

## Effects of Social Media Utilization on Labor Union Social Capital in South Korea

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### **Abstract**

*This study delved into the effects of labor union members' social media utilization for the formation of labor union social capital. Specifically, this study aimed to identify the effects of labor union-related social media use and participation on the labor union's social capital formation through quantitative and qualitative research. It set up trust, network, and participation as social capital components and as dependent variables. Network, in particular, was divided into bonding and bridging aspect. There is the correlation between labor union-related social media use and the formation of labor union social capital. As participation in the group type social media operated by a labor union becomes more active, evaluation on labor union social capital throughout trust, network, and participation is higher. Especially, the correlation between bonding network and bridging network was high. This proves that a labor union's bond enhancement does not result in the labor union's selfishness, but it can build a cooperative system with an external network.*

**Key words:** *Labor Union, Social Media, Social Capital, Trust, Bonding/Bridging Network, Participation*

### **1. Introduction**

Korea's labor movement currently suffers from many difficulties. Due to the increase in temporary positions, organization rate fell while the labor market's bipolarization and labor movement's segmentation deepened. As employers prefer temporary positions where they can employ with much smaller cost and dismiss employees without burden compared to permanent positions' wage and working conditions, the number of non-regular workers sharply increases. Social and economic differences between regular workers and non-regular workers have widened more, which causes a problem of bipolarization. A labor union generally is a social organization made to solve the problems of workers and workplaces and to improve workers' rights. A labor union seeks to build a community respecting labor and supporting the underprivileged. This study is mainly on whether the utilization of new media amid Korea's labor movement crisis can contribute to the consolidation of solidarity within the labor union movement, expansion of external network, and improvement of trust on labor unions. This study particularly focuses on the utilization of social media and was carried out from the viewpoint of whether social media can promote solidarity

within the labor movement and can be significantly utilized for labor movement development.

Some recent cases show such a possibility in social media. In the so-called Arab Spring in the anti-government demonstration that erupted in the Middle East and North Africa in December 2010, the demonstration participants let the world know about the terrible brutality of their governments, oppressing the demonstrators, through social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. They communicated and organized information on their marches and rallies through social media. Eventually, the Arab Spring was hailed as “Twitter Revolution” (Shirky 2011). Some cases can be found in Korea’s labor movement. Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction (HHIC) unilaterally dismissed some 400 workers in a restructuring process in 2010. Kim Jin-sook, an executive of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and a laid-off worker of HHIC, held a 309-day high altitude demonstration by climbing a crane. Although she did not gain attention at an early stage, the situation rapidly changed as Kim Jin-sook let other people know about the high altitude demonstration situation through Twitter; likewise, actress Kim Yeo-jin gained attention as a socialtainer retweeting the situation. The support and participation of not only labor movement activists, but the general public, continued and “the buses of hope” were organized going toward the high altitude demonstration site nationwide. This became a symbol connecting the depressed labor movement camp and civil society. As the cleaning workers of Hongik University were dismissed collectively from the school in 2011, they began a long-term demonstration. The Twitterians who heard of this news organized a Twitter group, “Punk External Force,” and collected donations, donated goods, and put an ad denouncing the university’s immorality. As the public opinion criticizing the university was diffused, the university cancelled the dismissal. Such cases showed a possibility of social media’s connecting network letting other people know about the labor movement and persuading civil society.

However, there is not always a positive assessment on the utilization of social media. There is an assertion that the utilization of social media is temporary, and that it is far from fundamental problem solving. In a column, “Small change, Why the revolution will not be tweeted” Gladwell insisted that fundamental social revolution is impossible with weak ties like Twitter (2010). Kim also said that social media can be assessed positively for its role affecting Egyptian Revolution, but also asserted the expression that “SNS Revolution” is an overestimation of the role of technology (2011). These are the assertions taking precautions against excessive expectation or the overestimation of social media. As social media including Facebook and YouTube are diffused, studies on the effects of social media utilization on social movements are carried out (Carty 2015; Cho & Lee 2011). This study surveys the social media utilization status of Korean labor union members and analyzes what effects the social medial utilization of labor unions have on labor union social capital, such as participation in labor union activities, increase in bond, and improvement of external solidarity. This study actually seeks a direction on how the Korean labor union members should utilize social media.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Social Media

The term *social media* was used to refer to the service forming the relationships of people like community by Tina Sharkey in 1997 for the first time (FKII Survey and Research Team 2006). Boyd and Ellison defined social media as follows: “① An individual can introduce him/herself to the public and offer or receive information within the limited system. ② Social media can form the list of other users who want to form and maintain relationships. ③ Social media can see or connect the relationship network made by other users within the system (2008). They defined social media as a Web-based service having characteristics in

the three aspects mentioned above. Bruns and Bahnisch defined social media as a technology that forms deep social interactions, forms community, and offers a space for carrying out a cooperative project (2009). Kaplan and Haenlein explained social media as an Internet-based application program group building idea and a technology base for Web 2.0, allowing the exchange of user-created contents (2010). The definition of social media evolves even now according to technological advancement.

