The Conditional Indirect Effects of Political Social Media Information Seeking and Expression on Government Evaluation in Hong Kong: Revisiting the Communication Mediation Model

YAN SU
DANIELLE KA LAI LEE
PORISMITA BORAH
Washington State University, USA

In Hong Kong, public discontent against the government has evolved into a series of civil disobedience campaigns in the past few years, and digital communication platforms served to channel public sentiments and shape collective action. Grounded in the communication mediation model, this study analyzed the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) data. Findings show that political social media expression was negatively associated with government evaluation. Moreover, internal political efficacy was negatively associated with government evaluation, and it also mediated the associations between both political social media information seeking and expression, and government evaluation. External political efficacy was positively associated with government evaluation, whereas it only mediated the association between information seeking and government evaluation. Furthermore, democratic preference was found to be a significant moderator upon which the association between expression and government evaluation operated via internal political efficacy was contingent. Our findings provide insights into understandings of social movements.

Keywords: government evaluation, political social media information seeking, political social media expression, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, democratic preference

Since the Arab Spring and subsequent worldwide democratic activities, scholars have documented the role of social media in shaping democratic ideologies in authoritarian regimes and transitional democracies. Social media, undoubtedly, enable information exchanges, coalition building and meaning making among various social actors (Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018). A consensus upon the evident linkage between social media and the formation of democratic ideas has also been reported in prior research (e.g., Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014; Halpern, Valenzuela, & Katz, 2017).

In Hong Kong, public discontent has rapidly evolved into civil disobedience campaigns such as the Umbrella Movement and the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement, in which digital media served to channel public

Yan Su: yan.su@wsu.edu
Danielle Ka Lai Lee: kalai.lee@wsu.edu
Porismita Borah: p.borah@wsu.edu

sentiments toward government and influenced collective action (F. L. Lee, Chen, & Chan, 2017). As such, both information seeking and sharing on social media are tightly associated with peoples' discontent toward the government, and social media provide channels that unprecedentedly allow the surge of alternative views (F. L. Lee et al., 2017; Qiang, 2011).

Grounded in the communication mediation model (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 1994), the current study seeks to understand the extent to which political social media information seeking and expression were associated with Hong Kong citizens' government evaluation. Our study has several potential contributions. First, the conventional communication mediation research usually operationalizes the media consumption, or the "stimuli," as a single variable (Chen, 2019, p. 4). Considering the interactive nature of digital platforms, we use two variables—political social media information seeking and political social media expression—to fit the proposal of information "reception" and "expression" (Chen, 2019, p. 4). Second, through incorporating democratic preference into the model, this study enriches the extant knowledge about whether the extent of the association between media use and government assessment among Hong Kong citizens is contingent upon their ideological orientations. Moreover, previous communication mediation studies mainly focused on political participation; our study, however, looks into whether communication variables are associated with government evaluation, the prerequisite and incentive that motivates engagements (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001).

Literature Review

Ideological Spectrum and Political Use of Hong Kong Media

In the posthandover era since 1997, the threats to press freedom have been critical public concerns in Hong Kong (F. L. Lee, 2007). The city's association with the Chinese authority, which has a documented history of information control, has introduced subtleties that collectively work toward the redistribution of media along a political spectrum. Fung (2007) suggested that the ownership changes across news organizations helped the formation of a proestablishment norm in the media environment. Moreover, the existence of self-censorship among the public was validated to be contributed by the nouveau political order after the handover (e.g., F. L. Lee & Chan, 2009). Yet journalists have been striving to maintain autonomy from political and economic influences, and the general public have called for boycotting proestablishment media. Indeed, these tensions between the erosion and fight for media freedom represented the refusal of governmental control from both the media professionals and the general Hong Kong public.

Among Asian societies, Hong Kong is considered a breeding ground of democratic movements (F. L. Lee et al., 2017). The year 2016 has witnessed continuous political turmoil in Hong Kong. In addition to the missing of a Causeway Bay Bookstore staff at the end of 2015, the occurrence of the Mong Kok civil unrest also marked an escalation of the government's crackdown on unlicensed street hawkers, and a series of acts of violence broke out between police and protesters (Lo, 2016). Statistics showed that as of 2016, the social media usage rates reached 94% among citizens under 24, and over 65% among those aged 45 or older (Research Office, 2019). As for the overall media ecology, Hong Kong has both conservative, proestablishment press, as well as abundant and diversified online sites, which allow "alternative information" and coordination of activism, and are characterized by "pluralism and integration with civil society" (Chen, Chan, & Lee, 2016,

p. 350). The continuation and escalation of the political turmoil in 2016 relied to an extent on the pervasiveness of Internet use and its pluralized media ecology (F. L. Lee et al., 2017).

Although Hong Kong is a tech-savvy and vibrant democratic society, few studies have hitherto examined the association between communication technologies and attitudes toward the government, using the communication mediation model. Furthermore, the extant literature has excessively focused on the association between social media and participation, whereas research examining the linkages with evaluations of the government are rare. Government evaluation is considered to serve as the prerequisite and incentive motivating participation (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001); hence, a thorough exploration is warranted. In light of this gap, our study examines an elaborated and integrative model on how social media use is tied with government evaluation.

Theoretical Framework: The Communication Mediation Model

The original S–R model (stimulus–response) was adopted by social psychologists to explore the role of media in political participation, which later evolved into the communication mediation model, or the O–S–O–R model, to outline the communication process in which individuals' ideologies, attitudes, and media use elicit political outcomes (Li & Chan, 2017). In this model, the first "orientation" refers to "structural, cultural, cognitive, and motivational characteristics" (McLeod et al., 1994, pp. 146–147), such as social context, community integration, and political ideology of individuals (Li & Chan, 2017). The "stimuli" represents communication behaviors, such as discussion and media use. The second "orientation" (orientation[2]) refers to "what is likely to happen between reception of the message and the response of the audience member," such as political efficacy and knowledge (McLeod et al.,1994, pp. 146–147). The "response" represents the outcome of the stimuli, such as political engagement and attitudes (Chan, Chen, & Lee, 2017, p. 2003).

Since its advent (McLeod et al., 1994), the communication mediation model has undergone a series of examinations. N. J. Lee, Shah, and McLeod (2013) confirmed that the model holds true in socializing the American youth into democratic citizenship. Similarly, H. Lee (2012) testified to the process wherein consuming satirical humor indirectly spurs political participation via the conduit of interpersonal talk about politics among Americans. Thorough investigation of the model has also appeared in non-Western contexts. For instance, Chen and associates (2016) found that the model exhibited different levels of associations between communication and civic and political participation in three East Asian societies. F. L. Lee and colleagues (2017) revealed that political information sharing and connections with political actors via social media were associated with support and participation.

