Learning Implications of Korean Online Communities

Bak, Hyejin

2017

교육학박사학위논문

Learning Implications of Korean Online Communities:

Towards a New Paradigm of Social Learning

한국 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 함의된 배움의 의미:

소셜러닝의 새로운 패러다임

2017년 8월

서울대학교 대학원

교육학과 평생교육전공

박 혜 진

Learning Implications of Korean Online Communities: Towards a New Paradigm of Social Learning

한국 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 함의된 배움의 의미: 소셜러닝의 새로운 패러다임

지도교수 Lynn Ilon

이 논문을 교육학 박사학위논문으로 제출함
2017년 7월

서울대학교 대학원
교육학과 평생교육전공
박 혜 진

박 혜 진의 박사학위논문을 인준함

2017년 7월

위 원 장 ___조 영 달___ (인)

부 위 원 장 ___서 이 종___ (인)

위   원 ___Lynn Ilon___ (인)

위   원 ___홍 영 기___ (인)

위   원 ___Eric Ananga___ (인)

Abstract

Learning Implications of Korean Online Communities: Towards a New Paradigm of Social Learning

Bak, Hyejin
Department of Education
The Graduate School
Seoul National University

This study explores learning in online communities. The study inductively explored the meaning of learning, how learning occurs, and what implications it has for the online environment. In so doing, I examined the dialogue, activities and structure to discern the implications learning within five online communities which are not generally defined for the purposes of learning. For example, their topics focused on local cities and hobbies. By choosing communities that are not necessarily focused on learning, but trying to find the underlying learning within such communities, the study's finding might be significant academically and practically in understanding how digital societies work and which online factors crucially affect learning in diverse fields.

Although the main theoretical framework was Social Learning Theory, the concepts of Situated Learning and Communities of Practice were also referenced. A mixed methods research design using various methodologies was employed to produce a fluent, intensive and comprehensive source of data. I conducted an online/offline survey of 150 online community members in their 20-60's. I invited 23 survey respondents (who were relatively more active online community members) for further observations of their activities and for interviews in order to

approach their deeper thoughts. I also analysed the structure of the websites to determine how members related to each other and conducted their interactions and learning. The findings in the study are summarised into six themes.

The online community classification standards were divided as two categories when explored in a sociocultural context: 'structure or function' and 'content or purpose'. In terms of 'structure/function,' I found the platform of an online community determined whether the online community is either an informative or reciprocal network. Meanwhile, the term online community was differently named in the Korean and English literature. In South Korea it was called 'Community' and '(online) Favourite Club', depending on the purpose. They were differentiated by their purposes in the building or joining of online communities and the type of contents provided through online communities.

Research participants actively participated in learning when the conditions at the individual level and at the collective level were conducive. While they used the collective learning environment for their own 'personal study,' they generally showed little interest in improving that environment for the collective good.

Not only did affective components cause participants' more active participations, but their participation partially depended upon the integration with others. These affective aspects seemed to be significantly linked to the concept of 'play'. Online community members felt relaxed expressing the term 'learning' – linking it with 'hobby' or 'play'.

The combination of online and offline activities tended to trigger 'creative' learning, which balanced theories with applications. This type of learning was the opposite of more formal learning in that it was bottom-up learning.

South Koreans' unique moral, affective and sociocultural factors related to relationships affected cooperation and contributions at both individual and collective level in online communities. Social factors, especially relationships, were significant for online communities including learning. In many cases, relationships had to be fostered before informal learning could begin. These relationships,

however, sometimes had negative effects on learning. Some affective factors such as selfishness and laziness, and the culture of 'Che-Myoun' and 'Noon-Chi' (high pressure to honour relationships based on age and reputation) got in the way of building relationships and learning.

This learning/relationship link bled into other findings. The study found that participants considered working, enjoying and living as learning. These were both the means and end for one another. Since the three concepts, learning, enjoying, and communicating connoted communal fulfilments, the awareness of learning would eventually accord with the concept of 'social' learning.

The research findings showed that people have enjoyed their life by fostering and maintaining their own informal learning through various platforms of daily life. I concluded and summarised several relevant aspects of this phenomenon.

In general, learning might happen through each individual's interaction with other persons and sociocultural agents, not simply for the purposes of acquiring knowledge or information. Communication occurs to support, share, cooperate and so on. Reflecting, experiencing and choosing among these motivated actions are a further process of learning. By internalising and circulating new knowledge, learning could happen and learning could be maintained. Through this process, both individuals and communities develop. Moreover, people tend to experience learning as enjoyment, and experience enjoyment as learning. This is similar to play, and a natural part of life.

Learning has different emotional and social meanings within the South Korean context. There are, effectively, two words for 'learning' in the Korean vocabulary. One word is rather informal, casual and practical, while the other one is more formal and strict, connoting particular formal relationships with teachers or trainers. This can cause confusion not just due to the choice of words, but the choice of *meaning*. This is because the meaning of learning becomes complicated because the learning *experienced* may not be the learning one actually *preferred* or *chosen*. Learning, in this way, is both by culture and by language, very much social within

the Korean context.

Two traditional aspects, 'relationships' and 'collective society' play a significant role in constructing and maintaining their own special social learning in South Korea. Koreans tend to prefer 'belonging to' a certain group, and hanging out 'together' for 'collective works', due to the importance of the sociocultural atmosphere, which naturally adheres to these traditional concepts. Accordingly, they gather, and go where other people gather. Therefore, they build their platforms in an environment where it is easy to gather – the platforms are online communities. Thus, Koreans want to form relationships with other members, and focus primarily on maintaining such relationships instead of focusing on personal necessities or contributions. A strong humane bond involving the building and strengthening of relationships is a significant factor in maintaining online communities, and thus, learning is also maintained.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acronyms

AI – artificial intelligence
CSCL – Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning
DOI – Digital Opportunity Index
FB – Facebook
ESD – Education for Sustainable Development
ICT – Information communications technology
IT – Information technology
KISA – Korea Internet & Security Agency
LLL – lifelong learning
MOOC – massive open online course
OC – online community
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PC – personal computer
PR – public-relations
SLT – social learning theory
SNS – Social Network Service

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research explores how an intensive study of online communities (OCs), not necessarily organised for the purpose of learning, nevertheless learn. In so doing, this study contributes to an ongoing expansion of the definition and description of learning from formal education environments and from online environments specifically designed for learning into the realm of online activity generally. How might people learn even when they did not have an intention to learn? Even when they did not see themselves as learning? Even when they did not see their OC as being primarily about learning?

One worldview, social constructivism, also named as interpretivism, is adapted to this research, since my intention to seek meaning of learning in our life corresponds with this perspective, which supports individuals' trial to understand the world where they live and work. In order to best understand the specific issue, learning, in terms of both individual factors and reciprocal interaction in the sociocultural context, this research employs a mixed methods approach to produce fluent, intensive and comprehensive source of data based on various sub-research questions, observations and interviews as well as surveys, literature, documents and web-sites analysis were mainly conducted.

I chose online communities that are not generally designed for learning,

not only because spaces in the Internet are spheres of life that are as significant as physical spaces, but also because I want to acquire a more in-depth understanding of the casual learning of such communities. I suspect that they are still likely learning nevertheless. In this respect, learning is not defined formally. Such formal learning often occurs when pursuing a degree or attending a classroom. If we define learning in this way, it would have to be said that what happens in such communities is not 'learning'. But if we think that these communities are sharing, knowing and building activities around knowledge, then these are types of learning. In fact, this is a new paradigm of learning upon which I am. Specifically, I focus this research on the exploration of learning within the OCs.

The definition of an OC is quite diverse, and activities in this space vary as well. This research focuses on the learning that takes place among the various activities during which the widespread views of members of OCs are communicated, especially in the Korean context. Specifically, I have focused on aspects of original communities (offline) which are found in OCs; how OCs really work; which background contexts affect them and why the way in which the impacts correspond to learning is considered. This definition of an OC is not based on the theoretical frame, since an OC is a type of community as well as a social phenomenon, which exists in reality.

Therefore, the study of learning and OCs through an individual's activities

and ideas in the sociocultural context is a suitable lens for studying phenomena, and is a standard according to which researchers can determine the implications and roles of learning in our expanded life environment.

The fundamental reason why I want to undertake this research is because I would like to try to understand and learn about life by expanding my views beyond the concept of schools or teachers, and by reflecting upon learning in order to legitimately put the title of 'educator' in front of my name. It would be exciting to research the implicative significance of learning from unclassified institutes to education from the point of view of my previous perspective. Through this research, I might be able to reflect on what sustainable learning is. It would entail a meaningful inquiry as to the assumption that learning in our general life also represents valid learning, and not just the one, limited form of learning that takes place only in school.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is:

'What is the role of learning in online communities?'

In order to answer this question, the following specific sub-questions will be addressed in the methodology chapter:

1. What is an online community?
2. In what ways do online communities learn?
3. What role does learning play in motivating people to join, if any?
4. What role does learning play in members' participation, if any?
5. What role does learning play in members' contributions, if any?
6. What awareness of learning exists among members, if any?

Sub-questions 1 and 2

When considering learning, most OCs tend to have a clear and obvious purpose; for instance, an OC for learning English or an OC for learning how to prepare for a job interview. The role of learning in these kinds of community is important and meaningful. However, this research focuses on learning in general OCs, not only 'communities for learning'. This research deals with which learning factors are salient in the OC, and how members fulfil the OC's activities for and by learning. To answer these questions, it is necessary to establish a standard definition of OCs, and to consider which factors can be regarded as learning in OCs and which factors cannot. This work is dealt with in the literature review chapter. The question of why and how learning is fulfilled and considered consciously/unconsciously in OCs is explored through studying other research

questions based on the literature review.

Sub-questions 3, 4 and 5

According to Bandura's arguments in SLT, people tend to learn or not according to their own cognition, reinforcement or rewards. As an individual factor, people learn from models such as other people, social environment, and their interactions with them. Also, modelling and interacting could affect people's learning as well. Therefore, it is significant to understand why people learn, which kind of learning is fulfilled or should be conducted in both an individual and a sociocultural context. Moreover, through researching why people join the community and how they participate and contribute within the community, it would be possible to understand them in a learning context.

Sub-question 6

With regard to the meaning of learning, which can be defined in various modes, each OC member might consider the meaning of learning differently. Furthermore, some intentions or activities might be regarded as learning or not depending how people actually understand what learning means to them. If the

answer to this question is found through this research, it could be discovered which aspects of learning are recognised and emphasised in people's life, and which ones are fulfilled or even when they are not realised.

Overview of Methodology

Since I would like to understand the substantive meaning of learning from ordinary people's view, I have tried to understand my research participants' voices and their interactions in the sociocultural context. Therefore, this research employed various methods, such as literature analysis, interview, observation, statistical trends analysis, analysis of changes in website content and so on, based on six sub-research questions.

Firstly, I basically tried to understand people's general views on OCs and learning through a survey. I built the concepts of social learning, particularly in the South Korean context through literature. Then, I invited 23 research participants who were active OC members (chosen among 150 survey participants) for further observations of their OC activities (online mainly) and for interviews in order to approach their deeper thoughts. Not only did I focus on their individual tendencies, but I sought to comprehend the learning of OCs

through these interviews and observations. I used coding of interviews, matrix

tables, Venn diagrams, tree types and 2x2 tables to analyse this data.

To secure the fluency and validity of research data, I combined results from

observations of online activities, interviews, and survey through various analyses

of the meaning of OCs and their learning implications at both the individual and

collective levels.

Theoretical Frame of Learning

This section simply introduces the research's theoretical framework,

namely social learning. It starts with a description of Bandura's (1977) social

learning theory, and it discusses Vygotsky's (1987/1997) sociocultural theory, and

Lave and Wanger's (1991/1995) learning theory. I will discuss the relevant

theories and arguments in the literature review.

Since some of the research will rely on the participants' views of the

situation, it is significant to listen to individual OC member's voice to understand

how individual factors affect the construction of their meanings of learning. Often,

these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words,

they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction

7

with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (Cresswell, 2013, p. 25).

One of the important features of this perspective is that the specific contexts related to where people live and work are emphasised to gain an understanding of the historical as well as cultural settings of the participants (Cresswell, 2013). Therefore, an investigation that considers the sociocultural context in this research would be appropriate. If the global level is regarded as the standard of society, 'South Korea is an appropriate sociocultural standard or context for a discussion of learning in OCs.

This research, which is based on social learning theory (SLT), might not seem to belong within this perspective, since inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning rather than starting with a theory (Cresswell, 2013). However, the direction of the research corresponds to the content explained above. Moreover, the perspective, which emphasises the impacts of the sociocultural context and the reciprocal interaction, as well as a focus on individual factors based on SLT, is parallel to the constructive context. Furthermore, there are a considerable number of deductive factors because the research was guided by questions; how and which aspects of learning work, and answers were mainly based on data from my communications with OC members, rather than my analysis of OCs in the case study. Therefore, the constructivism,

especially social constructivism, was deemed appropriate as the whole framework of the research.

As the whole frame of this research is based on social constructivism, my attempt to understand the main key word, learning, is also derived from the constructive perspective. This approach was taken in order to focus on questions such as how knowledge is constructed in an OC, and how and why learning is conducted in this environment, rather than how people acquire knowledge there. The core premise of constructivism is situated cognition or situated learning (Schunk, 2004). It means that cognitive processes including thought and learning are conducted in the physical social context (Brown et al., 1989). In the perspective of constructivism, principles of learning do not exist, nor can they be verified. The perspective assumes that persons are positive learners, and the learners themselves can construct their own learning (Schunk, 2004). Constructivists interpret knowledge as a working hypothesis rather than define it as truth. In other words, they consider that knowledge is built from the inside and not provided from outside of human beings. Knowledge built by an individual is truth to oneself, but it is not the same for others, since it is built based on an individual's own beliefs and experiences, which are subjective and personal (Simpson, 2002, cited in Schunk, 2004, p. 347). The hypothesis of constructivism concerning interactions between individuals and their environment (social

9

context) corresponds to SLT, in the sense that these theories are connected to the constructive approach beyond the cognitive approach (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2000, 2002).

The key theoretical frame is social learning theory (Bandura 1977; Gibson, 2004; Tu, 2000). The term 'social learning' refers to what is experienced through interaction and the learning that arises from such interactions. In other words, the research is based on the most likely fundamental idea about learning, although it might be somewhat nondescript: People live as they learn, they make new knowledge through learning, and they even live for learning; learning takes place through communication with other people; people create a new world through it (Jung, 2010). This theory will be discussed in more detail in the literature review chapter.

This approach is also heavily influenced by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987/1997), since it deals with learning in the social and cultural context. And I refer to some ideas of Lave and Wenger (1991/1995) as well, since I agree with their emphasis on considering learning itself in a relatively unconstrained perspective. They consider learning as neither a means nor an end for students. They break the dominant premise that 'only students, children or juveniles are regarded as learners'. They also contemplate natural and practical learning in communities, and regard the community unit as a smaller sociocultural

context.

Research Purpose

The sphere of life goes beyond our village, national, and international society and thus expands due to the development of science and technology. Despite the constant changes in life environment, education and learning are still largely defined and described within the 'offline' environment, and people still only tend to regard OCs as entities that literally pursue explicit goals like 'community for learning'. Through exploring the learning implications in general OCs, which are spatially expanded life environments with various purposes, and examining how and why people interact with one another based on the concept of social learning, this study provides conceptual and evidential background on the recent paradigm shift of learning. It also provides insights into the newly emerging practices that define the new social learning agenda. The conclusions of this study summarise the social learning approaches in the online environment and provide suggestions to the on-going implications of learning in contemporary society.

Particular attention will be paid to the prospect of Korea's adoption of the

successful aspects of online environment. Education policy makers might invoke good practices and bring this vision more directly into new policies or programmes. Stakeholders in the lifelong learning (LLL) field might consider the importance of LLL in the online environment, and develop further theories or alternatives. Professors and teachers of formal educational institutes might be able to employ this learning paradigm approach in the formal education system for a more flexible and suitable mode of teaching along with conventional learning pedagogies. More countries and institutions might be encouraged by the implications of South Korea's case; that is, it may raise support for a variety of initiatives for their learning environments as well.

Research Rationale

This research emphasises that learning and sociocultural context are affinitive, like a necessary and sufficient condition. Sociocultural factors vary depending on whether the local or global unit is the scope. Instead of being considered in dichotomous terms, this phenomenon should be understood as crossing the boundary between the broader and narrower frame. Furthermore, consideration of the sociocultural context includes the temporal aspect, as it

relates to both the traditional and the modern sociocultural context. Therefore, this research contemplates both the current learning paradigm and the previous academic perspectives on social learning. It also considers experiencing, reflecting and (re-)creating through direct or indirect interactions with the environment (non-humans), such as media including Social Network Service (SNS) and sociocultural factors, as well as interactions between oneself and others (humans) as learning, specifically social learning.

There are many examples of research advocating the view that the online space is an alternative tool or space for learning. Massive open online course (MOOC) or OCs of inquiry (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007) are representative examples of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL). This research starts from the opposite side of other previous studies about learning and OCs; it tries to find the implications of learning, back to front. In other words, it intends to reveal what learning means; how it operates; what implications it has for the online environment. In regard to the expanded sphere of life – online environment, the rationale of this research is considered in two perspectives – practical and academic.

In the aspect of practical rationale, OCs have expanded more as a life environment. Not only are their physical numbers increasing rapidly, but the OCs are also adapting to more diverse areas such as leisure, education, business,

health, law and so forth (Arbaugh, 2008; Bingham & Conner, 2010; Brown & Adler, 2008; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Kim et al., 2012; Laing et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009; Risser & Bottoms, 2014; Rossi, 2011; Swan et al, 2009). Furthermore, it is possible that adult learning through OCs as well as students' learning in school is more actively attended (Heo & Lee, 2013; Jung, 2010). Especially, the number of people who choose OCs increases for practical knowledge in life, self-development, and occupational works. Simply sharing information in OCs might not be regarded as learning if we consider learning as fulfilment based on the traditional educational, theoretical or academic standard. However, if an OC is described as a space to teach and learn something according to a broader and more general view, the navigation of learning might be found in all OCs, and it might be regarded as a core factor. Considering the fairly busy life of a Korean, it would be a reasonable assumption that adult learning will be more actively accomplished through an OC. If that assumption is correct, it will be possible to provide useful tips for organising educative and active OCs by revealing or determining the role of learning in OCs.

Meanwhile, this research will be meaningful academically as well, since it might not be easy to find research based on this approach which focuses on learning itself in the new life environment, online space in the academic domain. While some previous research done by Heo & Lee (2013) and Jung (2010) are

14

significant studies, which argue that online activities are related to the non-formal learning of adults in the LLL-centred view, this research considers the concept of social learning as more important than the informal way of learning in OCs, and concentrates on the voices of people in the field. Therefore, it considers some questions such as whether it is reasonable to consider OC activities as learning; why they are learning; and what kinds of role OCs play in learning conducted through concrete and practical cases of OC.

Above all, it might be reasonable to say that the direction of this research is quite different from that of previous research. It seeks to find educational implications and suggestions as it starts from the interdisciplinary and inclusive perspective, rather than being fixed in the perspective of 'education' only. Research on OCs generally focuses on relationship changes and social meanings: the Internet community and Korean society (Suh, 2002); relationships between OC and changes in social relationships (Jang, 2004); relationships and psychological dimensions (Bae, 2005); democracy and social capital (Song, 2006); OC as communication structural change (Jun, 2012); OCs and social relationships (Lee et al., 2012); and the impact of OCs on participatory social capital (Park et al. 2012). With regard to the aspect of knowledge or information in OCs: The key word of Lee's (2004) research is 'edutainment'; the research of Yoo et al. (2002) concerns enhancing involvement; Bock et al. (2005) discuss

15

knowledge sharing; Kim (2009) researches the motivational factors for knowledge contribution; Kim, H. (2010) discusses differences in terms of collective intelligence in the Korean historical context. From this trend, we can ascertain that research related to learning seems to focus primarily on the aspects of knowledge or information, not on learning itself. Research which deals both with learning and OCs tends to focus on the enormously popular trend of online learning, online methods or space, especially for collective learning (Bingham & Conner, 2010; Duncan-Howell, 2010; Gubbins & MacCurtain, 2008; Rossi, 2011; Tu, 2000; Yuan & Kim, 2014). We can see that there does not seem to be a tendency to consider learning itself in the new life environment.

Therefore, exploring educational meaning and the role of learning would illuminate the possibility of OCs as an alternative for adult learning from the LLL perspective, and provide basic resources for further research of the relationships between OCs and learning.

Research Significance

As society has changed, the concept of LLL, which includes the emphasis of education in the local community or other spheres of life beyond formal

education, has become more popular. LLL is too broad to deal with learning in all spheres of life. Likewise, the research has its own intention to see the meaning of learning in the context of life in broader society, rather than considering learning in the educational dimension which especially emphasises school education. The young generation, also known as 'Digital Natives '(Palfrey & Gasser, 2008), has been living in digital society. Thus, the scope of this research includes the digital environment, but is limited to online space, and more specifically 'online communities (OCs)'.

However, we are still unfamiliar with considerations of education and learning in the online environment, although everyone can use online facilities and regard the space as our life environment. This research could provide insights into how the online environment naturally creates a sphere of learning – how it generates and regenerates learning.

If these naturally created learning environments are better understood, people might expand the concept of learning. As a result, they might feel fewer burdens about learning when it comes to competition and grades. Students and their parents might be more inclined to consider students' interests or agenda for learning instead of traditionally emphasised test-based assessment. Further, more people might be willing to share their own educational benefits with others and cooperate with others for learning if the opportunities to learn are more accessible,

and not something 'exclusive'. In addition, new learning environments might provide more educational chances for people who have less opportunities to access the traditional types of learning institutes due to time and distance barriers, or even cost.

According to people's thoughts about learning, their attitudes and behaviours will naturally change. Therefore, if people have a more open-minded attitude toward learning spatially with a wide variety of content in the expanded environment, not only do both the quality and quantity of learning increase in more diverse modes, but also a more equitable, sustainable and abundant life will ultimately be expected.

For these reasons, this research might not be a fragmentary example concerning a certain type of knowledge, or information or learning service. Rather, it could enhance our general understanding of Korean information and knowledge of society; and it could also be applied to further research about learning in the historical and cultural perspective of the society.

Research Limitations

Some aspects would be considered limitations to the research. These

include multiple cases, cultural and linguistic barriers, and time limitation, as briefly described in what follows. Also, the personal experiences or perspectives of the researcher and participants could affect the research significantly.

Multiple cases

The study with multiple cases could have relatively less profound analysis than a study that focuses on a single case (Cresswell, 2013). However, through the five cases of OCs, the research allowed me to gain enough information to consider the possible varieties related to certain factors, such as the type and purpose of OCs.

Cultural barrier

Even though the participants and I have some commonalities – we are all Korean and have a similar sociocultural background – the regional and personal differences, such as educational background, household, and other characteristics might affect the outcomes of the entire study. I thus need to continually bear in mind the ethnographic argument that we should '…allow interviewees to explain their answers from their own perspective' (Goldbart, 2005, p. 20).

Communication difficulties

The research participants and I may not have grasped the hidden meanings or the intended effect of some terms when we communicated via the online method, a situation which could not support our comprehension when it comes to the important nonverbal elements such as gestures and intonation. However, we perhaps can have a heightened awareness of potential linguistic pitfalls because we did not have just one chance to conduct an interview, but many; any remaining problems could be overcome by repeatedly listening to the voice recordings.

Language barrier

As a Korean, I cannot perfectly describe or express what I learn and feel whilst writing my research in English. To clarify my intentions in the use of some terms, I had to carefully translate Korean into English; I even double checked my work. The most challenging aspect of this work was translating Korean terms that are unique to Korean culture into English. To minimise this limitation and choose the best terms to describe them, my foreign supervisor gave me a lot of help.

Time limitation

One of the best benefits of online communication and working in the online space might be that we can manage time flexibly. I could save much more time visiting the online field than I could when I was doing offline field work. Therefore, when I had to join offline activities of OCs in another region, I spent relatively much more time. Furthermore, I had to meet more than twenty participants, with each more than two times. This means that I might not have enough time to build a strong rapport with a participant and could not communicate enough with him or her face-to-face. However, communication through SNSs and E-mail would have tremendously helped to reduce these limitations.

The perspective of the researcher and participants

Although I have been a member of almost all kinds of OCs, generally I am not a very active member in all these communities; thus, I might not understand the situation completely. Moreover, some participants might tend to hide their true feelings; they might want to emphasise only the positive aspects of the OC, especially in the case of members of *School-Where*, in which the members might

not want to directly express their opinions or feelings because they know that I am a primary school teacher.

The influence of personal experience

My career as a South Korean public primary school teacher and PhD student might also affect my interaction with adult OC members as well as teachers and other education stakeholders. It might be useful to be able to grasp general educational issues. However, my understanding of education phenomena and values are without doubt reflected in the analysis and interpretation of the OCs and their sociocultural contexts, both consciously and unconsciously.

It would indeed be arrogant to claim to apprehend all OCs and individuals fully through such fieldwork and a literature review. On the contrary, it is perhaps inevitable that there might be challenges in any attempt to understand the hidden and potential meanings of phenomena in different individual, cultural, moral and social environments. Nevertheless, although I might have experienced some limitations, I was able to minimise these difficulties with the help and advice of other community members, especially the community builder or manager, and the support of my fellow colleagues, supervisor, and other professors who are experts in the field of learning and social sciences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter explores the literature related to the research's subject matter. It begins by examining social learning theory, which is the research's theoretical framework. In the first section, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, social change, and the new paradigm of social learning theory are mainly considered. It then moves on to discuss lifelong learning, particularly, informal learning, which could be the criteria for the classification of learning in online communities (OCs). After this, it discusses what kinds of conduct could be regarded as learning, and what communities and OCs are. Lastly, it explores the South Korean context, in order to understand how this context could affect people's learning, and the vitalisation of OCs domestically as I argue that learning should be understood in the sociocultural background.

Social Learning Theory

The concept of social learning has received unprecedentedly a widespread attention across biology, neurology, social sciences, humanities and the education field (Hoppitt & Laland, 2013). Hoppitt & Laland state that Heyes's (1994)

definition of social learning is the most commonly used, 'learning is influenced by observation of, or interaction with, another animal (typically a conspecific) or its products' (cited in 2013, p. 3). They add that these influential factors cannot be conducted without other agents, whether they are other people, products or the surrounding environment (Hoppitt & Laland, 2013). In this research, social learning of human beings is considered, based on the perspective of Bandura (1977), mainly due to the relevance between the psychology and education field.
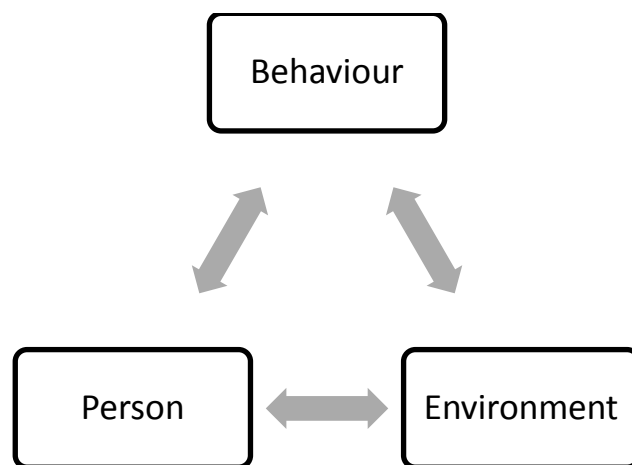
Figure 1 Reciprocal Interactions

*Source: Bandura, 1977

Bandura (1977) discusses human behavioural determinations which produce behaviour and interactions with other agents based on the continuous reciprocal interactions between cognition, behaviour and environment in his SLT, as shown in Figure 1. For instance, the situation of 'John engages in certain behaviours for learning' includes four sentences: Why he wants to learn; what behaviour he engages in; what he learnt the behaviour from; and what factors cause the behaviour. The first and fourth sentences could be related to 'personal' intention and purpose and 'environmental' affect, the second one is related to 'behaviour' itself, and the third is linked to the 'environmental' factor.
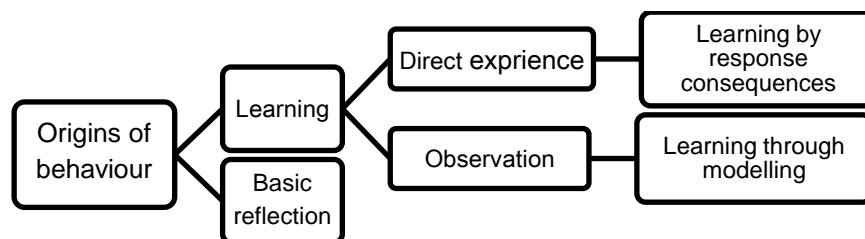
Figure 2 Origins of Behaviour

*Source: Bandura, 1977

Behaviours are divided into a Priori and a Posteriori, and Bandura emphasises the latter one, which is acquired or accustomed through 'learning'.

25

Bandura explains that the learning is accomplished *by response consequences* (1977, p. 17) and *through modeling* (1977, p. 22). Figure 2 shows relationships between behaviours and types of learning.

The basic pattern of learning from direct experiences tends to be built by positive or negative response consequences of the behaviour. The consequences have several functions: a) *Informative Function* (Bandura, 1977, p. 17) – the response consequences conduct information. The acquired information affects the further behaviour b) *Motivational Function* (Bandura, 1977, p. 18) – the response consequences operate as motivational factors by incentive value. As anticipatory reason which combines existing behaviours and expected consequences, the function provides a stimulus and continuous drives for further proper behaviours c) *Reinforcing Function* (Bandura, 1977, p. 19) – the notion of reinforcing function is closer to *regulation of behavior* (Bandura, 1977, p.21) rather than reinforcement of behaviour by consequences. The function is effective in controlling behaviour, not building it.

According to the SLT, learning affected by modelling is generally related to the informative function. Observatory learning consists of four components processes. The processes result in translating an observed event into observer and learner's performance which is matched with the model (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Gibson, 2004): a) *Attentional Processes* (Bandura, 1977, p. 24) – not only to pay

26

attention to and perceive the behaviour of the model, but also to decide which factors to observe and focus on more. A number of factors, the person's sensory capabilities, previous reinforcements, the attributes of the observed activities or the models themselves, and the nature of the interactions between individuals, could affect the attention (Gibson, 2004); b) *Retention Processes* (Bandura, 1977, p. 25) – to keep information acquired from observation or experience as imaginal or verb system; c) *Motor Reproduction Processes* (Bandura, 1977, p. 27) – to change retained information as proper behaviour. After the observers compare their own behaviours to the symbols retained from a modelling experience, they gradually adjust their behaviours based on self-observation and self-correction (Gibson, 2004); d) *Motivational Processes* (Bandura, 1977, p. 28) – to perform what observers learnt if they seem to result in positive outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Gilson, 2004). The further conduct, performance after observing or learning, would only happen when there is a perceived need to do so (Gibson, 2004). The learning should result in valuable consequences such as an external and vicarious reinforcement as well as self-reinforcement (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Gibson, 2004; Hergenhahn & Olson, 1997; Mischel, 1973).

However, the limitation of the observing model seems to be that it does not explain the environmental impacts. Not only a single observation, but also more multiple interactive behaviours for learning and more complicated behavioural

origin should be considered (Bandura, 1986). It would be meaningful to regard that this approach considers determinations between personal and environmental factors, and emphasises symbolic, vicarious and self-regulatory processes as well as direct experience for the learning process.

Bandura (1977) criticises previous theories which only dealt with behavioural tendency and environment as separate entities, despite their mutual influences. Environmental factors should be considered as non-fixed attributes (Djupe & Lewis, 2015). Additionally, an individual can be an environmental factor as well, since personal behaviours or tendencies significantly or less significantly affect the atmosphere or culture of the group (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Mischel, 1973; Zhou et al., 2014). Moreover, self-regulation and self-efficacy including intrinsic reinforcement that comes from one's self-assessment is regarded as a greater influence than extrinsic reinforcement because intrinsic assessments could affect people's motivation to pursue learning and performance based on their intention and confidence (Bandura, 1977; Gibson, 2004; Hergenhahn & Olson, 1997; Lim & Chan, 2003). This means that the observer's anticipated self-reactions would be fundamental to the learning process (Bandura, 1977; Gibson, 2004; Lim & Chan, 2003). Therefore, not only would individual factors be significant for learning and behaving, but they would also be other types of environmental or external factors for other persons' behaviours.

Bandura (2002) discusses perceived efficacy in technological terms as well. Firstly, perceived efficacy for self-regulated learning can be positively evolved by educational technologies and the rapid pace of informational change. Secondly, technological aspects such as telecommunications and the Internet affect certain lifestyle elements across the world; not only can it produce intercultural commonalities, but it also might foster a more extensive globalised culture. He does not say this constitutes an extreme cultural patterning. Instead, it might mean that the world is linked by technologies, people interact with more diverse people in more places, and learning can occur in the expanded environment in the global sociocultural context.

As I emphasise from the previous sections, my main perspective of learning is articulated in this sentence − 'learning is thoroughly related to our fulfilment such as interacting, cooperating and other collective conducting as we have lived in the sociocultural context.' I do not blindly follow Bandura's cognitive or psychological approach. Instead I partially refer to his considerations of human being's fulfilments; understanding each culture or society (like a state unit), interacting between individual and environment and its impacts in the sociocultural context; arguing that new phenomena (e.g., commonality, globalisation and extension of life environment to online space) should be considered in the new sociocultural context. If the standard of 'sociocultural' is

29

national or local (each society or culture, similar units to a state or a race), learning seems to be conducted in diverse ways through the personal efficiency or collective efficiency of individuals. And learning might be implemented through more widespread forms of conduct or interactions of all units from individual to the world, if the standard is global.

The perspective of new social learning, 'learning comes through 'reciprocal' relationships', seems to correspond to the research's key word, learning in one of the types of SNSs, OC. Moreover, even though 'social' in this paradigm is not an academic concept, it seems to accord with the notion of 'social', as it is understood within this research's theoretical background: As the concept of social in Bandura (1977) and Vygotsky's (1987/1997) theories signifies, learning occurs through relationships and communications, it is a term for emphasising 'interaction' within SNSs in the new paradigm as well.

Meanwhile, new social learning would seem to be far from the concept of learning in this research, due to its tendency to emphasise social learning as fulfilment of cooperation among members of organisations for benefits of business or the concept of 'sociability. However, as I originally consider the concept of 'development' beyond 'economic development', the sociable as well as interactive aspects of SNS, social learning should be considered for more people with regard to the full range of social issues as well. In addition, it is natural that

people consider the substantial differences between new and old social learning approaches, since the learning environment changes as time goes by. Instead of adhering to the existing ways of learning, we should try to develop more effective learning methods for overcoming the limitations of time and space in line with current social trends, namely the sociocultural context, in which there is a profusion of information and rapid change.

To sum up, the term, social is connected to the concept of interaction, and the social/sociable/reciprocal learning (even learning in SNS)[1] means learning which occurs in the context according to the sociocultural changes.

The research further focuses on four aspects of social learning based on both established and new concepts.

Firstly, we can consider three notions of sharing knowledge which Bingham & Conner (2010) mention; *vitality*, *socialisation* and *appropriacy*. Vitality means that good learning spaces or methods should vitalise people. It means that people can be more positive and active to lead a more affluent life. Socialisation is related to learning from/by/with others. Interaction such as sharing and cooperation is a part of socialisation. Moreover, people can understand sociological concepts and learn how to understand others and communicate with them (Van Wynsberghe & Andruske, 2007). Furthermore, appropriate knowledge

---

[1] The term, 'social' is used in the research as it includes all these meanings

reflects the passage of time and new trends as well as a practical perspective.

Secondly, as creativity is emphasised as a part of learning, learning is not a partial conduct. It should be sustainable as required information and knowledge change. Further, we should cooperate so as to be able to afford to deal with the trend, and pursue 'long-term development' for 'all' instead of 'competition', which tends to result in 'short-term benefits' for 'a few' people.

Thirdly, some individual factors which encourage people's learning should be considered, although social learning seems to focus on the concept of the 'group' at first glance. As Bandura (1977; 1986) emphasises, psychological factors such as motivation and intention are significant for learning, since learning is an individual behavioural factor, whether it is affected by personal or environmental process (Butler, 2001). Considering both the generality and the specificity of social learning and both group and individual behaviour might be more meaningful and may help us to understand the value of it.

Lastly, social learning can explain and support people's further pursuit of values beyond knowledge or relationships. Not only can we anticipate expected knowledge, but we can also observe 'unexpected learning' from the learning conduct in the social field. social learning provides opportunities to understand social concepts which could contribute to promote a more democratic society (Djupe & Lewis, 2015; VanWynsberghe & Andruske, 2007). People note the

immediate benefits of community service, and consider a good approach for social relationships (Van Wynsberghe & Andruske, 2007). The social skill is not taught or learnt by reading a book or simply taking a lecture, it is a real valuable skill for living with others in society.

Learning is expanded to more mutual concepts of conduct such as sharing, cooperating, interaction and creating beyond the contrary concept of teaching. 'One plus one' does not simply equal two anymore. Learning should cause 'two plus alpha'. People can go further in learning how to make strategies or decisions (Bryson, 1995). Therefore, we have to consider '*what* knowledge we acquire' and '*how* we acquire and *use* it' instead of '*acquiring* knowledge' simply. It might be possible to assume that the term 'social learning' will be naturally named as 'learning' later, just as new concepts of social learning have replaced the old one based on SLT.

Individual and social aspects, individual efforts and social interaction and impacts and meanings of milieu might be essential points of social learning. Learning might be understood as realising who I am; what I pursue, and practicing the realisations among individual's efforts and mutual interactions in society. The mutual interaction even includes interaction with objects as well (e.g., information in the online space is saved there by someone). In other words, interactions occur not always as face-to-face between I and other(s), but it also happens between

humans or non-humans, directly or indirectly. It means that I can interact with human beings such as myself, friends, families, teachers and other people who are at a physically long distance, and I can interact with non-human beings such as books, televisions, computers and smartphones. The interaction with media might mean an indirect interaction with person(s) who are installing the media as well. However, as Go matches between AlphaGo and Lee Sedol[2] are not regarded as (indirect) interactions between human beings (Lee Sedol and AlphaGo programmer or engineer), it might be necessary to leave open the possibility for the meaning of interaction in the advent of the coming Post-Human Age [3].

Learning is not a narrow concept as a contrary concept of teaching any more. Bandura (1977; 1986) explains learning as 'the means and causes' of behaviours with concepts of interacting, conducting, experiencing and observing and so on. I therefore considered learning with combinations of conduct which Bandura (1977; 1986) applies to many other concepts in the sociocultural context beyond the existing predominant notions in education fields (Heron, 1996). Namely, the research discussed certain factors of motivation or context that are significant when learning starts or is conducted with/through reflective experience

---

[2] According to Wilipedia, 'AlphaGo versus Lee Sedol, or Google DeepMind Challenge Match, was a five-game Go match between 18-time world champion Lee Sedol and AlphaGo, a computer Go program developed by Google DeepMind, played in Seoul, South Korea between 9 and 15 March' (Wikipedia, n.d.a)

[3] In this research, the scope is not expanded to the Post-Human Age

and interaction. It especially emphasises that the context is related to culture, society and informal situations which may unintentionally make learning happen, rather than to formal situations such as schools. Moreover, Lipscombe (2007) indicates that it provides a space for creativity and new approaches to teaching and learning (cited in Hopkinson et al., 2008, p. 439). In other words, learning should be for life and through flexible concepts.

Social changes and new paradigm of social learning

How does the contemporary social paradigm consider learning, which is constructed through both individual and collective conduct? I guess the concept known as social learning might have many things in common with Bandura's argument, and this section would help to relate the concept of social learning to the digital age.

The concept of '소셜 (social)' is a common term that is pronounced the same as the English word in South Korea. It is used as a popular concept to indicate mediated communication services collectively in the circumstance – SNSs are changing apace (Lee, 2012a). According to Lee (2012a; 2012b), '소셜

(social)' has two meanings: a) literally, 'social'[4]; b) 'sociable' or 'intimate'. He insists that the latter meaning is used in the context of SNS (Lee, 2012a, p. 324, *emphasis added*), since the former cannot convey the functional attribute of the services if the term, 'social' of SNS is *misunderstood* as a *macroscopic* meaning, the former (Lee, 2012a; 2012b, *emphasis added*). However, separating meanings of social as the two meanings seem somewhat extreme to be applied in the research: The latter is somewhat microscopic while the former is too macroscopic to mean the meaning of 'social' in the research. As interactions at both levels: Individual and collective are focused on in the research, the meaning of social used in the research might be more close to 'reciprocal', to embrace general functions of OCs by communal and mutual activities including intimacy. As some experts argue that '소셜 (social)', in other words, highlighting sharing, participating, cooperating and so on based on SNS, is the core of '(new) social learning[5]' (Bingham & Conner, 2010; Gubbins & MacCurtain, 2008; Rossi, 2011; Tu, 2000; Yuan & Kim, 2014), from the perspective of the research, social might mean reciprocal, and this seems to be appropriate. This semantic consideration might be able to help capture the meaning of 'social' in the traditional social

---

[4] adjective term of society

[5] When the research needs to distinguish the concept of the current paradigm from previous academic theories clearly, it adds 'new' in front of social learning

learning concept in the current sociocultural context.

Learning in context

Learning by imitation is a key factor in social learning, especially for young people (Vygotsky, 1978/1997). Young learners can have an abundance of opportunities to observe, imitate, and subsequently improve their higher psychological development through interactions with adults or peers in the collective social environment (Vygotsky, 1978/1997). The notion of imitation is also a key concept of Bandura's SLT as a different term, *modeling* (Phillips & Solitis, 2004).

Vygotsky's (1978/1997) cultural-historical perspective suggests that learning and development cannot be separated from contexts (Schunk, 2004). A learner's thought changes depending on how one interacts with his or her environment; other people, objects and custom. Meanings of concepts could change, as they are linked to the external environment (Schunk, 2004).

The social environment affects a person's cognition through 'tools' such as cultural objects, language, and the social customs and system. And social interactions promote harmonised functions of the tools which affect a person's development (Schunk, 2004).

This mediation is a core concept of development and learning mechanism

(Karpov & Haywood, 1998; Schunk, 2004). All learning is mediated by the tools.

Learners internalise the tools, and use them as meditators for further learning.

Table 1 Learning from Experience and Learning in/with Experience

	Learning from experience	Learning in/with experience
Perspective	Psychological	Sociological
Ground	Humanistic psychology	Critical social theory
Interests	The individual learner and learning process	The context of the learner and learning
Common assumptions	The learner and experience are in separate domains and reflection mediates both	
Meditation and control of reflection	An autonomous learner can reflect on experience. The learner can make meaning, produce knowledge, solve problems, and fulfil self-realisation.	A socially constructed learner who internalises socioculturally structured knowledge and meaning.
	Experience situated in the context can exist independently from the learner. Without reflection, experience has nothing to do with learning; learning does not happen at all.	
Relation to the concept of social learning	Learning from experience	Learning in/with experience
	Social Learning Theory	*Sociocultural theory*
	Social learning	*New social learning*

*Source: Kang (2015, p. 3)

Kang (2015) states that the sociocultural context is '…where an individual

interacts with his or her environment, including family, the neighbouring community, institutions, schools, workplace, and national and global societies…have, therefore, multiple facets and layers' (p. 12). It seems that experiential learning takes place through 'interaction' in the sociocultural context. It is 'social learning' which puts emphasis on the concept of interaction. It might be reasonable to consider the correlation between social learning and experiential learning as two concepts that are compared as described in the bottom part of Table 1. Social learning is considered more deeply in the next section.

Wenger (1998/2001) seems to consider that it is important to view group learning within the context of people's shared experience. He describes the concept of the practice which could be continued or discontinued as 'a shared history of learning' (Wenger, 1998/2001, p. 93). He thinks that the result is an emergent structure that perdures and is resilient (Wenger, 1998/2001). Then, he explains learning in practice, which consists of three processes that take place within the community (Wenger, 1998/2001, p. 95, *italics* from the original):

Evolving forms of mutual engagement - Discovering how to engage, what helps and what hinder; developing mutual relationships; defining identities, establishing who is who, who is good at what, who knows what, who is easy or hard to get along with.

Understanding and tuning their enterprise - Aligning their engagement with it, and learning to become and hold one another accountable to it; struggling to define the enterprise and reconciling conflicting interpretations of what the enterprise is about.

39

Developing their repertoire, styles, and discourse - Renegotiating the meaning of various elements; producing or adopting tools, artifacts, representation; recording and recalling events; inventing new terms and redefining or abandoning old ones; telling and retelling stories; creating and breaking routines

I also would like to understand learning from an 'autonomous' and 'flexible' perspective in order to consider learning itself, as Lave and Wenger (1991/1995) did in their study. They try to review the meaning of learning. Their premise embraces the fact that communities such as those in schools constitute quite a special context as a social institutions and venues where learning takes place beyond issues of school education and learning related to our general culture. Moreover, I would like to discuss learning and knowledge which is constructed by mutual interactions in the special context, not given or standardised knowledge. Furthermore, I interpret Lave and Wenger's (1991/1995) idea, 'people who learn something are participants of a related community or context of minimum learning', as 'what people who participate in a related community or context of minimum learning can or do learn' rather than 'people with academic purposes participate in a related community or context of minimum learning in order to learn something'. The relationship between community and learning will be discussed more in the section that deals with community and learning.

The reason why I preferred not using adjective terms in front of 'learning' is that I could thereby avoid the terms' disruption when I contemplate genuine

meanings of learning. I thus tried a sort of inductive bottom-up approach as I started to thinking of learning from concrete cases, fields or life, not from defined or conceptualised learning in theories of the academic field. Therefore, reviewing literature was somewhat burdensome for me, since I would not see realities of life through sample OCs as I am blinded by theories. However, it was helpful indeed to find out concepts such as social learning and LLL, which accord with my view and explore them.

Informal Learning in Lifelong Learning

As I mentioned previously, I personally would like to consider the essential meaning of learning, not using terms like X education or X learning. Since learning in life (that takes place naturally) is discussed and emphasised rather than certain systems or education in institutes such as school in the field of LLL, it seems that LLL and informal learning (which it embraces) (Han, 2010; Kang, 2015; Kim et al., 2010) are quite close to the meaning of learning assumed in the research. Therefore, they are considered briefly in this part.

Dave (1976) defines LLL as 'a process to accomplish individual, social and vocational development in order to improve quality of both individual and

collective life through individual's entire life…LLL relate individual growth and social development together' (p. 34 cited in Kim et al., 2010, p. 3). Kim et al. (2010) argue that Dave's definition highlights concepts of life, self-realisation and social development.

> *Lifelong learning is humanising education which means that individual person promotes harmonic development of humanity, masters knowledge and skills to deal with changing modern life wisely and creatively, and enhances welfare of community with other people by seizing continuous learning opportunities actively through his or her whole life* (Jang, 1985, p. 104, cited in Kim et al., 2010, p. 3, self-translated)

Moreover, Kim et al. (2010) note that Jang (1985) defines LLL with substantive contents' definition, and they point out that Jang's ultimate educational ideology is based on human education, as he comprehends that educatees are independent and active.

Meanwhile, the European Commission defines LLL as 'all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective' (European Commission, 2002, p. 7).

Like this, it seems that LLL coincides with what social learning emphasises because its perspective highlights both individual and society, both life areas and the academic field, as well as independent and active learners. Then, why do I try

to focus on informal learning in this research? It would be considered as comparing differences among formal, non-formal and informal learning at first.

To explain their differences, Han (2010) compartmentalises learning activities and non-learning activities based on the European Task on Measuring LLL's suggestions. The concept of 'learning activity' is described as 'an individual activity which is organised for his or her improvement of knowledge, skills and ability' (cited in Han, 2010, p. 67, self-translated). The standard of learning activity is basically established according to the following principles: 1) activities are purposeful, and learners should have objectives decided in advance. Incidental learning is excluded from the concept of LLL; 2) Activities should be organised in any modes including self-organisation in order to accomplish the purpose. Therefore, they tend to include a shift of information (messages, thoughts, knowledge, and strategies). Transient realising or informative field learning are ruled out as categories of learning activities (Han, 2010, p. 68, self-translated). However, I do not agree that the concept of LLL should not include incidental learning as well as sudden enlightenment or informative field learning, which are not regarded as learning activities. It is because the separation seems to connote a nuance which regards the learning of habituated school education and its immediate educational attainments as important. Being unintended notwithstanding, As accrued experiences or interactions with society, environment

and others as well as school education would prove their real worth in the unintended area as capability (similarly to the reason why integrated and multidisciplinary education are emphasised), the possibility or potential which is realised belatedly might be a quite significant factor of learning.

Han (2010) divides learning activities into two categories: Learning as innocent meaning (informal learning) and learning guided by education (formal and non-formal learning) based on whether learning activities are led by institutionalised instructional courses or not. Thus, one of the main criteria that determines whether learning activities are so-called 'learning by instructional courses or not. Self-directed learning, not by instructional courses, is informal (Han, 2010).