The method to classify social media has also changed. Kotler et al. classified social media into expression type social media and cooperation type social media (2010). Park defined social media as the media in which the consumers and producers of publishing are the same, classifying it according to the following nature: expression type (blog, micro blog service site), relationship type (membership site), sharing type (site in which videos or photos can be shared), and game type (online game service site) (2010). Choi and Park classified social media into open and closed types according to the nature of network (2011). They classified a) a structure in which relationship with other members is decided through his(her) acceptance like Cyworld, a closed type social media, and b) a structure in which relationship formation is possible, regardless of the other party's acceptance like Twitter, an open type social media. Ha classified Twitter or Facebook manifesting online communication space communicated with people without boundary as open type social media, and a communication service based on limited human network formed with social and geographical relationships offline as closed type social media (2014). This study classified a) Band, a type in which a member is invited, centering on existing human network, where the member should accept the invitation, and b) Kakao Talk, centering on one-on-one or group chatting, as closed social media. Meanwhile, this study classified Twitter, YouTube, Blog, and Podcast as platforms in which relationship can be easily formed, regardless of the other party's acceptance. They are open type social media. Facebook is regarded as open type social media, given that it has pursued open type social media from its launch and the scope of friend recommendation, as well as acquaintances, which includes extensively unknown people, although Facebook has some closed type functions.

The characteristics of social media are participation, openness, conversation, community, and ties. Social media promote all the interested people's contribution and feedback (vote, comment, information sharing) and are open for anybody to participate in. Community is formed fast, based on two-way communication in the social media, and people talk about common interests in the community. Ties through various media's combination or link are the main characteristics of social media (FKII Survey and Research Team 2006). Kietzmann et al. regarded the characteristics of social media as the seven following characteristics: identity, presence, sharing, relationships, conversation, reputation, and groups (2011). These have common things in many ways in terms of the components of social capital to be examined below.

## **2.2 Social Capital**

The concept of social capital started from the thought "Social relationship has value." In the 1990s, studies on social capital were carried out in full swing by Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. Bourdieu said that the social discrimination issue cannot be judged with only the status of capital possession (1983). He introduced the concept of social capital to explain discrimination at ideological and symbolic levels. He explained the difference between "cultural habitus" causing a difference in education, which is connected to social status, and reproducing inequality among classes, starting from cultural capital concept at the early stage (Kim 2009). While Bourdieu introduced the social capital concept from a critical perspective on social system, Coleman applied social capital concept as a theoretical framework explaining a social phenomenon (1990). He said that social capital exists in the relationship structure of members, defining it as a connection network promoting specific activities. Such a social tie directly affects human behavior through emotional support

and the exchange of information and physical resources. It also indirectly affects norm, expectation, and social structure, forming a social interaction basis (Croninger & Lee 2001; Lee 2001).

A scholar who accepted Coleman's social capital concept and expanded it to the political area is Putnam. Putnam defined social capital as network, norm, and social trust factors promoting coordination and cooperation for social members' mutual benefits (1993). Putnam especially classified network as bonding network and bridging network. Since bonding network is formed on the basis of relationships made by a combination of the members having homogeneous interests like family, ethnicity, and religion, it has a tendency to be closed outside. Meanwhile, the bridging network is a type horizontally combining various groups, is friendly with the outside, and is based on mutual respect and understanding between heterogeneous groups (Kim 2004). Narayan viewed social capital as formed by each group since society is divided into various classes, religions, races, and regions. He viewed that bonding and particularized social capital can have a problem damaging social publicness, but viewed that bridging and generalized social capital can also be accumulated (Narayan 1999; Song 2005). This study set up the concept of labor union social capital by accepting the position of Narayan and defined it as the relationships formed among labor union members and the aggregation of realistic or virtual resources generated in the relationships.

