

The Influence of SNS and Podcasts on the Political Participation of Korean Youth: A Case Study of the Candle Light Rallies and the 2017 Impeachment of the Korean President

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This study investigates the influence of social network services (SNS) and political podcasts on youth participation in candlelight rallies leading up to the impeachment of the Korean president. It also examines the effect of SNS and podcasts on online participation through SNSs. It was found that engaging in political discussions with friends or parents and news media use, including TV and Internet newspapers, exerted a major positive influence on participation in the rallies. However, SNS had a negative influence, while podcasts did not have a significant effect. On the other hand, SNS and podcasts had a positive influence on online participation. The results of structural equation modeling showed that SNS and podcasts affected SNS participation in the mediation of political discussion and political efficacy.

Keywords: SNS, political participation, political podcast, online participation, political efficacy

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1. Introduction

Social media, technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual networks (Wikipedia, 2017) include SNS, blogs, content communities such as YouTube, and podcasts (Hwang & Park, 2010). Using social media is an essential means by which young people interact with peers (Lee, Park, Na & Kim, 2016). As with the Internet in previous times, social media platforms now provide a new political space for participation as an information source or virtual public sphere (Vromen, 2017).

According to a national survey of 2,291 Korean students in 2016, almost a third of adolescents (33.8%) depended on SNS, including Twitter and Facebook, for news information for the last week, while only 11.0% used print newspapers (Korea Press Foundation, 2016). In the 2019 survey, almost two-thirds (64.7%) of teens used SNS, while only 5.6% used podcasts (Korea Press Foundation, 2019). In an Australian study, Facebook and YouTube were the most popular social media sites used by teens to obtain news (Notley & Dezuanni, 2019). Accordingly, social media and news portals are becoming an important source of news in platform-driven societies (Dwyer & Hutchinson, 2019; Yoon, 2019).

Young people are increasingly aware of social issues and are more active in alternative participation, such as rallies and signature campaigns through social networks (Kim & Yang, 2013). It was found that adolescents who obtained political news from the media were more likely to increase their political participation, political knowledge, and tolerance (Song, 2019). Social networks characterized by openness, interactivity, and connectivity have expanded civic participation and democracy (Do, 2015). As the civic voluntarism model indicates, social media as well as time can be an important resource for political mobilization among the young generation called digital natives (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003).

The Internet and social media played an important role in mobilizing the young generation in recent historic events in Korea. In rallies against the import of American beef in 2008, Internet cafés were critical in mobilizing teenagers in the streets (Lee & Jung, 2008). They exchanged information related to demonstrations and expressed their experiences on the Internet. Sinking of *Sewol Ferry*, which caused hundreds of high school students' deaths in 2014, shocked the young generation (Lee, 2017; Song, Jung, Kim & Park, 2019). They expressed their anger against a state that could not protect their peers from danger. They obtained information about this tragic accident not from mainstream media but from social media such as Facebook.

In this respect, candlelight rallies caused by a civilian meddling in state affairs in 2016 in Korea shows another good example to investigate the role of SNS in youth participation. These events triggered the active participation of Korean young people in rallies that occurred peacefully in the form of a festival. Numerous people, including teens, rallied against the wrongdoings of the president, and the former Korean President Geun-hye Park was impeached in March 2017. This was an unprecedented historical event in Korean history. The candle rallies were held every Saturday around squares in downtown areas in major cities such as Seoul and Pusan between October 2016 and March 2017. Many adolescents participated in rallies with their

parents or peers, who received much attention and media coverage. They expressed anger and disappointment with the political authorities and the government. More importantly, they requested the lowering of the voting age from 19 to 18; now, in 2021, people over the age of 18 can vote in Korea.

In this political context, this study investigates the influence of SNS and political podcasts and participatory activities on youth participation in candlelight rallies. In addition, it also examines the effect of SNS and podcasts on online participation through SNSs. Previous studies have focused on young adults' participation (Li & Chan 2017; Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014; Yang & DeHart, 2016). There are hardly any studies on the political participation of high school students in relation to SNS or political podcasts. Furthermore, political podcasts have received little attention in terms of political communication and participation. Finally, building on the Orientation-Stimulus-Reasoning-Orientation-Response (O-S-R-O-R) model (Cho et al., 2009), this study explores the structural relationships among social media, political discussions, political efficacy, and SNS participation.