Based on the communication mediation model, political social media information seeking, and expression, could serve as "stimuli" associated with political disaffection (e.g., F. L. Lee et al., 2017). Abundant evidence has lent credence to such association (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Garcia-Perdomo, & McGregor, 2015; Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2009). The mechanism is twofold. First, the costs of information acquisition and communication are substantially reduced because of the ease of use and egalitarian access to the Internet (Xenos & Moy, 2007). Second, using the functionalities such as "retweet," "share," and "mention," social

media users became both intermediaries and catalysts, disseminating and amplifying political information to others (Ellison & boyd, 2013, p. 17).

The negative association between political social media use and government evaluation was confirmed within varying contexts. Such association is rather evident in transitional or nonliberal democracies (e.g., Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). For instance, social media played an instrumental role in the success of the antigovernment protests in Egypt (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). Social media use not only exacerbated civil antigovernment sentiment but also translated such sentiment into street protests. P. S. Lee and associates (2015) demonstrated that acquisition of political news through social media was negatively associated with satisfaction and trust of established authorities. Similarly, Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar (2015) revealed that political social media use was associated with increased dissatisfaction toward the government among Tunisian people.

The mechanism of such widely confirmed negative association is twofold. First, scholars suggested that social media nurtures the heterogeneity of discussion networks, whose effect was found particularly prominent for those "introverted and less open individuals" (Kim, Hsu, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2013, p. 498). For instance, individuals are often exposed to diverse information on social media (Brundidge, 2010; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), some of which would be at odds with their inherent views such as criticism of the government or debunks of the government's propaganda. Such heterogeneous information may trigger the progovernment people's self-correction. In an era without social networks, such heterogeneity could only be achieved through face-to-face talks. Yet for people who are introverted, often not involved in interpersonal dialogues and/or those who tend to avoid interpersonal confrontations, exposure to heterogeneous content is even more unlikely. Second, social media can relatively compensate for the political information scarcity resulting from information control in authoritarian regimes, allowing a "digital elite" to break the national media blackout through information from mainstream media (Breuer et al., 2015, p. 766). Specifically, in authoritarian regimes, media resources and the power of resource allocations are mainly owned by the government, and many of the resources are used for propaganda and stability maintenance. Social media platforms allow people who are technology savvy while dissatisfied with the government voice their opinion that may pose challenges to the mainstream discourses. In a nutshell, the mechanism of such negative association between social media use and government evaluation lies in the existence of unfavorable conversations against the government possible in interactive social media platforms.

Scholars have highlighted that social media enabled new opportunities for interactive, user-centered political experiences (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Gil de Zúñiga, Bachmann, Hsu, & Brundidge, 2013). Our study extends the traditional model by conceptualizing the "stimuli" into two independent variables—information seeking and expression—to adapt to the nature of interactivity in social media platforms and explore the nuanced relationships.

It bears mentioning that multiple studies have lent credence to the effectiveness of the model under which political participation was the dependent variable (e.g., H. Lee, 2012; Park & Karan, 2014), however, few have examined government evaluation. We argue that the necessity for examining government evaluation is threefold. First, the original model has made it clear that the R variable includes political engagement and attitudes (Chan et al., 2017), while insufficient research has hitherto paid attention

to people's attitudes toward their government. Second, scholars suggested that the assessment of government and political system can serve as the prerequisites of action, significantly triggering participatory behaviors such as protests (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). Third, pundits have repeatedly highlighted the complexity of the attitudes of Hong Kong citizens toward government (e.g., K. T. W. Wong & Zheng, 2017; T. K. Y. Wong, Hsiao, & Wan, 2009). As a special administrative region of China, its citizens' government evaluation is a prism through which one could observe the relationship between Hong Kong and mainland China (DeGolyer, 2001). Therefore, our first hypothesis is proposed:

H1:   (a) Political social media information seeking and (b) political social media expression are negatively associated with government evaluation in Hong Kong.

Internal and External Political Efficacy as Mediators

Moreover, orientation[2] functions as the mediator between S and R, often referring to efficacy, knowledge, and trust (McLeod et al., 1994). Scholars suggested that the aim of electronic democracy is to expand societal-level political discussions and engagements in a socially acceptable way through the use of communication technologies, and assured engagement can be maintained only when positive political efficacy meets positive judgment of environment (K. M. Lee, 2006). Our study, therefore, treats political efficacy as the orienting factor here. Political efficacy has two dimensions—internal and external. Internal efficacy is conceptualized as an individual's self-perceived ability to understand what is going on in the political system or have some say or impact on the system (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998). External efficacy refers to regime or system responsiveness, which is often operationalized as respondents' assessment on the willingness of elected officials to listen to or care about the public (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998). Our study includes both internal and external political efficacy.

In an attempt to understand how political efficacy functions in the model, we first investigate whether the two communication variables associate with both types of efficacy. Abundant studies have confirmed the positive association between online political information seeking and expression, and internal political efficacy (e.g., Kenski & Stroud, 2006; K. M. Lee, 2006). For instance, K. M. Lee (2006) demonstrated that both using online news and sending or posting political messages increased political efficacy among the U.S. college students. Halpern et al. (2017) found that using Facebook and Twitter, respectively, influence collective and internal efficacy among citizens in Chile. Similarly, prior research has also indicated that online hard news consumption and expression have positive associations with external political efficacy (e.g., Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Zhou & Pinkleton, 2012). Zhou and Pinkleton (2012) suggested that informed citizens are more likely to enjoy a higher external efficacy, which also reflects the ideals proposed in the civic volunteerism models of public affairs.

The mechanism of such positive associations pertains to the interactive nature of social media (e.g., Ellison & boyd, 2013; Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014; Halpern et al., 2017). Specifically, one pivotal feature of social media speaks to the concept of affordance, which refers to the perceived properties of an object allowing individuals to do something with it (Halpern et al., 2017). Scholars (e.g., Ellison & boyd, 2013; Halpern et al., 2017) pointed out three affordances of social media: (1) it allows the emergence of personalized content through developing personal profiles; (2) it contributes to public connections among people who are

unrelated in real lives; and (3) it enables interactions among each other. Political efficacy is precisely determined by users' success in achieving their goals and governments' responses to their demands (Xia & Shen, 2018). These affordances of social media provided an interactive arena that made such bottom-up effect possible (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). With the help of the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2:   *(a) Political social media information seeking and (b) political social media expression are positively associated with internal political efficacy.*

H3:   *(a) Political social media information seeking and (b) political social media expression are positively associated with external political efficacy.*

Scholars suggested that political efficacy has considerable "theoretic import" and are "generally considered to be key indicators of diffuse support (i.e., generalized trust and confidence) for the political system" (Rodgers, 1974, p. 257). Therefore, we also propose that internal and external political efficacy will be associated with government evaluation. As F. L. Lee (2010) argued, a large part of people's political disaffection and protest intention could be lost if they do not hold a belief in their own power. Research showed that higher levels of internal political efficacy is associated with higher levels of political dissatisfaction and protest intentions (e.g., Finkel, Muller, & Opp, 1989; F. L. Lee, 2010; F. L. Lee et al., 2017). Yet, when it comes to external political efficacy, as it is conceptualized as an individual's assessment of officials about how responsive the latter are to people and whether they care about people's demands (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998), prior research has lent credence to the positive association between external political efficacy and government evaluation. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H4:   *Internal political efficacy is negatively associated with government evaluation.*