To specifically measure social capital, discussions on the development of social capital's components and measuring indicators have been diversely carried out. Park and Kim set up norm, trust, and network as social capital components, and developed indicators (2001). So defined trust, participation, network, norm, and altruism as social capital components, and studied how the social capital in a specific community is differently revealed according to community environment, historic attributes, and resident composition (2004). Hong et al. developed social capital indicators through a study on the development and measurement of social capital indicators, and measured and diagnosed social capital status by community type (2007). This study drew and measured three factors—trust, network, and participation—judged to be suitable for explaining labor union social capital and commonly mentioned as social capital components in the previous studies.

### **2.3 Social Media and Social Capital**

As social media are recently diffused, many papers studying the relationships between social media and social capital are released. Keum examined the social and cultural differences between social media use and social capital formation through a comparative analysis on Korean and U.S. college students (2009). In both countries, the total use amount of social media promoted civil participation and social movement. Shim and Hwang analyzed the possibility of Twitter's social capital formation (2010). As a result, Twitter use intensity had a positive effect on bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Choi et al. segmented the use of micro blogs into reading and writing, and analyzed the correlation with social capital (2011). Consequently, the network size increased as more reading and writing were conducted in micro blogs. The studies mentioned above assert that the use of social media consolidates social capital.

Meanwhile, Sander asserted that interactions on the Internet weaken offline social capital formation by reducing the offline communication activities of a family or community (2005). Putnam pointed out the Internet can cause information gap, reduce opportunities for face-to-face contract, disturb reliable mutual relationships by increasing individualism and collectivism tendencies, and make it difficult to build structural foundation to form social capital like trust, norm, and network (1995). Holmes criticized the Internet as making individuals automatons and weakening social solidarity instead of consolidating community order (1998). However, such a social capital decline perspective is founded on Internet utilization at an early stage, and has a huge difference from the sharply changed recent social media.

### **3. Research Question and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Question**

Research Question 1: Is there any correlation between social media utilization and labor union social capital?

Research Question 2-1: Is there any correlation between the general characteristics of labor union members and labor union social capital?

2-2: What effects do the use of labor union-related social media have on the formation of labor union social capital?

Research Question 3-1: Is there any specific case of improving or reducing labor union social capital through social media utilization and, if so, what is the reason?

3-2: Is there any correlation between a labor union's bonding social capital and bridging social capital and, if so, what is the reason?

#### **3.2 Data and Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of labor union members' general characteristics and social media's use amount, use motive, use type, and labor union-related use on labor union social capital. This study identified daily average social media use amount to measure social media use amount. A separate question was asked on the social media use ratio related with labor union. This study particularly tried to measure the effects of a labor union's social media utilization on labor union social capital through a question on the participation in labor union-operated group type social media. This study set up trust, network, and participation as social capital components and as dependent variables. Network, in particular, was divided into bonding aspect and bridging aspect, and four related questions were selected from the scale developed by Cohen and Hoberman (1983) as regards measured questions. The reliability of the questions, namely Cronbach's alpha, was 0.776 and higher. The data collected through the questionnaire survey were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, t-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis were used in this study.

This study performed an in-depth interview, which is a qualitative analysis, to find out specific cases on the quantitative analysis results and the reason. Along with specific analysis on the effects of a labor union's social media utilization on labor union social capital, this study examined how bonding social capital consolidation is connected with bridging social capital, which was reviewed in the previous studies.

#### **3.3 Subjects**

The subjects of this study were the labor union members in Korea. They were selected in consideration of the subjects' labor union position, business type, workplace, and workplace size through a quota sampling. After undertaking a preliminary survey, this study carried out an online survey from October 25 to November 8, 2015. Although 361 people in total responded to the questionnaire survey, just 331 questionnaire copies were used for final analysis, excluding inappropriately responded questionnaire copies.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1 Labor Union Members' Social Media Use**

##### **4.1.1 General Use Characteristics**

As for social media use frequency, the everyday frequent access rate was high at 78.9%. Concerning the question asking daily use amount, 40.8% was used for 30 min to less than 1 hour, 23.9% for less than 30 min, and 19.0% for 1 hour to less than 2 hours. Due to the characteristics of employees, they seemed to check

messages frequently, rather than use social media for a long time at a time. Meanwhile, use duration did not seem to be long. Regarding motive to use social media, this study asked the following items with a 5-point scale: self-expression, interest in others, information acquisition, habitual use, and overcoming the sense of alienation. The mean score of using social media for interest in others and information acquisition was high at 3.72 and 3.87, respectively. The motive to reveal and express one's own thinking to others was relatively high at 3.33. The response using social media habitually was 2.39, and the response not to be alienated was 2.20.

