or you'll get in trouble." It doesn't have to state alternatives, and threats don't have to be an emotional form of persuasion. In this case, the threat is that a particular choice may lead to negative consequences.

3) Offer is the most specific information about the selection. One choice leads to good results, while the other leads to nothing or negativity. An offer is defined as the result of an express statement of a particular choice of circumstances.

4) Guidance describes the consequences of the choices. If described, option A has positive consequences, while option B has negative consequences. This consequence is not always clearly stated. Guidance in this particular sense is defined as a description of the outcome of a choice.

5) Appeal is information that a particular choice may lead to positive consequences. There may be another option, which may be stated or may only be implied. Example: "You have to do this because it's good for you and the community".

6) Appreciation often implies the values associated with making choices. The human capacity to make choices can be emphasized, or certain values (solidarity, democracy, equality) can be appreciated. Appreciation is defined as making all choices count and ultimately lead to positive consequences.

Kozak and Coles (2005) in their research on treating OCD mention that therapists can seek to communicate clear expectations that the proposed solutions will work under specific conditions. Regardless of the specific techniques employed, the therapist is encouraged to recognize their persuasive impact on the patient.

Kurniawan, Maarif, and Rahardi (2021) mentioned in the study of the role of women in community development after disasters that the government and public organizations actively provide materials, guidance, appeals and other measures after disasters, as well as individual efforts, are conducive to the recovery process and are expected to improve or maintain spirituality psychosocial and physical condition of patients with or disease and improve their quality of life.

2.1.3 Forms of Argument in Persuasion

In the process of information presentation, the continuous argument in some form can enhance persuasion. McCroskey (1969) defines evidence as a factual statement from sources other than the biographer and the opinions of others who support the biographer's claims. These evidence of opinions of information proving or argument often appear in different forms, which can be roughly divided into two categories -1) evidence of objective statistical data (data-based evidence) and 2) emotional anecdotal narrative evidence (Perloff, 2010).

Data-based evidence refers to the use of factual presentation and abstract data to convince the audience, such as data speculation on the development of related diseases and pointing out that individuals or groups are likely to be affected by health problems. As a kind of factual data, data-based evidence includes quantitative description of events, people, places or other phenomena (Baesler & Burgoon, 1994).

Its persuasiveness can depend on the number of observations, because a large number of cases can show greater objectivity. Liberman and Chaiken (1992) showed that data-based evidence is very intuitive and clear, which has certain advantages in presenting the central content compared with narrative evidence. However, when a highly intrusive receiver is faced with health information that does not conform to an important belief or position, it is likely to cause a strong defensive response and refutation. Therefore, even high-quality data-based evidence has only limited persuasion. Narrative evidence includes specific and emotional information. For example, the first-person narration is a special case, which can also influence the information receiver to a certain extent. Narrative evidence is defined as "using case stories or examples to show that the conclusion provided by the communicator is true. Narrative evidence provides a large number of attractive plots. When it is vivid, the audience is more likely to imagine or construct a specific scene, so that it is easier or faster to make some kind of judgment (Allen & Preiss, 1997).

As data and narrative evidence would have different characteristics, these two types of information may produce different results. Zebregs, Putte, Neijens, and Graaf (2015) have pointed out that information containing data-based evidence will promote greater cognitive response, while narrative evidence will promote greater emotional response. In terms of attitude change and judgment, narrative evidence seems to be more persuasive (Han & Fink, 2012). In addition, narrative information can evoke a stronger image and emotional response and urge the receiver to agree with this information. For the perceived change of dangerous behavior, data-based evidence is better (Allen & Preiss, 1997). Because they provide a legitimate reason, can accurately represent a wider range of groups, and have universality, thus further affecting the source. On the basis that statistical data are more persuasive than narrative evidence (Allen & Preiss, 1997), a group of researchers, Allen, et al. (2000) concluded that these types of evidence are believed to provide different persuasive

functions. They may not need to be compared separately, as in some cases the types of evidence can be combined to be more convincing than narrative or statistical evidence alone. Therefore, it also shows that no matter what type of evidence information, the persuasion effect is better than no evidence information.

2.1.4 Health Messages for Prevention Practices

Persuasion for disease prevention normally involves two elements: health messages and emotional appeals such as fear. The followings cover review of literature about these concepts.

2.1.4.1 Health Messages

The term "health messages" mentioned in the previous chapter can be used for persuasive information, referring to information about health that is intended to change the recipient's perception of a particular health behavior or health behavior in the area of health care. Change behavior Health Messages can target not only unhealthy behavior changes for patients, but also behavior changes for caregivers, such as adhering to preventive care reminders or reporting illness to public health authorities (Maibach & Parrott, 1995). In addition to the physician-patient group, in a study of the efficacy of health messages in promoting disease prevention in a university group, the authors (Becker, McMahan, Etnier, & Nelson, 2002) showed that people's behavioral goals were more likely to promote health. The messages in favor of disease prevention have little to do with it. In addition to this, there is a preference and likely increased interest in health-promoting activities. In addition, Masumoto, Shiozaki and Taishi (2020) studied the effect of age on the goal frame of health messages, and the results showed that age did not directly affect behavioral intention but was mediated by health interest and emotion regulation. Therefore, effects on health and emotion regulation should be considered when examining the relationship between age and health message goal framing. In these studies, different groups acted differently on health information, not just for disease prevention. If

patients want to be cured, doctors and nurses want to have more professional health knowledge to promote public health, while individuals are more aimed at promoting physical health and interest-guided behavior.

2.1.4.2 Emotional Appeal

After receiving information, individuals have the motivation to accept and spread ideas, which is the stimulating influence brought by the information content. In persuasion strategies, there are two main strategies: rational and perceptual. As Schacter, Gilber, and Wegner (2011) concluded, systematic persuasion is to change attitudes or beliefs by resorting to logic and facts. Heuristic persuasion is due to the attraction and resonance of habit or emotion. And emotional and rational motivational demands have comparative experiments appeared. And one of the famous experiments came from Hartmann (1936). He distributed two leaflets of "rational" and "emotional" appeals to voters in the region, measured the voters, and analyzed which appeal mode would have better effects on communication. However, in similar studies, researchers could not determine the attributes of stimuli that caused the change in subjects' attitudes. For example, the stimuli included various "emotional" appeals, such as tension, humor, warmth and so on. In addition, the single or compound impact is difficult to subdivide and define. Accordingly, Yuan (2013) concluded that emotional appeal mainly includes love appeal, nostalgic appeal and fear appeal. Fear appeal refers to the normal response of the psychology of individuals in the face of a threat. It is a common state of psychology when individuals lose their sense of security. It stimulates individuals to get rid of or avoid the threat by changing their behavior or consciousness.

Dillard, Li, and Yan (2016) pointed out that if the threat intensity is equal to the emotional intensity, there is only one line between fear and persuasion in sexual relations. Although the returns from moderate to high levels of threats are diminishing, Dillard, et al. (2016) found no evidence that high threats lead to a decline in

persuasion. The experimental results show that whether the relationship between fear and persuasion is linear or curved depends on the degree and angle of analysis.

For the different experimental results, Witte (1992) study found that fear appeal of high threat will trigger two common reactions among the audience, one is the fear control and the other is the risk control. When faced with information containing "fear appeal", the audience will evaluate the information, - one is "perceived threat", while the other is "perceived efficiency." Only after the audience perceives the threat will they trigger the evaluation of their own effectiveness. If the audience believes that the preventive measures provided by the information are effective and have their own channels to complete the measures, they will enter the "danger control" procedure; otherwise enter the "fear control" procedure. The audience in the "fear control" program will reject the relevant information of fear and take no preventive action. The above is the theory of the "extended parallel process model" put forward around the appeal of fear. And the model of expanded parallel process complements the fear appeal and puts forward that the sense of efficacy will affect the impact of fear appeal on individual will. In short, when the audience believes that the suggestions in the information that can hinder the occurrence of threats are effective and easy to implement, it will lead to the motivation to control the danger, so as to accept the views and strategies provided by the information. However, if the audience cannot get effective advice, or they think it is too difficult to get the advice, and the cost of time and money is high, they will take fear control. Therefore, the threat of information dissemination should be in direct proportion to its effectiveness. When the threat presented in the dissemination of information is high, it must be accompanied by effective measures, methods and suggestions. And it also provides guidance and direction for the design of experimental materials after the text.

2.2 Review of Related Theories

This section involves a review of three related theories – the first one is the Social Penetration Theory (SPT), the second one is the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), and the last one is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

2.2.1 Social Penetration Theory (SPT)

According to Carpenter and Greene (2015), Social Penetration Theory (SPT) was developed to explain how information exchange plays a role in the development and breakdown of interpersonal relationships. Social penetration describes the process of transforming a relationship from a shallow relationship to a closer relationship.

Although the Social Penetration Theory has also been criticized for its limited scope and primarily used to describe the early stages of relationship development and how dating relationships develop over time rather than the relationship between coworkers, neighbors, or acquaintances, it can be applied to investigating relationship between government or organizations and the public.

2.2.2 Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

Knobloch (2015) believes that the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), also known as initial interaction theory, is a pioneering theory in the field of interpersonal communication and belongs to the category of communication theory. Information disseminated by government agencies and private organizations is also based on this theory. In the early stages of the epidemic, government agencies and private organizations were in the introductory stage of releasing prevention information through social media, and their interactions with the masses were highly uncertain. There is also great uncertainty about how it will be received by the masses. As health information dissemination increases, uncertainty among interactive participants decreases, allowing audiences to learn more epidemic prevention information. This resulted in increased information spread.

2.2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

American scholars Petty and Cacioppo (2009) recommended the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion Communication in 1986, and persuasion research has been further developed. Combined with the current epidemic environment, "Elaboration Likelihood" means the degree to which individuals think about information related to the epidemic. Individuals will process this information differently due to their different motivations and abilities. This affects how people think about things and make decisions, as well as how people gather information and trust information sources (Petty, Barden, & Wheeler, 2009).

The ELM proposes that persuasion can take two paths: 1) the core path or "central route to persuasion," when the individual has a high degree of motivation and ability, the individual thinks about all aspects of the information, and conducts deep analysis and evaluation to decide whether to change his attitude toward things. This is an active way of participation. People who choose this path first change their cognition, which leads to changes in beliefs and attitudes, and finally leads to changes in behavior; 2) the marginal path, or "peripheral route to persuasion," when the individual's motivation and ability are relatively weak, the individual will be satisfied with the current cognition, not willing to spend more energy to analyze the information, and it is easier to be persuaded by the surface characteristics of the information. Since the authenticity of the information content cannot be judged, the credibility of the information can only be determined by some external factors, which is more likely to lead to a change in attitude. This is a peripheral way of engaging, and people who choose this path first have a change in belief, then a change in behavior, and finally a change in attitude (Wagner & Petty, 2011)

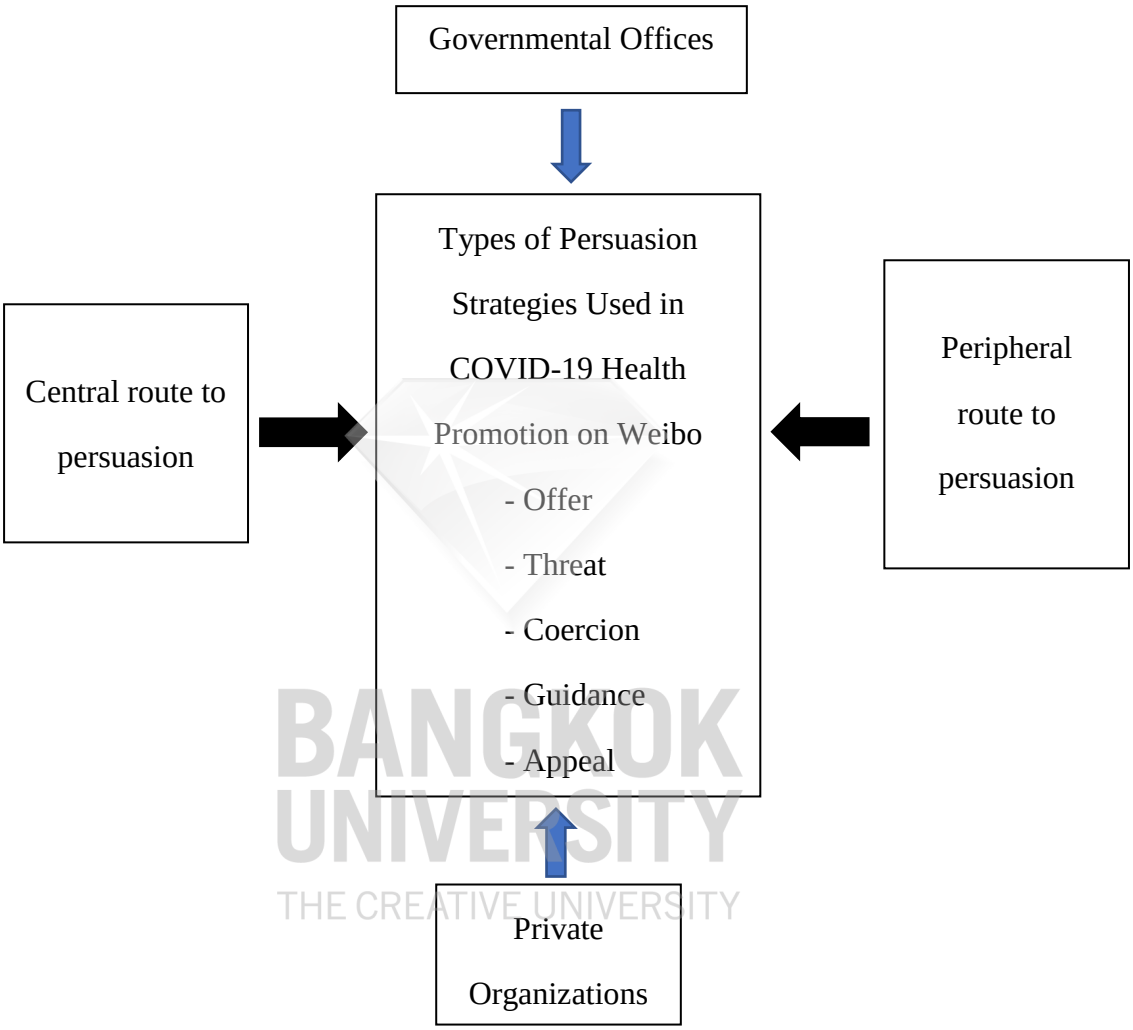
As can be seen from the above description, Wagner and Petty (2011) detail that motivation and ability are the main factors of this model. Among them, motivation includes three main factors: 1) Involvement, that is, the degree of

relevance between individuals and information subjects; 2) The diversity of arguments, whether the source of information is reliable, and whether the information is controversial, requires personal in-depth thinking to judge; and 3) Personal cognitive needs, that is, whether there is a need to understand information. Competency refers to an individual's expertise and experience in processing information. If the motivation or ability is strong, the central path will be adopted, and if the motivation and ability are weak, the peripheral path will be adopted.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the above literature review, the conceptual framework of this study was developed as shown in Figure 2.1. The framework of this study is centered on Ojanen's (1996) six persuasion strategies to promote preventive measures - coercion, threat, offer, guidance, appeal, and appreciation. Government offices and private organizations adopt a variety of persuasion strategies in COVID-19 health information on social media to promote prevention practice in China. Comparison of the differences in the persuasion strategies used by these two kinds of organizations is the focus of this study. In addition, this study assumes two routes to persuasion based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) as the transmission direction of preventive measures. On the one hand, the central route is data-based evidence, and on the other hand, the peripheral route is narrative-based evidence. Combining six persuasion strategies with two routes of dissemination of prevention measures will demonstrate which persuasion strategies are used by government departments and private organizations on social media to disseminate COVID-19 health information to promote prevention practices in China.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



2.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the above conceptual framework, this study proposes to test the following research hypotheses.

HP#1: Government offices use all six persuasion strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media to promote prevention practices in China.

HP#2: Private organizations use all six types of persuasion strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media to promote prevention practices in China.

HP#3: Use of persuasion strategies by government offices to promote the COVID-19 prevention practices in China is significantly differently from the use by private organizations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes research design, population and sample selection, research instrument, instrumental pretest, and data analysis. It also explains validity and reliability of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The specific social media that became the focus of this study is Sina Weibo ("Weibo" for short). Taking 20 officially certified Weibo accounts as the research subject, 20 Weibo accounts published blog posts about the prevention of COVID-19 content were treated as the research content. This study uses quantitative content analysis to examine and classify the use of persuasive strategies and whether the same persuasive strategies are the main strategies in blog posts about COVID-19 prevention published by Chinese governmental offices, comparing with the private organizations on Weibo. This method is appropriate with the objectives of this study. According to Berelson (1952), content analysis is a research method that quantitatively presents explicit communicative content under the premise of an objective system. The basic method is to use certain signs as the research unit, code the collected data, and finally analyze the data and get the results.

