กลยุทธ์ในการหาข้อมูลข่าวสารเพื่อลดความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจ
ในความสัมพันธ์ที่ห่างไกลกัน

ปริยา รินรัตนากร

มหาวิทยาลัยศรีปทุม วิทยาเขตชลบุรี

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ของคู่รักทั้งที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงานและแต่งงานแล้ว โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัย เพื่อมุ่งตรวจสอบเหตุการณ์ที่ก่อให้เกิดความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจในความสัมพันธ์ของคู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกัน คู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันได้พูดถึงความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจในขณะนั้นไว้อย่างไร และสำรวจกลยุทธ์ซึ่งคู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันนำไปปฏิบัติเพื่อลดความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจที่อาจจะเกิดขึ้นได้ในทุก ๆ ขั้นตอนของความสัมพันธ์ การเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลใช้การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกกับนักศึกษาชาวเอเชียจำนวน 9 คน ซึ่งกำลังศึกษาอยู่ที่วิทยาลัยนานาชาติในประเทศไทย

ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า สาเหตุของความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจในความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันก็คือ ความแตกต่างด้านเวลา การสื่อสารที่น้อยลง และความห่วงกังวลเกี่ยวกับเรื่องลูกของพวกเขา นอกจากนั้น คู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันได้ให้คำแนะนำว่า เทคโนโลยีทางการสื่อสารถือเป็นเครื่องมือที่มีความสำคัญซึ่งจะช่วยให้คู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันสามารถรักษาปฏิสัมพันธ์กับคู่รักของพวกเขาไว้ได้ ความอดทนอดกลั้นก็เป็นสิ่งสำคัญสำหรับการรักษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคู่รักด้วยเช่นกัน บุคคลที่มีคู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกันควรจะมีความอดทนกับสถานการณ์ซึ่งอาจจะเป็นสาเหตุของความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจระหว่างคู่ของตน และควรให้ความใกล้ชิดกับลูก ๆ เพื่อที่ว่าจะได้ไม่เกิดความรู้สึกแตกแยกจากครอบครัว สำหรับประเด็นที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการหาข้อมูลข่าวสารเพื่อลดความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจในความสัมพันธ์ของคู่รักที่อยู่ห่างไกลกัน ผลการศึกษาชี้ให้เห็นว่า คู่รักที่ใช้วิธีเปิดเผยตนเองและมีความเห็นอกเห็นใจในความรู้สึกของคู่รัก จะสามารถรักษาความสัมพันธ์กับคู่รักของตนไว้ได้ ในทางตรงกันข้ามคู่รักที่ใช้การแสดงความหมายโดยนัยหรือใช้ถ้อยคำภาษาที่อ้อมค้อมไม่ตรงไปตรงมา มีแนวโน้มที่จะเลิกรากับคู่รักของตน

คำสำคัญ: กลยุทธ์ในการหาข้อมูลข่าวสาร, การลดความลังเลหรือความไม่แน่ใจ, ความสัมพันธ์ที่ห่างไกล

Information-Seeking Strategies to Reduce Uncertainty in a Distance Relationship

Pariya Rinrattanakorn

Sripatum University Chon Buri Campus, Thailand

Abstract

This research specifically focused on studying distance romantic relationships (e.g, dating and marital relationship**s)**. The purpose of this research was to examine events that provoke uncertainty in a distance romantic relationship and how people in such a relationship addressed moments of uncertainty. Furthermore, this study investigated the strategies that people in distance romantic relationships execute to diminish uncertainty that might occur at every stage of such a relationship. In-depth interviews with nine Asian students studying at international colleges in Thailand were conducted to attain the purposes of this research.

The findings revealed that the causes of uncertainty between partners in a distance romantic relationship were**:** time difference, less than normal communication, and concern about their children. Moreover, people in a distance romantic relationship suggested that communication technologies were significant instruments to help them maintain interaction with their partners. This study further demonstrated that patience was also important for maintaining relationship. People in a distance romantic relationship should be patient with circumstances that may cause uncertainty between partners and stay close to their children so that they would not feel disconnected from their family. Conversely, people who communicated indirectly or by implication were more likely to disengage from their romantic partners.

Keywords: information-seeking strategy, uncertainty reduction, distance relationship

Introduction

Normally, people who have interactions with one another are more likely to raise uncertainty, so they attempt to reduce this uncertainty in order to maintain the relationship with their partners. The study of reduction of uncertainty has become an important aspect of interpersonal relationships. Berger and Calabrese (1975), who originally proposed Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), viewed the ability to predict and explain the actions of self and others as the primary facet of uncertainty. It means uncertainty concerns two processes: a proactive process and a retroactive process. The proactive process refers to the prediction of future behaviors whereas the retroactive process focuses on explaining present and past behaviors.