#### **4.1.2 Use Characteristics of Labor Union-related Social Media**

Concerning a question on communicating through group type social media, such as Band, Kakao group, or Facebook group made by the labor union to which one belongs, 81.0% replied "yes." Concerning the question on how actively one participates, 9% of them said that 'they relatively did not participate', or 'they did not participate at all', 28% said that 'they participated moderately', 63% said that 'they relatively actively participated', or 'they very actively participated'. There were many respondents saying that they participated in the group type social media operated by their labor unions.

Regarding the question on social media use type, 35.8% said that they browsed, expressed consent well, and wrote a comment. 28.4% said that they focused on browsing and expressing consent like "good". 16.8% said that they browsed and posted a writing or picture at least once a week. 12.3% said that they linked articles or frequently wrote. Only 6.7% said that they just browsed and seldom wrote. As for use type, the ratio of relatively active users writing a comment or posting a writing was 64.3%. From all these, the labor union members actively communicate on the group type social media operated by their labor unions.

Concerning a question on the need for labor union executives' social media utilization for communication with labor union members, 40.2% said it was highly required. 37.8% said it was relatively needed. Thus, 78% said it was needed. Essentially, labor union members require labor union executives to actively utilize social media.

#### **4.2 Correlation between Social Media Use and Social Capital Components**

The analytic result of the correlation between labor union members' social media utilization and labor union social capital is shown in the following table <Table 1>. There was no significant correlation between general social media use and labor union social capital. However, labor union-related social media use ratio showed the correlation with each part of trust, network, and participation, as well as the entire social capital. Participation in labor union group type social media showed relatively high correlations with the entire social capital (0.418) and all parts of the components. Such results imply that labor unions need to equip group type social media, and that the induction of union members to actively participate can be a method to enhance labor union social capital.

The correlation coefficient between bonding network and bridging network among social capital components was 0.629, which was high. This supports what Putnam (2000) said: "Although bonding social capital can create hostility towards the outside of the group by creating solid loyalty of their own group, bonding social capital and bridging social capital can create a strong synergy effect and positive social effects in many cases." This is the result supporting that a labor union's increase in bond does not result in a labor union's selfishness.

**Table 1. Correlation between Social Media Use and Social Capital**

	Use amount	Labor union-related use ratio	Group social media participation	Trust	Network		Participation	Entire Social Capital
					Bond	Bridge		
Use amount	1							
Labor union-related use ratio	.193**	1						
Group social media participation	.203**	.322**	1					
Trust	.103	.138*	.280**	1				
Network	Bond	.080	.266**	.366**	.526**	1		
	Bridge	.005	.210**	.308**	.477**	.629**	1	
Participation	.091	.182**	.343**	.410**	.480**	.419**	1	
Entire Social Capital	.082	.261**	.418**	.721**	.864**	.830**	.717**	1

\*\*p&lt;0.01, \*p&lt;0.05

### 4.3 Social Media Use and Labor Union Social Capital

#### 4.3.1 Social Media Use and Labor Union Social Capital according to Respondents' Characteristics

To examine in further detail the relationship between social media use and labor union social capital according to respondents' characteristics, this study conducted ANOVA. Differences in social media use amount and trust by age were shown. As for social media use amount, users in their 20s used social media the most, and the use amount decreased as the users got older. The users in their 30s showed the most in terms of trust in social capital components, followed by the users in their 20s and 40s at a similar level, whereas the users in their 50s showed the lowest level. In all age brackets, mean trust was 4.02 and higher, which was high <Table 2>.

**Table 2. Social Media Use by Age and Social Capital**

		Average	Standard deviation	F-value	p-value	
General social media use	20s	3.13	1.246	4.634	.003**	
	30s	2.63	1.258			
	40s	2.29	1.125			
	50s	2.07	1.053			
Social capital	Trust	20s	4.13	.890	3.246	.022*
		30s	4.35	.656		
		40s	4.16	.711		
		50s	4.02	.741		

\*\*p&lt;0.01, \*p&lt;0.05

The items showing differences among groups according to positions within labor union were labor union-related social media use ratio, labor union group type social media participation, entire social capital, trust, and participation among social capital components. Concerning the labor union-related social media use ratio, labor union heads showed the highest numbers, followed by labor union executives, representatives, and general members. Concerning the labor union group type social media participation, labor union executives were the most active, followed by labor union heads. The reason seems that labor union

executives take charge of most labor union work. As for trust, trust on representatives was the highest, and the reason seems that labor union heads and executives were elected directly. Regarding participation, labor union heads showed the highest numbers, followed by labor union executives, representatives, and general members.