Meanwhile, the terms informal and non-formal might be confusing, unlike formal learning which depends on school education. As non-formal education is 'a learning activity which is intentional and organised activity with the purpose of education' (Han, 2010, p. 70, self-translated), non-formal situation is defined as 'organised, systematic, educational activities outside of formal environment' (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, cited in Kang, 2015, p. 13). And informal learning is self-learning which is neither being planned nor guided by an instructor. As learning which is neither systematised nor structured, but nonetheless has intentionality, it is conducted by a learner's own autonomy, or by family or is

society-led (Han, 2010, pp. 70-71, self-translated). Thus, it is also typically defined, as 'learning from the media, as individualistic learning situations' (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, cited in Kang, 2015, p. 13).

It seems that concepts of formal, informal and non-formal learning are more supported by descriptive classifications of Mocker and Spear (1982) and Merriam and Caffarella (1999), which Kang (2015) cites. Mocker & Spear (1982) add self-directed situations to the typology of formal, non-formal, and informal situations (Kang, 2015, p. 14). They seem to assume that LLL should be based on the locus of control for making decisions about the goals and means of learning (Kang, 2015). They operationally develop a 2x2 matrix of learner and institution to identify four situations of learning as: 1) formal situations − where learners have little control over the objectives or means of learning; 2) non-formal situations − where learners control the objectives but not the means of learning; 3) informal situations − where learners control the means but not the objectives of learning; 4) self-directed situations − where learners control both the objectives and means of learning (Kang, 2015, p. 14). If that is the case, it might be reasonable to state that people tend to be concerned with the unveiled collective topic in informal situations, while individuals might be more active and free, or they might be able to build their additional objective autonomously, in even purposeful situations in 'self-directed' situations. However, the

distinctions are not easy to determine when decisions about the goals and means of learning are made (Kang, 2015). Meanwhile, the typology, elaborated by Merriam & Caffarella (1999), includes formal institutional settings, non-formal settings, and 'informal or self-directed contexts' instead, not clearly separate self-directed form informal situations (Kang, 2015, p. 14). They might view informal or self-directed contexts as 'situations where learning takes place in the learner's natural setting and is initiated and carried out by the learner' (Kang, 2015, p. 14). In terms of this view, Kang (2015) describes this form of learning with two further citations: 'Very common in adult life…[but] is not recognised by many adults, or even some educators of adults, as *real learning* (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 33), and ' informal adult education is a movement so vast and so formless that large numbers of people engaged in it do not realise that is what they are doing' (Knowles, 1950, p. vii, cited in Kang, 2015, p. 14).

According to these classifications, particularly if a modifier is added in front of the term, learning in OCs, which the research explores, would be referred to as 'informal', in order to more clearly present the features of learning which are emphasised in the research. It is because it might be necessary to reveal the fact that the OC situation has a collective topic and objective(s) more patently even though I attach importance to an individual's autonomy. In sum, the research regards roles of social learning as important in the informal collective learning

environment.

Learning and Online Communities

It might be important to understand what kinds of conduct could be regarded as learning, since the understanding would be a guideline to explore learning implications from practical OC activities with such questions – Which OC activities should be emphasised more? How do people learn in OCs? What activities could be regarded as learning?

Mayer (2008) explains learning in the perspective of not only constructivism, but also behaviourism and cognitivism. The emphasised meaning of learning in this research is closest to constructivism. However, it does not mean that the research denies other learning approaches with a dichotomous view. It rather admits that people still fulfil learning as forms of other approaches, which cannot be ignored. Table 2 shows that the meaning of learning is considered differently with regard to conduct in diverse approaches.

Table 2 Meanings of Learning

Strengthening response	**Adding new behaviours to your repertoire**
	- Learning is a mechanical process in which successful responses to a given situation are automatically strengthened and unsuccessful responses to the situation are wakened.
	- The learner becomes a passive recipient of feedback who is completely shaped by rewards and punishments in the environment.
Acquiring knowledge	**Adding new facts and skills to your knowledge base**
	- Learning takes place when information is transformed a more knowledgeable person to a less knowledgeable person.
	- The learner becomes a processor of information
Constructing knowledge	**Understanding how to fit pieces of information together**
	- Learners actively create their own learning by trying to make sense out of their experience
	- Learning takes place when people select relevant information, organise it into a coherent structure, and interpret it through what they already know
	- The learner is a sense maker
	- Instead of emphasising the learning products-such as how much is learned-this view emphasises the learning processes, such as strategies for how to learn and understand
Selecting	- Paying attention to relevant elements in the presented material
	- You are selection pieces of information for further processing in working memory
	- Selective encoding…[is defined] as "sifting out relevant from irrelevant information (Sternberg, 1985, p. 107, cited in Mayer, 2008, p. 18)
Organising	- Constructing internal connections among the incoming pieces of information
	- 'Combining selectively encoded information in such a way as to form an integrated...internally connected whole' (Sternberg, 1985, p. 107, cited in Mayer, 2008, p. 18)
Integrating	- Constructing external connections among representations and prior knowledge
	- Building connection between two pieces of newly organised knowledge
*Source: Mayer, 2008, pp. 13-15, 18-19	

This section starts by considering concepts and the categorisation of communities for the further exploration of the implications of learning in communities – this is because a full understanding of the broader context would be helpful to comprehend the sociocultural phenomena. It then narrows down the scope of communities to the new contextual field, OC which is the main field of the research – it explores various terms and concepts for OCs and OC activities' relevance to learning, since the connectivity between learning and OCs would exist due to the characteristics of 'collective' and the emphasis of sociality, communal character and interactivity. Lastly, it discusses features and meanings of learning in OCs more deeply based on arguments of SLT with other factors in the sociocultural context.

Community and learning

Concepts and categorisation of community

Just as learning was discussed in terms of social meanings and interaction, communities and OCs can be described based on social criteria such as social-ties. Suh (2002) summarises the concepts of community as follows:

- *A certain area is shared for the quite considerable period. However, location/are does not affect individual's identity in contemporary society due*

to the informatisation and less geographical limitation (Castells, 1997, cited in Suh, 2002, p. 21, self-translated)

- *Community members have a certain common tie*
- *Social interactions exist*
- *It is a group (Hamman, 1997, cited in Suh, 2002, p. 21, self-translated)*

Table 3 Categories of Community and Association

		strong tie ← social solidarity → weak tie				
		Community				
		Community			Association	
		Destined community	Obligatory community	Associative community	Community-directed association	Association
Standard of social solidarity	In-group ↑ ↓ Out-group	Family Ethnic group	Local (neighbour) community, Age community, School ties community, Religion community	Social volunteering community, Hobby community Interest(discussion) community	(Non-Profit Organisation) Labour union Doctors union	(Political) party Enterprise

*Source: Suh, 2002, pp. 22-23

Communities and associations are categorised according to the features of

social-ties, as shown in Table 3. Although the concept of community is contrasted with the (complete) association if it is categorised by members' interactivity and strengths of social-ties, it includes widespread types from destined community to association. Since a destined community is given to people, they have a low degree of choice as to whether they join the community or not, whereas people decide to join the associative/spontaneous community with autonomy. Community-directed association is not within the frame of communal ties, but still has features of community. In contemporary society, especially, associative community and community-directed association are more significant concepts than types of social solidarity beyond individuals, since self-determination and unique personality are emphasised in this era (Suh, 2002).

Learning in communities

Wenger (1998/2001) considers learning in communities as a person can participate in a new activity or can work toward learning a new task or function; one understands and masters it; one puts value on the fulfilment; the implications are admitted as a capability. Activities, tasks, works, functions and understanding cannot exist separately, since their mutual relationships are parts of the whole structure, and the parts are meaningful within the whole. In other words, learning means development of persons according to the possibility which is opened up by the relational structure (Wenger, 1998/2001).

Therefore, Wenger (1998/2001) discusses meanings of learning with regard to each individual, and from the communal and organisational perspective. Individual learning is an issue related to participation in a community of practice, and to maintaining and developing the practice. The communal aspect is about upgrading the shared practice and passing it down to the next generation. In an organisational perspective, learning is related to how the community could develop and be maintained as an organisation which reproduces effective and valuable work.

Wenger seems to deal with both 'learning in communities' and 'communities for learning'. While the latter focuses on the roles of communities for learning, the former focus on the roles and implications of learning in communities. Therefore, this research considers concepts of learning and communities which he discusses for a more full understanding of their relationships, although this research focuses more on the former.

In terms of the three aspects of learning through practice in the community – *mutuality of engagement*, *accountability to an enterprise* and *negotiability of a repertoire* (Wenger, 1998/2001, pp. 152-153) – that Wenger values, this research does not fully refer to his idea. Wenger's premise is that communities are based on strong relationships. These social solidarities are stronger among destined or obligatory communities in terms of the categories of community referred to Suh

(2002). On the other hand, sharing repertories or engaging in joint enterprises seems to be an important concept as the purpose of the existence of association as well. If a person participates in a community and in community activities for his or her own purpose or for a purpose outside that of the community only, it is not explained by Wenger (1998/2001) or Suh (2002), even though both emphasise the communal and social aspects. Therefore, 'learning in communities' and 'communities for learning' are clearly different issues.

It would be meaningful to consider learning in communities in the view based on a combination of Lave and Wenger's (1991/1995) perspective on learning in communities and both the individual aspects and the conception of sociocultural contexts from Bandura's SLT and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Even in the personal dimension, t might not be possible to separate learning from the concept of mutual interaction or relationship, since people do interact with others to seek alternatives for either personal or collective purposes or for both. In the communal dimension, not only should individual and collective learning promote the development of the entire community, but also the community should be helpful to each of the individuals and their learning. Furthermore, in the broader dimension of community, like the social/cultural context, learning might be related to promoting valuable work for development of the society/culture for both individuals and society/culture.

People tend to learn together when a given object has the same meaning for them. In this regard, the notion of 'homophily' may be relevant. The Greek term's original meaning is 'love of the same thing' (Lee, 2016). Lee (2016) says homophily is the 'functional principle in networks [and] would fundamentally affect the reality of OCs in South Korea' (p. 237, self-translated). It generally means 'the tendency of individuals to associate and bond with similar others' (Wikipedia, n.d.f). Prell (2012) defines it as the social tendency for an agent to prefer to maintain sociable relationships with other agents who are analogous to himself/herself (p. 129, cited in Lee, 2016, p. 237). There have been two different sides to the debate about features of groups or organisations, individual tendencies and homophily: While Coleman et al.(1981) and Feld (1981 & 1982) argue that organisations' situation and composition result in homophily, as is the case of churches, sport clubs and so on, Skvoretz (1985, 1990) makes the opposite contention that an individual agent finds similar agents in terms of age, education and so on, and makes a relationship with them regardless of the situation or composition (cited in Lee, 2016, p. 237, self-translated). Lee (2016) cites Kadushin's explanation of homophily in the perspective of interaction or communication which is a classic concept in the network research field.

If an agent is surrounded by other people who have thresholds of same act, homophily plays an important role, for instance, one cannot learn new things from

similar persons. In order to deviate from an exclusive homogeneous group, one needs different kinds of people. In this sense, the role of structural hole or bridges which would link them is important (Kadushin, 2012, p. 158, cited in Lee, 2016, p. 237, self-translated)

What this explanation refers to is the 'power of weak ties' in the words of Granovetter (1973, cited in Lee, 2016, p.237, self-translated). The tendency to form 'weak ties' with weaker homophily is more advantageous for the dissemination of new information than 'strong ties' with stronger homophily, a phenomenon that has been examined in several research (Aral et al., 2009; La Fond & Neville 2010; Baksy et al., 2012; Nick et al., 2013, cited in Lee, 2016, p. 238, self-translated). Based on this consideration and Dunbar's (1992) research, Lee (2016) contends that it would be quite possible that affective support and communal bonds are stronger in 'strong tie' networks with stronger homophily. Thus, in sum, networks with relatively stronger homophily are for emotional support, whereas networks with relatively weaker homophily are for the spread of information (Lee, 2016).

Online communities and learning

Then, where do communities exist? They have surrounded our life in the form of destined communities, associations or other types, as shown in Table 3 (page 49). However, the space of our life has expanded to include cyber space,

and the categories of Table 3 are not sufficient for a discussion of communities in the contemporary era. For instance, a certain obligatory community belongs to the category of associative communities. While I am given obligatory factors, such as my hometown and age, and naturally belong to a local community or age group in an offline environment, I can decide whether or not to join an online local community in which there are people of various ages autonomously. Therefore, it might be necessary to discuss communities in expanded context as our milieu expands.

Comparison of community and online community

As a new communication space, the online space is for communications of thought, mind and idea with the least involvement of the physical body. Thus *virtual presence*, *virtual communication* and *virtual relation* have different meanings, unlike the case of offline space (Suh, 2002, p. 27, self-translated).

Communities in the online environment have quite particular forms because the fact of existing and interacting in the online space, is itself special. It is different from the original reason from the perspective of relationships (Suh, 2002). Although similar patterns of solidarity occur in the online environment, like offline communities, Suh (2002) states that a dispute about online solidarity could occur. Can we refer to the solidarity in the online space as a community? It might be controversial. However, as shown in Table 4, it could be regarded as a

community due to similarities and differences between online and offline communities in the real and experimental perspective beyond the philosophical and theoretical perspective. OCs might be expressive alternatives among changes of offline communities, and they reflect the cyber tendencies of offline communities (Suh, 2002).

Table 4 Differences and Similarities between Offline and Online Communities

			Offline/real communities	Online/virtual communities
Differences	Origin		Fateful and ascriptive based on natural reasons	Spontaneous, alternative, spatialtemporal entrapment free
	Relationship		Direct, comprehensive	Indirect, partial, even guarantee of anonymity
	Regulation or enforcement		Very strong	Relatively weak
Similarities		· Sharing experiences and emotions as well as values/regulations/thought with members · Based on mutual trust and in solidarity with sympathy · Open to non-members, but based on the membership system · Individual's experiences and memories are saved as data in the community. Simultaneously traditionality of the community exists		

*Source: Suh, 2002, pp. 29-30

Various terms and concepts for online community

Not only is the notion of cyber space named as several terms, such as virtual community (Baker & Ward, 2002; Hsu et al., 2007; Hsu et al., 2015; Rheingold, 1993), web community (Figallo, 1998; Flake et al., 2002; Sclano & Velardi, 2007), community in cyberspace (Irving & English, 2011), electronic community (Wasko & Faraj, 2000), cyber community (Fernback, 1999), and online community (OC) (Baek & Kim, 2015; Dunning, 2009; Gray, 2012), but also, the concepts and contents to which these terms refer are diverse. For instance, Levy (1997/2000) considers virtuality to be the main feature. He describes it philosophically: Not as real, but as potentially existent. Fernback (1999) uses 'cyber community' instead of 'virtual community' in order to avoid the implication of the unreal, which is in opposition to the real under the dichotomy (Lee, 2000). The concept of an OC is following: 'The *people* who come together for a particular *purpose*, and who are guided by *policies* (including norms and rules) and supported by *software*.' (Preece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2005, *italics* from the original). In this research, the term, 'online community (OC)' is used, since it might be useful to distinguish online and offline environments when some social or cultural contexts are discussed.

Online communities, interactivity and motivation

I focus on two typologies of OCs, which regard interactivity and

motivation respectively, since the two concepts as OCs' features are also important factors of social learning. It would be helpful to understand how these features affect learning in OCs.
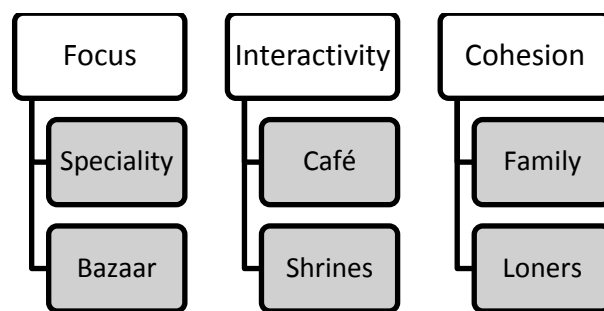
Figure 3 A Classification of Online Communities

*Source: Figallo, 1998, cited in Kwon & Bang, 2006, p. 427

Figallo (1998) suggests 'focus' and 'cohesion' with 'interactivity' as three features of online community, and divides OCs in two categories according to each feature (Suh, K., 2003, cited in Kweon & Bang, 2006, p. 427) (Figure 3). According to the extent of the concreteness of an OCs' purpose and visitors' interests, 'focus', OCs are divided as 'Speciality' with high concentrativeness and 'Bazaar' with low concentrativeness. According to 'interactivity', which means

the extent of mutual exchange of opinions and conversation, OCs are classified as 'Café' [6] and 'Shrine'. And OCs are distinguished as 'Family' and 'Loners' according to the degree of mutual cohesion.

Meanwhile, Suh, K. (2003) makes a typology of OCs as 'Entertainment', 'Relations-pursued' and 'Information & opinion-shared' OCs according to members' motivation for participation (cited in Kweon & Bang, 2006, p. 427, self-translated).

Diversified activities through online community

In general, an 'OC' is defined as 'a group of people who use a particular Internet service or belong to a particular group on the Internet' (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2015). However, it has rapidly permeated through diverse people of various social strata. Some experts focus on OCs within corporations or organisations for business (Bingham & Conner, 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Rossi, 2011), and some other experts discuss OCs for sharing professional knowledge (Arbaugh, 2008; Brown & Adler, 2008; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Laing et al., 2011; Swan et al, 2009). Moreover, OCs are considered as a type of 'network' with the emphasis of relationships in cyber space (Kim et al., 2012; Park et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2011; Risser & Bottoms, 2014). In other words, OCs have exerted a big influence across the whole society as well as parts of politics,

---

[6] This term 'café' differs from a type of internet forum, Café in South Korea

economy and culture as a social network beyond the spatial notion within which individuals can freely share information and knowledge (Kim & Koh, 2011; Kim et al., 2012). Thus, activities that take place under the name of OCs are classified in diverse categories like Table 5 summarises.

People share information and knowledge and learn from one another. People can upload and download resources, and various information and knowledge spontaneously in OCs with diverse purposes from hobbies to professionalisms (Yao et al., 2014). In the case of an OC, such as a fan page devoted to a certain brand, members share information about promotion of the brand or product reviews (Hsu et al., 2015). In another case, people organise or join OCs to study regularly or irregularly together (Heck, 2015; Yao et al., 2014). If raw-data is open and public, everyone who fancies or needs it can utilise it as well as build-up different types of information. Moreover, not only collaborative research among experts, but also cooperation or exchanges between researchers and citizens has increased in various OCs.

Similarly, members can ask questions or access resources about things that they do not understand on the bulletin board of OCs. For instance, if a Korean does not know how to form some sentences in English, one can ask 'How can I say 'blah blah' in English?' in a foreign language learning community. Then other members might answer the question as a comment or provide resources as

references. Reflecting a long pedigree, people may glean direct information from OC activities (Djupe & Lewis, 2015).

OCs, free social networks, enable users to interact with others. They can send and read messages as well as provide other options, such as the ability to share photos and videos (Dunning, 2009). These functions are useful for keeping in touch with friends or other people, especially without the distance barrier.

Table 5 Summary of Diverse Online Community Activities

Sharing information and knowledge
Networking and communicating
Learning
Asking and Answering
Problem solving
Organising and promoting offline activities
Enjoying entertainment and leisure

 *Source: the author

Moreover, people can organise and enjoy offline events through OCs. They can notify others about an offline event and gather participants promptly through OCs. For instance, in the case of an OC for learning, a type of study group,

members save and share learning resources in the OC, and organise an offline seminar or forum. The blending of OCs of practice and face-to-face meetings can support programmes (Brooks, 2010).

Furthermore, OCs could play a significant role in members' leisure, since people tend to pursue fun and share their interests through OC activities. In the case of travel OCs, some members introduce their favourite travel places, and information about local food, traffic and accommodation and so on. Members ask questions about places that they want to visit on the community in advance. Members can look out for companions from the OC as well. These functions are linked to other roles of OCs, such as sharing information.

OC members can work to resolve an issue or overcome a difficulty together as well. They utilise OCs to solve some problems. For instance, 'Mash-up' is an OC in which members organise individual data and build up meaningful resources. It seems to be useful and helpful, especially in allowing members to cope with challenging situations such as natural disasters and accidents to figure out what people most need and how situations are changing on a case by case basis.

Besides, people can promote social movements through OCs as a type of public field. Regarding features of OC such as openness, speed, mobility and interaction, people can gather for offline movements or spread the truth or

information about social issues through cyber space. For instance, a social movement focusing on gender issues could be promoted (Irving & English, 2011) through SNSs including OCs. Announcements concerning the Iranian dictatorial government and resistance against it throughout the world through the system are also the good usages.

It seems that these diverse activities through OCs could be described as purposes or reasons why people join OCs. Activities are linked to other functions of OCs as well. They bring several benefits to people. Firstly, in relation to dealing with information or knowledge factors, participants in OCs seem to engage their brains collectively (Dunning, 2009), since the cooperation can create new strategies or better solutions. Secondly, through developing social relationships, people can form new bonds which enhance social capital factors (Sessions, 2010). Thirdly, since knowledge as a public good, knowledge exchange is motivated by people's sense of moral obligation and community interest, rather than narrow self-interest (Wasko & Faraj, 2000). Lastly, not only does people's trust in OCs increase self-disclosure, but they also have a tendency toward collectivism which increases self-disclosure as well (Posey et al., 2010). Thus, activities which people can enjoy in OCs could be considered to cause people to aspire to learning something new, interesting and meaningful which can ultimately enrich the life of more people through cooperating and sharing.

64

Activity stage in online community and its causes

Although an OC is a type of group, it is an aggregate of individuals (Fernback, 1999). Thus, it would be necessary to consider what steps the individuals pass to join an OC. In this section, activity steps of OCs are discussed as three steps: Why an OC is designed, why members join; why they continue to be involved in an OC; and why members stay or leave. Since some parts of steps could overlap based on the classification standard, the steps will be described in Table 6. I sort the 'conducting' of *Step 2* and 'keeping' of *Step 3* in order to show that the latter one focuses on reasons why members keep joining an OC continuously while the former one concentrates on how members conduct activities. Especially, the purpose of the separation is to regard the possible special activities which might make members keep being involved in OC activities.

Both internal and external reasons why people participate in OCs are usually separated, but they are also significantly linked. For instance, a notion of reciprocity in OCs is related to both internal and external factors. Moreover, the organisational factor, and the atmosphere of an OC can affect individuals' intentions to share knowledge or not (Bock et al., 2005; Rye & Choi, 2008).

Table 6 Activity Stage in Online Communities and Causes

STAGE	STATUS	WHY	
		Internal Factors; individual	**External Factors; social, organisational, and technical** (Zhao & Bishop, 2011)
Stage 1	Designing or Joining	*Interests *Necessity *Knowledge contribution (Chou, 2010) *Goal (Djupe & Lewis, 2015) *Curiosity	*Reputation *Trends *Recommendation *Advertisement *The micro-social forces of family, friendship, and group (Djupe & Lewis, 2015
Stage 2	Conducting	*Satisfactions from positive self-worth disconfirmation, distributive justice, interactional activities (Chiu et al., 2011) *Perceived identity verification (Chou et al., 2010) *New/different information/technics sharing satisfaction and contribution	*The sense of community membership *Appropriate managing strategy *Information system's quality (Yoo et al., 2002) *Sharing culture; fairness, identification and openness (Yu et al., 2010)
Stage 3	Keeping /Staying	(Butler et al., 2002; Chou, 2010; Djupe & Lewis, 2015; Laing et al., 2011; Ma & Agarwal, 2007; Yao et al., 2014) *Emotional attachment and contributing to relationship maintenance (Lee et al., 2011)	*Member interactions, community participation, and community promotion (Djupe & Lewis, 2015; Wang & Wei, 2011) *Trusting atmosphere (Benlian & Hess, 2011) *- Different Information and Technology (IT) features (Benlian & Hess, 2011) *The belief about personal information (Ridings et al., 2002)
	Being dormant or Leaving	*Technical and personal barriers (Seddon et al., 2011) *Different cyberspaces, information and media literacies required *A loss of interests *Members' innovativeness in IT (Chou, 2010)	*A lack of trust between members, free rider behaviour (Matzat, 2010) *A lack of stable membership (Matzat, 2010) *A lack of interaction, feeling of isolation (Yuan & Kim, 2014) *Members' innovativeness (Chou, 2010) *The implications of such extensive connectivity between people and their web-technologies (Thompson, 2011)

OCs play a role in a special field for sharing certain professional knowledge within an organisation (Arbaugh, 2008; Brown & Adler, 2008; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Laing et al., 2011; Swan et al, 2009). However, according to the diverse activities and roles of OCs mentioned previously, the roles of OCs can be more fully explained with individuals' purposes to join OCs. Moreover, members' degree of development of OCs could be described according to the degree of activities of individual members (Brown & Adler, 2008; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Individuals are significant 'factors' and 'actors' within OCs, also have special features as a 'public place for individuals'.

Online community activities' relevance to learning

No one can deny that we are living in the information society. Everything is described as information, and the information is the basic and important resource for all activities (Ilon, 2015).

> *...new learning environment, what show how learning environments inside and outside schools are being rethought in light of the advances in networks, knowledge, technology and the changing learning ecosystem (Ilon, 2015, p.7).*

As Ilon (2015) mentions, information or knowledge is not simply for economic benefits, and is not distinguished from academia and education. This is not meant as a judgement as to whether information or knowledge is useful for

economic benefit. Instead, we need to reinterpret and resignify them as a social trend. For this reason, it should be significant to connect them to academic and educational meanings as well.

Why are the activities linked to learning? It might be necessary to consider some concepts such as information and knowledge, sharing, learning and studying at first. As the extension of sources of information and knowledge has made popular the knowledge which was almost all previously restricted to specialists, information and knowledge is regarded as something 'practical', 'curious' and 'interesting' beyond 'academic' or 'theoretical'. In addition, people can get information and knowledge though their 'sharing' and 'cooperating' instead of by 'learning' or 'teaching'. Features of the actions which pursue new concepts of information and knowledge might fit the significance of OCs. Namely, learning as widespread types of activities is conducted in OCs ultimately − from individual acquisition and construction of knowledge to collective interaction (Brown & Adler, 2008).

Sharing information or knowledge means giving opportunities to people so that they can better understanding the conditions of life. It helps and encourages people to choose and enjoy better things for their lives. The biggest strengths of knowledge, the fact that it is free and cannot be depleted, means that it can be given to anyone who needs it via OCs (Brown & Adler, 2008; Garrison &

Arbaugh, 2007; Laing et al, 2011). Moreover, the skills of continuous learning and knowledge are different. Although more people share and acquire 'knowledge', it does not mean that they can update information continuously. Not only the generalisation of information related to the skill of finding out and developing information, but also the universalisation of opportunity to access the skill might be more significant in contemporary society. Learning is conducted in OCs, and the learning plays a key role in attracting people and maintaining the community.

We cannot judge which one is more important or efficient between an OC focusing on manuscripts about polishing a car without scratching it in a car-wash and an OC focusing on the teaching and learning methods of teachers. The value of their knowledge or information may be different depending on each individual's intent and purpose for sharing and learning. In other words, Information becomes one of the most important factors of human life, and the value placed on learning about the information would be different, according to who, why and how they pursue and use it.

Lastly, OC activities are not limited within the cyber world (Brown & Adler, 2008). It is not simply the case that members 'upload' or 'download' information on the one-dimensional screen, they also interact with others, and meet in the face-to-face space, in offline society. In sum, OC members consider and use online and offline as necessary and sufficient conditions, they do not

69

regard online activities as adjuvant things for offline activities.

Like this, learning exists in our life, in the form of OC activities, and it plays a significant role in OCs. What this research focuses on is the argument of Ilon (2015): Our expanded life environment develops and is maintained by technological development due to the role performance of education and learning, the environment of which has been expanded by technologies, and learning exists there.

Online communities and social learning

Reciprocal interaction is a prominent thrust for both OCs and social learning. People learn certain themes from other people intentionally or unintentionally by interacting as a member of an OC. Moreover, people can have (more) opportunities to acquire certain knowledge or information, learn how to understand society and others, and reflect themselves (Van Wynsberghe & Andruske, 2007) through social interactions (Bandura, 2002; Djupe & Lewis, 2015; Prugsamatz, 2010) in OCs. In this case, the OC and other members are the environment for learning which is a type of behaviour (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). In other words, interactions are conducted between person and environment as well as person and person.

Psychological factors such as motivation and reinforcement significantly

70

encourage people's activities and social learning in OCs. Individual motivation of conduct, reciprocal motivation and reinforcement from others would be seen as a form of satisfaction or compliment in OCs. They are cause as well as effect for people's behaviour in both aspects.

As the terms, 'community' and 'social' literally connote meaning of 'group', group function and mutual interaction are significant factors in both. Simultaneously, each individual is important because they are actors who implement those functions, and they are factors who consist of the group as well (Bandura, 2002; Butler, 2001; Djupe & Lewis, 2015). As a factor and actor, people tend to pursue cooperation, which is a fundamental factor in a group. The new types of conduct for learning, such as sharing and interacting, are based on the principle of cooperation as well (Djupe & Lewis, 2015; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993).

Due to the development in the information technology (IT) industry and culture, our life environment is expanded to the digital space. People easily know OCs are based on the virtual space from the term. Social learning is also accomplished in various SNSs including OCs in the expanded environment. Moreover, OCs and social learning include blending online and offline activities as alternatives and supports for each other. Proper usage of the expanded environment with fewer barriers is one of the benefits of OCs and social learning.

Both concepts of OC and social learning can suggest good alternatives for learning beyond the traditional education concept. While we focused on acquiring and memorising knowledge in the past, we have to consider how we can learn and how we use acquired knowledge these days. Besides, learning which was conducted in formal or systemised educational institutes at fixed times can be accomplished in any types of field and at any times. Furthermore, features of information and knowledge are changeable. People do not only pursue academic or theoretical contents. Instead, people are willing to learn and experience various themes for a better life as well as interpret phenomena based on their own ideas. The idea of learning based on the concept of social learning is conducted in OCs.

Meanwhile, it seems that there are significant connections between functions and activity steps in OCs and learning in the perspective of the social learning concept of Bandura (1977, 1986, 2000 & 2002). Table 7 shows the several overlaps between OCs and the traditional SLT. These implications could be different individually, depending on what people concentrate on. As the seven features are connected reciprocally, OC and social learning can exist 'for' and 'by' each other as the means and the ends.

Like this, the value of learning in OCs is significant, and its roles and fulfilment correlate factors of learning. Therefore, it might be reasonable to state that learning exists and is realised in OCs as the extension of life context.

Table 7 Connections between Online Communities and Social Learning Theory

Online communities		Social learning	
Functions	Getting/sharing information or knowledge	Informative function	Learning by response consequences
	Personal purposes or motivations	Motivational function	
	Satisfaction, compliment, feedback	Reinforcing function	
Activity steps	Step 1. Designing or joining	Attentional processes	Learning through modelling/interacting
	Step 1. Designing or joining Step 2. conducting Step 3. Keeping	Retention processes, Motor reproduction processes	
	Step 3. Staying, being dormant or leaving	Motivational process	
*Source: Bandura, 1977; 1986			

Fernback (1999) argues that OCs are essentials rather than formality, and meanings rather than a structure. This argument might mean that an OC is a substantial thing and process, and includes members and the symbolic conduct of members. Similar to his argument, I have been more interested in focusing on individual members and their activities in order to consider the communities while many previous research discuss OCs as objectives.

These days, OCs are spaces where people can acquire and require

knowledge and information freely based on the development of the Internet rather than fixed and closed learning institutions of certain groups. People can join them voluntarily and enjoy learning and various activities with other people both in online and offline activities due to the Internet development. Namely, like learning is fulfilled in offline life, by and for widespread units from individual to society, learning exists as, by and for persons' fulfilment in OCs as well.

The South Korean Context

As the development of informative societies has advanced, information has become the core resource as well as the social drive within the Internet system. The trend is not exceptional in South Korea, however, South Korea was ranked first in the Digital Opportunity Index (DOI), which measures the supply of infrastructure, the ratio of telecommunications charges among consumption expenditure and the high-speed Internet rate in 2005 and 2006 (Lee, 2008). The informatisation level shows the sufficient digital environment in South Korea. Specifically, diverse types of SNS such as OC, mini-homepage[7], blog, micro-blog

[7]Cyworld (Hangul: 싸이월드) is a South Korean social network service…Members cultivate relationships by forming *Ilchon* (Hangul: 일촌, Hanja: 一寸) or 'friendships' with each other through their *mini-hompage*

and profile-based service have become more popular based on the rapid evolution of IT and Information communications technology (ICT) (Park et al., 2012; Suh, Y., 2002). The research especially focuses on OCs, which is the most popular type of SNS related to learning and knowledge (Suh, Y., 2002). Not only technical issues, but also the widespread background of the trend will be discussed in order to understand the phenomenon within Korean sociocultural contexts.

Meanings of online communities in South Korea
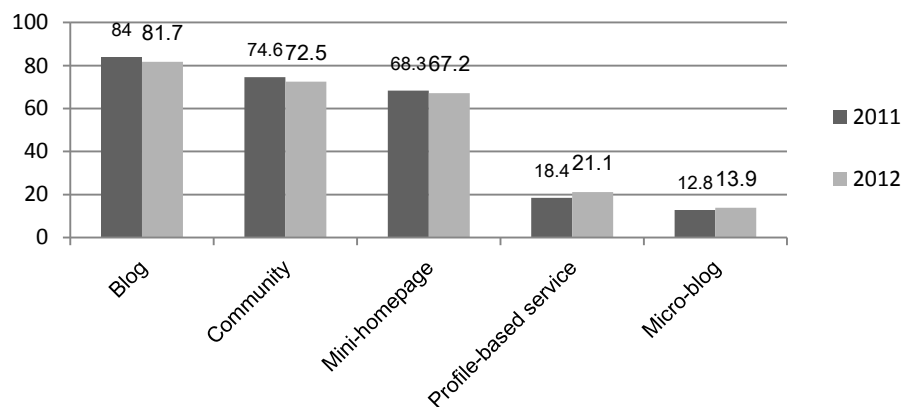
Figure 4 SNS Utilisation

*plural response, %, users over 6-year-old

**Source: KISA, 2012

which is a small, decoratable, apartment-like space in an isometric projection…Cyworld is a rough equivalent to MySpace of the United States (Wikipedia, n.d.b)

In South Korea, the English term, 'online community' is used and pronounced identically. However, it is quite challenging to categorise OCs, since the term is used differently depending on the users. The Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA, 2012) classifies five types of SNSs − (online) community, mini-homepage, blog; micro-blog and profile-based service (Figure 4). The OC is divided into two types. One is a 'Club', and the other is usually named as 'Café'. Café is the synonym for 'Internet forum' provided by web portals. The two most popular Korean portal sites for the Café are 'Daum' and 'NAVER'. However, the meaning of 'Club' is not clear here. As it is divided according to its form, like a Café, it seems to indicate an independent form of OC which includes websites such as 'dcinside (디씨인사이드)' and 'PPOMPPU (뽐뿌)' [8].

However, the term, OC which is generally used to encompass more diverse types such as online services such as types of mini-homepages and blogs, question and answer corners provided by portal sites, breakout rooms, message boards with comments, online clubs, fan clubs and game communities as well as the two types previously mentioned, club/webpage and Café (Kim, S., 2010). As SNS, other systems of its subcategory and OC are categorised as upper or lower categories of

---

[8] Dicinside (http://www.dcinside.com/) and PPOMPPU (http://www.ppomppu.co.kr/) are big online communities which consist of several bulletin boards in South Korea

each other, terms are used differently among real academic papers[9]. As they indicate different types of OCs according to cases, it is not easy to define or categorise an OC clearly. It might be because OCs exist in several types in order to reflect new types of social platforms, and attempt alternative functions such as alternative press and social commerce beyond the space for mere socialising or networking. It might reflect the up-to-date trend to survive with providing more diverse functions to netizens. It is the OC space's expansion from 'old new media', web to 'new new media', SNS (Levinson, 2009, cited in Lee, 2012a, p. 339). Specifically, the phenomenon named as an OC has changed, reflecting new trends in order to proceed toward a more 'preferred' direction. It thus might be reasonable to summarise that the term, OC in South Korean is used as a loanword, mixed with Korean terms; it is usually managed as a type of Café or independent webpage; its meaning might be regarded as 'a group widespread in the Internet space for cooperation and interaction' (Kim, S., 2010, p. 54), similarly to the general definition, 'a networking service or group in the Internet' in the IT industry (Jang, 2004).

General tendencies of online communities

---

[9] The term, Community is 커뮤니티 (same as English sound according to loanword orthography) or 공동체 (Gong-Dong-Che, 共同體 as a Chinese character word). Two Korean words are used to indicate same or different things depend on who use them. Using loanword seems to cause meaning confusions

According to the research of Lee et al. (2012), Korean netizens use some attributes mainly such as channels for news, sharing experiences, opinions and information and doing hobbies together in OCs. Benefits of them are acquiring useful information, disseminating a new point of view and saving time for information searches (Djupe & Lewis, 2015). Furthermore, users pursue values of diversity, sympathy and happiness. Their fulfilments significantly seem to be related to the perspective of learning depending on the definition of learning. In other words, many Korean netizens tend to pursue sustainable learning in various fields consciously or unconsciously through OCs.

It would be assumed the vitalisation of OCs has taken place, based on the figures, for example, over 70 per cent of the Internet users use OCs. While some OCs have their own domain (independent OCs), OCs based on services of web portals are popular in South Korea. The tendency, that domestic portal sites pursue more open environments (Cafés) where netizens can join, produce, recreate and share contents voluntarily rather than providing information, knowledge or contents as service providers, vitalises OCs (Lee & Kim, 2013; Suh, Y., 2002). For instance, in the case of NAVER, which was ranked first for Café usage in 2012 (Lee & Kim, 2013), 752,312,184 members (plural figures) joined 9,981,081 Cafés within 26 main theme directories and 21 geographical directories in October, 2016 (NAVER CAFÉ HOME, 2016). The various opportunities for both

experts and amateurs contribute to the diversity of whole Korean cultures from the period of personal computers (PC) communication to the current Café era (Kim, 2009; Suh, Y., 2002).

Board and reply culture is also one of remarkable features of OCs in South Korea (Jun, 2012; Kim, 2009; Kim, H., 2010). Most of the boards in OCs have the function of comment and reply. People can have simple chats as well as serious discussions on the space. Namely, as the space for conversation has expanded to online space, people engage in free debate without formality and constraint. Korean netizens are very active in Internet communities, knowledge-search engine and an online discussion sites, but they are relatively passive in participating in online encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia, which is known as a new experimental collaboration model of collective intelligence (Hwang et al., 2009; Kim, S., 2010). While Korean netizens actively participate in types of question and answer corners provided by portal sites, breakout rooms, message boards with comments, they tend to be relatively less interested in joining a type of collective intelligence like Wikipedia (Kim, S., 2010). This tendency will be discussed further in terms of the contents of knowledge and learning in the context of the historical sociocultural background.

Meanwhile, the appearance of OCs has changed due to the rapid generalisation of social media and the variance of Internet-use-patterns. OCs are

not perfectly open to every person, they are relatively exclusive due to their registration process or limited approbation. However, specific features of Korean OCs might result from their sociocultural contexts. Those factors will be more considered and discussed later.

Infrastructure and technologies

Table 8 IT Movement at the National Level in South Korea

1993	Establishing National IT Education Programme Plan
1999	Starting to provide internet PCs to people
	Founding IT education institutes for soldiers in 13 troops
	Starting IT education for persons with visual impairment
2000	Constructing additional LAN in 5700 schools for 330,000 students and educations stakeholders
	Staring 'IT education for 10,000,000'
2002	Starting 'the second step of National IT Education'
2006	Conducting Internet Safety Education for 200,000 students in 600 schools
*Source: Kim, 2009, p.14	

The IT industry has developed at the national level in South Korea.

Through the building of strong and high quality IT infrastructure and by supplying Internet PCs to citizens, the Korean government provided IT education and it targeted the entire nation from the 1990's. Moreover, the government concentrated on resolving the issue of the digital divide by providing a diverse range of vocational support and IT education for rural areas, the elderly, and people with disabilities from the 2000's (Kim, 2009; Lee, 2008). Table 8 shows the national IT movement.

In the 1970's, PC communication culture started based on data communication. It played a significant role in fostering IT human resources, since talented IT stakeholders gathered and shared a great amount of information, especially about IT in the space of PC communication. Indeed, on the basis of the Korean Internet service, the online game industry and other online services were founded by the PC communication generation (Kim, 2009).

The meaningful point is that the development of the PC communication culture is the basis of the current Internet culture (Kim, 2009; Kim, H., 2010; Lee, 2008; Park et al., 2012). In other words, current South Korean OCs were rooted in thousands of communities of the PC communication system between the 1980's and the 1990's. The communities tended to be designed by ordinary people based on their interests and related knowledge. People shaped public opinion by expanding their interests from ordinary life issues to political, economic and

social issues (Lee et al., 2012; Suh, Y., 2002).

The PC-Bang (Internet café) is also one of the representative Internet cultures in South Korea (Kim, 2009; Suh, Y., 2002). Since the world's first PC-Bang was opened in Seoul in 1988, the business of PC-Bangs has contributed to the development of Korea's Internet culture and industry as well as multiplayer computer games (Kim, 2009; Suh, Y., 2002).

As shown in Table 9, the culture of OC has developed based on both top-down and bottom-up efforts in South Korea. The balance of top-down and bottom-up has created the coexistence of IT and a cultural development. From young netizens to IT stakeholders as well as government established the current development, and they should keep cooperate for the better.

Table 9 Basis of Development of Online Communities in South Korea

TOP-DOWN FACTOR	BOTTOM-UP FACTOR
State-sponsored IT development and diffusion: IT industry and IT education	· Participation of various strata and generations · Student generation-centred
· Personal computer (PC) communication · Internet culture · PC bang (internet café) culture	
*Source: Jun, 2012; Kim, 2009; Lee, 2008; Park et al., 2012	

82

Communities

Social conditions should also be addressed, due to the distinct social characteristics and significantly rapid changes of Korea's information society (Castells, 1997, cited in Suh, Y., 2002, p. 21, self-translated). On that point, it is important to consider South Korean society with regard to the way in which its communal social regulations (e.g., Confucianism) still affect the society as important social values and regulations, and the concept of 'community' has been fundamentally significant in Korean society (Suh, Y., 2002).

Korean people have traditionally lived in a village based on kinship. The strong solidarity of family and local community had been weakened since the traffic and communications became relatively developed in the late period of the Joseon [10] dynasty. However, the tendency to rely on kinship and village community became firmer until the middle of the 1940's, since Korean society had to adapt to modern society rapidly due to Japanese colonialism (Suh, Y., 2002).

In the 1960-70's, although individuals' social awareness was improved, Koreans still tended to find the shield from the traditional community in order to survive in the extremely competitive and changeable society. Consequently, they

---

[10] One of Korean kingdoms founded in 1392 and lasted before the modern Korea (Wikipedia, n.d.c)

strongly united as communities based on intense school ties and local ties (Suh, Y., 2002).

More various communities have been built due to the development of civil society, ICT infrastructure and communication since the 1990's as ardent democratisation took place in the 1980's. On the hidden side of the development, there was a constrictive and hateful modernisation without introspection due to the colonial experience, and a rush to start an information society under the slogan, 'get ahead in informatisation despite being behind in industrialisation (Suh, Y., 2002).

Currently, as democracy, the traffic system, globalisation and individual communicative ability have been improved; South Korean society is moving toward social relationships which are pursued not only to overcome individualistic values and their institutionalisation, but also to concretise individualitat as a subject of communications (Suh, Y., 2002). Suh (2002) describes this tendency as 'networked individualism'. This society tends to focuses on 'associative community' which emphasises individual's freedom and choice (Suh, Y., 2002). Besides, many Korean OCs tend to be rooted in the previous offline communities. And offline activities are actively fulfilled by OCs (Suh, Y., 2002).

The civil society has developed the new Internet cyber society through conflicts and coexistences within the continuous intervention of both government

and market. It is the outcome from social passions and solidarity of real (offline) society with the emergence of the Internet and the new social space after the late 1990's (Suh, Y., 2002).

Knowledge and learning

Kim, S. (2010) discusses the Internet culture from the traditional to the current sociocultural context. I refer to the area of OCs and its features within the knowledge and learning aspects rather than the whole Internet culture in his discussion.

Kim, S. (2010) remarks that most history books were written by a private individual as a single book, rather than as voluminous work by several writers. He adds that it is because the form of collective intelligence is fulfilled separately by an individual editor than the model that personal authors with pseudonyms participate in collective works simultaneously in Korean history. The popular form aimed to collect and save old works rather than to deliver new knowledge (Kim, S., 2010). And the hierarchical relationship between master and disciple (teacher and pupil) that was a feature of Joseon's academic culture has already been mentioned. For instance, if a scholar would write an article with pupils, the master's name was written on the paper as the representative author, and the contribution of pupils was only recorded in the 'acknowledgements', even

though the work was done mainly by the pupils (Kim, S., 2010). It is assumed that the latent hierarchical culture has caused the horizontal cooperative way of communities such as Wikipedia to be adopted slowly in the current Korean society (Kim, S., 2010).

In terms of sharing and communication, institutional and cultural incentives based on the outcomes of cooperation should be understood in Korea's traditionally unique cultural context as well. While volunteering and contribution are western factors, sharing is related to the context in Korea. The concept of sharing means family virtue which targets the first group such as family members or neighbours (Kim, S., 2010). In the traditional Korean society, the sociocultural incentive of contribution and sharing was based on moral concepts such as virtues and duties, not concepts of right which indicate reward or compensation (Kim, S., 2010). The Korean perspective is introverted, receptive and tolerant with regard to sociocultural norms whereas the Western one is extroverted, active and participatory for the sake of individual satisfaction (Kim, S., 2010). This difference between incentive as virtue and incentive as right can refer to intellectual contribution as well (Kim, S., 2010). It shows why Korean netizens are relatively generous in terms of 'concrete contribution' for members in the same community while they become misers if they are to contribute for the sake of unspecified individuals. Therefore, it might be reasonable to state that services

for exchanging experimental knowledge as well as sharing emotions and feelings are more preferred than services for exchanging objective knowledge in the Korean Internet culture (Kim, S., 2010).

It is necessary to understand features of Korean Internet culture based on the East-Asia's unique *Confucian view of knowledge* and the tradition of discussion culture, since the traditions are fundamentally different from the Western scientific view of knowledge and pluralistic discussion culture (Kim, S., 2010). Especially, knowledge is considered to be closely related with moral principles and junzi's personality, which pursues those principles (Kim, S., 2010). Thus, for the Korean nobility in the past, knowledge was considered to be acquired not only through individual training and consideration but also discussions based on the view of knowledge which aims to argue for political legitimacy and the normative superiority of moral knowledge rather than authenticity of objective knowledge (Kim, S., 2010). It is necessary to understand how these traditional views and attitudes about knowledge might be a significant part of Korea's sociocultural context to understand the characteristics of contents (experiential and normative, rather than objective and logical) and the form (threads and comments mainly) of discussion in OCs (Kim, S., 2010). Namely, the context is linked to the contemporary tendency to not consider some shared knowledge as knowledge because it tends to be *easy*, *tender* and *small* rather than

complicated and *theoretical* (Kim, S., 2010, p. 56, self-translated), but also the knowledge is accumulated and sorted by/as lists of comments, fixed texts in OCs in the Korean Internet environment (Hwang et al., 2009).

Korean: Linguistic features

Far from infrastructure and the development of diverse technical industries, another original factor is also remarkable as a contributor of vitalisation of OCs as well. It is the Korean alphabet, Hangul (Kim, 2009). Since Hangul is easy to write and read, all generations can access and use even adult-rated information and contents of SNSs, regardless of their age and educational levels. Indeed it is not difficult to find young founders of OCs or aggressive debates between adults and adolescents on the board of South Korean OCs. Furthermore, from social issues to IT, the young generation with passion and sincerity have tried to do their best to learn and make their voice in/through the environment. These participations of diverse strata result in the sustainability and development of OCs in South Korea.

On the other hand, relatively, Korean netizens tend to interact less with global English-based OCs due to Korean's local characteristics, while those same people are active members of Korean OCs. Their linguistic communication means, Korean, which conveys netizens' cultural or conceivable capabilities, can be a partition wall among OCs in the global society (Suh, Y., 2002).

Conclusion and Summary

The first challenge was to define the online community. Thus, I have narrowed the focus to South Korean sociocultural influential online communities, which are commonly indicated as widespread groups including collective and communal activities in the Internet environment. It this research, five South Korean online communities were selected which were comprised of amateurs and professional, and also had examples of information deriving from experimental information to expertise.

The second challenge is to define learning. As the term is generally used in the existing school system, and its functional concept for achieving a better grade of exam predominates, I use discourse analysis of the current literature to find a broader definition. By concentrating on the learning that takes place within online communities (not designed for traditional learning in schools), however, insights might be gained into how 'ordinary people' learn – not just 'learners' in school. The meaning of learning is thus broadened and becomes more diverse. In other words, its meaning is different according to the context or system where it is used.