When the levels of uncertainty rise, people who want to generate or maintain an interaction episode with a partner have to reduce the levels of uncertainty through seeking more information about their relational partners. This notion is reasonably supported by Parks and Adelman (1983) who illustrated that a lack of interaction between relational partners can lead to increased uncertainty and have deleterious effects on the relationship. As people in a romantic relationship communicate more with their romantic partners, the levels of uncertainty and disruption in their relationship will diminish. Thus, the utilization of information seeking strategies to reduce uncertainty is a significant issue in URT.

In previous research, several studies have used URT to examine interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, most of those studies have been confined to communication processes between partners in the initial stages of a relationship or interactions between strangers (Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985; Berger, 1975; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Clatterbuck, 1979). Actually, in any relationship and in any stage of a relationship, uncertainty can occur; it is not confined to the initial stage. Baxter and Wilmot (1984) argued that an acquaintanceship, a friendship or a romantic relationship, whether in its infancy or existing from a person's earliest memories, can result in uncertainty on the part of one or both (all) relationship members as a result of a number of events.

Moreover, in the original version of URT, Berger and Calabrese (1975) did not emphasize employing strategies to acquire information to reduce uncertainty. Subsequent studies were confined to the information-seeking strategies of initial acquaintances. Indeed, we should acknowledge the transformation or development of relationships beyond the initial stage. As a relationship matures, interactants acquire more information about each other. They better understand the other person's attitudes, beliefs, values, and perceptions.

In the context of romantic relationships, the uncertainty and information seeking strategies of people in distance romantic relationships are especially significant and interesting topics for exploration. When the romantic partners are separated geographically, the individual might feel uncertain of their partner or their romantic situation. So they are more likely to employ strategies to acquire information from their romantic partners to reduce their uncertainty. Parks and Adelman (1983) found that people in distance romantic relationships who receive enough information from their partners will have lower levels of uncertainty, and hence are less likely to have their relationship disrupted. Conversely, the lack of interaction with their partners causes an increase of uncertainty that will probably lead to the eventual dissolution of the relationship. However, there are few studies that have focused on uncertainty in distance romantic relationships. Moreover, the previous research has not fully considered the strategies that people in distance romantic relationships employ to seek information from their romantic partners.

This research will explore URT in the context of distance romantic relationship, that is geographically separated romantic relationships. In this study, the distance romantic relationships will be categorized into two groups: distance dating relationships and distance marital relationships. Dating relationships refer to people in a romantic relationship who have shared

several dates with their romantic partner in order to know each other better, and which may transform into a marital relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). A marital relationship refers to connections between opposite-gender partners who are related by marriage. So they have a marital status as wife and husband (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

The primary focus of this investigation is to specifically examine the moments/events that provoke uncertainty in distance romantic relationships and the strategies that people in distance romantic relationship use to acquire information from their partners. Obviously, persons in distance romantic relationships need to gain more information from their relational partners in order to decrease their uncertainty and maintain the relationship. The knowledge of these issues helps romantic partners have more comprehension of how to create and maintain good romantic relationships with their partner; this usually leads to the establishment of a strengthened family relationship in society. The specific research questions guiding this study were:

Research Questions

RQ1. What moments/events provoke uncertainty when trying to maintain a distance dating relationship and a distance marital relationship?

RQ2. How do people in distance dating relationships and distance marital relationships seek to address those moments of uncertainty?

RQ3. What information-seeking strategies do people in distance dating relationships and distance marital relationships use to reduce uncertainty?

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Establishing a relationship is always full of challenges. Berger (1986) stated that, with any face to face communication, including first dates, marriage proposals, and connections with foreigners, uncertainty can occur because communicators cannot perfectly predict how others will react or interact with them. Besides, both physical and social environments are accelerative and change continuously. Hence individuals' cognition will have to adjust and develop over their lifetime (Acredolo & O'Connor, 1991). Therefore, individuals who want to generate or maintain an interaction episode with a partner have to reduce their mutual uncertainties and seek more information to adapt to ever-changing social realities.