#### 4.3.2 Labor Union-related Social Media Use and Labor Union Social Capital

This study examined the assessment on labor union social capital according to labor union-related social media use ratio through ANOVA. There were significant differences in the entire social capital, bonding network, bridging network, and participation. As a result, this study confirmed that the labor union social capital increased as labor union-related social medial use ratio became higher. Bonding network increase was remarkable among social capital components <Table 3>.

**Table 3. labor union-related social media use ratio and Social Capital**

			<i>Average</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Trust		0~20%	4.10	.775	1.907	.109
		20~40%	4.12	.751		
		40~60%	4.23	.690		
		60~80%	4.29	.514		
		80~100%	4.53	.641		
Network	Bond	0~20%	3.42	.889	6.408	.000**
		20~40%	3.63	.835		
		40~60%	3.78	.884		
		60~80%	3.95	.718		
		80~100%	4.32	.758		
	Bridge	0~20%	3.39	.827	4.653	.001**
		20~40%	3.48	.819		
		40~60%	3.83	.878		
		60~80%	3.72	.736		
		80~100%	3.96	.728		
Participation		0~20%	4.13	.662	3.427	.006**
		20~40%	4.27	.741		
		40~60%	4.40	.533		
		60~80%	4.32	.667		
		80~100%	4.68	.506		
Entire Social Capital		0~20%	3.74	.608	6.424	.000**
		20~40%	3.86	.617		
		40~60%	4.04	.623		
		60~80%	4.05	.506		
		80~100%	4.36	.616		

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

Significant differences were shown in all parts, namely trust, network, and participation, as well as entire social capital, in terms of social capital evaluation according to how actively people participate in one's group type social media. As one actively participated in group type social media, the evaluation on labor union social capital was higher <Table 4>.

Similar results were drawn in social media use type. There were significant differences in the entire social



capital, network, and participation as to the following items: ① Just browse and seldom write. ② Focus on browsing and expressing consent like “good” ③ Browse, express consent well, and write a comment. ④ Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week. ⑤ Link articles or frequently write. Consequently, mean social capital value was higher in the active user group frequently writing, rather than passive users just browsing <Table 5>.

**Table 4. Participation in group social media and Social Capital**

		<i>Average</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	
Trust	Don't participate at all	4.00	.	6.312	.000**	
	Relatively don't participate	3.85	.936			
	Moderately	4.03	.740			
	Relatively participate	4.14	.665			
	Very actively participate	4.51	.549			
Network	Bond	Don't participate at all	1.75	.	10.835	.000**
		Relatively don't participate	3.20	1.043		
		Moderately	3.50	.763		
		Relatively participate	3.77	.772		
		Very actively participate	4.15	.726		
	Bridge	Don't participate at all	2.00	.	7.298	.000**
		Relatively don't participate	3.21	.927		
		Moderately	3.44	.654		
		Relatively participate	3.69	.798		
		Very actively participate	3.97	.839		
Participation	Don't participate at all	2.75	.	11.531	.000**	
	Relatively don't participate	4.16	.664			
	Moderately	4.02	.683			
	Relatively participate	4.31	.664			
	Very actively participate	4.66	.408			

Entire Social Capital	Don't participate at all	2.53	.	14.975	.000**
	Relatively don't participate	3.59	.753		
	Moderately	3.73	.509		
	Relatively participate	3.97	.565		
	Very actively participate	4.31	.460		

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

**Table 5. Group social media use type and Social Capital**

		Average	Standard deviation	F-value	p-value	
Trust	Just browse and seldom write	3.76	.913	2.392	.051	
	Focus on browsing and expressing consent like 'good'	4.14	.772			
	Browse, express consent well, and write a comment	4.23	.637			
	Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week	4.23	.717			
	Link articles or frequently write	4.36	.591			
Network	Bond	Just browse and seldom write	3.08	1.007	6.847	.000**
		Focus on browsing and expressing consent like 'good'	3.50	.850		
		Browse, express consent well, and write a comment	3.90	.744		
		Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week	3.84	.820		
		Link articles or frequently write	4.04	.729		
	Bridge	Just browse and seldom write	3.04	.913	4.695	.001**
		Focus on browsing and expressing consent like 'good'	3.49	.724		
		Browse, express consent well, and write a comment	3.76	.795		
		Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week	3.78	.855		
		Link articles or frequently write	3.86	.829		
Participation	Just browse and seldom write	3.88	.666	6.777	.000**	
	Focus on browsing and expressing consent like 'good'	4.13	.664			