H5:   *External political efficacy is positively associated with government evaluation.*

Based on the communication mediation model, orientation[2] serves as people's perceived attitudinal orientation between stimuli and outcome (McLeod et al., 1994). Our use of political efficacy as the mediator is justified, as scholars have indicated that mental elaboration is a critical mediator of the association between news use and attitudinal outcomes (Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011). Previous studies, too, have examined political efficacy as a mediator in various contexts. For instance, Jung and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that internal efficacy functioned as significant mediators between news media use and political participations. Building upon these studies, our next hypothesis is proposed:

H6:   *Internal and external political efficacy will mediate the associations between (a) political social media information seeking and (b) political social media expression and government evaluation.*

Democratic Preference as Moderator

Conceptualized as a set of beliefs that endorses the basic liberties, democratic preference pertains to the predilection of democratic values, such as equality in both abstract form and situations of conflicting values (Protho & Grigg, 1960). Numerous studies have confirmed the impact of democratic preference on a

wide variety of political variables. For instance, democratic preference was found to correlate with government support (Kennedy, 2009), political participation (Su & Xiao, 2020), and efficacy (F. L. Lee, 2010). Moreover, research has also included ideological preferences as moderating variables in theoretical models. Su and Xiao (2020) found that among Taiwanese individuals, those who use social media more frequently, those reluctant to endorse the authoritarian values were more likely to participate in politics than those preferring authoritarianism. Likewise, Zhang (2012) found that the relationship between media use and participation is also contingent upon people's preference of authoritarianism.

Yet our examination of democratic preference in the context of Hong Kong is much warranted for two reasons. First, Unlike South Korea (Su & Xiao, 2020), Singapore (Zhang, 2012), and other Asian countries with authoritarian characteristics, Hong Kong is not a sovereignty state but a Special Administrative Region of China under the "one country, two systems" model (So, 2011, p. 99). Such a unique system fundamentally endows Hong Kong with the essential characteristics of political authoritarianism and economic marketization, and such dual ideology directly brews the polarization and the tearing of democratic and pro establishment preferences among citizens (W. O. Lee & Sweeting, 2001; Ng, 2007). Second, though previous comparative studies have used authoritarian preference as a moderator (e.g., Su & Xiao, 2020; Zhang, 2012), they were confined to its role in moderating the associations between communication and participation. Our study, however, focuses on government evaluation. No research has explored whether peoples' ideological preference is linked with government evaluation or buffers its link with media use. This study fills these gaps, and the following research question is asked:

RQ1:   To what extent does democratic preference moderate the associations between peoples' (a) political social media information seeking, (b) political social media expression, and internal and external political efficacy?

In a nutshell, the above reviewed literature speaks to a moderated mediation model outlined by the communication mediation model. Specifically, the associations between both communication variables and government evaluation operated via both types of political efficacy are varied by democratic preference. Taken together, we propose the following final research question and the hypothesized model (see Figure 1):

RQ2:   Are the associations between (a) political social media information seeking, (b) political social media expression, and government evaluation mediated through internal and external political efficacy contingent upon democratic preference?
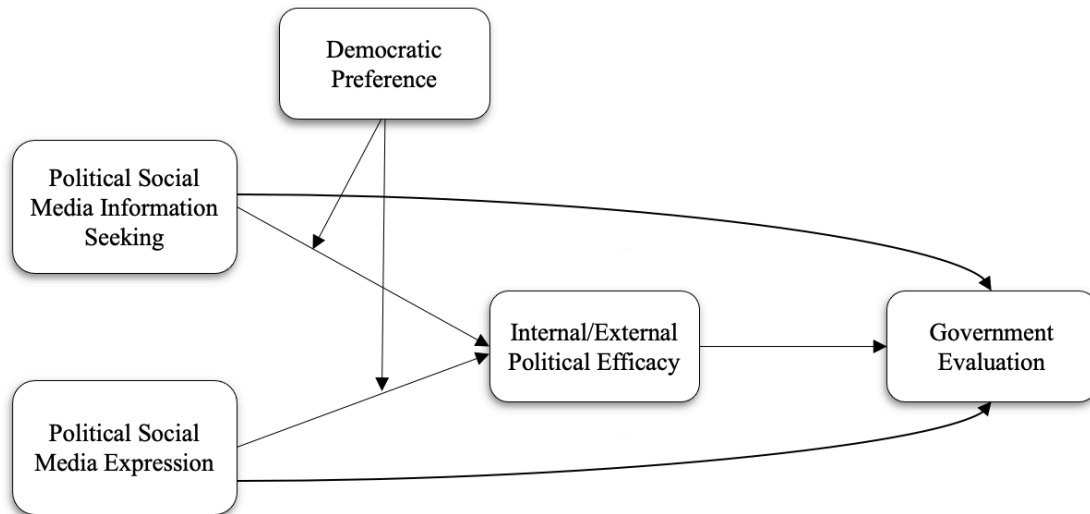
Figure 1. The hypothesized moderated mediation model.

Methodology

The current study uses secondary data from the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS), an extensively examined East Asian longitudinal multination project (e.g., Chu & Huang, 2010; Kang & Lee, 2018; S. H. Lee, 2017; Zhang, 2012). The ABS has collected data at four different times, on four different samples of people; we used the fourth wave, the most recent one. The data were based on the territory-wide household survey targeting at the Hong Kong inhabitants ages 18 or older. The samples were prepared by means of a multistage design. Initially, a sample list was obtained from the Census & Statistics Department (CSD) based on the frame of quarters maintained by the CSD. Next, systematic replicate sampling technique with fixed sampling intervals and nonrepetitive random numbers were applied, yielding 2,209 samples upon excluding vacant, demolished, and unidentifiable ones. Finally, face-to-face data were harvested through interviews. The fieldwork was performed from January 11, 2016, through April 10, 2016. The final sample size is $N = 1,217$, with a response rate of 55.1%. Respondent's demographics were checked with tracking data, other nationwide survey results, and official statistics. The original questionnaire was in English and translated by qualified translators.

Endogenous Variables

Political Social Media Information Seeking

Respondents were asked to indicate, on a Likert scale (0 = *practically never*, 5 = *everyday*), the frequency with which they use social media to find information about politics and government ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 2.15$).

Political Social Media Expression

Respondents were asked to indicate, on a Likert scale (0 = *practically never*, 5 = *everyday*), the frequency with which they use social media to express their opinions about politics and government (*M* = 1.71, *SD* = 1.47).

Internal Political Efficacy

Three items were compiled to measure internal political efficacy. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the following statements—(1) "I think I have the ability to participate in politics"; (2) "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on"; and (3) "People like me don't have any influence over what the government does"—on a Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*). The last two items were reverse coded (*M* = 1.18, *SD* = .59, *a* = .76).