With the use of quantitative content analysis, the study hopes to draw how government offices and private organizations used Weibo to spread persuasive prevention information at the beginning of the new crown epidemic, which can help us learn how Chinese health agencies successfully promote disease prevention in China. Understanding how government network services and private organizations promote prevention practices would provide useful guidance and practical reference

for the prevention of major illness and the dissemination of health information to the public in the future.

In terms of the media platform, Weibo is the platform being examined in this study. Li, Xu, Cuomo, Purushothaman, and Mackey (2020) mentioned that Weibo is known as the Chinese version of Twitter and is also one of the most influential social media platforms in China. According to the research results of Li, et al. (2020), during the epidemic, the Weibo public discussion platform has a prominent position and is one of the most important platforms for obtaining epidemic information and exchanging discussions.

In summary, this article uses a quantitative content analysis method to study the use of persuasive strategies in blog posts about COVID-19 published by Chinese government offices and by private organizations on Weibo.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

Target population of this study is COVID-19 prevention messages sent through Weibo by the government offices and by the private organizations in China during January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020.

With the use of purposive sampling, sampled organizations include 10 official government Weibo-certified accounts and 10 private organization Weibo-certified accounts. Purposive sampling is a technique widely used in communication research to identify and select informative cases to make the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002).

To gain the data samples, Weibo account was searched according to these two keywords: "names of provincial administrative regions in the country + health" or "names of provincial administrative regions in the country + health commissions", and selected Weibo officially certified by the Health and Family Planning Commission, that is, "provincial health commissions" According to the above criteria,

31 provincial-level administrative regions in mainland China were retrieved, resulting in a total of 26 Weibo users who met the requirements. The 10 Weibo accounts of the government offices with the most followers were selected.

In similar vein, among four private organization fields - 1) news media, 2) local-hospital, 3) hospital-doctor, and 4) charity account, 10 certified Weibo accounts of private organizations with high follower attention were selected as a sampling unit as well. A total of 20 eligible Weibo accounts were retrieved (See Appendix A and B).

Figure 3.1–3.3 shows the five operation steps on Weibo webpage. It should be noted that each post in this process was used as a sample.

Step 1: Search the Weibo account of the account keyword on the Weibo homepage.

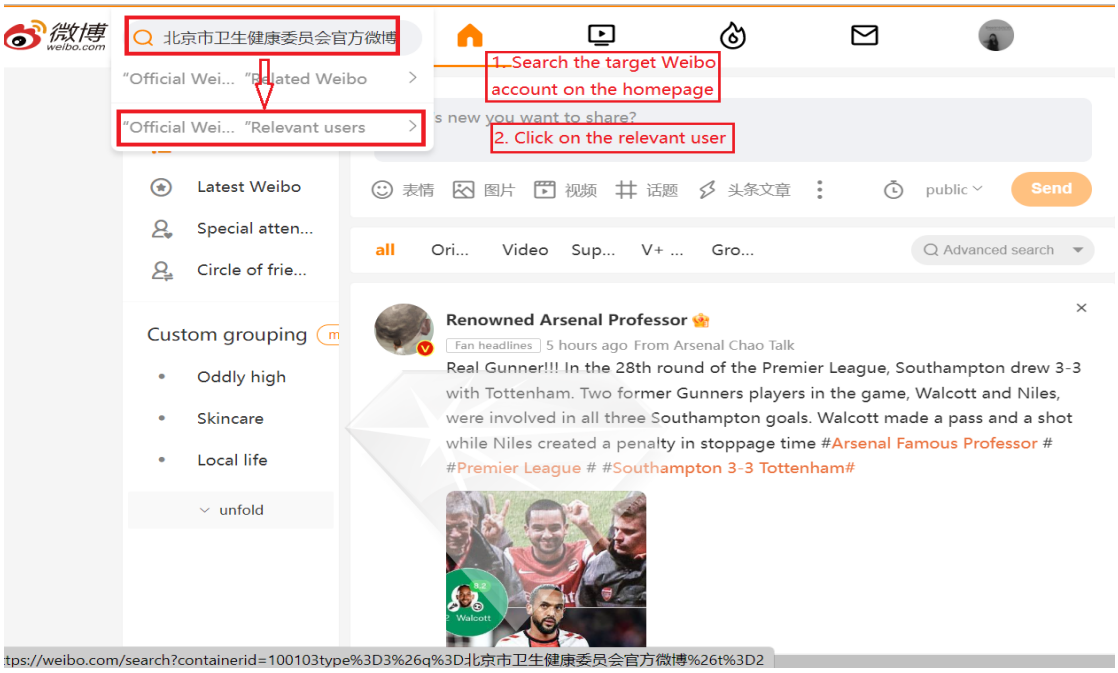
Step 2: Click on the relevant user.

Step 3: Verify Weibo authentication information among relevant users and enter the Weibo homepage

Step 4: Select the time to view Weibo posts on the Weibo account homepage

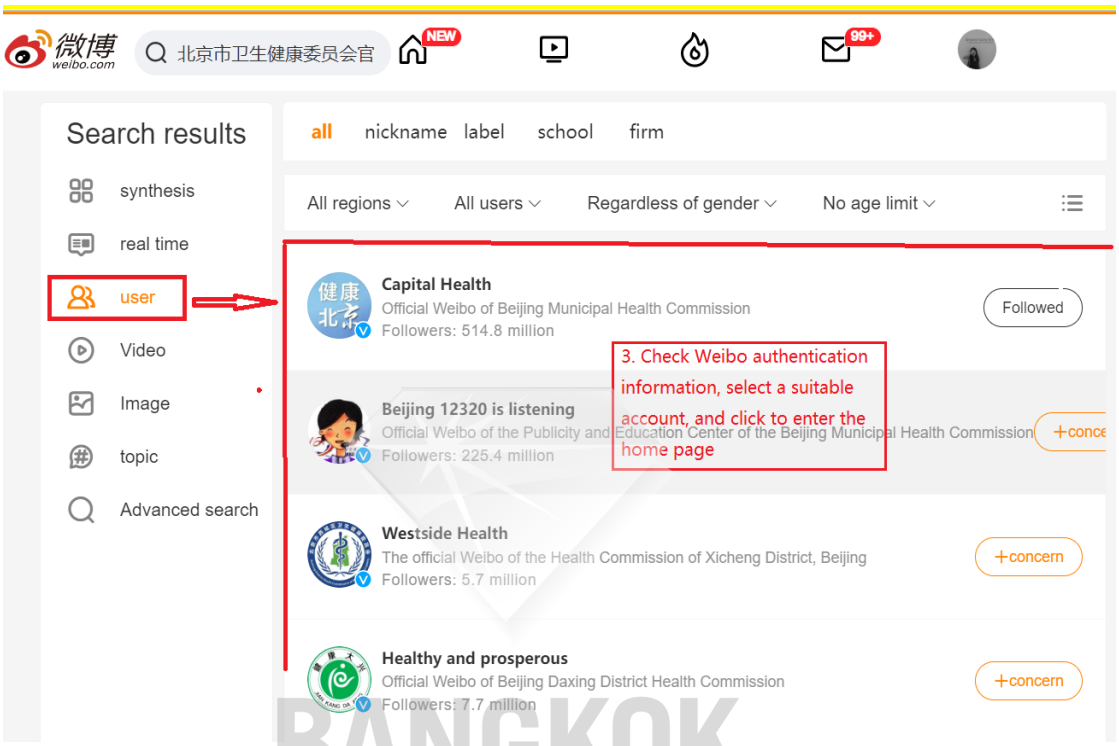
Part 5: View and collect posts related to the new crown epidemic as samples in the display area of the Weibo account homepage.

Figure 3.1: Step 1 and Step 2 of Weibo Post Search Process



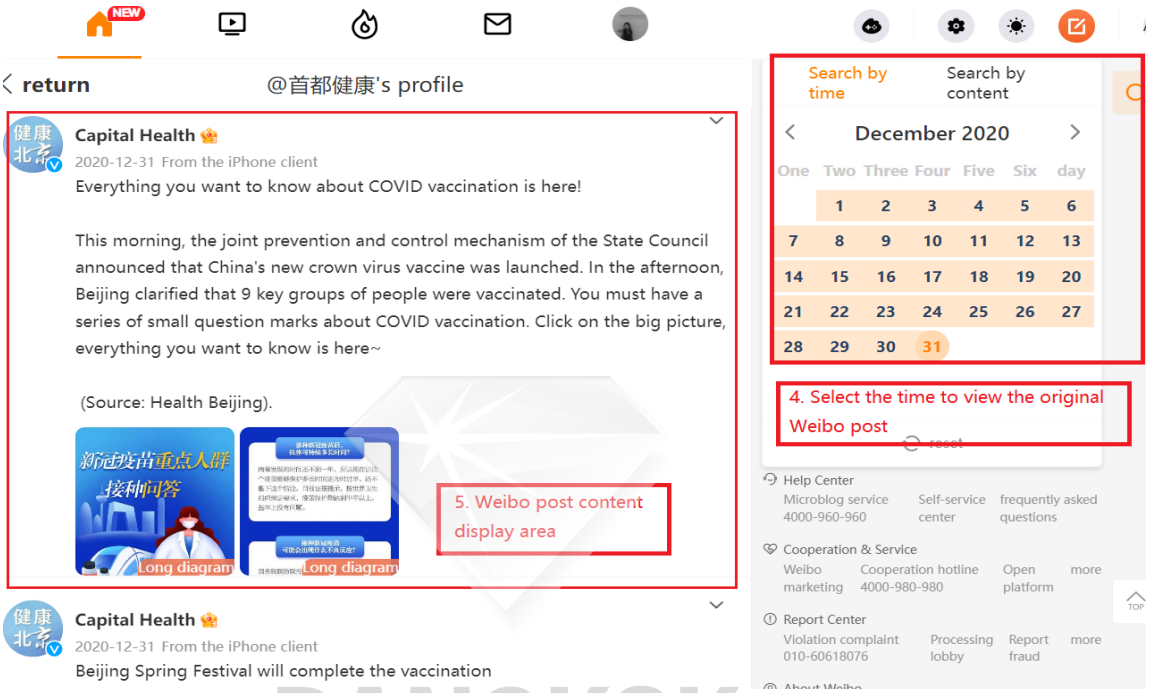
Source: Weibo. (2022). *Weibo post search process*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

Figure 3.2: Step 3 of Weibo Post Search Process



Source: Weibo. (2022). *Weibo post search process*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

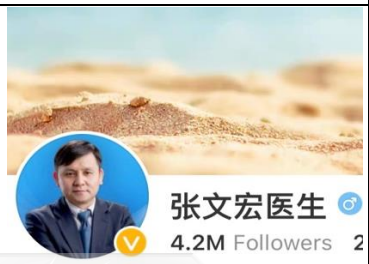
Figure 3.3: Step 4 and Step 5 of Weibo Post Search Process



Source: Weibo. (2022). *Weibo post search process*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

Weibo authentication means that Sina Weibo users apply for real-name authentication, and Weibo passes (recognizes) real-name authentication to encourage users to be responsible for the authenticity of their own statements and avoid impersonating others. Authenticated Weibo will display blue, red, and yellow "V" logos under the account profile picture. Among them, the blue "V" indicates the certification of Weibo institutions, such as the government, enterprises, schools, and media. Both red and yellow "V" belong to personal Weibo authentication. The difference is that the yellow "V" account can be upgraded to a red "V" account if it meets certain conditions.

Figure 3.4: Three Authentication Types of Weibo Account

Example of three colors "V"		
Blue	Yellow	Red
		

Source: Weibo. (2020). *Weibo Account*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure involves four stages. The first stage is ‘data collection.’ Among 20 Weibo accounts on Weibo, the query period was set from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, and then view all public posts published within 2020 on the Weibo account homepage. Next, posts related to the new crown epidemic for sampling were selected, and finally the corresponding details in Excel, including Weibo account, post content, post time, and post URL were recorded. The data collected in this study is pure text data, excluding pictures, videos, audios, links, etc.

The second stage is ‘data encoding.’ Research units were established, and the collected data were coded (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Here, the second approach mentioned by Stemler (2001) was used to syntactically define record units (e.g., using researcher-created delimiters such as words, sentences, or paragraphs). Both categories of data were studied using the same coding method. This study aims to quantify the selected data and draw conclusions about the persuasive strategies used

by Chinese official and private organizations on Weibo regarding COVID-19 prevention and control practices. The relevant elements in the selected Weibo posts are combined with the six persuasion strategies of Ojanen (1996) - 1) Coercion, 2) Threat, 3) Offer, 4) Guidance, 5) Appeal, and 6) Appreciation - to derive the coding scheme of this study. Deductive method was used to examine sampled data from key words regarding six persuasion strategies. Operational definitions of each strategy are provided in Section 3.4.

The third stage is ‘data decoding’ by carrying out quantitative content analysis and result summary for the sampled data. The use of six persuasion strategies in published posts was identified and recorded in the Microsoft Excel according to the coding scheme. The last stage is ‘data interpretation’ with the use of descriptive statistics in terms of frequency and percentage to answer the research questions.

3.4 Research Instrument

At the beginning of the new crown epidemic, Chinese government offices and private organizations used Weibo as a medium to disseminate information on the prevention and control of the new crown virus, making China's anti-epidemic work more orderly, and achieving the purpose of effective and active communication with the public. To understand the persuasion strategies used by government offices and private organizations, this study quantitatively analyzed the content of 200 posts about COVID-19 prevention from 20 Weibo accounts. The elements of data in the post are listed as follows:

1) Weibo Account: the names of 20 Weibo accounts, such as "Capital Health", "Gansu Health Commission", etc.

2) Post Content: the text content of posts published by Weibo accounts is also the sample unit of this study.

3) Post Time: 20 Weibo accounts published posts time.

4) Post URL: URL of each posted post.

5) Definitions of six persuasion strategies:

A coding scheme for six persuasion strategies adapted from Ojanen (1996) was developed (see Table 3.1). The number of times the six persuasion strategies being counted was recorded as frequency in the Excel sheet. The followings are operational definition of all six strategies for coders to be used as a guideline to code the sampled data.

3.4.1 Coercion: This strategy includes two dimensions – 1) prevention and control policies, and 2) prevention arrangement.

1) “Prevention and control policies” refers to the timeliest release of medical policies, traffic control information, and public place management measures, etc. Its keywords are uniform implementation, restrictive measures, medical policy, legal enforcement, urgent enforcement, strict requirements, must be adopted, etc.

2) “Prevention arrangements” refers to the timeliest release of mandatory epidemic prevention work arrangements. Its keywords are closed-loop management, health monitoring, medical observation, home isolation, isolation period, nucleic acid screening, etc.

3.4.2 Threat: This strategy includes two dimensions – 1) Tracking announcement, and 2) Emergency pandemic legislation.

1) “Tracking announcement” refers to the action tracking of publicly confirmed cases, indicating that those who encounter them should be subject to medical observation and protection. Its keywords are itinerary, confirmed cases, carrier itinerary, close contacts, authoritative release, high and medium risk areas, overseas imports, epidemic impact etc.

2) "Emergency pandemic legislation", by calling for legislation to draft legislation, etc., to implement preventive management programs from the legal aspect, combined with fear appeals. Its keywords are legislative Council, legislative

plan, call for legislation, special legislation, emergency legislative measures, joint responsibility, travel code, health code.

3.4.3 Offer: This strategy includes three dimensions – 1) Epidemic notification, 2) Health release, and 3) Materials provided.

1) “Epidemic notification" refers to the increase or cure of confirmed cases within a certain period or within a certain period released by the Weibo account. Its keywords are new report, cumulative report, deadline, report, notification, test results, etc.

2) "Health release" refers to health-related science popularization, publicity, news, etc., which may apply to content related to COVID-19, such as breakthroughs in treatment technology, dissemination of health knowledge, etc. Its keywords are health science popularization, health tips, health promotion, health education, psychological counseling, experience sharing, etc.

3) “Materials provided” refers to living and medical supplies. Its keywords are supplies, vaccines, donated items, shelter hospitals, Nucleic acid testing agency, etc.

3.4.4 Guidance: This strategy includes two dimensions – 1) Epidemic prevention and 2) Control tips, and Epidemic work guidance.

1) “Epidemic prevention and control tips,” which refers to the information dissemination of people's self-prevention knowledge during the epidemic, including home isolation precautions, symptom self-examination and other prevention and control knowledge. Its keywords are precautions, anti-epidemic instructions, and epidemic prevention tips, etc.

