

# New and Old Media Uses and Political Engagement among Korean Adolescents

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*This study examined new and old media uses among Korean adolescents and their political engagement including political interest, political knowledge, political talk, and political participation. Korean adolescents' political media uses are based on four distinct motivations—guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment. Korean adolescents are more likely to engage in politics when they use new and old media to fulfill guidance and social utility needs. The Internet is the dominant medium in the Korean adolescents' media environment for political engagement.*

*Keywords: Internet Use; Political Participation; Political Knowledge; Political Talk; Political Interest; Adolescents; South Korea*

Previous research about media use and political engagement shows three points in the forefront of discussion. First, individuals are different in terms of why they use political media contents (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; McLeod & Becker, 1981). Some people watch, read, or listen to political stories to know more about what is happening in their society, while others do it for entertainment purposes. Second, there is a difference among media types in influencing political engagement (Gunter, 1991; Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999; Robinson & Davis, 1990; Shaw, 1977). Reading newspapers rather than watching television news is a strong factor in political engagement (e.g. Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994; Choi & Becker, 1987; Garramone & Atkin, 1986). Third, why individuals use political media contents (i.e. motivations for political media use) is a critical factor in whether one becomes more actively engaged in politics (Becker, 1976; Garramone, 1985). Information-related motivations for media use is more likely related to political engagement than entertainment-related motivations (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001).

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This study analyzes adolescents' media use and their political engagement. There have been public concerns about the low interest of adolescents in political media use (i.e. reading newspapers or watching TV news) (Drew & Reeves, 1980). In addition, the media environment for adolescents has changed dramatically since the early 1990s, mostly due to the introduction of various new media such as the Internet (Biocca, 2000; Montgomery, 2000). How has the rapidly changing media environment affected adolescents' political media use? Adolescents in South Korea are widely known as having gone through the most dramatic changes in media environment, especially with the access to broadband Internet services. We collected data from Korean adolescents regarding media use and political engagement to examine (a) multidimensional political media motivations, (b) cross-media differences in fostering political engagement, and (c) cross-motivation differences in political engagement. To strengthen the validity of our argument about cross-media and cross-motivation differences in facilitating political engagement, we considered four indices of political engagement—rather than using a single variable—such as political interest, knowledge, conversation, and participation.

The uses and gratification approach suggests that the social and political significance of a medium is largely contingent on why and how people use media (Hofstetter, 2004; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Individuals actively select and use media based on their existing beliefs about whether it will satisfy their needs (Ruggiero, 2000). From this perspective, media effects depend on types of motivation (e.g. information seeking, getting advice, or having fun) that individual users bring to their media use (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 2002).

Based on the uses and gratification framework, previous studies have tried to identify different motivations for using political contents from diverse media forms (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; McLeod & Becker, 1981). Individuals use political media contents to get information and orientation to take specific political actions, such as voting (guidance). Individuals' political uses of media are also motivated by the need to stay abreast of the socio-political environment (surveillance). People retain political information from media in order to converse with others (social utility). Individuals also consume political stories for relaxation, especially by watching, listening to, or reading entertaining political stories (e.g. political gossips, entertaining campaign materials, or horserace reporting in elections, etc.) (entertainment).

Most previous studies about motivations of political media use were based on adult samples. We do not have much knowledge about what types of motivations adolescents have when they consume media. Thus, as our first research question, we ask whether adolescents use political media contents with the similar motivations as adults, as shown in previous research. We ask this question for each of four new and old media forms: TV, radio, newspaper, and the Internet.

RQ1: Do Korean adolescents use political media contents with the four distinct motivations—guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment? Are these motivations found across new and old media forms?

If adolescents use new and old media with several distinct motivations, which medium is dominant for each motivation category? Does a specific medium (e.g. newspaper or the Internet) prevail for all of the media use motivations in the adolescents' lives? Or are there different patterns for each motivation category?

RQ2: Which media are considered more useful than others for the different political media use motivations among Korean adolescents?

### **Cross-media Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement**

Political socialization of adolescents include the processes of acquiring basic knowledge about political procedures and issues, learning how to articulate thoughts and opinions about political issues, gaining basic skills to share the political thoughts and opinions with others, and developing motivations to participate in political activities as responsible citizens. Previous studies have suggested that media use patterns were related to these specific aspects of political engagement such as political knowledge (Chaffee et al., 1994; Choi & Becker, 1987; Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002), political talk (Ball-Rokeach, Kim, & Matei, 2001; McLeod et al., 1996; Nah, Veenstra, & Shah, 2006; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), and participation (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Shah et al., 2001). One of the most important findings from these studies is that different media have differing effects on political engagement (Gunter, 1991; Kim et al., 1999; Robinson & Davis, 1990; Shaw, 1977). In the sections that follow, we will discuss this issue in three aspects of political engagement: political knowledge, talk, and participation.

