

The Effects of the SNS Activities of Politicians on Political Efficacy and the Intention to Participate in Voting

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ABSTRACT

Political activities through social networking service (SNS) are common in the political communication environment. The main aim of this study is to present logical and empirical evidence on the effects of politicians' SNS activities. To achieve this goal, this research analyzed the relationship between the SNS activities of politicians and the political efficacy and political participation of citizens through a survey of 644 people. The results of the survey analysis showed that politicians' SNS activities have a positive effect on both the internal and external efficacies of citizens and that these efficacies positively influence political participation. This finding means that the SNS activities of politicians promote political participation by increasing the political efficacy of citizens and states. The results also suggest that SNS, with its characteristics of communication and interaction, plays a crucial role as a political communication medium. Therefore, with SNS, a variety of information sources on politics can be offered, suggestions from citizens can be embraced, and such suggestions can be revealed to politicians as a means of promoting political efficacy and participation.

Keywords: SNS Activities of Politicians, Political Efficacy, Internal Political Efficacy, External Political Efficacy, Intention to Participate in Voting

I . Introduction

As the social network service (SNS) is becoming a means of political participation, since the late 200s, there has been a growing interest to SNS in academic industries, such as politics, linguistics, and business management (Song and Ko, 2013). Although, in terms of social commerce, SNS can be an interesting target

that results in private profit-seeking motives, such as management of information, marketing, and consumers' sentiments, SNS as a social medium drew the attention, support, and mobilization of public issues (Song and Ko, 2013). The reason why SNS has received so much attention is that, due to its characteristics such as openness, interactivity, and connectivity, it can be enhanced by strengthening

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the existing interactions or by forming new networks (Kang et al., 2012).

In terms of politics, SNS is a means of promoting political participation to enhance the declining public interest in politics (Song and Ko, 2013). Since, as demonstrated in previous research, Obama was elected president in 2008 with the help of the effective use of SNS, the interest in SNS for political effects has amplified. This research shows that voters discussed the contents of the news and related issues through various types of SNSs, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In addition, the political parties or candidates have used SNS to promote party promises, to identify the major issues of SNS, and to draw support for the candidates. Consequently, the use of SNS not only increased in the participation and interest of voters in the US presidential election, but also played a major role in Obama's success in the election (Kirk and Schill, 2011; Smuts, 2010). Thus, SNS makes it easy for citizens to not only access a variety of information sources, but also, through SNS' providing a public sphere to discuss political matters, to freely and easily exchange their personal opinions. In addition, SNS has contributed to the popularization of political participation and can be a strategic means of effective campaigning that allows politicians to promote their political views or commitments. However, several studies have considered potentially negative aspects of SNS. Specifically, it has been proposed that SNS might not be an effective means of promoting citizens' political participation. Concerns have been raised about the quality of the information provided via SNS, as the information on SNS is directly propagated without being filtered through the fact-checking stage; therefore, SNS may not be a most suitable way to exchange political information and opinions that are deeply related to the truthfulness of information.

Furthermore, the information on SNS can be passed on to anyone; however, receivers can be selective of the information that they wish to receive. Thus, those who are indifferent to politics may be exposed to some types of information, but they may not be selective of that information. Consequently, the use of SNS may not influence their political participation. In view of the above, some researchers have claimed that there might be serious side effects of dividing and differentiating SNS users (Baumgartner and Morris, 2009).

Human behavior is determined by interactions between individuals and the environment; changes in behavior do not occur passively in response to external stimuli; rather, they are present in the medium of the cognitive process (Bandura, 1977). Said differently, behavioral changes occur with the ability to respond to the environment and to take action. The combination of an expectation of the desired outcome from the environment and one's ability to ensure that desired outcome determine human behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy combines the concepts of expecting the efficacy and expecting the outcome. The embodiment of self-efficacy in political communication research is considered to be an individual who is actively using media, such as information retrieval, and who has a positive relationship and positive beliefs about their meanings and the impact of political participation and outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy in political communication research involves a positive belief about the meanings, influence, and result of an individual's participation in politics; it is regarded as passively related to active media usage, such as information searching (Bandura, 1997). Since SNS has characteristics of communication and interaction, voters would freely express their political opinions and politicians can use interactions to exert political influences.

These provide a positive effect on political efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Vitak et al., 2011).

However, previous research also suggests that the relationship between SNS and political efficacy may vary depending on the specific motives of the SNS activities (Choi and Lee, 2013; Kaye and Johnson, 2002; Kim and Park, 2015). Specifically, relevant studies suggest that, depending on the motives of SNS activities, the trust in or satisfaction with the political information can be different, and this may influence the public's trust towards the government and political efficacy. Furthermore, political efficacy becomes a psychological foundation of the behavior of political participation. Said differently, the expectation of one's capability to influence politics and the assurance that one can obtain a certain result by political participation are important antecedents of promoting political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Vitak et al., 2011; Williams and Gulati, 2008).