2) “Epidemic work guidance” refers to the dispatch of medical funding personnel, vaccine research and development, etc., Its keywords are vaccine research and development, Centers for Disease Control, work guidance, work arrangements, gradual relaxation, full recovery, and lifting of the ban, etc.

3.4.5 Appeal: This strategy includes two dimensions – 1) Epidemic awareness, and 2) Epidemic control supervision.

1) "Epidemic awareness" refers to improving awareness of the prevention of new crowns and is oriented by the dissemination of health information. Its keywords are prevention, prevention, vigilance, fighting the epidemic, active, participation, protection, wearing a mask, donating love, positive energy, protection, support, etc.

2) “Disease control supervision” refers to promoting the work of the disease control department, especially the accountability of the responsible department for work mistakes, etc. Its keywords are supervision, accountability, suggestion, soliciting opinions, etc.

3.4.6 Appreciation: This strategy includes two dimensions – 1) Heroic deeds of prevention and control, and 2) Encouraging blessings.

1) “Heroic deeds of prevention and control” refers to publicize and commend all kinds of social workers and service personnel who have made outstanding contributions to epidemic prevention and control. Its keywords are the most beautiful, persevere, great, story, diary, tribute, commendation, hero, volunteer, rescue team, retrograde, etc.

2) “Encouraging blessings” refers to dredge the public's tension and fear, and then guide the public to respond to the epidemic optimistically. Its keywords are blessing, encouragement, gratitude, gratitude, care, commemoration, cheer, condolence, etc.

Table 3.1: Coding Scheme

No.	Strategy Type	Dimensions	Keywords
1	Coercion	Prevention and Control Policy	All implementation, restrictive measures, medical policy, law enforcement, emergency enforcement, strict requirements
		Prevention Arrangements	Closed-loop management, health monitoring, medical observation, home isolation, isolation period, nucleic acid screening
2	Threat	Tracking announcement	Itinerary, confirmed cases, carrier itinerary, close contacts, authoritative release, high and medium risk areas, overseas imports, epidemic impact
		Emergency Pandemic Legislation	Legislative council, Legislative plan, Call for legislation, Special legislation, emergency legislative measures, Joint liability, Travel code, Health code

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Coding Scheme

No.	Strategy Type	Dimensions	Keywords
3	Offer	Epidemic notification	New report, cumulative report, deadline, report, notification, test results
		Health release	Health science, health tips, health promotion, health education, psychological counseling, experience sharing
		Materials provided	Supplies, vaccines, donations, shelter hospitals, nucleic acid testing agency
4	Guidance	Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips	Precautions, anti-epidemic instruction, epidemic prevention tips
		Epidemic Work Guidance	Vaccine research and development, Centers for Disease Control, work guidance, work arrangements, gradual relaxation, full recovery, lifting the ban, errand

Continued

Table 3.1 (Continued): Coding Scheme

No.	Strategy Type	Dimensions	Keywords
5	Appeal	Epidemic awareness	Prevention, vigilance, war epidemic, active, participation, protection, wearing a mask, donating love, positive energy, guarding, supporting, remind
		Disease control supervision	Supervision, accountability, suggestion, soliciting opinions
6	Appreciation	Heroic deeds of prevention and control	The most beautiful, persevere, great, story, diary, tribute, hero, volunteer, rescue team, retrograde
		Encouraging blessing	Blessing, encouragement, gratitude, caring, commemoration, refueling, condolence

3.5 Instrument Pre-test

Before coding the whole set of data using the proposed coding scheme, 10% of the sampled data from Weibo from both government offices and private organizations were coded to check whether there is any error with the coding scheme.

The government offices and private organizations each select 10 posts for pre-test, carefully read whether the content of the post uses the number of keywords of the six persuasion strategies, and verify whether there are posts using persuasion strategies, in which the keywords are not defined to the encoding scheme. If this is the case, adjust the encoding scheme based on the pretest. According to the above pre-test

scheme, make a coding table. If 10 posts use one persuasion strategy, frequency is counted as one. If two persuasion strategies are used at the same time, frequency is counted under the two persuasion strategies. If none of the six persuasion strategies is used, frequency is counted as one under "Others".

Table 3.2 shows 10 posts of the sampled Government offices that were pre-tested. According to the table, the pretested posts used one or more persuasion strategies, the most used persuasion strategy was "offer", and none of the posts used "other" persuasion strategy. Posts related to "Prevention and Control Policy", "Emergency pandemic legislation", "Materials provided" and "Disease control Supervision" were not detected in the test and should be carefully identified in an actual research analysis. Overall, the coding scheme can be considered valid instrument for examining the government offices postings on COVID-19 prevention.

Table 3.2: Coding Sheet for Government Offices

Persuasion Strategies	Data ID									
	Gov#1	Gov#2	Gov#3	Gov#4	Gov#5	Gov#6	Gov#7	Gov#8	Gov#9	Gov#10
1) Coercion										
1.1) Prevention and Control Policy										
1.2) Prevention Arrangements								1		
2) Threat										
2.1) Tracking announcement				1	1			1		
2.2) Emergency pandemic legislation										
3) Offer										
3.1) Epidemic notification				1	1	1		1	1	1
3.2) Health release							1			
3.3) Materials provided										

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued): Coding Sheet for Government Offices

Persuasion Strategies	Data ID									
	Gov#1	Gov#2	Gov#3	Gov#4	Gov#5	Gov#6	Gov#7	Gov#8	Gov#9	Gov#10
4) Guidance										
4.1) Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips							1			
4.2) Epidemic Work Guidance										
5) Appeal										
5.1) Epidemic awareness									1	
5.2) Disease control Supervision										
6) Appreciation										
6.1) Heroic deeds of prevention and control	1	1	1							
6.2) Encouraging blessing	1									
7) Others										

Table 3.3 shows 10 posts of the sampled private organizations that were pre-tested. According to the table, the pretested posts used one or more persuasion strategies, the most used persuasion strategy was "offer", and none of the posts used "other" persuasion strategy. Posts related to "Prevention and Control Policy", "Emergency pandemic legislation" and "Disease control Supervision" were not detected in the test, which should be carefully identified in an actual research analysis. Overall, the coding scheme can be considered valid instrument for examining the COVID-19 prevention posts by private organizations.

Table 3.3: Coding Sheet for Private Organization

Persuasion Strategies	Data ID									
	Pri#1	Pri#2	Pri#3	Pri#4	Pri#5	Pri#6	Pri#7	Pri#8	Pri#9	Pri#10
1) Coercion										
1.1) Prevention and Control Policy										
1.2) Prevention Arrangements			1							
2) Threat										
2.1) Tracking announcement		1		1		1				
2.2) Emergency pandemic legislation										
3) Offer										
3.1) Epidemic notification	1				1					
3.2) Health release				1		1				
3.3) Materials provided								1		1

(Continued)

Table 3.3 (Continued): Coding Sheet for Private Organization

Persuasion Strategies	Data ID									
	Pri#1	Pri#2	Pri#3	Pri#4	Pri#5	Pri#6	Pri#7	Pri#8	Pri#9	Pri#10
4) Guidance										
4.1) Epidemic Prevention & Control Tips				1	1					
4.2) Epidemic Work Guidance	1		1							
5) Appeal										
5.1) Epidemic awareness		1		1	1	1		1		
5.2) Disease control Supervision										
6) Appreciation										
6.1) Heroic deeds of prevention and control							1		1	
6.2) Encouraging blessing								1		
7) Others										

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The researchers performed content analysis and calculations by selecting relevant elements in the sample posts and using Office Excel to record the use of various persuasion strategies according to the above-mentioned coding guidelines.

First, collect posts about the COVID-19 in 2020, and use Excel to record samples of government offices and private organizations.

Second, read the collected samples by using an encoding scheme. Create a new Excel to record the frequency of use of various persuasion strategies by the government offices and private organizations and calculate the percentage to describe the proportion of each persuasion strategy.

Third, compare whether government offices and private organizations use the same persuasion strategies when posting information about COVID-19 prevention on Weibo, and discuss their purpose and practical significance.

Finally, the findings on the six persuasion strategies are summarized to answer the research questions and to test the research hypotheses.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Study

To ensure the validity of the research, the data were collected from public social media (Weibo), and the data were analyzed with the same objective and systematic coding scheme. Based on Berelson (1952) and Holsti (1969), content analysis is a research method for identifying the characteristics of information and making inferences under the premise of an objective system. The six persuasion strategies used in this study were derived from those used and demonstrated by Ojanen in his 1996 study entitled, Persuasion Strategies Applied to Psychosocial Rehabilitation. The adoption of the coding scheme of this study from Ojanen's work can be considered valid in terms of 'construct validity.'

In order to ensure the reliability of the research, a Chinese liberal arts student was invited as the second coder, especially in the deduction of the keywords of the six persuasion strategies. Second, the second coder coded 30% of the sampled data using the same coding scheme, and recorded posts using persuasion strategies in order to verify whether similar frequencies are found. Inter-coder reliability was calculated to confirm reliability of the data coding. Stemler (2000) mentioned in his research that reliability can be measured by stability and reproducibility. The so-called stability refers to the intrinsic reliability of the evaluators.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reported the results of a quantitative content analysis of 200 relevant Weibo posts from 20 Weibo accounts, using persuasion strategies and health information dissemination as the conceptual framework. The findings are based on the proposed research questions.

4.1 Summary of Data Samples

A total of 200 Weibo posts published in 2020 were selected as a sample, of which 10 government office Weibo accounts (see Table 4.1) published a total of 100 posts about COVID-19 prevention, and 10 private organization Weibo accounts (see Table 4.2) published a total of 100 posts about COVID-19 prevention.

Table 4.1: List of Governmental Office Samples

ID No.	Weibo Authentication	Weibo Account
Gov#1	Official Weibo of Beijing Municipal Health Commission	Capital Health
Gov#2	Official Weibo of Gansu Provincial Health Commission	Gansu Provincial Health Commission
Gov#3	Official Weibo of Guangdong Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Guangdong
Gov#4	Official Weibo of Shanghai Municipal Health Commission	Health Shanghai 12320

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): List of Governmental Office Samples

ID No.	Weibo Authentication	Weibo Account
Gov#5	Official Weibo of Hebei Provincial Health Commission	Health Hebei official microblog
Gov#6	Official Weibo of Guizhou Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Guizhou
Gov#7	Official Weibo of Sichuan Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Sichuan official microblog
Gov#8	Official Weibo of Henan Provincial Health and Family Planning Commission	Henan Health Commission
Gov#9	Official Weibo of Jilin Provincial Health Commission	Jilin Provincial Health Commission
Gov#10	Official Weibo of Tianjin Municipal Health Commission	Tianjin Health

Table 4.2: List of Private Organization Samples

ID No.	Weibo Authentication	Weibo Account
Pri#1	China News Network Legal Person Weibo	China News Network
Pri#2	China daily China Daily Official Weibo	China Daily
Pri#3	The Paper Official Weibo	The paper

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): List of Private Organization Samples

ID No.	Weibo Authentication	Weibo Account
Pri#4	Chief Physician of Pediatrics, Beijing Union Medical College Hospital	Bao Xiulan Clinic
Pri#5	Director of Department of Infectious Diseases, Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Fuda University	Dr. Zhang Wenhong
Pri#6	Dr. Yu Changping, Critical Care Specialist, Department of Respiratory Medicine, Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University	Dr Yu Changping
Pri#7	Official Weibo of Beijing Hanhong Love Charity Foundation	Han Hong Love Charity Foundation
Pri#8	Beijng Union Medical College Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences	Beijing Union Medical College Hospital
Pri#9	Official Weibo of Xiangya Hospital of Central South University	Xiangya Hospital of Central South University
Pri#10	West China Hospital of Sichuan University	West China Hospital of Sichuan University

4.2 Findings

The quantitative content analysis of 100 posts by 10 government offices and 100 posts by 10 private organizations based on Ojanen's (1996) six persuasive strategies reveal the findings based on the proposed research questions as follows.

4.2.1 Findings on Research Question # 1

RQ#1: What types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media are used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China?

Table 4.3 shows that government offices used all of the six persuasive strategies to post epidemic related information on Weibo. Among six persuasion strategies, “offer” was used the most (n = 71), followed by “guidance” (n = 22), “appeal” (n = 20), “threat” (n = 16), “coercion” (n = 12), and “appreciation” (n = 9).

Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Persuasive Strategy Used by Government Office

Persuasive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Offer	71	47.33
Guidance	22	14.67
Appeal	20	13.33
Threat	16	10.67
Coercion	12	8.00
Appreciation	9	6.00
Others	0	0.00
Total	150	100

When breaking down by dimensions of each strategy, firstly in terms of "Coercion" strategy, the “Prevention and control policy” dimension is 3.33% (n =5), and the “Prevention arrangements” dimension is 4.67% (n = 7).

Secondly, the use of “Threat" strategy is 9.33% (n = 14) in the “Tracking announcement” dimension, while only 1.33% (n = 2) in the “Emergency pandemic legislation” dimension.

Thirdly, the use of the "Offer" strategy reached 29.34% (n = 44) in the dimension of “Epidemic notification,” 11.34% (n = 17) in the dimension of “Health release,” and 6.67% (n = 10) in the dimension of “Materials provided.” The fourth persuasion strategy is "Guidance," 7.33% (n = 11) in the “Epidemic prevention and control tips” dimension, 7.33% (n = 11) in the “Epidemic work guidance” dimension as well. As for "Appeal" strategy, 8.0% (n = 12) was found in the “Epidemic awareness” dimension, and “Disease control supervision” dimension is 5.33% (n = 8).

Finally, “Heroic deeds of prevention and control” dimension is 5.33% (n = 8) and “Encouraging blessing” dimension is 0.67% (n = 1) in "Appreciation" strategy. However, "Others" was not found (n = 0).

Table 4.4: Frequency and Percentage of Dimensions under Each Persuasive Strategy by Government Office

Persuasive Strategy	Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage
Coercion	Prevention and Control Policy	5	3.33
	Prevention Arrangements	7	4.67
Threat	Tracking announcement	14	9.33
	Emergency Pandemic Legislation	2	1.33

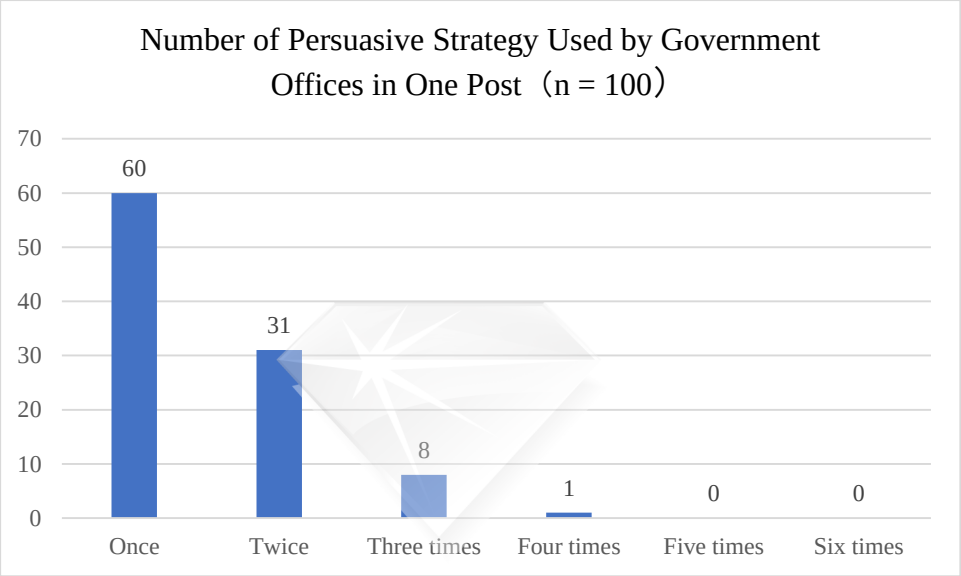
(Continued)

Table 4.4 (Continued): Frequency and Percentage of Dimensions under Each Persuasive Strategy by Government Office

Persuasive Strategy	Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage
Offer	Epidemic notification	44	29.33
	Health release	17	11.33
	Materials provided	10	6.67
Guidance	Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips	11	7.33
	Epidemic Work Guidance	11	7.33
Appeal	Epidemic awareness	12	8.00
	Disease control supervision	8	5.33
Appreciation	Heroic deeds of prevention and control	8	5.33
	Encouraging blessing	1	0.67
Others		0	0.00
Total		150	100.00

Based on Figure 4.1, although most of the government offices' posts used only one type of persuasive strategy (n = 60), about one-third of the posts used two types of persuasive strategies (n = 31), and a very small number used three types of persuasive strategies (n = 8). Four types of persuasive strategies were rarely used (n = 1). Use of five or six persuasive strategies at the same time was not found.