Within this context, learning becomes social. In this research, experience, especially social or mutual interaction, is regarded as learning since learning is

conducted through interactions with other people or their outcomes. Therefore, the theoretical frame is based on Bandura's social learning theory in order to both emphasise significance of learning both individually and communally, and support ideas about learning within a certain type of community in the sociocultural context. It aims to understand learning with regard interactions with other people and environment as significant factors for learning. It is not only because interactions can affect the individual learning in a community, but also because the individual taking part could result in learning benefits to others in the sociocultural context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

My main research question, 'what is the role of learning in online communities?' might imply that this would be a predominantly quantitative study, since the ratio of certain roles could be described in statistical terms. Rather, this research focused on analysing the implications of learning in online communities (OCs) that are perceived consciously or unconsciously by the members of OCs.

The methodology follows from a specific research design. This chapter outlines the research goals and design. These follow from the research question. I then discuss the specific online communities in detail, and the kinds of data I intend to collect. There are many kinds of data which require various types of analysis – a mixed methods approach. The analysis generally follows a qualitative approach, and I thereby analyse the data that is discussed next. Finally, I discuss the ethical issues.

Research Design

The type of data I gathered and analysed was chosen because it was the

appropriate data for revealing the nature of learning in an exploratory case study. The approach of using interviews and excerpts from websites and analysing structure and contents of websites especially to see how people learn, lent credence to approach selected. This mixed methods approach and triangulation was chosen for specific validation of results.

Table 10 (page 94) shows the sub-questions which, collectively, if answered properly, would lead to the answer to this research question. The table also shows how each sub-question would be answered. Each sub-question has a set of sources and an identified method for deriving information from that source. The analytic questions are guides showing the direction of inquiry for each sub-question.

I tried to answer sub-questions one and two through existing literature first in order to be sure of the definitional question of what an online community is and what learning is. And I allowed research participants to express their own opinions. I wanted to see if the literature fits what the OC members experience, and if they see that their definitions have changed over time. I was looking for consistency and whether the answers I received for these questions support my initial thoughts that OCs also might include learning. The sub-questions three, four and five were expected to include more emotive aspects. It was quite important to build rapport with participants and induce deeper conversation. It

was expected to be interesting to connect how participants considered the concept of learning by connecting their answers from the last sub-question to answers from the other sub-questions. Their propensities, which are seen in their responses, may or may not be coherent.

Sub-questions helped me to find aspects which I might have missed, such as similarities and differences in perspective between other participants or even myself. Because I was able to use qualitative methods to collect and analyse data, which showed OCs' development and activities, I was able to understand richer stories of communities, whether or not they were hidden, as well as each person's voice and life.

Time frame

The research period for data collection was around 9 months from February of 2016 to October of 2016. By using one of online environment's benefits, the asynchronous access and communication, I was able to save time for 'field work' relatively. And I accessed each OC at least once a week during the research period.

Table 10 Linkage of Research Sub-questions with Methods

Sub-question	Source	Method	Analytic Question (What will I be looking for?)
What is an on-line community?	Literature, Members Field note including research diary	Literature analysis, Interview Observation	- How do people define on-line communities? - Did the definition change over time? - How it is considered in the Korean context? - Does everyone agree? - In what areas do people agree? - Where are the disagreements? - What parts of the definitions work for my research and why?
In what ways do online communities learn?	Literature, OC Websites Members, OC manager Field note including research diary		- Which fulfilments can be regarded as learning in OCs? - Which factors are fulfilled as learning at the individual level in OCs? - Which factors are fulfilled as learning at the collective level in OCs? - How do people define learning in OCs? - Did the definition change over time? - Does everyone agree? - In what areas do people agree? - Where are the disagreements? - What parts of the definitions work for my research and why?
What role does learning play in motivating people to join, if any?		Literature analysis, Interview, Observation Statistical trends analysis, Analysis of changes in website content	- Why did they join? - What benefits did they think they would get? - Did they know others who were members? - Did their expectations get met? - Did they find other benefits than what they expected? - Are there problems they didn't expect? - What are personal/social/public reasons/situation/trends/factors to join the community?
What role does learning play in members' participation, if any?	OC Websites Members, OC manager Field note including research diary		- Do they participate in either/both on-line or/and offline activities? - How both (online-offline activities) affect each other? - What are pros and cons of blended activities? - What do they see are the benefits of blended activities if any? - When and how often do they usually log in/join the activities? - Which activities do they usually participate in? - Why do (not) you participate activity/inactively in particular activities?
What role does learning play in members' contributions, if any?			- What are their roles in the communities? - Do they have particular responsibilities? - How did they take on these responsibilities? - What do they want to do for the community? - What was/will be the most remarkable contributions? - What your materials/activities/resource contribution that was the most popular among members? - How do you think the community could become more active? - What is the biggest barrier to participation or new membership?
What awareness of learning exists among members, if any?			- What materials/activities/resource were the most/fewest meaningful to you? Why? - What do they more expect from the communities? - If they recommend the communities to WHOM and WHY to him or her? - What kinds of unexpected experience/learning did (do) they get from the communities?

*Source: the author

Sample of online communities

I picked OCs in South Korea. The sample of OCs was purposive – I deliberately selected OCs that were likely to display different approaches to learning. Further, I did not select any OCs that were specifically set up to 'teach' a topic or that could generally be defied for the purposes of learning. I did this because I wanted to look at the instances of social learning, especially in terms of individual factors and reciprocal interactions in the sociocultural context. The research was conducted through analysing the OCs communities and comparing of them. Selection based on diverse standards like Table 11 (page 98) was useful to the research project as it allowed the study of the characteristics of a particular group or the situation within it. The table shows a simple description of the five OCs.

I selected OCs with considering various terms. Firstly, topics or main interests of OCs are not overlapped: The term local, hobby and professional group were selected respectively. Secondly, whether the OC included active offline/blended activities or not is considered, since online spaces and activities intertwine with real/offline life ultimately. Thirdly, the size of OCs is diverse as well. The OC, *School-Where* was selected as a representative OC due to its stead aspect in terms of solidarity, vitalisation and professionalism. The representative OC was expected to show affluent learning aspects related to main issues in the

95

OC such as teaching/learning methods and child development. Furthermore, the OC which presents various aspects of learning was expected to be a helpful example and standard to explore other OCs as well.

City-Where is for a local city of which the population is about 350,000 including foreigners in 2015. It provides various information and knowledge about the city and its amities. Citizen members of the OC share various information regarding anything from fancy restaurants[11], commercial service for ordinary life, to lost property and missing pets and people. In addition, people could acquire information or knowledge about local history and traditional festival, and discuss temporary events, up-to-date news and issues in the OC. Interestingly, although the anonymity of the OC was somewhat weak due to the small size of city and the feature of FB (Facebook), it was not easy to see that some members stopped at nothing to argue about certain issues or to advertise with commercial intentions. In other words, the OC is an unconstrained space, and has cross-sectoral and integrative nature because literally diverse topics are dealt with and various ages and social stratum of citizens are joining unlike traditional local communities which are obligatory communities mentioned in Table 3 (page 50). Differences between traditional obligatory local community and this online local community were expected to imply interesting aspects. Do people consider

---

[11] Going to new fancy restaurants is a type of popular trend in South Korean society

getting or sharing information of stores or restaurants as learning? How do they regard their activities? What is the implication of these activities? These questions were expected to bring interesting data as well.

In *Shuttlecock*, an offline activity, playing badminton is the main purpose, and the online space/means is made for the object. Although most of people who gather in this community tend to like badminton and would like to enjoy it, the visibility of learning in the community seems to be somewhat predominant, since personal badminton lessons are conducted by a coach for members who want them. Thus, for members, especially, beginners who want to 'learn' badminton, the community could be regarded as a type of 'study group' of badminton. It could be a literally 'learning group'.

Like *Shuttlecock,* offline activities are vitalised in *Foto-Club*. However, contrary to *Shuttlecock*, offline activities are not unconditionally priorities for the OC. Why do members learn photography, camera usage or Photoshop and so on through the OC, and not from the regular, formal or non-formal courses? How different or similar is learning considered intentionally/unintentionally between *Foto-Club* where professional photographers and armatures are quite clearly, but implicitly, compartmentalised by members and other communities? These questions were mainly focused in this case of OC.

Table 11 Online Community Descriptions

Alias of OCs	City-Where	Shuttle-cock	Foto-Club	IT-Crowd	School-Where
Form	Facebook Group	NAVER BAND based Daum CAFÉ	Facebook Group based Daum CAFÉ	Web-page	Web-page based Facebook Group NAVER CAFÉ
Number of Member	31,729 (03/06/16)	66 (03/06/16)	96 (03/06/16)	100,000 (2014)	143,000 (2014)
Topic	Information about a local city	Badminton	Photography and related issues	IT information and diverse social issues	Materials related to classes, educational guidance and addministrative tasks at primary schools
Purpose	For issues and information of various contents related to the city	To play badminton	To take pictures together To share information about camera and software related to photography	For IT information To discuss about general/diverse social issues	To develop professionalism To communicate and to create valuable information
Features	It is a local community	It has regular offline activities It is affected by Badminton Korean Association	It hasrelatively regular offline activities	It deals with diverse issues or topic as well as IT	It is a primary school teachers' community
Type	Associative community Community	Associative community Favourite Club	Associative community Favourite Club	Associative community Community	Associative community Community
Non-profit	o	o	o	o	o
Spontaneous	o	o	o	o	o
Practical	o	o	o	o	o
Experiential	o	o	o	o	o
Professional	Partially	Partially	Partially	Partially	o
Cooperative	o	o	o	o	o
Informal	o	o	o	o	o
Commercial	Partially	x	x	Partially	Partially

*Source: the author

98

IT-Crowd is about IT and its related issues. It was originally a small group of Sony PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) users. Currently the number of members is enormous and it is one of the biggest and most popular OCs in South Korea. Professional or high quality information and knowledge related to IT sphere is dealt with. Member come from various backgrounds: Some of them are the corporations IT experts, academic specialists, some others were even non-related to IT people who just need information to purchase IT products. The social stratum of members is diverse. Moreover, people scribble down their personal life stories as well as public opinions about social, political and economic issues are discussed in the OC. Furthermore, the OC also has relatively strict regulations which site administrators enforce. While the OC is non-profit, it has some commercial factors such as advertisements for group purchase and second-hand market as well.

School-Where is an OC of primary school teachers[12]. It is a type of professional group. Although it is an associative community, it might be reasonable to state that it has features of community-directed association like teacher union. Why did they build and join the community spontaneously? What do they pursue in the community? What is the biggest difference between learning

---

[12] The number of primary school teacher was 182,000 in 2014 (Statistics Korea, 2015). It is no exaggeration to say that most of South Korean primary school teachers join the OC, since about 79% of them joined the OC in 2014.

from formal in-service teacher training programme and learning in this community? What aspects are the most useful for learning as teachers? In this case, these kinds of question were more focused on rather than successful technical factors or contents. And this OC was expected to somewhat clearly show learning aspects as a representative case.

Concepts of and perspectives on learning – in, by, for OCs – the implication, and the expected roles of learning were explored through the literature review as a background to the study as well. The primary research project comprised of a five South Korean OCs. Yin (1989) defines the case study as 'An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context' (cited in Glatthorn & Joyner 2005, pp. 43-44). Similarly, this research would explore, describe and explain how learning is regarded and fulfilled in OCs through data collection and analysis based on referring the principles of case study approach partially.

Online community participants

First, for quantitative survey, 150 (30 members x five OCs were expected) responded to the survey (Figure 5). I invited them by the OC message, and noticed on the OC board. 100 of them were male, and 50 were female. In terms of the age group, 20's was 44; 30's was 71; 40's was 26; 50's was eight; 60's was one. And

two of respondents did not want to reveal their age. Among them, 56 of participants responded that they were living in a big city such as metropolitan city; 79 said that they were living in local small or middle city; 15 said that they were living in a county level local region. They responded to the question about their highest level of schooling as well: Middle school was for four; high school was for 15; being undergraduate students were for 44; undergraduate was for 65; being or graduating postgraduate level was for 22. Although the ratio of sex is lopsided to male, other general backgrounds of participants are balanced. 29.3% of participants were still in formal education (undergraduate), it could not be a serious mirror, since they also could provide valuable data as adults, and I could invite more adequate participants (who have finished formal education) for qualitative research.

To more focus more on the qualitative data, I planned to interview each OC builder or a core manager and two or three more members who were active mainly among people who participated in the quantitative survey. I invited participants for qualitative approach from them. Moreover, I asked the OC managers to recommend other active members, and applied the snowball effect. Hence, 23 research participants were invited. Table 12 (page 103) shows their background simply, and includes ratio of providing and acquiring of information or knowledge on the last line.
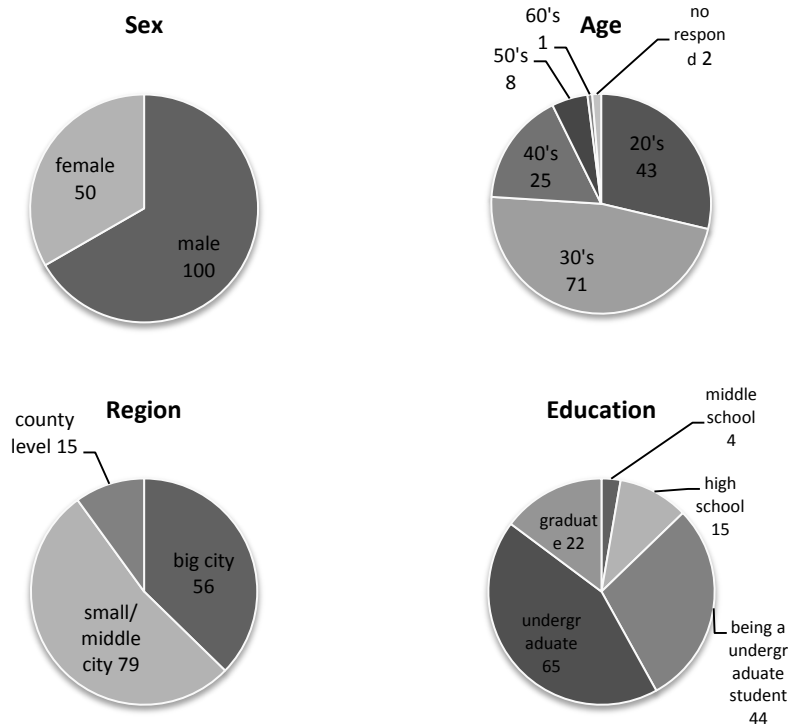
Figure 5 The Distribution of Survey Participants

*Source: the author's survey

Even though the OCs and activities are shown as open source among OC members, I regarded ethical issues more carefully. I observed participants' activities mainly who got the research information sheet (*Appendix C*) and informed consent form (*Appendix D*) so as not to make them feel they were being 'monitored'. Especially activities could be involved in the category of learning which dealt with in the literature review. The details of interview will be discussed

in the next section.

Table 12 Research Participants for Qualitative Approach

No.	Commu-nity	Parti-cipants	Age	Region	Occupa-tion	Interview - (frequency)	Note	Ratio of acquiring: providing
1	*Shuttlecock*	Mr A	32	Local county	Veterinarian	Face-to-face (FF) (2) Kakao Talk (1)		95:5
2	*Shuttlecock*	Mr B	41	Local city	Office worker	FF (1) Kakao Talk (2)	FC manager	50:50
3	*Shuttlecock*	Mr C	39	Local city	Estate agent	FF (1) Kakao Talk (1)		60:40
4	*Shuttlecock*	Mr D	39	Local city	Office worker	FF (2) Kakao Talk (1)	FC manager	80:20
5	*Shuttlecock*	Ms E	43	Local city	Housewife	FF (1) Kakao Talk (2)	Ex- FC manager	90:10
6	*Shuttlecock*	Mr F	32	Local city	Journalist	FF (2) Kakao Talk (2)	Manager	10:90
7	*City-Where*	Mr G	60	Local city	Professor	FF (2) FB chat (3)	Community manager	30:70
8	*City-Where*	Mr H	40	Local city	Restaurant owner	FF (1) FB chat (1)		70:30
9	*City-Where*	Ms I	29	Local city	Accountancy	FF (1) FB chat (2)		40:60
10	*City-Where*	Ms X	33	Seoul	Primary school (PS) teacher	FF (2) FB chat (2)		80:20
11	*IT-Crowd*	Mr J	22	Seoul	College student	FF (1) E-mail (1) Kakao Talk (1)		70:30
12	*IT-Crowd*	Mr K	39	Seoul	IT worker	FF (2) Kakao Talk (1)		90:10

13	*IT-Crowd*	Mr L	31	Seoul	IT worker	FF (1) Kakao Talk (2)		50:50
14	*Foto-Club*	Mr M	38	Metropolitan city	Office worker/photographer	FF (2) FB chat (3)	Community manager	30:70
15	*Foto-Club*	Mr N	32	Local city	Office worker	FF (1) Kakao Talk (1)	PhD student of computer	30:70
16	*Foto-Club*	Mr O	37	Local city	Photographer	FF (1) Kakao Talk (2)		10:90
17	*Foto-Club*	Ms P	25	Local city	Unemployed	FF (2) E-mail (1)		90:10
18	*School-Where*	Ms R	28	Seoul	PS teacher	FF (1) Kakao Talk (3)	Teacher career 5 years, MA part time student	100:0
19	*School-Where*	Ms S	32	Local county	PS teacher	FF (1) Kakao Talk (3)	Teacher career 10 years	80:20
20	*School-Where*	Mr T	34	Local city	PS teacher	FF (1) Kakao Talk (2)	Teacher career 6 years	90:10
21	*School-Where*	Mr U	35	Local city	PS teacher	FF (1) Kakao Talk (3)	Teacher career 8.5 years	90:10
22	*School-Where*	Mr V	41	Local county	PS teacher	FF (1) E-mail (2)	Teacher career 16 years	10:90
23	*Club-Camping*	Mr Y	38	Metropolitan city	Office worker	FF (1) Kakao Talk (3)	Scout leader	30:70

*Source: the author

Data Collection and Research Analysis

As shown in Table 10 (page 94), this research includes diverse data collecting methods. It might be fully able to secure justification, richness and

subsidiarity of data. I will now describe how I applied each method and secured the validity of data analysis separately.

Qualitative data was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the OCs. This cannot be accomplished with only one source of data (Cresswell, 2013). In the qualitative approach, the research was triangulated[13] by data from structure and content of websites, interviews, dialogue on websites, offline observations and notes, physical artefacts, and archival records.

The quantitative process was used to ascertain OC activities and concepts of learning. These are derived from questionnaires. These questionnaires were designed to ascertain the mode and proportion related to which OC activities people conduct, and when and why people do them.

All my data was typically organised into computer files. Regarding that research participants were Korean and this research is written in English, I saved texts of interviews in both Korean and their translation in English.

Survey

A survey as a type of quantitative research was conducted before the

---

[13] The purpose of triangulation is to apply two or more methods to research a phenomenon in terms of different perspectives, times, spaces, and situations in the data collection process, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the research as well as to minimise the distortion of the research process (Goetz & LeCompt, 1984)

qualitative research started: It was in order to collect data about people's opinions and tendencies related to OCs and OC activities in general, and invite some research participants for qualitative data through interview mainly. The time period of this survey was different according to each OC in order to avoid a long time interval between the survey and qualitative research. They were thus conducted intermittently between February and June 2016.

The survey included about 10 multiple-choice and closed questions: Which were like what motivates people to join, how, when and why they participate and contribute, what they think they have learned (if anything), and what relationships exist between learning and online community. Based on this survey, the interview consisted of deeper and concreter questions. It was conducted through two modes, a survey sheet and online survey. *Appendix A* shows the forms and questions.

Interviews

I planned to meet interviewees in a public place near their locations for face-to-face interviews. The qualitative approaches including interviews were conducted as well. After I had pilot interviews and adjusted questions, participants were invited for face-to-face interview, SNS or E-mail interviews. The SNS or E-mail interviews supported the main interviews.

106

I looked for a diverse range of interviewees with wide education experiences, regions and jobs. Several times of individual interviews were conducted. Mostly I used e-mail and SNS messengers for interviews, but I considered face-to-face semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions at least one or two times per interviewee. The type of semi-structured interview was used in the expectation that this would be suitable for gathering qualitative data, for example, the views, opinions, ideas and experiences of OC or e-learning stakeholders. In the case of Mr Y, he is not a member of any five OC cases, but he helped me in a pilot interview as an active member of *Club-Camping*. However his interview was also referred as research data, since it also seemed to be quite interesting and meaningful.

The qualitative approach was helpful in interviewing members of OCs because they all had different attitudes, feelings and experiences with regard to activities of OCs and learning. Thus, *the open question format* (Kane, 1995, p. 120) was primarily employed. I also planned to ask probing questions to obtain more specific and deeper responses rather than vague or ambiguous answers (University of Wisconsin, n.d.; Thompson-Grove et al., 2014).

Based on the principles of the semi-structured interview and probing questions, I prepared some initial fixed questions based on analytic questions in Table 10 (page 94) but is free to improvise follow-up enquiries for areas of

interest and importance that emerge in each interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999; University of Wisconsin, n.d.).

All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis (Arksey & Knight 1999, p. 78) because I preferred to explore an individual's experiences and candid opinions of activities of OCs in confidence. On the other hand, Mr T and Mr U had a face-to-face interview together due to time limitation and personal reasons. After that, separate Kakao Talk[14] supported the interview personally.

Due to limited time with participants, I needed to conduct a pilot – i.e. 'the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule' (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) – in order to maximise the impact of the study. I discarded any descriptive or vague questions after discussions with four lecturers who are experts in education and social science and four pilot interviews including the interview of Mr Y. *Appendix B* shows examples of question for interviews.

The interviews had to be carefully constructed because some OC members might not think they are learning – they might have had an older paradigm of learning in their heads. Thus, I had to ask questions relating to their motivation for

---

[14] KakaoTalk (Korean: 카카오톡), or sometimes KaTalk, is a free mobile instant messaging application for smartphones with free text and free call features. It was launched on March 18, 2010 and is currently available on iOS, Android, Bada OS, BlackBerry, Windows Phone, Nokia Asha and Personal Computer. KakaoTalk currently has 170 million users and is available in 15 languages. The app is also used by 93% of smartphone owners in South Korea (Wikipedia, n.d.d)

joining the community, what kind of activities they participate in, and what benefits they are getting from the community.

Observations of offline activities and field notes

I could flexibly have opportunities of direct observation and participant observation as a member of each OC. However, offline activities were not active in all OCs.

In the cases of *City-Where* and *IT-Crowd*, instead of joining any offline activities, I could only collect data from interviews and websites about irregular gatherings such as a type of flash mob, since the research participants did not participate in any offline activities during the research period.

In the case of *School-Where*, I could accompany Mr V who was a previous community manager to the gathering of some active members. I observed their discussions about how to manage and protect their online platform and what kinds of in-service training programs they would like to organise. As was the case with the situations of *City-Where* and *IT-Crowd*, other research participants of *School-Where* did not participate in any offline activities during the research period due to time and distance limitations.

However, *Foto-Club* and *Shuttlecock* had relatively frequent offline activities. I participated in *Foto-Club*'s official monthly offline gathering and

109

casual gathering once and four times respectively. I could observe what and how they taught and learnt from one another about camera and pictures mainly. There were four main offline activities of *Shuttlecock* – regular badminton play/lessons three times a week, gathering after playing badminton, and regular social event of members' families such as weddings and funerals. I observed what and how members taught and learnt one another about playing badminton, how members interacted and what kinds of factors could affect their activities and relationships through observing game and conversation from regular badminton play/lessons, and gathering at the pub after playing as well as wedding reception.

Literature

The literature analysis helped to determine how to understand what the meaning of learning is and the definition of OCs is for the purposes of this research. Literatures were mainly for theoretical aspects: Related to concepts of learning or social learning, SLT, sociocultural theory, learning in practice & communities of practice, social changes and new paradigm of social learning were analysed. Moreover, OCs' context, especially South Korean context was explored deeply as the significant context of the research.

I did not expect that the literature would give a final definition of learning and OCs, but I did expect a spectrum of definitions that are emerging and

changing. From that literature, I drew on various aspects and made my own definition for purposes of the research.

Websites

Website data helped me look for learning trends. I did content analysis through analysing learning discourse present on the websites and looking for trends contained within this learning discourse. For example, who contributed to this learning discourse? When? At what stage of their membership? What types of learning what contributed to by whom? Who contributed to which types of learning at what points in the discussions? Which types of learning occurred on which types of websites?

I looked at what the participants created themselves such as discussions, suggestions and instructions. Through exploring them, I could find out several things: 1) What learning content is there?; 2) Does it change over time?; 3) Who is creating this information, everyone or just certain people? If only certain people, who would they be? Exploring how has a piece of group developed information/document changed over time and analysing the product of a process were conducted using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The validity of data analysis

For analysis of data, I mainly referred to principles of data analysis and representation by case study (Table 13), as well as employing a quantitative approach.

Table 13 Data Analysis and Activities

General data analysis	Activities
Data organisation	· Create and organise files for data
Reading, note-taking	· Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes
Describing the data into codes and themes	· Describe patterns and themes
Classifying the data into codes and themes	· Use categorical agregation to establish themes or patterns
Interpreting the data	· Use direct interpretation · Developnaturalistic generalisations of what was 'learned'
Representing, visualising the data	present in-depth picture of the case (or cases) using narrative, tables, and figures

*Source: Cresswell, 2013, pp. 190-191; Dey, 1993

One of the most important tasks was semantic analysis. I tried to ensure the validity of the data so as not to misinterpret what data showed after applying the various methods mentioned above. Firstly, I double checked doubtable matters

after initial interpretations: I asked and checked questions which arose from offline observations or websites through interviews; I had two or three more short E-mail or SNS interviews about barely understandable issues or new questions, which I had had from the analysis of the first interview. When I found research participants thought differently from my ideas, literature or theories, I tried to compare the different meanings of their ideas by finding more literature and discussing with experts such as IT experts, professional photographers, local experts, badminton coach, teachers, OC experts, my fellow colleagues, supervisor and professors who are experts in the field of education and so on.

Some of my analyses were textual − looking at specific discourse and categorising it much as I did with the quantitative interview analysis. Some of them were looking at trends across participant demographics such as age, education levels, gender, profession, the length of time as members of that OC, and their experiences in that OC.

Outcomes of the descriptive analysis included summaries of demographic and temporal inputs and outcomes of learning taken from the websites. These descriptions and summaries were not intended to comprise the totality of the analysis of the data. Rather, they provided a succinct overview of the important aspects of the case to get a sense of the case as a whole (Schiazza, 2013).

I efficiently tried to categorise data based on the sub-questions. In terms of

forming initial codes, I planned to use simple coding signals in my own way to save data as texts as shown in *Appendix F*.

The data from interviews, observation notes and researcher's notes was coded by finding patterns based on repeated concepts and terms. The themes or issues were analysed across cases for commonalities and differences among the OCs. Sorting by comparing and contrasting cases, it was possible to find if they were coincidental or not. To establish themes or patterns, various text, tabular, and figure forms were useful such as matrix tables, Venn diagrams, tree types and 2x2 tables. These forms were used to present analysis from findings effectively.

The examples with which I could secure the validity and reliability of the research data analysis are following:

1) With regard to the finding of OCs' structure, I looked at how each community, with the community. The *IT-Crowd*, for example, belonged to the 'website' structural group. I determined this because they uploaded a lot of information. They are very active in uploading. They have a hidden identity. Information is constantly updated. They are very polite. This is in contrast to *Shuttlecock*, where people meet regularly and participate in offline activities, which is conducted within the Band platform. To categorise these OCs in terms of structure, I had to analyse the structure of the online platform, the interaction in the location, what people said about the interactions, and the characteristics of OCs (i.e., whether they had hidden or revealed identifies as well as the nature of

114

what they told me in interviews).

2) With regard to the nature of learning, I discovered that people had to build a relationship before they could really begin some kinds of learning. First of all, I tried to interpret OC members' interactions, such as their conversations about personal daily life unrelated to OC's topics such as badminton, gatherings for seasonal picnics, or occasional drinking at the pub and referring to other OC members as 'family members' from my point of view, which is conventional in Korean culture. Then, I confirmed that there was correspondence between my interpretation and the interviews regarding why they had those kinds of activities, and how the activities affected their learning and enjoyment of badminton. And I applied the contents of my literature review with regard to Korean's concepts of homophily, relationships, collective society and so on. Moreover, I double-checked discrepancies and questionable contents through the second and third interviews.

3) My analyses of the different use and awareness of learning as 배움 (*Bae-Woom*) and 학습 (*Hak-Seup*) in Korean were also affected by my subjective experience and interpretation as a Korean, at first. Then, I was able to identify which terms two Koreans as learning OC members used to indicate their OCs activities, and talked about why and how they used the selected terms. Moreover, I referred to experts' opinions about Koreans' perspectives and tendencies related to learning.

4) In terms of the contribution in OCs, I applied various methods, such as both English (international) and Korean literature, questionnaires,

interviews and observations of participants. At the very beginning, I was able to understand OC members' various propensities related to providing and acquiring resources in OCs through a survey, and invited relatively active members for interviews and observations of OC activities. Since I found their activeness and concept of contribution did not correspond to their concept of contribution in English literature through the two methods, I referred to more Korean literature about Korean's concept and tendencies with regard to contributions in communities, and divided the concept into three levels to understand it according to the Korean perspective. Therefore, I secured legitimacy of the interpretation of the data concerning the contribution of members of Korean OCs as I analysed data from interviews and observations to understand the concept in the sociocultural context.

Ethical Issues

In terms of ethical issues, I have to be aware of discrepancies between the theory and reality in the field because the study addressed the subjective experiences of individuals in relation to somewhat sensitive issues such as personal identified information and educational background. Moreover, I took some measures to respect research participants' privacy. Before doing observations and interviews, I utilised an informed consent letter which furnishes

details of the study, and obtains permission for using a voice recorder. In the interests of confidentiality, I also purposefully avoided mentioning the actual names of regions, OCs or participants in the paper. *Appendix C* and *D* are the participant information sheet and informed consent form respectively. The research's approval number from Seoul National University Institutional Review Board is 1602/001-006.

Conclusion and Summary

The research makes use of the mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data, integrate the findings, and draw inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods. Among the methods, discourse analysis is used to ascertain the appropriate definition of learning and to analyse the websites. Descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis are used to analyse trends and interviews.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter is structured based on my research sub-questions. The findings include what I have learnt from my research participants: What space and OCs mean; how OC activities affect learning motivation, conduct and contribution in both individual and collective dimensions; how people are aware of learning, especially through OCs.

Meaning of Online Community

- What is an online community?

Since this study tries to explore the implication of learning in general online communities (OCs), it is neither a research that focuses on all aspects of OC, nor focus on those designed only for learning purposes. I attempted to set up a standard meaning of the term OCs, and consider which factors can be regarded as learning in these general OCs. This grounded a base to understand which learning factors are in the OC, and how the members fulfil OC's activities for and by learning. The literature review chapter explored the various terms and concepts for online communities, diversified activities, activity stages and activities on each

stage related to learning in OCs. The chapter also compared aspects of general communities (traditional offline type) and OCs.
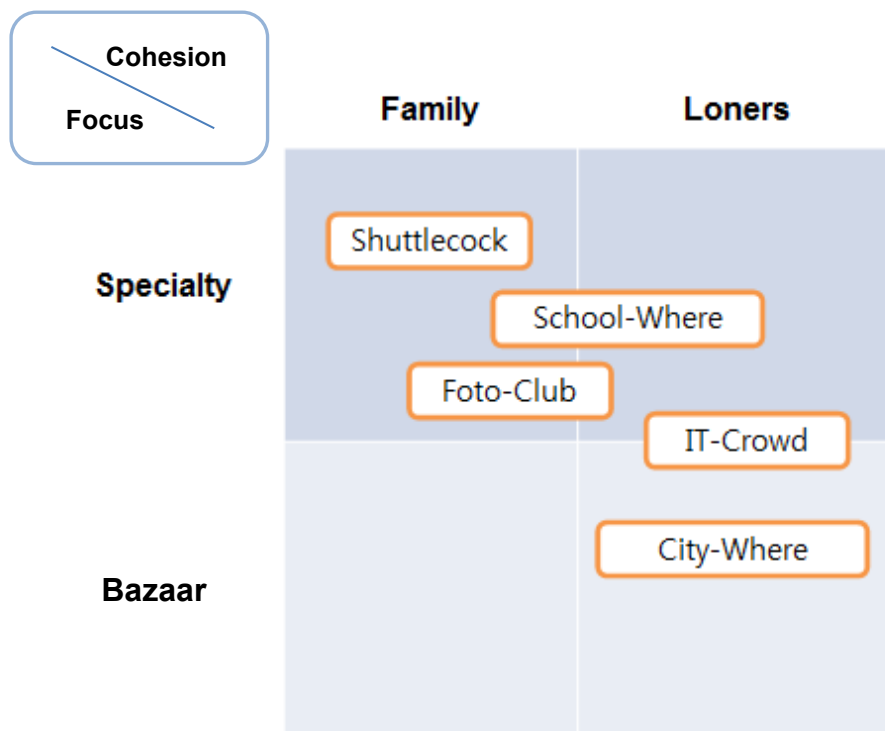
Figure 6 2X2 Table of Classification of Five Online Communities

* Source: Figallo, 1998

The five OCs could be classified as shown in Figure 6 based on the typology of Figallo (1998) without referring to the 'interactivity' aspect because

119

of two reasons: It might not meaningful to distinguish all of online communities which were sampled in terms of interactivity because all of them are quite interactive; and the term 'café' might be confused with Korean term, 'Café' (internet forum).

Café | **Club** | School-Where
| Shuttlecock | City-Where
| Foto-Club | IT-Crowd
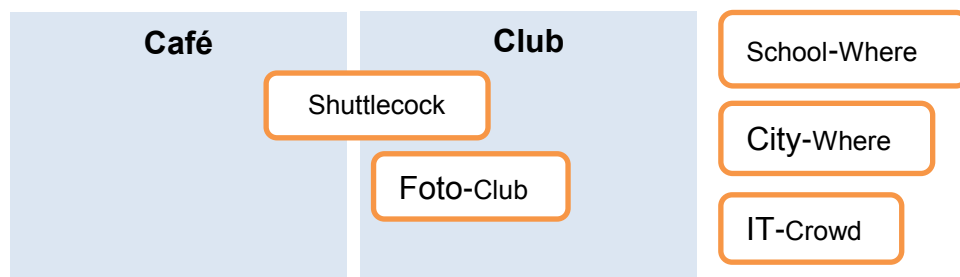
Figure 7 Classification of Five Online Communities according to KISA (2012) Research

*Source: the author

Although this classification includes some important concepts, which are emphasised in this research, it still has some limitations to describe characteristics of the five OCs and their learning implications. While this classification appears to be categorised by features of OCs at large, I try to understand OCs based on how research participants consider and regard OCs at an individual rather than a collective level. Therefore, cases of OC are equivocally classified across the boundaries of categories. Moreover, samples, which could support the area of

120

Family-Bazaar, are not considered in this research. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how people regard OCs according to purposes people use OCs for or the contents people pursue through the OCs for.

Meanwhile, some of the five online communities cannot be classified as either Café or Club according to the classification of KISA's 2012 research, since I found that people named Café as a type of platform (structure), and Club as a title to show the 'purpose' of online communities. As shown in Figure 7, it was not easy to organise the OCs systematically.

Although the literature review was quite helpful to understand OCs, and provided a general direction for this research, I needed to understand each OC's own definitions which provided more depth based on similar and different awareness among OC users. Therefore I tried to classify online communities based on two standards – structure/function and content/purpose.

Structure or function

The research result indicated that the communities studied could be defined by their structure and form. The most overriding structure was that of interaction versus information. Figure 8 shows how each of the five OCs under my study used software that contributes to the OCs' unique structure, where communication and interaction/information can be potentially shared. *IT-Crowd* and *School-*

121

Where were built as a type of the general webpage with several boards; *City-Where* was one of Facebook Groups; *Foto-Club* had two spaces – Café and Facebook Group; and *Shuttlecock* ran as a sub-group that belongs a larger OC named NAVER BAND[15].
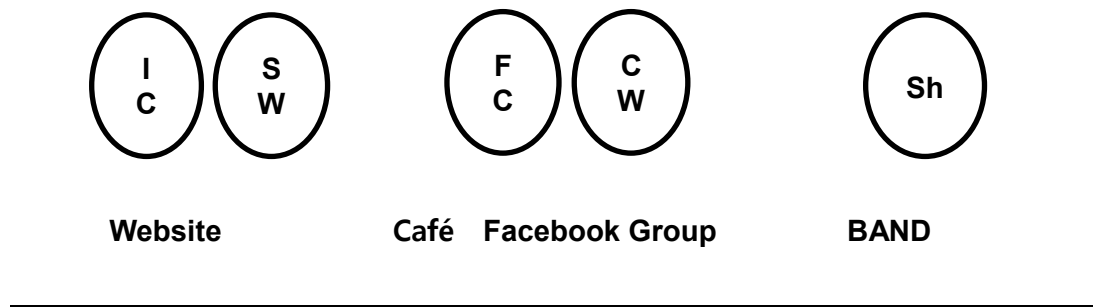
Figure 8 Classification of Online Communities with Respect of Structure/Form

*Source: the author

This grouping methodology seems to correspond and update the way in which it has been done for the literature review of KISA's 2012 research according to the recent changes in the online environment. It is because the

---

[15] According to Wikipedia, 'BAND's core features are Board, Chat, Calendar, and Album. Main communications happen on Board where postings and comments are posted. Polling, file sharing, and image/video sharing are also possible on Board….Unlike messaging apps, BAND has a membership system where Admins and Co-Admins have certain privileges, including Admin-only posting, deleting other members' content, approving/disapproving membership, removing members, or restricting sending out invites to non-members (Wikipedia, n.d.e)

current types of OCs have changed with the appearance of new or different ones, which take on different structures or forms, due to changing social and technology dynamics. While the Facebook and OCs were regarded as subcategories of SNS in the past, the 'Facebook Group', the newest form, has replaced the existing position of OC. Moreover, NAVER provides a new easy-to-use platform, named 'BAND' which is a smartphone application. This new way of communication in the South Korean virtual environment might offer another dimension to 'structure and function' as shown in Figure 9.
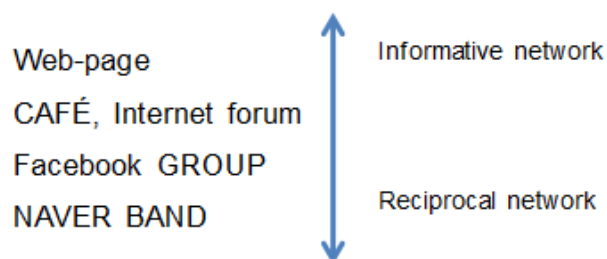
Figure 9 Informative Network and Reciprocal Network

*Source: the author

Structure and purpose overlap as explanations of why one form might be preferred over another for any given online learning community. Although both

Café and Facebook Group are the space for a group, Facebook Group might be less private and more open than Café in terms of personal information. The OCs that take the form of Café operate under a strong anonymity and allows less accessibility to personal online spaces such as the blog of OC members unlike the Facebook system. The Café requires a corner of self-introduction of members[16] and issues membership of various levels according to the effort of activities, contribution for vitalisation of the OC or participation in offline activities. Moreover, some resources and corners are only allowed for the higher-level membership holders to access. Whereas OCs as Facebook Group do not have those kinds of process and system, joining Facebook Group means that some personal information including one's profile on the personal Facebook page is automatically revealed to other members.

The OCs of which immediate and spontaneous interaction are important to be active in the system of BAND than other types of OC platform. This tendency might reflect 'maneuver of warfare' of smartphone SNS era, not 'position warfare' (Lee, 2012a, p. 336), which suggests an important distinction between the previous types of OCs and the new system, mobile apps. 'Maneuver of warfare' is used for intimacy and supports reciprocal interplay in the network. NAVER

---

[16] Self-introduction is the first requirement to join, and the style and contents are generally decided by the OC builder

BAND does this with its many features that allow members ways to interact and share. Informative networks, on the other hand, tend to prosper under webpage based OCs or Cafés. Compared to the mobile application based groups, their tendency is closer to 'position warfare.' It does not need frequent and speedy interaction, which means it runs relatively loosely in terms of activity compared to more interactive networks.

Another structural element was whether the OCs are 'group' oriented or 'individual' oriented. Generally, most interaction takes the form of group, but there is a tendency towards 'individualism' to get stronger as time went by.

Some OCs were settled in multiple platforms, in order to take the most advantage of each. For instance, *Foto-Club* mainly prospered in Facebook, although it still left its prototype, which is Café, active for the sake of archives including pictures and visitors' record history. Also, *IT-Crowd* planned to construct new types of structure such as smartphone app as well as webpage. This tendency shows that the dimension of OC as a means of virtual space expands with the advent of 'new new media' – a Levinson's (2009) expression.

Content or purpose

If the nature of the structure is adaptable enough to respond to technological advance, another reasonable way of categorisation, for OCs, is by

content and purpose. It was found that people tended to identify their OCs by what they do, and what they aim, rather than wherein, regardless of the environment they are surrounded such as Café or BAND.

Learning as a goal

- *A small group or space to create collective intelligence where people gather, share information and knowledge as well as intercommunicate with similar purposes*
- *A space where people learn and enjoy their interests with others who have same interests, not alone*
- *A place for sharing information and close friendship*

(Definitions of OCs from respondents)

The descriptions above are they key excerpt from the survey responses regarding the definition of OCs. Namely, if it is explored that how people consider and use OCs from the research cases based on concepts of such as 'in company with', 'communication', 'knowledge and information', 'intimate friendship' and so on, it would be more effective to understand how people considered OCs in the aspect of content/purpose.

For many participants of OCs, they view their participation as explicitly a place they go to learn. Firstly, *Shuttlecock* meant 'doing' badminton. Here, their jargon 'doing' could involve various activities that take place through the OC − playing badminton, taking lessons, discussing game strategy and watching other

126

members' game as the offline activities and watching and uploading videos on the OC and so on. The OC's functions were differently interpreted depend on how this verb 'do' represents. For instance, doing meant learning, as they did by watching and uploading videos on the club in order to master badminton skills and play well, and they sometimes shared resources from other sites with others.

[The OC is] like a library, an electronic library. [It's] a space to master necessary skills to play badminton more fun and better because I can draw information which I need only from there…there are a lot of OCs which have information I need such as videos of the national team matches…especially OCs where these kinds of matches are well arranged, are convenient. If I get good resources, I sometimes share them with my OC (Shuttlecock) members (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

I sometimes to log on my OC to see some videos which I am interested in or which are about skills I am not good at. I watch them for 10-20 minutes when I can turn on the computer to finish my work. And I visit there on purpose – to watch videos if members pointed out my weakness or wrong plays during [offline] games in the day before, since I do image training, and practice poses with watching videos at home. (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

Also, people joined the OC, hoping the chance of further meetings possibly offline, so that they can learn by watching others' playing in person and taking lesson from it.

[This FC's offline] badminton games always need four people, which needs a partner. So, always communication about exercise cannot be helped to happen: 'play this way or that way', better players give advice, and I cannot help to learn. And even I do not get advice, I can learn as playing with better players. Their spikes or attack skills are different. This experience itself is learning for me (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

I go there (to join offline game) to learn. I think learning from YouTube is limited, and sports should be learnt by watching and doing in person. As I participate in more games, the speed of improving skills is faster. And I can realise some unrecognised aspects as I get advice or comments from others what I could. I also ask better skilful players to have a game with me in order to improve defence skills against unfamiliar or faster attacks. After playing a game, players talked about the game much like 'you should have received the attack in this way', 'don't spike that way'. I can say I learn badminton from others, not only during plays, but also occasionally from video and talking with them… (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

I can learn from other members who have played for a long time. Besides I learn from lessons of coach, I can learn basic skills or game serve from other members (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

Implicit learning

For others, OCs could serve as an indirect means of learning. Although the members tend to stay unaware that they are learning something through the pleasure of all the activities they take in the community, the process might imply the sense of learning, which is often encouraged at an unconscious level. By sharing experiences, they learn. Their intent is not generally to 'learn,' but to share experiences. The formation of relationships has a positive effect on learning. Thus, other types of collective experience are well integrated with the target activity.

For the members, what mattered in the course of 'doing' was, for the members, 'doing together'. 'Do' means 'do together.' Although it is the nature of the game that calls for a partner and counterpart, the will for a team play was imperative for them under the sense of belonging to a certain group as a member.

128

It means that the relationship of 'do together' and 'learning together' is the necessary and sufficient condition. Namely, not only were people doing something together in order to learn, but they also learn about it as they do it together. Collective activities occur, thereby a relationship among members is built, and it becomes important.
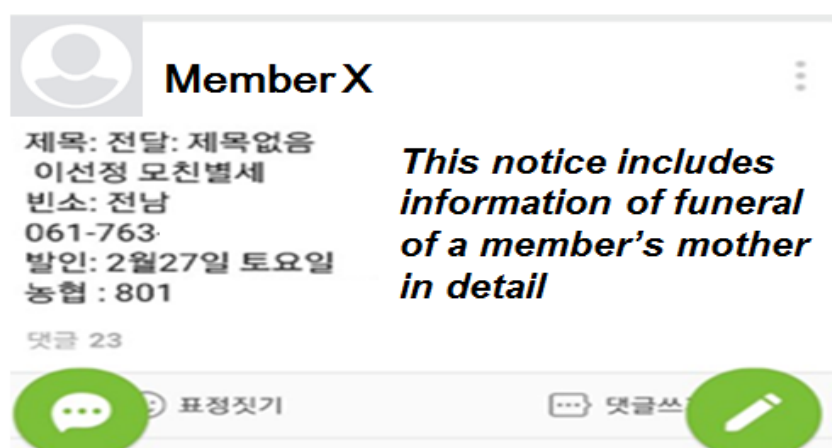
Figure 10 A Captured Scene of Announcement in *Shuttlecock* BAND

*Source: *Shuttlecock* BAND

> *Although we gathered here due to the topic ─badminton, all social activities happened here because it became a community and a culture which is peculiar to Korean culture such as taking care of each family's events (Figure 10). I think this culture is very strong and important to us (South Korean) (Mr F, Shuttlecock).*

And the formation of relationships had a positive effect on learning.

'Are you not coming for today's practice? Let's go', 'I will assist you today', like these, we motivate and encourage each other. While riding a bike alone in the fitness club is boring, in this community, people care and lead each other, so I can endure and have worked out for more than three years. We care about each other (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

[I join there] to be healthier as working out together, and to work out longer with more fun (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

Group strengthening

The mixing of relationship formation and learning advances the apparent main purpose of the community. Relationship formation serves an integral part of the learning environment – as a necessary element.

Communication was regarded as important in order to maintain relationships and amity, promoting the motivation for 'learning' and 'doing together'. Activities that involve outdoor activity were important for this group, thus offline relationships might be equally significant. Indeed, as they called each other as family[17], not only did they play badminton together, but also they organised seasonal events including regular meetings. They even sincerely took care of other fellow members' life evens such as wedding and funeral in order to

---

[17] 'The terms of address used within the family can be also use outside the family in order to express intimacy' in Korean Culture (Kim, H., 2010, p. 261). According to age difference in close relationships, it is common to use familial terms such as (older) brother or (older) sister (Kim, H., 2010)

strengthen their bond. Attendance at such events as a non-family member signifies a feature similar to the traditional Korean culture, which prioritises the concept of community – village community people help each other as their own family and help.

> *Online, BAND is only for greeting and promoting relationships for more fun offline activities (Mr A, Shuttlecock)*
>
> *I upload my personal things as well as pictures of entertainments times. We also talk about seasonal picnics of family (members) in the online space as well. It is almost family relationship…Furthermore, resources such as videos which could be a guide for beginners as well as family's personal pictures are shared [in the OC] (Mr B, Shuttlecock)*
>
> *For instance, during weekend, members notice and collect other members who want to go to play games with other badminton community members through BAND instead of calling to everyone by phone. Also, the game schedule and list of participants are noticed there. We also can vote to the preferred time for game through BAND's voting function. These things are really important and useful. Furthermore, we can announce news such as someone's lost or family events through BAND, otherwise, we have to give a call to every 80-90 member. Mobile text is also not that convenient. So, BAND is really good for us (Mr C, Shuttlecock)*

In most cases, some OCs played the role of assistance, encouraging this intimate relationship, communication and offline activities. In order to strengthen these kinds of roles, the online platform of OCs tended to transfer to BAND from webpage or Café. The case of Shuttlecock is the example.

It is admittedly a fact that the BAND provides a function of learning as one of general OC's functions such as acquiring information and knowledge, since people could watch badminton videos and searched materials through it. Still, it is

131

vital to note that the very effect of learning is entailed through the course of offline activities, and it seemed to be much stronger because this group's main purpose was a physical sport. Namely, this group strongly pursued 'do together' or 'do with good people like family'.