#### *Traditional Media and Political Knowledge*

In modern society, mass media use has become an important way to gain political knowledge (Chaffee et al., 1994; Choi & Becker, 1987; Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002), which is 'the range of factual information about politics that is stored in long-term memory' (Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p. 10). In a democratic society, having a basic level of political knowledge is considered a prerequisite to political competence or political sophistication, which often turns to political participation (Carpini & Keeter, 1993; McAllister, 1998). Thus, gaining a basic level of political knowledge is an important part of political socialization of adolescents.

Newspaper reading facilitates gaining political knowledge. Studies show that reading the newspaper is a more reliable way of getting political knowledge (Gunter, 1991; Robinson & Levy, 1986) than other media, especially TV. More specifically, several studies indicate that newspaper readers tend to obtain and retain more information about political campaigns or candidates and are better able to discriminate among issues than television viewers (Chaffee et al., 1994; Choi & Becker, 1987; Robinson & Davis, 1990).

TV viewing seems to have ambivalent effects on political knowledge depending upon types of knowledge. While some studies show that viewing TV has a negative or no impact on fundamental or general knowledge about politics (e.g. knowledge about constitutions, or the length of presidential term, etc.) (Conway, Stevens, & Smith, 1975; Rubin, 1976), other studies demonstrate that TV viewing might increase the level of knowledge about current affairs (e.g. the name of newly elected mayor, government decision to send a troop to Iraq, etc.) (Chaffee & Frank, 1996; Lo & Chang, 2006). For the majority of adolescents, TV is a primary medium to gain political knowledge (Dominick, 1972; Jackson-Beeck, 1979), especially knowledge about current affairs. Lo and Chang (2006) find that television news viewing by adolescents has a significant contribution to their knowledge level about the Gulf War.

#### *Traditional Media and Political Talk*

Engaging in conversations about political stories is a good indication of political socialization. Previous studies demonstrate that individuals who watch, listen to, or read political news in the media are more likely to participate in discussions about political issues (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; McLeod et al., 1996; Nah et al., 2006; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Regarding political talk, previous studies suggest a cross-media difference in fostering political engagement. The majority of studies find that newspaper reading encouraged individuals to talk about politics with others while TV viewing does not show such an effect. Shaw (1977) finds that frequency of political discussion is more closely related to newspaper reading than to television news viewing. Kim et al. (1999) also find that television news viewing does not contribute to any type of political conversation.

#### *Traditional Media and Political Participation*

Previous political communication studies find a significant effect of media use on civic participation. For example, Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006) show that individuals' connection to local media as well as other community storytellers (e.g. community organization, or interpersonal networks) is a significant factor in civic participation.

Past research reports a difference among various media forms with regard to the extent to which they facilitate political participation. Most of these studies find that newspaper reading is a positive factor in political participation while TV viewing is a negative or negligible factor in it. Putnam (2000) suggests that reading newspapers is positively related to civic or political participation, while watching television news is negatively related to it. Nah et al. (2006) also report a finding that television news viewing is negatively associated with political participation during the period up to the war in Iraq.

Based on what we have discussed regarding the differing effects of the uses of diverse media forms (especially newspaper versus TV) in political engagement, we

hypothesize that newspaper reading contributes to adolescents' political engagement more than TV viewing.

H1: Newspaper reading will be more strongly associated with political engagement variables than TV viewing among Korean adolescents.

### *Internet Use and Political Engagement*

Researchers have examined the effects of Internet use on political knowledge, political talk, and participation; however, these studies are still at the preliminary stage showing mixed results (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Regarding the relation between Internet use and political knowledge, Horrigan, Garrett, and Resnick (2004) find that Internet use is positively related to the number of arguments that people report having heard about the presidential candidates. However, there are also other studies suggesting no effect of Internet use on political knowledge (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003). Second, recent research suggests that online news consumption leads to an increased level of political talk (Nah et al., 2006; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). However, researchers comment that the research on this issue is also only at the preliminary stage (Nah et al., 2006). Third, studies about the effects of Internet use on political participation have reported mixed results as well. Some studies show a positive effect of Internet use on political participation (Gibson, Howard, & Ward, 2000; Hill & Huges, 1998; Kraut et al., 2002) while others show either no or negative effects (Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kohut, 2000; Kraut et al., 1998). Some of the recent studies provide more elaborate analyses showing that effects of Internet use on political participation depend on conditional factors such as existing level of social capital, communication capacity, or Internet use motivations (e.g. information needs vs. entertainment needs) (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Shah et al., 2001).