Figure 4.1: Frequency of Number of Persuasive Strategy Used by Government Offices in One Post



4.2.2 Findings on Research Question # 2

RQ#2: What types of persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media are used by private organizations to promote prevention practice in China?

Table 4.5 shows that private organizations used all of the six persuasive strategies to post epidemic related information on Weibo. Among six persuasive strategies, “Offer” was used the most (n = 63), followed by “Appreciation” (n = 34), “Appeal” (n = 26), “Guidance” (n = 13), “Threat” (n = 7), “Coercion” (n = 5), and “Others” (n = 0).

Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage of Persuasive Strategies Used by Private Organizations

Persuasive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Offer	63	42.57
Appreciation	34	22.97
Appeal	26	17.57
Guidance	13	8.78
Threat	7	4.73
Coercion	5	3.38
Others	0	0.00
Total	148	100.0

When breaking down by dimensions, in terms of the "Coercion" strategy, the “Prevention arrangements” dimension was used more (2.70%, n = 4) than “Prevention and control policy” dimension (0.68%, n = 1). As for the second persuasive strategy, "Threat," “Tracking announcement” dimension was used more (4.05%, n = 6) than the “Emergency pandemic legislation” dimension (0.68%, n = 1).

In terms of the third persuasion strategy, "Offer," “Health release” dimension is used the most (27.70%, n = 41), followed by “Epidemic notification” dimension (11.49%, n = 17), and “Materials provided” dimension (3.38%, n = 5).

In terms of the fourth persuasive strategy, "Guidance," the “Epidemic prevention and control tips” dimension were used more (7.43%, n = 11) than the “Epidemic work guidance” dimension (1.35%, n = 2). As for the "Appeal" strategy, the “Epidemic awareness” dimension was used more (12.16%, n =18) than the “Disease control supervision” dimension (5.41%, n = 8). As for "Appreciation”

strategy, the “Heroic deeds of prevention and control” dimension was used more (16.89%, n = 25) than the “Encouraging blessing” dimension (6.08%, n = 9). Finally, "Others" was not found.

Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentage of Dimensions under Each Persuasive Strategy by Private Organizations

Persuasive Strategy	Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage
Coercion	Prevention and Control Policy	1	0.68
	Prevention Arrangements	4	2.70
Threat	Tracking announcement	6	4.05
	Emergency Pandemic Legislation	1	0.68
Offer	Epidemic notification	17	11.49
	Health release	41	27.70
	Materials provided	5	3.38
Guidance	Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips	11	7.43
	Epidemic Work Guidance	2	1.35
Appeal	Epidemic awareness	18	12.16
	Disease control supervision	8	5.41
Appreciation	Heroic deeds of prevention and control	25	16.89
	Encouraging blessing	9	6.08
Others		0	0.00
Total		148	100.00

Based on Figure 4.2, nearly half of the posts by private organizations used only one type of persuasive strategy (n = 59). There were 35 posts using two types of persuasive strategy. A small number of posts (n = 5) used three types of persuasive strategy. Four types of persuasive strategy were rarely used (n = 1). Use of five or six types of persuasive strategy at the same time was not found.

Figure 4.2: Frequency of Number of Persuasive Strategy Used by Private Organization in One Post

4.2.3 Findings on Research Question # 3

RQ#3: Are persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China different from persuasive strategies used by private organizations?

Results of descriptive Statistics yield that both government offices and private organizations used all six persuasion strategies by Ojanen's (1996). However, based on Table 4.7 and Figure 4.3, persuasive strategies used by government offices

are generally different from those used by private organizations. In term of the first persuasive strategy, the "Coercion" strategy was used more by government offices (8.00%) than by private organizations (3.38%). As for the second persuasive strategy, "Threat" strategy was used more by government offices (10.67%) than by private organizations (4.73%). This persuasion strategy is mostly used in "fear appeals".

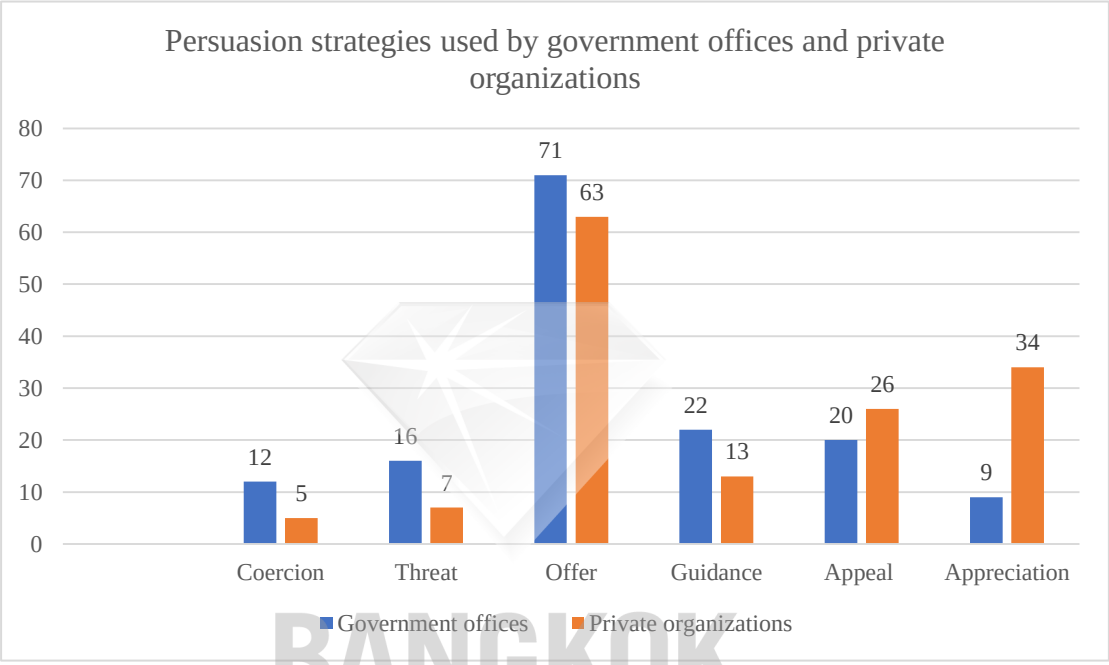
As for the third persuasive strategy, the "Offer" strategy was used slightly more by government offices (47.33%) than by private organizations (42.57%). In addition, in terms of the fourth persuasive strategy, the "Guidance" strategy was used more by government offices (14.67%) than by private organizations (8.78%).

As for the fifth persuasive strategy, the "Appeal" persuasion strategy was used less by government offices (13.33%) than by private organizations (17.57%). In terms of the sixth persuasive strategy, the “Appreciation” strategy was used less by the government offices (6.00%) than by private organizations (22.97%).

Table 4.7: Frequency and Percentage of Six Persuasive Strategies Used by Government Office and Private Organization

Persuasive Strategy	Government Office		Private Organization	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Coercion	12	8.00	5	3.38
Threat	16	10.67	7	4.73
Offer	71	47.33	63	42.57
Guidance	22	14.67	13	8.78
Appeal	20	13.33	26	17.57
Appreciation	9	6.00	34	22.97
Total	150	100.00	148	100.00

Figure 4.3: Comparison of Persuasive Strategies Used by Government Offices and Private Organizations



In addition, to test the third research hypothesis regarding the significant difference between government offices and private organizations in China in their usage of persuasion strategies for the COVID-19 prevention messages on Weibo, Chi-Square was performed to confirm that persuasive strategies in COVID-19 health messages on social media used by governmental offices to promote prevention practice in China are significantly different from persuasive strategies used by private organizations or not.

Bolboacă, Sestraş, Sestraş, and Pamfil (2011) mentioned that Chi-Square test ($\chi 2$ test) is a test based on a series of hypotheses, which is often used in the statistical analysis of experimental data. Chi-Square tests provide solutions to common problems when applied to testing for goodness-of-fit, homogeneity, and independence. Among them, the chi-Square test of homogeneity is used to analyze whether different

populations are similar in certain characteristics. Chi-Square test for homogeneity was chosen for this test.

Hypothesis as follows:

H0: there is no significant difference between government offices and private organizations in using of persuasion strategy to spread COVID-19 prevention messages.

Ha: there is a significant difference between government offices and private organizations in using of persuasion strategies to spread COVID-19 prevention messages.

Chi-Square test process can be viewed in Appendix C. The test results are as follows: $X^2 = 24.50$, alpha = 0.05, $df = 5$, C.V.=11.07, $p < 0.001$. On the one hand, according to the decision rule, X^2 (24.50) > C.V. (11.07), null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, under the p-value approach, p (0.00017) is less than alpha (0.05), null hypothesis is rejected as well.

Conclusion of Chi-Square: this provides good evidence against the null Hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant difference between government offices and the use by private organizations in using of persuasion strategies for the COVID-19 prevention messages.

4.3 Conclusion

Ojanen (1996) stated that the six persuasive strategies are part of the interactive situation, which will produce different interpretations and emotions in different situations. These persuasion strategies were used to elicit compatible responses. Based on findings of this study, government offices and private organizations used different persuasion strategies to release prevention information in

different situations, hoping to get relevant responses from the audiences to promote the prevention and control of the new crown epidemic.

Due to the different roles played by government offices and private organizations in society. As the powers they can exercise and the responsibilities they assume are different, the proportions of using six persuasion strategies by these two groups when promoting disease prevention on Weibo are quite different as well.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter provides discussion of findings. It includes discussions based on the previous studies, relevant theories, and investigator's expectations. It also describes limitations of the study, together with implications for further applications and implications for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Through the investigation and analysis of Weibo posts published by government officials and private organizations using persuasion strategies on the Weibo social media platform, the researchers have a preliminary understanding of the use of persuasion strategies by Chinese government offices and private organizations to disseminate health information on the prevention of new crowns at the beginning of the epidemic Case. (From January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020.)

Specifically, there are three aspects of findings:

5.1.1 Types of Persuasion Strategies Used by Government Offices

The results show that the six persuasion strategies of "Coercion", "Threat", "Offer", "Guidance", "Appeal" and "Appreciation" are used to varying degrees in the official government health information. Among them, "Offer" is the most widely used persuasion strategy by government offices. It was followed by "Guidance," "Appeal," "Threat," and "Coercion" and the least was "Appreciation." The findings of this study did not find that government offices used other persuasive strategy. Since the government office is an official machine of the state, it should protect the safety of audiences while exercising state power. It is the most basic for government offices to provide "infection notification" during the epidemic. Secondly, popular science and

health information is important. The audiences know more about COVID-19, reduce their fear of the unknown, and understand scientific prevention methods.

Additionally, more than one persuasive strategy was used simultaneously in two-fifths of the study sample. This shows that two or more persuasion strategies can be used in the same post at the same time. The government offices have more than one purpose and wants more than one response, but the ultimate purpose is to promote China's prevention practice.

5.1.2 Types of Persuasion Strategies Used by Private Organizations

The results show that the six persuasion strategies of "Coercion", "Threat", "Offer", "Guidance", "Appeal" and "Appreciation" are also used by private organizations to disseminate health information to varying degrees. Among them, "Offer" is the most used persuasion strategy. Followed by "Appreciation", "Appeal", "Guidance" and "Threat", the least used persuasion strategy is "Coercion". Private organizations were not found to use other persuasive strategy in this study. During the epidemic period, private organizations also made their own efforts for the country and the society to end the new crown battle as soon as possible, especially in providing anti-epidemic materials and spreading "positive energy".

In addition, more than two-fifths of the study sample used more than one persuasion strategy at the same time. This shows that persuasion strategies can be used in combination to achieve the effect that one plus one is greater than two. The ultimate purpose of private organizations is also to promote prevention practice in China.

5.1.3 Comparisons

This study found significant differences in the use of persuasion strategies by government offices and private organizations to disseminate COVID-19 prevention messages. Due to the different subjects of distributing information, the proportion of

them using the six persuasion strategies of Ojanen (1996) is different as well. As a state organ, the government offices can exercise state power and at the same time provide services to the public, maintain national stability, and promote social development. The private organizations in this study are news media, groups with professional medical knowledge, and charitable organizations. They will refine the dissemination of information, and the form and content of the information released are also related to their certification.

At the same time, this study uses the Chi-Square test, and the test results also support the significant differences in the use of persuasion strategies between the two types of organizations (Government offices versus private organizations) in China.

5.2 Discussions

5.2.1 Use of Persuasive Strategies by Governmental Offices

The government offices released information about COVID-19 prevention using the six persuasion strategies by Ojanen (1996).

First of all, “Offer” is the most widely used persuasive strategy by government officials, reaching 47.33% (n = 100), and nearly three out of four posts use this persuasive strategy. As a national machine, government offices provided rich information in the dimension of “Epidemic notification” (29.33%, n = 100), they should provide the people with real-time and accurate new crown information reports and release the nucleic acid test results of some special personnel. The second is “Health release”, reaching 11.33% (n = 100). The government offices promoted how to prevent the virus, clarifies false reports, and promoted health education, which gives the public more information about COVID-19 and reduces public panic.

The third is “Materials provided” (6.67%, n = 100). The government offices announced nucleic acid testing institutions, hospitals for infection treatment, and provided corresponding materials for areas with severe epidemics. This is what a government office serving the people should do.

In terms of the “Coercion” strategy, as the government offices are the decision-making and executive department of the country, they have the power to use legislation, and it is necessary to adopt emergency prevention and control policies during the epidemic. While private organizations use "Coercion" persuasion strategy mainly in the news media to follow the government offices.

In terms of the “Offer” strategy, the government mainly provided information on epidemic notifications, publicity of health information, lists of nucleic acid testing institutions and hospitals. Private organizations were more concerned with sharing health experiences and avoided the spread of false reports. Of course, there were also charities that provide donations.

In terms of the “Guidance” strategy, the guidance of the government offices was not only for the audiences, but also for sub-government offices on how to arrange epidemic prevention work. And private organizations were more to guide the audiences how to prevent COVID-19 in their lives.

In terms of “Appeal” strategy, anti-epidemic prevention is not only the government offices responsibility of the government, but also the responsibility of the society. While calling on the audiences to actively prevent the epidemic, they appealed to the audiences to supervise and make suggestions on the epidemic prevention work as well.

Secondly, during the epidemic, more than one-fifth of the government offices used the "Guidance" persuasion strategy, reaching 14.67% (n = 100). The government offices gave professional advice and reminders in” Epidemic Prevention and Control

Tips” (7.33%, n = 100) and “Epidemic Work Guidance” (7.33%, n = 100). Different regions have different epidemic risk levels, and the prevention and control work arrangements vary different. Of course, it must be based on the specific situation, and unreasonable prevention and control work cannot be blindly implemented.

Thirdly, the government offices used the "Appeal" persuasion strategy during the epidemic, reaching 13.33% (n = 100). It is necessary for government offices to disseminate information on how to prevent the new coronavirus in terms of “Epidemic awareness” (8%, n = 100), and to raise people's awareness of the epidemic. To take the initiative and persevere in the prevention of the new crown virus, to a certain extent. It also calls for positive energy in the society because the official power of the government is also limited, and only by calling on all sectors of society to fight the epidemic together can we win the final victory. In addition, in terms of “Disease control supervision” (5.33%, n = 100), government offices also call on everyone to put forward epidemic prevention suggestions and supervise managers to prevent abuse of power.

Fourth, during the epidemic, the government offices used the "Threat" persuasion strategy to reach 10.67% (n = 100). The government offices’ “Tracking announcement” (9.33%, n = 100) will remind the public of the itinerary of the infected and asymptomatic, but more of it is fear, which is a disguised form for the public to self-defense control. On the other hand, in terms of “Emergency Pandemic Legislatio” (1.33%, n = 100), the government offices made legislation specifically for the epidemic situation, which is also to remind the public to pay attention to the new crown epidemic. But this strategy is not used much.

Fifth, the proportion of "Coercion" persuasion strategy used by the government offices is 8% (n = 100). The government offices had clear regulations on “Prevention Arrangements” (4.67%, n = 100), especially in the areas of "nucleic acid

screening" and "medical observation" in high-risk areas of infection. In addition, the government offices' implementation of the "Prevention and Control Policy" (3.33%, n = 100) should be effective and flexible, changing the new policy during the epidemic according to specific circumstances, but it is an indispensable strategy.

Finally, the "Appreciation" persuasion strategy was the least used by the government offices during the epidemic, only 6% (n = 100). The government offices pay tribute to the contributions made by the epidemic prevention staff mainly in terms of heroic deeds of "Prevention and Control" (5.33%, n = 100). On the other hand, the government offices were "Encouraging Blessing" (0.67%, n = 100) audiences, paying attention to the people's emotions, shows that the government offices care about the audiences in real time, but it should be able to do more and better in this regard.

There are some examples of government offices using 6 persuasion strategies (Ojanen, 1996) to publish Weibo posts, which can be found in Appendix D (Figure A to Figure F).