External Political Efficacy

Adapted from Geurkink, Zaslove, Sluiter, and Jacobs (2020), one item was used to measure the respondents' external political efficacy. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "Government leaders implement what voters want" through a Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*) (*M* = 1.40, *SD* = .74).

Democratic Preference

Seven items were compiled to measure democratic preference. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statements (0 = *strongly agree*, 3 = *strongly disagree*), including "Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions"; "The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society"; "If the government is constantly checked [i.e. monitored and supervised] by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things" (*M* = 3.49, *SD* = .41, *a* = .80).

Government Evaluation

A seven-item scale was compiled to measure respondents' government evaluation. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*), the extent to which they agree with the statements, including "over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems our country faces," "thinking in general, I am proud of our system of government," and "a system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support" (*M* = 2.60, *SD* = .45, *a* = .77).

Exogenous (Control) Variables

The first set of exogenous variables included gender, age, and years of education. *Gender* was measured by asking respondents to report their ''biological sex'' (54.60% female). *Age* was measured by

the respondents' age as of their last birthday (*M* = 46.1 years, *SD* = 17.4 years). *Education* was measured on a 10-point scale (1 = *no formal education*, 10 = *a postgraduate degree*) (*M* = 5.21 [complete secondary/high school: technical/vocational type], *SD* = 2.46). Following prior studies (e.g., Kenski & Stroud, 2006), we also included the size of social network and political interest as controls. The inclusion of both covariates is justified because online media use may not increase response as "those who have access to the Internet may be already interested in politics" and have wider networks (Kenski & Stroud, 2006, p. 188). *Size of social network* was measured by the number of people the respondents have contact within a typical weekday (1 = 0–4 people to 5 = 50 or more), (*M* = 1.18, *SD* = .91). *Political interest* was measured by the extent of interests in politics (1 = *not at all interested*, 4 = *very interested*), (*M* = 2.10, *SD* = .80).

Results

Hierarchical regressions were performed to confirm H1. As Table 1 shows, political social media expression (*b* = −.026, *p* < .05) was negatively associated with government evaluation. However, no significant association emerged between political social media information seeking and government evaluation (*b* = −.009, *p* = .26). Therefore, H1a was supported whereas H1b rejected.

H2 posited that the communication variables are positively associated with internal political efficacy. The findings show that, beyond all controls, heavier political social media information seeking (*b* = .03, *p* < .01) and expression (*b* = .056, *p* < .001) were both associated with higher political efficacy. H2 was supported. However, the findings show that political social media information seeking (*b* = .018, *p* > .05) and expression (*b* = .058, *p* > .05) were not associated with external efficacy. Hence, H3 is denied.

In testing H4 and H5, we examined the relationship between the two types of political efficacy and government evaluation, controlling for the covariates and the two communication variables. The results confirmed that higher levels of internal political efficacy were associated with lower levels of government evaluation (*b* = −.71, *p* < .05). Moreover, higher external political efficacy was associated with higher government evaluation (*b* = .51, *p* < .05). Therefore, H4 and H5 are both supported.

Table 1. Predictors of Government Evaluation, Internal, and External Political Efficacy.

Predictors	Model 1: Government evaluation				Model 2: Internal political efficacy				Model 3: External political efficacy			
	b	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*β*	*t*
Step 1												
Age	.001	.001	.017	.422	−.004**	.001	−.105**	−2.848	.004	.002	.079	1.911
Gender	.083**	.030	.093**	2.759	−.115**	.036	−.098**	−3.173	.008	.051	.005	.154
Education	.003	.008	.012	.316	.006	.010	.020	.566	.015	.014	.042	1.038
Network	−.028	.017	−.056	−1.646	.006	.021	.010	.308	.020	.029	.025	.710
Interest	−.064**	.020	−.115**	−3.114	.194***	.025	.262***	7.784	.052	.036	.057	1.447
ΔR^2	.048***				.193***				.006			
Step 2												
Political social media information seeking	−.009	.008	−.044	−1.120	.031**	.010	.114**	3.174	−.002	.014	−.007	−.170
Political social media expression	−.026*	.011	−.086*	−2.302	.056***	.014	.140***	4.087	.018	.019	.038	.953
Internal political efficacy	−.071*	.028	−.095*	−2.552	−				−.058	.047	−.048	−1.231
External political efficacy	.051*	.020	.083*	2.529	−.036	.025	−.044	−1.463	−			
ΔR^2	.067 ***				.189 ***				.000			
Total R^2	.077 ***				.223 ***				.016			

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

When it comes to the mediation (H6), Hayes's (2013) PROCESS Macro Model 4 was run. As a result, Figure 2 exhibits the positive association between political social media information seeking and internal political efficacy (a_1 = .06, p < .001) as well as the negative association between internal political efficacy and government evaluation (b_1 = −.13, p < .001). Though the association between information seeking and government evaluation was not significant when internal political efficacy is ruled out (c_1' = −.0013, p > .05), the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the mediation (a_1b_1 = −.0078) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples, did not cross zero (−.0128 to −.0038). In other words, people who frequently seek political information online can have lower government evaluation when mediated by internal political efficacy. In addition, the positive association between political social media expression and internal political efficacy (a_2 = .092, p < .001), as well as the negative association between the latter and government evaluation (b_2 = −.119, p < .001) were found. Although the association between expression and government evaluation was not significant (c_2' = −.0200, p > .05), the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the mediation (a_2b_2 = −.0110) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples did not cross zero (−.0178 to −.0051), lending support to the proposed mediation model. In other words, people who frequently express their political opinion on social media had lower government evaluation, and such association was mediated by internal political efficacy.
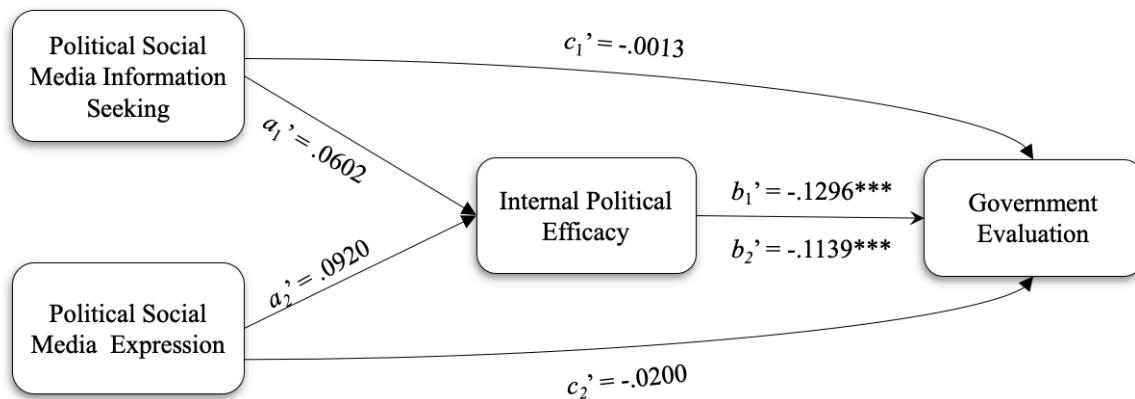

Figure 2. Associations between the two communication variables and government evaluation mediated through internal political efficacy.