Empirical results on whether the Internet can be a facilitator for adolescents' political engagement are relatively few, and mixed at best (Lin, Kim, Jung, & Cheong, 2005). As Livingstone and colleagues (Livingstone & Bober, 2004; Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2004) note in their studies, teens in general have little interest in political participation via the Internet. However, recently, researchers report some cases showing adolescents' active appropriation of the Internet as a tool for political engagement. For example, Montgomery (2000) reports a case where adolescents use the Internet to form communities and create public forums for self-expression. Gibson (2002) also suggests young people seem very active politically on the Internet, when compared to other age groups. Recently, Lin et al. (2005) find that, among adolescents who consider the Internet helpful for information and deliberation purposes, the level of Internet use is positively associated with the level of community service.

In the current study, we ask two questions about cross-media differences between Internet use and other traditional media uses:

RQ3: In comparison to traditional media such as television, newspapers, and radio, what is the relative position of the Internet use as a facilitating factor in political engagement in the Korean adolescents' media environment?

RQ4: Which medium is the most important for fulfilling each of the political media use motivations (guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment) among Korean adolescents?

### **Cross-motivation Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement**

Based on the uses and gratifications approach, previous studies show that different types of motivations have differing effects on political engagement (McLeod & Becker, 1981; Shah et al., 2001). They consistently report that individuals who use a particular medium with motivations of surveillance and guidance are more likely to show higher levels of political engagement such as having political knowledge, engaging in political discussion, or voting (Becker, 1976; Garramone, 1985; Kaye & Johnson, 2002). Past research demonstrates a negative relation between media uses for diversion (or entertainment) and political engagement (Putnam, 2000; Shah et al., 2001). For example, Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) report a negative relationship between sitcom viewing and political participation. It appears that media use with cognitive and instrumental motivations (e.g. information seeking, guidance or surveillance) are more strongly associated with political engagement than media use with affective or entertainment-related motivations (Rubin, 2002).

Past research about Internet use motivations and political engagement shows similar patterns: Internet use with information, guidance, or social utility motivations as a positive factor in political engagement and Internet use with entertainment-related motivations as a negative factor. Shah et al. (2001) find that individuals who use the Internet for information-seeking rather than recreation and anonymous socialization are more likely to experience civic benefits. Other studies such as those by Shah, Kwak, and Holbert (2001) and Scheufele and Nisbet (2002) confirm this result.

Drawing upon these previous studies, we hypothesize about differing effects of media use motivations on political engagement. We predict that media uses with guidance, surveillance, and social utility motivations more likely increase political engagement than media uses with entertainment motivation.

H2: Media uses with guidance, surveillance, and social utility motivations more likely increase political engagement than media uses with entertainment-related motivations.

We have one research question related to cross-motivation differences in facilitating political engagement: would the patterns of cross-motivation differences appear consistently across all four media forms? To put this question in a different way, we ask whether the prediction in Hypothesis 2 would be found across all of the

media forms, or it would appear only for some particular media forms, but not for others.

RQ5: Would the pattern described in H2 (stronger positive effects of media uses with guidance, surveillance, and social utility motivations on civic engagement than media uses with entertainment motivations) be found across different media forms?

## Method

### *Data*

A total of 317 Korean adolescents participated in an in-class self-administered survey conducted in April 2004 in one middle school and one high school in Gwangju, South Korea, a metropolitan city with the population of about 1.5 million, located in the southwestern region of the country. The average age of respondents was 16.3 years. The respondents were composed of 159 males and 158 females. A survey questionnaire was first developed in English and translated into Korean. We contacted the principals of the two schools to get their permission to conduct the survey. Eight classes were selected from these schools: two classes in each of 9th and 10th grade in the middle school and two classes in each of 11th and 12th grade in the high school. An almost equal number of students were selected from each of the four grades levels: 9th (25.2%), 10th (24.6%), 11th (24.9%), and 12th (24.3%). An undergraduate research assistant majoring in mass communication supervised all of the in-class surveys in the two schools. The participating students and the school officials were assured of the confidentiality of the responses. The students' participation was voluntary without incentives.

### *Measures*

#### *Political interest*

Political interest was measured by averaging respondents' answers to two questions about national and local level political interests. In two separate questions, with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal), we asked the adolescents whether they were interested in local (i.e. referring to Gwangju) ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) and national level political issues ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). The Pearson's  $r$  correlation between these two items was  $r = 0.51$  ( $p < 0.01$ ).

#### *Political discussion*

Political discussion was measured by averaging three items asking about how much adolescents talk about political issues with (a) family members ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), (b) friends ( $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ), and (c) teachers ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). The possible responses range from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal).

*Political knowledge*

Based on Carpini and Keeter's (1993) conceptualization of political knowledge, this study used 15 items addressing adolescents' knowledge about (a) local public affairs ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ; five items), (b) national current events ( $M = 2.59$ ;  $SD = 1.37$ ; five items), and (c) general or fundamental politics ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ; five items). We asked these items in two formats: as true or false questions or short open-ended questions.<sup>1</sup> The political knowledge measure for the current study was constructed by taking two steps: (a) counting the number of correct answers in each of the local, national, and general/fundamental knowledge categories, and (b) calculating the average of the three knowledge scores. The possible range of political knowledge is 0 (low) to 5 (high). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.64.