Persuasion strategies are widely used in modern society, affecting society not only in psychology and advertising, but also on a larger scale through the development and dissemination of the Internet.

Franke and Van Rooij (2015), in Researching Psychology and Society, not only explore a novel extension of the dynamic model of DeGroot's classic perspective, but also investigate psychological and social aspects; allowing researchers to reflect on the general question of what constitutes a good manipulation strategy. According to research: Successful manipulation requires exploiting critical vulnerabilities, such as limited strategic reasoning abilities, limited awareness, vulnerability to cognitive biases, or potential indirect social pressure. The use of persuasion strategies during the epidemic is also affected by awareness, cognition, social pressure, etc. This is the same aspect as the results of this study. In this study, persuasion strategies were

combined with social media, and it was concluded that different subjects used persuasion strategies to promote health information with different frequencies through the same social media platform during the epidemic.

According to Pelclová's (2010) study of persuasion strategies in advertising discourse, advertising tends to be constructed based on friendly interactions between the speaker (the persuader) and the receiver (the persuaded). Second, the rights of participants in advertising communications are different from the rights of participants in ordinary spontaneous conversations. This is the same as this study, which uses health information released by government offices on social media to communicate and interact with the audiences, but the subjects of information release are able to exercise their rights and need to perform their responsibilities. Advertisements, on the other hand, are always prearranged texts. However, the information released in this study was not pre-arranged. It was reported and publicized based on what happened in real time during the epidemic.

According to a review of the Social Penetration Theory (Carpenter & Greene, 2015), which refers to the relationship development process between individuals from superficial communication to intimate communication, the registration of Weibo accounts by various provincial-level official governments on Weibo is a form of self-disclosure. While they continue to release and disseminate information about the COVID-19 prevention to the audiences, they are also gradually getting closer to the audiences, making it easier for the public to communicate with government offices and better understand the work of government offices.

As mentioned above, based on the view of the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), Son, Lee, Larsen and Woo (2020) speculated that the more uncertainty information a disaster tweet contains, the higher the entropy (entropy is a measure of uncertainty), which leads to a lower number of retweets. By using statistical and

predictive analysis, the researchers provide evidence to support that entropy is an effective and reliable way to assess the uncertainty of tweets. Their research helps to improve our understanding of information dissemination on Twitter during disasters. This may be based on the fact that during the epidemic, the public's acceptance of official government information on Weibo ranged from shallow to deep.

5.2.2 Use of Persuasive Strategies by Private Organizations

Through content analysis, the six persuasion strategies used by Ojanen (1996) to study the induction of psychosocial rehabilitation were used in the posting of information about COVID-19 prevention by private organizations on Weibo.

First, private organizations use "Offer" to reach 42.57% (n = 100), and more than half of the content used this persuasion strategy. Among this part, the “Health release” is the most used by private organizations (27.70%, n = 100). Hospitals and doctors with professional knowledge in the medical field are actively providing popular science information about the epidemic, so that the people can understand the new crown epidemic from a wider area, pay attention to health while preventing new coronavirus infection. In terms of “Epidemic notification” (11.49%, n = 100), private organizations reported nucleic acid test results and medical research results to increase the way for the public to learn about information, especially in news media accounts. In terms of “Materials provided” (3.38%, n = 100), charitable organizations also use their own strength to donate materials to areas with severe epidemics, which is also a manifestation of social warmth.

Secondly, during the epidemic, more than one-third of the content of private organizations used the "Appreciation" (22.97%, n = 100) persuasion strategy. Among them, the dimension of “Heroic deeds of Prevention and Control” is 16.89% (n = 100). From the departure of the anti-epidemic rescue heroes to their return, the number of infected people continued to increase until it was dynamically cleared. These are the

joint efforts of the anti-epidemic workers. While private organizations praise them, and the epidemic is also cruel. We need “Encouraging blessing” (6.08%, n = 100). Touching stories under the epidemic can give audiences power.

Thirdly, during the epidemic, the "Appeal" persuasion strategy was used by 17.57% of private organizations' posts (n = 100). Under the social epidemic prevention work, it is essential to improve the “Epidemic awareness” of the masses (12.16%, n = 100). While providing information on the prevention of the new crown virus, private organizations are also doing their best to call for epidemic prevention, especially in terms of "wearing a mask" and "disinfecting," Of course, in terms of “Disease control supervision” (5.41%, n = 100), doctors with professional medical knowledge will also put forward some suggestions on epidemic prevention and control to promote faster and better recovery of the epidemic. There should be more voices in this regard.

Then, the “Guidance” persuasion strategy was used in 8.78% of private organization posts (n = 100). In terms of “Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips” (7.43%, n = 100), the news media also closely follow government officials and professional medical experts to issue tips and recommend dissemination of information. In addition, while paying attention to the new crown epidemic, medical personnel also provide their professional guidance on “Epidemic Prevention Work” (1.35%, n = 100).

In addition, during the epidemic, the "Threat" persuasion strategy (4.73%, n = 100) was used by private organizations. It is frightening that a certain place is defined as a high-risk area because the number of people infected with the new coronavirus is high and the speed of transmission is fast. Private organizations use “Tracking Announcement” (4.05%, n = 100) to remind other areas to raise awareness of prevention in high-risk areas to avoid increasing the risk of mass infection. In

addition, “Emergency Pandemic Legislation” (0.68%, n = 100) is an explanation of the government’s policy during the epidemic reported by the news media, and this aspect is not mentioned much.

Finally, private organizations used the least "Coercion" persuasion strategy during the epidemic, only 3.38% (n=100). Among them, Prevention and Control Policy (0.68%, n = 100) and “Prevention Arrangements” (2.70%, n = 100) are news media accounts reporting on government official epidemic policies and arrangements. These compulsory measures are necessary to maintain social order during the epidemic, and disseminating real-time news is what the news media should do.

There are some examples of private organizations using 6 persuasion strategies (Ojanen, 1996) to publish Weibo posts, which can be found in Appendix D (Figure G to Figure L).

Page, Crampton, Viney, Rich, and Griffin (2020), in their study of physician professional teaching, concluded that educators can demonstrate expertise by utilizing persuasive communication techniques to increase their credibility. Physicians' professional attitudes can be influenced by building rapport and leveraging rational and emotional appeals. Similarly, most of the private organizations in the sample of this study are doctors and professional media workers with professional medical knowledge. The health information on Covid-19 prevention released by them using persuasion strategies has a certain degree of credibility, making it easier for the audiences to accept it. However, the audience in Mike's study was doctors with certain professional knowledge, while most of the audience in this study were the public, which makes the reception of health information somewhat different.

According to Asbeek, Fransen, and Smit (2015)'s research on medical television dramas, viewers evaluated the current investigation's use of attitude statements regarding potential persuasive strategies in educational entertainment (E-E)

as unethical. Audiences prefer neutral storylines. Employing strategies that viewers deem inappropriate may interfere with the intended prosocial impact of E-E.
For effective E-E production, a broader understanding of the appropriate and inappropriate use of persuasive strategies in E-E is essential. Likewise, it is necessary for private organizations to better understand the needs of the audiences and disseminate health information to prevent Covid-19. However, this research survey uses text content as the research sample and does not include sounds and images, so the use of persuasion strategies has certain limitations.

According to Cockburn (2015), the most important concept of Standpoint theory is that individuals' opinions are determined by their social and political experiences. In this study, doctors, journalists, and donors with professional knowledge are the groups who are more aware of the epidemic and are always concerned about the current situation. Doctors propose their own professional prevention methods for Covid-19, journalists publish hot topics about the epidemic, and donors deliver their love supplies. These are all speaking with their actions.

5.2.3 Differences in Persuasive Strategies Used by Governmental Offices and Private Organizations

At first, the "Coercion" persuasion strategy was used more by government offices (8%, n = 100) than by private organizations (3.38%, n = 100). Since the government offices are the decision-making and executive department of the country, they have the power to use legislation, and it is necessary to adopt emergency prevention and control policies during the epidemic. While private organizations use "Coercion" persuasion strategy mainly in the news media to follow the government offices.

Secondly, the "Threat" persuasion strategy is used more by government officials (10.67%, n = 100) than private organizations (4.73%, n = 100). This persuasion strategy is mostly used in "fear appeals".

Thirdly, the "Offer" persuasion strategy is the most used persuasion strategy among the six persuasion strategies by government offices and private organizations, among which government offices (47.33%, n = 100) are more than private organizations (42.57%, n = 100). The government mainly provided information on epidemic notifications, publicity of health information, lists of nucleic acid testing institutions and hospitals. Private organizations were more concerned with sharing health experiences and avoided the spread of false reports. Of course, there were also charities that provide donations.

In addition, the "Guidance" persuasion strategy is used more by government officials (14.67%, n = 100) than private organizations (8.78%, n = 100). The guidance of the government offices was not only for the audiences, but also for sub-government offices on how to arrange epidemic prevention work. And private organizations were more to guide the audiences how to prevent COVID-19 in their lives.

In addition, the "Appeal" persuasion strategy was used less by government offices (13.33%, n = 100) than by private organizations (17.57%, n = 100). Anti-epidemic prevention is not only the government offices responsibility of the government, but also the responsibility of the society. While calling on the audiences to actively prevent the epidemic, they appealed to the audiences to supervise and make suggestions on the epidemic prevention work as well. However, private organizations care more about the emotions of the audiences and allow them to be encouraged and comforted.

Finally, government office (6%, n = 100) rarely use the "Appreciation" persuasion strategy, while private organizations (22.97%, n = 100) use the "Appreciation" persuasion strategy more. Government offices are less than private organizations in publicizing heroic deeds and encouraging blessings. Since government departments release more comprehensive epidemic prevention information and the heroic deeds promoted are also representative, this strategy is relatively rarely used. Private organizations, on the other hand, focus on more emotional perspectives, not only praising heroes but also encouraging and blessing people who are fighting the epidemic. This aspect is also something the government needs to strengthen.

Based on Teng, Khong and Goh (2014) who studied the application of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in specific contexts, the proposed conceptual framework emphasizes the key structures and parameters of information processing. So that marketers can develop effective communication strategies in the social media environment. Similarly, this study also combines ELM as a research framework and uses keywords to code the released information. By summarizing the types of persuasion strategies, they belong to, the persuasion strategies used by official governments and private organizations in publishing health information on social media are derived. Finally, analyze and compare and draw conclusions. However, how to develop effective communication strategies and understand which persuasion strategies are most effective were not involved in this study.

However, based on the results of this study, we can infer two situations: Due to the different social roles played by government office and private organizations, the social responsibilities they bear are also different. Government offices use the central route to persuasion to release more prevention information. They can get some official data as soon as possible and use data-based evidence to disseminate it to the

masses through Weibo. However, private organizations release prevention information more through peripheral route to persuasion. They use their own abilities and power to spread prevention information on Weibo, promote heroic deeds and encourage blessings, especially among the masses who use narrative methods (emotional anecdotal narrative evidence) to spread prevention information.

5.3 Limitations

The current study has several limitations, such as data selection. Firstly, the sampling method of this study involved judgmental sampling rather than random sampling.

Secondly, this study only collected and analyzed 200 text posts about COVID-19 on the Weibo social media platform from 10 government office and 10 private organization accounts in 2020. China is one of the biggest countries in the world including over ten thousand of governmental offices organizations. The selected data samples cannot completely represent the whole target population due to the use of non-probability sampling method.

Thirdly, the persuasion strategies of this study are based on the six persuasion strategies of Ojanen (1996) to summarize the content of the information, without further content research. There may be some strategies being excluded from the data analysis.

Another limitation of this study is the selected period of data collection is only one year (2020), COVID infection is significantly less severe in 2021 and 2022 due to the nationwide implementation of vaccination around the world including China, findings of this study may not accurately reflect this communication phenomena in China in the following years.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has lasted for three years around the world. The specific situation of each country was different, and the social media used to spread the information was different as well. In this study, only the data on China's Weibo were the focus of this study. It cannot represent the same phenomena in other countries.

5.4 Implications for Further Applications

Findings of this study provide useful implications for communication practitioners, government offices, policy makers, and the publics.

5.4.1 Implications for Communication Practitioners

Communication practitioners can understand current hot topics, and from the perspective of social concerns, use the power of technology to disseminate health information needed by the public to promote disease prevention. It's not just Weibo, a social media platform.

Jackson (1992) proposed the concept of "health communication." He believes that "health communication" is a communication activity that uses mass media as a channel, uses health-related information as the communication content, and aims to prevent diseases and promote health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has been described as a source of toxic "infodemics" or a valuable tool for public health (Schillinger, Chittamuru, & Ramírez, 2020). In this study, the release of health information combines persuasive strategies with social media, which not only disseminates prevention information widely but is also timely.

As communication practitioners, in order to better carry out benign communication, on the one hand, we must rely on the development of science and technology. On the other hand, we can combine information dissemination and communication theory to achieve the purpose of communication.

5.4.2 Implications for Governmental Offices/Policy Makers

It is hoped that when facing specific health problems in the future, government offices or policymakers can actively participate in the dissemination process of health information and strengthen connections and cooperation between relevant departments. At the same time, we also hope that private organizations can use your professional expertise to actively spread health messages, whether in action or language, when society faces disease threats. Of course, they can use some communication theories that are more acceptable to the audiences to publish health information. In addition, how to further improve health communication on social media platforms is also worthy of in-depth study.

In the context that the health communication environment may change at any time, Schiavo (2013) mentioned some factors that affect health communication, such as: health beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, gender, policies, laws, social groups, culture, etc. Whether these relevant factors are related to the audience, health behaviors, products, services, social or political environment, they are all related and interactive. At the same time, health communication can be intervened. As in this study, government offices and private organizations use persuasive strategies to spread health messages about COVID-19 prevention on social media, but don't overlook these related factors.

5.4.3 Implications for Public (audiences)

In an era of continuous development of technology and media, everyone can be a publisher and disseminator of information, but not necessarily an informed person. We need to improve our ability to distinguish between true and false information. Additionally, different groups or individuals may post the same content on social media at the same point in time. Just like during the epidemic, the dissemination of information such as "how to prevent the new coronavirus" and

"health tips" has, on the one hand, made the information disseminated wider and more influential. On the other hand, if it is not a specific social problem, such as the spread of rumors, it may also lead to duplication and false information, occupying network resources. While using social media to improve and enrich our lives, we can express our views on events, give feedback, and receive health information dissemination. At the same time, we should also regulate the use of social media.

5.5 Implications for Future Research

Future research may use social media more widely than Weibo platforms. Of course, other persuasion strategies can also be used to disseminate health information to achieve the purpose of promoting health. Moreover, researchers can give more consideration to investigating the effect of communication from the perspective on different groups of target audience such as different age, different social-economic status. For example, the positive and negative effects of disseminating information, and the audience's receptivity to persuasion strategies. As a tool for information dissemination, social media not only disseminates information for advertising and marketing, but also disseminates health information. Of course, what kind of method is more effective in disseminating and exchanging information needs further research. Psychological theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) or communication theories such as the Uses and Gratifications (UGT) can be applied and should provide valuable findings for media workers and communicators.

It would be interesting that future research involves comparing the use of persuasion strategies in various countries with different cultural dimensions such as power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, long-term vs. short-term orientation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Samples of Weibo Accounts

The Weibo Official Accounts of 10 Provincial Government Offices			
Number	Weibo authentication	Weibo account	Weibo account image
1	Official Weibo of Beijing Municipal Health Commission	Capital Health	
2	Official Weibo of Gansu Provincial Health Commission	Gansu Provincial Health Commission	
3	Official Weibo of Guangdong Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Guangdong	
4	Official Weibo of Shanghai Municipal Health Commission	Health Shanghai 12320	
5	Official Weibo of Hebei Provincial Health Commission	Health Hebei official microblog	

The Weibo Official Accounts of 10 Provincial Government Offices			
Number	Weibo authentication	Weibo account	Weibo account image
6	Official Weibo of Guizhou Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Guizhou	
7	Official Weibo of Sichuan Provincial Health Commission	Healthy Sichuan official microblog	
8	Official Weibo of Henan Provincial Health and Family Planning Commission	Henan Health Commission	
9	Official Weibo of Jilin Provincial Health Commission	Jilin Provincial Health Commission	
10	Official Weibo of Tianjin Municipal Health Commission	Tianjin Health	

Source: *Weibo*. (2022). Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

The Weibo Authentication Accounts of 10 Private Organizations			
Number	Weibo authentication	Weibo account	Weibo account image
1	China News Network Legal Person Weibo	China News Network	
2	China daily China Daily Official Weibo	China Daily	
3	The Paper Official Weibo	The paper	
4	Chief Physician of Pediatrics, Beijing Union Medical College Hospital	Bao Xiulan Clinic	
5	Director of Department of Infectious Diseases, Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Shanghai Fuda University	Dr. Zhang Wenhong	

The Weibo Authentication Accounts of 10 Private Organizations			
Number	Weibo authentication	Weibo account	Weibo account image
6	Dr. Yu Changping, Critical Care Specialist, Department of Respiratory Medicine, Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University	Dr Yu Changping	
7	Official Weibo of Beijing Hanhong Love Charity Foundation	Han Hong Love Charity Foundation	
8	Beijng Union Medical College Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences	Beijing Union Medical College Hospital	
9	Official Weibo of Xiangya Hospital of Central South University	Xiangya Hospital of Central South University	

The Weibo Authentication Accounts of 10 Private Organizations			
Number	Weibo authentication	Weibo account	Weibo account image
10	West China Hospital of Sichuan University	West China Hospital of Sichuan University	

Source: Weibo. (2022). Retrieved from https://weibo.com.