A note on 'Favourite Clubs'

The groups that comprise of the features discussed above is called 'Dong-Ho-Whe (동호회)'. Its literal meaning highlights that it is a group for 'people with same interests' or 'doing interests or something we like together', and there is no equivalent term in English to help distinguish the cultural nuance of Dong-Ho-Whe (동호회) from a club. It is more like a bond – a kind of close community of people who act collectively with a purpose and mutual support. Since there is no English equivalent, I have chosen the term 'Favourite Club' in this research. Concepts of community matters profoundly for South Koreans as well as the sense of together as plural subjects 'us', and under the slogan, they tend to appreciate the sense of belonging and do something with others as it is shown in the literature review. This tendency is seen well from the development of Favourite Club. And, learning, amity, and activities are necessary, and co-dependent conditions for each other in Favourite Clubs. Figure 11 shows important relationships in such clubs between activities, learning and amity. Each part underpins the weights of the trust; if you remove one element, the other two

will go away.

Learning
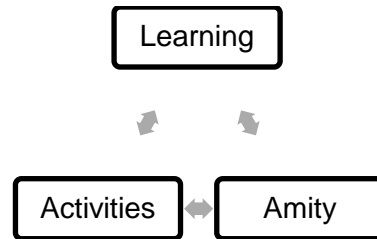
Activities → Amity

**Figure 11 Relationships among learning, activities,
and amity in Favourite Club**

*Source: the author

At a glance, some might assert it is not reasonable to divide the group simply by the location where the members 'do' their interest (regarded as offline activities) with others into two as 'online' and 'offline'. It might be necessary to explain its features in details. Groups for physical activities in offline environment build their platform in the online space in order to manage their group smoothly. These groups are offline-Favourite Clubs. On the contrary, in the case of online-Favourite Clubs, people who have common interests gather in the online space for related information or knowledge at first. And then they plan offline activities. Since the online space is natural and compulsory for both cases, people tend not to

distinguish them, and call them as just Favourite Clubs. *Shuttlecock* is the former's case, and *Foto-Club* is the latter's case the former case. *Foto-Club* was to communicate for various purposes related to photography such as camera information, camera uses, Photoshop skills, artistic inspiration and so on.

It might be regarded that we can learn about taking pictures, using equipment (e.g., camera, lens) and Photoshop programme through Foto-Club, since people's photographic styles are diverse. We teach each other how to make certain effects by Photoshop … We also have an annual seminar and exhibition (Mr M, Foto-Club)

Since I only use camera's function as I know, I can learn other diverse functions as I participate in Favourite Club's activities…It is meaningful to learn as I enjoy because other members recommend some functions and explain photo editing ways (Ms P, Foto-Club)

If I am isolated in my own studio, I feel stuffy. Photography is a very individual work, so I think communications are important. Pictures is somehow an indirect experience…for instance, I need abundant knowledge of butterfly in order to take pictures of it. And I need to listen to people's life story in order to express others' life which I have never experienced. OC is an opportunity to widen my view. I joined this OC in order to converse with other people (Mr O, Foto-Club)

However, despite both groups' same identity as OC, *Foto-Club* showed lower level of intimacy through their loose relationships compared to *Shuttlecock.*

I consider it (Foto-Club) somewhat mildly. I just participate in many activities, not work hard, and not consider it as a serious or important thing for me. If it disappears, it is nothing for me. I am not so attached to it because I can find many other photography groups and I can take pictures anywhere too (Ms P, Foto-Club)

To be honest, I think, these days, the influence of OCs is weaker than past because SNS too much develops. It is vitalised. And people talk about even trifling things [through it]. So, the OC activity is a just hobby for me, it is enough to meet a few

134

congenial people from there (Ms N, Foto-Club)

In this case, the importance of communication regarding offline activities was weaker than the case of *Shuttlecock* relatively. The reason might be related to the fact that *Foto-Club*'s frequency of offline activities including photographers' outdoor photo-shooting was much less than the regular play schedule of *Shuttlecock*. In other words, in the case of *Foto-Club*, the members' activity tendency was relatively more salient online than offline, since the communal digital online space where they could deal with 'digital photos' is essential for the OC; people were able to have diverse (offline) activities through other channels; they also tended to focus on acquiring information and communicating in the online space.

Peripheral learning benefits

Many OC members mentioned the benefits of which they had learned from the OC membership that did not have a direct association with the original purpose of the OC. Numbers of noteworthy examples from my research supported this view, since the OC appeared to provide an environment whereby other types of information and networks were made available to participants.

It is interesting to introduce Mr Y's response here, as he stated his purpose of OC activities in the pilot interview. He meant that not only 'going camping' was the main purpose of joining his OC, but also having more 'relationship' and

135

providing his 'children opportunities to experience' were the main meanings/topics of the OC for him.

> *I can get information of camping equipment, but the main purpose is relationship. Of course camping with my own family is good, but I want to meet new people, and provide my children new environment and opportunities to experience society with others. And they can learn habits or custom of jobs naturally as they experience other people with various jobs in camping. The meaning of OC for me is an educational field or learning opportunity for my kids. That is why I tried to find good camping opportunities from the OC and join them. We learn many things naturally (Mr Y, Club-Camping)*

Like the case of Mr Y, research participants stated like the bellow sentences. For them, OCs was the venue where they expected to communicate with others directly as much as possible, and get + α[18] effect, social relationships through the communication.

> *[I join the OC] to make various relationship. If I know various occupational clusters, it could be helpful for my life. Isn't it?...Jobs of people whom I meet through community are various, and my relationships widen indeed. If I need someone, for instance, a lawyer, I can contact him and ask a help within the network of the OC. We are such like a human resource for each other (Mr C, Shuttlecock)*

> *First, this is a badminton Favourite Club. So, we might learn badminton only as knowledge or skill. However, we also learn relationship, social interaction for bye because there are many people, and social relationships happen inside of Favourite Club (Mr D, Shuttlecock)*

Members of *City-Where* considered their OC as somewhere they stay

---

[18] + α means more, additional or extra

logged in, glance over in spare time, and if lucky, learn their local's trend; they get

to understand tendencies of the young twenties, or where they could get local

information likewise. As people could understand 'trends' from people's posting

on the OC as well as they acquired knowledge or information related to a certain

topic, communication seemed to be an important factor for the OC.

I accessed this OC for parts of this city's sentiment and local PR (public-relations). And for manners, rules and basic principles are made in OCs. As an educator, I can provide educational factors related to this city. I hope this OC becomes a local cultural space with volunteering or cultural activities, not commercial place (Mr G, City-Where)

I do [OC activities] because I just feel interested. How can I say...I am a nosy person? I just want to introduce fancy restaurants where food is really good [to other people], since I think City-Where is the best place for PR or promotion. Also, we can help each other [through this OC]. For instance, it can play a role in lost-and-found. Actually, when I found a wallet on the street, I contacted the owner through City-Where (Ms I, City-Where)

One day, I needed a certain kind of shop. But I didn't have any information about it. So I asked to City-Where, and many people left recommendations. This thing is quite useful. And if I sometimes log on and look over there, I can grasp what happened in the city, for example, traffic accidents or crimes...I can see the current situation and ambience [of the city] (Ms X, City-Where)

I have a business in this city. I'm staying there physically all day, so the way I can communicate with people except my customers is the Internet. And I visit City-Where to see what kinds of content young people upload, what tendencies they have and how they express their opinions or emotions on the public space. I see the city's social flow from there. Understanding these things is important for business. But I do not get information or knowledge from there. I rather read and search [information] from Daum or NAVER. I do not search information from OCs (Mr H, City-Where).

Like the interviews above, *City-Where* members tended to consider the OC

as somewhat trifling space for mere life information. They expressed only mild interest in pursuing or considering some serious directions or goals whereas the OC manager (Mr G) deeply cared the matters. Although some people held nationwide famous offline events in the city as an event of the OC, and peers recruited members for different Favourite Clubs, the numbers of offline events as collective activities were still not many. Two reasons can be presumed for this: Not only many members already knew each other due to the small size of the city, but also the topic of OC was not clear enough to develop into offline activities, because it nominally plays a role in the space for information and trend of the local city.

In the case of *IT-Crowd*, people value 'communication' as much as professional knowledge related to IT like cases of previous OCs.

At first, I join this group to get news or information of IT because of my job. I leave questions or search in the board if I log on there in order to find certain information. Besides I like I can discuss and communicate about social issues as well as the newest IT news, since I realise what I did not consider before or understand opposite opinion's logics ...I sometimes arrange my thoughts by referring to various opinions... (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

Although the OC's topic was IT, Mr L's speaking showed that the OC's members liked that they communicated through texts on boards: They enjoyed discussing current affairs and issues, and they trusted in each other.

138

I think we should understand a lot of things in order to survive this complicated society: things we should know as well as common senses are very diverse and enormous. While several subjects of school system and some majors of university have limitations to cover them, I can experience various issues in IT-Crowd where self-purification occurs well and members' intellectual level is relatively higher. As I steadily read postings in IT-Crowd in my spare time, I make my own thoughts such like 'these items are good for these days' and 'it could be considered as that way'. I think I can widen my view, develop thinking skills, and improve my capabilities to find out good information if I pile up knowledge and thoughts neatly although they are not useful in a moment. I think it is a must-have activity in the changeable society (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Whereas a role of OC as a library where people browse in a book to find immediate need information was discussed in the case of *Shuttlecock* previously, the function Mr K mentioned might be similar to the reason why we read books widely. It is because reading is helpful to develop thinking skills and improve abilities for re-combining knowledge, which gets accumulated, rather than for knowing certain knowledge and using it forthwith. It might be reasonable to say that what people can get from OCs like the efficacy of reading is learning which involving reflection and creation. In other words, OC is a space where people can educate themselves as acquiring common sense advice, various information, knowledge and competence to cope with the present and future by making the most of it while they are participated in OCs. This is likely to occur depending on whether they identify their OC activities as a way of learning or not.

I hope teachers share how they have grown up later even though they started to use School-Where only for getting other teachers' materials and work by themselves at

139

first. Communicating and growing up together is the final goals of the OC (Mr V, School-Where)

'Oh, this teacher has also hard time, not only me,' 'her headmaster or his sub-master is similar with mine' I feel empathy or sympathy with other teachers… (Mr U, School-Where)

The reason why I donate supporting money and log in School-Where is that we can talk about teachers' stories there…it is somehow poor though, teachers can talk their stories comfortably in the space. And teachers can discuss about something they feel uncomfortable to talk with senior teachers as face-to-face, for instance, the incentive system. Not only related to classes, but also related to promotion or irrational system are discussed in the space. To be honest, I do not participate in these kinds of discussion, but I can support them and understand the fact that many teachers have similar opinions with me. That is why I cherish *there (Ms S, School-Where)*

One of the objectives of *School-Where* was 'space where primary school teachers could communicate and share their concerns about education. Mr V, one of the previous managers of the OC, hoped *School-Where* to be a place for the objective, and tried to use the OC solely on the ground. He also emphasised communication and social functions among teachers in the OC.

Like above, some teachers particularly liked to support those who are in the similar position, and communicated more honestly and more easily in the online environment. On the other hand, others tended to pay their exclusive attention to the factors apart from this dimension: The purpose of using *School-Where* was to acquire necessary materials and provide better classes to his or her students with the materials available on the OC.

I'm really happy when my students like and enjoy classes, then I want to find more interesting materials [from School-Where] ...However, I have never left a comment nor uploaded materials there. I only visit there in order to find or download some resources...It might be selfish, but so many resources are uploaded by many other teachers who are much better than me...If I get good teaching tips or materials, I just share them with teachers in my school, not upload there (Mr T, School-Where)

I have to teach many subjects, but it is reality that I don't have enough time to study all of them. So, School-Where is like a space for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Not only I download teaching-learning materials, but also I get ideas of them. So, I often use School-Where to browse or search teaching tips (Ms S, School-Where)

A conceptual framework for categorising by content and purpose

As *Shuttlecock* and *Foto-Club* clearly showed features of Favourite Club as a type of OCs, while other three OCs did not, South Korean OCs could be divided as two standards, 'Favourite Club's and non-Favourite Clubs. The non-Favourite Club type of OCs is called as Community (커뮤니티, same as the English sound). When the OCs are divided into two types as Favourite Club and Community, it is easier to define them by its clear features including content/purpose. Figure 12 shows how the five OCs can be categorised by their purpose and activities. Three of the OCs are fully online and function largely anonymous. Two OCs function as a support to offline activities, and also have substantial relationships with each other for mutual support. In one case, the anonymity can be thought of as more distant and purpose-oriented than the other 'Favourite Club,' which requires more amity as the club's foremost value to function.

141

Online community

Commu-
nity
(커뮤니티)

Favourite
Club
(온라인 동호회)

Exclusively online   Includes offline activities

Anonymous participations   Intimate participation

City-Where

IT-Crowd   *Shuttlecock*

School-Where   *Foto-Club*
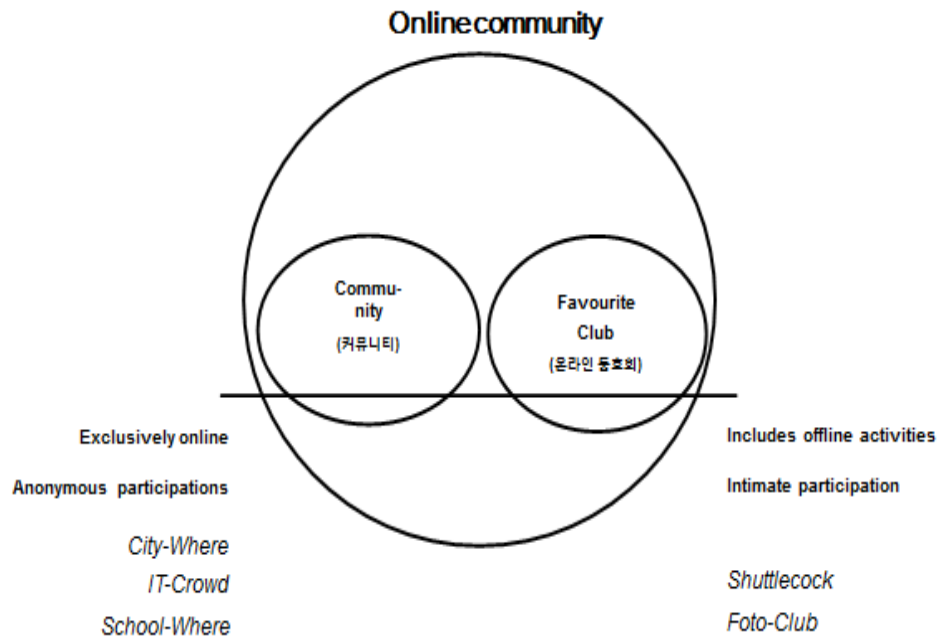
Figure 12 Classification of Online Communities with Respect of Content/Purpose

*Source: the author

Not only people search or share information about a certain topic in the type of Community such as *City-Where*, *IT-Crowd* and *School-Where*, but they also discuss topics irrelevant to the main subject of the community. Generally the function of forum/Q-and-A asynchronously on the bulletin board is a distinctive feature. This takes the form of indirect communication performed between 'human – OC (non-human) – human.' Also, the space is similar to the library, in the sense of what people pursue therein, as they acquire or share knowledge and

142

information free from spatio-temporal limitation and economic costs through the structure. The contents dealt with are searched or collected for an immediate need. Moreover, should any posts contain enough knowledge value, they are actively referred in a retrospective manner after the entire discussion is closed. They would have + α benefits to improve thinking and communication skill later.

The definition of Favourite Clubs (Dong-Ho-Whe, 동호회) like *Shuttlecock* and *Foto-Club* is 'a group for enjoying same hobby/interest with others' (NAVER Dictionary, n.d., self-translated). It connotes a strong meaning that people enjoy offline activities together as well as they search and share information about the interests. In other words, it is a group to learn more about their interests from peers in the process of enjoyment, in company with others. Therefore, offline activities tend to be the main purpose while OC activities including communication usually play ancillary roles. As offline activities indicates, in Favourite Clubs, a direct communication between 'human – human' is more important, and intimacy is considered as a measure that decides the level of smoothness in communication. Moreover, people expect + α effect of Favourite Club activities: They widen their spheres of life, namely network, as they experience and learn about relationships and social life through the direct communication. Certainly, indirect communications like 'human – OC (non-human) – human' also actively takes place as people save and share useful and

memorable knowledge and information in Favourite Clubs.

Conclusion on meaning of online community

The Features of OCs were discussed in both aspect of structure/form and content/purpose previously in this section. Examining features of the five OC cases, I could find which was common and different among them, especially in the sense of learning. Two Favourite Clubs are relatively more reciprocal, and have a higher inclination of offline activities than the other three Communities rather informative and of low inclination in offline activities. However, *School-Where* is distinguished from other two Communities because the group of primary school teachers has strong homophily; sympathy and communications among primary school teachers are emphasised, even though a lot of primary school teachers consult the OC in order to get teaching materials (informative network tendency); the Community often holds offline activities such as in-service teacher training or events, and the members have become more actively involved; it has an apparent topic – primary school field including teaching unlike two other Communities which treat cross-sectoral topics including their own main topic, IT and local city respectively. Namely, five case OCs are divided into three groups as the following:

(I)   School-Where
(II)   Shuttlecock, Foto-Club
(III)   City-Where, IT-Crowd

Firstly, the *Group (I)* seems to be similar to Wenger's (2001) 'communities of practice'. Primary school teachers joined *School-Where* mostly in order to acquire 'practical' and 'experiential' knowledge from other teachers with abundant experiences. Especially, early-career teachers tended to learn through resources uploaded by other more-experienced teachers, prepare classes and develop their own teaching know-how in the process. The reason why *School-Where* is distinctive from other general communities is that only primary teachers are entitled to a full access membership, and they treated their professional know-how and knowledge in their field, whereas experts and non-experts from diverse fields randomly mingle in other Communities. In other words, since *School-Where* pursues communicative and socio-emotional dimensions among teachers as well as informative network concurrently, it does not lean toward either informative or reciprocal side. In this group, not only does the feature of informative network appear strongly from sharing resources online, but also offline gatherings or training programmes at the in-service level are formed for teachers' learning. It might appear similar to the service of a traditional learning community. However, apart from in-service training programmes which are held by this OC, teachers' general learning through the OC might be much closer to informal learning

145

because the learning is a sort of self-learning without top-down and guideline. Nevertheless, it shows its function for learning clearly as a representative case among five cases.

In the case of *Group (II)* with Favourite Clubs, members gathered there to learn and enjoy what they were interested in through especially communal offline gatherings. Especially, joining of professional photographers or badminton training coach was effective regarding the OC members' professional development. However, each Favourite Club is a group, which has strong reciprocal tendencies which people enjoy some extra events together. Therefore, these groups had better be considered in a broader perspective, rather than limiting them as 'learning' community like *Group (I)*.

Although *IT-Crowd* and *City-Where* in the *Group (III)* were Communities with the main topic, various topics and issues were also treated widely through the communities. Therefore, the tendency of the informative network is stronger in the groups than other groups, and their discussion threads on about current issues and affairs are actively conducted in the Communities in parallel. At a glance, as an IT 'professional' group, *IT-Crowd* might seem to belong to the same group as *School-Where*. However, it is rather classified as far more general Community like *City-Where* due to several aspects: 1) It encompasses many topics and issues in diverse fields as well as the IT; 2) it is not an exclusive space for IT experts only.

Shallow and intermittent communications about diverse topics including everyday life are often triggered by non-experts and diverse people; 3) offline activities are far more inactive than online ones. In the traditional perspective, the freest and less systematic *Group (III)* that treats unspecified topics including trifling chatters might seem to be related to learning least. However, it would be reasonable to regard their sheer amount of contents (e.g., information as well as professional knowledge), active interactions (including sharing, observing, reading etc.) and diverse communications as a catalyst for both intentional/unintentional learning as well. Perhaps, it might be the least stressful and obligatory model of learning. One might be sceptical in the way my research regard the users as potential learners and their interaction as the equivalent of education. Consideration on grounds why interaction is learning and why learning takes place through interaction would begin in earnest from the next.

Lastly, I explored different tendencies among Favourite Clubs and Communities respectively. The reasons are, as discussed previously, related to some points: 1) Some OCs builds their spaces in more than one structure/form, and the spaces are not equally active. For instance, *Shuttlecock* uses only the space and functions of BAND, and its previous Café only remains an out-dated site; 2) several Favourite Clubs derive from an OC; 3) the terms, Community and Favourite Club are regarded differently according to 'individuals' different

purposes even though they are 'communities' which classified as Communities and Favourite Clubs with quite apparent features and objectives. For instance, some Favourite Club members focus on the general functions of Communities such as getting information instead of participation in offline activities. It might be reasonable to state that either classifying or defining OCs clearly is highly complicated, since individual members' purposes, attachments, interests and other dimensions are too diverse and characterful to be described as features of a group. Therefore, it might be significant to explore research questions related to motivation, purpose and so on as linked to research questions about what and why OC activities people do. And the work which explores the meaning of OCs through classifying cases in several modes in this finding section would be the crucial foundation to contemplate further research questions about the implications of each OC in the learning dimension.

Method of Learning within Online Communities

- In what ways do online communities learn?

Online learning takes different form compared to the traditional model of learning such as classrooms, if not, MOOCs. In other words, learning takes place

informally or even in embedded modes. In this section, I explore five ways that people described how they learned in online communities. In general, these learning strategies fell into the following categories − searching and asking; reflecting; creating; individual or collective learning; and experiencing.

			5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70
To search or acqure information, knowledge or materials	106	70.7%	
To provide information, knowledge or materials spontaneously	38	25.3%	
To leave comments or give feedbacks to materials from other members	43	28.7%	
To enjoy a close friendship with other members	44	29.3%	
To participate in group offline activities	30	20.0%	
To promote his or her business	8	5.3%	
To ask some questions or request a certain resource	24	16.0%	
To participation in the discussion about various issues	19	12.7%	
Others	0	0.0%	

N=150. Respondents could choose more than one

Figure 13 What Are Your Main Online Community Activities?

*Source: the author's survey

I asked respondents why they visited online communities. Given their responses, I was able to discern their implicit learning methods. Figure 13 shows

149

the results of my aggregations from the responses of this survey. Many respondents mentioned more than one reason why they got online and approached communities – hence the total responses were more than the number of respondents as follows.

The most striking pointing in the finding was, information and materials acquirement was the overwhelmingly more important or popular activity for online communities. It is worth noting that the top three activities given are all related to learning. Also, it is clear that there is a priority for building and maintaining relationships. Each of the learning functions is discussed below.

Searching and asking

| Search box for the whole OC | Search box within the bulletin board |

Figure 14 Retrieval Functions of *School-Where*

*Source: the webpage of *School-Where*

150

Firstly, OCs were vast reservoirs of information and knowledge which played a role of 'libraries' as mentioned in the previous section. Therefore, people got information and knowledge from OCs. As Figure 13 shows as a part of the survey, the main OC activities was 'searching' through the search box (Figure 14) and 'acquiring' information, knowledge or materials (106 votes, 70.7%).

I usually talk with people or search resources from online spaces such as Café when I want to learn something. When I search some learning materials [related to badminton], coaches or stakeholders already uploaded resources like videos about aspects which ordinary amateurs like me would wonder about and need. I can get information as I search these kinds of video. And I don't need to watch the whole video. I can watch some parts I need. I can acquire resources as I select…it is convenient and good to find them by searching. I don't know the provider personally, but I communicate with the 'teacher' (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

Android is open source, so there are enormous amounts of contents if I search about what I wonder. It is very useful because they are well arranged in Korean [in IT-Crowd] (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

At least once a day I log in [School-Where] and find teaching materials for main subjects such as Korean, math and social studies, since it would be boring if I use i-Scream[19] all day…I use School-Where to find good materials (Mr T, School-Where)

Meanwhile, like 'To ask some questions or request a certain resource' which got 24 votes (16%) in Figure 13, people acquired resources by the act of 'asking' or 'requesting' (Figure 15).

---

[19] It is an education service which grafts educational contents with IT technology as digital resources. It provides contents and software related to from subject, non-subjects to evaluation sectors in the primary school level (i-Scream, n.d.)

[컴퓨터]
이게 네트워크 프로그래밍(소켓 프로그래밍)이 맞나요?

대학교 네트워크 프로그래밍 수업 팀과제로

네트워크(소켓)를 사용한 프로그램을 만드는건데했

저희 팀에서 회의한 결과 웹에서 돌아가는 서비스를 만들기로 했거든요

저희가 수업시간에 배우는건 tcp/ip 소켓 프로그래밍이구요

교수님이 딱히 개발언어나 플랫폼에 제한을 둔건 아닌데

이게 소켓프로그래밍의 범주에 들어가나요?

This is a question about programming

Member B left a response
웹에서 (80포트, http 프로토콜) 돌아가는 서비스(아무거나 될수있음)
예전에 com+ 이나 atl 같은게 웹서비스라고 판객은 있던거 같긴한데.개 생각은
아니다에 한표 드립니다.

Member C left a response
소켓프로그래밍 c언어 로 작성해서 cmd창에서 양쪽컴퓨터에서 채팅 주고받고 피

Member D left a response
아파치같은 웹 서버 띄워놓고 .. 웹서비스 짜넣는다면 소켓프로그래밍이라 보기 응
tcp/ip를 이용하는 인터페이스가 소켓이고 그위에 돌아가는게 웹이라 봐아죠.

Member E left a response
Duyu 님 의견에 한표~
소켓프로그래밍이 과제라면 아마도 http 보단 low level 의 protocol 을 짜셔야 할

Figure 15 A Captured Scene of A Question and Answers in *IT-Crowd*

*Source: the webpage of *IT-Crowd**

I can ask about different fields to members who are working in the field. And they might be able to help me if I ask a help as well (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

If I cannot solve some problems [of programming], I write about them on the bulletin board in order to ask helps. Someone might be able to find wrong parts and suggest a revised version under my writing [as a comment] (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

If I ask, "can you recommend any café where I get delicious macaroon [in the city]? Where is the location?" Some people leave comments to the question with the information I need (Ms X, City-Where)

In the case of *Shuttlecock*, tendencies to ask some questions or request something in person was more frequent than other OCs, due to its regular offline activities such as badminton games, lessons and other social gatherings. Meanwhile, the relatively higher frequency of asking and requesting in the online space of certain OCs than others might be attributed to the function and structure/form of the OCs: The volatility of information is stronger in OCs which is built as the type of Facebook Group or BAND, since the previous contents are forgotten as the scroll of space goes up, and saved information and its spaces are relatively not shown visibly in these OCs. The information turns into 'absent' information. Therefore, it is common to ask about what people need to know such occasions (although the information or materials were already provided in the OC because other(s) already had asked). The phenomenon – asking was more active in *City-Where* while searching was more active in *IT-Crowd* and *School-Where,* the type of the webpage where saved contents are relatively visible – supports this argument. This kind of conduct which information or resources are stored through asking and answer is the feature which shows how knowledge is pile up in Korean OCs as forms of thread and comment as discussed in the literature review.

153

However, the fact, this kind of OC function has been somewhat weaker, should not be overlooked. As Mr O and Mr L explained, other Internet spaces have been expanding and opening up its scale as well as OCs.

Getting information is really easier than 10 years ago. In that time, we could not find all information through the Internet. But now, if I search through NAVER, I can find everything. Rather too much… While Favourite Clubs are only places where we (30-40's) could find a lot of information about interests before, now from Blogs to NAVER Knowledge-iN[20], [we can get] so much information. So I think the necessity of Favourite Clubs has decreased (Mr O, Foto-Club)

While the number of communities [like IT-Crowd] has decreased a lot, survived communities became bigger. [If people tended to use communities only in past] I think I can classify the Internet users in three groups – firstly people use SNSs mainly (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter); secondly people use web portal sites to search information (e.g., NAVER, Daum and Google); thirdly people join OCs. So I can say that the tendency to focus on [online] communities is reduced (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

If a person reads or searches what other person has uploaded, it means that an interaction happens between a reader/searcher and a writer. If a person asks a question, the interaction happens between an asker and an answerer. The provider and taker thereof perform the role of a teacher and a learner to each other. Interaction happens although these relationships lack face-to-face value because of a medium – OC is interrupted between them. In other words, as I discussed in

---

[20] NAVER Knowledge-iN (네이버 지식-iN, *self-translated*) is one of NAVER services. People can ask and answer about everything from fancy restaurants to medical or legal knowledge. While some of your points are spent if you ask, you can get some points if your answer is selected or recommended. The number of cumulative responses is 240,127,949 since 2002 until 12.07pm, 4th September, 2016 (NAVER Knowledge-iN, 2016)

the literature review chapter, its function connotes reciprocal (social) meaning; the member's virtual experience enables indirect learning through interactions and communications with others; they learn through the experiences of others. This kind of learning could also be counted as 'learning', hence, 'knowing'. Further, deeper levels of 'learning' are possibly conducted in OCs as well; people could go further into 'reflection' and 'creation' beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge, through other members in OCs.

Reflecting

> *It is not easy to know about policies, and reasons why [political] parties have quarrels. Even though I watch broadcast news, I cannot understand these things, and sceptical about public opinion manipulation. But if I read contents about these things from many people [in IT-Crowd], and understand their arguments, I think I can have my position and my perspective. I think I got political intuition [as I refer to communications in the OC] (Mr K, IT-Crowd)*

> *One day, we took a picture of 'bridge'. There were so many different pictures which I had never imagined. I was surprised and thought that 'people can express it as that way' and 'people can have these kinds of views' (Mr O, Foto-Club)*
> *Although I have never met them in person, interacting with stars[21] among [primary school] teachers on SNS is helpful to build my view and values. I sometimes want to follow some aspects of them as a teacher (Ms S, School-Where)*

> *It is a place to show and test our own trials [about taking and editing pictures]. So sometimes other people's experimentations motivate me to decide to try new styles like them later (Mr N, Foto-Club)*

---

[21] Some teachers who upload a lot of resources or organise programmes in the space of *School Where* are quite famous and popular among primary school teachers in South Korea. They are called as 'stars' like movie stars.

I log in when I need presentation files or videos [for classes]. If I have to teacher lesson 2 of science, for example, I firstly collect resources for the whole lesson [from School-Where], and I rearrange them – throwing out some unnecessary parts, and select suitable parts for my students. I think reconstructed resources [by other teachers] are desirable (Ms R, School-Where)

One could consider the term 'reflection' with above five stories. If a person had a better thinking process because a 'reading effect' helped to improve thinking skills, this process could be interpreted as a reflection as well. People could review and express their opinions or views by expressing them through writing or communicating on what they accessed and experienced in OCs. When people saw the fellow users' activities, they sometimes recognised signs of new ideas, or they might decide to try it as well. Besides, when people observed some members' positive activities, they were motivated to engage more intensively in those activities. Moreover, people are more reflective of their own situation when they referred to or used resources uploaded by other members. Furthermore, leaving a comment or feedback to a post by others is also a type of self-reflection, in the sense that comments are written based on a fine understanding of the original text. Namely, it could be aruged that the reflection is not only an internal function of the individual, but also it is an appearance of social learning as a reciprocal interaction within the environment – OCs and peers.

If this aspect describes reflection at the individual level, reflection at the collective level in OCs might also be a significant factor to consider in the

research. Reflection protects OCs and promotes their development through self-awakening and self-purification against problems or issues inflicted by members at the level of the group.

> *In IT-Crowd, self-purifications against commercial ads, sexual contents and so on are quite good. Filtering or suturing against conflicts or serious arguments is fine as well. So, it is less uncomfortable to use [the Community]. And stampeding to a certain perspective is lessen [by this process] as well (Mr K, IT-Crowd)*

> *City-Where seemed to be a huge leaflet at once. Then, people woke up, and tried to find a way to control commercial advertisements. Some members suggested a vote – how often retail stores can advertise on City-Where, and it was decided as once per month. And although some ignorant people still leave offensive or dyslogistic comments under someone's shop review, many people seem to try to consider reviews or other postings in the objective point of view. So, people try not to make victims of 'witch-hunting'. And of course individual business households are conscious of City-Where, and try to provide good services in this city (Ms X, City-Where)*

> *One day, a teacher attacked on another teacher who worked for extra lectures [out of primary school]. When attacks like this happen, managers have many worries about private things or controversial issues. But we do not delete the negative postings by ourselves though because we think self-purification applies and solves the problem. By [general member] teachers' comments (arguments) about what are wrong or right… (Mr V, School-Where)*

Creating

'Creating' can also be viewed as an extended form of learning. At first, let us assume a person acquires resource *A* from his or her OC. If he or she makes different versions of resource *A* (*A-1, A-2…*) or he or she makes something new (*B, C…*) by referring to resource *A*, it means that creative learning occurs at the

individual level. Meanwhile, it would be more reasonable to consider creating at the level of group in two modes: Firstly, if the person provide either *A-1* or *B* which he or she created to share in the OC, it means that creating occurs at the collective level too; secondly, if many members leave feedbacks and additions along threads or comments to a certain previous material in the OC, it means that the new ideas or resources are archived through the communal reflective function at the collective level. OCs where 'update of diverse information' and 'creative learning' are continuously conducted survive. Deeper consideration about this OCs' permissiveness will be discussed based on other research sub-questions later.

However, as the interviews suggest below, re-sharing or creating at a collective level seemed to occur less than at the individual level.

We don't pursue a monolithic style. Perhaps a novice who just joined might think there's nothing to learn from here. But I wish people share their own styles, not follow typical technical functions. As you keep thinking of what and how you want to take pictures, as you keep finding what you want, you can keep elaborating your own style, and you can teach and learn yourself. As you keep experiencing, as you try this or that way, you can realise and find what you want. If you go to private institutes [to learn photography], many of them fix the direction, not to guide you to find your own way. But, realising the fact that 'I can find my own way', finding and making the way are what I want people to do as they promote and help each other through our pictures or collective activities (Mr M. Foto-Club)

Even though I can learn 'I can attack that way, that movement is good' as I watch others' [badminton] games, I cannot do likewise. Our height, strength or basic conditions are different. So, I try to find my own way as I refer to others, not just try to imitate others (Mr D, Shuttlecock)
Among resources which teachers upload, there are many materials I can use as I modify or refer to my classes because I can find out how teachers use that material

from comments under the posting. A lot of feedbacks are useful (Mr T, School-Where)

When we download resources, we have to use it based on our own condition, then we have to upload a feedback something like 'I edited this part because of this reason'. I can find this kind of feedback a lot. It means that teachers have 'reflection' even for only a paper of worksheet. I think this re-production is the most merit [of School-Where]. Perhaps the OC did not fail. You know, while many Communities like resource rooms actually went broke, there are many people who reflect, and many subjects who have correct values, wholesome values in Communicaties which maintain the system. But the problem is that…re-uploading (re-creating) is not easy [in my case]. Perhaps, only diligent users can do it. I download and use a certain resource as it fits for my students, and share with other same grade homeroom teachers. It is not easy to upload [the revised version] despite the simple process (Ms S, School-Where)

Individual learning or cooperative learning

Indeed, according to Figure 16, in terms of one's OC routines, the ratio of resource acquisition to provision on average is 75% and 25% respectively in the case of survey respondents, and the figures are each 59% and 41% in the case of research participants. It could be assumed that the numerical difference between two groups is attributed to the degree of activeness in the group the research participants belong, which might relatively higher than that of the counterpart group the survey respondents do, since the group mainly consists of general OC users. Nonetheless, given the fact that both groups have lower ratio in provision, it is assumed that (re-)creating or re-sharing might happen relatively less at the collective level in OC environment. It might also be interpreted that people tend to

159

regard the gesture would be helpful to others' learning, which is less important than 'using' OCs for their own learning as. For them, such charitable act is what takes an 'extra effort' regarding their OC activities.
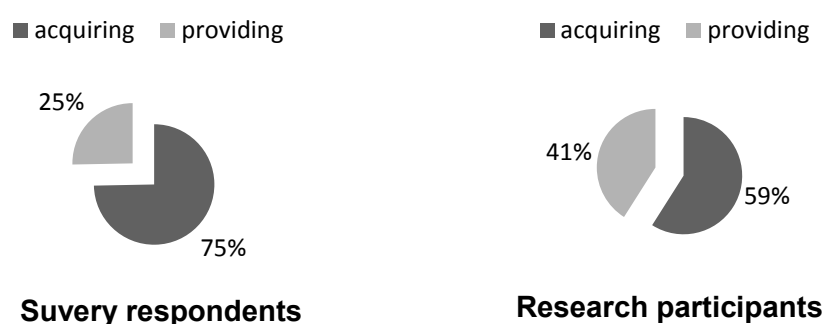
Figure 16 What Percentage of Your Activity Deals with Acquiring and Providing of Information in Online Communities?

*Source: the author' survey

I just get what I need as I use YouTube. I don't share. I get what I need. If I watch a good video, I just tell to people in offline, [not download or upload resources for others] (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

Maybe, active, 1 % of members lead the whole community. I am a minority who only download (giggled). They work hard and lead. They are really respectable. I cannot do [like them] (Mr U, School-Where)

…I have never left a comment nor uploaded materials there…I only visit there to find or download some resources (Mr T, School-Where)

The three people's quotations above support the assumption, which would mean that they were keen on the benefits of learning and other OC activities at the individual level. They rather used collective intelligence and community for the purpose of their own 'personal study', whilst paying no attention to the side of 'cooperative learning'. On the other hand, although members like Mr V might be minorities besides the number of all members (who are relevant to the 1% which Mr U mentioned previously), they tended to value a long term advantage of OC activities rather than immediate, and identify themselves as a factor as well as an actor of their OC. These members might maintain their role as a constant contributor, promoting communicating and providing resources. Therefore, not only resources and activities in OCs might keep updated actively, but also the quality of learning might grow deeper with the materials created at the both of individual and collective levels. And then OCs would be maintained ultimately.

I hope teachers pursue developing together through interacting and communicating. And as they have grown up, I hope they meet their students with passion, and try to share their own development with other teachers beyond their class room. In School-Where, teachers usually do their own individual learning by reefing resources which they got from others at the beginning though. But from the step, they would share how they are grown up there. Communicating and developing together… it is the final objective [of School-Where]…It is a kind of win-win concept…When teachers sympathise with my stories or my classes; it means that they also develop my classes and me together. When teachers give me some feedbacks after they used my resources, it is the most worthwhile and meaningful (Mr V, School-Where)

Experiencing

Furthermore, people tended to be expressive on what they experienced or thought through writing and visual materials in OCs; the length of writings tended to be relatively brief or a bit longer compared to normal post on trivial everyday subject. Visual materials aid the quality in detail, including photos and videos. Therefore, posts in OCs might have strong subjective and empirical tendencies. This tendency suggests that people are able to experience peers' diverse experiences directy/indirectly through OCs. In other words, activities through OCs seems to reinforce the potential of learning, as a member can reflect from the experiences of peers. Thus, a claim could be set that social learning in OCs occurs through interactive communications.

The following interviews illustrate that people learn through experiences, and their method of sharing experiencing is highly related to learning.

A lady in her 50's asked for a recommendation for a good restaurant for dinner with her friends on the Facebook Group (City-Where). So, I left a tagging of a posting of my blog which is at a fancy restaurant I have been with its address. That evening, I went to the restaurant again, and saw her company. They seemed to enjoy it there. You know, the thing I did for her is only leaving a comment though. I was also very happy to see them having a good time due to my tiny help (Ms I, *City-Where*)

We tell and teach as say like 'I couldn't receive a low attack in that way' or 'I watched a video, it explains how to practice a defence skill which is against that kind of attack' (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

In a seminar [of the OC], I shared my knowledge and experience about film camera. You know, people are not used to filming cameras due to this digital age. [Because I am interested in it and have experiences] I collected more resources and prepared a presentation for the seminar. We could share experiences which we can watch and use film camera directly. Then, I assume we might have more knowledge [about it] (Mr M, Foto-Club)

For instance, a teacher uploaded teaching plan from the first period to ninth period of lesson 1 of science. For the resource, one teacher commented as using the experiment for motivation in the part of introduction was also very effective instead of using it for middle periods. As watching both cases' experience, as reflecting my previous experiences, I think how I will teach the lesson, and try what I choose with my students…I don't think I just imitate it. I think I use materials which modified by my own experiences and ways (Ms R, School-Where)

[One day], teachers share their experiences about field trip places. They discuss like 'place A was good for the year 3 because of B and C…' (Ms S, School-Where)

There are so many options for camping equipment for a certain function. I sometimes need to spend additional cost to buy other equipment for a different function. But [if I read reviews in OCs], I can prevent wasting more money. For instance, I have tool A for cooking, but I need tool B of which price is 100 dollars to cook food B. But a tool A reviewer shares information which tell that cooking food B even by tool A is possible if I spend only 10 dollars more for a small extra tool C instead. We cannot find this kind of information from product manuals. It is the information as we use and experience. If we share this kind of information, utilisation becomes higher, and financial cost becomes less (Mr Y, Club-Camping)

A question can be raised here; why do people have activities and learn at the both individual and collective levels through OCs? In what aspects, what role does learning play in motivations, maintenance of doing OC activities and contributions of OC members? The next finding sections will ponder on the points addressed with an in-depth discussion on them.

163

Learning Motivations in Joining and Participating in Online Communities

- What role does learning play in motivating people to join, if any?

This section will discuss 'emotive dimensions' which facilitates the participation of people in the community by making them 'want' to join OC activities, and the next section will analyse the aspects of practical uses or activities.

With regard to the emotive factors, how learning motivate people to join and conduct activities in OCs, and which learning factors drive the motivation were considered at collective and individual levels of learning was explored at individual and collective level separately in previous sections. Moreover, the causes are explored in two perspectives – internal and external causes as in Table 6 (page 66), which described OC activity stages regarding the causes.

At the collective level, which routes people joined OC; which factors triggered OC activities, especially related to learning; which factors were motivational for learning are considered. At the individual level, a tendency – self-centred is specifically focused. Moreover, at this level, roles of learning to motivate people's joining in terms of affective aspects are explored alike in two aspects, 'from myself' and 'for myself.' Lastly, this section will conclude as

summarising why motivation of OCs activities and other related factors are significant regarding learning.

Collective level

Recommendation, observation & searching

			5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
I built the online community by myself	9	6.0%													
An acquaintance reccommended the online community	91	60.7%													
I found the online community through the Internet searching	70	46.7%													
I referred to an advertisement of the online community	0	0.0%													
Others	4	2.7%													
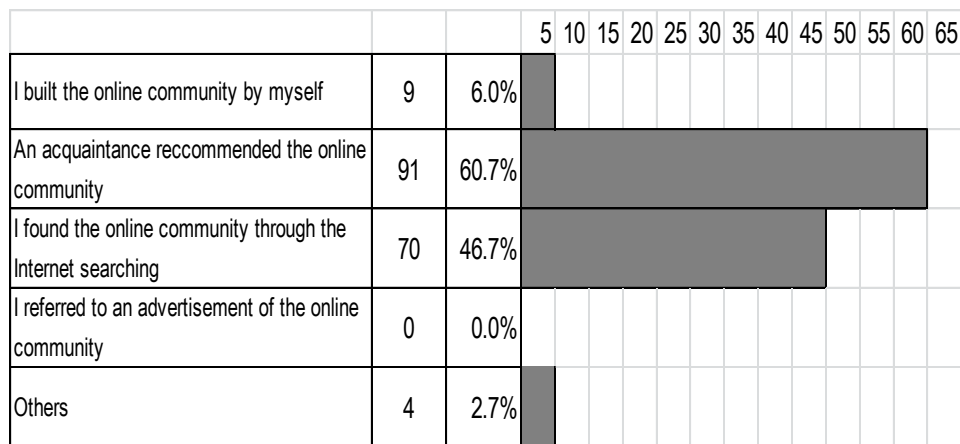
N=150. Respondents could choose more than one

Figure 17 How Did You Know about Your Online Communities?

*Source: the author's survey

Figure 17 is concerned with a question of a route, in the sense of how people learned about their OC in the survey. The most voted item is an acquaintance's recommendation, and the next is the Internet searching.

165

In my case, my brother suggested that I join the badminton club. He has played badminton [there] since 2006…I finally decided to join the club when I accompanied with him for offline activities, since I was getting tired of another hobby at that moment. Playing badminton with others seemed interesting (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

Some of my Facebook friends, from all over the country, recommended that I join this local online group because I have my own business in the city (Mr H, City-Where)

When I was looking for a photo Favourite Club in the city, someone introduced this group with a comment under my picture on Instagram. I can say, one of my Instagram friends introduced it (Mr M. Foto-Club)

Due to a recommendation of colleague…since an early-career teacher like me told that we could find a lot of [teaching] resources from School-Where. So I have joined and still use it (Mr T, School-Where)

Since recommendations based on direct experiences of peers around them might obtain credible merit, these suggestions could be viewed in the similar sense with a shared experience as well. Thus, recommendation or suggestion to join an online group might be a trigger factor of social learning.

Another interesting point in this regard was the defining extent of acquaintances is expanding. While acquaintances mean people whom one knows in the physical space as the case of Mr B, people whom one meets in the online also could become friends like Mr M's case. The phenomenon such as online friend's recommendation or suggestion, in this sense, might also be another tenet of shared experience – a communicative function between persons.

It seemed to be very interesting when I saw my husband playing badminton. So, I also joined later (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

I found the website of IT-Crowd through a link in a [programme] development Community among NAVER Cafés, and I joined it because of [its] enormous amount of information on programming (Mr J. IT-Crowd)

I had played badminton in Seoul. It was really interesting and good for me. When I moved to this city, the Internet was only one way to find a badminton club. I could find this badminton club among many others in this city because the OC introduces its detailed information. So, yes, I met this Favourite Club through the Internet first (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

Meanwhile, cases that one joined an OC more positively were through observing and searching. As one happens to observe other's fulfilment, of which the proof is openly published in the online space, the chances are high that the candidate attempts to find a suitable OC according to his or her need. In this respect, the preceding development case of others could stimulate one's initial motivation as a beginning factor of social learning.

Amity, communication & cooperation

Figure 18 shows how people respond to the question regarding why they built or joined their OC in the first place. The results show that some not only 'learn through cooperation', but also other communicative aspects – 'sharing resource' (76, 50.7%; 73 votes 48.7%), 'participating in group offline activities' (31 votes, 20.7%); 'making or keeping sociable relationships or network' (24 votes, 16%; 12 votes, 8%); 'participating in discussions about various issues' (11 votes, 7.3%) affect people's joining OCs. The result suggests that the OCs' role of

167

the reciprocal network could be the main reason why people joined OCs.

			5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
To share living information and knowledge	76	50.7%											
To share expertise knowledge and participate in	73	48.7%											
To participate in group offline activities	31	20.7%											
To enjoy leisures or entertainments	26	17.3%											
To promote his or her business	8	5.3%											
To build up a network	12	8.0%											
To make or keep sociable relationships	24	16.0%											
To participation in the discussion about various	11	7.3%											
Others	4	2.7%											
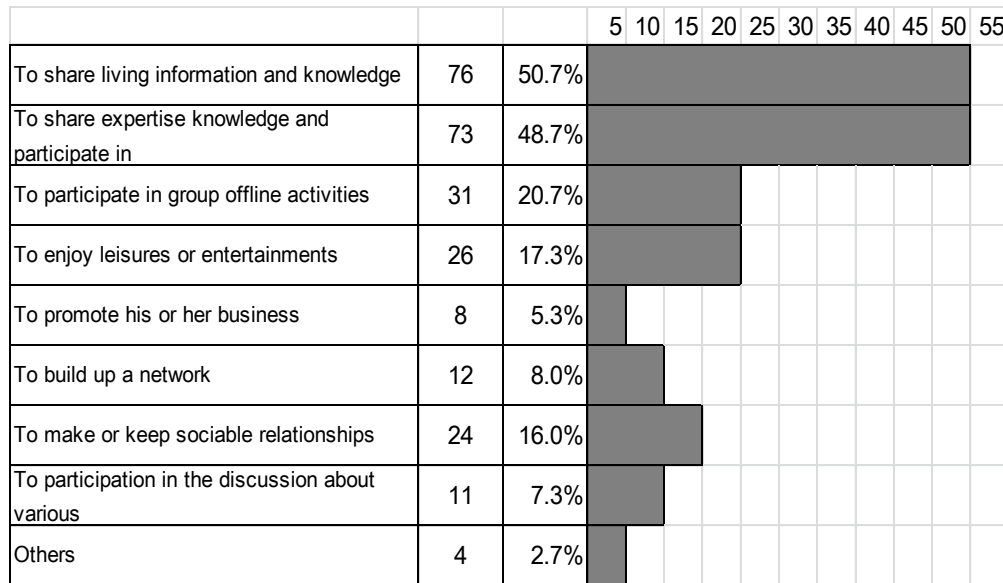
N=150. Respondents could choose more than one

Figure 18 Why Did You Build or Join Online Communities?