Berger and Calabrese (1975) further categorized uncertainty in two broad categories: cognitive uncertainty and behavioral uncertainty. Cognitive uncertainty refers to uncertainty about others' beliefs and attitudes whereas behavioral uncertainty points to the predictability or unpredictability of behaviors. These two types of uncertainty are highly related. Clearly, cognitive uncertainty can lead to uncertainty about how someone will act (behavioral uncertainty) in a situation. Uncertainty reduction is associated with better understanding not only of the other person's beliefs, attitudes, and actions, but also coming to a better understanding about one's own beliefs, attitudes, and actions.

Obviously, people in romantic relationships struggle to make sense of their romantic relationship by decreasing uncertainty about themselves, their romantic partners, and the relationship between them. The persons in a romantic relationship who gain enough information from their partner can decrease partner uncertainty and relationship uncertainty. They will have more confidence and security in their relationship.

Information Seeking Strategies

Berger (1986) stated that information seeking is strategic behavior. Information seeking supports uncertainty reduction. When people seek more information about their partners, they will

decrease their personal uncertainty and more readily maintain long-term relationships. Kellermann and Berger (1984) found that people attempt to acquire as much information as they can through both verbal and nonverbal means, so that they might display appropriate behaviors and communicate effectively with their partners.

In the context of distance relationships, the relational partners are apart, and levels of uncertainty can escalate. However, if persons in a distance relationship make an effort to maintain contact with their partners, it is possible that any uncertainty will be reduced; as a result, the sojourners can maintain their distance relationship with their partners. In a distance romantic relationship, the partners do a lot of effort in order to keep the relationship, and effective communication between partners should promote a strong relationship with each other. Persons in distance romantic relationships will have high levels of uncertainty. They put in a lot of effort into keeping the relationship. Employing effective information-seeking strategies in order to gain information about their partner is important. This information will assist them to predict their partner's behavior and circumstances. If people cannot predict the situation or behaviors of their partners in a distance romantic relationship, their relationship will be undermined by uncertainty.

Methodology

In this study, I employed a qualitative approach with data collected through interviewing nine Asian students who studied at international colleges in Thailand. They were apart from their countries and romantic partners. I used the snowball sampling method to recruit nine participants. These participants were categorized into two groups: those who are in dating relationships and those who are in marital relationships. There are five participants in dating relationships, four females and one male. Four participants are in marital relationships, consisting of two females and two males. I specifically selected the nine participants who had experience in distance romantic relationships, related to the context that I was interested in studying.

Data collection

This qualitative research used interviews to collect data. Each interview was conducted at a convenient location and time for the participants. I began each interview by introducing myself and explaining the purposes of the study. The participants carefully considered the interview protocol before the discussion. Also, I explained to them about the participants' right to refuse to answer any questions to which they didn't want to respond. Interviews were semi-structured; all of the participants were asked similar basic questions, but follow-up questions permitted each interview to go in its own direction. My participants and I discussed and probed issues of uncertainty and information-seeking strategies in order to answer the research questions. The main body of the interview focused specifically on coping with issues that provoked uncertainty, coping with those moments of uncertainty, and employing information seeking strategies to reduce relationship uncertainty.

Identifying Participants

The participants in this study were undergraduate or graduate Asian students at international colleges in Thailand. They needed to have studied in college for at least six months. The 9 participants represented six nationalities: two Indians, two Indonesians, two Chinese, one Korean, one Cambodian, and one Philippine. They were aged between 20 and 38.

Data Analysis

After finishing the interview process, the data were analyzed. The procedure of data analysis started with transcribing the interviews. Then, I examined and re-examined the data several times in order to connect with the ideas and gain more details. Primarily, particular codes were being produced from data. I identified the names of these tentative codes. To continue the process, the codes which seemed to overlap with others were merged into one category or I found a different way of sorting them. I analyzed these categories and connected them. Again, the categories which seemed similar with others were collapsed into one theme. I attempted to extract a new theme which helped explaining and answering the research questions. I produced themes that were elicited from the data rather than placing a set of themes upon the data. In addition, I reviewed previous research and extracted former themes that were associated with the research questions in the current study.

Findings

Based on the research questions, the participants in distance romantic relationships were categorized in two groups: dating relationships and marital relationships. The interview data showed a linkage between uncertainty and distance romantic relationships. However, if persons in a distance romantic relationship could effectively execute information-seeking strategies, they were able to maintain their relationship. The data from this study could answer the research questions on the following topics:

Provocation in Moment of Uncertainty

After exploring the data from this study, I found the two main themes that caused moments of uncertainty in distance dating relationship, namely: differences in time and lesser communication because of limited communication channels. Certainly, when people are geographically separated from each other, the difference in time zones is influential on maintaining the relationship. Selecting effective communication channels can assist people in a distance romantic relationship share information with their romantic partner conveniently and thus decrease the uncertainty derived from distance living. I coded and categorized in order to identify the themes in this issue. There were two themes in dating relationships: time differences and limited communication.