Appendix B

Data Samples

Samples of Government Offices' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Gov#1	Health capital	An Open Letter to Citywide Health System Personnel Dear comrades in the city's health system: When the Spring Festival, the Beijing Municipal Health Commission would like to extend our sincere condolences and New Year blessings to you and your families! Thank you for your devotion and sincere dedication to the city's health work all the time. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2417852083/Ir9RgoPW9
Gov#2	Gansu Provincial Health Commission	#How beautiful you are# [14-year-old girl to doctor's father: "There is no winter that cannot be overcome"] "Influenza is on the rise, pneumonia is coming, do you want your father to be healthy?. You should pay more attention to the hospital and be careful Infection. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2329569434/IsbRu1gAj

Samples of Government Offices' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Gov#3	Healthy Guangdong	Pay tribute to her amazing [Women gather to fight the epidemic, build youth in a different "beautiful" way!] Under the epidemic, it is you who use the tenacity unique to women to persevere and build a security wall; use delicacy and tolerance to transform the rain, convey hope, and contribute "half the sky" to the front line of the epidemic! Today is the "March 8th" International Women's Day. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1962787713/IxFBllo7A
Gov#4	Health Shanghai 12320	[Shanghai had no new local confirmed cases of new coronary pneumonia yesterday, and 2 new cases were imported from abroad, and 13 cases were cured and discharged] From 00:00 to 24:00 on April 29, 2 confirmed cases of imported new coronary pneumonia were reported through the port joint prevention and control mechanism. 13 new cases were cured and discharged, including 9 cases from Russia, 3 cases from the United Kingdom, and 1 case from Italy. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2372649470/IFFG0oNy9

Samples of Government Offices' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Gov#5	Health Hebei official micro	#Healthy News# [The Epidemic Situation of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia in Hebei Province on May 28, 2020] From 00:00 to 24:00 on May 28, 2020, there were no new confirmed cases of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia in Hebei Province, and no new deaths, no new suspected cases. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2416042387/J4864evdl
Gov#6	Healthy Guizhou	[#Guizhou# Epidemic Notification On June 27, Guizhou Province's New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic Information Released] From 0:00 to 24:00 on June 27, 2020, there were no new confirmed cases of new coronary pneumonia in Guizhou Province, no new suspected cases, and no new cases. Symptomatic infected persons... Retrieved from https://weibo.com/3458987284/J8GL80ocQ
Gov#7	Health Sichuan official Weibo	Health Science# Will the flu and the new crown overlap in autumn and winter? These are the most effective ways to prevent flu!] At present, the global epidemic is still severe, and the autumn and winter flu season is coming again. Many people have such questions and concerns. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/3754192351/JgO2Sw74k

Samples of Government Offices' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Gov#8	Henan Provincial Health Commission	[As of 24:00 on October 5, the latest situation of the new type of coronavirus pneumonia in Henan Province] From 00:00 to 24:00 on October 5, 2020, there were no new confirmed or suspected cases of new coronary pneumonia in our province; 1 confirmed case was cured and discharged, 4 asymptomatic infections were released from medical observation. Retrieved from: https://weibo.com/5594618028/JnTpBAK4R
Gov#9	Jilin Provincial Health Commission	Jilin Provincial Health Commission's Notification on the Epidemic Situation of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia (Announced on November 19, 2020) From 00:00 to 24:00 on November 18, there were no new imported confirmed cases in the province. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/3500496847/JuzNwgic8
Gov#10	Tianjin Health	[Authoritative release] As of 18:00 on December 22, there are no new confirmed cases of new coronary pneumonia in our city, and no new confirmed cases imported from abroad. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/3244253572/JzGzvzyUX

Samples of Private Organizations' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Pri#1	China News Network	[Wuhan Municipal Party Committee Secretary Responds to How Long the Spring Festival Holiday Is Extended#: Depends on the Epidemic Control Situation] Hubei Province was approved to appropriately extend the Spring Festival holiday on the 31st. So, how will Wuhan extend the holiday? Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1784473157/Is5EbhHJo
Pri#2	China Daily	[WHO: The global epidemic is at a critical moment#] On the 27th, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the global prevention and control of the new crown pneumonia epidemic is at a decisive moment, and all countries should formulate comprehensive prevention and control plans. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1663072851/Iwlku14cK
Pri#3	The paper	[In the 14 days before entering Shanghai, those who have traveled or lived in these 8 countries will be quarantined for 14 days] Shanghai War Epidemic #Shanghai New Coronary Pneumonia Prevention and Control Work Leading Group Office announced that in order to further prevent and control the risk of imported epidemics from abroad, Retrieved from https://weibo.com/5044281310/Iyjdsg3BX

Samples of Private Organizations' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Pri#4	Bao Xiulan Clinic	[About the current pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus, what should we pay attention to?] Now that the epidemic has entered a severe and complicated period, the prevention and control of the epidemic is also in a critical period. People with novel coronavirus pneumonia are generally susceptible. The elderly and those with basic diseases are seriously ill after infection. Children and infants also have the disease. It can be transmitted through close-range droplets or through contact. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1893410897/IrS1m1T1K
Pri#5	Dr. Zhang Wenhong	Recently, Shanghai reported two locally imported cases of new coronary pneumonia. Arouse everyone's heated discussion. How to understand this phenomenon? First of all, we must admit that the world is still in the middle of the epidemic, and China is in the late stage of the epidemic. Symptomatic patients have been adequately isolated and treated, but there will still be a small number of asymptomatic patients. At present, it belongs to the digestion period of asymptomatic patients, and it is better to find it than not to find it. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/7454177482/J2Q416XVz

Samples of Private Organizations' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Pri#6	Dr Yu Changping	Half of the outbreak in Urumqi was diagnosed asymptomatic. Health big coffee said #At present, half of the infected people in Urumqi are asymptomatic, and only one-fifth of them have fever and are asymptomatic, so the negligence of the patients caused family gatherings sexually transmitted. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/7383887932/JfyZB5IZq
Pri#7	Han Hong Love Charity Foundation	National Commendation Conference for Combating the New Coronary Pneumonia# Peking Union Medical College Hospital Du Bin, Liu Zhengyin, Zhou Xiang, Han Ding, and Zhang Shuyang won the National Advanced Individuals in Fighting the New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic The advanced collective of the epidemic situation, the hospital party committee won the title of national advanced grassroots party organization! Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2684793101/JjQ3icukD

Samples of Private Organizations' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Pri#8	Beijing Union Medical College Hospital	Everyone Public Welfare Festival# #Memory Package# In September last year, the "Memory Package" project was officially launched. After the project was released, we received support from many caring people. Affected by the epidemic, the project was delayed. After the epidemic eased, the foundation immediately launched the pilot project. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1654801402/JjHrf9DD7
Pri#9	Xiangya Hospital of Central South University	[2020 Government Affairs Microblog Annual Excellent Case Collection Officially Opened] Government Affairs V Influence Summit# and Government Affairs Microblog Excellent Case Collection# 2020 Internet celebrity ticket: Xiangya sensory control experts rush to the front line of epidemic prevention in Wuhan January 21, 2020, Professor Wu Anhua, chairman of the Hospital Infection Control Branch of the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association and an infection control expert at Xiangya Hospital of Central South University, Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1905961317/JzV16nt1C

Samples of Private Organizations' Posts		
Data ID	Weibo Account	Post Content
Pri#10	West China Hospital of Sichuan University	[2020 Last Day's Gift#] On December 31, China's new crown virus vaccine was approved for marketing, and the new crown virus vaccine was free for all #. A role model for a great country, this is the best New Year's gift # (People's Daily) Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1726458667/JB0q73blY

Appendix C

Results of Chi-Square Test

Formula of Chi-Square Test

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

X^2 = chi squared

Oi = observed value

Ei = expected value

Used Microsoft Excel for Chi-Square Test.

The following two sets of data observations:

Observed							
Strategy Type	Coercion	Threat	Offer	Guidance	Appeal	Appreciation	Total
Government offices	12	16	71	22	20	9	150
Private organizations	5	7	63	13	26	34	148
Total	17	23	134	35	46	43	298

The following are the expected values of the two sets of data

Expected							
Strategy Type	Coercion	Threat	Offer	Guidance	Appeal	Appreciation	Total
Government offices	8.56	11.58	67.45	17.62	23.15	21.64	150
Private organizations	8.44	11.42	66.55	17.38	22.85	21.36	148
Total	17	23	134	35	46	43	298

$X^2=(Obs-Exp)^2/Exp$							
Strategy Type	Coercion	Threat	Offer	Guidance	Appeal	Appreciation	Total
Government offices	1.39	1.69	0.19	1.09	0.43	7.39	12.17
Private organizations	1.40	1.71	0.19	1.10	0.44	7.49	12.33
Total	2.79	3.40	0.38	2.20	0.87	14.87	**24.50**

$X^2 = 24.501$, $p < 0.05$, df = (r-1) (c-1) =5

C.V. = f(x)CHISQ.INV.RT (alpha, df) = 11.07

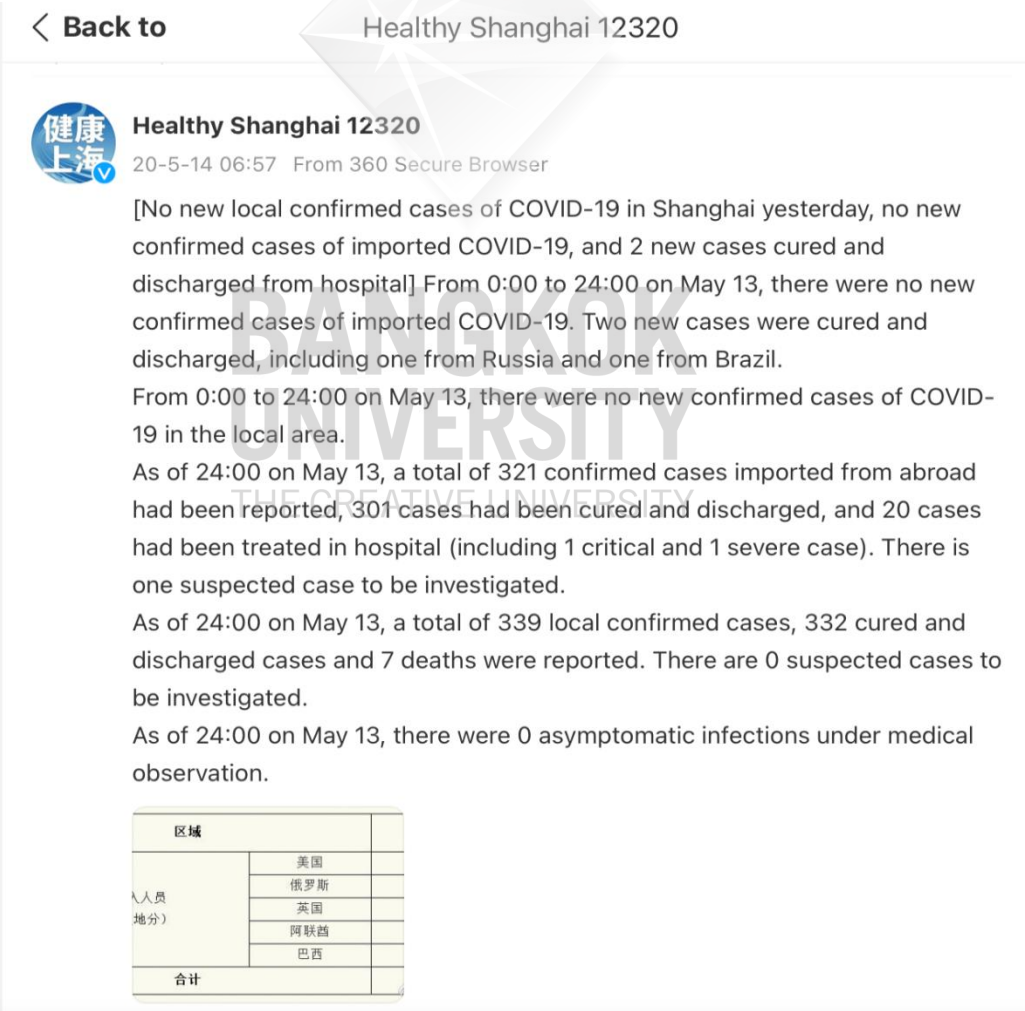
P-value = f(x) CHISQ.DIST. RT (X^2, df) = 0.00017

Appendix D

Examples of Sampled Posts with Six Persuasion Strategies

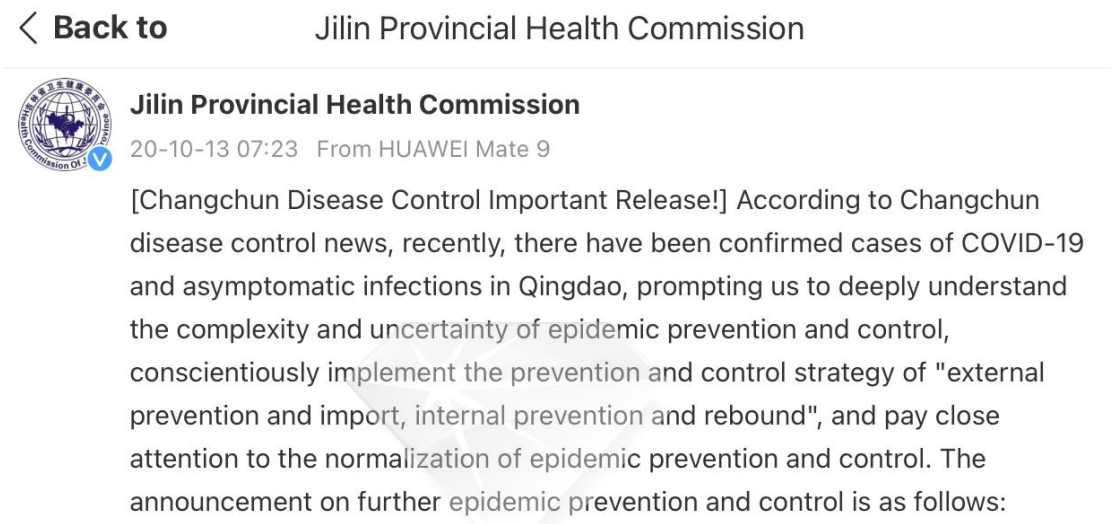
Figure A to Figure F belongs to government offices posted:

Figure A: An example of a post used the “Offer” persuasion strategy in the dimension of Epidemic notification.