In the relationship between political efficacy and political participation, the influence may vary depending on the type of political efficacy. Political efficacy is categorized into 'internal efficacy', which is the confidence in being capable of having an influence over politics, and 'external efficacy', which refers to the belief that the government or a political system would respond to the needs of their voters (Erikson and Tedin, 2005; Hong, 2013; Jung and Lee, 2013; Ku, 2014). Previous studies have suggested that there is a difference in the influence of internal and external efficacy on political behaviors and that the behavior of individuals participating in the politics may vary depending on it (Jung and Lee, 2013; Niemi et al., 1991; Song, 2011).

SNS can be a factor that enhances political efficacy and political efficacy can, in turn, become an important factor that facilitates political participation. On the other hand, the influence of SNS on political

participation is limited; another limitation relates to in drawing younger people who are not interested in politics to participate. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the influence of politicians' SNS activity, as perceived by voters, on the political efficacy and political activities. First, voters' recognition of politicians' SNS activity and their intention of participating in election has been found according to the voters' characteristics. Second, the analysis has been performed on the relationship between politicians' SNS activity, as recognized by voters, and voters' intention of participating in the election. The significance of the results of the present study lies in that this research identifies the awareness of voters with regard to politicians' actual SNS activities and investigates the effectiveness of SNS politics.

II. Theoretical Background

2.1. SNS and Political Participation

The emergence of the Internet has brought about significant changes in methods, scope, and structure of communication, since large amounts of information are easily produced and distributed beyond space-time limitations (Song and Ko, 2013). One of the most noticeable effects of the Internet is the change in the existence of users. Like prosumers, the citizens who have previously been passive objects in politics have start to actively express political interest and support and go further towards making a direct impact on policy decisions of the government. This phenomenon is discussed in relevant literature in more detail than special situations, such as elections or the emergence of a particular policy issues, and has been empowered by the recent activation of SNS based on the Internet and smart phones.

SNS is a service that interacts with unspecific users and, within a limited system, public or semi-public profile information is formed in conjunction with other people. It is a Web-based service that is built to view the information created by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Unlike other web-based services, SNS has the characteristics of openness, interactivity, and connectivity, so it is used as an effective medium to strengthen the connectivity between citizens or individuals and politicians, enhancing thereby political participation (Kang et al., 2012).

Since social purposes of democracy are defined and executed through political participation and are based on public debate and interests (Dalton, 2008), research and discussion on political participation have been active in the last several decades. In the theories about the relationship between internet and political participation, there are positive viewpoints and negative viewpoints toward the effect that internet has on the political participation. First, the mobilization theory suggests that the characteristic of internet has positive effect on the political participation. On the other hand, the reinforcement theory suggests that internet can be utilized for the enforcement of vested political rights; therefore, there can be negative effect. Furthermore, in the fragmentation thesis, since it is easy to disclose selective information on internet, it is suggested to inhibit the deliberative democracy. Finally, there is the fragmentation thesis according to which the easy access to selective information disclosure is assumed to be a disincentive to the development of democracy.

From the perspective of the mobilization theory, citizens now have an access to massive amounts of higher-level political information and the increase of political knowledge and efficacy of citizens can activate their political participation (Norris, 2001).

Specifically, SNS has the characteristics of interactivity, openness, and connectivity. Therefore, individuals can acquire more political information, exchange political opinions with others, and connect with more people. SNS activates political participation because it increases political efficacy and makes individuals wish to participate and make decisions by themselves, rather than to leave political judgments to politicians (Shirky, 2008). Numerous relevant studies claim in this regard that people who frequently use SNS have a higher political efficacy and are more active in various types of political participation individuals who do not frequently use SNS. In addition, SNS is a medium that is relatively convenient for politicians to use in terms contacting their voters, which results in a smoother communication between politicians and voters than it was in the past (Kirk and Schill, 2011; Kum, 2011; Langlois et al., 2009; Lee, 2006; Vitak et al., 2011; Yun, 2013).

According to the reinforcement theory, political resources of Internet are applied to strengthen the positions of a small number of politically-vested rights, which are already rather politically synchronized rather than evenly used by everyone (Norris, 2001). Therefore, SNS is irrelevant to voters' political efficacy and participation (e.g., Baumgartner and Morris, 2009). The political parties, lobbyists, and activists able to mobilize political resources gain the additional resources to help expand their capacity in the policy process. Therefore, general voters with an inferior accessibility would develop complaints in the process of making policies (Davis, 1998; Norris, 2001). This not only fails to attract indifferent people to participate in politics, but also exacerbates unfairness in participation, creating controversies or inhibiting influential activities (Baumgartner and Morris, 2009; Song, 2010).