*Source: the author's survey

I just joined Shuttlecock for offline activities and intimacy (Mr F, Shuttlecock)

The main reasons are, I wanted to know about cameras more deeply because I like cameras, and I wondered about online communities where I can share and communicate with more people (Ms P, Foto-Club)

Emotionally, I felt uncomfortable to use the word, '학습 (Hak-Seup)'[22]. In terms of

---

[22] Both words are translated in learning in English. ' 배움 (Bae-Woom)' is a pure Korean word, and ' 학습 (Hak-Seup, 學習)' is a Sino-Korean.

answer, I think '학습 (Hak-Seup)' is that the fixed answers are provided to learners unilaterally, and '배움 (Bae-Woom)'is that learners have a process to find the unfixed answer together. So, I think we can promote their development together through 배움 ([Bae-Woom)…the space we can pursue the growth is here (School-Where) (Mr V, School-Where)

However, as the research previously discussed, a type of selfish behaviour, which involves some people's one-way attitude in taking advantage of what they need without sharing theirs, some people still focused on using collective intelligence for their own learning. The following interviews explain this kind of tendency. Although an opportunity of communication or cooperation in OCs could lead to the further opportunity for amity, the function could still latently limit the potential of utility at the extent of a 'necessary means' for personal learning.

I use OCs to get information and knowledge which I need, not make new friends or amity in online… it is useless to hang out with strangers who are living far from here…I only get information. I think I don't need to make relationships with people living in Seoul or Busan, faraway cities (Mr A, Shuttlecock)
Literally, it is just 'online' relationship, no more (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

For only 'moderate' amity… neither heavy nor light… only the level I appeal that I am a photographer (Mr M, Foto-Club)

Pleasant/interesting

This part might be related to amity as discussed: People appreciated the emotional aspect of OC that facilitates the user's pleasure produced from the intimate atmosphere, and thus they form entertaining relationships to enjoy OC

activities with great interest. They tended to do or learn something more interestingly, not tediously. Due to this interest-stimulating tendency, OCs were useful; they could hang out with peers as a latent process of education. As people conducted OC activities including learning with other people, the activity was more pleasant and enjoyable.

I pursue being sociable to enjoy offline [activities] more interesting… due to interactions including real-time discussions and conversations, learning is not boring and [I can] keep doing it (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

I really relieve my stress from there…because I am not alone like being at home. I really like learning and playing badminton [through Shuttlecock] because I can be distressed as I laugh a lot loudly with other people (Ms E, Shuttlecock)
As I participate in Favourite Club's activities, I could realise what I didn't know before, get recommendations about camera function, and learn how to edit pictures. I think the biggest benefit [of Favourite Club activities] is that I can learn as I enjoy (Ms P, Foto-Club)

Stimulation & encouragement

People participated in OC activities more eagerly, and they were more willing to learn as they stimulated and encouraged each other. Although there were no rewards or reinforcements as the convention in the education field, people promoted joining OCs because the members therein could create positive energy and impact on each other, as taking a role of independent actors and learners. This might be a factor that corresponds to the concept of Favourite Club, most suitably, a group for doing and learning what people like together.

170

We have to endeavour to improve skills in order to play badminton together, and we can enjoy it. If I have a [badminton] game with a good player, it is totally different. Itself (playing with a good player) is learning…I try to level up because I hope good players call me [to have a game] first before I ask them to have a game with me…I try to learn and master better skills as my wish comes true (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

Since we stimulate and encourage each other, we participate in more activities. We care about each other (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

I get a type of comfort as 'it is not useless' when other people praise [my pictures]. Their compliments encourage me to work harder (Mr M, Foto-Club)

I think I learn talents of other teachers (laughing)… it is a sort of motivation? Because I decide to work harder like other teachers through there (School-Where), and try to find more resources and study from resources there (Mr U, School-Where)

I can make my own way as referring or editing resources there. For instance, when I found a good video of the graduation ceremony in School-Where, I also really wanted to make a video like it. So, I even paid money to take an online video editing [in-service teacher] training course and searched good videos from YouTube (Mr T, School-Where)

Competitiveness

Competitiveness might also be included as an element of emotive prospects of OC learning model, which promotes peer-to-peer encouragement. At the first glance, this kind of instant emotion might appear subsidiary as a mere effect, inadequate to be called a learning factor. Regarding cultural context, however, one should consider the social climate of learning in South Korea. Learning cannot be discussed without competition in South Korean culture, since a learner's process is marked by 'grade-prioritised', 'examination-ism',

'achievement-ism' and 'outcome-ism'[23] (Jo, 2009, cited in Jo, 2012, p. 14, *self-translated*). To survive, it is a 'must' for people to secure better grades and rank than others [24]. For learners as students, pressure is constant to win the 'competition'. In contrast to this, fierce competition does not count as a 'must' in neither goal nor purpose of OCs (Kim, H., 2010). While there is a positive atmosphere of stimulation or encouragement, was a type of implicit boost from other persons, competitive spirit in OCs was a psychological catalyst for learners to get fully motivated, as active, passionate and free as they could, away from the pressure that traditional method of learning had imposed on them.

> *Not just because of self-contentment from exercise, desire for winning might be the main reason why I even watch videos and work harder. For instance, if I lost a game with opponents whose levels are similar with my team, I recall the game one more to think about causes why we lost…Due to competitive spirit, I try to find out ways to win. It is a desire for winning. Due to this, I could develop my skills and abilities more, and study strategies (Mr D, Shuttlecock)*

> *Well, I think I just feel this [emotion] by myself. I feel happy if my pictures look better than others' ones in the same space, If not, I try to find out why they look different. As I compare mine with others' ones, I might have a sort of spirit of emulation (Ms P, Foto-Club)*

Due to its identity as a sports community, the competitive characteristics

---

[23] Like Meritocraticy, I translated four words as adding '-prioritised' and '-ism' to emphasise that four factors are blindly pursued and valued in South Korea

[24] Marking grade and standing students/learners in a queue (ranking) are parts of 'evaluation' in reality. It is unfortunate to indicate these ways as evaluation - getting grade and raking. Thus I could not use a word, 'evaluation' at this part

might apply quite strongly in the case of *Shuttlecock*. In the case of Mr D, he seemed to use the term 'competitive spirit' when he stressed that he wanted to excel other players in the game, even though the peers first served as a source of motivation to him. Conversely, though perhaps subtly nuanced, comments on competitiveness or desire to win were not explicitly found in the other OC's interviews. It is usually acknowledged for Koreans that the notion of competition and comparison to fellow students, in their school days, often evoke emotional burden. Thus it seems that the competitiveness and pressing factors' impact is somewhat weak because people tend to enjoy activities in OCs without such pressure. The enjoyable side of learning through OCs will be discussed further at the individual level.

Individual level

At the individual level, motivational factors were considered in two aspects − 'from me, myself' and 'for myself'. 'Interested', 'necessary' and 'autonomous' were for the former, whereas the latter was considered in terms of 'self-contentment and sense of accomplishment' and 'expectation of unexpected benefits'.

Interested

Interests, what people like, they are linked to the meaning of Favourite

Club[25]. People did not have to join OC activities if it failed to engage their interest; it was not compulsory for them to join the group. People tried to find and join, and voluntarily opted for the OC activities because they were simply drawn to them. In South Korea, many people have lived under the burdens from their expected roles, duties and responsibilities such as a child, student, worker or parent. They tend to long for a solitary time of one's own to take care of the self. One of the ways to make the most of the time, in case one managed to secure any, is to learn what they are genuinely interested in. Therefore, it seems to be necessary to consider why people concentrate on 'I, my, me, myself' in the South Korean sociocultural context.

Since 'grade' and 'title (school name value)' often rule as a dominant objective of learning in one's school years, ranging from primary to higher education, for most Koreans, the common conception of learning might involve the sense of difficulty, almost a toilsome and distasteful work. Although this achievement-oriented connotation in the traditional sense of learning might be able to drive some people's rivalry instinct at one point, it is still crucial to claim that the majority of people still find an informal environment such as OC more ideal to work as a mature independent, as it acknowledges one's autonomous ability compared to the constraints the conventional institutions would usually

---

[25] In Korean, Favourite Club is 'Dong-Ho-Hoe' (동호회, 同好會). 'Ho' (호, 好) means 'like'.

impose on. The learner can decide their own style of learning, and this freedom of options leads to reassurance that they are respected when they learn through OCs.

> *What do I want to do? [I want to do] my hobby. Something for my abundant life, not financially…I suddenly wanted to start something like that. What 'I' want. I have lived for my husband and kids. But it is not entirely my life. Because I have lived as a parent and wife, I want to experience many things although I would give up later. What I can, what I want to learn…for me, not for kids (Ms E, Shuttlecock)*

> *Since our [South Korean] people are tied to schools or workplaces, we are bored and wearisome. So we try to find something interesting for abundance except schooling or working. OC is the place where we can find it (Mr K, IT-Crowd)*

> *I think I will regret when I become 50 or 60 if I just live as fixed in cast which society makes…and I'm not stressed when I do this work (photographing). Although it is really hard or I try to do other things, I am looking at this field. Maybe addicted…I keep going to find what I like, teach and learn about them by myself (Mr M, Foto-Club)*

> *I think I cannot get knowledge quickly from teacher's books or other books. Besides they are boring and uninteresting. So, the thing I find (use) is School There. If I cannot find a solution [for interesting class] from there, I sometimes solve it as I talk and discuss with other homeroom teachers. In that regard, I think I have to like what I want to work hard or learn. Let's imagine my education office makes policy, 'primary school teachers should use or participate in School-Where for 50 hours per a year'. If I am originally willing to use School-Where, I would use it despite the compelling. But, if I am not a School-Where user, I might hate to log in there, hate more. Maybe just click [to spend time there] (Mr T, School-Where)*

Necessary

The necessity of learning was not just for a compulsory work. It was also attributed to the extra values the voluntary learners pursued. Having being given that further education was not their obligation, the candidates showed an earnest

175

commitment to the OC based methodology of learning. The fact that interviews from *IT-Crowd*, *City-Where* and *School-Where* were mostly cited for this aspect clearly demonstrates that communities' role, 'informative network' satisfies this aspect of necessity.

I have more opportunities to talk or ask in online than direct communications in offline. So I join a Favourite Club where has enormous knowledge or information for my needs (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

Basically I use IT-Crowd with two reasons mainly. Firstly, I can get knowledge or information about IT and electronic equipment because experts in the fields gather there. Secondly, since there are a lot of trades of the fields, a bond of sympathy developed among members. [So, I can say I join and use IT-Crowd because] I also do IT-related works, and need to catch new IT trend for work (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Advertising is not a purpose. I just like making people laugh through communications. If people like my videos [uploaded on City-Where], and feel happy, I also feel happy. As I have opportunities to communicate with people like that, I can understand trends in the city. It is important for business as well (Mr H, City-Where)
To be honest, what I learnt from my university of education is hardly helpful in the school field. Not only me, most of student at universities of education focused showy materials and ppts. They are just perfunctory things. But in School-Where, I can select what I need in the field and re-product for my classes. They are practical and real…If my students feel difficult or bored, I go there (School-Where) to get ideas for fresh classes (Ms S, School-Where)

Autonomous

Like most factors considered in this section, circumstances varied for people in the motif of registration and performance in OCs; the randomness in each member's motivation ground signifies the possibility of spontaneity in their

participation, rather than external force. To rephrase, the subjective and interior drive that constitutes the online learner's motivational structure evinces the potential for autonomy. In other words, the reason why the emotional aspect of autonomy in OCs should not be overlooked is that people regard the autonomy significantly. They had strong experiential memories of formal learning which were against the aspect.

While previous learning compelled me what I didn't want to learn, and I was 'learnt' [at schools], I can choose what I learn by myself in a Favourite Club at least. If the direction of Favourite Club fits for mine, I follow, if not, I can move to another Favourite Club. If I don't want, I don't have to do. I have free [in a Favourite Club] (Mr O, Foto-Club)

I did not often go to schools, not adjusted to school life. I think schools had, still keep the cramming system of education. But, here (City-Where), I can express what I learn from life, my thought, and conversations as I select (Ms I, City-Where,)

I think reading contents of Communities is a means for learning rather than learning from books or finding fixed answers. It is my personal tendency. As a person who dislikes stereotyped learning, I think we can learn much more things from online than schools or private institutes (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Of course, curriculums of universities or consulting programmes host by headmaster investigated demand. But it was not me who chose the programmes. They were just given. I had to take them. It is 'them' who made the curriculums. But, this (School-Where) is built and managed by us (primary school teachers). I use what I need from this. 'Star teachers' are more helpful for me. They are more influential and practical…the direction of learning starts from me [in School-Where] while curriculums of institutes are given (Ms R, School-Where)

When I was a student, I studied to bluff, show off. I studied because I disliked losing [exams][26]. *And I thought reading a book by Goethe was fancy. It was a show to*

---

[26] Losing at exams means that a student gets lower ranking depending on his or her exam score. In South Korea, students got scores for every subject on the basis of 100 points (It have somewhat changed

show 'I am a Goethe reader' I thought it was fancy. I studied for competition and higher rank. However, now, I study to be a better person. Since I want to be a better teacher, I want to learn what I want to teach my students (Mr U, School-Where)

People might be tired of the formal education system which was given, compelled, and burdened. 'Doing what I want as I choose' might be a just natural thing, but South Koreans generally could not do it naturally. Is it not earnest and valuable for them to be an independent subject of real learning who 'can' decide to learn something spontaneously, and have opportunities to choose what they learn? In other words, people might desire that every affective value was 'from' themselves, and it is respected. Therefore, the reason why people gather in OCs might be that they could be satisfied in the spaces in that regard.

While the initiation of learning is 'from me, myself' I was focused in terms of concepts of interested, necessary, and autonomous above, the end of learning' is 'for myself'. In other words, expected outcomes people can get from learning could motivate people to join OC activities for themselves. Therefore, I will consider how and which learning factors function as a motivational outcome.

Self-contentment & Sense of accomplishment

It seems that being satisfied or feeling content was more meaningful for these interviewees rather than getting a good reputation, praise or incentives from

according to the sort of exams)

178

others. The satisfaction and happiness worked as 'rewards' (Bandura, 1977) for them. In other words, getting these affective learning factors in OC activities might motivate people to join them more actively as a purpose.

I think learning of schooling was for going to university primarily, a sort of study for a certain outcome-centred. And learning after graduating university might be for self-contentment mostly. I think adults learn to feel sense of accomplishment or something similar rather than for getting some profits surely (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

The best thing I can have as working out through Favourite Club is self-contentment. Anyway, I have to work out. It's a self-management. If I work out in the fitness centre, it is boring. It's hard to keep working out without company. [Working out with other people for fun is important though], being healthy and making good body shape are the most pleasure and satisfaction eventually (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

I just think it is interesting [to upload information about good restaurants and respond to people's questions in City-Where]. It is just good for me if people are satisfied with food and service of the restaurant and if the restaurant's business extends. I am not interested in monetary value when I participate in OC activities. It is just my self-satisfaction (Ms I, City-Where)

I think pictures are for self-contentment. Even though I started learning photography for product pictures when I worked at the marketing company, I had already liked it, and I like recording memories. It does not have such a big meaning, just de-stressing? And a little bit of pleasure from revising? I might like having these feelings from pictures (Ms P, Foto-Club)

Expectation of unexpected benefits

When Mr M used the term, 'learn(ing)', he seemed to think that he would be able to learn by questioning and searching for answers to expand his knowledge. Even though he did not consciously pick up the word, 'learn(ing)', there might be implications that his learning experience was facilitated naturally

179

through the associated activities available in the OC. This might be related to the OC's positive effect, which produces a pedagogical interaction by the 'reading effect' discussed in the previous section. It means that a lot of information, knowledge or even senses are acquired and processed now and then as people are exposed to the resources in OCs by all means, using their spare time; the validity in this 'flip through' type of reading is, though indirect, expected as equivalent to the steady type such as online subscription or careful reading, from which the learning involves intent and conduct. This point might also support my argument that unintended activities in the OC could be educational in the perspective of informal learning (page 41, *Informal Learning in Lifelong Learning*). Regardless of the matter on whether OCs could play a role in informative or reciprocal network well, people might keep joining OC activities, with the expectation for +α, the unexpected or unintended effect as well.

> *I can learn as I log on to the IT-Crowd. For instance, if I am sure which information I need, I just ask or search about it in IT-Crowd. I can say that I go to IT-Crowd for the information. But If I can get the up-to-date information from here, it does not mean that I come here to get the newest information. I just know about it as I come and read postings there. I can learn these kinds of information and trend a lot from here, and I keep coming here for these [unexpected] things. When I joined here at first, information about PDA I used was the main purpose. But now, the biggest reason why I keep logging on here is to be able to learn and understand what I did not regard before as I read various people's writings − from product review to opinions and views about political or social issues (Mr L, IT-Crowd)*

Learning is play, but not learning

The reasons why people joined OCs appeared relevant to the types of OC. In the case of Communities, necessity was the main reason, whereas interest, a source of pleasure, seems to be more salient in Favourite Clubs. However, the common ground shared in both of the OCs was the potential of 'autonomy'. Although some of the members' motive originated from the preceding members' recommendation, the final decision is made by the self, subjectively, out of pure interest. As even a subtle sense of pressure causes one's reluctance as well as a decrease of willingness, irrespective of the quality of the project, the same logic applies in the case of OCs as well.

People joined OC activities due to pleasure and positive feelings, and they learned what they were interested in through the activities. The concepts of interesting learning and self-directed learning might play significant roles in motivating people to join OCs. Therefore, rather than motivational function or reinforcing function by 'incentive values' (Bandura, 1977) from the OC members' activities, 'active aspects' such as spontaneity and autonomy at an individual level, which is 'by, for, from myself' seem to lead to another step, motivating 'social interactions'. For them, things they can enjoy as 'self-centred' might serve as 'incentives' or 'rewards', which occurs in the course of learning, to put it in Bandura's terms.

181

However, even though people learnt what they wanted, they tended to baulk at the word, learning[27]. As soon as they considered activities as 'learning', the motivation decreased. It might be because 'provided' learning, which is more accustomed, includes factors opposite to the motivational factors considered in the research. It seems there is an epistemic gap between the traditional concept of learning, negative (which people recognise strongly) and the newly emerging concept of learning (which people desire and currently do). Thus, if learning is given or compelled, or if learning is too competitive for score or grade, people find it 'uninteresting' which people had used to.

[I think we do] learning as playing or as a hobby. I hated studying English when I was a high school student. I failed college entrance due to the English score. I chose law as my major because I did not need to learn English. But, now, I don't feel uncomfortable learning English. The reason why I want to learn English now is that I might be able to learn it interestingly. If my company requires English score, it will be a big burden again. But, now, I try to learn English by myself. Favourite Club activities are same. If someone pushes me to do them for score or promotion, I might hate it like hell. I do them in case I want (Mr F, Shuttlecock)

Until middle school age, I didn't have special goals. I just studied because I went to school, I studied for the university in high school age, I studied in order to graduate and find a job at university age. After university, I had to study to take a teacher certification examination. So learning was not interesting for me at all. Now I have a job. I teach students in school, and do what I like. It is interesting. I think it is learning. Well, both are learning, but learning at school had an unclear sense of object, which other people decided. Now I learn what I want to do, and I do harder during spare time although I'm tired (Mr T, School-Where)

---

[27] Especially South Koreans tend to feel more unpleasant to Hak-Seup (학습) than Bae-Woom (배움). There is a different nuance between the two words.

Table 14 Essential Properties of Play

Interest	Play is a unique energy which accompanies positive psychology, and itself is an expressing way of the energy
Composure	People do not have time for play if they are poor, unpleasant or busy
Spontaneity	The motivation of play is autonomous.
	Play is not fulfilled forcibly, and it should not be compelled
Free	Play is an existential system of possibility, and its starting and ending points are open in principle
Choice	Players can choose materials, methods, participants etc. It is appropriate
Equality	It premises that players participate in play under the equal or similar condition
Cooperation	It requires that communal communications and meta-communications (Jo, 1989)
	It requires interactive and reciprocal fulfilment of participants
Process	It premises that play is an immanent reward system of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, emphasis added) itself, which does not pursue a certain predeterminate result
Aesthetic	Play is an activity to sharing feelings, and it is a feeling, and it is a form of life which requires understanding, not explaining
*Source: Jo, 2012, p. 49.	

Therefore, they felt easy and relaxed when they expressed the term, 'learning', finding it in the OC environment 'hobby' or 'play'. The two associated terms signify that the OC based learning model is entertaining and less stressful to them, of which the effectiveness stands out amongst models of learning. Related to this, Jo (2012) attempts to find helpful ideas from Nietzscheanism to improve South Korea's school education, especially classes designed for students' learning.

In his study, he discusses classes that consist of several plays. According to him, play has nine distinctive features as shown in Table 14.

The properties of play described in Table 14 seem to be identical and similar with the affective components of motivation discussed earlier in this section. Like Jo's (2012) argument that school classes should be conducted like plays, people gathered in OCs because the learning process in the OC took a playful form as if the activities were plays for them.

If learning which adults want is *learning-A*, they conducted *learning*-A through OC activities. However, they regarded *learning-B*, which adults were compelled as learning. Although they articulated 'I learn' or 'I want to learn' unconsciously as connoting concept of *learning-A*, it meant burdensome and uncomfortable learning-B when they perceived the word, learning consciously. Since people might not want to 'repeat' *learning-B* anymore in their mature age, the features of *learning-B* might not appear as defining factors which motivate OC activities. In other words, requisites pursued as *learning-A* might motivate their learning, whereas the aspect of *learning-B* might disturb them. It might be an indictment of school education which makes antithetic and contradictory meanings of learning. Therefore, it is a regrettable reality that learning can and cannot work as the motivational factor for people's OC activities at the same time.

Learning Benefits Accrued from Online Communities

- What role does learning play in members' participation, if any?
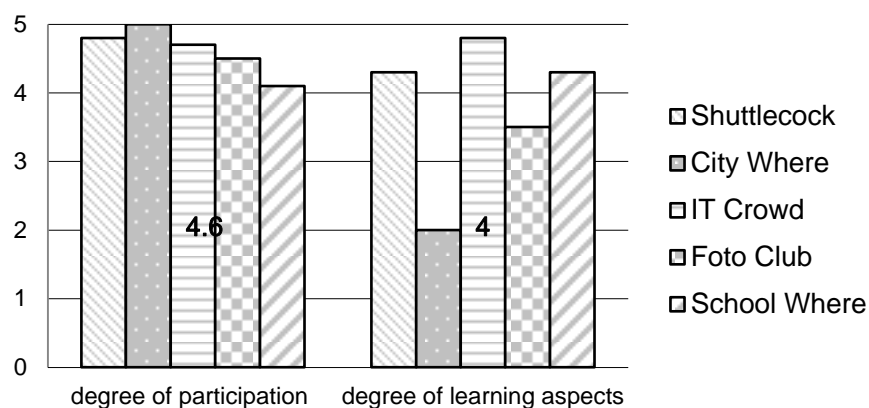
Figure 19 Degrees of Participation and Learning in Online Communities

*Source: the author's survey

Figure 19 shows how much research participants considered their activity participation and learning dimensions in each OC[28]. As the highest degree is 5, the degree of participation and learning is 4.6 and 4 respectively, and both are relatively high. Thus it seems that the two aspects are closely correlated. Regarding this, the sub-question of the research, 'what role does learning play in

---

[28] Likert scale: 0 not linked, 1 very unrelated, 2 unrelated, 3 moderate, 4 related, 5 highly related

185

members' joining, if any?' is necessary to investigate which factors could increase people's participations in OC activities related to learning in this section.

As discussed in the previous section participating in collective learning for sharing these resources (e.g., knowledge, information and materials) was one of the main reasons why people built or joined OCs. Therefore, if the research explores which aspects people regard as merits of the resources in OCs, it is expected to find out why and how learning for them could play a role in members' joining OC activities.

			5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
Knowledge, information or opinions are practical and useful	90	60.0%													
Knowledge, information or opinions are quite professional	60	40.0%													
I can trust in knowledge, information or opinions	75	50.0%													
Update of knowledge, information or opinions is prompt	83	55.0%													
I can get knowledge, information or opinions from more diverse people	75	50.0%													
I spend less time or effort to get necessary knowledge, information or opinions	60	40.0%													
Others	0	0.0%													

N=150. Respondents could choose more than one

Figure 20 What Are Merits of Contents in Your Online Communities?

*Source: the author's survey

186

Figure 20 shows the aspects of which research the participants considered as advantages of knowledge, information or opinions in OCs. 'The practical and useful aspect of knowledge, information or opinions' is voted mostly as 60%, and 'prompt update' is secondly high as 55%. 'Reliability' is a joint three with 'the aspect of diversity' as 50%. On the other hand, 'expertise' is relatively low as 40%. By looking at some other concepts as well as these clear features of knowledge, information or opinions in OCs, the research is to explore why people try learning in OCs and how learning influences the sustainability of their OC activities.

Utility and practicality

Firstly, knowledge in OCs was often dealt with practical matters, since most topics were raised in need of help regarding daily life or work.

> *The population [of City-Where] is the most among local communities [of this city], and I can get diverse information [from it]. People around me are limited…So, it is the most convenient and easiest to get practical information from here in this city. From restaurants to the civil complaint, I can get information from here, which I cannot get from books or schools. I think City-Where is quite useful and necessary (Ms X, City-Where)*

> *Even in terms of working-level, as I am working in the IT field, I cannot only understand the flow and up-to-date issues in the field, but also refer to recommendations about development language – which is easier and so on. News from IT-Crowd is really useful and practical for my work as well (Mr L, IT-Crowd)*

187

Most of the resources I get from there (School-Where) are related to classes, and classes are parts of my life. Therefore, I can say that the resources are related to my life, and they are practical (Ms R, School-Where)

Thus, members' experiences also became knowledge or information for other members, and it was re-shared through online or offline gatherings.

For instance, I upload videos of family (Favourite Club members)'s plays at a competition which I recorded. If the player and another family (Favourite Club) members watch it, they can learn from them. I often make family members' plays as videos and upload them in our BAND (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

I only have a lesson from the coach three times per week, but other seniors more often teach and advise me. So, activities with them are basically useful for training (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

Moreover, another reason why knowledge or information was useful in an OC was that difficult expertise topics became popular in the space. The expertise topics in academic or professional fields were generalised, and then the public could use and understand them through OCs. Especially, OCs that promoted the popularisation of expertise topics seem to satisfy people's learning desire and endless curiosity. Moreover, OCs would help members who tried to learning and wanted to become a better person rather than remaining their present status. Due to this strength of OCs, people tended to more actively join and use OCs.

Members who upload resources are experts [of this field]. So for amateurs in Favourite Clubs, like me, it is good to get good resources from them through

Favourite Clubs. [Badminton] coaches, experts know what amateurs need, provide good materials such as short videos for training. Then I can get whatever I need among them individually. I can regard my Favourite Club as an encyclopaedia (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

Recently, I read news about an observation of the gravity field by an astronomical telescope, which was a difficult topic to understand. But diverse writings about it in IT-Crowd were useful. Some were written easily, some compared phenomena, and some referred to academic papers. As I read them, I could understand about it relatively easily. It is usually difficult to understand scientific phenomena or meanings for me, but I can understand them through descriptions in the OC (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

It is hard to understand professional's description for novices. So like us, middle of professionals and amateurs play a role in connecting them like a bridge through OCs. We explain expertise easily, and introduce skills at the level of hobby, not all complicated professional level (Mr M, Foto-Club)

Trustworthiness

Similar to the aspect of utility, people tended to have higher credibility on practical knowledge or information rather than academic theories, since their trustworthiness was based on people's judgment from their real experiences.

I guess most of the people in this field are already members of IT-Crowd. Thus I can trust contents of this Community because they are from IT people's experimental knowledge (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

There are also a lot of administrative or legal questions [in City-Where]. Although there are some rubbish answers by young students, I can refer to comments with a logical or legal basis from people who work in the professional field or who have experiences in the field (Ms X, City-Where)

I think the reliability [of this Community] is strong because teachers share resources which they already verified in their classes, and reinforced them. As I am on the

189

same position, as a teacher, I think resources from the OC has higher credibility than from any other books (Ms R, School-Where)

On the other hand, knowledge or information from people's experience reduced the credibility due to subjective or emotional dimensions as well: Knowledge shared in the Internet environment tends to be emotional or subjective, developed from personal experiences, rather than scientific and logic (Kim, S., 2010). Thus, trustworthiness on that kind of knowledge could be weaker than the credibility of knowledge from professional curricula curriculum.

Because I can trust only about 70% of advising or kibitzing by other members, it is not perfectly non-trustful. However, as right handed and left handed are different, or tall people and short people are different, right skills for each person differ from individual to individual. I should judge which one is right or wrong for me among their subjective advice (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

Special pleading or emotional writings are unreliable, even unpleasant. Subjective opinions could be dangerous. If these kinds of writings are continuously uploaded as 'true', someone could seriously suffer. I saw a lot of retail shops have a hard time due to ferocious reviews. I sometimes refer to personal reviews, but I don't believe them 100% (Ms X, City-Where)

However, apart from the concern of objectivity, OC members tended to have the high credibility of contents made or shared by experts. In other words, the reliability of OC as space where people could easily access to resources contributed by experts was relatively higher.

190

While I partially trust in contents which people personally share, I can trust in what coach tells completely because he is a pro. And I can more trust in resources or information which coach uploads [than what other members share] in our BAND. Of course, I also trust in contents which other members extracted from experts' resources, not their personal opinions (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

I think I learn professionally now, since I can get information and knowledge through communications with experts − from programming to law through the OC (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

Since information spread on the Internet generally has no credibility, novices seem to ask here…In any Favourite Clubs, there are influential people with an incredible ability or information strength. I can fully trust in resources from them (Mr M, Foto-Club)

The overall trustworthiness was different depending on the degree of professionalism of each OC. Although *Shuttlecock* was an amateur badminton club, there were many amateur masters who had played for ages as well as a professional coach. The credibility of resources shared by them was relatively higher. The case of *Foto-Club* was similar. Its reliability became high due to professional photographers and quasi-professional amateurs who bring their own know-how about photography into play. Since *IT-Crowd* and *School-Where* would be regarded as a professional group, the credibility of information and knowledge from them was relatively high as well. Especially, empirical knowledge, as well as theories, was credible, because experts provided them. Although *City-Where* was regarded as it did not have a certain expertise due to its unclear main topic as a normal local community, it was not difficult to find experts in various fields among diverse members. For instance, it was reported that a pharmacist

191

responded to questions about a medical substance, and a car mechanic gave advice about an estimate for repairing expenses within the local city. Thanks to the contribution of few professionals, the other majority of members visited their OCs, and benefited from them consistently.

Blended activities

Although the five cases are literally pertinent to 'online' communities, they included many 'offline' activities. Online and offline activities were complementary. If the online resources established theoretical aspects, the offline activities nurtured them in a practical manner, realistically, as a part of real life. The latter gave people opportunities to learn empirical knowledge; people could learn cognitive knowledge from the former, and thus, they could achieve it by the coordination of theories and realities. As empirical learning occurred through the coordination, the participation degree of OC activities increased.

> *Of course, badminton is a physical activity, so I have to learn it through playing in offline. But I cannot learn detail things through offline only. I can support my skills through online materials. So, I think we need both. Both creates a synergy effect (Mr D, Shuttlecock)*

> *When I joined an offline gathering, the conversation naturally flew to IT issues because most of them worked in the field. Although we can meet a lot of IT issues in the online space, it is an indirect experience. On the contrary, I feel offline communications are more vivid, and close to direct experience. They more touch my heart, and I can get answers immediately from the real-time interactions. I think*

offline gatherings compensate limitations of online activities (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Although I can get diverse information about equipment from the online space, I cannot fully understand its functions. Written description and pictures are not enough. But if I meet members in offline, and try the new equipment (e.g., camera) of them directly, I can fully understand about the equipment, and get enough information and knowledge about it (Mr N, Foto-Club)

Managers host several offline meetings every summer and winter vacation. When we (teachers) gather face-to-face, we can more understand each other, and we can find out [other teachers'] classes, pedagogies, and even their values in the context. Although writing is one of the means to deliver ideas or thoughts [in online], it is still a limited way, and it can occur misunderstandings. Thus I think offline gatherings/activities are popular among teachers (Mr V, School-Where)

Online activities played a promoter's role in offline activities. While offline activities associates were for practical activities, OC activities were for planning, advertising and forwarding. Like socio-emotional aspects were particularly important factors in Favourite Clubs, which had many offline activities, in either general Communities or Favourite Clubs, online activities could promote amity and offline activities. Besides, the blended activities produced more opportunities for interaction. Thus, members were more exposed to interactive opportunities. Chances of learning were also more frequent to interactive opportunities. Chances of learning were also more frequent to achieve throughout the interactions.

Online is convenient to contact and gather people. If someone suggests an offline activity in the OC, we gather in the offline space. I think online activities lead, and offline activities are followed (Ms P, Foto-Club)

It is an OC which reduces space-time limitations. I think its offline activities also overcome the barrier. People might feel more comfortable and hang out with other

193

members in offline if they already formed an intimacy through online activities. That is really good (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

People are familiar and comfortable [in offline] if we reacted and communicated in the online space beforehand. Of course we cannot know about each other 100% through online activities though, it is enough. So, I can tell, it is more comfortable to meet members for offline activities if we developed a bond of sympathy among members in the online space first (Mr Y, Club-Camping)

While the utility value was affected by empirical and practical measures, the trustworthiness value was more related to professionalism and theories. The balance between the two values might be the existence of blended (online and offline) activities. The blended activities compensated and increased utility and credibility of OCs as oscillating between theories and realities. More experience and the following reflections from the community users helped increase the chances for their creative learning as well as activity participation rate to a promising level. Therefore, it might be reasonable to state that an OCs could provide people with opportunities for direct empirical learning, benefited from the practical and credible knowledge and information.

Diversity

This section looks at the way in which a vast store of knowledge or information was gathered by diverse people in OCs: People could acquire something unique and rare which they could not get from ordinary books or their

surroundings. Therefore, the quality, as well as the quantity, could be more diverse in OCs than previously existed media.

I don't learn from only one person continuously. Instead, I can learn from many people in the Community. As IT companies are various, I can get different knowledge and information from people of Samsung, LG or other different companies. If I collect the piece of information and knowledge from each, it becomes enormous (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

I keep logging on School-Where because it has a lot of special resources which I cannot get from teacher's books or other places. Diverse teachers and diverse contents… they are totally different with contents in teacher's books. Besides, new resources are continuously uploaded there. I just can select what I want to try with my students among them (Mr T, School-Where)

For me, there are two kinds of resource in the OC. One is video, and the other is the description of skills in the video. The series of description just look like course books. I have never found books like them, only from OCs. It is really useful. In the OC, unknown videos are well arranged, too. Watching them is much better than searching and watching videos through YouTube (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

We cannot find nor get these things from other places. No matter how many in-service teacher training programmes we take, it is not easy to apply what we learn from them to our school field. But, here, everything is set. When I have a class, all contents of the textbook are well constructed from motivation to preview of the next period here. If I read them for about 10 minutes, I can prepare the class (Mr U, School-Where)

Moreover, as for places where many diverse people gather, self-purification occurred well due to active discussions and communications in OCs. The function raised the credibility about values of diverse knowledge and information.

One day, I had a bad experience because of unkindness and ridiculous services of a certain shop. I really wondered what I did wrong, or who really made a mistake. So, I wrote about my experience which I could judge by myself to get others' opinions or advice. Many people leaf comments under my content. Then, I could judge the situation with relatively objective views. Moreover, I think retailers could be aware of good service attitudes if they see the responds (Ms I, City-Where)

Sometimes a fierce argument happens because of different people and different views. And unilateral opinions or views by the many are unpleasant, too. But due to the good function of self-purification, unpleasant things don't occur much. Furthermore, although many people try negative activities such as viral marketing, I can trust here because more people actively discuss and try to reveal the negative functions in this OC. From the fact that many other OCs cannot be purified by their members, and 'polluted' by the negative intentions, I think it is really hard to winnow out normal truths from falsehood these days (Mr K. IT-Crowd).

Furthermore, not only people joined an OC, but also some people had access for more than one OC because they shared resources from place to place, which enabled the diversity in contents. If each member shares a resource, the whole OC contents could be abundant in terms of second opinions. About a certain topic, many OCs have different strengths. After chains of sharing and re-posting, with more comments and verdicts encompassing a wide range of OCs, a prompt, accurate and diverse concept of brand-new resource is produced, of which the process resembles what researchers refers to in academia.

Although I join several Favourite Clubs, I don't have any disadvantages, and no one nitpicks. I use some Favourite Clubs only for good videos of badminton matches. So, I think it is no problem to join several Favourite Clubs. But, for offline activities, I focus on only one Favourite Club (Shuttlecock) (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

I use several Communities because I can get more answers. Each Community has a different view. For instance, coding styles of game business and the major IT

companies are quite different (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

Lastly, various issues such as a common sense and socio-emotional topics are posted alongside the main topic of OCs. Empirical learning for these also maintained their activity status after sign up.

Knowledgeable things are helpful. They are common senses for a living. In my case, as an estate agent, I have to meet a lot of people, and I have to have plenty of sense. As I meet many kinds of people through my Favourite Club, I can experience different people and diverse work fields through them naturally. Of course, I learn badminton through the Favourite Club, but I think it is a relationship that I learn in the end because it happens naturally (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

From product reviews to opinions about politics, I learn in all aspects from IT-Crowd. There are a lot of contents in many different fields. Reading contents of IT-Crowd, I feel I become smarter (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Photography is the main, and I think it is good to know miscellaneous information or knowledge as well as share or donate. If we only deal with photography, it could be too professional and boring (Ms P, Foto-Club)

However, diversity, it was understood from the research, did not always lead to a positive result. While quantitative aspect was diverse, qualitative aspect could be worse; the flow of OCs could be monolithic as majority pursues, even worse, due to the tyranny of the majority, the variety of minors was not respected. This aspect could impede participations of some members who expected interaction and communal learning from the group.

197

There are too much data. We even didn't have a searching function before. Although the Web server is improved, and we can search now, I hope some worthless resources are deleted. We have to click every title and open the attached file to check whether it is good or not. Well, in fact, no one can examine or delete resources which teacher uploaded, though (Mr U, School-Where)

Joining a discussion for strategies is much better than my own decision. No one is perfect, and everyone is different. But an egoistic person argues his or her own way, even gets angry...Furthermore, sometimes I am too confused because of too much different advice from many people (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

In other photography Favourite Clubs, some middle age members tend to apply a uniform standard. When they go outside, for instance, one bossy member picks a point with a laser pointer and says 'take a picture of this part' to novices, especially young people. These Favourite Clubs are somewhat authoritative and boring (Mr M, Foto-Club)

Closed characteristics of OCs could cause limitation in free learning as well; some OCs are open, but most OCs are run in a rather reserved atmosphere, especially as far as membership obtainability is concerned. Although the OC seemingly exists as a kind of 'open' access project amongst members, the OC becomes 'closed' regarding validity because interactions happen among only members. If the accuracy of knowledge or information could decrease, even learning in the OC causes a situation like a proverb – he who is in hell knows not what heaven is. Mr N and Mr O indicated a limitation of OCs related to the aspect.

If a Favourite Club makes a standard or 'right answer' of the good picture according to the preference of many people within the group, it is the tyranny of the majority. It often happens in closed Favourite Clubs. Then people learn wrong photography. It is sort of downward levelling (Mr N, Foto-Club)

198

Many issues could be a topic for discussions within Favourite Clubs. But only photographic equipment is mainly dealt with rather than photography itself in this Favourite Club… I don't exclude discussions about equipment, but I also want to talk about topics of pictures, communicate about people's opinions, and express those stories. I feel pitiable that activities flow in only one direction (Mr O, Foto-Club)

People learn through reciprocity – with various people in OCs: People can internalise learning as they think reflectively and critically during the process of sharing, adapting their learning into better knowledge and information beyond a mere resource acquisition. It means that people gather in OCs in the hope of an in-depth learning.

Getting information promptly

The more people joined, the more prompt the OC grew in terms of correspondence and spread-out. Although the speed was different depending on the type of OCs, prompt knowledge and information delivery played a role in attracting people to OCs.

It is like a 'round-the-clock' system. I can get response like a real-time conversation at even very late night. So, I can say that information is really real-time in City-Where (Ms X, City-Where)

However, a prompt resource upload does not always have positive meaning: They could be highly volatile. This is 'instant' information or

knowledge; it means that information or knowledge appears immediately as well as it is short-lived. Whatever people needed to know can be easily searched and available online, with the answer provided as well. Due to this immediacy, a through learning at the level of reflection or creation hardly happened. For example, when one-off and superficial knowledge was produced, the credibility decreased, and the feature – promptitude was rather applied as a demerit.

> *A lot of information is indiscriminately uploaded, and much of it just disappears as pages [of OC (Facebook Group] are turned. I think people more join OC activities if information is more systematically provided (Mr H, City-Where)*

> *Plenty of contents just vanish (fall backwards) due to lots of newly uploaded ones in real-time. I think disappearance of contents as volatility is a disadvantage of this kind of OCs (Facebook Group) (Ms P, Foto-Club)*

The trend of the times

Just as they pursue speedy information, people are quick to the newest trend and issues. Firstly, the visual aspect of tools or modes to provide resources also reflected the trend of the age. It means that we can easily find any content or topic in various formats that reflect social or cultural trends from OCs.

> *When Cyworld was popular, teachers used its platform design and characters, and now, teachers use design factors of Facebook and Kakao Talk for teaching-learning materials. And, the design of i-phone is used instead of folder phones. We can get more trendy visual resources from School-Where (Ms R, School-Where)*

As textbooks change, resources change, too. Because some teachers upload new resources for every period of subjects, updating and upgrading of resources are very fast here. If a drama is popular, a resource with referring to its characters and buzzwords is uploaded soon. [It is] really prompt. We can get trendy teaching materials which teachers reflect current hot issues from School-Where (Mr T, School-Where)

Moreover, various up-to-date cases about a topic were discussed in OCs. The recently added resources confronted the changes in the contemporary status of quo flexible, bringing together people into the OC as an arena for debate.

Not only real-time information stays there, but also it spreads throughout other OCs in real-time when persons come and go like I join several OCs. If the news or information is considered as popular or interesting, it spreads widely. This ripple effect is amazing. And due to the effect, even some news journalists stay in OCs (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

Information is rather fast [among amateurs of this Favourite Club]. The information is about equipment and programmes, not about photography. People [of Foto-Club] rather get this kind of the newest information much faster than general or commercial photographers according to the trend. They might want to follow the trend. For people who do photography as a job like me, it is not easy to try a new style readily. But Favourite Club members who enjoy it freely, they don't care much, and change equipment and photograph styles easily (Mr O, Foto-Club)

Timeliness is…for instance, one of the lessons in the Year 6 Korean (subject) is from the perspective of news with several examples. Rather than the examples in the textbook, examples in School-Where reflect current trends or issues. I also even learn about new trends from them. While textbooks include old materials, capable teachers upload current materials or the latest pros and cons articles for the grade. These useful materials compensate the timeliness of textbooks (Ms R, School-Where)

Fewer limitations

OCs helped to ease limitations of offline environments. Firstly, in terms of time, OCs enable people to make the best use of their spare time, investing in learning, free from the constraints of a fixed timetable. Furthermore, they could save time due to cooperation with other OC members (e.g., people can refer to better information, which other people already had found and shared).

I visit the OC in my spare moments. If I have a clear objective, I spend a long time there though. Usually, I just log on it when I have extra time, and I use it at a convenient time (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

Because young people (college students) usually cannot find good information well, I try to find new information for them. If I share it, they can see it. They can save time. Rather than they wander around online spaces to find useful information or knowledge, it would be more convenient for them if I share what I get from several other places. And it would be an education for them (Mr G, City-Where)

Because I don't have regular break time at work, I just drop by there and read postings occasionally when I have no work (Ms I, City-Where)

I usually log on there in my spare time. If there is a hot issue, IT-Crowd is better to understand the background of it within much less time than the Internet news because the issue is one more filtered by IT-Crowd people whose average intelligence is relatively higher. I can access professional contents of various spheres and learn them fast (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

Moreover, benefitted from its money-wise characteristics, learning through OC activities may well attract people as a charming option for Internet users.

While I have to 'pay' and 'go' to a place directly to ask and learn something in offline, it is just convenient to access [information/knowledge] in online. It is really useful because I just can download what I need without a cost. For instance, when a certain [badminton] skill is difficult for me, I can refer to a video which a coach

made for training. I can use this kind of resource actively without paying (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

For example, I have to buy a certain programme or pay costs to use it. But if I literally have a relationship with a person who already has it in our Favourite Club, I can access it easily without cost (Mr N, Foto-Club)

Furthermore, the expandable spatiality of OCs works well on those who are in need of self-teaching but has a physically restricted access to resources. Overcoming their limitation in the physical immobility, the members of OCs could develop their knowledge into at a trans-national level.

I can watch matches in abroad which are not broadcasted from my OC. If someone uploads these kinds of video, I can comfortably watch them in my room (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

While I talk about an issue with acquaintances around me at the level of common sense, I can encounter opinions about the issue from its working groups to academic fields in IT-Crowd. Sometimes I find the content I know as common sense is not true really through the communications. And I can find contents which break 'common sense' around me from IT-Crowd as well (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

The best sources are from overseas countries [for IT information and knowledge]. If a product or programme is made domestically, the domestic news is the fastest though. But if it is from abroad, people who monitor overseas information usually find out it first, and share in Communities. Due to the language barrier, Community is the only one method for me to encounter overseas up-to-date news (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

While I only can meet teachers around my region in offline, teacher's OC expands the space and provides me to meet various teachers from other regions as well (Ms S, School-Where)

Lastly, an adaptation of knowledge or information into practice was easy due to the good accessibility through OCs. Besides, regarding learning, it was

cooperative. Thus people needed relatively less effort.

Due to a smartphone, accessing learning resources is easy. Even during working time, I can watch a video of match which could be helpful for me in my spare time (Mr A, Shuttlecock)

I prefer learning from others in the field to finding learning materials by myself. Even I don't learn from the coach, people at the higher level already know. Since I can learn what I want to know from them immediately, I take less time and effort (Mr D, Shuttlecock).

If this Community is offline only, I don't participate in. I might just try what I can do within my limited situation. Due to good prompt and accessibility, I keep joining here (Mr T, School-Where)

Individual capability

As there was a collective goal, OC members who gathered in certain forums spontaneously had their individual purposes as well. As the capability to shift 'necessary knowledge' to 'the trend of the time' is important, it also seemed to be vital for people to develop their abilities to search and acquire what they needed based on their objectives from and through interactive OC activities. People tended to regard that they could become more discriminating, and joined activities more actively as they had participated in more various activities. As an oft-quoted metaphor of an unfathomable crux, *what came first, the chicken or the egg*, it is hard to judge the before and after regarding the exact turning point in the member's ability and participation development.

Furthermore, people seemed to develop their surviving skills in the form of insight according to the rapid social change in OCs. It means that people could get to read social elements, and develop 'competencies required in current and future', 'discernment in the competences', 'information gathering capability' and 'information literacy' through OCs. Also, they demonstrated the collective power which led a new view and way of thinking with/against the tide. It means that collective intelligence promotes people's activities through OCs.

[We] have to filter [knowledge and information] well. Without the ability, joining OCs is nothing more than just reading or wasting time. Each person's utilisation methods or intentions are different. And I think it is important to promote abilities to learn how to find necessary knowledge and how to filter bad opinions in education for students as well. If students are qualified to do them, I think it would be good to use OCs for school education as well (Mr L, IT-Crowd)

I think we have to understand some things in order to live in this complicated society…I think knowledge required in current and future is really huge in many different spheres. While several subjects or major of formal education might be limited to supplement, such OCs might be indispensable to remedy the limitation. Now, it (informativity of OCs) is essential for survival… (Mr K, IT-Crowd)

When I just became a teacher, education through play or creativity education were never accepted in my religion. But School-Where was a space where I could talk and hear about new trends in education…Moreover, instead of preferring higher grade of the evaluation system or promotion, School-Where's teachers have tried understanding view of children first – how to be a good teacher for children; what values we have to have for them…School-Where is a square as well as an opportunity to consider these things (Ms S, School-Where)

Factors Affecting Online Communities Learning Contributions

- What role does learning play in members' contributions, if any?