*Political participation*

Political participation ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) was measured as a composite index of five items asking how much adolescents are willing to participate in party election in near future when they are eligible to do them.<sup>2</sup> Each of these expected behavior items was measured with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.69.

Table 1 lists the sample students' mean scores of the four civic engagement variables. In the table are the scores compared by grade level and gender (see Table 1).

*Motivation for political media use*

Based on Kaye and Johnson's (2002) work, we made 13 statements indicating different reasons for obtaining political content from various media, both old and new. We used the same set of the 13 items for TV, radio, newspaper, and the Internet with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the time) (see Table 2 to see the statements used in the study).

*Time for political media use*

For each of TV, newspaper, and the Internet, respondents were asked to answer how often they use it for getting political information. Television use time for political information ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) was measured by averaging answers from two questions: how often they watch television news in a week and how often they watch current issue programs in a week. Newspaper use ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) was measured by asking how often adolescents read newspapers in a week. Finally, Internet use ( $M = 2.46$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) was measured by asking how often adolescents use the Internet to find political information in a week. Each of these items was measured with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (every day).

**Table 1** Four Dimensions of Political Engagement among Korean Adolescents

	Girls ( <i>n</i> = 159)				Boys ( <i>n</i> = 158)				Total ( <i>n</i> = 317)
	9th ( <i>n</i> = 40)	10th ( <i>n</i> = 43)	11th ( <i>n</i> = 39)	12th ( <i>n</i> = 37)	9th ( <i>n</i> = 40)	10th ( <i>n</i> = 38)	11th ( <i>n</i> = 40)	12th ( <i>n</i> = 40)	
Political interest	2.42 (0.70)	2.50 (0.61)	2.17 (0.60)	2.33 (0.60)	2.40 (0.68)	2.32 (0.60)	2.38 (0.59)	2.36 (0.42)	2.37 (0.61)
Political discussion	2.58 (0.66)	2.82 (0.73)	2.41 (0.63)	2.36 (0.67)	2.50 (0.79)	2.34 (0.64)	2.40 (0.55)	2.30 (0.55)	2.47 (0.67)
Political knowledge	2.20 (0.96)	2.89 (1.17)	2.53 (1.11)	2.86 (1.03)	2.82 (1.07)	2.60 (0.77)	2.81 (0.88)	2.89 (0.85)	2.70 (1.01)
Political participation	2.68 (0.67)	2.61 (0.77)	2.69 (0.71)	2.71 (0.78)	2.60 (0.71)	2.26 (0.60)	2.35 (0.42)	2.34 (0.43)	2.53 (0.66)

*Note:* Values in parentheses represent standard deviation. 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal); but 0 (low) to 5 (high) for political knowledge.

## Results

### *Motivations for Political Use of New and Old Media*

In RQ1, we asked whether Korean adolescents have four distinct motivations (guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment) when they use political contents from diverse media forms. As shown in Table 2, we found that Korean adolescents have these four motivations when they use both new and old media forms for getting political information (see Table 2).

For each of the four media (TV, radio, newspapers, and the Internet), the 13 motivation items were factored by principal components analysis with varimax rotation with a predetermined number of factors ( $= 4$ ) to reveal and compare the motivations for using political information from the four media forms. Items were assigned to a particular factor if the primary loadings were greater than 0.50. Four common factors were extracted for each of the four media types. After being carefully examined, these factors were labeled as guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment as consistent with the previous research. These factors accounted for 65.6% (the Internet), 69.5% (newspapers), 69.1% (TV), and 80.5% (radio) of the variance of each media form.

In RQ2, we asked which media type is more dominant for each of the motivations identified from the factor analysis. Korean adolescents consider TV and the Internet more useful than newspaper and radio for all of the four motivations tested in the current study. For the guidance, social utility, and entertainment motivations, watching TV for political contents was considered most useful while Internet use was the most useful way to satisfy surveillance goals. One may suspect that these results about media dominance are confounded somehow with frequency of media use. To check this possibility of mixing two separate constructs—perceived usefulness and use frequency—we ran an ANCOVA after controlling for time spent on each of the four media forms as well as individual characteristics variables. We found that in the Korean adolescents' media environment the Internet and TV were still significantly more dominant media forms for all of the four motivations than newspapers and radio while the difference between TV and the Internet disappeared after including the media use time covariates.

### *Cross-media Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement*

In Hypothesis 1, we predicted that newspaper reading would more likely be associated with political engagement than TV viewing. We also had two related research questions. We asked what the relative position of Internet use is as a factor in political engagement (RQ3). We also asked if, in different motivation situations, similar or different media forms appear as positive factors in political engagement (RQ4).