Finally, according to the fragmentation thesis, the

expansion of new media will hinder deliberation democracy, due to the characteristics of the Internet media that are easily accessed for selective information disclosure (Kim, 2011). Said differently, since the Internet provides an easy access to selective information acquisition (due to the technical characteristics of the Internet), information exchange and political debates about political orientation between like-minded people become more active (Conover et al., 2011; Shin and Woo, 2011; Stroud, 2008; Sunstein, 2009). This social fragmentation effect is likely to be exacerbated by psychological factors. Psychologically, it is reported that, for effective information processing and cognitive consistency, people tend to look for information that supports their opinions (Smith et al., 2008).

2.2. Political Efficacy

Changes in human behavior actively occur through cognitive processes towards the external environment. The cognitive process can be understood as a process with a belief that one can respond to the environment and confirmation that one can gain the desired results (Bandura, 1977). This cognitive process is called self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and, when applied to politics, this concept is political efficacy.

After its introduction by Campbell et al. (1954), political efficacy has been evaluated as a key factor in explaining political activities; in the next decades and until present, the concept of political efficacy has gained consistent attention regarding political emotions (Verba et al., 1995). Campbell et al. (1954) defined political efficacy as the feeling that an individual political behavior can influence a political process. This is the concept that includes trust towards a political system and legislation, confidence that one can influence a system, and a belief that forces

a system to react (Hess, 1971).

In general, political efficacy can be categorized into internal efficacy, which perceives that political efficacy is an ability to engage in political action, and external efficacy, which is related to the perception that a political system will respond (Craig, 1979). Internal efficacy is defined as the belief in one's ability to effectively understand and participate in politics. External efficacy is defined as the belief that a political group and the government may respond to individual needs (Craig et al., 1990). Internal efficacy presupposes that the degree of influence that people can exert comes from their own abilities; external efficacy is related to the perception that the influence of people is enabled by substantial functions of a political system. Therefore, internal efficacy plays an important role in inducing traditional or non-traditional forms of political participation in relation to internal motivation (Morrell, 2005). Alternatively, external efficacy is associated with common confidence regarding the functions of political systems and organizations (Niemi et al., 1991) and refers to a subjective state of how the government treats individuals. Both types of political efficacy are reported to be highly correlated in individuals (Tedesco, 2011).

Numerous studies on political efficacy insist that, since political efficacy has a passive relationship with active media usage, such as information searching, SNS has a positive effect on political efficacy, (Bandura, 1997; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). The accessible political information obtained through SNS has various types of high-level information, so voters can have enhanced knowledge. Such enhancement in political knowledge can boost voters' confidence in being politically influential, which enhances internal efficacy (Carpini and Keeter, 1997; Vitak, et al., 2011). On the other hand, external efficacy, which is related to trust in a political system, is also

affected by SNS. Interaction, one of the characteristics of SNS, can expand the network among users and strengthen social capital (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). When reviewing these characteristics in politicians' SNS activities, it becomes clear that their SNS activities strengthen communication between politicians and voters, which helps the latter to develop trust in the former, which further leads to the development of trust in a political system (Jung and Lee, 2013). Therefore, external efficacy may enhance due to interactive characteristic of the SNS.

In other words, political efficacy increases since there are opportunities to gain political knowledge and to participate through SNS (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012).

Although substantial research on the relationship between political efficacy and political participation considers political participation as a major factor, there are conflicting views on them as well. Studies advocating positive opinions about using SNS (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Vitak et al., 2011; Williams and Gulati, 2008) show that there is a possibility of being associated with friends who actively participate in political activities and that, eventually, one will have an increased internal efficacy when participating in political activities by oneself, which leads to one's active participation in political activities (Vitak et al., 2011). Since the variety of information sources related to politics through SNS will enhance political knowledge of individuals and provide opportunities to participate, political efficacy is increasing and providing motives for active participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). On the contrary, there are claims that the forms of political participation may differ depending on the types of political efficacy as well (Erikson and Tedin, 2005; Hong, 2012; Jung and Lee, 2013; Ku, 2014). In these studies, political efficacy is classified as internal efficacy or external