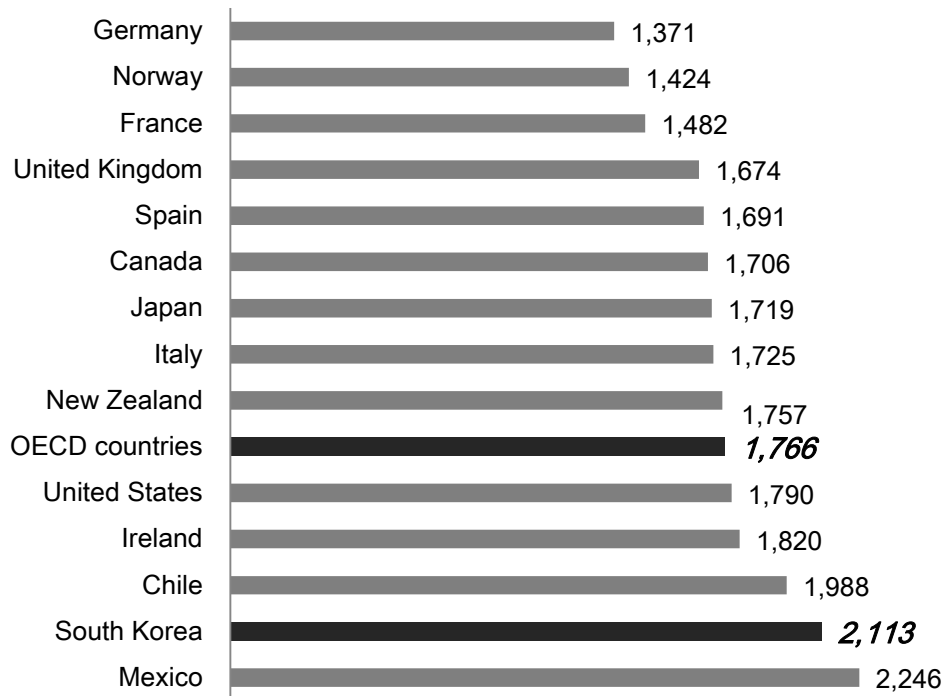| Country	Hours
Germany	1,371
Norway	1,424
France	1,482
United Kingdom	1,674
Spain	1,691
Canada	1,706
Japan	1,719
Italy	1,725
New Zealand	1,757
OECD countries	*1,766*
United States	1,790
Ireland	1,820
Chile	1,988
South Korea	*2,113*
Mexico	2,246

Figure 21 Average Annual Hours Actually Worked per Year Worker (2015)

*Source: OECD. Stat. (2016)

Figure 21 shows that South Koreans worked an average of 2,113 hours per year in 2015, the third-longest average hours among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD. Stat., 2016). This was

350 hours longer than the average for OECD countries. The busy South Korean with a lot of work, it might be surmised, could not afford the extra time for many other activities. Nevertheless, they often get involved in many other extra meetings as well as vocational activities. Within the most commonly used search engine in Korea, there were 9,981,081 OCs (Café type) and 752,312,184 members (plural figures) listed in October 2016 (NAVER CAFÉ HOME, 2016).The scale is enormous. Although some South Korean OCs might be built with a commercial intention, and other ones pursue business purposes later, most of OCs are usually managed unrelated to members' living (Suh, Y., 2002).

This leads to questions as follows; which factors generally make busy South Koreans have responsibilities for the extra time it takes to participate, manage and build OC? Why are they willing to invest their time and effort, and contribute for OCs? This section will ponder on these questions – especially the socio-emotional correlation between their contribution and learning. I will address them in two dimensions, collective and individual levels. Also, I will discuss issues that are detrimental to their contributions, so that the research comes into a fuller understanding of these phenomena.

What a contribution is

As shown in Table 12 (page 103), research participant ratios of resource

acquisition (e.g., information, directions and assistance) varied even among relatively active members. Could participants with a higher ratio of resource acquirement to provision still be regarded as contributors? Is it possible that some members never contribute?

According to Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2016), the definition of contribution is 'something that you contribute or do to help produce or achieve something together with peers, or to help make something successful'. To clarify what and how the contribution is made, first it is necessary to rectify the meaning of joining/participating in the practical field.

I assume that people's contribution to OCs for three major reasons. Firstly, people wish to acquire resources or materials through OCs. They could search and choose what they needed, and even achieve creative learning at the individual level. It means that they might 'contribute' to the OC by nurturing the contents, as increasing the number of log on and hits of postings and so on.

For one's better understanding, I will scrutinize the contributions as dividing into three 'levels.' *Level 1* is pertinent to passive contribution. This stage of participants mainly receive information but does increase the number of logins and postings without substantially enriching the information and content. *Level 2* is pertinent to the people who are largely *reactive*. They respond to the content of others with a 'like' or simple comment. They do not add much to the content, but

they do give minor help in rating and guiding others to good content and supporting the content of others. Comments at this level are expressions of intimacy or appreciation rather than adding content. *Level 3* is referred to as an active *contributor*. These people provide contents, information and often upload, upload and revise. Their content, substantial, often works useful and lasts longer. Of course, many users fall in-between these categories, but, as a general guide, it is useful to think regarding these categories.

My research participants seemed to consider all these levels when they were interviewing on their active contributions, not only active contribution, *Level 3*. In the sociocultural context of South Korea, 'contribution' takes on a different meaning than that of the Western (discussed in the literature review, see section 'Knowledge and learning'). While volunteering or 'contribution' is a western concept, the term 'sharing' resonates more convincingly in the South Korean context. This is based on the implicit ways of participation within a community and a socio-emotional dimension, not just because participants feel they have a duty to do so (Kim, S., 2010). Therefore, the research takes all the three levels into the concept of contribution. It explores relevance between contributions and learning, particularly through the lens of South Korean culture.

Collective level

Affective learning factors: Sympathy and sense of belong

As discussed previously, affective dimensions were a big part of the main reasons for the OC registration. For and by the affective dimensions, people were motivated, participated in OC activities with their voluntary commitment, which produced substantial contribution. People were willing to enjoy and learn with others, in which sympathy creates the process. Moreover, they tried to contribute as providing contents or leading their OCs more eagerly than others, due to their sociality and intimacy for good relationships and interactive learning. Although relationships and communities are commonly regarded as easy and unburdened in online (Flores, 2014/2015; Young, 1998), research participants who were active on OC activities usually developed sympathy and emotional connectedness among the members and felt a sense of belonging. Thus, they considered the group and group members as important. A member's contribution to others' learning than their own sake occurred naturally by the fellow-feeling process. Especially this sense of bond seemed to be relatively more emphasised in small Favourite Clubs with active offline activities than large Communities with thousands of anonymous members.

> *Even if people are passive, not sociable or not good badminton players, they feel good because they feel a sense of belonging, and they can learn [badminton] as they hang out with others. I think that the cooperative learning with this bond makes people more active in Favourite Club's activities (Mr B, Shuttlecock)*

To be honest, I'm bothered although a lot of extra tasks in my Favourite Club are not compulsory. But, I just do them because my favourite brothers[29] ask. If we aren't close, I don't work for them. [I do because] I like them, and [I do] because of a sense of belonging. This is a small community, we know each other, and we have a sense of belonging…I can say that we have a sense of belonging as joining and learning here, and the sense of belonging became a sense of duty. Then we try to contribute for each other (Mr F, Shuttlecock)

For example, a person asked about patent or the Europe trip. I searched and found information about them from other OCs, and answered the questions. I guess they might not know where he should search or he just didn't have any ideas how to try. Although I don't know about him personally, I was willing to spend a little time and help him because he is my local citizen, and my help could be for my city in the end (Ms X, City-Where)

Although I feel scared of other people [in different fields]'s view or prejudice in other OCs, I can share various values, study together and communicate through School-Where…If the situation is not affordable or burden in the offline environment, school field, we can pursue these things in online…as one of School-Where representatives, I could see a bigger blueprint of here…what kinds concerns teachers have, where they are interested in… I could see the direction which we should try. Through here, we sympathise, bear fellowship, and spend more effort for here (Mr V, School-Where)

Feedback

General online learning contents, for instance, online lectures, are usually unidirectional teacher-centred, not bidirectional (Clark & Mayer, 2011). If a single learner does not have a guide for learning such as a teacher, the learner might not be convinced of the lesson, as it is believed that people tend to rely more on the experts' guide than random posts in their OCs. Contrastively, not only learners could self-validate the creditability of their learning through feedbacks from many

---

[29] Not real siblings.

peers through an OC with communal interests, but also they themselves could act as a promoter of the better model of learning to others, sharing ideas on information, knowledge or resources from each other. Since they identified this type of learning is possible through the interactive process, they were able to make an active or moderate contribution in the group.

Since many people occasionally teach me [badminton skills] in the intervals, and give me feedbacks after finishing games, it is much better (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

I sometimes don't understand an answer to my question on the bulletin board. Then I ask about the answer, and the responder gives me a comment again, or other members give comments; we exchange asking and answering. As we use [a bulletin board] as this way, we can understand what we didn't know through comments and feedbacks. This interaction is quite active here. I think this is a very open-mind Community, like 'whenever you need, feel free to ask' (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

On an offline gathering day, if I show what I took, people tell like these: 'Controlling light might be more effective for this' or 'try this way to take that'. These feedbacks are quite helpful to learn photography (Ms P, Foto-Club)

Teachers have to give feedback after using downloaded contents with considering their situations like 'I slightly changed this part because of blah blah'. There are a lot of feedbacks [in School-Where]. It means teachers consider even a page of worksheet deeply. Reproduction of is the best merit of School-Where. While Some Communities just like a simple reference room failed, School-Where still survives due to the merit and reflective agents. It is a beautiful and healthy value (Ms S, School-Where)

When teachers sympathise with my stories or my classes; it means that they also develop my classes and me together. When teachers give me some feedbacks after they used my resources, it is the most worthwhile and meaningful (Mr V, School-Where)

Related to this aspect, encouragement or praise on learning factors also

promoted members' contribution. Prompted by the affective element of the OC, the members more actively participated in the activities.

> *When people react to my posting in our BAND, I get excited and post more. If no reacts, to be honest, I sulk. I think not only offline exercise, but also praising, cheering and encouraging on BAND postings about from badminton contents to ordinary life are also very helpful to maintain our Favourite Club (Mr B, Shuttlecock)*

> *Cheering or praising is not that effective to work activities, but helpful unless it is an evaluation. While I don't want to communicate once in the OC when my works are criticised or evaluated, I post writings or pictures due to thankful compliments. Then, my postings might be good examples or helpful resources to others (Mr M, Foto-Club).*

> *Because of even small thanks, I feel to keep helping or supporting him or her (Ms P, Foto-Club)*

Eventually, win-win

Despite the inconvenience that calls for time and effort in order to share resources or prepare and manage an event for communal purposes, people were, in fact, willing to take the job, because they believed that learning through collective activities would achieve the best result for all members eventually. Although such positive contributions seemed to be at first one member's personal performance out of generosity, the mere post could found a seed to further to a big achievement by sharing feedbacks such as creative ideas, new knowledge and even positive affective energies. It means that persons readily 'contribute', and conduct more positive activities because these kinds of feedbacks occur learning

213

which promote win-win.

I teach or advise lower-level members more. However, as I help them, I also learn from them a lot. Despite the lack of skill, they sometimes make more brilliant strategies for games. Then, we learn from each other, and our abilities are improved together (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

I hope teachers pursue developing together through interacting and communicating. And as they have grown up, I hope they…try to share their development with others…Communicating and developing together… it is the final objective [of School-Where]…as we observe what others are concerned and how they are growing, we learn from each other…It is a kind of win-win concept…It is meaningful that we can meet a mentor. As we share and learn what happen in others' school field, it would bring us win-win…Instead we hold each speciality, we share it. I think cooperation with colleagues would be the most important (Mr V, School-Where)

Individual level

There is no doubt in the fact that financial benefit is one of the controversial issues in South Korean OC culture. As far as the country is run by the capitalist system, it cannot be denied that any member with a business motif could exploit the community as retailer dealers advertise their shops in the space where many people gather. However, none of my research participants seemed to pursue the benefit from OCs[30]. Instead, their personality and tendency only

---

[30] *City-Where* officially permits people to post a commercial advertisement once per month (members made the rule by themselves through voting). However, most of research participants from the OCs were not directly related to this purpose, and Mr H who manages a restaurant also did not emphasise it as the priority.

influenced on their active contribution to OC activities.

Sense of responsibility

People tended to feel a sense of responsibility as a member of their OCs.
Whether they were in charge of the manager's role voluntarily or not, members
tried to be responsible for their positions.

It's a big responsibility. I hope every member equally enjoys this Favourite Club. Steering Committee (managers) endeavour after a good atmosphere (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

As a general member, I read most of the postings and leave a comment on what is proper for me. The reason why this activity is related to responsibility is that…I don't want our BAND die out as a member of this Favourite Club. As we leave comments and use BAND, the OC develops, and old people might also try to learn how to use it. Since the space of Community like BAND is essential for group activities, it is really important to maintain the online space. Some Favourite Clubs cannot manage their online spaces. It seems that they don't have a good atmosphere or they don't manage an OC well. Thus, I feel responsible for vitalising our space (Mr C, Shuttlecock).

I think even general members should have a sense of responsibility as the entire nation maintain a nation. We have to use this well-established OC as good ways…the Community already has good roles. So, I hope not only citizens keep this information system by using it well, but also try to seek a way to develop it more…Especially, announcing this OC to 40-50's citizens like me and promoting them to use this well are what I can do for this Community (Mr H, City-Where)

Moreover, people felt responsible for their privileged access to the
resources in OCs despite the nature of the community as an open space where
they could acquire knowledge or information easily. This proper value of OCs
might be one of the crucial factors as learning spaces.

Related to copyright…I clearly cite the source. As I have used IT-Crowd, I could realise this…And if I only get information, in common parlance, it is like a jerk…So I want to give and take [resources]. And I want to communicate with people. I think it is a manner in online. Not only because of rules of IT-Crowd, have I felt responsible for such as tacit promises (Mr J, IT-Crowd)

I feel responsible for copyright because I did not make the resources [I get from the OC]. Not only because some people mark their signatures on contents which they post, but I'm also definitely aware of that resources I download from OCs are not mine; I should cite the source (Ms R, School-Where)

One more interesting phenomenon was that people had a sense of responsibility for general social affairs as well as special roles in OCs. Some of them had a tendency to contribute to OCs for the common good as mature adults whether they were active or passive. Without considering what they do would count as a 'grandiose' contribution, the members volunteered for extra roles of facilitators in some activities so that others could fully enjoy activities; the effect of learning would exert at its best through the self-led activities. Besides, some peers seemed to have adult responsibilities[31] or professional responsibilities as well as responsibilities for the proprieties.

For instance, I often clean up after offline activities…Participating in Favourite Club events might be contributive because everything is conducted by human power at the end (Mr C, Shuttlecock)

Because here is where people gather, I keep manners and proprieties although they aren't big responsibilities. I wish all members do it as well (Ms P, Foto-Club)

---

[31] This might be related to a Korean cultural aspect – people have duties and rights according to their age (Kim, H., 2010). As elders, they might feel their duties to teach or help young people.

As an educator, I can talk educational things with adding local factors. If young people use SNS, it is convenient and educational for them. I remind them they can communicate with other people, especially elders who have much more experiences. And they could know there are a huge number of people who respond to their questions or requests. I think using SNS for educational purpose is really convenient and useful. Therefore, I can say I have a responsibility of this OC's manager as an educator (Mr G, City-Where)

If my experiences are helpful for early of 20's or college students, I'll share. I also have grown with elders' help. I don't know how to say exactly, but, as an adult, I feel responsible for students even whom I meet indirectly. I think it is an adult duty and responsibility to help them as giving good information or advice. Of course, I might not be very helpful for them, but I might more helpful than 40-50's because I had experienced 20's more recently (Ms X, City-Where)

While the members of Communities found it necessary to hold a sense of responsibility in the protection of copyright, *IT-Crowd* and *School-Where*, it was difficult to find the same aspect in other types of OCs, Favourite Clubs. It seemed that Communities were aware of their responsibilities in terms of information while Favourite Clubs were in relationships and group maintenance. In other words, responsibilities in OCs could be regarded as 'informational responsibility' and 'relational responsibility'. This could be understood in the similar context, as OC roles are regarded as 'informative network' and 'reciprocal network'. Furthermore, it might be reasonable to state that people embrace the responsibilities imposed on them for the goodness of all; they promote learning for development for all as they share resources and communicate in OCs because OCs are another key social spaces in our time.

217

Activeness, confidence and leadership

In general, there are many people who join an OC in the hope of learning, and some of them are only a beginner in the field, if not, a stranger. These people usually need helpers or assistants who lead OC activities, provide learning resources (e.g., knowledge and information), and respond to their questions or requests for teachers in classrooms. I found a common tendency among members who supported their fellow members; they provided more resource and contributed more voluntarily than others; they were active with leadership.

There are many people who are willing to share their professional knowledge [about photography in Foto-Club]. If you see comments [by them] to 'I don't know' (questions), you can recognise them easily. People who leave comments for this kind of question are limited. I think beginners who feel bored with their simple pictures could learn from them and feel more interested in photography [due to their contributions] (Ms P, Foto-Club)

[The reason why I became one of the managers is] due to my character. I usually take the initiative in activities due to my active character. It is the biggest reason. And because I have been a Scout leader, I have relatively more experiences [related to camping] than others. Quasi-professional compared to ordinary people? It could be an effort-volunteering…a sort of talent donation (Mr Y, Club-Camping)

It is true that there were also many people who offered minor help for others' ease although their work did not appear conspicuous. Despite the presence of managers in the group, the number is only a few. Thus, the more people consistently share resources and feedbacks, the more abundant learning factors are produced in an OC. In this manner, the OC could prosper and will be well

218

maintained.

Some special teachers, like specific experts, had led the OC in the past, whereas the majority, general teachers are leading it as they don't reveal themselves remarkably in the current. Managers don't post resources, just organise some in-service teacher training programmes or deal with some problematic issues. Activities of general teachers should be more active, and we just support them (Mr V, School-Where)

Through an OC, well-experienced people could assist others with less experience and behind the progress as sharing information, knowledge, and their know-how in whether online or offline. And, since every person is capable of drawing a solution from different backgrounds, every person is helpful for others. They would freely take any position that suits them according to their different characteristics. By helping and learning together, they could be one another's mutual contributor.

Self-contentment

Since the members tended to be satisfied as they managed to learn what and how they wanted spontaneously, the feeling of achievement led them to the next step, contribution to other's learning. One's self-satisfaction is deepened by the advanced performance such as from leading OC activities, teaching or sharing contents for others' learning. OC members seemed to willingly keep contributing due to this self-contentment because it gives pleasure as a reward as well as motivation for learning in OCs as Bandura (1976) argues: People tend to expect

certain outcomes or rewards when they learn. Being satisfied with these things and having a will to contribute might be a part of personalities as well.

First, my satisfaction is the most important. I love myself...when I showed leadership and dealt with some works as a manager, when I organised an opportunity for communication due to some problems among members, and the problems were well solved, I felt satisfied. And I am satisfied with posting some helpful resources for others [in BAND]. I feel satisfied as I help others. Helping is a sort of experience between him or her and me. So, I can have a satisfaction from it too. When a brother couldn't play [badminton] well because he didn't know it was wrong, I told him, and he became better. It was worthy. Like this, I think we can have self-satisfaction as we help and teach each other (Mr B, Shuttlecock)

It is my personality. I just feel interested in posting information and leaving comments for others. I like that people like it. I like that if people are satisfied with my works. Although I cannot get advantages from the activities, they are interesting. They just make me feel satisfied (Ms I, City-Where)

Of course people appreciate when I actively host an offline camping and plan some programmes for children...No one gives me a prize if I help people to pitch a tent efficiently and safely. I am just satisfied. It is natural, but I think this aspect is really meaningful for me (Mr Y, Club-Camping)

Affection

One more interesting emotional factor was 'affection'. Not all participants showed it, but still, some of them appreciated their OCs and contributed to keeping the spaces. Their attachment to OCs was as special as love for school or hometown. They had such affection because they could meet good people including mentors through the OC; they could learn from them; they could develop. Thus, they seemed to know the value of OC, and try to contribute to share the value. This affection might also be related to the sense of belonging and

220

fellowship.

I just try to find something I can do for this Favourite Club because I like here. At the first time, it was natural that nets were prepared, and I had no idea about cleaning the place after games. About one year later, I realised that some people worked for others. As I realised that, I voluntarily work. It is just an unnoted contribution (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

[I think people contribute] because of self-satisfaction and cheers from others. By the way, people who work hard for this Community seem to be beyond these reasons. They really love this [OC]. So this is the space where they want to care and maintain. And they desire this goes well. I think this OC is managed based on their affections. You know, they make lesson materials with lots of effort. When they share them in this OC, they have a huge love for this space. I can see love of teachers who have spent their time and effort for more than 10-20 years from even their comments (Ms S, School-Where)

Less burdensome due to the anonymity

People also tried to contribute because of OC's most compelling nature that appealed to their tendency; they were less burdened by the anonymity in OCs. Although hanging out with fellow members and participating in OC activities are quite important to communicate and learn with others, some people had opposite-tendencies. However, the anonymous system in OC seemed to relieve their pressure for engagement. Thus, it would be reasonable that there are both active and less active people in terms of characteristics among committed OC users; people could be more active due to the anonymity.

I don't want to share teaching materials or express my opinions in my school

because we know each other too well. I feel so cautious and uncomfortable because they could judge me or have a stereotype about me, like 'what's the matter with her?' But in School-Where, I could post some teaching and learning materials I tried with my students to share and communicate with other teachers because it guarantees the anonymity. Although I'm still somewhat afraid because some people could realise my identity, I feel much more comfortable here because the anonymity is relatively much more guaranteed. So I sometimes can tell my opinions, and I willingly share contents. And I could accept other teachers' feedback less emotionally (Ms P, School-Where)

[I can more trust in postings about people's opinions in the Community because] they are more honest due to the anonymity…I also honestly leave comments as I want to tell, and feel less burdensome (Mr T, School-Where)

Obstacles to contribution

Some factors hindered the members' utilisation and contributions that could have been more helpful for others. I could find reasons why people were reluctant to contribute in two aspects, 'free ride' and a culture of '*체면* (Che-Myoun, 體面)'[32] and '*눈치* (Noon-Chi)'[33].

Free ride: Selfishness and laziness

OCs are usually maintained because many people contribute in their ways, and they learn and enjoy what they are interested in through an enormous amount of data and activities. Thus, some research participants did not seem to care about their biased activity patterns in the OC, but they took advantage of the resources

---

[32] A social virtue, 'an honourable duty or a face to others' (Kim, H., 2010, p. 309) In general, if younger people save seniors' face, they can maintain their roles in the group ((Kim, h., 2010)

[33] A social virtue, 'a skill to notice a sign of others' mind' (Kim, H., 2010, p. 309) In general, if people read others' face, they respect the group values more than individual values (Kim, H., 2010)

only without contribution. The free ride seemed to be a trivial matter for them. In the education field, a free ride means taking advantage from collective learning without any efforts or contributions. It commonly happens in social interactive learning (Cho & Son, 2008). As we do not feel necessary to give a feedback or do a certain contribution for a book when we get knowledge and learn through it, some people seemed to consider OCs as a similar case with physical books that provide a place of resource supply; they could be unaware they should contribute, or perhaps they did not want to make an effort for OCs. Thus, it seemed that people who simply considered OCs as a means for their improvement only did never contribute in OCs, even though OCs are non-profit-making spaces for collective social learning.

> *I don't have responsibilities for Favourite Club because getting information and materials is only a purpose. I don't contribute to there, and I don't care about this thing. An OC could not be maintained unless people provide resources. If there are only members like me, it could not survive. I know it would be better if there are more members who upload resources, not like me (Mr A, Shuttlecock)*

> *I like that I don't have any responsibilities as a general member. [It is a sort of] free riding...it is up to me whether I participate in activities or not. Situations in this Community are free. And, I really get a lot of information from here though, but not provide though (Mr K, IT-Crowd)*

> *I want to help others as I share what I am good at as well as what I was also given from others. But it's not easy [to do these contributions]. Not only in my case...I think the frequency of sharing recreated resources has gradually decreased. Teachers are more individualised although this Community still maintains good condition. While teachers cheered up each other in the past, 20's teachers seem to be more personalised than 30's and 40's...(Ms S, School-Where)*

Not only I have a lot of works including classes at school, but also I have to spend a lot of time for the housework and my hobbies. So I don't think I have to spend time for posting contents for others [in School-Where]. I like resources here, but I'm not interested in posting... I only visit there to find or download some resources...I might be too selfish...(Mr T, School-Where)

Moreover, it seemed that some people did not provide resources in OCs simply because of laziness. It might mean that their conception of the OC seizes to remain in the boundaries of essential need, whereas extra working is bothering. This aspect that connotes limitation also seems to be related to the tendency of which people only mind individual learning rather than communal social learning. It seems to be linked to Cho & Kang's (2015) statement; many OCs are formed by the individual who brings together one's specific interests with others', of which the process grows eventually communal. This new route of the community making is distinctive from the traditional communities, where face-to-face only counts as interaction and respect the groups' common objective rather than an individual.

I just button 'Like' or leave simple comments, not lead a direction of training, nor provide many resources. As I work for a general company, it is not easy to spend much time or effort for Favourite Club like that (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

I think there are not 'real' communications in OCs. People just glance over the screen or refer to what they need quickly. And people easily withdraw an OC if they disagree with some issues or they cannot take advantage from there. Then the OC will be gone. Although the previous OC has been gone, there are still a lot of OCs we can join... (Mr O, Foto-Club)

It would be good to share, but I have to do extra works to do sharing: I have to re-arrange contents; I have to write for posting; I have to upload files…I am bothered by these things…we have to be quite diligent to use SNS because it takes quite a lot of time and it's somewhat bothering… (Mr U, School-Where)

Culture of 'Che-Myoun' and 'Noon-Chi'

There are other defining elements, particularly assertive in South Korean sociocultural sentiment, which gets in the operation of the community. They are 체면 (Che-Myoun, 體面, saving one's face) and 눈치 (Noon-Chi, reading one's face). Although people felt relatively more comfortable in online than offline due to the anonymity and autonomy, they were still reluctant to contribute because they were conscious of what other people would think of, if not, judge them in even OCs.

If someone is outstandingly active for a group in South Korean society, the implicated public opinion of the person's behaviour is usually regarded as 'over-doing' for one's good, not 'contributing' to the group. Thus, South Koreans tend to try to read others' face (reading/having Noon-Chi), and save their face (saving/keeping Che-Myoun) as a safe option, not to be blamed by others. Kim, H. (2010) states that Che-Myoun and Noon-Chi are cultural phenomena evolved from a Confucian culture where people tend to be dependent rather than independent in interpersonal relations; group's purposes are regarded more significant than individual's. She adds that 'this type of culture of 'face' and

225

dignity emphasises thinking about what other people think about you rather than what you think. In a more positive sense, however, we can also say that this is a culture of taking care of others' (Kim, H., 2010, p. 310).

It is assumed that these cultures affected the OC culture as well. People seemed to feel uncomfortable with negative comments and criticism, despite the anonymity, and disliked dropping their Che-Myoun whether the response were useful or not. Furthermore, many South Koreans often take the notion of 'difference' or 'unique distinctiveness' as 'wrong' unconsciously, and they feel uncomfortable, if not, afraid of being different from others in the group (Hofstede, 1995, cited in Kim, H., 2010, p. 326). This might be a type of South Koreans' particular consciousness, trying to assimilate with many others in the collective culture unlike Western's independent culture (Kim, H., 2010). The situation in OCs might be similar with this tendency. It might not be easy for some people to try contributions which they needed to lead or show their personal intentions. They did not want to be salient of their existences in front of many people; they just wanted to quietly follow the direction which majority or seniors led even in OC activities. However, these phenomena are much weaker among younger people who tend to be more individualised and emphasise on each member's distinct personality (Kim, H., 2010).

I think some people just judge others' pictures negatively or sarcastically and leave tendentious comments. People want concrete feedbacks, not raw criticisms when they post their pictures as a hobby in an OC. So, I just appreciate others' uploaded pictures, but not post mine due to that kind of unpleasant criticism (Mr N, Foto-Club)

I shared resources several times in past. Although some persons left comments with saying 'thank you', some others criticised like 'this part is wrong, that part is useless…… blur blur'. When I saw critical comments, I thought I wouldn't do it (sharing) again. I was in a bad mood due to the comments. Of course, I should accept critical feedbacks, but I feel unpleasant. Why should I be judged even in online? (Mr T, School-Where)

Related to these cultural phenomena, people have different authority according to relationships between order and younger, senior and junior, and superior and inferior (Kim, H., 2010). People tended to feel reluctant and read Noon-Chi when they would like to make a suggestion, express their opinions, or let others know their knowledge in front of elders or masters. OC activities, especially as for the offline ones, seemed to be impeded by this South Korean-style authoritarianism.

There are so many masters and experts in my Favourite Club. I think these people teach others in offline, and post resources in online, so I don't do [these activities] because my level is much low (Ms E, Shuttlecock)

My ability is not enough [to upload resources]. Even for leaving comments [to others' uploaded resource], I think I don't have enough ideas as an early-career teacher. I need more time (experiences). It doesn't mean that I don't want to provide, whereas I don't have resources or ideas to post. And I'm still in a position which I can be 'attacked'. Since there are many more-experienced teachers in School-Where, it's not a good timing I appear…I think Korean society is twofold. Although we have a something wondered, isn't Che-Myoun? We don't ask, [Noon-Chi?] we

227

can't ask. Especially, look at foreign teachers. They generally seem to be free to ask about what they wonder… [Moreover, for instance,] I cannot ask about annual leave even though it is our right on contracts. If I search for this kind of working conditions or rights, I become a somewhat cheeky junior. Of course, I don't need to consider Che-Myoun or Noon-Chi relatively in this OC, but I am still cautious [because it where teachers gather]. It is a sort of silent pressure. I might be just timid, or maybe too cautious (Ms R, School-Where)

Due to this kind of cultural factor, people might consider Che-Myoun and read 'Noon-Chi', and then social communal learning and interactive actions were less productive in even OCs where the atmosphere was relatively free and open.

People's Awareness of Learning in Online Communities

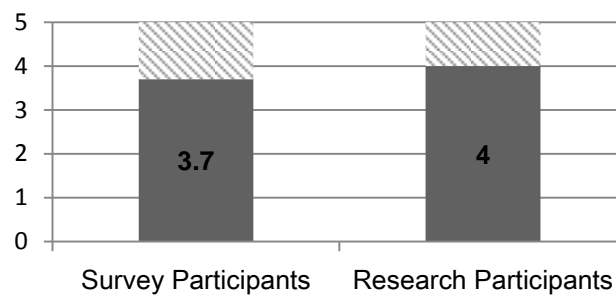*- What awareness of learning exists among members, if any?*

Figure 22 The Relevant Degree between Online Community Activities and Learning

*Source: the author's survey and interviews

228

Figure 22 shows the averages of the survey and research participants' responds about a question, 'how much do you think OC activities are relevant to learning?' As the average degree of 150 survey respondents and 23 research participants were 3.7 for the survey respondents and 4 for the research participants[34]. Both of these responses showed that respondents found their OC activities were 'somehow related' or 'related' to learning. If this is the case, then, how are they are aware that they are in the course of learning in OCs? These questions would be considered in this section.

Relevance between online community activities and learning within each online community
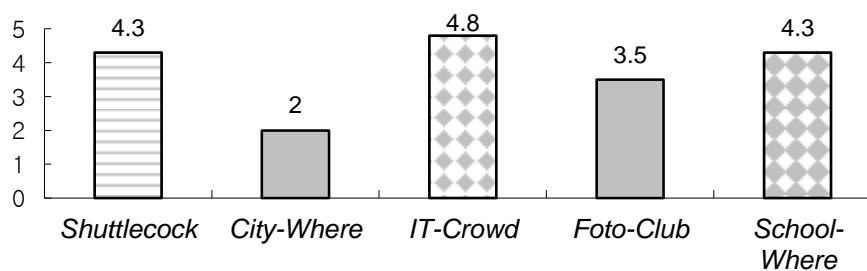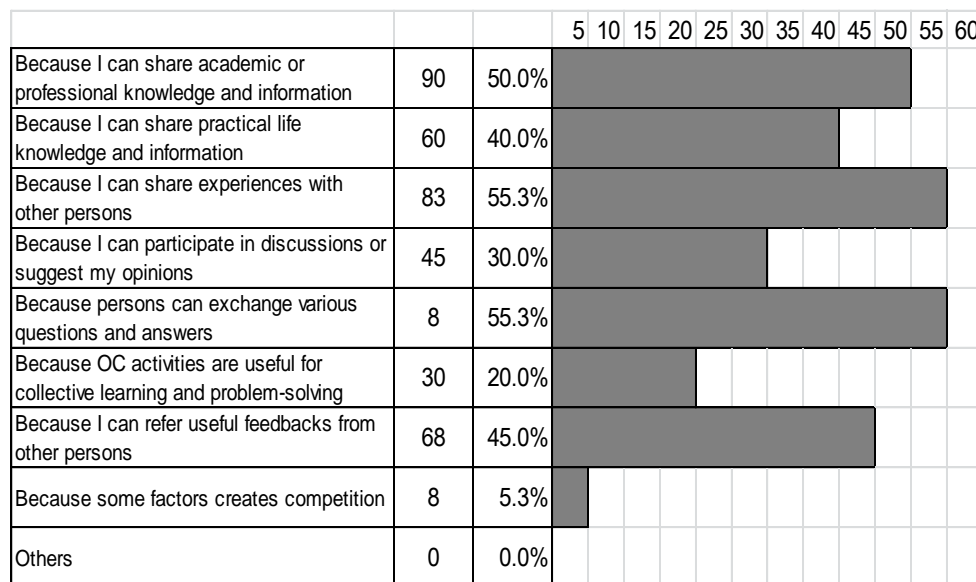
.

Figure 23 Differences in Perceptions of Online Activities Connected to Learning

*Source: the author's interviews

---

[34]Likert scale: 0 not linked, 1 very unrelated, 2 unrelated, 3 moderate, 4 related, 5 highly related

Firstly, I focus on to what extent people regarded OC activities as learning in each five OCs. Although the average of all OCs was 4, Figure 22 shows that research participants considered OC activities might be related to learning, while the averages of each case OC were quite different as shown in Figure 23.

			5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60
Because I can share academic or professional knowledge and information	90	50.0%	
Because I can share practical life knowledge and information	60	40.0%	
Because I can share experiences with other persons	83	55.3%	
Because I can participate in discussions or suggest my opinions	45	30.0%	
Because persons can exchange various questions and answers	8	55.3%	
Because OC activities are useful for collective learning and problem-solving	30	20.0%	
Because I can refer useful feedbacks from other persons	68	45.0%	
Because some factors creates competition	8	5.3%	
Others	0	0.0%	

N=150. Respondents could choose more than one

Figure 24 Why Do You Think Online Activites and Learning Are Relevant?

*Source: the author's survey

Furthermore, Figure 24 shows that research participants' appropriate awareness of learning in OCs in the survey. Mainly, three reasons, 'sharing

230

experiences with other persons' (55.3% of research participants voted); 'exchanging various questions and answers' (55.3%); 'sharing academic or professional knowledge and information' (50%) were mostly voted. This result corresponds to the members' preference tendency about diverse, professional and experientially proved knowledge, information and resources. General awareness of learning related to OC activities for the five OCs was examined based on these tendencies of awareness of learning and diverse learning contents which discussed in the previous sections[35].

In the case of *IT-Crowd,* the relevant degree, 4.8/5 might be derived from the idea that people could learn diverse opinions and perspectives about various social issues as well as IT materials through active discussions and interactions. Especially, people regarded reading and finding out useful information from various posting, which generates 'reading effect', and acquiring IT knowledge necessary for them at the moment as 'learning helpfulness'.

As for the case of *Shuttlecock*, the average was 4.3/5, as they seemed to consider as learning was adequately fulfilled. The reason for such high regard might be because they could learn badminton by watching videos uploaded in their BAND as well as playing badminton together, teaching each other and referring to others' plays in offline. Moreover, members reasoned they could learn

---

[35] Therefore, I don't quote interviews in this part

badminton 'properly' due to the professional coach who had been a national player. Competition, one of the characteristics of sports, also affected as a learning factor.

The average of *School-Where* was also quite high as 4.3/5 because the members associated acquiring and sharing necessary knowledge with pedagogies as learning. Related to this, they emphasised on reconstructing or reproducing their contents by referring to the uploaded contents rather than simply acquiring resources from the OC. Moreover, they preferred the OC to other websites or programmes, because its knowledge and information was both professional and experiment-based from 'teachers' in practical fields'. The professionalism would be considered in two aspects. The OC is quite professional in terms of teaching and learning methods and materials while its professionalism might be relatively weaker than academic or theoretical fields in the aspects of curriculum content.

Teaching is a professional job, but I think teachers don't have deep understanding about subject contents because we have to know knowledge widely rather than deeply. Of course not all teachers do…I definitely agree that we are professional in terms of teaching skill because, for example, teaching children is totally different with teaching middle or high school students (Mr U, School-Where)

On the other hand, people considered the relevance between OC activities and learning as a slightly more than moderate (3.5/5) and unrelated (2/5) in *Foto-Club* and *City-Where* respectively.

Foto-Club members tended to feel uneasy to use the term, 'learning' when it was pointed precisely even though they were talking about their activities with the vocabulary naturally included. As South Koreans generally tend to perceive learning differently depending on '배움 (Bae-Woom)' or '학습 (Hak-Seup, 學習)', *Foto-Club* members seemed to feel uncomfortable to define their 'enjoyable hobby' with the term, due to a type of Hak-Seup 'trauma'. Therefore, while they unconsciously said they 'learnt (배움, Bae-Woom)' through communications about information and knowledge related to the camera lens or technical dimensions, they seemed to deliberately try focusing on 'enjoying' than 'learning (학습, Hak-Seup)'. Moreover, due to the particular inclination in the art sector, they emphasised independence and subjective factors such as their own features and pictures, not technical virtuosity. Even though they communicated and motivated each other, it seemed that they avoided using the term, learning (학습, Hak-Seup) as well.

Many issues could be a topic for discussion within Favourite Club. But only photographic equipment is mainly dealt with rather than photograph itself...I guess novices could learn from this kind of communication definitely...I don't exclude discussions about equipment...[However], the photograph means a picture drawn by life in English, but its Korean word, translated from Japanese style of Chinese character, means 'copying'. So, many [Foto-Club] people try to 'copy' when they learn about photography. They try to mimic as using technical skills. This is why I say learning doesn't occur much in this OC...I think it is correct to learn inexperienced life through communications, get inspiration from them, and create

my own expressions. And I hope this perspective is emphasised [in this OC] (Mr O, Foto-Club)

In *City-Where*, people considered the relevance was scarce because the OC usually treated common information such as advertisements, fancy restaurants, news about accidents, and so on. One manager explained that it would be hard to develop the OC into special contents featured space such as the local culture and history and volunteer activities, because the overwhelming majority of young members generally used the OC as space for light chatters. He added that local notables or seniors tended not to intervene in OC activities although they had joined the OC in the early stage because a lot of less cautious 10's and 20's would obstinately slander, curse and swear [36] . However, many people showed cooperative efforts to develop this OC as a more cultural and educational space as they actively communicated for wholesome solutions about certain issues and cultural events. Related to direct learning, one Interviewee (Mr H) seemed to regard advertising his restaurant and understanding city's trend through the OC as learning. Mr H's case might be a type of forced interpretation. Another interviewee (Ms I) considered introducing good restaurants as a type of communication, not learning. However, they both agreed that the aspect which they could acquire various information would be a part of 'learning'.

---

[36] If their behaviours are too serious, they would be kicked out according to the OC rule. However, still, their behaviours or blames could damage of elders' Che-Myoun

234

As *City-Where* and *Foto-Club* is a local Community and a hobby Favourite Club respectively, they often have different tendencies. The latter has tendencies of the reciprocal network, whereas the former has strong tendencies of the informative network. Thus, it might seem that there is not a direct correlation between the two OCs in the aspect of content and purpose. However, it is assumed that the fact that both are a Facebook Group in the aspect of structure and function could diminish the relevance degree between the OC activities and learning. Their learning and other OC activities would be regarded relatively less serious than other types of OCs since volatility of information and knowledge, which discussed previously, are strong in this OC structure, and the demerit would disturb people's learning.

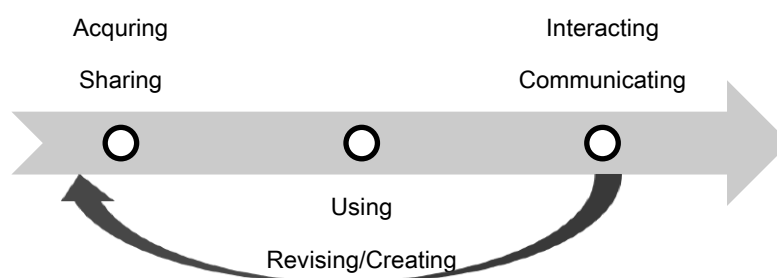**Awareness of learning in online communities**

Figure 25 The Orbit of Learning in Online Communities

*Source: the author

235

I have contemplated on people's awareness of learning in OCs with concepts of acquiring, sharing, experiencing, reflecting, re-constructing and re-creating knowledge, information and resources. The learning locus in OCs would be described as Figure 25, which involves learning *'how'*.

I also discussed *learning 'why'* – reasons people pursue learning something related to the concepts of motivation and contribution. I also explored what people learnt through OCs; some people learnt badminton through *Shuttlecock*, and some other people learnt life information or their local information and knowledge through *City-Where*. People in *Foto-Club* learnt photography and its related contents, and *IT-Crowd* members learnt social issues as well as professional information and knowledge in the IT field. Lastly, primary school teachers learnt what they needed to take care of students including general teaching, learning methodologies and materials through *School-Where*. Furthermore, people could learn relationships and social factors as well as main topics through OCs, and the features of each member's understanding were pertinent to a subjective experience, which varied by various factors. This is a part of *learning 'what'*. Given my assumption that it would be possible to conceptualise learning as 'doing a certain thing' or 'an act for a certain thing'. I would like to explore people's awareness of learning in OCs based on considerations on *how, why, what learning* in this part.

Working and for working

While students tend to learn to achieve a good grade that serves a ticket to the next level school, adults learn to be better in their work fields. Since getting a job is a vital element to make a living in modern society, the adults have to keep learning even after graduate to work better or even to survive. For this, OCs become an appealing option to grown-ups for various reasons. It means that some people do not need to suffer financially or sacrifice their job even if they take additional time and effort to learn 'more'. However, for several reasons, they autonomously and readily decided to get learnt. Some OC members' stories clearly indicated this case where the main topic of the OC is linked to their vocational factors such as *IT-Crowd* and *School-Where.*

> *Umm……I don't think I participate in OC activities with a will for learning. I just naturally learn as I use the OC. However, I can say that I learn professional and practical experience, knowledge and opinions on my job and interests. I acquire detailed and practical information by searching. Then, I might affect enlargement, diversification and localisation of professional knowledge as I revise acquired knowledge and share it (Mr L, IT-Crowd)*

> *First of all, I study because I have to know what I have never known before. I learn teaching methods, counselling and very detailed things as a teacher. It is usually useful because I need them in order to teach and take care of my students…Moreover, [I learn] to be a better person...If I know about diverse things, I could teach my students more things…I might say, now, I learn many things to use. And I want to have more abundant knowledge and wisdom. I think the more I learn, the better for me as well as my students (Mr U, School-Where)*

Enjoying and for enjoying

Some people might choose to learn to survive in their career. However, some research participants seemed to gather in OCs in pursuit of pleasure, as they were 'willing' to learn and spend more effort on it. The pleasure, liberating them from a dutiful feeling while learning, optimistically reshaped their work attitude so that they could work.

> *This [photography] is my job. But the more important fact is that I like it. I want to enjoy it as I learn diverse ideas from other people…Although my studio is a commercial place, [the Favourite Club] people comfortably have offline activities here: we talk a lot…Learning seems to be for rationality or logic at first, but I think, in the end, it is for emotional and humane things which are hidden inside (Mr O, Foto-Club)*

> *Because there are lots of diverse contents in School-Where, I can re-arrange my previous knowledge, and learn new things from there. Above all, the most important are that teachers' new ideas, values and efforts which I learn directly and indirectly through the OC encourage me to be a better teacher…Moreover, instead of preferring higher grade of the evaluation system or promotion, teachers have tried to understand views of children first there… I think these attitudes and efforts are what teachers should consider. I realise and willingly learn these things from School-Where…In general, learning is for and by me. Learning to be a better teacher is also what I want and do…As I can meet teachers who spend their efforts for same goals [with me], it is enjoyable and meaningful (Ms S, School-Where)*

Moreover, aside from job-specific skills, learning became actualised as people naturally pursued pleasure and interests for fun life. In other words, people started learning something to enjoy it, and more learning could occur in the process of enjoying. Furthermore, people wanted to continue learning in order to

maintain interests more pleasantly and satisfactorily as well as reach a higher standard.

> *[Learning is] endless, it is what I do until death to enjoy my life….I want to learn something continuously for hobbies…So, I talk with other people or refer to resources from OCs instead of books when I learn something (Mr A, Shuttlecock)*
> *Of course I need [better] skills. Unless I have good skills, I can't have interesting games. And to play with other people, we can't enjoy badminton if we don't do our best to improve our skills. To enjoy more, I keep learning more [about badminton] (Mr B, Shuttlecock)*
> *I want to learn [photography] interestingly. The most important thing is fun. As it is a hobby, I simply want to enjoy it for fun…learning as enjoying is the most important. If I learn alone, I'm sometimes lazy. If I learn with others, it is more interesting….Of course, for other things, it might be better to learn systemically at an educational institute. But this [photography] is for enjoying what I'm interested in rather than doing seriously (Ms P, Foto-Club)*
>
> *What I love is meeting new people and something I can enjoy with my family. So, I love this kind of activity, and try to find better and more opportunities. That's why I go camping. It is not only good for my children educationally, but also good for me because I can learn how to treat people. While my relationships are generally limited, with friends, neighbours and colleagues, I can learn about different relationships and sociality as an adult when I meet new people with different jobs and various values in camping. It is fun (Mr Y, Club-Camping)*

The reason for learning, as far as it is concerned with adult online users, might be related to the concept of 'select' – learning is optional. It emphasises on emotional dimension, whereas the reason for job and work might be related to the concept of 'must' as a rational reason.

Living and for living

Lastly, people seemed to consider living itself as learning, in this sense, would be integral for a living. Learning for both survival in the career world and

pleasure in the private life at the same time, though seemingly difficult to coordinate, might be possible if the OCs come in a right use. The scope of learning might be too comprehensive if we state that we learn everything naturally as we live. Nevertheless, learning as people want most on top of everything is, after all, a natural part of life.

Not only for badminton, but also relationships and basic common senses, [they are what] I acquire and learn. My life could become abundant, I feel greater and have more happiness...I think they (activities through the OC) are ways to live better (Mr C, Shuttlecock).

Activities in this OC are also learning. [They are] much related [to learning] because I think all activities by seeing, listening and speaking are learning. OC activities could be means to understand other people's tendencies as well as their movements [for playing badminton]. All these things are learning... [Therefore, learning is] a tool for a living?...I do learning to be comfortable eventually...I don't recognise I'm learning, in a sense, I just learn as I live day by day because I have never considered as I'm 'learning'...maybe, I just keep learning?...I just learn something including badminton naturally as I have lived (Mr D, Shuttlecock)

Because learning is studying...People are living as they are always learning...it is comprehensive. I can't define what learning is clearly...I think [all] I see, feel, and judge correctly in daily life like OC activities are learning...What I have experienced through the OC might also be reflected...As doing so, I try what I experienced, and I could understand and learn naturally (Ms I, City-Where)

I think learning is a meaningful experience. Some resources of the Community are not useful, so I have to pick up useful resources, reflect on them, and do my best to teach my students well. Not only it's a sort of vocational duty, but also it's a process and way to develop myself (Ms R, School-Where)

Considering learning 'for' living might be a perspective that highlights both 'aspects of capability for learning' and 'limitations of formal or individual

240

learning'. Especially in this society with countless information and rapid changes,

quality and quantity of information of formal educational systems with relatively

fixed curriculum might struggle to catch up with the online world's strength.

Moreover, people should develop learning ability by several means such as

finding better information and demonstrate the ability. Therefore, collective

learning is more emphasised, and social learning concept becomes more important

(Ilon, 2015).

> *…I think we can learn much more things from online than schools or private institutes…learning in OCs is practical and good, but the important thing is filtering…I think current life is opposite to the past one. I think we have to understand a number of things in order to live in this complicated society while people lived for surviving with the limited source, and they tried to acquire information and knowledge for the purpose [in the past]. I think knowledge required in current and future is really huge in many different spheres. While several subjects or major of formal education might be limited to supplement, OCs might be indispensable to remedy the limitation. Now, it (informativeness of OCs) is essential for survival…as a sort of indirect learning? Learning in OCs is incredible learning. I think it is impossible to cover up this effect professionally by several teachers and subjects in the [formal] education system (Mr K, IT-Crowd)*

> *Because there is too diverse information, ability to filter it is important. And we learn what we want based on the ability…Moreover, it doesn't happen much that we are confused by ridiculous things due to collective intelligence as the ability. As our capabilities gather, it become win-win (Mr L, IT-Crowd)*

Learning as means and end

The three aspects discussed above mean that learning itself is

fundamentally a purpose. People learn for the three purposes, and they are realised

as they learn. Therefore, related to this, research participants seemed to think further development of their learning capability that they previously had not known how to approach by searching and filtering better resources as learning. Furthermore, they regarded 'doing/trying certain things for developing the capabilities' as learning. As these fundamental purposes of learning are linked to Sen's (1999) argument, strengthening competencies is significant for development, the purposes might become the means and end for the ultimate purpose of learning and education.

In contrast, some people seemed to regard learning as a tool only: Learning is one of the procedures in education that involves grades, accreditations, evaluations, degree and 'name value' of schools. Some research participants who considered learning for this stated that learning did not happen in OCs.