2. Social Media and Political Participation

Studies investigating political participation indicate that political interest, efficacy, and discussions are involved in accounting for the level of participation (Cantijoch & Martin, 2009; Jung, Kim & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011; Klofstad, 2010; Min & Joo, 2007; Song & Park, 2006). In addition to these political variables, news media exert a significant influence on the political participation of young people. Studies have revealed that the use of news media is positively related to individual levels of political involvement and participation (Besley, 2006; Min & Joo, 2007). In other words, news media can facilitate political participation by increasing political knowledge and efficacy (Jung et al., 2011). Additionally, the use of the media enhances political participatory behaviors by making people more interested in public affairs or can help them form opinions on political issues (Kim & Han, 2005). However, the effect of news media on political participation depends on the specific types of content provided by the media. Kim and Han (2005) found that the use of entertainment programs had a negative effect on political participation, whereas reading or watching political news had a positive influence. That is, simply using or consuming mass media does not directly lead to participation. A study on Belgian adolescents found that watching news and current affairs programs boosted levels of political participation (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011).

As mentioned above, the Internet and social media, in particular, are becoming important in mobilizing people in political activities. They lower the costs of many different forms of engagement and provide new ways to discover and get involved with issues (Xenos et al., 2014). They have great potential – not only for mobilizing, but for expanding the scope of political participation as well (Xenos et al., 2014). Traditionally, the type of political participation was mainly related to voting behavior; however, new forms of online participation by young people, such as satire and comedy, online petitions, and posting messages on the Internet are emerging and gaining importance (Theocharis, 2011). These online activities lead to offline political

participation (Lin & Chiang, 2017). Min and Joo (2007) found that people who were more likely to participate in political discussions online and reply to news articles tended to take part in street demonstrations and signature campaigns more actively. Political activities on Facebook, such as discussing political information and posting a link about politics, were associated with political participation (Vitak et al., 2011). In another study, Internet use, together with newspaper reading habits, had a positive influence on the rate of political participation (Besley, 2006). The Internet as a source was also strongly related to political self-efficacy and political involvement (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010).

Recently, social media news consumption was found to be an important predictor of online and offline political/civic engagement (Hao, Wen & George, 2014). Based on U.S. national data, Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, and Valenzuela (2012) found that SNS use for news was a significant predictor of online and offline political participation. Among U.S. university students, “the political use of social media is a very important predictor of the online political participation” (Yang & DeHart, 2016, p. 10). Students’ political self-efficacy and social capital were also identified as important factors influencing their online political participation (p. 13).

The intensity of social media use is also associated with political engagement. Xenos et al. (2014) examined the relationship between social media use and political engagement among young people aged 16 to 29 in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. They found that social media was positively related to individual and collective political engagement in all countries. The interaction between social media and digital education is positively related to collective political engagement.

In addition, political podcasts play an important role in enhancing the political interest, efficacy, knowledge, and participation of young people (Lee & Ryu, 2013; Song, 2012). It has become a new type of media as a source of political news (Kim, Kim & Wang, 2016). Podcasts can be created by anyone with minimum equipment and technical knowledge, and have been popular over the years (Wrather, 2016). In particular, they enable the audience to understand political issues easily and amusingly. Most political podcasts in Korea are critical to governmental policies and partisans. Since *Naneun Ggomsuda*, a liberal-slanted partisan podcast, was successful in satirizing and criticizing the conservative government in 2012 (Kim et al., 2016), numerous political podcasts have been established. They are served through YouTube and *PodBbang*, a podcast portal, and can be easily accessed by anyone.

Studies indicate that a positive relationship exists between podcasts and participation. For example, listeners of political podcasts were more likely to participate in general and presidential elections in Korea (Song, 2012). The study based on national data from the U.S. show that podcasts, in general, were associated with both online and offline political participation (Chadha, Avila & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012). Discussion was an important mediator between podcast use and participation. For example, Min’s study found that political discussions among people through internet bulletin boards or SNSs had a mediating role between exposure to podcasts and political activities (Min, 2015). In this study, however, offline political discussions were not significant in the mediation of podcast consumption and participation.

Although political podcasts are emerging as new news sources of political stories, only a handful of studies have focused on their effects on participation.