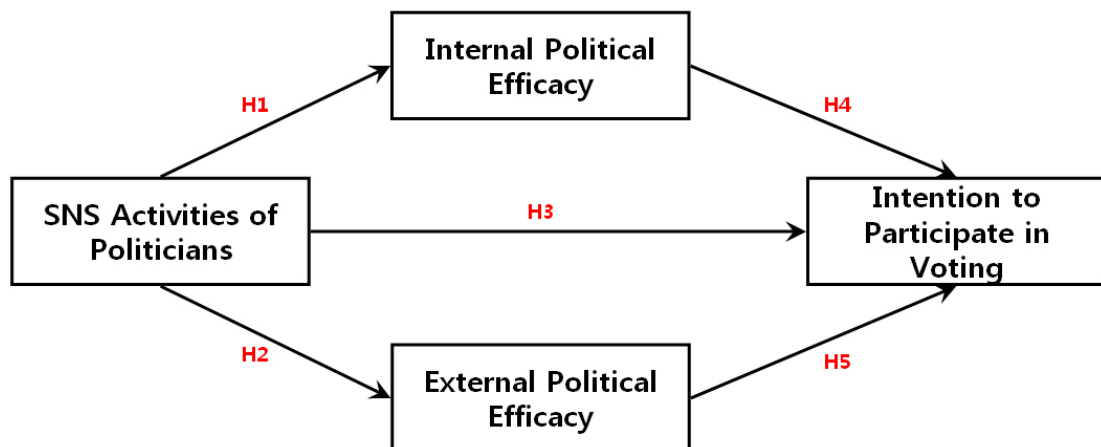
efficacy and these two types of efficacy are shown to have a different degree of influence on political participation. Internal efficacy is a major factor in increasing participation in voting; however, external efficacy has negative effects on this (Ku, 2014). When the level of internal efficacy and external efficacy differ depending on political participation behaviors, their influences may differ as well (Erikson and Tedin, 2005; Jung and Lee, 2013). Furthermore, whereas internal efficacy affects participation in voting, contact with officials, and campaigns, external efficacy does not significantly influence political participation (Hong, 2013).

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Model

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of political activity through SNS in political terms. To achieve this aim, the relationship between SNS, political efficacy, and political participation were identified through advanced research.

Previous research suggested that there are both positive and negative aspects of SNS effects at the same time. However, since many studies demonstrated positive effects, the relationship between SNS and political efficacy, as well as that between SNS and the intention to participate in voting, were set as positive relationships. In addition, there were studies claiming that the effects of political efficacy differ in terms of their positive effects and types. Since most research suggests that political efficacy has a positive effect on political participation, this is set as a positive relationship in this study. In line with this, the relationship between the variables mentioned above is described in <Figure 1>.



<Figure 1> Research Model

3.2. Formulating the Hypotheses

Regarding the relationship between SNS and political efficacy, there is a belief and confidence in that one can impact politics with political efficacy through active participation, such as information search, suggestion of opinions, and human network. Previous research can be divided into studies on positive relevance (Bandura, 1997; Choi, 2012; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Hong, 2012) and those claiming differences in the influence over political efficacy, according to the trust of SNS and motives to participate (Choi and Lee, 2013; Johnson and Kaye, 2013; Kaye and Johnson, 2002; Kim and Park, 2015).

This present study estimates the relationship between SNS and political efficacy as a positive relationship. The SNS activities of politicians serve the purpose of promoting communication and interaction with voters. These SNS activities can make voters with convictions and an interest in politics to believe that they can have a political influence, which is an enhancement of internal efficacy. In fact, previous research (e.g., Langlois et al., 2009; Kirk and Schill, 2011) claims that using Facebook, Twitter,

and YouTube effectively impacted Obama's winning in the presidential election, demonstrated that politicians' SNS activities give voters the confidence that they are involved in politics through debate, which led to positive impacts on political efficacy. In this regard, Bandura (1997) defined political efficacy as confidence that one can influence politics and insisted that political efficacy has a positive relationship with the use of active media, such as information searching. Vitak et al. (2011) also reported that, through the analysis of the relationship between Facebook use and political participation, there is a higher possibility of connecting with the friends who are actively involved in political activities and, by looking at them, internal efficacy that allows one to participate in politics increases as well. Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) suggested that, by providing information regarding political issues and allowing exchange of opinions and communication, SNS such as Facebook can form social capital based on trust. This, in turn, may lead to the development of trust in a political system, which enhances external efficacy.

The studies claiming a positive relationship between SNS and political efficacy confirmed that the

characteristics of communication through SNS have a positive effect on an individuals' political efficacy. Therefore, the following two hypotheses have been formulated in the present study.

H1: The SNS activities of politicians would have a positive (+) effect on the internal political efficacy of citizens.

H2: The SNS activities of politicians would have a positive (+) effect on the external political efficacy of citizens.

Earlier studies based on the mobilization theory show that the relevance between SNS and political participation has a positive effect. By contrast, the studies that adopt the reinforcement theory and the fragmentation thesis contend that its influence is insufficient, as there are some negative impacts. However, the findings of various previous studies suggest that the characteristics of SNS promote political participation. In particular, the research that demonstrates that SNS made a great contribution to the 2008 presidential election of Obama (Kirk and Schill, 2011; Smuts, 2010) emphasizes that the debates and discussions on political issues through SNS makes voters become more interested in politics, which has led to political participation.