	Browse, express consent well, and write a comment	4.39	.554		
	Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week	4.33	.801		
	Link articles or frequently write	4.67	.490		
Entire Social Capital	Just browse and seldom write	3.42	.649	8.464	.000**
	Focus on browsing and expressing consent like 'good'	3.79	.596		
	Browse, express consent well, and write a comment	4.06	.531		
	Browse and post a writing or picture at least once a week	4.03	.607		
	Link articles or frequently write	4.23	.488		

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

#### 4.3.3 Regression Analysis between Social Media Use and Labor Union Social Capital

The analytic results on the effects of labor union-related social media use ratio and group type social media participation on social capital analyzed through simple regression analysis are as follows <Table 6>.

Regarding labor union-related social media use ratio,  $R^2$  value meaning a model's explanation power was low; however, the coefficient was significant on all social capital components. Consequently, labor union-related social media use ratio positively affected ( $\beta=.261$ ) the entire social capital.

Concerning the labor union group type social media participation, the coefficient was also significant in all components. The  $\beta$  value, the effect level affecting the dependent variable(entire social capital) was 0.418, which was relatively high. This implies that it is important to enhance a labor union member's group type social media participation to improve labor union social capital.

**Table 6. Regression between Social Media Use and Social Capital**

			Dependent variables				
			Trust	Network		Participate	Entire social capital
				Bond	Bridge		
Independent variables	Labor union-related use ratio	$\beta$	.138	.266	.210	.182	.261
		p	.012*	.000**	.000**	.001**	.000**
		$R^2$	.019	.071	.044	.033	.068
	Group social media participation	$\beta$	.280	.366	.308	.343	.418
		p	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
		$R^2$	.079	.134	.095	.117	.175

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

#### 4.4 Qualitative Research of Labor Union Social Media Use and Social Capital

This study carried out an in-depth interview to more specifically trace the questionnaire survey result that identified the relationships between a labor union's social media utilization and social capital. The in-depth

interview, a qualitative analysis, can identify structural things that can be difficult to identify from a quantitative research through in-depth and specific questions. The interview is meant to answer the questions that the researcher prepared, and the answers were analyzed after recording with the respondents' consents.

The interview subjects were divided into two groups, namely social media operators and users. The reason is that a comparison between the purpose of the social media that a labor union operates, and whether such a purpose can be properly delivered to users can be made. The operator group included corporate labor unions and industrial labor unions. Specifically, the Youth Union representing the youth generation's labor union movement were interviewed in order to reinforce the opinions of people in their 20s, whose distribution was small in respondent distribution in the quantitative survey. As for the interview with users, the general members of labor unions operating group type social media became the subjects of the research <Table 7>.

**Table 7. In-depth Interview subjects**

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>Respondent/Affiliation</i>	<i>Social media type</i>	<i>Number of union member</i>	<i>Period of use(year)</i>
Social media operator	1 (44-year-old man) Federation of Korean Public Trade Unions	Band	35,000	2
	2 (38- year-old man) Federation of Korean Metal Workers Trade Unions	Facebook Page	120,000	2
	3 (33-year-old man) Korean Health and Medical Worker's Union	Band	9,000	1
	4 (33-year-old woman) Youth Union	Facebook Page, Facebook Group, Band, KaKaoTalk	1,633	4
	5 (44-year-old man) KAIUNION	Band	2,400	2
Social media user (labor union member)	1 (33- year-old woman) Federation of Korean Public Trade Unions	Band	100	1
	2 (49- year-old man) **Chemical union	Band	213	1
	3 (40- year-old man) **Music union	KaKaoTalk	43	1

#### 4.4.1 Labor Union's Social Media Utilization Cases

Social media operated by labor unions are divided into open type and closed type. There are also cases that operate both. If the social media aim to enhance communication and participation among labor union members, the operation is centered on the closed type, and the open type is operated together for external PR.

“We focus on Facebook. Since the homepage is the space made to make people, who came to know the Youth Union for the first time, come to search, it is not suitable for communication for labor union members. The Facebook group was made for labor union members' communication, and the Facebook page is used for external PR.” (Operator 4, 33-year-old woman).

There are diverse contents shared through social media ranging from labor union news to private lives without formality. There are many contents like event news and an organization's statement as to the details posted on the Facebook page. There is a perception that social media are unofficial media, compared to homepage, and there is an aspect that burden on posting contents is smaller in that regard.