Because badminton is interesting, it's a hobby. I learn (배움, Bae-Woom) it because I want to live pleasantly and interestingly. [But,] I go to graduate school for learning (학습, Hak-Seup). The goal is clear. It's only for a degree, the certificate. I guess it will be useful someday (Mr F, Shuttlecock)

Learning should be from experts. It should be formal, and have curriculums. And outcomes should result from the learning. In the case of students, [for instance], it (the outcome) is like improving grades. [However,] in the OC, feeling and practicing through activities are, how can I say, non-standard learning? Rather than considering them as learning, they just have strong concepts of experience. Well, if people could master something naturally as they experience, maybe, I can say they learn something though (Mr N, Foto-Club)

Like Mr F's saying, 'learning (배움, Bae-Woom)' badminton is for fun and

242

it is a pleasure of life, whereas 'learning (학습, Hak-Seup' is just for 'degree'. Mr N,'s description was similar. Learning for grade or degree seemed to serve as learning for them. In other words, they might be aware of performance-centred learning, which is often asserted in formal learning. Therefore, it might be reasonable to state that 'learning' through activities in general OCs is sometimes not considered as 'learning'. Activities and communication in general OCs are not considered as learning factors, unlike some cases of e-learning programmes that show the learning objectives and curriculum; OCs for academic subject study; OCs for contents related to examinations.

Learning = enjoying = interacting

As I discussed previously, South Korean adults tended to separately conceptualise 학습 (Hak-Seup) and 배움 (Bae-Woom). However, learning which they wanted and how they realised either consciously or unconsciously might be summarised in Figure 26. It indicates the relation among the integrating, enjoying and learning process.

People considered that they learnt for working, enjoying and living through OCs: They gathered in OCs due to the OCs' merits and special features, enjoyed the activities therein as interacting with others, and learnt as enjoying themselves. Therefore, people separated 'learning (with others)', 'enjoying (with others)' and 'interacting (with others)', yet occasionally they perceived the three

indistinctively. It means that the three are means and ends for each other. As people did three aspects 'together (with others)', it would accord with the concept of 'social' learning[37] in the end.
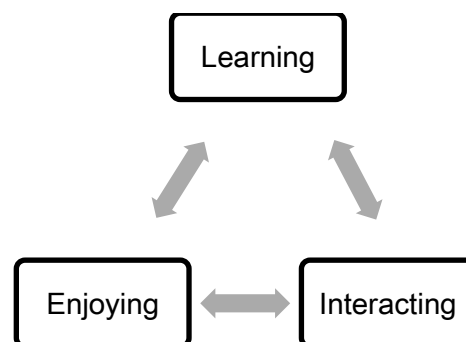

Figure 26 Learning = Enjoying = Interacting

*Source: the author

It might be reasonable to conclude that life itself is learning. People learn from every act they do in life o as others; whether learning is related to work or not, whether they learn to enjoy or survive, they learn. The significance of the OC learning, especially for adults, is concerned with broad notions such as 'informal' and 'lifelong' learning and eventually 'social' learning that transcend the

---

[37] You can refer the meaning of 'social' on page 35, 'Social changes and new paradigm of social learning'

limitation in the traditional 'formal' learning.

Conclusion and Summary

In this chapter, I examined implications of learning from OC activities through exploring quantitative and qualitative data from five cases of South Korea OCs. Findings and discussions in each section were based on the research sub-questions.

Firstly, it appears that classifying and considering meanings of OCs in the sociocultural context was meaningful because it showed that terms and definitions of OC could be different depending on definers; and its features could be diverse according to different sociocultural contexts. Especially, Favourite Club might be a South Korean distinctive OC type; South Korean's inclination to enjoy something in groups is quite reflected, and both online and offline activities are vigorous in this type of OCs. In other words, although people gather in OCs for necessities, learning and activities did not easily take place without a significant social component – amity in the sociocultural context. Moreover, when OCs were considered in the sociocultural context beyond the traditional educational perspective, they seemed to serve as 'learning communities' sufficiently, with

more comprehensive and flexible aspects.

Secondly, OC activities were conducted through different modes including interacting: People actively participated in the activities through searching and asking, reflecting, creating, experiencing, and so on. Moreover, it seemed that learning should be considered at both collective and individual level, even though the focus of the research is on the concept of a communal group.

Figure 27 The Balance of Learning through Online Communities

*Source: the author

Thirdly, I found that not only do affective components at individual level trigger people's more active participation, but also motivation partially depends upon integration with others and not just about the exchange. Especially, these motivational factors significantly seem to correspond to a contention of educational experts – learning and education should be discussed as play. This aspect shows that OC activities are not simply interesting; rather people can actualise learning through enjoyable activities. It supports an argument of the

246

research – the pleasure could be an important motivation for activities, including learning.

Furthermore, I found that participants were often aware of the learning they derived; and the learning was diverse, although the OCs were not designed specifically for learning. Because of the combination of online and offline activities, 'creative learning' seemed to be more productive through 'learning' which had a balance of theories and realities (Figure 27), and which provided and promoted opportunities for direct experiences in the milieus of OCs.

'Acquiring, knowing, understanding resources' and 'experiencing, critical reflecting, creating' are circular sages; important learning aspects would arise from social interactive learning rather than only the individual learning dimension. Therefore, it might be reasonable to state that an OC is related to 'flip the system' and 'bottom-up' of learning in comparison to school education because it is managed by the cooperation of various people, from experts to ordinary persons on an equal footing in OCs (Kim, H., 2010). The new concepts, knowledge and ideas were built. This expansion not only provides more people with more learning opportunities, but also contributes to qualitative equity of education as especially increasing diversities and popularising expertise.

Meanwhile, as it appears natural that people cannot live without social interactions, people learn through communications, and the interactive activities

reflect sociocultural features and socio-emotional dimensions. They are also important in OCs, like other social spaces (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997). The research found that South Koreans' unique moral, affective and sociocultural factors related to relationships affected their cooperation and contributions at both individual and collective level in OCs. In becoming a more westernised society where Korean tradition and modern society coexist, both interpersonal and individualised phenomena were shown in OCs as well: People sometimes were more focused on groups and others; they sometimes were more concentrated on their own purposes; various aspects of social culture, as well as individual characteristics, were reflected in OCs.
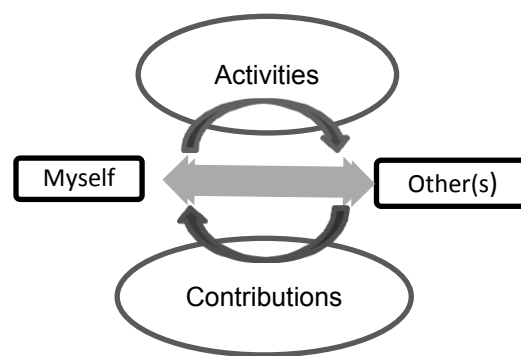

Figure 28 The Orbit of Activities and Contributions in Online Communities

*Source: the author

Learning is ubiquitous, expansive, appealing, and social, but it is not without its problems. Thus, it might be reasonable to posit that people's activities including learning and their contributions circulate throughout their interactions, similarly to the locus of people's joining. People are inclined to cooperate and contribute socially through OCs; they actively participate in OC activities; people (re-)share what they acquire and (re-)create through the activities; the sharing becomes helpful to others; it then promotes continuous cooperation and contributions, as shown in Figure 28. That is, human development is possible thanks to the positive orbit as they gather in OCs, which maintains the spaces.

Lastly, I explored people's awareness of learning in OCs based on considerations on *learning how, why and what*. First, learning process seemed to resemble the mechanism of an orbit − acquiring and sharing learning resources, using and revising/creating them, then sharing the outcomes through interacting and communicating with peers. Moreover, as learning was considered in three aspects − working, enjoying and living, learning was the means and end for the perspective. Furthermore, learning could be regarded as learning itself, enjoyment and communication. These concepts were recognised, either separately or integrally, as a necessary and sufficient condition for each other. Therefore, the awareness of learning among people would accord with the concept of 'social' learning eventually because the three concepts connote communal fulfilments.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Researching the implication of learning in people's ordinary lives was challenging, but meaningful. People seemed to be enjoying their life as they managed their own learning with others through the informal learning platforms as well as formal institutes.

In this chapter, I conclude and summarise several relevant aspects of this phenomenon. It starts by synthesising the meaning of learning, without distinguishing between formal and informal methods, and is based on the concept of 'social' learning at a general level. Then I consider South Korea's sociocultural aspects further. In the second section, I compare two relevant Korean terms; each of them mean 'learning' in English. Through the comparison, I discuss why and how the terms have different meanings. In the third section, I look back on Korea's unique sociocultural features, which have a positive and dramatic effect on the OC environment and its learning. It then emphasises the importance of means of learning or 'motivation', and learning as context-specific or 'homophily'. Moreover, it also discusses some limitations of online communities for learning. Lastly, the research suggests some implications for online learning environments and formal learning in school education, as well as introducing some significant concepts for further research.

Meaning of Learning, Eventually

I especially focused on the concept of social learning, and referred to it in two aspects. The first aspect was related to Bandura's academic theory and his further research discussed in the sociocultural context. Bandura's theory is sometimes criticised for the mode that the meaning of 'social' in his theory is closer to the concept of top-down, like children learning from observing teacher's behaviours, rather than the concept of reciprocal or interactive learning which is more egalitarian. Moreover, because his theory about learning is regarded as being based on cognitivism, it might not seem to provide a proper theoretical framework for this research. However, I still believe that it was worthy to explore his theory and further studies for this research. Not only does he apply the concept of 'social' to learning, but he also continues to consider the concept in the sociocultural context as well as the constructivist approach. He does not retain his concepts in the previous perspective. The second aspect was a social paradigm which is named as new social learning in the perspective of contemporary society in general. The research tried to consider the concept of social learning and its related theories and paradigm, without blindly following Bandura's concept at the expense of all others: In the section of 'context', it referred to the concept of informal learning in the perspective of LLL through the lens of Vygotsky's

sociocultural theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991/1995) learning in practice in the academic field overcome the limitations of Bandura's theory, and emphasise the importance of the sociocultural context.

Like the work of many other scholars, the research discussed learning in terms of internal functions and external interactions among factors of the individual, other people, and the social environment. Moreover, in keeping with the concept of informal learning in the perspective of LLL, the research understood learning in terms of the functions and concepts. Therefore, the meaning of learning would be considered differently depending on when, where, how and who is doing the learning, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15 What Learning Is

| Learning	Traditional concept of learning	Alternative concept of learning
What we learn	Theories, lectures, knowledge, information	All issues related to life
Where we learn	Formal or systemised institutes	Any where we can access in blending online and offline spaces
When we learn	Scheduled times, school ages	Any time we can access to the learning space
How we learn	Learnt relatively passively	Learn actively and spontaneously
Who/by whom we learn	Students, experts, teachers, educational institutors	I, others, society, environment
*Source: the author		
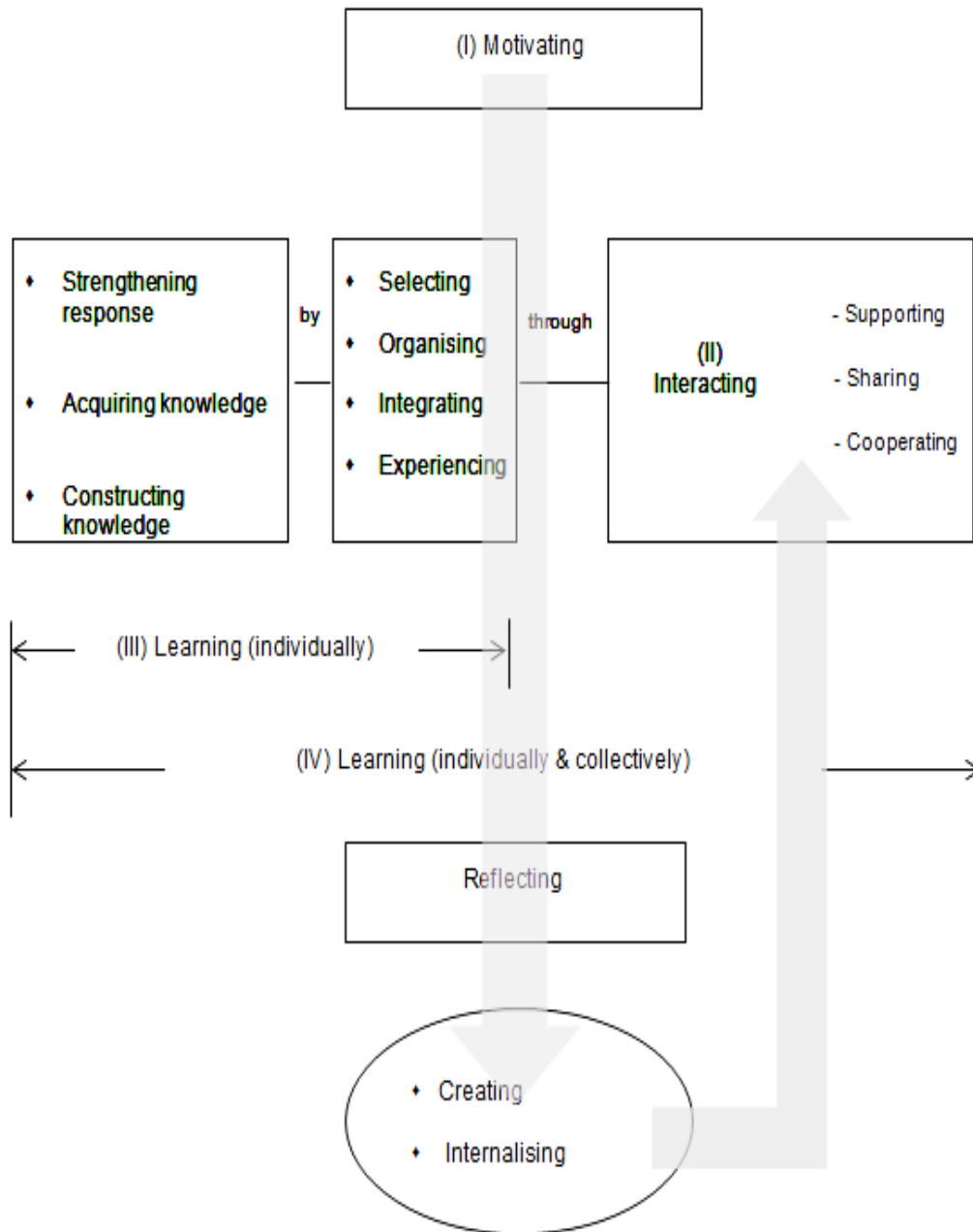
Figure 29 Meaning of Learning

*Source: the author

Furthermore, as Bandura emphasises, that we can distinguish between an individual agent and another two agents, but not as a dichotomy, so the meaning of learning can be different depending on what the unit is − individual or community. Figure 29 shows the meaning of learning with terms which indicate features of fulfilment in our lives. It might show that learning is not simply acquiring knowledge: It rather means experiencing through interactions with diverse factors in the life context; creating new things through reflecting on experiences; and communicating with other people by sharing the creation.

In Figure 29, *(I)* might be the reason why people engage in learning. Personal reasons or the influences of others (humans or non-humans) are relevant to this: The motivation to engage in learning refers not only to an individual deciding 'I will learn something' intentionally or unintentionally due to the affection of his or her unconscious internal function, but also to an individual thinking 'I want to learn something' due to the impacts of others. Thus, as the concept of 'interaction' of *(II)* applies to the concept of motivation of *(I)*, it might be a quite important concept of 'social learning'. *(III)* emphasises the aspect of an individual conducting self-learning in the physical space. It means that a person acquires, strengthens and constructs his or her new knowledge as one selects, organises and integrates knowledge from several resources. In terms of *(IV)*, it is considered in two aspects: Firstly, with regard to the individual level, it

emphasises that learning is conducted through indirect interactions with other people, despite the fact that an individual learner is staying in the physical space alone: While interactions with non-human factors such as mediators (e.g., books and online methods) are not regarded as reciprocal actions in the level of *(III)*, it is the opposite at this level. Indirect relationships between reader and author through a book are in the same vein. As mentioned previously, consideration of learning through this kind of interaction would be quite important in digital society in which media including SNS (up-to-date mediators) are prevalent, especially in the forthcoming future society with post-humans. Secondly, at the collective level, not only is it regarded as collective learning that takes place if 'many' people conduct learning 'together' in the physical space, but it also might include the concept of (indirect) collective learning in such a case that an individual uses knowledge or information which is raised by 'collective intelligence'.

It might be worthwhile paying attention to the '+ α' value of learning through interactions: Interactive learning provides not only knowledgeable or informative values, but also opportunities like reflections to be aware of oneself; to consider how one understands and behaves in society and toward other agents (Van Wynsberghe & Andruske, 2007). As these values are not gained without interactions, interactions could create a synergy effect, rather than simply physical sum (Bandura, 2002; Djupe & Lewis, 2015; Prugsamatz, 2010). In this sense, it

might be reasonable to state that learning through interactions would create further learning, and knowledge and information from this learning is cumulative.

Learning, in the individual context is fulfilled through selecting, organising or integrating by an individual. However, learning in the sociocultural context could include the collective dimension. People learn individually, and they learn through mutual interactions – supporting, sharing and cooperation – with others, and even the environment and society. As I insisted previously, this takes place not dichotomously, but comprehensively. We should consider the meaning of environment including communities to individual as well as meaning of individuals to the environment simultaneously. Then, even inherent meanings of learning could be understood.

Learning might be each individual's interaction with other persons and sociocultural environment in communities, and it promotes individual and social development during the process of practice and cooperation. Individual and collective developments are interrelated as sufficient condition, necessary condition or necessary and sufficient condition for each other. The development involves a diverse range of things, such as an individual's grades, career building and life environment improvement. It might also involve communal goals such as solving social problems, promoting a better social atmosphere and enjoying life through leisure with others.

The Term, Learning in South Korea

Both the term ' 배움 (Bae-Woom)' and the term ' 학습 (Hak-Seup, 學習)' can be officially translated into English as 'learning', but they generally have two different emotional and social meanings in South Korea. The first, 배움 (Bae-Woom) is viewed as a rather informal process of learning, often casually, non-academically or practically undertaken among peers. Interestingly and meaningfully, the word derives purely from a Korean context. On the other hand, the word 학습 (Hak-Seup) takes on a more formal definition of learning – bringing to mind the formal classroom setting, and connoting particular formal relationships with teachers, trainers or mentors that require specific relationships that must be adhered to. Also, interestingly, this word derives, as much of the Korean language does, from a Chinese character, 學習 (Hak-Seup). When people think of this word for learning, they often think of more formal relationships, rules and values that position them in a strict setting for learning. Thus, learning for Koreans, connotes both a set of cognitive activities *plus*, importantly, a set of interpersonal relationships that go hand-in-hand with the learning environment. Even the language cannot be separated from the social environment. Learning is, by culture and even by language, social within the Korean context. Paradoxically, then, it sometimes feels more comfortable to use the foreign language noun,

'learning' than either of the two Korean words: 'Learning' is a foreign word, it carries less hidden meaning.

Relationship[38], Collective Society and Learning in South Korea

Social learning is not just limited to South Korea, as concepts of collective intelligence and organisations such as Wikipedia are prevalent around the world. However, it is not easy to discuss why and how OCs are vitalised in Korean society above IT development, and social learning is active in the online environment, if Korea's unique features are overlooked.

Two aspects, namely, 'relationships' and 'collective society' still play a significant role in constructing and maintaining their own special social learning 'society', although South Korea might not seem to have unique features in the global perspective because capitalism and individualism have become stronger in the nation, like in Western countries.

Koreans have a strong tendency to do whatever they do 'together'. As students commonly go to the toilet together during the break time, and people tend

---

[38] It was not easy to translate the sociocultural concept in English. Between friendship and relationship, the latter one was chosen in order to emphasise 'relation' among people.

to have meals with other(s) rather than alone, they tend to learn and study together. In other words, Koreans tend to prefer 'belonging to' a certain group, and hanging out 'together' for 'collective works', although they tend to do neither like, nor be used to some types of collective works, such as discussions and presentations, during which they should reveal 'personal' opinions or knowledge, compared to Westerners. Accordingly, they gather, and go somewhere where other people gather. Therefore, they build their platforms in an environment where it is easy to gather – the platforms are OCs, and the environment is online.

And if so, Koreans want to form relationships with other members, and try to maintain them instead of just focusing on personal necessities or contributions. 'Relationships' and the 'purpose' of joining OCs, such as learning, are a necessary and sufficient condition for each other. In other words, there has to be a social environment before some kind of learning can take place.

For example, people gather to learn badminton in a Favourite Club, but before that, 'people' is the priority, rather than 'badminton'. It is important to be good to one another, and make a good impression in order to learn and thoroughly enjoy badminton. Creating a good atmosphere for the retention and development of a community and establishing and maintaining these relationships are indispensable factors for each other. Therefore, members even take care of the social events of other members' families to create an even stronger fellowship. In

a similar vein, members want to maintain homophily, since it is uncomfortable for people to join and learn together if a member is a 'different' person in the community, because thereby he or she becomes a 'wrong' or 'strange' member. In terms of homophily, I will discuss learning context separately in another section.

However, relationship is not always important in OCs. The structure of OCs differs depending on their purpose, and a selected OC among a number of OCs on the same subject by a person is different. Furthermore, the degree of intimacy is also diverse. Familiarity and intimacy become more or less important depending on the characteristics of OCs and individual pursuits. In general, 'Communities' are more focused on online activities and anonymity, while Favourite Clubs emphasise these kinds of affective and emotional characteristics due to offline activities and more direct interactions. And these activities of Favourite Clubs are an extension of members' actual life. In addition, there are also a lot of discourteous or non-friendly people in OCs. And it is common for OC members to leave their current OCs without scruples and move to another OC when their necessities or purposes are satisfied.

Nonetheless, OCs are still alive and well, and a strong humane bond involving the building and strengthening of relationships is a significant factor in maintaining social learning in South Korea due to the importance of the sociocultural atmosphere, which traditionally emphasises relationships and

collective society, and which naturally adheres to these traditional concepts.

People Learn by Different Means: Motivation

It was interesting that people were uncomfortable with the notion that they were learning outside a formal setting – they did not really consider this to be learning. That, in itself, is a kind of lack of knowledge, in that they separate knowledge 'coming from the experts' from knowledge 'coming from peers', even though they actually trust knowledge from OCs, and even act on it. This might be affected by whether South Koreans consider learning as 배움 (Bae-Woom) or 학습 (Hak-Seup), and they might consider learning differently according to their previous experience of learning, especially in their schooldays.

This does not include people who do not feel unpleasant about learning, nor does it include people who expect learning in OCs. The concept of 'motivation' might be the appropriate way to explain autonomous learning. Self-motivation might seem to be natural for adult learning. However, the power which triggered their active OCs and learning was quite significant at both individual and collective levels in the informal and social learning sector.

People spontaneously gather within OCs. They try to browse through the

OC's contents by themselves for their own purposes. In other words, their collective learning through OC activities might be one of the means for their self-directed study. Individuals are masters of their own learning. More specifically, people tend to learn through shared communications such as conversations and collective offline activities in OCs. These social functions then become motivations, and promote further learning, because motivation from either personal or individual impacts might promote sustainability and development of a community.

Thanks to these different motivations, people tend to learn as a form of enjoyment, and enjoy learning. This learning is conducted in the same way as children learn through play. This might be described by some academic terms such as social learning, informal learning and lifelong learning. Nevertheless, it might be simply, but fundamentally, regarded as a natural part of life as our life goes on according to technological and social changes.

Learning Is Context-Specific: Homophily

The results show that learning through OCs is significantly affected by sociocultural context. Therefore, I assume that the concept of 'homophily', which

was discussed in the literature review chapter, would vitalise learning as it works in both antithetical directions, informatively and reciprocally, and the learning would enable the activation of OCs. People tend to form an OC with 'much homophily' where members have similar interests; they build social relationships with so-called congenial members; they learn about their interests from one another in order to enjoy them in a more interesting and pleasant way.

However, if OC members are more diverse in terms of perspective and their level of interest − namely, if an OC consists of different people with 'less homophily' − learning would occur more actively in the OC as diverse people share more varied feedback, and play different roles according to their particular features. This is a phenomenon that corresponds to the argument that the collaborative learning effect would increase when students of more varied levels join (Clark & Mayer, 2011). If OC members' levels of interest in a certain topic are similar, they might be limited in terms of how much more they learn from one another. Similarly, people tend to prefer an OC where more proficient members are gathering when they consider OCs in terms of aspects of knowledge and information in reality.

Some people might raise the question, 'then, why do people at a high level still adhere to 'a position of provider' as they provide resources, answer questions, and help other people at a low level in OCs?' A professional photographer among

amateur photographers responded to this question; he could also learn various views and unexpected things from other different non-experts, even though he might be better in terms of technique or artistic aspects. Similarly, a teacher thought he could learn from feedback on his postings, and both feedback providers and receivers could help each other develop. As research participants stated, thanks to the abundance created by diversity, the learning aspect could be stronger in groups with weak homophily.

Meanwhile, as we go back to the original meaning of homophily, 'love of the same thing', it could be expressed as 'tendency to be interested in the same thing'. It seems that this pursuit is eventually equal with what Communities or Favourite Clubs pursue. In this perspective, OCs seem to fundamentally be groups with strong homophily. Therefore, a more accurate explanation might be this: In cases of networks, including OCs, which generally have strong ties with strong homophily in 'a certain topic', they could be more advantageous in terms of learning aspects such as knowledge sharing and feedback, and if they have 'weaker homophily' (diversity) in terms of other aspects (e.g., diverse perspectives, characteristics, background). This logic could be clear evidence to distinguish Communities with relatively strong tendencies of informative networks from Favourite Clubs with relatively strong tendencies of reciprocal networks.

Table 16 contrasts OC characteristics for groups that have strong homophily and weak homophily. This categorisation does not mean that Favourite Clubs and Communities are distinguished dichotomously. It rather means that generally Favourite Clubs where people enjoy the same interests together through offline activities actively tend to have strong homophily (the same interests) and strong ties (strong amity, enjoying together, direct reciprocal offline activities), while Communities in which various people share diverse information and knowledge through generally online interactions have weak homophily (various people) and weak ties (interacting for knowledge and information mainly through online activity). If OCs consist of people with weak homophily (diversity) in terms of perspectives and levels, their informative roles could be improved, whereas learning in socio-emotional dimensions could increase if OCs' ties become stronger.

Table 16 Online Communities and Homophily

Strong homophily	Weak homophily
Strong tie	Weak tie
Reciprocal network	Informative network
Favourite Clubs	Communities
*Source: Lee (2016)	

Therefore, it might be a reasonable assumption that OCs could be most useful when they serve a unique learning purpose which cannot easily be fulfilled elsewhere, and in this case, learning is the central focus, and relationships become important for it.

Limitations of Online Communities for Learning

However, OCs do not have only positive learning implications. In terms of not only the aspect of information and knowledge, but also the aspect of OC systems and their users' attitudinal aspect, learning through OCs could have some limitations.

In the aspect of information and knowledge, which has been investigated in OCs, a lack of professionalism might be the first limitation: It might be different depending on the individual, and the information might not be serious enough to be useful in everyday life. However, interactions through OCs which mostly consist of amateurs would be limited if the aim is in-depth learning on a certain topic, and the learning would be standardised downward. Due to this limitation, some OCs, like *Shuttlecock,* create an alternative, like inviting professional tutors. Besides invited tutors, the professionalism of the OC would be

different depending on not only the activities of experts belonging to OCs, but also the source and quality of the resources that amateur members receive and share.

In the similar context, reliability of information and the level of knowledge is not always high. This is because much of the information and knowledge in OCs is from hearsay opinions rather than careful selections. Like Kim, S.'s (2010) description discussed in the literature review, this is because much knowledge is based on people's experiences, and it is emotional, subjective and basic, rather than scientific and theoretical in the Internet environment. Its credibility, therefore, tends to be much weaker than knowledge from specialised curriculums. The credibility sometimes decreases due to false or exaggerated advertisements as well. *City-Where* might be a representative case in this regard; its contents related to the local city feature a large proportion of commercial advisements or the promotional events of retail shops. It might be an absurdity if information from excessive commercial advisements is regarded as a learning resource.

Moreover, as a context within which there is volatility of information, knowledge in OCs is 'instant knowledge'. Rather than thinking and researching deeply, some people attempt to solve a problem quickly by asking easy questions doing only simple searches. In this instance, the learning level which relies on reflecting or re-creating would not be high.

Related to this, cooperation through interactions is one of the biggest learning activities in OCs. In this regard, the differences among OCs with respect to how closely they linked their activities with learning deserve further consideration. Although sharing or cooperating is the main reason for joining an OC for a lot of members, they generally say that they are most interested in 'acquiring' information rather than providing it to others. If members use an OC for meeting their own needs only – without considering the needs of others – updating of the OC happens infrequently. This would eventually affect the sustainability of the OCs, as it would need to be maintained regularly. OC contents could be more abundant and deeper when 'provision' and 'acquisition' of knowledge and information are balanced, and there is an abundance of feedback.

On the other hand, a limitation of learning through OCs could be related to the closed membership system. Although some OCs have an open-door system, like any Facebook members, any of whom can join *City-Where*, a lot of OCs are open to members only. Members might interact actively and 'openly' within their OC. However, they could be rather 'closed' if they only interact among themselves. In that case, the accuracy of knowledge and information could decrease; even learning in the closed OC is like cultivating people of narrow views.

Some phenomena which should be improved in the learning dimension of

OCs include many people using OCs strictly for their own benefit; knowledge…

volatile activities take place.

Nonetheless, learning might be the primary role of OC activities, since people from within OCs could learn what they want to learn, and OCs could not be maintained unless learning keeps happening. The learning through OCs should be explained as something through direct or indirect interactions beyond the concept of provision and the acquirement of knowledge and information, and the learning is interesting, empirical, practical and self-selected. Therefore, people gather in general OCs, a type of 'associative communities', which emphasise personal autonomy and choice.

Further Research

The whole journey of the research was quite meaningful for me beyond the main research topic and purpose, since I discovered many other interesting stories and phenomena along the way. Although these might not seem to be directly related to social learning in OCs, it would be worthwhile to consider them more deeply in terms of learning implications. Among the inexhaustible stories from our lives, I would like to summarise three concepts specifically for cohort studies.

Societal benefits: Sustainability and well-being

I discussed concepts of learning by considering relevance of OC and social learning, and considered the way in which the two concepts would affect and develop each other. One of the most worthwhile notions in the context of this discussion might be 'sustainability for learning'.

Learning promotes multi-layered problem-solving that could contribute to a more sustainable future, and is consistent with the principles of sustainability throughout one's life (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, n.d.). According to this statement, the fulfilment, rights, responsibilities, roles and relationships of people – individuals, organisations, nations, regions, and social groups – are emphasised. This perspective, which concentrates on the significant role of sustainability in terms of education or learning, is meaningfully close to the emphasis of interactions between people and their environment (e.g., society) in the perspective of social learning.

Dewey (1916/2008) believes that individuals can learn through experience, especially from the everyday social community environment, and their learning and improvements can contribute to these communities as well. Similarly, Prugsamatz (2010) indicates that an individual's motivation for learning has a significant influence on the sustainability of the larger group's learning, and the psychological aspects sustain and improve members' performance. According to

these arguments, individual development can result in the development of groups. Further mutual impacts promote their own specific, concrete and sustainable learning within the community.

The concept of sustainable learning posits that learning is natural, important and necessary. Then, what is the fundamental meaning and importance of this learning? Although this question might make the research return to the starting point of my original question, it is beyond the essential scope of this research. The intrinsic implications of sustainable learning in the global perspective might serve as a meaningful trial to understand learning in a different way with this research. The notion of well-being might be the central topic for further research in terms of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), since human beings are eager to improve their lives, and development relies heavily on learning and education throughout the world (Lee & Ramirez, 1995).

Therefore, sustainable learning for well-being in both aspects – essential factors such as human rights and material factors related to the vocational and economical roles of learning, specifically, roles or significance of OCs for these aspects – might be meaningful topics for further research.

Implications of South Korean culture and IT development for online learning environment

The research explored the natural development of SNS from the historical, cultural and social perspective in the case of South Korea. South Koreans work within the given environment, but their interests, challenges and needs also cause OCs to change and develop. In other words, the interplay between people and environment is natural. Therefore, we cannot consider change and development beyond the digital environment without focusing on persons as factors and actors in the sociocultural context.

The widespread sociocultural features of South Korea, especially related to knowledge and learning, seem to be significantly linked to factors which affect the specific characteristics of OCs. Specially, there are important factors that form the background of a given OC's development that are in South Korea's historical, cultural and outstanding technical development characteristics. In general, various communities with strong communal solidarity as well as traditional communities such as school-ties and local-ties communities are dominant. Perhaps they derive from the efforts of civil society to thrive against the difficulties and failures of successive governments during the modernisation process. Due to the improvement of the communication ability of both individuals and communities based on the IT development and efforts of both the state and citizens, South Korean society has developed with regard to citizens' various activities in the online as well as the offline environment. The vitality of OCs clearly shows these

tendencies. Moreover, South Korea has tried to seek a socially malleable role from social and civil communities, not from governmental authorities or the enterprise of the market only. The social civil-centred and communal social features have developed their specific sociocultural communities in the online environment. And the knowledge and learning for it tend to be practical and experimental based on citizens' subjective views about political, economic, social and cultural issues, not only professional and objective viewpoints in the new life space.

South Korea is s a good example of a country that has invested in knowledge; it is an uncommon case in which the state has invested in the Internet and information economics for social well-being at the national level. Although South Koreans might just consider this to be natural, it is quite incredible in the global context. Therefore, the associated knowledge benefit for all and learning equity through the investigation could become a model for other developed and developing countries in the global perspective.

Implications of informal learning in online communities for formal learning in school education

Although I have tried considering learning beyond my perspective, which is limited, due to my characteristics as both a teacher and a student, I should not

overlook some positive lessons from the research's informal learning field, especially related to both of the key concepts, OCs and social learning, for the formal education field to which I belong. In other words, educational stakeholders should be well-acquainted with some implications from the investigation of OCs and other informal learning environments, even for formal education fields.

Firstly, people generally desire to integrate learning in their daily routine. Although they are interested in learning what they like and are willing to learn it, why do they feel the term 'learning' is something difficult or burdensome? Have schools not compelled people to learn passively, rather than providing learning in the forms people have wanted, and are they not still doing that?

Moreover, is the proper role of formal education in current society to defend against the phenomenon that superficial knowledge is rampant in online spaces, which are already a big part of our life spaces? It might be better if instructions on how to safely and effectively use and refer to knowledge and information through online methods including OCs, and in-depth alternatives for balance between online learning and standard education, are now being prepared.

Furthermore, in this digital society, 'social learning' has been more dynamic as more types of SNS have developed by passing through their Café heyday, and a post-social age is now coming, as AlphaGo appeared. Then, how much does the formal education field reflect and follow this social development?

In terms of contemporary social contradictions or conflicts being viewed as Luddism 3.0[39], a discord between human and non-human such as AI (artificial intelligence) could be a social problem in the foreseeable future. How much do educational authorities, which lead learning roles in preparing for the future, recognise and prepare for this kind of problem, more importantly in terms of student protection within subjects such as ethics and social studies?

Schools and educational authorities have played an important role in providing learning opportunities. Not only they, but also other stakeholders for learning, should deviate from the arrogance and backward idea that there are 'absolute' spaces. Educational policy makers should shift the policy attention from providers and systems to receivers and learners. The focus on formal education needs to be broadened in order to embrace a system-wide non-formal and informal type of education, in accordance with the concept of lifelong learning. Therefore, this research suggests that deeper reflection and introspection on the questions which learning in OCs raises are vital.

---

[39] Luddism 3.0 is one of ideologies related to movements of anti-informatisation and anti-digitalisation in this age. The term Luddism indicates the ideology of anti-mechanisation movement, and it is named after Ned Ludd, a leader of the movement against newly developed technologies in the early industrialization in 19th century (Lee, 2012b; Oh, 2000)

Although I described OCs as spaces and methods which people can learn –
not simply acquiring and retaining knowledge and information freely based on
the development of the Internet rather than being fixed and closed learning
institutes of certain groups − it is true that countless number of people cannot
gain the benefits that the global world can provide. Although the learning
advantages and opportunities from informal learning through OCs are natural in
South Korea, they might not be feasible in some other countries with less
technological infrastructure.

I am not contending that other countries should encourage OCs simply
because of the success of learning through OCs in South Korea. Nonetheless, the
reason why I try to consider and suggest learning implications in OCs in the
global perspective, particularly as part of the last point of the research, is that it
also has implications for global well-being. I want to argue that there would be
possibilities of learning which are suitable for regional circumstances and
cultures, and that this learning should be encouraged, as it is in South Korea. In
other words, a nation's own particular form of social learning should be
promoted, whether it is in the online environment or not. It might be summarised
as 'think globally, act and share locally'. If each local does so, they could be
another good case of social learning, and come closer to achieving the ideals of
'education for all' or 'learning for all'.

Well-being is something fundamental which cannot be accomplished by humanitarian or economical alone, it should be achieved through the harmonisation of these two perspectives. The factors that could best realise the concept of 'well-being' might be the best form of learning according to communities' sociocultural contexts, and whether countries are developed or developing to contribute to the well-being of humanity and the global community. Therefore, I would like to end this research by emphasising one simple but fundamental truth; an OC could be an alternative that promotes learning, especially within the context of social learning and well-being for all. Social learning could make a large contribution if its principles are placed within a local context, either in an online or offline environment.

References

AlphaGo versus Lee Sedol. (n.d.a). Retrieved September 07, 2016 from
    Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AlphaGo_versus_Lee_Sedol

Arbaugh, J. B. (2008). Does the community of inquiry framework predict
    outcomes in online MBA courses? *The International Review of Research
    in Open and Distance Learning*, *9*(2). Retrieved from
    http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/490/1045

Arksey, H. and Knight, P. (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An
    Introductory Resource with Examples.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Bae, Y. (2005). *Relationships and social psychology in the network society* (No.
    05-03). Korea Information Society Development Institute. Retrieved from
    http://m.kisdi.re.kr/mobile/repo/res_view.m?key1=9816&key2=0&key3=
    &category=2&categ=

Baek, S. I., & Kim, Y. M. (2015). Longitudinal Analysis of Online Community
    Dynamics. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, *115*(4), 661-677.

Baker, P. M. A. , & Ward, A. C. (2002). Bridging Temporal and Spatial "Gaps":
    The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Defining
    Communities. *Information, Communication & Society*, *5*(2), 207-224.

BAND. (application) (n.d.e). Retrieved July 10, 2016 from Wikipedia:
    https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAND_(application)

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory (Vol. viii)*. Oxford, England: Prentice-
    Hall.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social
    Cognitive Theory*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of Human Agency Through Collective Efficacy.
    Current Directions in Psychological Science, *9*(3), 75-78.

278

Bandura, A. (2002). Social Cognitive Theory in Cultural Context. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 2002, *51*(2), 269-290.

Becker, G. (2006). The Age of Human Capital, in Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., and Halsey, A. H. (Eds.), *Education, Globalization, and Social Change.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 292-294.

Benlian, A., & Hess, T. (2011). The Signaling Role of IT Features in Influencing Trust and Participation in Online Communities. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *15*(4), 7-56.

Bingham, T., & Conner, M. (2010). *The New Social Learning: A Guide to Transforming Organizations through Social Media*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Bock, G. W., Zmud, R., Kim, Y. G., & Lee, J. N. (2005). Behavioral Intention Formation in Knowledge Sharing: Examining the Roles of Extrinsic Motivators, Social-Psychological Forces, and Organizational Climate. *MIS Quarterly*, *29*(2), 87-111.

Brooks, C. (2010). Toward "Hybridised" Faculty Development for the Twenty-First Century: Blending Online Communities of Practice and Face-to-Face Meetings in Instructional and Professional Support Programmes. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *47*(3), 261-270.

Brown, J. S., & Adler, R. P. (2008). Minds on fire: Open education, the long tail, and learning 2.0. *EDUCAUSE Review*, *43*(1), 16-32.

Brown, J., Collins, A. , & Duguid, P. (1989). *Situated cognition and the culture of learning* (Technical Report, No. 481). Illinois: University of Illnois at Urbana-Champagn.

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Method,s* (2nd Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Bryson, J. M. (1995). *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*.

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Butler, B. (2001). Membership Size, Communication Activity, and Sustainability: A Resource-Based Model of Online Social Structures. *Information Systems Research*, *12*(4), 346-362.

Carnoy, M. (1999). *Globalization and education reform: what planners need to know*. Paris: UNESCO.

Chambers, L. (2007). *Ideas for Development*. London: Earthscan.

Chiu, C., Wang, E., Shih, F., & Fan, Y. (2011). Understanding knowledge sharing in virtual communities: An integration of expectancy disconfirmation and justice theories. *Online Information Review*, *35*(1), 134-153.

Cho, D. (2015). *Qualitative Research Methodology (volume of theories): the new horizon of school and class research* (*질적연구 방법론 (이론편): 학교와 수업연구의 새 지평, self-translated*). Seoul: Dreampig.

Cho, K., & Son, S. (2008). The Effects of Small Group Size on Problem Solving Achievement and Awareness of Group Effectiveness in Ill-structured Problem Solving Situation. *The Journal of Educational Information and Media*, *14* (2), 81-108.

Cho, Y., & Kang, J. (2015). *How Kakao Talk Could Be a Community System?* (*카카오톡은 어떻게 공동체가 되었는가?, self-translated*). Seoul: Dasan Books.

Chou, S. W. (2010). Why Do Members Contribute Knowledge to Online Communities? *Online Information Review*, *34*(6), 829-854.

Chou, S. W., Min, H. T., Chang, Y. C., & Lin, C. T. (2010). Understanding Continuance Intention of Knowledge Creation Using Extended Expectation-Confirmation Theory: An Empirical Study of Taiwan and China Online Communities. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, *29*(6), 557-570.

Clark, R. C., & Mayer, R. E. (2011). *E-learning and the science of instruction: Proven guidelines for consumers and designers of multimedia learning* (3rd Ed.). San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Contribution (2016). In *Cambridge Dictionaries Online.* Retrieved from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/contribution

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* (3rd Ed.). London: Sage.

Cyworld. (n.d.b). Retrieved September 27, 2016 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyworld

Dewey, J. (2008). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. Champaign: Book Jungle. (Original work published 1916)

Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge.

Djupe, P. A., & Lewis, A. R. (2015). Solidarity and Discord of Pluralism How the Social Context Affects Interest Group Learning and Belonging. *American Politics Research*, *43*(3), 394-424.

Duncan-Howell, J. (2010). Teachers making connections: Online communities as a source of professional learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *41*(2), 324-340.

Dunning, T. (2009). Online Communities and Aging. *Aging, Activities & The Internet*, *33*(4), 263-264.

Ensor, J., & Gready, P. (2005). *Reinventing Development?: Translating rights-based approaches from theory into practice.* New York: Zed Books Ltd

European Commission (2002). *European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning*. Retrieved from http://www.aic.lv/bolona/Bologna/contrib/EU/report_qual%20LLL.pdf

Favourite Club (동호회, *self-translated*) (n.d.). In *NAVER Dictionary online*.
Retrieved from
http://krdic.naver.com/search.nhn?dic_where=krdic&query=%EB%8F%99
%ED%98%B8%ED%9A%8C

Fernback, J. (1999). There is a There There: Notes toward a Definition of
Cybercommunity. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Doing Internet Research: Critical
Issues and Methods for Examining the Net.* (pp. 203–220). Newbury Park:
Sage.

Fetters, M., & Freshwater, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*.
Retrieved from https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/asi/journal-of-mixed-
methods-research/journal201775

Figallo, C. (1998). *Hosting Web Communities: Building Relationships, Increasing
Customer Loyalty, and Maintaining a Competitive Edge*. Retrieved
from http://www.citeulike.org/group/382/article/691740

Flake, G.W., Lawrence, S., Giles, C. L., & Coetzee, F. M. (2002). Self-
organization and identification of web communities, *IEEE Computer*, 35,
pp. 66–71. Retrieved from https://clgiles.ist.psu.edu/papers/Computer-
2002-web-communities.pdf

Flores, S, E. (2015). *Facebooked: How Facebook Affects Our Emotions,
Relationships, and Lives*. (J. Ahn, Trans.) Seoul. Bookworld. (Original
work published 2014)

Garrison, D. R., & Arbaugh, J. B. (2007). Researching the community of inquiry
framework: Review, issues, and future directions. *Internet and Higher
Education*, *10*, 157-172.

Gibson, S. K. (2004). Social Learning (Cognitive) Theory and Implications for
Human Resource Development. *Advances in Developing Human
Resources*, *6*(2), 193-210.

Glatthorn, A. A., & Joyner, R. L. (2005). *Writing the Winning Thesis or
Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide,* (2nd Ed.). California: Corwin Press.

Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*. New York: Academic Press.

Goldbart, J. (2005). Ethnography. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, (pp. 15-23). London: SAGE.

Gray, K. L. (2012). Intersecting Oppressing and Online Communities. *Information, Communication & Society*, *15*(3), 11-428.

Gubbins, C., & MacCurtain, S. (2008). Understanding the Dynamics of Collective Learning: The Role of Trust and Social Capital. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *10*(4), 578-599.

Hagel, J., & Armstrong, A. G. (1997). *Net Gain: Expanding Markets through Virtual Communities*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Han, S. (2010). *Lifelong Education for Learning Society (학습사회를 위한 평생 교육론, self-translated)* (3rd Ed). Seoul: Hakjisa.

Heck, E. (2015). Co-creating Stories in Social Learning Systems : The Role of Community Media and Cultural Organisations in Disseminating Knowledge. *Platform: Journal of Media and Communication*, *6*, 13-22.

Heo, G. M., & Lee, R. (2013). Blogs and Social Network Sites as Activity Systems: Exploring Adult Informal Learning Process through Activity Theory Framework. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*,*16*(4), 133-145.

Hergenhahn, B. R., & Olson, M. H. (1997). *An introduction to theories of learning* (5th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Heron, J. (1996). *Cooperative Inquiry: research into the human condition*. London: Sage.

Homophily. (n.d.f). Retrieved October 20, 2016 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophily

Hopkinson, P., Hughes, P., & Layer, G. (2008). Sustainable Graduates: Linking Formal, Informal and Campus Curricula to Embed Education for Sustainable Development in the Student Learning Experience. *Environmental Education Research*, *14*(4), 435-454.

Hoppitt, W. , & Laland, K. N. (2013). *Social Learning: An Introduction to Mechanisms, Methods, and Models*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Howell, D. C. (2013). Fundamental Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (8th Ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Hsu, L. C., Wang, K. Y., Chih, W. H., & Lin, K. Y. (2015). Investigating the Ripple Effect in Virtual Communities: An Example of Facebook Fan Pages. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *51*, 483-494.

Hsu, M., Ju, T. L., Yen, C., & Chang, C. (2007). Knowledge Sharing Behavior in Virtual Communities: The Relationship between Trust, Self-Efficacy, and Outcome Expectations. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, *65*, 153-169.

Hwang, J., Choi, S., & Kim, S. (2009). *Research of social productive mechanism of collective intelligence in the social computing environment* (소셜 컴퓨팅 환경에서 집단지성의 사회적 생산 메커니즘 연구, *self-translated*) (Basic Report, No.09-06). Korea Information Society Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.kisdi.re.kr/kisdi/fp/kr/publication/selectResearch.do?cmd=fpSelectResearch&sMenuType=3&controlNoSer=1&controlNo=11703&langdiv=1

Ilon, L. (2015). *The Cost of Not Educating the World's Poor: The new economics of learning*. London: Routledge.

Irving, C. J., & English, L. M. (2011). Community in Cyberspace: Gender, Social Movement Learning, and the Internet. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *61*(3), 262-278.

i-Scream (n.d.) Retrieved November 11, 2016 from http://www.i-scream.co.kr/user/introduce/index.do

Jang, W. (2004). *Change of Cyber Communities and Social Relation* (사이버 커뮤니티와 사회관계의 변화, *self-translated*) (Research Report, No.04-25). Korea Information Society Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.kisdi.re.kr/kisdi/fp/kr/about/selectResearch.do?cmd=fpSelectResearch&sMenuType=7&controlNoSer=30&controlNo=8519&langdiv=1

Joseon. (n.d.c). Retrieved October 20, 2015 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseon

Jo, Y. H. (2012). What do you think needs to change? (어떤 변화가 필요한가, self-translated). In *The Comprehension and Practice of New Public Education* (새로운 공교육의 이해와 실천, self-translated). (pp. 3-15). Seoul: Center for Integrated Teacher Training, Korea National Open University.

Jun, M. S. (2012). *From the State to the Village.* Seoul: Galmuri.

Jung, M. S. (2010). Internet, Reading by Lifelong Learning (인터넷, 평생학습으로 읽기, self-translated). Paju: Kyoyookbook.

Kakao Talk. (n.d.d). Retrieved September 27, 2016 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KakaoTalk

Kang, D. (2015). *Life and Learning of Korean Artists and Craftmen: Rhizoactivity*. Oxon: Routledge.

Kane, E. (1995). *Seeing for Yourself: Research Handbook for Girls' Education in Africa*. Washington, D. C.: the World Bank.

Kim, B., Bae, S., & Baek, S. (2012). Exploring the Network Structure of Online Communities by Using Social Network Analysis, special issue. *Entrue Journal of Information Technology*, *11*(1), 59-72.