There are other studies claiming that SNS has a positive effect on political participation. Shirky (2008) stated that, since SNS has such characteristics as interactivity, openness, and connectivity, individuals acquire more political information, exchange political opinions with others, and connect with more people. Therefore, more people are driven by a desire of political participation. In addition, Williams and Gulati (2008) report a very close relationship between the SNS public opinion and voting behavior of individuals. Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) demonstrated that there are positive relationships between the intensity of Facebook use and life

satisfaction, social trust, citizen participation, and political participation. In addition, Vitak et al. (2011) provided evidence that political activities on Facebook have a significant impact on offline political participation. Meanwhile, there is research showing that SNS is useful as a political medium tool. Choi (2012) insisted that the use of SNS increases internal political efficacy, which leads to a positive political participation. Moon and Kim (2014) also suggested that the use of SNS has positive effects on political participation. According to Hong (2012) and Yun (2013), the use of SNS also has a positive impact on the attitudes of candidates towards participation in voting.

Numerous studies on the topic outlined above reveal that SNS can serve not only a useful political medium, but also a catalyst of political participation. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated.

H3: The SNS activities of the politicians would have a positive (+) effect on citizens' intentions to participate in voting.

Political efficacy has a positive effect on political participation with the belief and confidence that one can influence politics. Vitak et al. (2011) demonstrated that, since political efficacy increases through SNS by connecting with friends who are active in political activities, participation in political activities can also increase. Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) also showed that political efficacy provokes motivation to actively participate in politics and Ku (2014) further confirmed that both internal and external types of political efficacy positively influence the intention to vote.

Thus, previous research suggests a positive relationship between political efficacy and political

participation. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated in the present study.

H4: The internal political efficacy of citizens would have a positive (+) effect on the intention to participate in voting.

H5: The external political efficacy of citizens would have a have positive (+) effect on the intention to participate in voting.

3.3. Measurement of Variables

Three key concepts in this study are SNS activities, political efficacy, and political participation. SNS activities have been defined as citizens' perceived SNS activities of politicians that strengthen the connectivity with voters or citizens. Based on the survey questions about the perceptions of SNS activities from Choi (2011), 10 questions have been modified to suit the aim of the present study and measured on a 5 - point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Political efficacy consists of external political efficacy and internal political efficacy. External political efficacy consists of four modified questions for the purpose of the present research. These questions were modified from the questions in Ku's (2014) study (which, in turn, was based on Craig et al. (1990). Internal political efficacy was modified in the present study based on the studies by Ku (2014) and Pinkleton and Austin (2002); overall, internal political efficacy was assessed via 3 questions that were responded to on 5 - point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The intention to participate in voting is defined as the degree of participation and awareness towards voting, as well as the degree of encouraged participation. All of the survey items were modified for the present research based on the survey ques-

tionnaires to measure the intention to participate in mobile voting. The questionnaires included 4 questions. The specific configuration of the measurement items are presented in <Table 1>.

3.4. The Survey Target and Data Acquisition

The samples used in this study were collected from adult males and females living in the Seoul and Gyeonggi Incheon areas in South Korea by using a convenience sampling method. Data collection was carried out through personal interviews; the interviewer visited each interviewee for a month from 18 February to 15 March 2015; and the final number of collected survey sets amounted to 652. For the final statistical analysis using the structural equation model, a total of 644 sets (98.7%) was used, as eight sets of questionnaires with insincere or absent responses were discarded from the data set.

A brief look at the demographic characteristics of the respondents suggests that the number of males (53.7%) was higher than that of females (46.3%). For the age range, those in their 40s amounted to 27.6% of the sample, those in their 30s to 26.6%, those in their 20s to 25.8%, and those in their 50s to 20.0%. As concerns education, high-school graduates represented 23.9% of the sample, university graduates 66.8%, and those with Master's degrees 9.3%. For the income range, 36.2% of the respondents earned less than 3 million won, 46.4% earned from 3 million to 6 million won, and 17.4% earned over 6 million won.

3.5. Reliability and Feasibility Analysis

In order to test reliability and validity of the measurement items, the analysis of convergent validity, the analysis of discriminant validity, and reliability