“International labor organizations’ issues, rally news, statements, and newsletters of metal labor associations are mainly posted. In the case of the Facebook page, opinions are presented slightly more freely there than in the homepage. Rally situation is immediately posted in the form of text like real time posting.” (Operator 2, 38-year old man)

What has changed after utilizing social media is that sharing speed has become faster than before, and a situation can be delivered vividly in real time. There is an opinion that communication with labor union members difficult to share opinions with usually has become smoother.

“In the past, an official document was sent through fax, a meeting was convened, and topics were discussed. It took more time since an explanation on issues was made in the meeting. Now, relevant things are talked about on Band, and therefore the meeting is conducted more efficiently because there is no need to explain the background in the meeting. Since communication is frequently made on Band, union members feel they know each other well, without any awkwardness. The atmosphere is amicable.” (Operator 1, 44-year-old man)

#### **4.4.2 Labor Union’s Social Media Utilization and Trust**

As for trust, there is an opinion that social media utilization improved trust, and there is another opinion that there is hardly any correlation.

“Feedback is returned as soon as problems or improvements at the site are posted. Because the problems are solved or the reason that cannot be solved are known, trust on labor union increases.” (Labor Union Member 2, 49-year-old man)

“It is not related with trust. Actually, it is related with information acquisition level. In the past, the result was not shared well after the meeting. But, these days, sharing is made well as Band is used. However, it is difficult to ask sensitive issues frankly and answer on Band in many cases. Such details are rather shared through one-on-one Kakao Talk or via email.” (Labor Union Member 1, 33-year-old woman).

#### **4.4.3 Labor Union’s Social Medial Utilization and Bond Network**

There were many opinions that a labor union’s social media utilization was positive in consolidating bond. Sharing is fast and prompt response is possible when a specific issue arises, which enhances bond.

“Since immediate response to sensitive issues and even trivial issues is possible, bond among labor union members is generated naturally.” (Labor Union Member 3, 40-year-old man)

“Understanding each other becomes better with frequent communication, and the distance between the executives and members seems to become narrower.” (Operator 5, 44-year-old man)

“As for a specific case, the Central Executive Committee of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions urgently convened a meeting to decide whether the agreement of the Tripartite Commission (of labor, management, and government) should be ratified in the winter of 2015. The Federation of Korean Public Trade Unions (FKPTU) took a view opposing the agreement of the Tripartite Commission, and

they almost had no time to let the public know about their opinion and voice it out. Therefore, they diffused public sentiment through Band, gathered the members affiliated with FKPTU, and properly delivered concerns at the site on the agreement of the Tripartite Commission.” (Operator 1, 44-year-old man)

There was a minority opinion that the effect on bond is minimal. Social media is an open space, and a variety of people communicate. If various occupational and regional groups of labor unions belong to the same social media, the interests become conflicting and bond consolidation is not easy. In this case, it is desirable to operate social media separately by making social media based on occupational group and region.

#### **4.4.4 Labor Union’s Social Media Utilization and Bridging Network**

Communication through social media within a labor union can bolster a social capital’s bridging feature. In social media, people post writings on various interests, or link the related articles. In this case, people easily access others’ interests and discussions, in addition to the contents in which they were interested themselves at a usual time.

“Interest becomes higher since the issues of other worksites are immediately notified, and people talk to each other. Interest in labor movement in the labor sector and labor issues in the political world, as well as the issues of our workplace, increased.” (Labor Union Member 2, 49-year-old man)

“There is labor union, called Hydis, which is the labor union of a company that invested in Taiwan’s capital. The management tried to restructure workers and steal technologies. Therefore, the corporate labor union went to the Taiwanese head office. The Taiwanese labor unions and civil organizations that received the news through Facebook actively supported them.” (Operator 2, 38-year-old man)

The interest of members and bridging network are not limited to just labor issues. The areas were expanding to the government-designated textbook issue and social issues including the Sewol Ferry disaster.

“The Youth Union actually are concerned about various social issues, in addition to labor issues. For example, when posting of participating in the campaign cherishing the memory of the victims and promoting truth ascertainment, such as when the Sewol Ferry disaster occurred, the union members who agreed with it came out to the place concerned and participated in the campaign. When they did not directly participate, they conducted online acts including posting comments or sharing rally articles.” (Operator 4, 33-year-old woman)

#### **4.4.5 Labor Union’s Social Media Utilization and Participation**

People agreed that social media activities enhanced the accessibility to labor unions and increased interest and participation in labor union activities. Social media activities are effective for PR, and participation can be enhanced with effective utilization. The activities are also effective to having people outside labor unions become labor union members. As a result of communication through social media, there is an effect to ease the existing labor union’s militant and radical image.