Time Differences

Three participants in dating relationships described their lack of skills in managing time differences as a major problem that provoked uncertainty in their long distance relationships. They acknowledged experiencing difficulty in maintaining their dating romantic relationship. One participant shared her experiences as follows: "When he called me and I was sleeping because of the time difference, he can't find me when he needs me … Because of the distance and the time difference, we can't talk as much as before." Similarly, another participant said: "The distance is not a huge problem, but it makes communication hard because of time difference between countries."

Limited Communication

Another source of uncertainty in distance dating relationships was limited communication because of limitations in communication channels. There were two participants in dating relationships who experienced limited communication with their romantic partners, and this provoked moments of uncertainty. One participant described his story as follows: "We already broke up, we had less communication because of limitations of communication channels … in my country, talking by telephone and text message is cheap, so we could do it a lot. Here it is too expensive."

In marital relationships, the moments that cause uncertainty were different from dating relationships. I coded and identified one theme: concern for a child.

Parents Concern

All four of the participants who were in a marital relationship stated that the main source of uncertainty in a distance marital relationship was anxiety about their children. I observed that people in a distance marital relationship were more likely to worry about their children, which caused arguments with their marital partners that could lead to uncertainty in the marital relationship. However, they make a lot of effort to maintain the relationship with their marital partners. For example, one participant described: "It is really a complicated thing, we argue with each other about our children. We have different opinions and that causes tension and so on but we try to avoid these disagreements and maintain family harmony." Similarly, one participant said: "Sometimes I have conflicts with my wife because my son is sick. I am concerned about him but I cannot take care of him. This situation makes me feel uncertain."

Addressing the Moments of Uncertainty

Toward the end of the interview, each interviewee was asked what advice he/she might give to someone who would be traveling abroad and wanted to know what to do in order to maintain distance romantic relationship back home. I found two themes about the moment of uncertainty that dating partners addressed: communication technology skills and patience.

Communication Technology

The results showed that three of the five participants who had a distance dating relationship had been able to cope with uncertainty and keep their distance dating relationship. They thought that distance was not a problem. Although distance increased some degree of uncertainty in their dating relationship, it made them feel more romantic and excited about their relationship. They believed that people can appropriately manage their time in order to continuously communicate with their partners and share information with each other. The first participant described her dating relationship as follows: "People in a distance romantic relationship should try to find the channels to talk to their partners … technology will help you to maintain your distance relationship. Before coming here, please make sure that you know how to use technology."

Patience

Conversely, two of the five participants who had a distance dating relationship could not maintain the relationship with their partners; they had already broken up. One of them mentioned the moments of uncertainty and gave the suggestions: "I think that in a distance romantic relationship, you should not have high expectations about your relationship but you should be patient in order to cope with difficult situations such as loneliness, distrust, and misunderstanding which may undermine the relationship with your dating partner."

For the distance marital relationships, I categorized the data and identified the themes related to coping with moments of uncertainty. Two themes were identified: communication technology and child closeness. Two of the four participants who were marital partners employed communication technology in order to maintain a distance relationship. Even though they believed that the marital relationship is a profound relationship among father, mother, and child that must be maintained without change, they attempted to continuously contact their partners in order to reduce the uncertainty that could occur at any stage and any relationship. As one participant said: "Everything is the same, we see each other through Skype like we are together … you have to know how to use technology, tools like Telephone, E-mail, Skype, Webcam, Facebook, Line, WeChat, Twitter, Tango, WhatsApp, to keep communicating with each other."

Child Closeness

Another source of uncertainty that people in a long distance marital relationship mentioned was the relationship with their children. As one married women explained: "It takes time to be close to your kid again when you live far away from him/her. Thus, people in a distance relationship should contact their kids frequently and not make them feel distant." Similarly, one married man expressed: "Dads and Moms who are separated from their children should think about ways to stay close to their children."

Information-Seeking Strategies and Uncertainty Reduction

Information-seeking strategies and uncertainty reduction are related. Uncertainty can occur in every type and stage of a relationship, no matter whether the relationship is long-term or short-term. Particularly, in the context of a romantic relationship where partners are separated by geographic distance, the persons in the relationship tend to experience increased levels of uncertainty. Hence they will strive to decrease their uncertainties. Acquiring more information is one strategy these persons used to reduce uncertainty and maintain their romantic relationship.