Likewise, the same analyses were performed to confirm H6 when external political efficacy is the mediator. As Figure 3 shows, political social media information seeking was not significantly associated with external political efficacy (a_3 = .029, p = .055), while a positive association between external political efficacy and government evaluation emerged (b_3 = .048, p < .05). Although political social media information seeking was not associated with government evaluation (c_3' = −.048, p = .543), the 95% bootstrap confidence interval (a_3b_3 = .0014) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples did not cross zero (.0000 to .0036). In other words, people who frequently seek political information on social media had higher government evaluation when mediated by external political efficacy. When it comes to political social media expression, it is not significantly associated with external political efficacy (a_4 = .0058, p = .772), while external political efficacy was positively associated with government evaluation (b_4 = .0626, p < .01). Yet no significance emerged in the association between social media political expression and government

evaluation ($c_3' = -.027$, $p < .05$), and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval ($a_3b_3 = .0004$) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples also crossed zero ($-.0019$ to $.0030$). Therefore, external political efficacy was not a significant mediator of the association between political social media expression and government evaluation, lending partial support to H6.
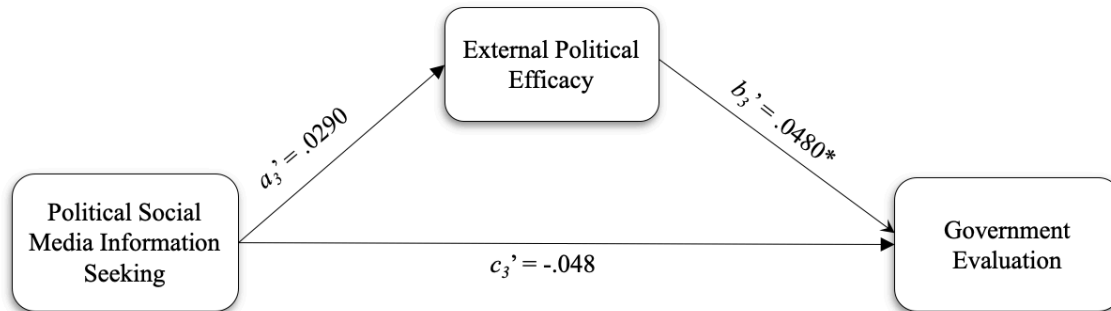

Figure 3. Association between political social media information seeking and government evaluation mediated through external political efficacy.

Hayes's (2013) PROCESS Macro Model 1 was performed to examine RQ1, which speaks to the moderating role of democratic preference. As Figure 4 exhibits, frequent political social media expression was associated with lower internal political efficacy among individuals with lower democratic preference ($b = -.113$, $p < .001$). However, the results did not support the moderation model when it comes to the association between information seeking and internal political efficacy ($b = -.028$, $p = .189$). The same analysis was conducted to examine whether democratic preference moderates the associations between the two communication variables and external political efficacy. The results showed that democratic preference did not moderate the associations between either political social media information seeking ($b = .009$, $p = .379$) or expression ($b = -.010$, $p = .558$) and external political efficacy.
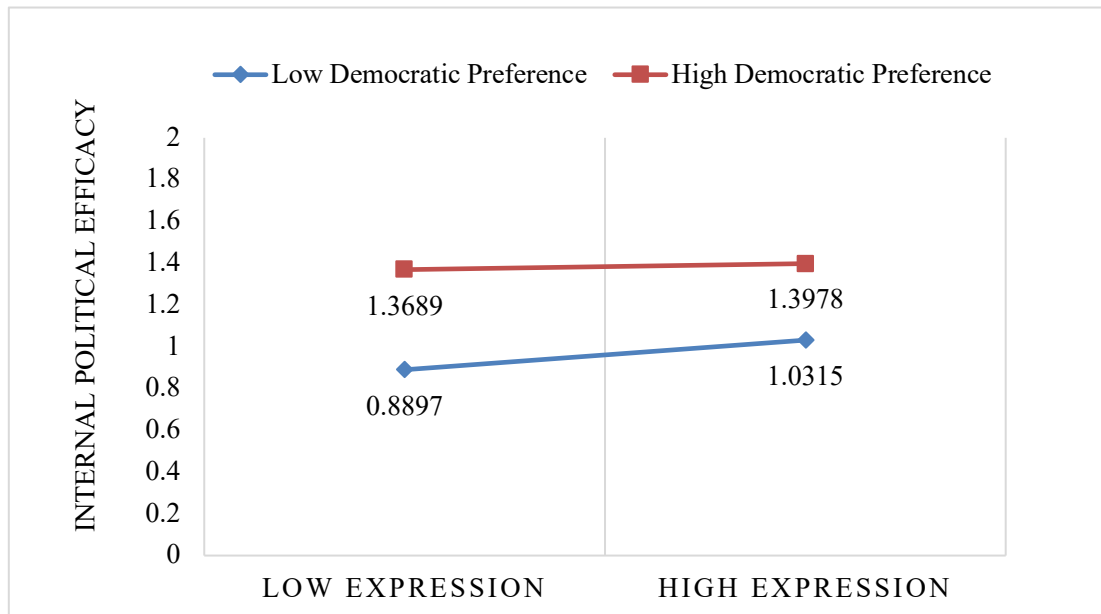
Figure 4. Association between political social media expression and internal political efficacy moderated by democratic preference.

In answering RQ2, which explores the moderated mediation model, Hayes's (2013) PROCESS Model 7 was run. As can be seen in Table 2, controlling all covariates, the result of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped samples demonstrated that the association between political social media information seeking and government evaluation through internal efficacy and with the moderator of democratic preference was not significant (*b* = .0035, *Boot SE* = .0033, 95% CI = [−.0025, .0106]). However, the result of 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped samples demonstrated that the moderated mediation model of political social media expression and government evaluation was significant (*b* = .0123, *Boot SE* = .0057, 95% CI = [.0020, .0238]). Therefore, among Hong Kong people who frequently express their political opinions on social media, those with higher levels of internal political efficacy and prefer democratic values had lower evaluations on their government. When external political efficacy is the mediator, the results showed that the moderated mediation model with both political social media information seeking (*b* = .0005, *Boot SE* = .0009, 95% CI = [−.0026, .0012]) and expression (*b* = .0023, *Boot SE* = .0018, 95% CI = [−.0012, .0061]) were not significant. Therefore, the associations between both communication variables and government evaluation that operated through external political efficacy was not contingent upon people's democratic preference.

Table 2. Final Indexes of the Moderated Mediation Models Where Internal Political Efficacy Is the Mediator and Democratic Preference the Moderator.