<Table 1> Configuration of Measurement Items

Factors		Measurement Items	Researchers
SNS activities of politicians		1. Politicians seem to put some effort into trying to exchange messages with voters through SNS. 2. I feel closer to politicians as they can answer my personal questions through SNS. 3. Politicians not only do promotions through SNS, but also try to get agreement from voters. 4. In addition to making political proposals, politicians try to communicate a lot through SNS. 5. Through SNS, politicians are trying to honestly share their thoughts on various issues other than politics. 6. Politicians give the information about their legislative and political activities and give the impression of being active in politics through SNS. 7. Politicians can provide information on various social issues through SNS. 8. I feel closer to the politicians who share their personal stories on SNS. 9. Politicians seem to be active in politics with their heart rather than managing their image on SNS. 10. I can see the humanistic side of politicians as they reveal their emotions through SNS.	Choi (2011)
Political efficacy	Internal political efficacy	1. Voting is an effective way to evaluate the government. 2. I have a lot to say about what the government does. 3. My vote has the power to create something different as compared to the past.	Craig et al. (1990)
	External political efficacy	4. Politicians are only interested in getting votes. 5. Politicians and government officials think that they are the owners of the country. 6. Politicians are not interested in voters after the election. 7. Politicians and government officials do not care about the thoughts that people like me have.	Ku (2014) Pinkleton and Austin (2002)
Intention to participate in voting		1. I have been mostly active in voting in the elections until now. 2. I think that voting is an important right of citizens of the Republic of Korea. 3. I persuade people to participate in voting. 4. I will definitely participate in voting when the election starts in the future. 5. No matter how busy I am, I vote and then look at the private schedule. 6. I vote even though there is no candidate I would like to choose. 7. I vote by considering the parties and areas that the candidates are from.	Kuem and Joo (2013)

<Table 2> General Characteristics of Targets (N = 644)

Category	Item	Frequency	%
Gender	Men	346	53.7
	Women	298	46.3
Age	20s	166	25.8
	30s	171	26.6
	40s	178	27.6
	50s	129	20.0
Education	High school graduate	154	23.9
	University graduate	430	66.8
	Master's and above	60	9.3
Monthly income	3 million won and lower	233	36.2
	3~6 million won	299	46.4
	6million and above	112	17.4

analysis were performed. <Table 3> shows the correlation coefficients between variables of confirmatory factor analysis and descriptive statistics using LISREL 8.72. <Table 4> shows factor loading of the measurement model and Cronbach's α value.

In <Table 4>, the loading values of each measured variable (λ) are both significant and appear to be quite high. In addition, for composite reliability, all variables are over 0.6. For the values of the average variance extracted (AVE), all of the variables are around 0.5 or higher and Cronbach's α is also near the limit of 0.7 or higher. Therefore, the results of our statistical analyses have shown that each measured variable satisfies the criteria of convergent validity.

According to the test method of Fornell and Larcker (1981), in order to test the discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated. Furthermore, after comparing its square roots and the correlation coefficient between variables, all AVE square roots of the variables were found to be bigger than the variables and the correlation coefficients between the variables. The analysis results showed that the measurements for the variables, which were included in the research model, contain a certain degree of discriminant validity.

3.6. Variance Analysis According to AgeGroups

In the present study, the difference between perception of politicians' SNS activity and intention to participate in voting was analyzed according to the participant's age groups. The results of this analysis are shown in <Table 5>. Specifically, the age group of people in their 30s ($M = 2.849$) had a positive evaluation toward politicians' SNS activity, while those in their 20s ($M = 2.552$) had the most negative evaluation. The difference between the age groups was statistically significant. However, the intention to participate in voting did not show a significant difference between the age groups.

IV. Hypothesis Testing

<Table 3> shows that, for the correlation coefficients between variables, all correlation coefficients have a significant positive (+) value at $p = 0.01$. The SNS activities of politicians have the highest correlation with internal political efficacy. In addition, external political efficacy and internal political efficacy have the highest correlations with the intention to participate in voting.

<Table 3> Correlation Coefficient between Variables (Φ Matrix)

Variables	SNS Activities of Politicians	Internal Political Efficacy	External Political Efficacy	Intention to Participate in Voting
SNS activities of politicians	0.857			
Internal political efficacy	0.282 (5.932)	0.701		
External political efficacy	0.159 (3.826)	0.285 (5.723)	0.799	
Intention to participate in voting	0.100 (2.448)	0.592 (15.322)	0.374 (9.930)	0.840