Self-Disclosure

The results indicated that three of the five participants in dating relationships employed a self-disclosure strategy to reduce their uncertainty and maintain their distance romantic relationship. This strategy refers to people in a distance romantic relationship who are willing and comfortable to openly share information with their partners. They tend to be close with each other because they try to talk about everything. One woman participant observed: "I had to let him see all of my friends through webcam when we had a party. He wants to know everything in my life … I see no point in doing that, but I do it for him". A second participant explained: "I observe that he is more likely to communicate his feelings when I came here compared to when I was staying in my country. I can see that he wants to explain his feelings". The third participant expressed: "The distance makes our relationship stronger. He communicates his feelings and uses romantic words with me that he seldom said to me when we stayed in our hometown."

Implications

Two of the five participants in dating relationships noted situations in which they and their partners had kept secrets between them that led to separation. This study identified a new theme called "implication" for explaining this situation. As one participant explained, "I didn't tell him about my plans after graduation, to stay in Thailand, or go back to my country." Another participant recounted: "I think we prefer implicit communication … we already broke up … I just knew the relationship was bad … I feel like she kept her distance from me."

Two participants in dating relationships reflected this new theme we called implication, and which means using indirect words to communicate with their romantic partners. They were less likely to use information-seeking strategies, resulting in a lack of information and the disintegration of the relationship. These participants attempted to use the implicit mode in order to protect their own feelings, ideas, and interests but created confusing responses for their partners. I think implication is not suitable within the context of distance romantic relationships because implication can lead to increased uncertainty.

In distance marital relationships, I created themes to explain information-seeking strategies that marital partners used in distance relationship. There were two themes: self-disclosure and empathy. Two participants in distance marital relationships executed a self-disclosure strategy to seek information from their partners as well. Thus, they can remain the distance romantic relationship. One male participant recounted his experiences of using self-disclosure strategies for

sharing information with his wife and child: "Our relationship is still the same … I leave them but my spirit is still there. We still talk and share stories with each other. I feel like they are very close to me." Similarly, another participant expressed the following about the relationship between her and husband: "Sometimes if I feel really bad … every time I just want to contact them. When I have a problem, I want talk to them more."

When I analyzed the data, I observed that the participants in both dating and marital relationships who use the self-disclosure strategies were more likely to be satisfied with their distance romantic relationship because they openly shared and seeked information with their partners. They did not have any anxiety in their relationships.

Empathy

Two of the four participants in marital relationships used an information-seeking strategy that I have called "empathy". This theme means understanding others' feelings or situations. As one participant explained, "My husband feels that I am ready to listen and understand him. If he talks with me about his problems, I will be compassionate so he feels better." She further stated "I think I understand his feelings and his situation that make him prefer to tell his stories to me."

Discussion

In this research, uncertainty reduction theory has been used to explore the challenge involved in maintaining distance romantic relationships. I categorized the romantic relationships into two groups: dating relationships and marital relationships. This research focused on three important issues in order to answer the research questions.

The first research question asked about the factors that provoked moments of uncertainty. After exploring the data, the results showed that there were two main factors or themes that provoke moments of uncertainty in a distance dating relationship; namely time differences and limited communication. Although people in a distance dating relationship attempted to maintain a continuous relationship with their partners, three of the five participants referred to timing differences that led to uncertainty in dating relationships and two of the five participants reported that limited communication was the main factor that resulted in uncertainty. This result appeared plausible and consonant with the idea of Parks and Adelman (1983), who stated that a lack of interaction or communication between relational partners can lead to uncertainty and deleterious effects on the relationship. Conversely, continuous communication between the partners will increase intimacy and decrease uncertainty. For distance marital relationships, I created one theme to explain the moments of uncertainty that occurred as a result of parents concern. I found that the main topic that most marital partners tended to communicate about with their partners was concern about their children.

The second research question was related to how the people in romantic relationships address their moments of uncertainty. The results showed that three of the five participants who have maintained their distance dating relationship have successfully managed their uncertainty. They focused on using communication technology including Skype, Text messaging, Telephone, Facebook, Twitter, Tango, WhatsApp, and E-mail to keep contact with their partner. Two of the five participants reflected that patience in difficult situations caused by feelings such as loneliness, distrust, and misunderstanding was a significant factor that helped people maintain the distance dating relationship with their partners. Obviously, when people use various communication technologies to interact with their partners, they will increase the chances of communication with their partners. Consequently, people can diminish uncertainty.