IV	*b*	*Boot SE*	LLCI	ULCI
Political social media information seeking	.0035	.0033	−.0025	.0106
Political social media expression	.0123	.0057	.0020	.0238

Note. LLCI: lower limit confidence interval; ULCI: upper limit confidence interval. The LLCI and ULCI are within the 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

A series of social movements in Hong Kong have attracted worldwide attention in recent years. On one hand, Hong Kong is a former British colony with a strong Western governance style. On the other, it is deeply rooted in the Chinese culture and is under the jurisdiction of China operated with the "one country, two systems" policy (So, 2011, p. 99). Such complexity of history and identity has led to the ideological polarization among its citizens (W. O. Lee & Sweeting, 2001; Ng, 2007), reflected in their eroding support to the SAR government and their attitudinal turns toward the mainland counterpart (DeGolyer, 2001). Additionally, as a highly tech-savvy city, the Internet has been inextricably tied with the formation of people's political attitudes (Chen et al., 2016). Against this backdrop, this study explored the conditionalities under which online political information seeking and online political expression were associated with government evaluation in Hong Kong. Four aspects of our findings merit further discussions.

First, our findings showed that political social media information seeking was not associated with government evaluation, whereas political social media expression was negatively associated with the latter. From this finding, one could infer that conservative assertions with respect to the strong tie between online news consumption and the erosion of regime support may no longer hold true given today's remarkable penetration of social media, particularly in Hong Kong. In other words, in a tech-savvy society where almost everyone can access the Internet, seeking for political information on social media is a daily routine, which might be associated with an individual's interest in politics (e.g., Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Ljungberg, 2013), but incompetent in reflecting a person's real attitudes toward government. However, frequent expressions on social media were repeatedly found to associate with the discussion networks heterogeneity, which, in turn, ties with people's attitudinal formation (e.g., Brundidge, 2010; Kim et al., 2013; J. K. Lee, Choi, Kim, & Kim, 2014). The process is fluid, such that online expression is effective in enabling persuasion, deliberation, and civic engagement (Kim & Chen, 2015), contributing to peer criticism and self-correction of ideological stances among social media users by "encountering difference" (Brundidge, 2010, p. 680; Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, & Nisbet, 2004). Therefore, it is safe to say that the online discussion heterogeneity serves as a latent factor that strengthens the linkage between social media expression and the eroded support for the government.

Secondly, and more notably, we found that political social media information seeking was not associated with government evaluation on its own, whereas upon incorporating internal political efficacy as the mediator, the relationship became significant. This finding supports the argument that mental elaboration is a critical mediator between news use and political attitudes (Jung et al., 2011). Our finding is also in line with previous arguments that political efficacy can reinforce the linkage between one's political process and their strengthened political attitudes and actions (Chan et al., 2017; Hoffman & Thomson,

2009). More specifically, political information seeking, though found not associated with government evaluation on its own, was linked with one's self-perceived competence of understanding of, and participating in, politics (i.e., internal political efficacy), which in turn associates with their attitudes toward the government. Hence, the evaluation of the government hinges upon both the richness of information and the sense of political judgment and efficacy, which are complementary and indispensable (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Applying to the context of Hong Kong, this finding also illuminated the general dissatisfaction with the government, and the formation of the series of subsequent social movements were probably inseparable from the increasingly popularized political social media use and citizens' increasing level of self-perceived competence in understanding politics.

As far as the external political efficacy is concerned, we found that it is also a significant mediator of the relationship between political social media information seeking and government evaluation. However, unlike internal political efficacy, when external efficacy was the mediator, the nonsignificant association between both factors became positively significant rather than the other way around. The finding is understandable because external political efficacy speaks to the perception and assessment of government functions and officials' concerns for voters (Geurkink et al., 2020; Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998). Our result confirms the positive association between external efficacy and government evaluation. When mediated through a more positive perception of government functionalities and the incumbent officials, the once weak linkage between information seeking and favorable government evaluations can become significant.

Last but not least, we found that the association between political social media expression and internal political efficacy was contingent upon people's preference for democracy. Given that internal political efficacy pertains to people's perception of their abilities in influencing politics, its premise speaks to the existence of a space allowing people to exert such ability (Halpern et al., 2017). This finding is particularly important in Hong Kong because the Mainland's influence on Hong Kong media and the self-censorship among Hong Kong citizens due to their ideological polarization have been increasing (F. L. Lee & Chan, 2009). Against this backdrop, our findings inspired that, though expression on social media platforms might have been encountering resistance, a preference for democracy still exerts notable impact on individual's efficacy, which further facilitates its association with political discontent.

Contributions

This study enriches the communication mediation literature in the following ways. First, unlike prior communication mediation research, which treated the communication variable as a whole, we dichotomized the variable into two independent factors—political social media information seeking (reception) and political social media expression (expression). Scholars have highlighted that social media not only play the role of information production, but also generated a series of affordances to provide egalitarian channels for user engagements (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Halpern et al., 2017). Our dichotomization of the communication variable not only fits into the interactive nature of social media platforms, but also provides nuanced evidence to the extant literature, explaining the varying associations of the two communication behaviors with peoples' attitude toward government.

Another novelty of our study pertains to our inclusion of democratic preference as the moderating variable. Democratic preference in our model exhibited nuances against the political attitude variables in prior research, which were generally operationalized either as a mixture of trust, cynicism, or case-specific attitudes (e.g., Halperin, Porat, Tamir, & Gross, 2013; Wang, 2007). In doing so, our findings expand the understanding of the role that individual's ideological orientation plays in influencing political responses. We argue that the inclusion of such variables is rather important and conducive given Hong Kong's special colonial history and its identity of China's SAR. Proestablishment and prodemocracy ideologies coexist at the two ends of Hong Kong's political spectrum (W. O. Lee & Sweeting, 2001; Ng, 2007), which provides a realistic basis for us to scrutinize democratic preferences.

Third, the existing communication mediation research has primarily paid attention to political participation. However, as noted earlier, political disaffection is the prerequisites and provides psychological reasoning for participation (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). Our examination on how orientations and stimuli influence government evaluation bridged this gap in this research field.

In addition to these theoretical implications, the current study is also contextually important. Our study provides evidence for understanding the mechanisms behind the high-profile democratic movements in Hong Kong in recent years. In addition to the dilemma of its identity, Hong Kong's complexity also pertains to the challenges toward the "one-country two-system" issue by Beijing, such as the constant threats to its dissidents and liberal writers. As the Hong Kong SAR government maintains a high level of ideological congruency with Beijing, the citizens' dissatisfaction also reflects to a large extent the general resistance to the latter. Our study provides insights into the nuanced conditionalities, such as different psychological and ideological traits, under which Hong Kong citizens' interactive use of social media were tied with their evaluations of the government.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is not without limitations. First, our use of cross-sectional survey data prevented us from inferring causative relationships, and reverse causality cannot be completely ruled out. Therefore, future studies could benefit from analyzing multiwave, panel data to further demonstrate causal inferences. This is particularly important given that Hong Kong is a unique society that has undergone dramatic political changes, a longitudinal study using multiwave data could be critical in revealing the variations of Hong Kong people's political attitudes. Moreover, our use of secondary data prevented us from including sophisticated measures, reflected in our measures that comprised single items. Though such approach was widely employed in prior operationalizations of social media use, future scholars are encouraged to improve the measurements and use multiple items. The same is true for our measurement of the external political efficacy. As external political efficacy usually contains multiple dimensions, future research should test these relationships with better measures. Additionally, political expression could also be treated as a potential mediator between information seeking and political response.