To answer Hypothesis 1 and the two research questions, we conducted five separate regression analyses: one motivation-general analysis and four motivation-specific

**Table 2** Motivations for Political Use of New and Old Media

'I use the medium for political information ...'	Factor 1				Factor 2				Factor 3				Factor 4			
	T	N	R	I	T	N	R	I	T	N	R	I	T	N	R	I
<i>Factor 1: guidance</i>																
To help me decide how to vote in the future	0.79	0.66	0.71	0.76	0.12	0.01	0.18	0.08	0.13	0.42	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.10	0.40	0.06
To help me decide about important issues	0.74	0.49	0.72	0.65	0.28	0.35	0.28	0.40	0.14	0.20	0.26	0.11	0.19	0.41	0.34	0.02
To see what a candidate will do if elected	0.79	0.67	0.80	0.75	0.11	0.15	0.21	0.01	0.04	0.18	0.21	-0.04	0.15	0.35	0.26	0.12
To judge personal qualities of candidates	0.76	0.76	0.84	0.75	0.09	0.20	0.18	0.16	0.10	0.04	0.21	-0.01	0.11	0.19	0.08	0.18
For unbiased viewpoints	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.62	0.34	0.47	0.44	0.20	0.15	0.08	0.31	0.15	-0.10	-0.03	0.09	0.13
<i>Factor 2: surveillance</i>																
Because information is easy to obtain	0.19	0.13	0.25	0.08	0.78	0.80	0.77	0.80	0.27	0.31	0.38	0.22	-0.10	0.03	0.17	0.02
To find specific political information I am looking for	0.28	0.39	0.41	0.21	0.69	0.62	0.70	0.67	0.05	0.19	0.17	0.01	0.26	0.16	0.36	0.21
To keep up with main issues of the day	0.24	0.18	0.45	0.30	0.53	0.68	0.53	0.65	0.46	0.27	0.43	0.37	0.09	0.34	0.22	-0.04
<i>Factor 3: entertainment</i>																
Because it is entertaining	0.10	0.16	0.22	0.01	0.21	0.33	0.23	0.17	0.81	0.77	0.88	0.85	-0.04	0.12	0.13	-0.01
Because it helps me relax	0.10	0.19	0.23	0.03	0.06	0.17	0.17	0.06	0.88	0.83	0.88	0.83	0.10	0.16	0.12	0.09
Because it is exciting	0.14	0.14	0.21	0.13	0.15	0.25	0.24	0.21	0.81	0.75	0.74	0.75	0.15	0.28	0.37	0.20
<i>Factor 4: social utility</i>																
To give me something to talk about with others	0.13	0.08	0.24	0.17	0.16	0.20	0.19	0.10	0.57	0.32	0.40	0.43	0.56	0.78	0.75	0.71
To use as ammunition in arguments with others	0.22	0.28	0.30	0.22	0.03	0.06	0.21	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.12	-0.01	0.88	0.79	0.82	0.88
Eigenvalue	5.16	5.94	7.70	4.44	1.11	1.05	0.84	1.19	1.95	1.28	1.34	2.02	0.76	0.77	0.59	0.87
Variance explained (%)	39.7	45.7	59.2	34.2	8.60	8.13	6.46	9.21	14.9	9.84	10.3	15.5	5.85	5.92	4.58	6.71

Note: T = television, N = newspaper, R = radio, I = Internet.

analyses (one regression analysis for each of the four motivation types). In the motivation-general analysis, we averaged four motivation scores for each media type so that each respondent was assigned one general (motivation-neutral) political media use score for each of the four media forms (TV, radio, newspaper, and the Internet).

As shown in Table 3, Internet use was positively related to all of the political engagement variables: political interest ( $B = 0.26, p < 0.01$ ), talk ( $B = 0.30, p < 0.001$ ), knowledge ( $B = 0.31, p < 0.001$ ), and participation ( $B = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ). Newspaper reading was positively related only with political participation ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ). We did not find any significant effects of TV watching or radio listening on any of the political engagement variables included in our analyses.

We also conducted motivation-specific analysis to see if the same pattern of cross-media differences as factors in political engagement is found across different media use motivations. In the case of guidance, Internet use was positively related to all of the political engagement variables: political interest ( $B = 0.22, p < 0.01$ ), talk ( $B = 0.25, p < 0.01$ ), knowledge ( $B = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ), and participation ( $B = 0.12, p < 0.10$ ). TV was positively related to political participation ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.05$ ) when the adolescents used it for guidance. Newspaper and radio were not related to any of the political engagement variables.