This finding was congruent with previous research. Knobloch and Solomon (2005) stated that when relational partners are geographically separated, uncertainty will clearly increase in their relationship. The partners in a distance relationship should recognize the importance of communication. Because communication is significant for the reduction of uncertainty, a lack of communication can have the effect of rising uncertainty levels and can put relationship maintenance at risk. Accordingly, our data suggested that uncertainty and a lack of communication about relationship issues had compatible outcomes. For distance marital relationships, there were two themes: communication technology and child closeness. Child closeness was one theme that marital partners were more likely to address. This theme demonstrated that marital partners recognized the closeness and togetherness with their children as important for their relationship.

The third research question focused on information-seeking strategies that people in distance romantic relationships employed to reduce uncertainty. Three of the five participants in dating romantic relationships reported employing an information-seeking strategy involving self-disclosure to reduce their uncertainty. The self-disclosure strategy indicates that people who are willing and feel comfortable to share information that leads to a closer relationship with their partners. Thus, people who use self-disclosure strategies to share information with their dating partners will reduce the uncertainty that occurs when people are apart and gain more understanding from each other.

Conversely, two of the five participants who reported not being able to maintain their relationship tended to use indirect to communicate with and seek information from their dating partners. This theme is called "implication". This is a new theme that was found in this research. However, implication is not compatible with a distance romantic relationship because indirect words can cause uncertainty and misunderstanding. Therefore, employing direct words is better than indirect words.

The finding was reasonably supported by Berger and Calabrese (1975). They argued that people fundamentally try to reduce uncertainty. Decreasing uncertainty corresponds with gaining enough information from their romantic partners. Particularly, when people in romantic relationships have conflicts, increased communication between romantic partners can resolve those conflicts and augment intimacy. We argue that uncertainty reduction can enhance the feeling of togetherness within the romantic relationship. However, individuals have techniques to access information about their partners differently depending on the partner's attributes and experiences.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

It is essential to recognize some of the limitations of this study. The participants of this study focused on Asian students who have studied at international colleges in Thailand. Therefore, the generalizability of this study is limited to students living in an Asian culture. People from other cultures might have different perspectives, attitudes, and experiences regarding uncertainty in distance romantic relationships. Thus, they might address moments of uncertainty and execute information-seeking strategies reducing uncertainty in different ways. The results of this study are limited to the Asian culture.

For future research, the researchers may consider to use uncertainty reduction theory to extensively examine the interaction of interpersonal relationships in other contexts. For example, the researcher can explore uncertainty in the organizational contexts resulting from the interaction between a newcomer and a manager or the interaction between customers and salesmen (relevance). In a cross-cultural context, the researchers can investigate the uncertainty that may occur between negotiators who have different cultural dimensions (relevance). In addition, researchers can explore the strategies that people in these contexts have used to acquire the

information needed to reduce uncertainty. The knowledge acquired from these contexts can be relevant for romantic relationships too.

References

Acredolo, C., & O' Connor, J. (1991). On the difficulty of detecting cognitive uncertainty. *Human Development, 34,* 204-223.

Baxter, L., & Wilmot, W. (1984). "Secret tests" Social strategies for acquiring information about the state of the relationship. *Human Communication Research, 11,* 171-201.

Berger, C. R. (1975). Proactive and retroactive attribution processes in interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 2,* 33-50.

Berger, C. R. (1986). Response---Uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: Uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13,* 34-38.

Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: Toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 1,* 99-112.

Clatterbuck, G. W. (1979). Attributional confidence and uncertainty in initial interaction. *Human Communication Research, 5,* 147-157.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *52*, 511-524.

Kellermann, K. A., & Berger, C. R. (1984). Affect and the acquisition of social information: Sit back, relax, and tell me about yourself. In R.N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 8* (412-445). Newbury Park: Sage.

Knobloch, L. K., & Solomon, D. H. (2005). Relational Uncertainty and Relational Information Processing. *Communication Research*, *32*, 349-388.

Parks, M. R., & Adelman, M. B. (1983). Communication networks and the development of romantic relationships: An expansion of uncertainty reduction theory. *Human Communication Research, 10,* 55-79.

Planalp, S., & Honeycutt, J. M. (1985). Event that increase uncertainty in personal relationships. *Human Communication Research, 11,* 593-604.

Planalp, S., & Honeycutt, J. M. (1985). Event that increase uncertainty in personal relationships. *Human Communication Research, 11,* 593-604.