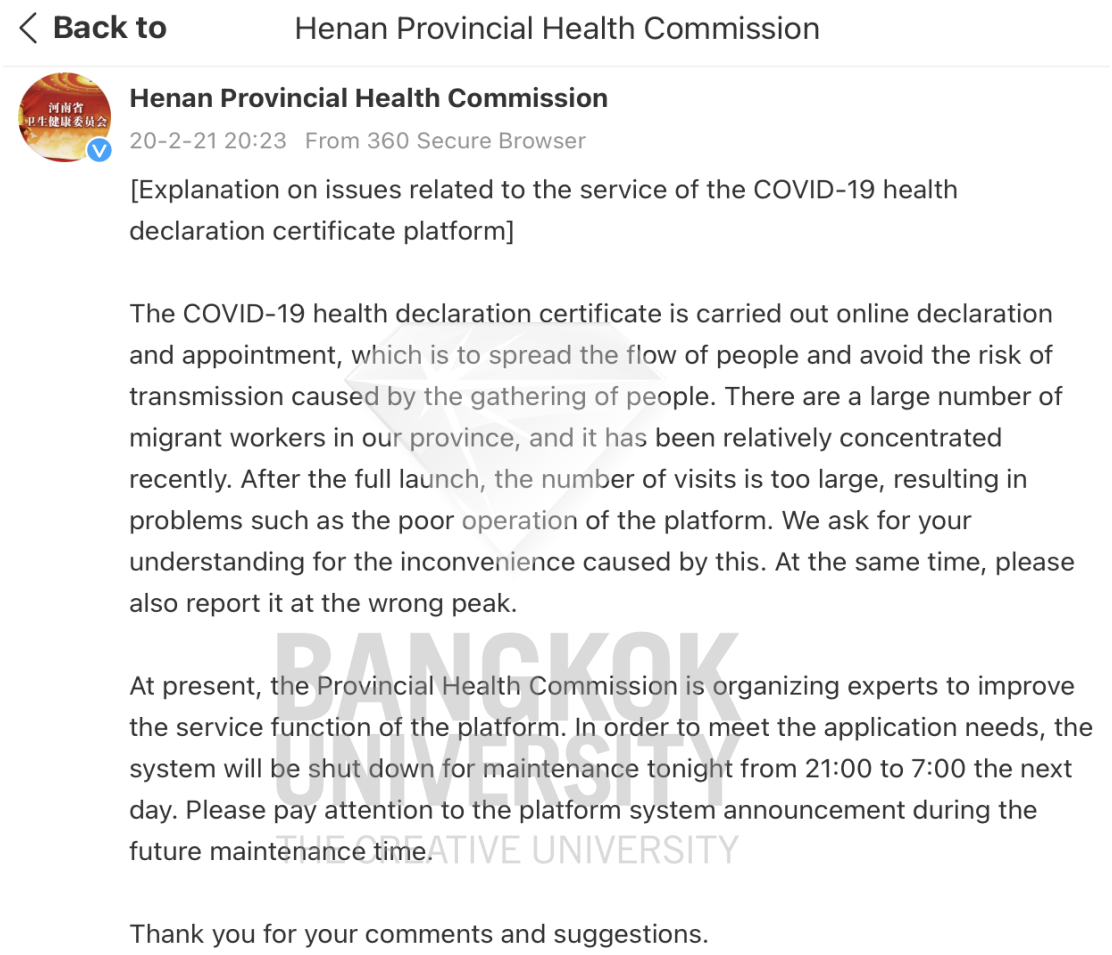
Source: Weibo. (2014). *Healthy Shanghai 12320*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2372649470/J1QgaB8aI.

Figure B: An example of a post using the "Guidance" persuasion strategy in dimension of Epidemic Prevention and Control Tips.



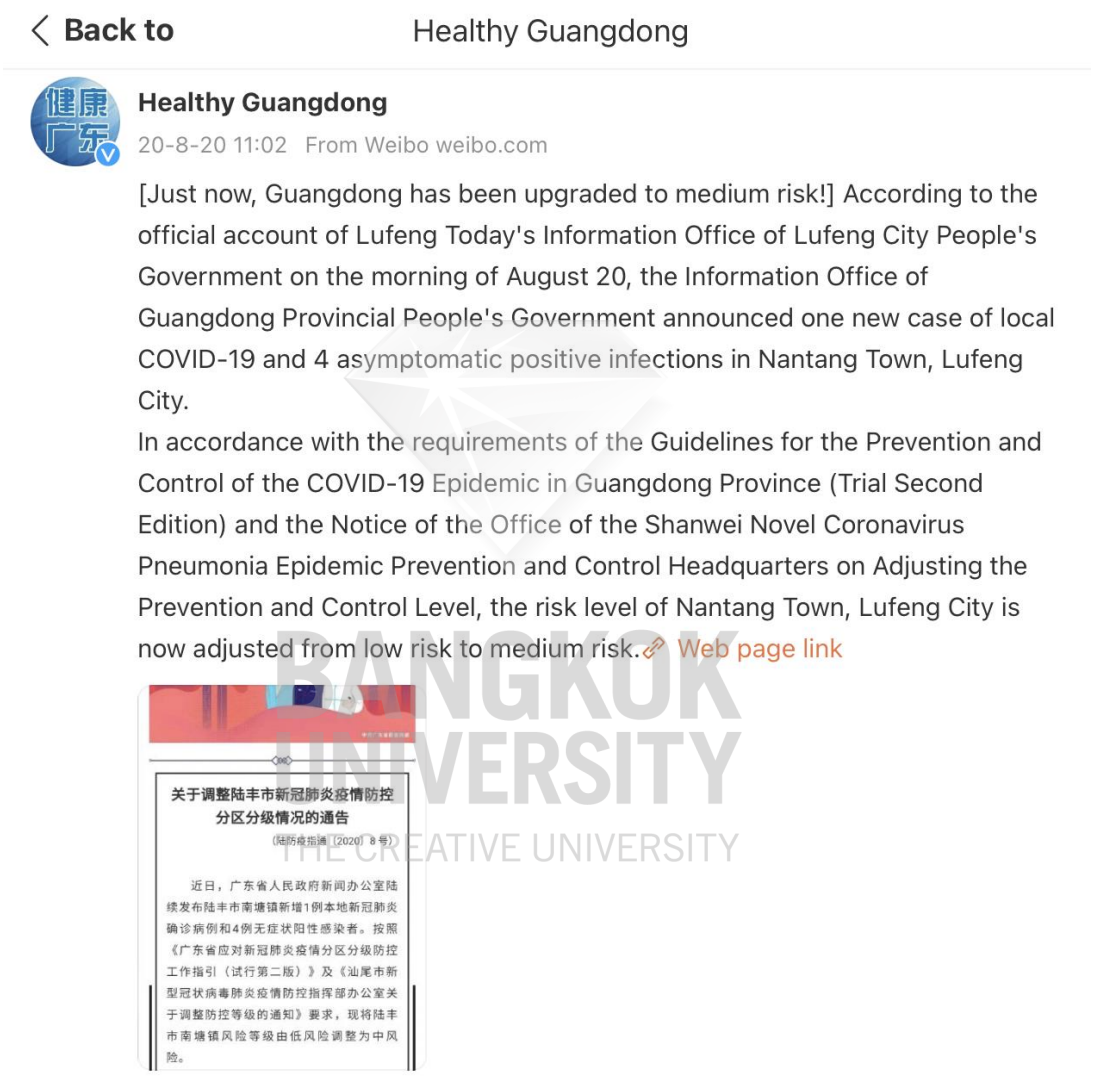
Source: Weibo. (2013). *Jilin provincial health commission*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/3500496847/JoXocwBq2.

Figure C: An example of a post using the "Appeal" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Disease control supervision.



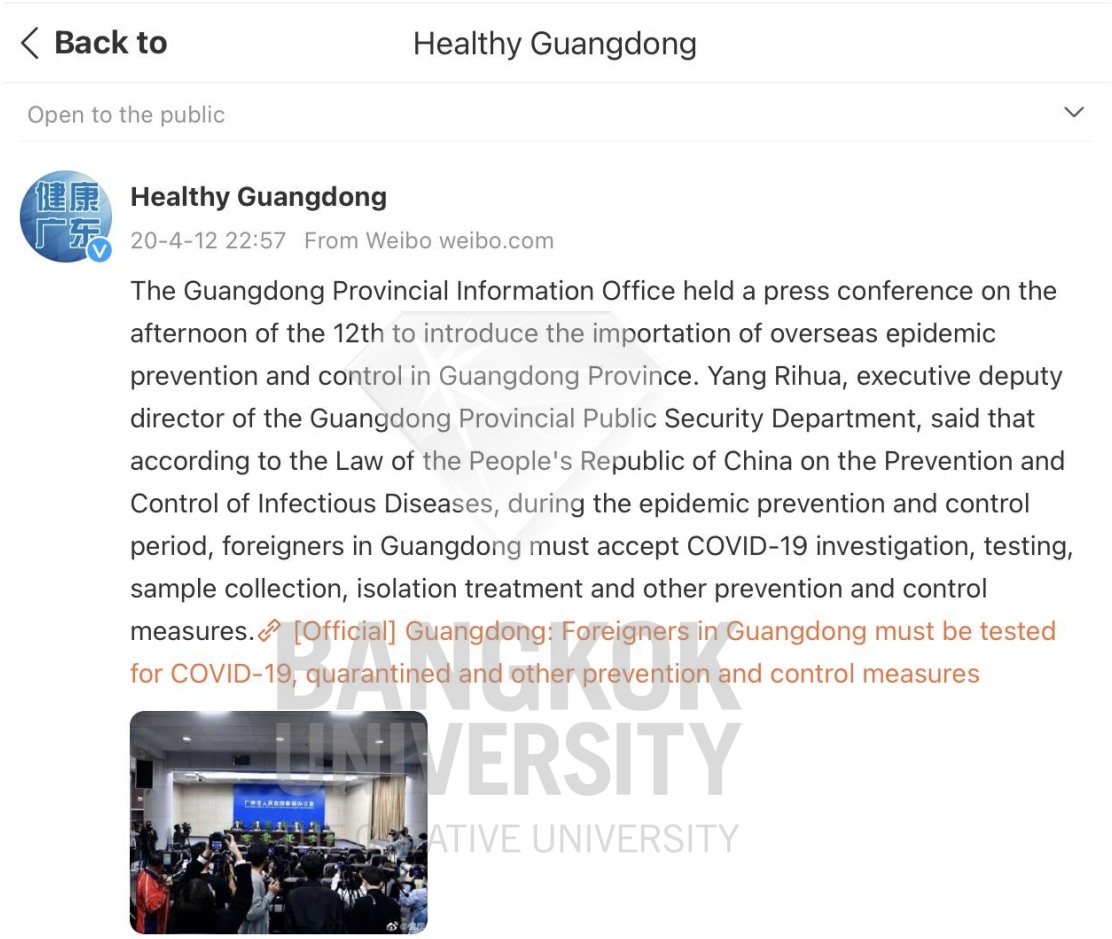
Source: Weibo. (2021). *Henan provincial health commission*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/5594618028/Ivgws81zM.

Figure D: An example of a post used the "Threat" persuasion strategy in the dimension of tracking announcement.



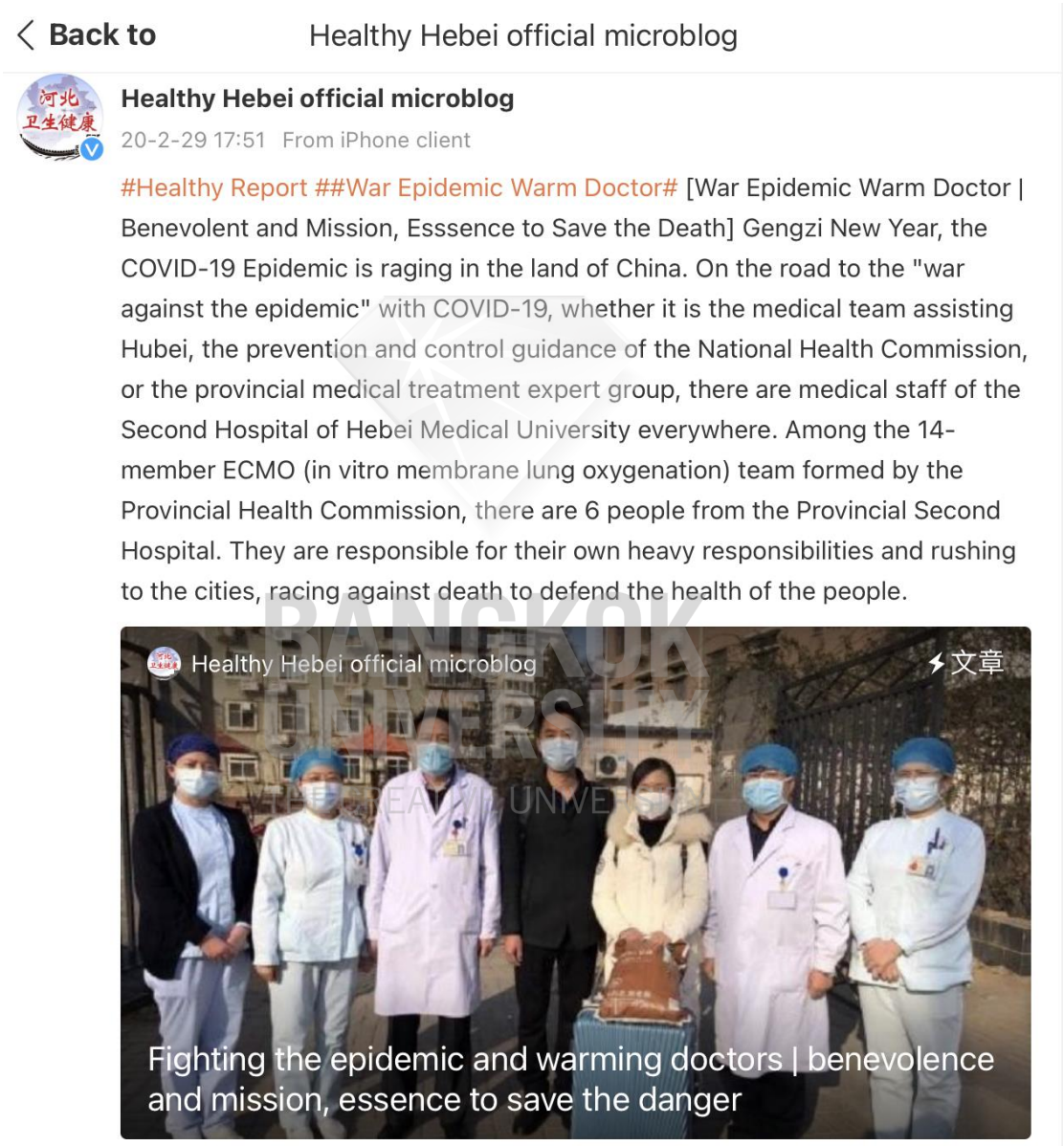
Source: Weibo. (2020). *Healthy Guangdong*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1962787713/JgLKgjxrM.

Figure E: An example of a post using the "Coercion" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Prevention Arrangements.



Source: Weibo. (2022). *Healthy Guangdong*. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from: https://weibo.com/1962787713/ID2k8DQTi.

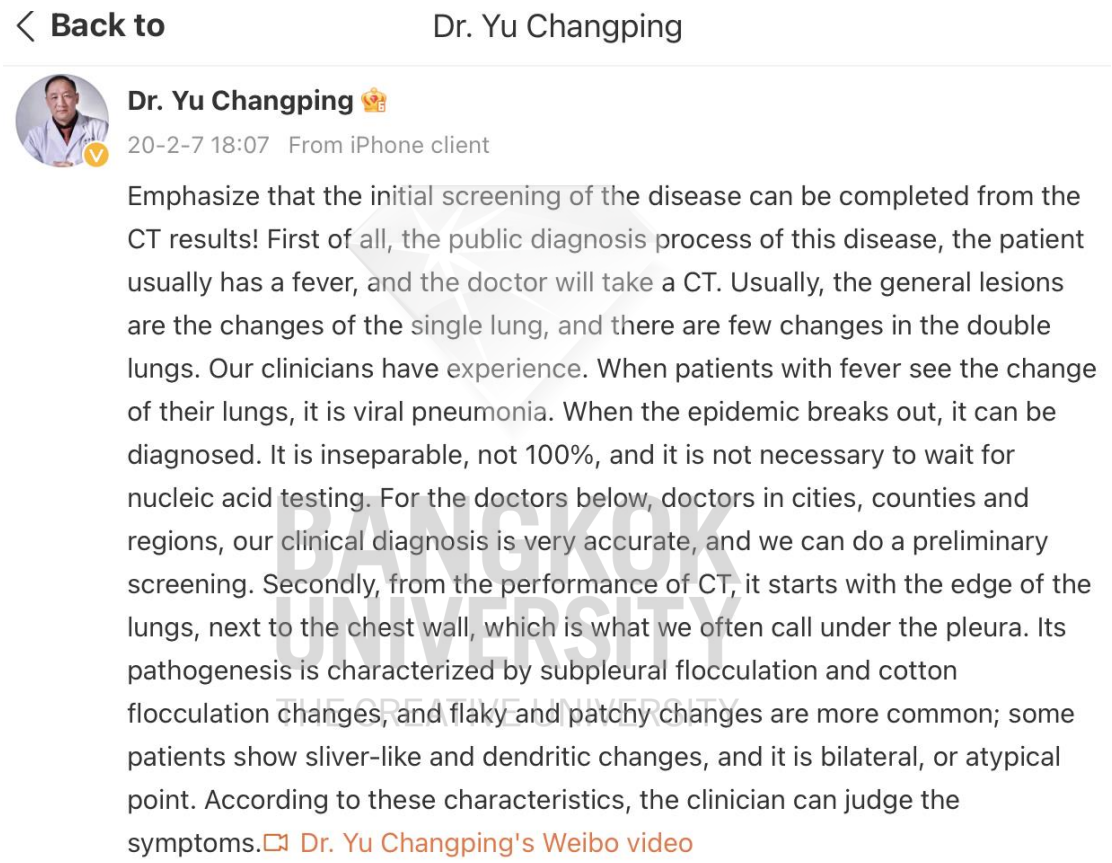
Figure F: An example of a post using the "Appreciation" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Heroic deeds of prevention and control.