In the case of surveillance, Internet use was again found positively related to all of the four political engagement variables: political interest ( $B = 0.19, p < 0.01$ ), talk ( $B = 0.16, p < 0.01$ ), knowledge ( $B = 0.20, p < 0.01$ ), and participation ( $B = 0.11, p < 0.10$ ). Newspaper reading was a positive predictor on political participation ( $B = 0.18, p < 0.01$ ) when adolescents read it for surveillance. TV and radio were not related to any of the political engagement variables. For social utility, Internet use was positively related to political interest ( $B = 0.28, p < 0.001$ ), talk ( $B = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), and knowledge ( $B = 0.26, p < 0.01$ ). Newspaper reading was positively related to political participation ( $B = 0.15, p < 0.001$ ) when adolescents read it with the motivation of social utility. In the case of entertainment, the only significant result was a positive relation between Internet use and political knowledge ( $B = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ). Newspaper reading was marginally related to political participation ( $B = 0.13, p < 0.10$ ) when adolescents read it for entertainment. All of the regression models for examining the cross-media differences explain at least 10% of the variance of the political engagement variables as dependent variables.

#### *Cross-motivation Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement*

We also examined the link between motivations for political media contents consumption and the likelihood of political engagement. In Hypothesis 2, we predicted that using media with the motivations of guidance, surveillance, and social utility would be positively associated to political engagement, but not to entertainment-related motivations. As in the case of cross-media comparisons reported in the

**Table 3** Cross-media Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement ( $N = 317$ )

	Political engagement			
	Political interest beta coeff.	Political knowledge beta coeff.	Political discussion beta coeff.	Political participation beta coeff.
Regression 1: motivation-general				
Television	0.01	0.00	-0.04	0.08
Newspaper	0.00	0.11	-0.04	0.17*
Radio	-0.08	-0.08	0.06	-0.00
Internet	0.31***	0.26**	0.30***	0.15*
$R^2$	0.24	0.17	0.22	0.21
$F$	9.12***	6.01***	8.22***	7.67***
Regression 2: guidance-specific				
Television	0.08	0.11	0.06	0.17*
Newspaper	0.01	0.07	-0.05	0.11
Radio	-0.06	-0.06	0.03	0.03
Internet	0.15*	0.22**	0.25**	0.12†
$R^2$	0.19	0.19	0.22	0.23
$F$	7.02***	6.84***	7.98***	8.77***
Regression 3: surveillance-specific				
Television	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.09
Newspaper	0.00	0.07	-0.12†	0.18**
Radio	-0.02	0.00	0.13*	0.05
Internet	0.20**	0.19**	0.16**	0.11†
$R^2$	0.20	0.15	0.19	0.20
$F$	7.20***	5.29***	7.02***	7.38***
Regression 4: social utility-specific				
Television	0.04	-0.06	-0.07	-0.06
Newspaper	-0.04	0.04	0.09	0.15*
Radio	-0.01	-0.05	0.07	0.07
Internet	0.26**	0.28***	0.23**	0.11
$R^2$	0.22	0.15	0.23	0.16
$F$	8.19***	5.44***	8.80***	5.80***
Regression 5: entertainment-specific				
Television	-0.03	-0.00	-0.07	0.05
Newspaper	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.13†
Radio	-0.01	-0.02	0.09	-0.00
Internet	0.15*	0.03	0.08	0.02
$R^2$	0.19	0.11	0.16	0.13
$F$	6.84***	3.61***	5.58***	4.50***

Note: Controlling for sex, age, income, and times for political media use.

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; † $p < 0.10$ .

previous section, we conducted five separate regression analyses: one media-general analysis and four media-specific analyses.

For the media-general analysis, media use motivation scores were constructed by averaging all of the media use variables for each of the four motivation types. Each respondent was assigned a media use motivation score for each of the four

motivation types—guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment. As shown in Table 4, the media-general analysis showed that guidance was positively related to political interest ( $B = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), political discussion ( $B = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and political participation ( $B = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Surveillance was positively associated with political participation ( $B = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Social utility had a