Kim, J. T. (2009). *South Korea IT History 100: From Facom 222 to Minerva* (*대한민국 IT史 100: 파콤222에서 미네르바까지, self-translated*). Seoul: eBizbooks.

Kim, J., Kim, S., Han, S., & Kang, D. (2010). *Introduction to Lifelong Education* (revised Ed.). Paju: Kyoyookbook.

Kim, H. (2010). *Reading in Korean Culture for Foreigners*. Seoul: Korea National Open University Press.

Kim, S. (2010). Collective Intelligence or Communities? Characteristics of the Korean Internet Culture from a Historical Perspective, *Cybercommunication Academic Society*, *27*(4), 45-91.

Kim, Y., & Koh, C. (2011). A Study on the Type and Process of Information Production in Online Communities. *The Journal of Digital Policy & Management*, *19*(1), 1-12.

Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) (2012). *2012 Survey on the Utilization of the Internet* (*2012년 인터넷이용실태조사, self-translated*). (Summary Report, pp. 1–25). Retrieved from http://isis.kisa.or.kr/board/index.jsp?pageId=060200&bbsId=3&itemId=803&pageIndex=1

Korean National Commission for UNESCO (n.d.). *Education for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.or.kr/business/sub_01_02.asp

Kweon, S., & Bang, K. (2006). A Study of the Communications in On-line Communities: Focused on Self-construals. *Journal of Communication & Information*, *36*, 423–462.

Laing, A., Keeling, D., & Newholm, T. (2011). Virtual Communities Come of Age: Parallel Service, Value, and Propositions Offered in Communal Online Space. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *27*(3-4), 291-315.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1995). *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral*

participation. (Ed. and Trans.). New York: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1991)

Lee, B. E., & Kim, S. I. (2013). Evaluation of the Usability of Local Portal Site Community Cafe Service: Focused on the Comparison between the Naver Cafe and Daum Cafe. *Korea Digital Design Council*, *13*(1), 439-448.

Lee, H. Y., Kim, H. Y., Oh, J. H., & Bae, Y. (2012). *Changes of Korean Society and Future Policies in Accordance with the Expansion of Social Platforms (I): Comparison of Foundation Mechanism of Social Relationship through SNS and Online Communities* (소셜플랫폼의 확산에 따른 한국사회의 변화와 미래정책(I): SNS와 온라인 커뮤니티의 사회관계 형성 메커니즘, *self-translated*) (Cooperative Research, Basic Report, No. 12-22). Korea Information Society Development Institute. Retrieved from https://www.nkis.re.kr:4445/search_subject_view1.do?otpId=KISDI00018 001&otpSeq=0

Lee, H., Lee, D., Taylor, C. R., & Lee, J. (2011). Do Online Brand Communities Help Build and Maintain Relationships with Consumers A Network Theory Approach. *Journal of Brand Management*, *19*(3), 213-227.

Lee, J. (2000). *Internet and Cyber Society* (인터넷과 사이버사회, *self-translated*). Seoul: Communication Books.

Lee, J. (2008). *Introduction to Information Society: State, Enterprises, Citizens and Democracy* (정보사회 입문: 국가, 기업, 시민과 민주주의, *self-translated*). Seoul: Communication Books, Inc.

Lee, J. (2012a). SNS as a Writing Space: Remediation, Metonymy, and Ekphrasis. *Communication Theories*, *8*(1), 323-351.

Lee, J. (2012b, November 23). *Post-Social: a New Perspective to See Social Style (포스트소셜: 교호 양식을 보는 새로운 관점, self-translated)*. 2012 7th Information Culture Forum: the Quest for Post-Social (*2012년 제7회 정보문화포럼: 포스트소셜 탐색, self-translated*). Seoul. Retrieved from

https://www.digitalculture.or.kr/nara/cmm/fms/FileDown.do?atchFileId=FILE_000000000006311&fileSn=0

Lee, J. (2016). Excess of Relationship, Excess of Interaction: the Size of Network and the Quality of Interaction in Facebook (*관계의 파잉, 상호작용의 파잉: 페이스북에서의 네트워크 크기와 상호작용 질*, self-translated). *Journal of Communication Research*, *53*(1), 217-266.

Lee, M. N. N. and Ramirez, F. O. (1995). Education, Science and Development, in Postiglione, G. A and Lee Wing On (Eds.), *Social Change and Educational Development: Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies The University of Hong Kong, 3-12.

Lee, S. K., Lee, J. Y., Lee, S. C., Lee, Y. J., Min, K. S., & Sim, S. K. (2005). *National Strategy Development Research for 10 Years of UN Education for Sustainable Development* (*유엔 지속가능발전교육10년을 위한 국가 추진 전략 개발 연구*, self-translated). Seoul: The Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development.

Lee, Y. (2004). A research for the activating of edutainment for the online community blog, *2004 Spring conference Journal, Korean Society of Design Science*, 248-249.

Levy, P. (2000). *Cyberculture*. In Kim, D., & Cho, J. (Ed. and Trans.), *사이버문화*. Seoul: Moon-Ye publishing. (Original work published 1997)

Lim, G. S., & Chan, A. (2003). Individual and Situational Correlates of Motivation for Skills Upgrading: An Empirical Study. *Human Resource Development International*, *6*(2), 219-242.

Ma, M., & Agarwal, R. (2007). Through a Glass Darkly: Information Technology Design, Identity Verification, and Knowledge Contribution in Online Communities. *Information Systems Research*, *18*(1), 42-67.

Matzat, U. (2010). Reducing Problems of Sociability in Online Communities: Integrating Online Communication with Offline Interaction. *American*

Behavioral Scientist, *53*(8), 1170-1193.

Mayer, R. E. (2008). *Learning and Instruction*, (2nd Ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

McAdam, D., & Paulsen, R. (1993). Specifying the Relationship between Social Ties and Activism. *American Journal of Sociology, 99*(3), 640-667

Mischel, W. (1973). Toward a Cognitive Social Learning Reconceptualization of Personality. *Psychological Review*, *80*(4), 252-283.

NAVER CAFÉ HOME. (2016). Retrieved October 04, 2016 from http://section.cafe.naver.com/

NAVER *Knowledge-iN*. (2016). Retrieved September 04, 2016 from http://kin.naver.com/index.nhn

OECD. Stat. (2016). *Average annual hours actually worked per worker.* Retrieved from https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ANHRS#

Oh, D. (2000, April 25). Digital keyword: Neo-Luddism (디지털 키워드: 네오 러다이즘, self-translated). *Digital Times*. Retrieved from http://www.dt.co.kr/contents.html?article_no=20000425170040002

Online community (2015). In *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/online-community

Palfrey, J., & Gasser, U. (2008). *Born Digital: understanding the first generation of digital natives*. New York: Basic Books.

Park, N., Kee, K. F., & Valenzuela, S. (2009). Being Immersed in Social Networking Environment: Facebook Groups, Uses and Gratifications, and Social Outcomes. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *12*(6), 729-733.

Park, S., Choi, Y., Hwang, D., & Paek, M. (2012). Do Different Types of SNS Have Different Impacts on Participatory Social Capital? In A. Kő, C.

Leitner, H. Leitold, & A. Prosser (Eds.), *Advancing Democracy, Government and Governance* (pp. 231–241). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-642-32701-8_20

Phillips, D. C., & Solitis, J. F. (2004). *Perspectives on Learning*, (4th Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Posey, C., Lowry, P., Roberts, T. L., & Ellis, T. (2010). Proposing the Online Community Self-Disclosure model: The Case of Working Professionals in France and the U.K. Who Use Online Communities. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *19*(2), 181-195.

Preece, J., & Maloney-Krichmar, D. (2005). Online communities: Design, theory, and practice. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *10*(4), article 1.

Prugsamatz, R. (2010). Factors that Influence Organization Learning Sustainability in Non-Profit Organizations.*The Learning Organization*, *17*(3), 243-267.

Rheingold, H. (1994) *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Ridings, C., Gefen, D., & Arinze, B. (2002). Some Antecedents and Effects of Trust in Virtual Communities. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *11*(3-4), 271-295.

Risser, H. S., & Bottoms, S. (2014). "Newbies" and "Celebrities": Detecting Social Roles in an Online Network of Teachers via Participation Patterns. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, *9*, 433-450.

Rossi, C. (2011). Online Consumer Communities, Collaborative Learning and Innovation. *Measuring Business Excellence*, *15*(2), 46-62.

Rye, I., & Choi, H. (2008). The Effect of Social Influence on Flow, Perceived

Usefulness and Intention to Use in Online Community. *The Journal of Information Systems*, *17*(2), 113-135.

Schiazza, D. M. (2013). *A Case Study of a Mixed Methods Study Engaged in Integrated Data Analysis* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/686.(Paper 686)

Schunk, D. H. (2004). *Learning theories: an educational perspective.* (4ᵗʰ Ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Sclano, F., & Velardi, P. (2007). Termextractor: A Web Application to Learn the Shared Terminology of Emergent Web Communities. In *Enterprise Interoperability II* (pp. 287–290). Springer. Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-1-84628-858-6_32.pdf

Seddon, K., Postlethwaite, K., & Lee, G. (2011). Understanding the Experience of Non-Contributory Online Participants (readers) in National College for School Leadership Online Communities. *Education and Information Technologies* , *16*(4), 343-363.

Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, New York: Anchor Books

Sessions, L. F. (2010). How Offline Gatherings Affect Online Communities. *Information, Communication & Society*, *13*(3), 375-395.

Song, K. (2006).*Cyber Communities and Democracy: Social Capital and civil political participation* (사이버 공동체와 민주주의: 사회적 자본과 시민 정치참여, self-translated). Paju*:* Korean Studies Information, 161-177.

Suh, K. S. (2003). The Effects of the Characteristics of Internet Communities and Individual on User Loyalty. *The Journal of Management Information Systems Research*, *13*(2), 1-21.

Suh, Y. J. (2002). *Internet Communities and Korean Society*. Seoul: Hanulbooks.

Swan, K., Garrison, D. R., & Richardson, J. (2009). A constructivist approach to

online learning: The community of inquiry framework. In C. R. Payne (Ed.), *Information technology and constructivism in higher education: Progressive learning frameworks*, (pp. 43-57). Hershey: IGI Global.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. B. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Teijlingen, E. R., & Hundley, V. (2001) The importance of pilot studies. In N. Gilbert (Ed.), *Social Research Update*. Retrieved from http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU35.html

Thompson-Grove, G., Frazer, E., Dunne, F. and Frazer, E. (2014) Pocket Guide to Probing Questions, *National School Reform Faculty*. Retrieved from: http://www.nsrfharmony.org/system/files/protocols/probing_questions_gui de.pdf

Thompson, T. L. (2011). Work-Learning in Informal Online Communities: Evolving Spaces. *Information Technology & People*, *24*(2), 184-196.

Tu, C. H. (2000). On-line learning migration: from social learning theory to social presence theory in a CMC environment. *Journal of Network and Computer Applications*, *23*(1), 27-37.

Tudge, J.R.H., & Scrimsher, S. (2003) Lev S. Vygotsky on education: A cultural-historical, interpersonal, and individual approach to development. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.). *Educational psychology: A century of contributions* (pp. 207-228). Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum.

UNESCO Bangkok. (n.d.). *Education for Sustainable Development Unit (ESD)*. Retrieved from http://www.unescobkk.org/education/esd-unit/definition-of-esd/

United Nations (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

University of Wisconsin (n.d.). *Probing Questions in Interviews, Program Development & Evaluation*. Retrieved from http://www.wit.edu/human-

resources/manager-corner/toolkit/Probing-Questions-in-Interviews.pdf

Van Wynsberghe, R., & Andruske, C. L. (2007). Research in the Service of Co-Learning: Sustainability and Community Engagement. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *30*(1), 349-376.

Vygotsky, L. (1997). *Interaction between learning and development.* In M. Gauvain & M. Cole (2nd Eds.), *Readings on the Development of Children*, (pp. 29-36). New York: W. H. Freeman and Company. (Original work published 1978)

Wang, W., & Wei, Z. (2011). Knowledge Sharing in Wiki Communities: An Empirical Study. *Online Information Review*, *35*(5), 799-820.

Wasko, M. M., & Faraj, S. (2000). It Is What One Does: Why People Participate and Help Others in Electronic Communities of Practice. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *9*(2-3), 155-173.

Wenger, E. (2001). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*.(Ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1998)

Woodhall, M. (1987). Human Capital Concepts, in Psacharopoulos, G. (Eds.), *Economics of Education: research and studies*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 21-24.

Yao, C. Y., Tsai, C. C., & Fang, Y. C. (2014). Understanding Social Capital, Team Learning, Members' E-Loyalty and Knowledge Sharing in Virtual Communities. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *26*(5-6), 619-631.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd Ed), London: Sage.

Yoo, W. S., Suh, K. S., & Lee, M. B. (2002). Exploring Factors Enhancing Member Participation in Virtual Communities. Jo*urnal of Global Information Management*, *10*(3), 55-71.

Young, K. (1998). *Caught in the Net: How to Recognize the Signs of Internet Addiction- and a Winning Strategy for Recovery*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Yu, T. K., Lu, L. C., & Liu, T. F. (2010). Exploring Factors that Influence Knowledge Sharing Behavior via Weblogs. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *26*(1), 32-41.

Yuan, J., & Kim, C. (2014). Guidelines for Facilitating the Development of Learning Communities in Online Courses. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *30*, 220-232.

Zhao, X., & Bishop, M. J. (2011). Understanding and Supporting Online Communities of Practice: Lessons Learned from Wikipedia. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *59*(5), 711-731.

Zhou, J., Zuo, M., Yu, Y., & Chai, W. (2014). How Fundamental and Supplemental Interactions Affect Users' knowledge Sharing in Virtual Communities? A Social Cognitive Perspective. *Internet Research*, *24*(5), 566-586.

Appendices

Appendix A Survey Sheet and Online Survey

IRB No. 1602/001-006   유효기간: 2017년 1월 28일

기본 설문지

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hLM3L-r9WuleYkelEQ1tFHV7wYFGHuZLr03wxUT7X6g/edit

안녕하세요? 저는 서울대학교 사범대학 교육학과 박사과정에 재학 중인 박혜진이라고 합니다.

본 설문은 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 대한 여러분의 의견을 듣고자 실시하는 것입니다. 여러분의 답변 하나하나가 소중한 자료로 연구에 반영될 것입니다. 특히, 기존의 형식적 교육 기관에서의 학습을 넘어서서 우리의 삶의 환경, 특히 온라인 공간에서 이루어지는 활동들에 내재되어 있는 배움적 요소에 대한 연구에 많은 도움을 줄 수 있을 것으로 기대하오니 성실한 답변을 부탁드립니다.

설문양식은 선택형, 단답형 질문으로 구성되어 있으며 약 20분의 시간이 소요될 것으로 예상됩니다. 또한, 응답하신 내용은 모두 비밀이 보장됩니다. 학교 이름이나 개인 정보가 노출되는 일은 없으며, 모든 정보는 연구 목적 이외에 사용되지 않음을 약속드립니다.

감사합니다.

2016. 2.

서울대학교 사범대학 교육학과 박사과정 박혜진

◎ 다음 문항을 읽고 해당되는 난에 V표 하거나, 써주시기 바랍니다.

1-1. 성별 : ① 남   ② 여

1-2. 나이 : ①20대   ②30대   ③40대

1-3. 거주 지역 : ①특별/광역시를 비롯한 대도시 ②지방 중소도시 ③군/읍/면 지역

1-4. 최종 학력 : ①초졸 ②중졸 ③고졸 ④대학 재학 ⑤대졸 ⑥대학원 재학 및 졸업

※ 다음은 소속 (온라인) 커뮤니티 활동 이전의 인식을 묻는 질문입니다 (2-4번)
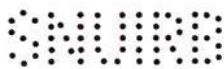
2. 본 커뮤니티를 알게 된 경로는 무엇입니까? (중복 선택 가능)
①직접 개설 ②지인 추천 ③인터넷 검색 ④광고 ⑤기타 (   )

3. 본 커뮤니티 개설/가입 동기는 무엇입니까? (중복 선택 가능)
①정보 및 지식 공유 ②전문 지식 공유 및 협력학습 ③단체 오프라인 활동 참여
④레져 및 오락   ⑤광고 및 사업   ⑥네트워크 형성
⑦친교   ⑧시사 문제 토론 및 사회운동 참여 ⑨기타 (   )

- 1 -

SNUIRB

❋ 다음은 커뮤니티 활동과 관련된 질문입니다 (4-8번)

4-1. 3번 문항에서 ①정보 및 지식 공유나 ②전문 지식 공유 및 협력학습을 선택하였다면 어떤 종류의 정보나 지식을 공유하고자 하십니까? (   )

4-2. 3번 문항에서 ①정보 및 지식 공유나 ②전문 지식 공유 및 협력학습을 선택하였다면 귀하의 활동은 정보 및 지식의 습득과 정보 및 지식의 제공의 대략적 비율 (100%)은 어떻게 됩니까? (습득 _____%, 제공_____%)

5. 본 커뮤니티에서 주로 하는 활동은 무엇입니까? (중복 선택 가능)
①정보 및 지식, 자료 검색 및 습득
②자발적인 관련 정보 및 지식, 자료 게시 및 제공
③타인의 자료 및 글에 피드백을 비롯한 댓글 달기
④친교활동
⑤단체 오프라인 활동 참여
⑥광고 및 사업
⑦질문 및 정보 요청
⑧토론 및 의견 나누기
⑨기타 (   )

6. 본 커뮤니티 활동에 참여하게 되는 이유는 무엇입니까? (중복 선택 가능)
①정보 및 지식, 자료 공유의 실용성 및 유용성
②정보 및 지식, 자료 공유를 통한 자기만족
③타인의 칭찬 및 감사와 같은 피드백에 의한 만족
④의사소통 및 친교활동   ⑤토론   ⑥습관   ⑦기타 (   )

7. 다음의 항목을 참고하여 본 커뮤니티의 장점이라고 생각되는 항목의 순위를 매겨 보세요.

①제공되는 정보의 실용성 및 유용성	②친근하고 편안한 분위기
③전문적인 정보 및 자료 공유	④공동 구매의 유용성
⑤오프라인 활동	⑥스트레스 해소
⑦활발한 의사소통 및 상호작용	⑧기타 ( ) - 중복가능

1위 (   ), 2위 (   ), 3위 (   )

- 2 -

296

8. 본 커뮤니티의 활동 중 배움/학습/공부와 관련이 있다고 생각하는 항목은 무엇입니까? (중복 선택 가능)
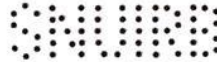
①전문 지식 및 정보 공유   ②경험 및 체험 공유   ③협력 학습 및 문제 해결
④토론 및 의견 제시   ⑤의사소통 및 대화   ⑥질문 및 답변
⑦경쟁   ⑧피드백   ⑨기타 (   )

※ 다음은 추가적 연구 참여 여부와 관련된 질문입니다 (9-10번).

9-1. 나는 커뮤니티 웹사이트에 (1일, 1주일, 1개월)에 (   )회 이상 방문을 한다. 1회 방문 시, 대략 (   )분의 시간을 소비한다.

9-2. 나는 커뮤니티 활동에 대체적으로 활발한 (편이다, 보통이다, 아니다).

10. 나는 연구에 대한 보다 자세한 추가적인 정보가 주어진다면 개별 인터뷰와 활동 관찰과 같은 연구 활동에 참여할 의사가 있다/아니다.
①연구에 더 참여할 의사가 있다 (11번 문항 반드시 기입해주세요)
②연구에 더 이상 참여할 의사가 없다 (설문이 끝났습니다. 감사합니다.)

11. 10번 문항에서 더 참여할 의사가 있다고 밝히신 분은 성함/아이디 및 연락처(핸드폰, 이메일, 카톡 아이디 등)을 남겨주세요 (저에게만 공개됩니다)
(   )

※ 지금까지 많은 질문에 성심성의껏 답변해 주셔서 정말 감사합니다.

※ 11번 항목에 연락처를 남겨주신 분께는 별도로 다시 연락드리겠습니다.

SNUIRB

297

개별 면담 질문

1. 온라인 커뮤니티에 대한 견해

1-1. 일반적으로 온라인 커뮤니티가 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?
1-2. 어떠한 온라인 커뮤니티를 선호하십니까?

2. 온라인 커뮤니티 가입 및 활동 연유

2-1. 본 커뮤니티를 개설/가입하게 된 동기나 이유는 무엇인가요?
    (개인적/사회적 이유, 트렌드)
2-2. 본 (온라인) 커뮤니티에서 이루어지는 활동 및 지식/정보에 대한 전반적인
    견해는 어떠한가요?
2-3. 어떤 정보나 지식 또는 다른 자료들을 본 커뮤니티에서 얻으시거나 공유를
    하시나요?
2-4. 본 커뮤니티를 활용하는데 유용한 점/어려운 점은 무엇인가요?
2-5. 귀하의 커뮤니티 활동에 영향을 미치는 다른 멤버들이나 커뮤니티의 분위기,
    또는 개인적인 이유에는 어떠한 것들이 있나요?
2-6. 다른 멤버들과 친분이 있거나 사적으로 알고 지내나요?

3. 온라인 커뮤니티 활동

3-1. 온라인/오프라인 활동에 참여하나요?
3-2. 온라인/오프라인 활동이 서로 어떻게 영향을 미치나요?
3-3. 온라인 활동과 오프라인 활동을 함께 할 경우의 장/단점은 무엇인가요?
3-4. 주로 언제/어떻게 커뮤니티 활동에 참여하나요?
3-5. 어떤 활동에 특히 활발히 참여하는/참여하지 않는 이유는 무엇인가요?

4. 온라인 커뮤니티 내 역할 및 위치

4-1. 커뮤니티 내 역할은 무엇인가요?
4-2. 역할에 대한 책임감은 어떤가요?
4-3. 커뮤니티를 위해 귀하께서 특별히 공헌하는 점은 무엇이라고 생각하시나요?
4-4. 귀하의 활동이나 제공한 정보 및 자료 등 사이에서 멤버들 간에 가장 인기

- 1 -

298

있는 것은 무엇 인가요?

4-5. 어떻게 하면 커뮤니티가 더욱 활성화 될 수 있다고 생각하시나요?

4-6. 커뮤니티 활동 참여나 새로운 멤버의 가입에 가장 걸림돌이 되는 요소는 무엇이라고 생각하시나요?

5. 온라인 커뮤니티 활동과 학습의 관련성에 대한 견해

5-1. 설문지에서 XX한 요소가 학습과 관련이 있다고 생각하신다고 했는데, 그 이유는 무엇인가요?

5-2. 커뮤니티의 활동 및 자료 중에서 어떠한 것이 귀하에게 가장 의미가 있나요/없나요?

5-3. 만약 다른 사람에게 본 커뮤니티 가입을 추천한다면, 누구에게 하시겠어요? 그 이유는 무엇인가요?

5-4. 본 커뮤니티에 좀 더 바라는 점이 있다면 무엇인가요?

5-5. 본 커뮤니티에서 기대하지/예상하지 못한 경험이나 학습이 있었다면, 무엇인가요?

SNUIRB

Online survey address: https://goo.gl/forms/YsiryD6wyTKBUP2w2

Appendix B Interview questions

What motivates people to join?

- Why did you join/build the online community?
- What benefits did you think you would get?
- Did you know others who were members?
- Did your expectations get met?
- Did you find other benefits than what you expected?
- Are there problems you didn't expect?
- What are personal/social/public reasons/situation/trends/factors to join the community?

How, when & why do members participate?

- Do you participate in either/both online or/and offline activities?
- How both (online-offline activities) affect each other?
- What are pros and cons of blended activities?
- What do you see are the benefits of blended activities if any?
- When and how often do you usually log in/join the activities?
- Which activities do you usually participate in?
- Why do (not) you participate in activity/inactively in particular activities?

How, when & why do members contribute?

- What are your roles in the communities?
- Do you have particular responsibilities?
- How did you take on these responsibilities?
- What do you want to do for the community?

- What was/will be the most remarkable contributions?
- What your materials/activities/resource contribution that was the most popular among members?
- How do you think the community could become more active?
- What is the biggest barrier to participation or new membership?

What to members think they have learned (if anything)?
- What materials/activities/resource were the most/fewest meaningful to them? Why?
- What do you more expect from the communities?
- If you recommend the communities to WHOM and WHY to him or her?
- What kinds of unexpected experience/learning did (do) you get from the communities?

What is relationship between learning and online community?
- What topics/area do you want to learn from online communities if you can?
- How do you define learning in online communities?
- Do you think online communities are useful for learning?
- What do you doing about reasons why people (want to) learn through online communities?

Appendix C Participant Information Sheet (English)

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a student project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Bak, Hyejin: PhD Lifelong Learning, Department of Education, Seoul National University (South Korea)

Title of the Research

Learning Implications of Online Communities: A Case Study in South Korea

What is the aim of the research?

1. To contemplate relationship between learning and online community
2. To explore the role of learning in motivating people to join
3. To explore whether learning affect how, when & why members participate and   contribute to online community
4. To analyse whether members aware of their learning? If so what (if anything)?

Why have I been chosen?

As the builder, manager or active member, I would like to listen your valuable opinions and experiences in the online community.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

I would be grateful if you could give me your time to speak with me. I will ask your opinion about general activities and information/knowledge in your online community. I am also interested in what kind of motivation and interests you have, what kind of resource (information/knowledge or anything else) you acquire or share in your online community, what you enjoy/find it useful or difficult to join/use your online community, and what aspect affect your activities such as other members, atmosphere, and your personal reasons.

When and what happens to the data collected?

Data collection will be conducted from January to October in 2016.

Data will be collected by following ways:

- Two or three times of less than an hour face-to-face interview
- Three or five times of E-mail or SNS interview
- Observation of your activities including writing or uploading files in the online community and offline activities

I wish to conduct a face-to-face interview in a café near your place; I may be able to change the location if you wish to do so. And four or five times of SNS interview will be conducted during the research period. In terms of offline activities, I will join as a member of OC if I can. However, if you do not want me to observe your activities or you feel uncomfortable my participation, I will respect your decision.

How is confidentiality maintained?

I may need to record contents of interview and your personal information such as sex, age, region and job to allow me to link the information from respondents from different online communities. However, I would use anonymity instead of

your real name, and remove any identifying details at the earliest possible point from records and data sets, and undertake not to identify any individuals or online communities in reports and other presentations.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

I will write a dissertation for my doctoral degree at Seoul National University

Contact for further information

Appendix D Informed consent form (English)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Learning Implications of Online Communities:
A Case Study in South Korea

Hello, my name is Bak, Hyejin. I am studying Lifelong Learning, Education at Seoul National University in South Korea. I am currently learning in online communities. My study will analyse how aspects of learning affect people's activities of online communities in South Korea.

In order to look at this issue, you are being invited to take part in a study as part of a student project. Before you decide, however, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. I would greatly appreciate your permission for an interview and/or observation. I greatly value your expertise and opinions on this matter. If you choose to permit it, the interview and/or observation might be recorded.

Please understand that your participation in the interview and/or observation is voluntary, and if you choose to participate, you can stop the interview and/or observation at any time. I will respect your decision and will not take it against you.

The interview and observation notes and recording will remain confidential at all times. When reported, this interview and/or observation will be combined with other interviews and/or observations and no names will be used. It will be impossible to tell who said what when I write and share my final report. For more details, please refer to the succeeding section.

Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. If you have additional questions, I may be contacted through:

Thank you very much for your consideration,
Bak, Hyejin

I wish to participate in this study. I understand the purpose of the study and the interview and/or observation process. I understand I may withdraw at any time. I have been given the chance to ask any questions I may have and understand I can continue to do so during and after the interview and/or observation.

Name/Signature_____ Date: _____

I certify that I have read out the above research description to the participant, and answered all questions.

Name/Signature _*Bak, Hyejin*_____ Date: _____

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION TABLE

Who will participate in the study?

For the study purpose, I expect participations of about 15 people from five online communities including online community builders.

What will happen to me if I take part?

I would be grateful if you could give me your time to speak with me. I will ask your opinion about general activities and information/knowledge in your online community. I am also interested in what kind of motivation and interests you have, what kind of resource (information/knowledge or anything else) you acquire or share in your online community, what you enjoy/find it useful or difficult to join/use your online community, and what aspect affect your activities such as other members, atmosphere, and your personal reasons.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You might need to spend time for interviews. I hope you will understand if the interview takes longer than necessary or additional interview(s) will be asked for better understanding about participations. However, we can negotiate this issue flexibly.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will write a dissertation for my doctoral degree in Department of Education at Seoul National University

Appendix E Participant Information Sheet & Informed consent form (Korean)

연구참여자용 설명서 및 동의서

연구 과제명 : 온라인 커뮤니티 활동의 학습적 함의: 한국 사례 연구
연구 책임자명 : 박혜진 (서울대학교 사범대학 교육학과 평생교육전공 박사과정생)

이 연구는 〈온라인 커뮤니티 활동의 학습적 함의: 한국 사례 연구〉에 대한 연구로써 기존의 형식적 교육 기관에서의 학습을 넘어서서 우리 삶의 환경, 특히 온라인 공간에서 이루어지는 활동들에 내재되어 있는 배움적 요소에 대해 분석하고 탐색하는 연구입니다. 귀하는 온라인 커뮤니티 관리자/멤버로서 활동과 관련한 소중한 의견이나 경험이 많으실 것으로 예상되어 이 연구에 참여하도록 권유 받았습니다. 이 연구를 수행하는 서울대학교 소속의 연구책임자 (박혜진,   )이 귀하에게 이 연구에 대해 설명해 줄 것입니다. 이 연구는 자발적으로 참여 의사를 밝히신 분에 한하여 수행 될 것이며, 귀하께서는 참여 의사를 결정하기 전에 본 연구가 왜 수행되는지 그리고 연구의 내용이 무엇과 관련 있는지 이해하는 것이 중요합니다. 다음 내용을 신중히 읽어보신 후 참여 의사를 밝혀 주시길 바라며, 필요하다면 가족이나 친구들과 의논해 보십시오. 만일 어떠한 질문이 있다면 담당 연구원이 자세하게 설명해 줄 것입니다.

1. 이 연구는 왜 실시합니까?

이 연구는 서울대학교 박사과정 논문으로 쓰일 것입니다. 연구에서 탐구하고자 하는 바는 새로운 삶의 환경이자 다양한 목적으로 만들어진 온라인 공간에서 사람들이 왜/어떻게 다른 사람들과 상호작용하며 학습을 하는지, 어떠한 학습적 요소가 이루어지는지 입니다. 여기서의 학습은 기존의 학교와 같은 형식적인 교육시설에서 이루어지는 학습의 의미를 넘어서 우리의 일상 삶 속에서 이루어지는 활동들에서 학습으로 볼 수 있는 요소들을 일컫는 것입니다. 이를 통해 학습과 온라인 커뮤니티의 관계 및 언제/왜/어떻게 사람들이 온라인 커뮤니티에 참여하고 공헌하는지와 관련된 학습적 요소에 대해 탐구하고자 합니다. 또한 사람들이 온라인 커뮤니티 활동을 어떻게 인식하는지에 대해서도 고찰하고자 합니다. 현대 사회에서 강조되는 평생교육을 추구하는 생활 속의 지속적인 배움의 중요성 및 역할을 오프라인 공간을 넘어서서 온라인 공간에서도 고찰해봄으로서 보다 확장되고 삶과 연결이 될 수 있는 개념의 학습적 함의에 대한 연구들의 촉진을 도모하고자 이 연구를 실시하고자 합니다.

2. 얼마나 많은 사람이 참여합니까?

다양한 온라인 커뮤니티 가운데, 여행, 맛집, 스터디 그룹, 전문 지식 공유, 취미 등을 목적으로 하는 온라인 커뮤니티 5군데를 선정할 계획입니다. 각 온라인 커뮤니티의 30명의 회원들에게 간단한 설문을 실시하였으며, 이를 통해 귀하와 같이 추가적인 연구 참여 의사를 밝히신 각 온라인 커뮤니티의 개설자/관리자와 20-40대의 다른 회원 3명 (총 20명)이 활동관찰과 면담과 같은 연구 활동에 참여 하실 것입니다.

307

3. 만일 연구에 참여하면 어떤 과정이 진행됩니까?

1) 활동관찰:

귀하의 그동안 온라인 커뮤니티 내에서 하신 활동들과 앞으로의 1년 동안의 활동에 대해 관찰합니다. 귀하께서 참여하신 토론 및 제안, 자료 공유 등을 온라인 활동으로 간주하여 이를 관찰하려고 합니다. 만약 동의하신다면 오프라인 활동 일부에도 동행할 수 있습니다.

2) 면담:

귀하의 온라인 활동 관찰 내용을 바탕으로 직접적인 면담 2-3차례 요청하고자 합니다. 1회시 약 30분에서 1시간 정도의 시간이 소요 될 것으로 예상합니다. 이를 위해 귀하의 귀한 시간을 내어주실 수 있으시다면 연구에 많은 도움이 될 것입니다. 주로 활동의 이유나 목적, 소속 되어 있는 온라인 커뮤니티 및 다른 온라인 커뮤니티에 대한 견해에 대해 질문 할 것입니다. 직접 면담이 어려우시거나 연구 중 귀하께 질문이 생기는 경우는 E-mail이나 SNS를 통한 면담을 요청하고자 합니다. 만일 귀하가 참여의사를 밝혀 주시면 귀하와 사전에 합의한 장소에서 진행하게 될 것이며 면담 내용은 녹음 및 기록됩니다. 그러나 절대로 귀하의 실명으로 기록되지 않을 것이며, '서울대학교 연구윤리 지침' 및 '생명윤리 및 안전에 관한 법률' 에 따라 녹음 내용은 3년, 전사 내용은 5년 이상 보관 후 완전히 폐기될 것입니다. 중도에 연구 참여를 포기하실 경우에는 모든 보관 자료들을 즉시 폐기 할 것입니다.

### 4. 연구 참여 기간은 얼마나 됩니까?

1) 활동관찰은 2017년 2월까지 이루어집니다.

2) 직접적인 면담은 2017년 2월내에 2-3회 요청 예정이며, 1회당 약 30분에서 1시간 정도 소요될 것입니다. E-mail이나 SNS를 통한 면담은 귀하께서 편안한 시간에 답변을 주시면 됩니다. 1-2개의 질문을 포함한 짧은 면담을 포함하여 최대 10회가 넘지 않을 것입니다.

5. 참여 도중 그만두어도 됩니까?

예, 귀하는 언제든지 어떠한 불이익 없이 참여 도중에 그만 둘 수 있습니다. 만일 귀하가 연구에 참여하는 것을 그만두고 싶다면 연구 책임자에게 즉시 말씀해 주십시오.

6. 부작용이나 위험요소는 없습니까?

귀하께서 면담을 위해 시간을 할애하셔야 합니다. 보다 나은 이해를 위해 면담 시간이나 회수가 연장되어도 귀하의 너그러운 이해를 부탁드립니다. 그러나 이 부분은 당연히 융통성 있게 조정가능한 부분입니다. 또한 개인적인 견해에 대해 질문을 하다보면 다소 불쾌한 감정을 유발할 수 있습니다. 이런 경우 귀하는 언제든지 면담을 중지하실 수 있습니다. 만일 연구 참여 도중 발생할 수 있는 부작용이나 위험 요소에 대한 질문이 있으면 담당 연구원에게 즉시 문의해 주십시오.

SNUIRB

308
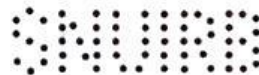
7. 이 연구에 참여시 참여자에게 이득이 있습니까?

귀하가 이 연구에 참여하는데 있어서 직접적인 이득은 없습니다. 그러나 귀하가 제공하는 정보는 온라인 커뮤니티와 학습에 대한 이해를 증진하는데 도움이 될 것입니다.

8. 만일 이 연구에 참여하지 않는다면 불이익이 있습니까?

귀하는 본 연구에 참여하지 않을 자유가 있습니다. 또한, 귀하가 본 연구에 참여하지 않아도 귀하에게는 어떠한 불이익도 없습니다.

9. 연구에서 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀은 보장됩니까?

개인정보관리책임자는 본 연구 책임자 박혜진 박사과정생 입니다. 또한 귀하께서는 연구 책임자의 지도 교수인 Lynn Ilon 교수에게 연락을 취하실 수 있습니다. 이 연구를 통해 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀 보장을 위해 최선을 다할 것입니다. 이 연구에서 얻어진 정보가 학회지나 학회에 공개 될 때 귀하의 이름과 다른 개인 정보는 일체 사용되지 않을 것입니다. 그러나 만일 법이 요구하면 귀하의 개인정보는 제공될 수도 있습니다. 또한 모니터 요원, 점검 요원, 생명윤리심의위원회는 연구참여자의 개인 정보에 대한 비밀 보장을 침해하지 않고 관련규정이 정하는 범위 안에서 본 연구의 실시 절차와 자료의 신뢰성을 검증하기 위해 연구 결과를 직접 열람할 수 있습니다. 귀하가 본 동의서에 서명하는 것은, 이러한 사항에 대하여 사전에 알고 있었으며 이를 허용한다는 동의로 간주될 것입니다.

10. 이 연구에 참가하면 댓가가 지급됩니까?

죄송합니다만 본 연구에 참가하는데 있어서 연구 참여자에게 금전적인 보상은 없습니다. 그러나 면담 시 필요한 교통비 및 음료 등의 비용을 연구책임자가 지불할 것입니다.

11. 연구에 대한 문의는 어떻게 해야 됩니까?

본 연구에 대해 질문이 있거나 연구 중간에 문제가 생길 시 다음 연구 담당자에게 연락하십시오.

이름: 박혜진

만일 어느 때라도 연구참여자로서 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문이 있다면 다음의 서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회에 연락하십시오.

서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회 (SNUIRB)   전화번호: 02-880-5153

동 의 서

1. 나는 이 설명서를 읽었으며 담당 연구원과 이에 대하여 의논하였습니다.
2. 나는 위험과 이득에 관하여 들었으며 나의 질문에 만족할 만한 답변을 얻었습니다.
3. 나는 연구 진행 중 녹음이나 기록에 대한 설명을 숙지하였으며, 이에 동의합니다.
4. 나는 이 연구에 참여하는 것에 대하여 자발적으로 동의합니다.
5. 나는 이 연구에서 얻어진 나에 대한 정보를 현행 법률과 생명윤리심의위원회 규정이 허용하는 범위 내에서 연구자가 수집하고 처리하는데 동의합니다.
6. 나는 담당 연구자나 위임 받은 대리인이 연구를 진행하거나 결과 관리를 하는 경우와 보건 당국, 학교 당국 및 서울대학교 생명윤리심의위원회가 실태 조사를 하는 경우에는 비밀로 유지되는 나의 개인 신상 정보를 직접적으로 열람하는 것에 동의합니다.
7. 나는 언제라도 이 연구의 참여를 철회할 수 있고 이러한 결정이 나에게 어떠한 해도 되지 않을 것이라는 것을 압니다.
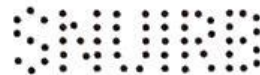8. 나의 서명은 이 동의서의 사본을 받았다는 것을 뜻하며 연구 참여가 끝날 때까지 사본을 보관하겠습니다.

_____   _____   _____
      연구참여자 성명   서 명   날짜 (년/월/일)

_____   _____   _____
      연구책임자 성명   서 명   날짜 (년/월/일)

SNUIRB

Appendix F Sorting Code for Data Analysis

	Research sub-questions	Content	Learning			merits of OC	On /offline	Tendency	attitude
code	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	R 1	main topic	motivation	emulation		utility	Online -comment	indiv dualistic	selfish
2	R 2	current issues/ public opinions		autonomy		promptitude	Online -board	Commu nity- centere d	volunteeri ng
3	R 3	life		interest		credibility	Online -chatting		character
4	R 4	Friend /relationsh ip		sympathy		financial efficiency	offline		
5	R 5	etc		necessity		emotional value			
6	R 6			satisfaction					
7				sense of accomplishment					
8			Contribution	compliment					
9				feedback					
10			interaction	acquiring					
11				providing					
12				communicating	reading				
13					conve rsatio n				
14			context	Korean					
15				local					
16				global					
17				vocational					
18				ordinary life					
19				capitalistic					
20			reflection						
21			creation						

국문 초록

　　본 연구는 다양한 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 함의된 배움의 의미를 탐구하고자 한다. 온라인 커뮤니티와 관련된 기존의 연구들은 온라인 커뮤니티에 따른 대인관계의 변화와 그 사회적 의미를 논하거나, 정보 및 지식, 집단지성, 학습공동체 등을 위한 측면에서 온라인 커뮤니티를 다루었다. 그리고 평생교육적 관점에서 무형식 및 비형식 교육의 대안으로써 온라인 커뮤니티에 주목하였다. 이와 달리 본 연구는 '학습공동체'라는 학습적 목적을 직접적으로 드러내지 않는 일반 온라인 커뮤니티를 통해 온라인 커뮤니티 활동이 배움[40]으로써 어떤 의미를 가지는지, 어떤 요소들이 사람들의 배움에 영향을 미치는지 등에 대한 탐구를 시도함으로써 배움의 의미를 찾아가는 귀납적 접근을 시도하였다. 이 같은 접근은 사회과학이나 교육학 분야 등의 학문적 측면에서뿐만 아니라, 온라인 환경의 다양한 요소가 여러 분야에서 중요하게 작용하고 있는 오늘날의 디지털 시대의 실용적 측면에서도 그 의의가 있을 것이다.

　　연구의 이론적 배경은 사회학습[41]이론이나, 사회문화이론, 상황학습, 실천공동체 등의 개념도 함께 참조였으며, 연구 방법의 큰 틀은 통합연구이다. 먼저, 온라인 커뮤니티와 배움에 대한 사람들의 일반적인 견해를 이해하기 위해 다섯 군데의 연구 대상 온라인 커뮤니티의 구성원 중 150명의 20-60대 성인을 대상으로 온라인 및 오프라인 설문 조사를 실시하여, 그에 대한 응답 수치 및 비율을 도출하고 분석하였다. 그리고 이들 중 상대적으로 온라인 커뮤니

---

[40] 본 논문은 영문 논문으로, 'learning'이라는 용어로 학습 혹은 배움을 지칭하지만, 한국인 연구참여자들이 학습 혹은 배움이라는 두 용어를 어떻게 구분해서 쓰는지를 참고하여 본 국문 초록에서는 학습 혹은 배움이라는 단어를 혼용하여 번역하였다

[41] 'social learning'을 사회학습 혹은 사회적 학습으로 번역한 용어를 본 국문 제목이나 국문 초록에서는 현 패러다임에서 영어 용어를 '소셜러닝'이라고 그대로 지칭하는 하는 대로 사용하였다

티 활동이 활발한 23명을 연구참여자로 선정해 참여관찰 및 심층면담 등을 실시하여 데이터를 수집하고, 삼각 검증 등을 통해 분석하였다. 본 연구에서의 발견은 다음과 같이 요약된다.

첫째, 사회문화적 맥락 속에서 온라인 커뮤니티의 의미를 탐구하면, 온라인 커뮤니티를 분류하는 기준을 크게 '구조 및 기능' 과 '내용 및 목적' 으로 나눌 수 있었다. 첫 번째 기준에 따르면, 온라인 커뮤니티의 플랫폼 구조는 정보적 네트워크 혹은 교호적 네트워크의 역할 중 어디에 더 중점을 두는지에 따라 정해지는 경향이 있었다. 반면, 한국에서는 온라인 커뮤니티를 영어 및 한글을 혼용해서 다양한 용어로 지칭하였는데, 이는 두 번째 기준에 따라 크게 '커뮤니티' 와 '(온라인) 동호회' 로 구분되었다.

둘째, 연구참여자들은 다양한 행위를 통하여 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 활발히 참여하였다. 이 때, 집단의 협력적 측면에 집중 하기보다 사적인 필요를 위해 집단지성이나 공동체를 활용하는 경우가 빈번하였다. 따라서, 온라인 커뮤니티 활동을 통한 배움은 집단적 학습일 뿐만 아니라 개별적 학습으로도 볼 수 있었다.

셋째, 연구참여자들의 활발한 온라인 커뮤니티 활동은 개인적 수준의 정의적 요소뿐만 아니라 집단적 수준의 타인과의 상호작용에 의한 동기적 요소에 의해서도 상당히 영향을 받았다. 특히, 이러한 정의적 학습 동기는 '놀이' 의 개념과 관계가 깊었다. 연구참여자들은 학습이라는 개념을 취미나 놀이로 여길 때 그 것을 편안하고 자연스러운 것으로 여기는 경향이 있었다.

넷째, 온라인 커뮤니티 활동을 통한 배움은 온라인과 오프라인의 통합적 활동에 의해 좀 더 효율적이고 창조적으로 이루어졌다. 이는 이론과 실제, 지식과 적용의 조화가 실현되었기 때문이다. 이러한 온라인 커뮤니티에서의 효과적인 소셜러닝은 온라인 커뮤니티가 기존의 학습의 개념을 뒤집는 학습의 장이 될 수 있다는 가능성을 보여주었다.

다섯째, 인간관계와 관련된 한국만의 독특하고 다양한 도덕적, 정의적, 사회문화적 요소들은 집단적 수준에서뿐만 아니라 개인적 수준에서도 온라인

313

커뮤니티 구성원들의 협력과 공헌을 도모하였다. 반면, 이기심이나 귀찮음과 같은 정의적 요소나 체면과 눈치 문화는 이를 저해하는 요인이었다.

여섯째, 연구참여자들은 온라인 커뮤니티 활동에 의한 배움을 통해 일, 즐거움, 그리고 삶 자체를 배움의 필수충분조건으로 여겼다. 배움, 즐거움, 소통을 상호작용적 개념으로 보기 때문에 그의 배움에 대한 인식은 결국에는 '사회적/교호적' 학습, 즉, 소셜러닝의 개념과 일맥상통한 것이다.

이렇게 본 연구는 사람들이 학교와 같은 형식적 교육 기관을 통해서뿐만 아니라 일상의 여러 플랫폼을 통해 자신들의 무형식적 배움을 선호하고 유지해가며 삶을 즐긴다는 것을 보여주었다. 이를 바탕으로 한 몇 가지 결론은 다음과 같다.

먼저, 일반적으로 배움이란 개인의 단순한 지식과 정보의 습득이 아니라 타자 혹은 개인이 처한 환경과의 소통에 의해 일어나며, 소통은 지원, 공유, 협력 등의 행위로 일어난다. 그리고 자의 혹은 타의로 동기화된 이러한 행위를 경험하며 사람들은 반성하고 (재)구성하는 수준의 배움까지 도달한다. 그러한 배움이 자기화되고, 다른 형태나 방식으로 (재)창조되는 과정이 순환됨으로써 배움은 지속되며, 개인과 공동체가 함께 발전한다. 뿐만 아니라, 사람들은 이러한 과정을 통해 배우면서 즐기고, 즐기면서 배우며 살아가길 원한다. 이는 놀이의 원리와 부합하며, 결국에는 배움이 삶의 자연스러운 일부라는 것을 의미한다.

한편, 한국인에게 배움 혹은 학습은 정의적, 사회적으로 다른 의미를 지닐 수 있다. 사람들은 주로 '배움'은 무형식적이고, 일상적인 것으로 여기는 것에 비해, '학습'은 교사와 같은 안내자가 있는 좀 더 형식적이고 엄격한 것으로 표현하였다. 이는 기존에 겪어온 주어진 학습과 본인이 바라고, 선택하는 배움 사이의 괴리에서 그 의미가 복잡해지기 때문이다. 즉, 한국적 맥락에

314

서 배움 혹은 학습의 의미는 문화와 심지어 언어에 의해 사회화된다고 볼 수 있다.[42]

마지막으로 한국의 특별한 소셜러닝 사회가 발전할 수 있는 데는 '친목'과 '공동체 사회'라는 측면이 큰 역할을 한다. 전통적으로 이러한 측면을 중시하고, 자연스럽게 고수해가는 사회문화적인 분위기에 의해 사람들은 어느 곳에 '소속'되어 '함께' 어울리는 '공동체 활동'을 선호하는 것이다. 사람들은 모이기 시작하고, 다른 사람들이 모이는 곳을 찾아 간다. 그래서 사람들은 쉽고 편하게 모일 수 있는 곳에 공동의 플랫폼을 구축하는데, 온라인 커뮤니티가 그 역할을 할 수 있다. 그리고 그렇게 모여서 사적인 볼 일이나 공헌으로 온라인 커뮤니티 활동을 끝내는 것이 아니라, 다른 구성원들과 인간적인 관계를 맺고자 한다. 그리고 그 관계를 잘 유지하려고 노력한다. 배움과 관계와 같은 온라인 커뮤니티를 찾는 '목적'은 서로 필요충분 조건이 되는 것이다. 즉, 끈끈한 인간적 유대 덕분에 한국의 온라인 커뮤니티는 건재하고, 그곳에서의 배움은 쉽게 와해되지 않는다.

---

[42] 역설적이게도, 이 연구에서는 영어인 'learning' 용어를 사용함으로써, 배움 혹은 학습이라는 두 개의 한국어 단어의 사이의 복잡한 의미의 차이를 고민할 필요가 없어서 오히려 용이하기도 했다