Indeed, a new development of the communication mediation model (i.e., O–S–R–O–R model) has already theorized the interactive usage of social media as a reasoning step (e.g., Chan et al., 2017; Chen, 2019; Chen et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2011; Shah et al., 2007). Scholars have often highlighted the

importance of testing traditional models and theories in the digital context (e.g., Borah, 2017), future studies should extend our findings by examining them in different political systems. Our study takes the preliminary step in the context of Hong Kong. Considering the current turbulent situation in Hong Kong, our study offers an understanding of some of the aspects of the citizens' evaluation of the government and the role of social media.

References

Bennett, W. L., Segerberg, A., & Walker, S. (2014). Organization in the crowd: Peer production in large-scale networked protests. *Information, Communication & Society*, *17*(2), 232–260. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2013.870379

Borah, P. (2017). Emerging communication technology research: Theoretical and methodological variables in the last 16 years and future directions. *New Media & Society*, *19*(4), 616–636. doi:10.1177/1461444815621512

Breuer, A., Landman, T., & Farquhar, D. (2015). Social media and protest mobilization: Evidence from the Tunisian revolution. *Democratization*, *22*(4), 764–792. doi:10.1080/13510347.2014.885505

Brundidge, J. (2010). Encountering "difference" in the contemporary public sphere: The contribution of the Internet to the heterogeneity of political discussion networks. *Journal of Communication*, *60*(4), 680–700. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01509.x

Chan, M., Chen, H. T., & Lee, F. L. (2017). Examining the roles of mobile and social media in political participation: A cross-national analysis of three Asian societies using a communication mediation approach. *New Media & Society*, *19*(12), 2003–2021. doi:10.1177/1461444816653190

Chen, H. T. (2019). Second screening and the engaged public: The role of second screening for news and political expression in an O-S-R-O-R model. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 1–21. doi:10.1177/1077699019866432

Chen, H. T., Chan, M., & Lee, F. L. (2016). Social media use and democratic engagement: A comparative study of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *9*(4), 348–366. doi:10.1080/17544750.2016.1210182

Chu, Y. H., & Huang, M. H. (2010). The meanings of democracy: Solving an Asian puzzle. *Journal of Democracy*, *21*(4), 114–122. doi:10.1353/jod.2010.0009

DeGolyer, M. E. (2001). Conditional citizenship: Hong Kong people's attitudes toward the new motherland. *Citizenship Studies*, *5*(2), 165–183. doi:10.1080/13621020120053572

Ellison, N. B. & boyd, d. (2013). Sociality through social network sites. In W.H. Dutton (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Internet studies* (pp. 151–172). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends": Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *12*(4), 1143–1168. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x

Eltantawy, N., & Wiest, J. B. (2011). The Arab Spring | Social media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering resource mobilization theory. *International Journal of Communication*, *5*, 1207–1224. doi:1932-8036/2011FEA1207

Finkel, S. E., Muller, E. N., & Opp, K. D. (1989). Personal influence, collective rationality, and mass political action. *American Political Science Review*, *83*(3), 885–903. doi:10.2307/1962065

Fung, A. Y. (2007). Political economy of Hong Kong media: Producing a hegemonic voice. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *17*(2), 159–171. doi:10.1080/01292980701306530

Geurkink, B., Zaslove, A., Sluiter, R., & Jacobs, K. (2020). Populist attitudes, political trust, and external political efficacy: Old wine in new bottles? *Political Studies*, *68*(1), 247–267. doi:10.1177/0032321719842768

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Bachmann, I., Hsu, S. H., & Brundidge, J. (2013). Expressive versus consumptive blog use: Implications for interpersonal discussion and political participation. *International Journal of Communication*, *7*, 1538–1559. doi:1932-8036/20130005

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Garcia-Perdomo, V., & McGregor, S. C. (2015). What is second screening? Exploring motivations of second screen use and its effect on online political participation. *Journal of Communication*, *65*(5), 793–815. doi:10.1111/jcom.12174

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Molyneux, L., & Zheng, P. (2014). Social media, political expression, and political participation: Panel analysis of lagged and concurrent relationships. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(4), 612–634. doi:10.1111/jcom.12103

Halperin, E., Porat, R., Tamir, M., & Gross, J. J. (2013). Can emotion regulation change political attitudes in intractable conflicts? From the laboratory to the field. *Psychological Science*, *24*(1), 106–111. doi:10.1177/0956797612452572

Halpern, D., Valenzuela, S., & Katz, J. E. (2017). We face, I tweet: How different social media influence political participation through collective and internal efficacy. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *22*(6), 320–336. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12198

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Hoffman, L. H., & Thomson, T. L. (2009). The effect of television viewing on adolescents' civic participation: Political efficacy as a mediating mechanism. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *53*(1), 3–21. doi:10.1080/08838150802643415

Holt, K., Shehata, A., Strömbäck, J., & Ljungberg, E. (2013). Age and the effects of news media attention and social media use on political interest and participation: Do social media function as leveller? *European Journal of Communication*, *28*(1), 19–34. doi:10.1177/0267323112465369

Jung, N., Kim, Y., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2011). The mediating role of knowledge and efficacy in the effects of communication on political participation. *Mass Communication & Society*, *14*(4), 407–430. doi:10.1080/15205436.2010.496135

Kang, Y., & Lee, D. (2018). Delegative democratic attitudes: Theory and evidence from the Asian barometer survey. *International Political Science Review*, *39*(4), 455–472. doi:10.1177/0192512117702755

Kennedy, J. J. (2009). Maintaining popular support for the Chinese Communist Party: The influence of education and the state-controlled media. *Political Studies*, *57*(3), 517–536. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2008.00740.x

Kenski, K., & Stroud, N. J. (2006). Connections between Internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *50*(2), 173–192. doi:10.1207/s15506878jobem5002_1

Kim, Y., & Chen, H. T. (2015). Discussion network heterogeneity matters: Examining a moderated mediation model of social media use and civic engagement. *International Journal of Communication*, *9*, 2344–2365. doi:1392-8036/20150005

Kim, Y., Hsu, S. H., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2013). Influence of social media use on discussion network heterogeneity and civic engagement: The moderating role of personality traits. *Journal of Communication*, *63*(3), 498–516. doi:10.1111/jcom.12034

Lee, F. L. (2007). Strategic interaction, cultural co-orientation, and press freedom in Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *17*(2), 134–147. doi:10.1080/01292980701306472

Lee, F. L. (2010). The perceptual bases of collective efficacy and protest participation: The case of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *22*(3), 392–411. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edq023