**Table 4** Cross-motivation Difference in Facilitating Political Engagement ( $N = 317$ )

	Political engagement			
	Political interest beta coeff.	Political knowledge beta coeff.	Political discussion beta coeff.	Political participation beta coeff.
Regression 1: media-general				
Guidance	0.24**	0.04	0.20*	0.24**
Surveillance	0.05	0.03	-0.08	0.19*
Social utility	0.09	0.17**	0.26***	0.06
Entertainment	-0.08	0.00	-0.08	-0.09
$R^2$	0.17	0.21	0.24	0.24
$F$	5.93***	7.50***	9.08***	9.15***
Regression 2: television-specific				
Guidance	0.25**	0.10	0.20**	0.28***
Surveillance	-0.00	0.00	-0.06	0.07
Social utility	0.05	0.15*	0.17**	0.03
Entertainment	-0.03	-0.03	-0.08	0.00
$R^2$	0.16	0.21	0.21	0.21
$F$	5.59***	7.57***	7.77***	7.71***
Regression 3: newspaper-specific				
Guidance	0.21**	0.08	0.18*	0.22**
Surveillance	-0.00	-0.06	-0.22**	0.13†
Social utility	0.07	0.10	0.26***	0.09
Entertainment	-0.01	0.05	-0.04	-0.04
$R^2$	0.14	0.18	0.23	0.21
$F$	4.92***	6.35***	8.43***	7.67***
Regression 4: radio-specific				
Guidance	0.09	-0.03	0.01	0.18*
Surveillance	0.09	-0.00	0.06	0.08
Social utility	0.02	0.13†	0.19*	0.08
Entertainment	-0.10	0.00	-0.06	-0.13†
$R^2$	0.11	0.17	0.19	0.16
$F$	3.80***	5.93***	6.79***	5.56***
Regression 5: Internet-specific				
Guidance	0.20**	0.05	0.17**	0.25***
Surveillance	0.10	0.10	0.04	0.05
Social utility	0.13**	0.17**	0.21***	0.10†
Entertainment	-0.04	0.04	-0.02	-0.01
$R^2$	0.20	0.24	0.25	0.21
$F$	7.42***	9.17***	9.81***	7.67***

Note: Controlling for sex, age, income, and times for political media use.

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; † $p < 0.10$ .

significant positive relation with political talk ( $B = 0.26, p < 0.001$ ) and political knowledge ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ). However, using political media contents with entertainment-related motivations was not significantly associated with any of the political engagement variables. Therefore, the media-general analysis confirms Hypothesis 2.

In RQ5, we asked if there were consistent or differing patterns of the relationship between media use motivations and political engagement when adolescents used different media. To answer this research question, we conducted media-specific regression analyses. In the case of TV, guidance was positively related to political interest ( $B = 0.25, p < 0.01$ ), political talk ( $B = 0.20, p < 0.01$ ) and participation ( $B = 0.28, p < 0.001$ ). Social utility increased political talk ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ) and knowledge ( $B = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ). Entertainment and surveillance were not related to any of the political engagement variables. In the case of newspaper, similar to general analysis and the analysis for TV, guidance was significantly associated to political interest ( $B = 0.21, p < 0.01$ ), political talk ( $B = 0.18, p < 0.05$ ) and participation ( $B = 0.22, p < 0.01$ ). Surveillance was positively related to political participation ( $B = 0.13, p < 0.10$ ), but negatively with political talk ( $B = -0.22, p < 0.01$ ). Social utility increased political talk ( $B = 0.26, p < 0.001$ ) when adolescents read newspapers. Again, entertainment was not related to any political engagement in the case of newspaper reading. In the case of radio, guidance was positively related to political participation ( $B = 0.18, p < 0.01$ ) and social utility was related to political talk ( $B = 0.19, p < 0.05$ ). Entertainment and surveillance were not related to any of the political engagement variables.

Lastly, for Internet use, guidance was positively related to political interest ( $B = 0.20, p < 0.01$ ), political talk ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ), and participation ( $B = 0.25, p < 0.001$ ). Social utility was positively related to political interest ( $B = 0.13, p < 0.01$ ), talk ( $B = 0.21, p < 0.001$ ), and knowledge ( $B = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ). Using the Internet for social utility was also marginally related with political participation ( $B = 0.10, p < 0.10$ ). Using the Internet for surveillance and entertainment were not related to any political engagement variables. Overall the  $R^2$ s for 20 regression models were fairly satisfactory, explaining 11% (radio for political interest) through 25% (the Internet for political discussion) of total variances for each model.

## Discussion

This study examines the ways in which adolescents' political uses of new and old media are related to their political engagement. There are several important findings. First, Korean adolescents use new and old media with several distinct motivations from previous studies using adult samples. Korean adolescents use political contents from both new and old media to gratify needs of guidance, surveillance, social utility, and entertainment. Second, Korean adolescents are more likely to engage in politics when they use political contents of new and old media with the motivations of guidance and social utility, but not with the motivations of surveillance and

entertainment. Third, we found that Internet use has become the dominant way for political engagement, when compared to uses of other traditional media such as newspaper, TV, and radio. Lastly, it appears that Internet use with the motivations of guidance or social utility is the strongest predictor of adolescents' political engagement.