2.1 O-S-R-O-R model

Studies suggest that news media will affect political participation via mediated variables, such as interpersonal discussion, political knowledge, and political efficacy (Cho et al., 2009; Jung et al., 2011). As Shah and colleagues contend, interpersonal discussions about political issues may be a critical intervening variable between news media use and political behavior (Shah et al., 2007). They found that “informational media use consistently encourages citizen communication, which in turn spurs civic and political participation” (Shah et al., 2007, pp. 695-696). According to a study concerning Hong Kong college students, SNS use affected online and offline political discussions which, in turn, encouraged participation in collective action (Ji, Zhou & Kim, 2017). That is, students’ SNS use activated their discussions, which led to their political participation.

Extending this communication mediation model, Cho and colleagues suggested the O-S-R-O-R model of campaign communication mediation (Cho et al., 2009). They found that reasoning processes such as “political conversation, political messaging, and cognitive reflections mediate the effects of campaign advertising exposure and news consumption on political participation and knowledge” (p. 67). Based on the O-S-R-O-R model, Jung et al. (2011, p. 422) found that interpersonal discussion (reasoning), political efficacy (second orientation), and political knowledge (second orientation) functioned as important mediators between news media use (stimulus) and online/offline political participation (response). Adopting the same model, Li and Chan (2017) examined the mediating roles of online and offline political discussion (first R) and political trust (second O) on social media use (S) and online/offline political participation (second R). They found that online/offline discussions were mediators of information seeking and political participation. On the other hand, political trust did not mediate the relationships between information seeking, political discussions, and participation. According to Hoffman and Young (2011, p. 159), “viewing satire or parody has positive and significant effects on political participation through the mediator of political efficacy.”

Accordingly, political discussion and efficacy are critical mediators of political information seeking and political behavior. The political use of social media is also a critical predictor of political participation. Based on relevant literature, we investigate how SNS and podcasts influence SNS participation through their impact on political discussions and political efficacy.

As discussed before, there are many factors that impact the political participation of young people, such as differing levels of political interests, political efficacy, the extent to which they engage in discussions about politics, and news media use. As this study focused on SNS and podcasts, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H1: News use via SNS or political podcast will be positively related to youth participation in rallies.
- H2: SNS participation will be positively related to youths' participation in rallies.
- H3: News use via SNS or political podcasts will be positively associated with youth SNS participation.
- H4: Participation in rallies will be positively associated with youth SNS participation.

In addition to these hypotheses, we examined the relationships among social media use, political discussion, political efficacy, and SNS participation. Based on the O-S-R-O-R model, we propose the following research hypothesis:

- H5: SNS and podcast will affect online participation through mediation of political discussion and political efficacy

3. Methods

3.1 Sampling

One well-known research company conducted the survey between March 28 and April 18, 2017, after the impeachment of the president. Stratified cluster sampling was conducted to obtain the samples. First, the whole country was stratified into four regions (Seoul metropolitan, Gyeongsang province, Chungcheong/Kangwon province, and Jeolla/Jeju province), and school type was stratified into two types (general school vs. vocational school). Next, schools were selected in each region according to the proportion of the youth population. As a result, 17 schools were sampled, and three classrooms in each school were surveyed. Prior to the survey, a public document announcing the aim of research and ethical considerations was shared with schools and consent was obtained. Interviewers with survey expertise visited the schools, and distributed survey questionnaires to the students.

In total, 1,430 high school students participated, with 807 (56.4%) male students and 623 (43.6%) females. The distribution of students in the first, second, and third grades was 457 (32.0%), 504 (35.2%), and 469 (32.8%), respectively.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Dependent variables

To measure the extent of participation in the rally for the impeachment of the president, students were asked how often they participated in the rallies between late October 2016 and mid-March 2017. The frequency ranged from zero to 12. The proportion of students who did not participate in rallies was 75.7%. That is, about a quarter of the students joined the rallies at least once or more. The average frequency was 0.44 ($SD=1.06$). As the frequency distribution was heavily skewed, we recoded values into a binary category for effective analysis: participation (24.3%) vs. non-participation (75.7%). SNS participation was composed out of four items drawn from Bai (2015). It measured how often respondents read about political issues, post their own

opinions on SNSs, forwarded or shared others' political messages via SNSs, and participated in petitions through SNSs. Each item had a value ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (often) and averaged ($\alpha = 0.758$, $M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.70$).