Source: Weibo. (2020). *Healthy Hebei official microblog*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/2416042387/IwsWUpfHy.

Figure G to Figure L belong to private organizations posted

Figure G: An example of a post using the "Offer" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Health release.

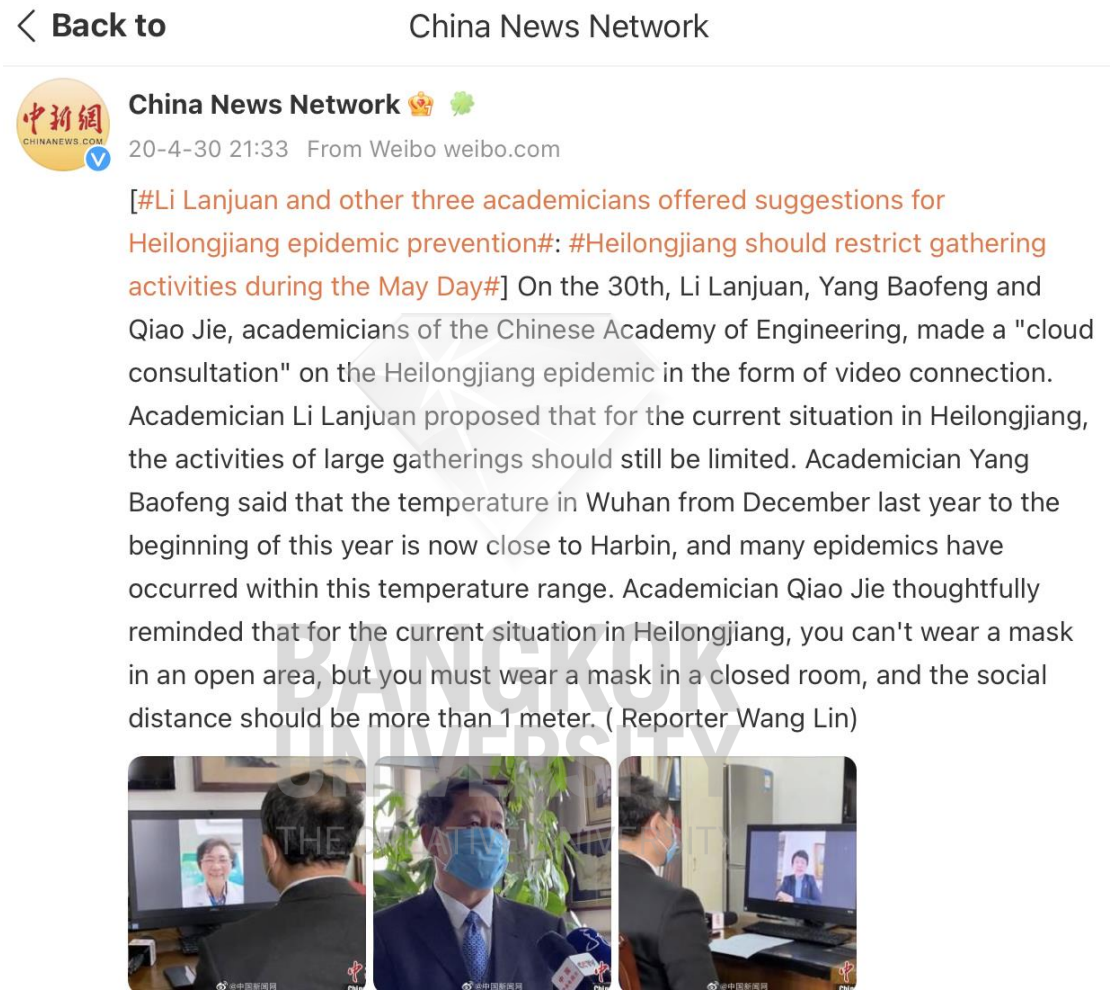


Source: Weibo. (2020). *Dr. Yu Changping*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/7383887932/It7EbBCnC.

Figure H: An example of a post using the "Appreciation" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Encouraging blessing.

Source: Weibo. (2020). *China Daily*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1663072851/Is55x1gy.

Figure I: An example of a post using the "Appeal" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Epidemic awareness.



Source: Weibo. (2020). *China news network*. From https://weibo.com/1784473157/IFLsX6NCj.

Figure J: An example of a post using the "Guidance" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Prevention and Control Tips.

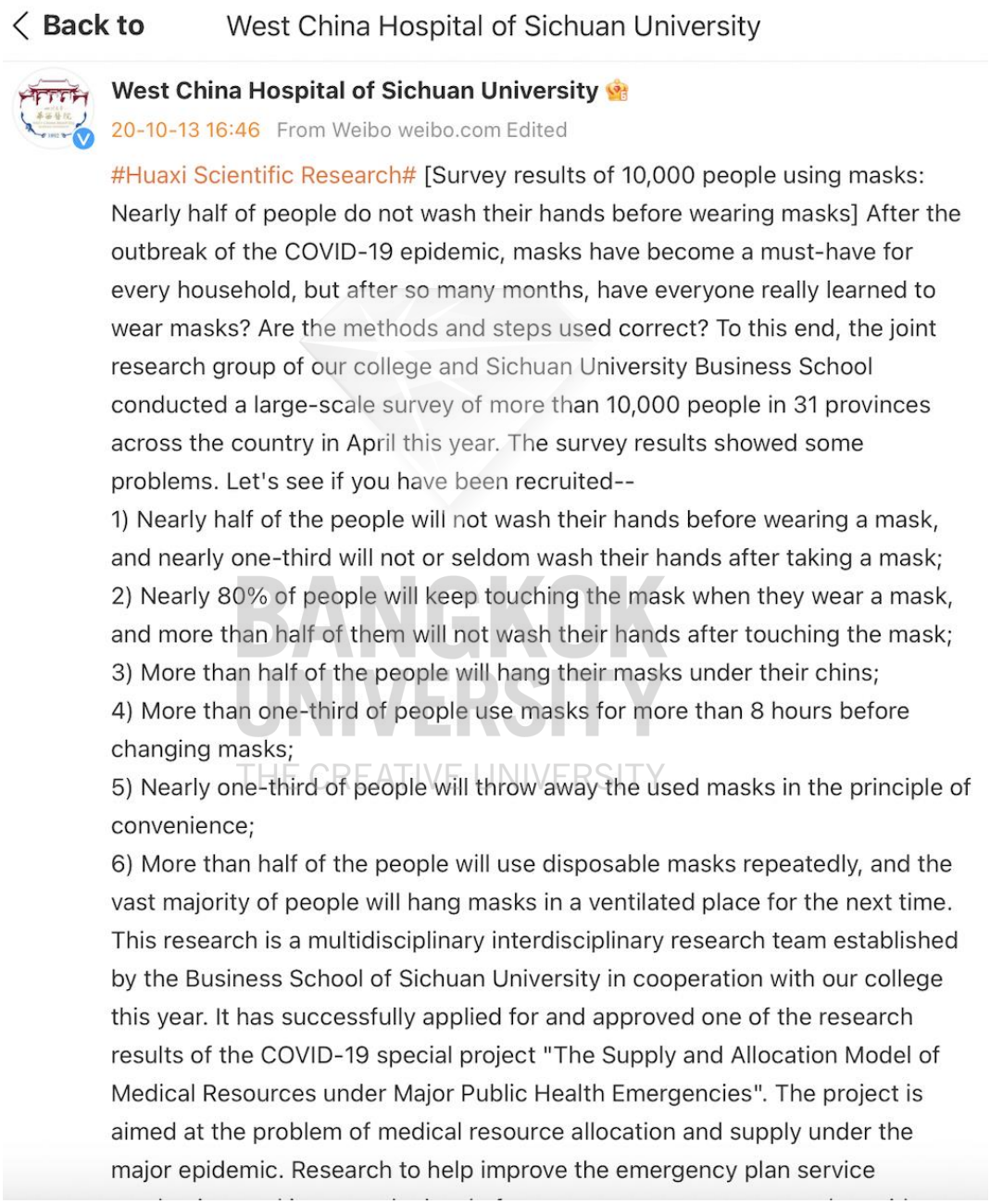
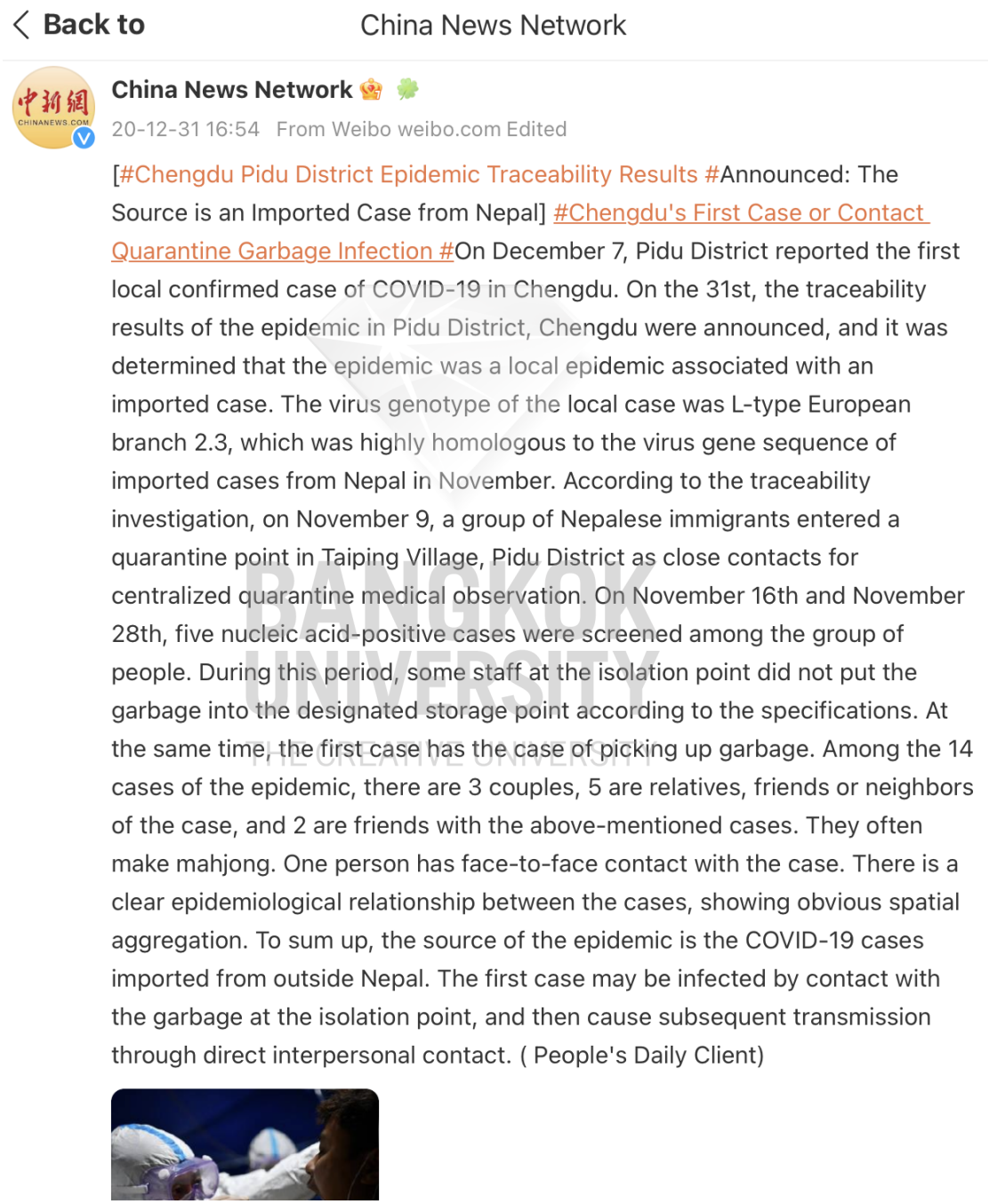


Figure J (continued): An example of a post using the "Guidance" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Prevention and Control Tips.

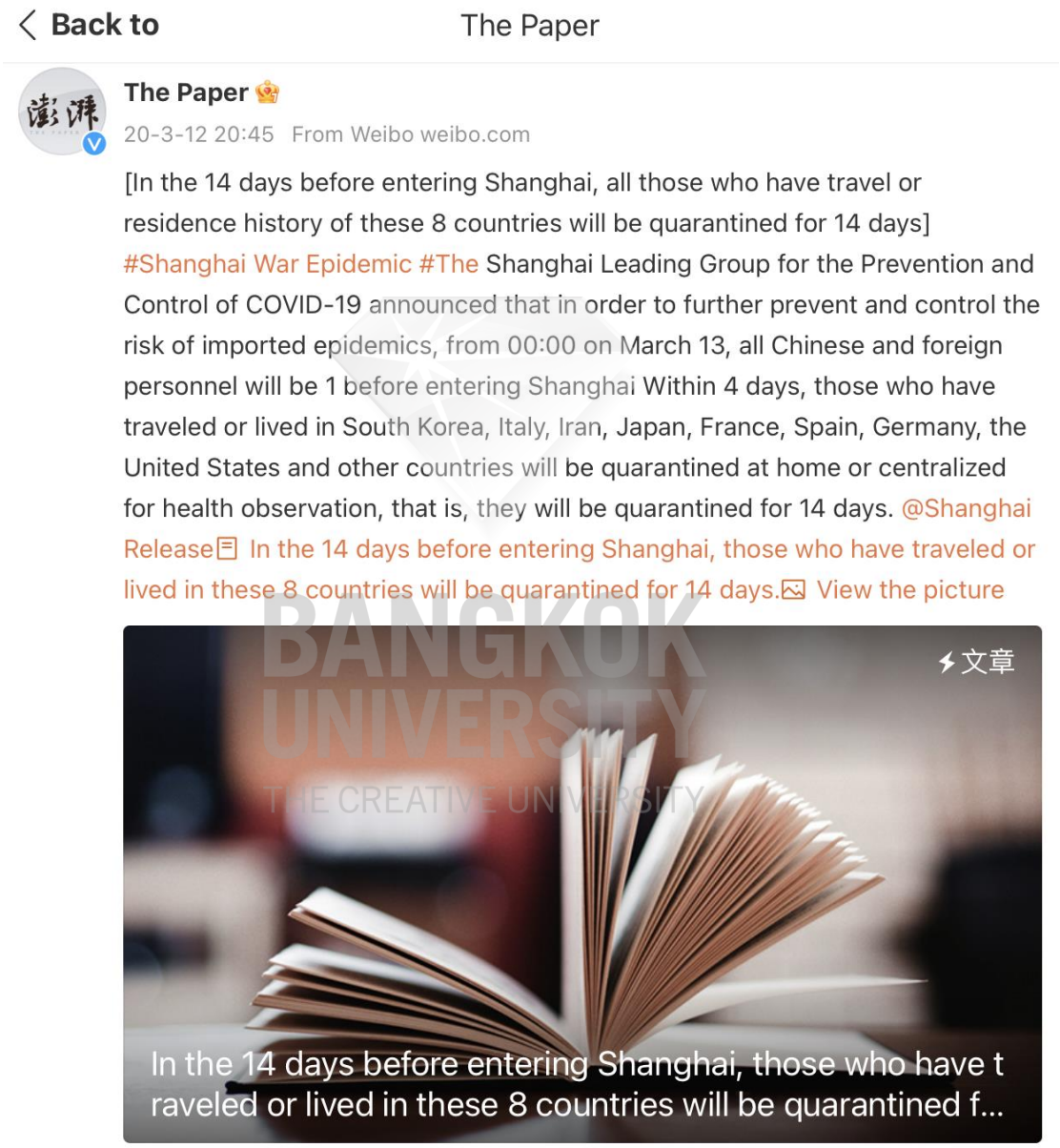
Source: Weibo. (2020). *West China hospital of Sichuan University*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1726458667/Jp14IfMV4.

Figure K: An example of a post using the "Threat" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Tracking announcement.



Source: Weibo. (2020). *China News Network*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/1784473157/JB1T6bUrl.

Figure L: An example of a post using the "Coercion" persuasion strategy in the dimension of Prevention Arrangements.



Source: Weibo. (2020). *The paper*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/5044281310/Iyjdsg3BX.

BIODATA

Name-Last Name:	Li Manhong
Email:	manhongli6673@gmail.com
Educational Background:	2020-2024: M.A. (Global Communication), Bangkok University, International Collage, Bangkok, Thailand. 2017-2020: B.E. (Business English) The University of Thai Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, Thailand.
Working Experience:	July 2020-April 2021: Chinese Teacher, Surilak. School, Nonthaburi, Thailand