There are several theoretical and practical implications that need further discussion. First, our cross-media comparisons clearly show the primary position of Internet use as a facilitating factor in political engagement among adolescents. Internet use is positively associated with almost all political engagement variables tested in the current study, especially when used with the motivations of guidance and social utility. Even though TV is the most often used medium for Korean adolescents to get political information, it does not seem to facilitate political engagement for these young people. Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of newspaper reading for civic or political engagement. Our data also show that newspaper reading has a significant effect on political engagement variables. However, after considering different types of media use motivations and compared with other media—especially with the Internet—the importance of newspaper reading for political engagement seems to be significantly reduced in the case of Korean adolescents. With regard to their media environment, it appears that the Internet has found a critical niche (Dimmick, 1997) as a channel for political engagement (Kim & Johnson, 2006; Rhee & Kim, 2004).

Second, Korean adolescents apply the same kinds of expectations to both new and old media, which is consistent with Flanagin and Metzger (2001), who found the same in adult samples. It seems that new media is not really new as far as use motivations concerned. We often hear that new media will dramatically change how we think and live, and how and why we use media. But, from the social shaping of technology perspective, new media have to be incorporated into the existing social and media environment. Individuals understand what the new media can do for them based on their experiences with the old media. As part of the political socialization process, adolescents also learn from their social environment (e.g. parents, teachers, and peers) what they can expect from their uses of new media.

Third, our study suggests that adolescents' political media use is related to their political engagement only when they use new and old media with certain motivations. That is, consuming political contents from diverse new and old media does not automatically lead to adolescents' political engagement. Political use of media facilitates political engagement only when adolescents use them to get practical information for specific political actions such as voting (guidance) and for conversations with others (social utility). Adolescents' use of political media in order to know what is happening in their local or national political environments (surveillance) or for having fun or relaxation (entertainment) does not affect their political engagement.

It is not clear why political media use for surveillance has a limited effect on political engagement. However, we can point to the fact that there is an interesting

difference between the two motivations—guidance and social utility—which were found in the current study to facilitate political engagement and the other two—surveillance and entertainment—which were not found here to foster engagement. The first two are action-oriented motivations implying more clear ideas about how individuals use the political information they receive from various new and old media. On the other hand, when adolescents use political media contents passively to merely satisfy their curiosity about what is happening out there without clear intentions to take political actions with the information from the media, such media uses seem less likely to lead to political engagement among adolescents. Another possible interpretation would be that adolescents' political uses of new and old media for surveillance may expose them to negative political news and increase the level of cynicism which would discourage the young students' political engagement.

Fourth, our two-way comparisons to see cross-media differences and cross-motivation differences in terms of facilitating political engagement show that it is not media nor individual motivations *per se*, but the interaction thereof that is responsible for political engagement of adolescents. Our findings suggest that even when adolescents have motivations to satisfy a certain political need (e.g. guidance or social utility), the medium they use with the motivations is still an important factor in whether their media use leads to political engagement. As another way to see this media–motivation interaction regarding civic engagement, our data also imply that even when adolescents use political stories from a certain medium (e.g. the Internet or newspapers), what needs they try to satisfy by using the medium will make a difference in whether the medium use will facilitate civic engagement. Our data clearly and interestingly show that the dynamic relations between media characteristics and individual motivations shape a combining factor in political engagement of adolescents.

As a caution, this study is not based on a random sample. This limits generalizability. Future studies can retest our hypotheses with probability samples to confirm our conclusions. Our findings about the Internet's primary role as a facilitating factor in adolescents' political engagement have to be reexamined more systematically in future studies with data about what adolescents actually do with the Internet with diverse political motivations. As some researchers have already done (Lin et al., 2005; Livingstone et al., 2004), it is crucial to know what sites adolescents actually visit, what kinds of civic or political activities they take online, and what types of political conversations they engage in online. Future studies about media use and political socialization also should reexamine our claims about the relation between political media use and political engagement with longitudinal data to overcome the limitations of the cross sectional data of the current study.

## Notes

- [1] Examples of items about local public affairs were: 'The mayor is now in jail because of a bribery scandal', 'This is the 24th year of 5.18 Gwangju Democratic Movement (True/False)', 'The assembly passed the law regarding the budget for making Gwangju as the capital of culture (True/False)'. Examples of the items related to national current events were: 'The Grand National Party is the majority party in the General Assembly (True/False)', 'Korean government has decided to send its troops to Iraq (True/False)' and 'A newly adopted electronic voting system will be used in the coming election (True/False)'. Examples of general or fundamental political knowledge were: 'who was the first president of Korea? (open-ended question)', 'Korean presidency is only a five year term (True/False)' and 'The Constitution supports respective independence of the legislature, the executive, and the judicature (True/False)'.
- [2] Examples of items about political participation were: 'volunteer as a poll worker on an election day (M = 1.55, SD = 0.94)', 'wear a election campaign button for a national or local candidate (M = 1.37, SD = 0.85)', 'talk to my friends about a candidate that I support (M = 2.68, SD = 1.01)', 'watch a national political convention on TV (M = 2.73, SD = 1.15)', and 'participate in voting for a general election (M = 4.34, SD = 1.05)'.

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