3.2.2 Independent variables

The degree of interest in politics was measured using five items. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they were interested in political issues, governmental policy, political parties, politicians, and TV political debates. The response categories ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very much) ($\alpha = 0.881$, $M = 2.47$, $SD = 0.69$). The items were drawn from Kim and Yang (2013). Political efficacy was measured using a three-item scale. Items included statements such as "I can make a rational judgement on a desirable national policy" and "I have the capacity to understand political issues and participate in politics". Responses to each item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) and averaged ($\alpha = 0.857$, $M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.67$). Items were adapted from Kim (2009) and Jung et al. (2011). Engagement in discussions on political issues was measured by how often young people engaged in discussions with their friends, parents, teachers, relatives, or online friends about such issues (1 = never to 4 = often). These five items were averaged for the analysis ($\alpha = 0.696$, $M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.57$). In addition to these variables, the socioeconomic levels of the related parents were measured by respondents' subjective evaluation of the extent of family wealth (1 = very poor to 7 = very rich).

3.2.3 Analysis

To analyze the effect of political news use and SNS participation on participation in rallies, we used a logistic regression analysis. This method was applied because the dependent variable was dichotomous. Next, we used hierarchical multiple regression analysis to investigate the influence of political news use and participation in rallies on SNS participation. Finally, to find relationships among social media news use, political discussions, political efficacy, and SNS participation, structural equation modeling was used with the AMOS program.

4. Results

4.1 Salience of the BRF in news

Logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine which variables predicted the degree of youth political participation in the rallies. As a result, political efficacy, political discussion, TV news media use, Internet newspaper use, SNS use, and participatory activities on SNS were predictors of young people's offline participation (see Table 1).

Table 1

Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Participation in the Candle Rally

Variables	β	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Demographic Variable			
Gender (female = 1)	0.156	1.169	0.896~1.525
Economic level (1~7)	0.012	1.012	0.890~1.151
Political constructs			
Political interest	-0.054	0.948	0.720~1.247
Political efficacy	0.240 ⁺	1.272	0.983~1.646
Political discussion	0.447 ^{**}	1.563	1.174~2.081
Political news use			
Radio	0.079	1.082	0.901~1.300
TV	0.219 [*]	1.245	1.023~1.516
Internet newspapers	0.188 [*]	1.207	1.028~1.418
Portal news	-0.146	0.864	0.705~1.058
SNS	-0.211 [*]	0.810	0.678~0.967
Political podcast	-0.059	0.943	0.780~1.139
SNS participation	0.758 ^{***}	2.135	1.671~2.728
-2 loglikelihood			1394.91

⁺ $p < .1$, ^{*} $p < .05$, ^{**} $p < .01$, ^{***} $p < .001$

SNS participation was the strongest predictor. That is, young people who participated in various activities through SNS increased the odds of being participants in the rallies (OR=2.135, $p < 0.001$). However, SNS use for political information had a negative effect on participation (OR=0.810, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, political podcasts had no significant effects on political participation. Therefore, hypothesis 1 that news use via SNS or political podcasts would be positively related to youth participation was not supported, while hypothesis 2 that SNS participation would be positively related to youth participation was accepted.

4.2 Predictor of SNS participation

Table 2 shows the influence of input variables on SNS participation. The independent variables were useful in explaining 46.5% of the variation in online participation. Among them, political constructs, such as political interest, efficacy, and discussions, explained 34.1% of the total variance.

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting SNS Participation

Predictor	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	β	β	β	β
Demographic Variable				
Gender (female = 1)	0.123***	0.100***	0.082***	0.076***
Socioeconomic status (1~7)	-0.005	-0.033	-0.024	-0.024
Political constructs				
Political interest		0.255***	0.195***	0.192***
Political efficacy		0.140***	0.112***	0.101***
Political discussion		0.321***	0.214***	0.194***
Political news use				
Radio			0.051*	0.046*
TV			-0.010	-0.018
Internet newspapers			0.038	0.027
Portal news			0.002	0.008
SNS			0.270***	0.271***
Political podcast			0.165***	0.161***
Participation in the rally (participation=1)				0.138***
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	0.014***	0.354***	0.448***	0.465***
ΔR^2		0.341	0.096	0.017

Gender, political constructs, radio, SNS, political podcasts, and participation in rallies positively affected SNS participation. In particular, SNS use for news had the most significant effect on online participation ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < .001$). That is, young people who found political news through SNS had a higher tendency to participate in SNS activities. Thus, hypothesis 3 that news use via SNS or political podcasts would be positively associated with youth SNS participation, and hypothesis 4 that participation in the rallies would be positively associated with participation was supported.