Note: t-value in bracket, Diagonal is the square root of AVE

<Table 4> Analysis of the Measurement Model

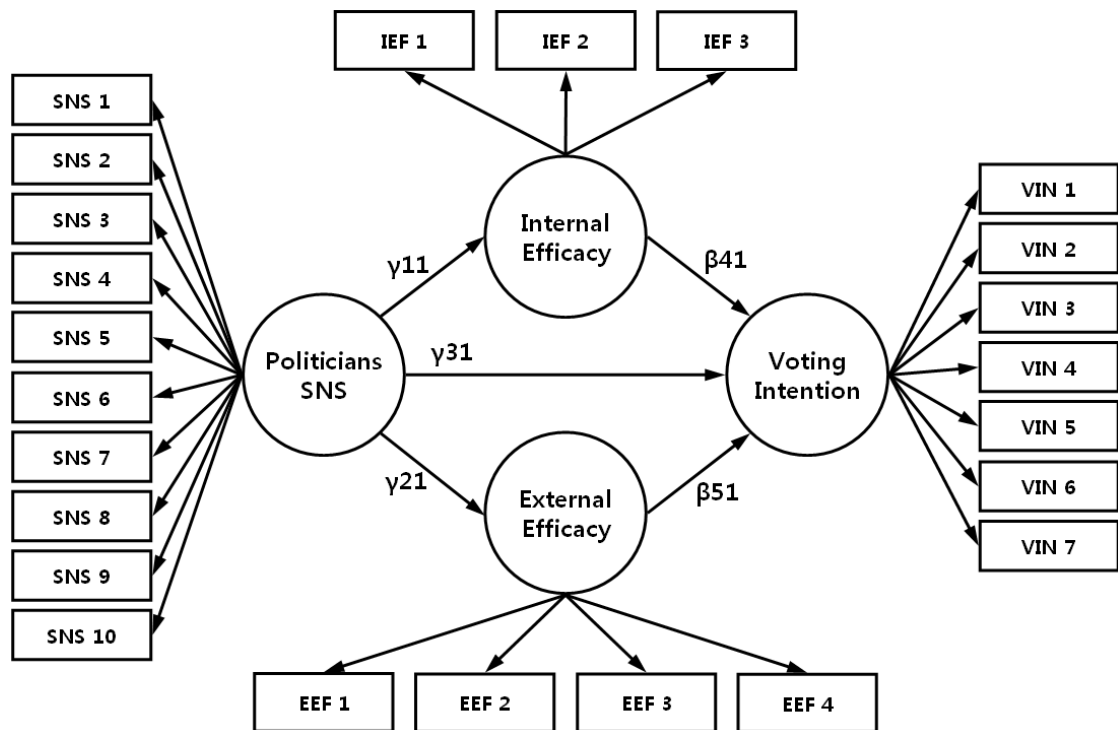
Variables	Measuring Items	Factor Loading(λ)	t-Value	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's α
SNS activities of politicians	SNS activity 1	0.803	24.486	0.965	0.735	0.967
	SNS activity 2	0.805	24.604			
	SNS activity 3	0.850	24.730			
	SNS activity 4	0.899	29.316			
	SNS activity 5	0.905	29.662			
	SNS activity 6	0.898	29.296			
	SNS activity 7	0.885	28.594			
	SNS activity 8	0.836	26.053			
	SNS activity 9	0.871	27.830			
	SNS activity 10	0.894	28.066			
Internal political efficacy	Internal efficacy 1	0.741	22.403	0.740	0.492	0.691
	Internal efficacy 2	0.656	16.204			
	Internal efficacy 3	0.778	24.885			
External political efficacy	External efficacy 4	0.730	20.475	0.876	0.639	0.875
	External efficacy 5	0.791	22.958			
	External efficacy 6	0.835	24.846			
	External efficacy 7	0.837	24.924			
Intention to participate in voting	Voting intention 1	0.849	26.494	0.943	0.705	0.942
	Voting intention 2	0.853	26.713			
	Voting intention 3	0.846	26.397			
	Voting intention 4	0.881	28.165			
	Voting intention 5	0.901	29.287			
	Voting intention 6	0.794	23.930			
	Voting intention 7	0.743	21.753			

<Table 5> Variance Analysis According to Age Groups

Variable	Age	Frequency	Mean	F-Value (p)	LSD
SNS activities of politicians	20's	166	2.552	4.439** (0.004)	a < b, a < c, c > d
	30's	171	2.849		
	40's	178	2.808		
	50's	129	2.652		
	Total	644	2.722		
Intention to participate in voting	20's	166	3.996	0.310 (0.818)	
	30's	171	3.983		
	40's	178	4.059		
	50's	129	4.007		
	Total	644	4.012		

<Figure 2> shows the structural model which was used for estimating parameters; <Table 6> shows

the test results for the major estimates and the hypotheses within the same model.



<Figure 2> Structural Model

<Table 6> Analysis of the Structural Model

Relationship with Variables	Symbol	ML Estimate	t-Value	Supported/ Not Supported	
SNS activities of politicians → Internal political efficacy	γ_{11}	0.283	5.421	H1	Supported
SNS activities of politicians → External political efficacy	γ_{21}	0.259	7.857	H2	Supported
SNS activities of politicians → Intention to participate in voting	γ_{31}	-0.001	-1.72	H3	Not Supported
Internal political efficacy → Intention to participate in voting	β_{41}	0.527	4.610	H4	Supported
External political efficacy → Intention to participate in voting	β_{51}	0.220	4.869	H5	Supported
Fit statistics	$\chi^2 = 1071.4$, $p = 0.000$, $df = 246$, $GFI = 0.871$, $NFI = 0.963$, $CFI = 0.971$, $IFI = 0.971$, $RMR = 0.057$, $RMSEA = 0.075$				