“When there is important training/education, we used the paid PR of Facebook, and there were many people who participated by looking at the PR, and also those who joined the labor union looking at

Facebook increased. When people were asked about the membership channel, about 20-30% of those seemed to join by looking at SNS. Thus, we posted a link for “Becoming a labor union member” at the end of a Facebook posting.” (Operator 4, 33-year-old woman)

“People gather on Band and talk about the labor union. Then, the atmosphere becomes congenial as they enjoy talking with others about general stuff. Before I got a job, I had the impression that labor union members were somewhat hostile, but they seem to be like me as I talk with them on Band.” (Labor union member 1, 33-year-old woman)

Meanwhile, there was a skeptical view on the assertion that social media utilization would enhance participation. Although there is the partial effect of letting other people know about labor union activities and making some issues, it is difficult to induce active participation. They say people just browse on social media, which is not connected with offline participation activities.

“Most participation ends up just online, and is not connected with offline acts. Social media are effective for letting other people know about labor union activities, but most people just browse around. Although there are many clicks on posted writings, there are not many people writing a comment or presenting an opinion.” (Operator 1, 44-year-old man)

#### **4.4.6 Future Labor Union’s Social Media Utilization**

It is pointed out that social media need to be steadily utilized actively to change the existing labor movement’s image and smoothly communicate inside and outside of labor unions.

“The labor movement has a closed type image, and it seems to be just their own play from the external viewpoint. There is a need to avoid such an image by actively using social media. To this end, social media utilization education should be fortified, and everyday life use should be induced.” (Operator 1, 44-year-old man)

“Social media utilization system should be made. The personnel taking charge of social media work exclusively is needed, and budget should be backed up.” (Operator 2, 38-year-old man)

## **5. Conclusion**

This study delved into the effects of labor union members’ social media utilization for the formation of labor union social capital. Specifically, this study aimed to identify the effects of labor union-related social media use and participation on the labor union’s social capital formation through quantitative and qualitative research.

More than 80% of labor unions operate group type social media on their own, and more than 60% of the labor union members actively participate in the group type social media. There is the correlation between labor union-related social media use and labor union social capital components. As participation in the group type social media operated by a labor union becomes more active, evaluation on labor union social capital throughout trust, network, and participation is higher. More specifically, as a result of grasping the effects of social media utilization (independent variable) on labor union social capital (dependent variable) through a regression analysis, it was ascertained that labor union-related social media use ratio and group type social media participation had a positive effect on labor union social capital ( $\beta=.261$  and  $\beta=.418$ , respectively).

Such a result implies that intensive seeking of how actively letting labor union members participate in group type social media is needed after opening the group type social media, although it is important for labor unions to open the group type social media. There were high correlations among social capital components including trust, bonding network, bridging network, and participation; the correlation between bonding network and bridging network was high, especially. This proves that a labor union's bond enhancement does not result in the labor union's selfishness, but it can build a cooperative system with an external network.

Through in-depth interview, this study found out specific cases and reasons of the results identified by the quantitative survey. Labor unions utilize social media through two goals: The first is to enhance communication and participation among the labor union members, the second is to expand the labor union's denotation and enhance social effects by bolstering external PR.

Regarding whether social media utilization affects the trust component of the labor union's social capital, there was an opinion that it improves trust, and there was another opinion that it is not much related. Mostly there was an opinion that the labor union's social media utilization consolidates bond, and some cases that social media utilization was connected with systematization were found. Simultaneously, there were many opinions that bridging network was also consolidated. Because members post writings on various interests or link the relevant articles on social media, they can easily access and cooperate with the parts where they were not usually interested. Although social media utilization is effective for PR and it is connected with participation, which was mainstream opinion, there was also an opinion that people just browsed and did not act, which can be a limitation.

Comprehensively, as social media was actively utilized, labor union social capital increases were drawn. It is important to offer various platforms and easily assessable paths so that labor union members can voluntarily act actively on labor union-related social media in the future. Labor unions also need to induce their members' attention steadily through continuous content update and management. Above all, there is a need to actively organize members who are active in self-expression and have much interest in others. They are the group that has influence on enhancing labor union social capital. Labor union heads and executives need to more actively act on social media. There is a saying that "social media is the success of hard work." Labor unions should indeed worry about new contents every day, check responses, and communicate for members' rights and the development of the community.

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