4.3 Structural equation modeling

To investigate the relationships among SNS, political podcasts, political discussion, political efficacy, and SNS participation, we tested the fully mediated model and partially mediated model using structural equation modeling. The results showed that the model fit of the partially mediated model (Chi-square = 651.847, $p < 0.001$, $df = 69$, GFI=0.933, CFI=0.906, NFI=0.896, RMSEA=0.077) was better than that of the fully mediated model (Chi-square = 1098.351, $p < 0.001$, $df = 74$, GFI=0.902, CFI=0.834, NFI=0.825, RMSEA=0.098). Furthermore, chi-square differences (446.504) between both models exceeded the critical value (11.07) of Chi-square with 5 degrees of freedom at $p < 0.05$. This result suggests that the less restrictive model improves the model fit. Thus, we accepted the partially mediated model (see Figure 1). As is

well known, acceptable fit includes GFI, CFI, NFI greater than 0.90, and RMSEA less than 0.10 (Weston & Gore, 2006).

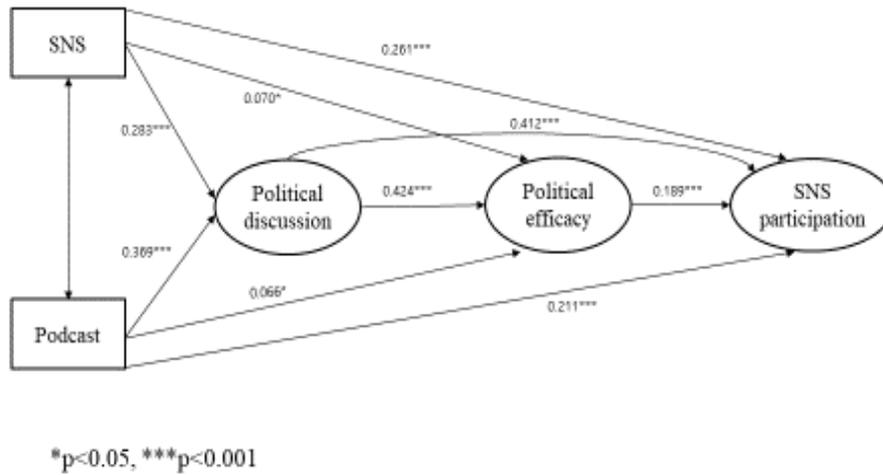


Figure 1. The effect of SNS and podcast use on participation via political discussion and efficacy.

As seen in figure 1, SNS and political podcasts are positively associated with political discussions, political efficacy, and SNS participation. Political discussion was a mediating variable between social media use and political efficacy. Furthermore, political discussion predicted political efficacy, which in turn affected SNS participation. Overall, political discussion and political efficacy played a mediating role between social media use and SNS participation. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported.

We performed bootstrapping (N=1,000) to test the significance of the indirect effect. As Table 3 shows, the indirect effect of SNS on political efficacy and SNS participation was statistically significant (p<0.01). Moreover, the indirect effect of political podcasts on political efficacy and SNS participation was significant.

Table 3

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effect of Variables

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
SNS → political discussion	0.283***		0.283
SNS → political efficacy	0.070*	0.120**	0.190
SNS → SNS participation	0.262*	0.152**	0.414
political podcast → political discussion	0.369***		0.369
political podcast → political efficacy	0.066*	0.157**	0.223
political podcast → SNS participation	0.211***	0.194**	0.405
political discussion → political efficacy	0.424***		0.424
political discussion → SNS participation	0.412***	0.080**	0.492
political efficacy → SNS participation	0.189***		0.189

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

5. Discussion

This study investigated the influence of social media on the offline and online political participation levels of Korean young people in the political situation of the impeachment of the president. As per the results, SNS was the main platform by which young people obtained political information. In fact, Korean young people indicated a much lower level of credibility in media and government compared to developed countries such as England and Germany (National Youth Policy Institute, 2016). Young people considered traditional media as boring and felt that Facebook posting, YouTube videos, and opinionated talk provided background information and perspectives (Marchi, 2012). Therefore, many adolescents tend to depend on SNS to obtain information that they cannot find in mainstream media. In addition, they prefer opinionated rather than objective news (Marchi, 2012).