Lee, F. L., & Chan, J. (2009). Organizational production of self-censorship in the Hong Kong media. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *14*(1), 112–133. doi:10.1177/1940161208326598

Lee, F. L., Chen, H. T., & Chan, M. (2017). Social media use and university students' participation in a large-scale protest campaign: The case of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. *Telematics and Informatics*, *34*(2), 457–469. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2016.08.005

Lee, H. (2012). Communication mediation model of late-night comedy: The mediating role of structural features of interpersonal talk between comedy viewing and political participation. *Mass Communication & Society*, *15*(5), 647–671. doi:10.1080/15205436.2012.664239

Lee, J. K., Choi, J., Kim, C., & Kim, Y. (2014). Social media, network heterogeneity, and opinion polarization. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(4), 702–722. doi:10.1111/jcom.12077

Lee, K. M. (2006). Effects of Internet use on college students' political efficacy. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, *9*(4), 415–422. doi:10.1089/cpb.2006.9.415

Lee, N. J., Shah, D. V., & McLeod, J. M. (2013). Processes of political socialization: A communication mediation approach to youth civic engagement. *Communication Research*, *40*(5), 669–697. doi:10.1177/0093650212436712

Lee, P. S., So, C. Y., & Leung, L. (2015). Social media and Umbrella Movement: Insurgent public sphere in formation. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *8*(4), 356–375. doi:10.1080/17544750.2015.1088874

Lee, S. H. (2017). Digital democracy in Asia: The impact of the Asian Internet on political participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, *14*(1), 62–82. doi:10.1080/19331681.2016.1214095

Lee, W. O., & Sweeting, A. (2001). Controversies in Hong Kong's political transition: Nationalism versus liberalism. In M. Bray & W. O. Lee (Eds.), *Education and political transition: Themes and experiences in East Asia* (2nd ed., pp. 101–121). Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre.

Li, X., & Chan, M. (2017). Comparing social media use, discussion, political trust and political engagement among university students in China and Hong Kong: An application of the O–S–R–O–R model. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *27*(1), 65–81. doi:10.1080/01292986.2016.1248454

Lo, S. S. H. (2016). The 2016 Mong Kok Riot in Hong Kong. In S. S. Lo (Ed.) *The politics of policing in greater China* (pp. 195–221). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

McLeod, J. M., Kosicki, G. M., & McLeod, D. M. (1994). The expanding boundaries of political communication effects. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media effects, advances in theory and research* (pp. 123–162). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Mundt, M., Ross, K., & Burnett, C. M. (2018). Scaling social movements through social media: The case of Black Lives Matter. *Social Media + Society*, *4*(4), 1–14. doi:10.1177/2056305118807911

Ng, K. H. (2007). Political context, policy networks and policy change: The complexity of transition in Hong Kong. *The Pacific Review*, *20*(1), 101–126. doi:10.1080/09512740601133245

Park, C. S., & Karan, K. (2014). Unraveling the relationships between smartphone use, exposure to heterogeneity, political efficacy, and political participation: A mediation model approach. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *24*(4), 370–389. doi:10.1080/01292986.2014.892146

Pinkleton, B. E., & Austin, E. W. (2001). Individual motivations, perceived media importance, and political disaffection: Relationships of media use and political disaffection to political efficacy and voting behavior. *Political Communication*, *18*(3), 321–334. doi:10.1080/10584600152400365

Protho, J. W., & Grigg, C. W. (1960). Fundamental principles of democracy: Bases of agreement and disagreement. *Journal of Politics*, *22*(2), 276–294. doi:10.2307/2127359

Qiang, X. (2011). Liberation technology: The battle for the Chinese Internet. *Journal of Democracy*, *22*(2), 47–61. doi:10.1353/jod.2011.0020

Research Office. (2019). *Social media usage in Hong Kong* (Report No. ISSH15/19-20). Retrieved from https://www.legco.gov.hk/research-publications/english/1920issh15-social-media-usage-in-hong-kong-20191212-e.pdf

Rodgers, H. R., Jr. (1974). Toward explanation of the political efficacy and political cynicism of black adolescents: An exploratory study. *American Journal of Political Science*, *18*(2), 257–282. doi:10.2307/2110702

Scheufele, D. A., Nisbet, M. C., Brossard, D., & Nisbet, E. C. (2004). Social structure and citizenship: Examining the impacts of social setting, network heterogeneity, and informational variables on political participation. *Political Communication*, *21*(3), 315–338. doi:10.1080/10584600490481389

Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (1998). The impact of attentiveness on political efficacy: Evidence from a three-year German panel study. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *10*(3), 195–210. doi:10.1093/ijpor/10.3.195

Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Nah, S., Gotlieb, M. R., Hwang, H., Lee, N. J., . . . & McLeod, D. M. (2007). Campaign ads, online messaging, and participation: Extending the communication mediation model. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(4), 676–703. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00363.x

So, A. Y. (2011). "One country, two systems" and Hong Kong-China national integration: A crisis-transformation perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *41*(1), 99–116. doi:10.1080/00472336.2011.530039

Su, Y., & Xiao, X. (2020). Beyond the differential gains model: The effects of authoritarian orientation, social media use, and political discussion on political participation in Taiwan and South Korea. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, *28*(4), 241–256. doi:10.1080/15456870.2019.1618304

Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363–379. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01629.x

Wang, S. I. (2007). Political use of the Internet, political attitudes and political participation. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *17*(4), 381–395. doi:10.1080/01292980701636993

Wojcieszak, M. E., & Mutz, D. C. (2009). Online groups and political discourse: Do online discussion spaces facilitate exposure to political disagreement? *Journal of Communication*, *59*(1), 40–56. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01403.x

Wong, K. T. W., & Zheng, V. (2017). A dissatisfied generation? An age–period–cohort analysis of the political satisfaction of youth in Hong Kong from 1997 to 2014. *Social Indicators Research*, *130*(1), 253–276. doi:10.1007/s11205-015-1175-3

Wong, T. K. Y., Hsiao, H. H. M., & Wan, P. S. (2009). Comparing political trust in Hong Kong and Taiwan: Levels, determinants, and implications. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, *10*(2), 147–174. doi:10.1017/S146810990900351X

Xenos, M., & Moy, P. (2007). Direct and differential effects of the Internet on political and civic engagement. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(4), 704–718. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00364.x

Xia, C., & Shen, F. (2018). Political participation in Hong Kong: The roles of news media and online alternative media. *International Journal of Communication*, *12*, 1569–1590. doi:1932-8036/20180005

Zhang, W. (2012). The effects of political news use, political discussion and authoritarian orientation on political participation: Evidences from Singapore and Taiwan. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *22*(5), 474–492. doi:10.1080/01292986.2012.701313

Zhou, Y., & Pinkleton, B. E. (2012). Modeling the effects of political information source use and online expression on young adults' political efficacy. *Mass Communication & Society*, *15*(6), 813–830. doi:10.1080/15205436.2011.622064