As shown in <Table 6>, the fit of the structural model for estimating the path coefficient appears to be good to a certain degree ($\chi^2 = 1071.4$, $p = 0.000$, $df = 246$, $GFI = 0.871$, $NFI = 0.963$, $CFI = 0.971$, $IFI =$

0.971 , $RMR = 0.057$, $RMSEA = 0.075$). Taking a look at the significant test results for each estimate, SNS activities of politicians have a direct positive (+) effect on internal political efficacy ($\gamma_{11} = 0.283$, $t = 5.421$)

and external political efficacy ($\gamma_{21} = 0.259$, $t = 7.857$), supporting thus Hypotheses 1 and 2. However, since the SNS activities of politicians did not appear to have a direct effect on the intention to participate in voting, Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the data analysis. On the other hand, since both internal political efficacy ($\beta_{41} = 0.527$, $t = 4.610$) and external political efficacy ($\beta_{51} = 0.220$, $t = 4.869$) appeared to have a significant positive (+) effect on the intention to participate in voting, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were supported.

V. Conclusion

This study aimed to present rationale and empirical evidence on how SNS activities affect citizens' intentions to participate in voting. To achieve this aim, it has been hypothesized that the SNS activities of politicians would affect the political efficacy of citizens and their intention to participate in voting. Another hypothesis was that political efficacy would have a positive impact on the intention to participate in voting and the statistical analysis using the structural equation model was performed by the data collected from 644 respondents.

The results of the data analysis allow for concluding that the SNS activities of politicians have a positive impact on both internal and external political efficacy. This confirmation of the positive relationship between the SNS activities of politicians and political efficacy not only enables people to freely and directly deliver personal opinions or claims, but also enables them to confirm their influence on politics through their interactions; such interactions include, for example, debates with politicians on certain issues. Therefore, it may be interpreted as having a positive effect on internal political efficacy. In addition, the

SNS activity of politicians creates an interaction with their voters and it lets the latter hold the belief that their opinions would affect politicians. This can be assumed to have a positive effect on external political efficacy. These results support the conclusions of previous studies where SNS activities are considered to be context variables or antecedents to promote political efficacy.

On the other hand, the SNS activities of politicians do not have a direct effect on the level of participation in voting; however, they are confirmed to have a positive impact on the intention to participate in voting through internal and external political types of efficacy. These results diverge from the findings reported in earlier research (cf., Kirk and Schill, 2011; Smuts, 2010) that claims that SNS has a direct positive impact on political participation. These results suggest that changes in human behavior occur (Bandura, 1977) due to the perception of external environment or with the belief in one's ability and outcomes. The findings are congruent with previous research that states that SNS activities are not effective for all political participation; rather, they have limited effects (Baumgartner and Morris, 2009; Song, 2010), are effective for passive participation (Song and Ko, 2013), and do not have any effect on inducing the participation of people who are not interested in politics (Bimber, 1998; Lee, 2005).

Furthermore, this study has predicted a positive relationship between political efficacy and the intention to participate in voting. The results of our analyses suggest that the internal and external political efficacies both appeared to have a positive (+) effect on the intention to participate in voting. These findings support previous research (cf., Williams and Gulati, 2008) that demonstrated that political efficacy should be considered a major factor in promoting political participation. said differently, political effi-

cacy is a concept that includes trust towards a political system and legislators, the belief that individuals can influence that system, and the belief that they can make the system respond in a certain way (Hess, 1971). This again provides evidence that political efficacy plays an important role in inducing participation in voting in relation to internal motives (Morrell, 2005). Furthermore, general trust towards the functions of a political system and organizations can induce participation in voting (Niemi et al., 1991).

Therefore, in the political communication environment with an active political participation through SNS, in order for the politicians to increase the political participation of citizens and exchange appropriate political communication with them, politicians should not only provide various political information sources through SNS, but also reflect the opinions of citizens to the, and motivate the intention to participate in the politics.

This said, the present study has however several limitations. First, we only examined the awareness of politicians' SNS activities and analyzed the relationship between political efficacy and the intention to participate in voting. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how each specific the characteristics of SNS

affects political efficacy and the intention to participate in voting. Existing studies focus on the characteristic of promoting political participation, as SNS can form human networks due to openness, interactivity, and connectivity (Kang et al., 2012). There is also research highlighting the limitations in promoting political participation by SNS activities (Song and Ko, 2013). In the future, the characteristic and quality of SNS should be explored more specifically, and the relationship between SNS and political participation should be analyzed. Second, this study focused on the specific type of political participation, specifically, the intention to participate in voting. However, political participation has various types, such as customary and conventional participations. Therefore, in addition to the intention to participate in voting, there is a need to analyze other type of political participation. Third, this study has only analyzed politicians' SNS activities as antecedents of political efficacy. However, earlier studies (cf., Niemi et al., 1991), have established differences in political efficacy according to various social demographic variables, such as level of education or income. These aspects should also be taken into account in further research.

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