Although social networks were popular among the younger generation, they had a negative influence on offline participation. This result is not consistent with studies that have shown that social media is associated with not only online participation but also offline participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Hao et al., 2014). Unlike mainstream media, in social media, there is a lot of information that is critical to existing politics or politicians. Thus, young people who obtain political information on SNS or podcasts may be disappointed by political reality, which in turn makes them reluctant to participate in rallies. However, the reason social media has a negative impact on participation in rallies needs to be further investigated.

While social media did not have a positive effect on offline participation, it was found that engaging in political discussions with friends or parents and news media use, including TV and Internet newspapers, exerted a major positive influence on participation in the rallies. As numerous studies indicated, political discussions were associated with civic or political participation (Cho et al., 2009; Klofstad, 2010; Odegard & Berglund, 2008). Interpersonal political discussions are crucial reasoning and deliberative processes that can lead to political participation (Cho et al., 2009). The aforementioned results also indicate that traditional media such as television are still influential in the political mobilization of young people in the era of social media. A study of Singaporean young adults showed that attention to traditional news media was more important in the process of traditional political participation and online political participation than social media (Skorvic & Poor, 2013). Although our research did not specify the name of TV news companies young people watched, it seemed that many of them would be influenced by JTBC news. This news company was founded as a commercial media in 2011, but was loved by many people due to its fairness and role as a watchdog. The JTBC famously broadcasted significant evidence about the state affairs being controlled by civilians. On the contrary, mainstream TV news media had little interest in the coverage of this historical event. Therefore, it is highly probable that adolescents will watch JTBC news far more than other institutional media.

Political activities on SNSs also played a critical role in promoting youth participation in the rallies. This result indicates that political activities via social networks are important for predicting offline participation. Therefore, encouraging online activities, such as posting political messages or signing petitions, is important in the political socialization of young people. Moreover, promoting online participation is necessary to enhance digital literacy because “working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace and the community” is an essential competency of media literacy (Hobbs, 2010, p. 19).

While social media such as SNS and podcasts were not positively associated with offline participation, they were important predictors of online participation. That is, young people who obtained political information from social media tended to participate in SNS activities. This result reflects the characteristics of the Web 3.0 era. While personal media such as blogs and mini-homepages played an important role in the era of Web 2.0, interactions among people on the basis of social networks are important in Web 3.0 technology (Kim, Kim, Choi & Kim, 2011). In the Web 3.0 era, users can express opinions about political issues anytime from anywhere. For SNS generation, participation through social media is commonplace, and social media is an alternative public sphere where users obtain political information. Political constructs such as political interest, efficacy, and discussions still had a significant influence on SNS participation. Interestingly, girls were found to be more active in online activities than were boys. This result is consistent with those of previous studies (Odegard & Berglund, 2008; Quintelier, 2009; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011; Snyder, 1966). Furthermore, participation in rally was positively associated with online participation. Therefore, the relationship between online and offline participation is reciprocal. More than other variables, online or offline participation

experiences tended to enhance the probability of youth participating in offline or online participation.

Overall, these results suggest that young people who engage in discussions with friends or parents about political matters more often and are ardent in offline or online activities and have a stronger tendency to participate in online or offline activities.

The results of structural equation modeling showed that SNS and podcasts affected SNS participation in the mediation of political discussions and political efficacy. Social media use promoted political discussions, which had a positive influence on political efficacy. That is, news information conveyed via the media encourages political discussion, which brings about an elevation of self-confidence in participating in the democratic process (Ardèvol-Abreu, Diehl & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017). Political efficacy is also associated with SNS participation. The direct effect of social media on online participation is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that political discussions and efficacy partially mediated the relationship between social media and participation in the medium. This result is consistent with that reported by Jung et al. (2011). It also supports the O-S-R-O-R model. In the framework of Cho and colleagues (Cho et al., 2009), the second “O” was not indicated more specifically. Therefore, this study suggests that political efficacy (O) can be a variable mediating between political discussion (R) and participation (R). Political discussion promotes political efficacy, which in turn enhances online participation. There is also a direct relationship between political discussions and online activities. Thus, political efficacy partially mediates political discussions and online participation.

Accordingly, social media played a role in promoting participatory behavior in the medium. In this process, political discussion and political efficacy are mediation variables.

Despite the contribution of our research, this study has some limitations. First, although there are many items about offline political participation, such as signing petitions or boycotts, the study only focused on participation in candle rallies. Future studies must include numerous examples of political behaviors. In addition, young people greatly depend on personal media such as YouTube for information. Thus, future studies should include personal media in the media category.

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