

**Symposium
on
Media and Internet Use
During General Election 2015**

Wednesday, 27 January 2016

Conference Room, Level 1, Oei Tiong Ham Building

Posted and Shared: Personalised Communication and Knowledge Gap in Singapore's General Election 2015

Dr Debbie Goh

Assistant Professor

Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information
Nanyang Technological University

Posted and Shared: Personalised Communication and Knowledge Gap in Singapore General Election 2015

Debbie Goh

Nanyang Technological University

Media use during GE2015...

- Intensified coverage by legacy and alternative media, start-ups and individuals
- Smartphones, social media, IM apps
- Greater diversity of content
- Voters access, share and post election information on numerous social media apps

Is there a knowledge gap?

- As mass media information increases, there will be an increasing knowledge gap between higher and lower social economic status segments of the population (Donahue, Tichenore & Olien, 1973)
- Better educated can acquire information faster
 - mass media caters to their interests and needs
 - better access to media and information resources
 - more media literate and greater prior knowledge
 - have higher literacy in processing complex topics such as politics

Internet & knowledge gap

- Internet reduced access barriers
- GE2011...
 - Alternative online media filled information gaps and narrowed knowledge gap between social status groups
 - Lower educated voters gained knowledge more rapidly from increased alternative media use than more highly educated voters
 - Greater relevance and authenticity of citizen-generated political information

Can personalised communication reduce knowledge gap?

- Production and sharing of political content based on personal values through various personal communication technologies (Bennett & Sergerberg, 2012)
- Information co-produced and co-distributed will be more relevant, based on personal interests

Survey Measures

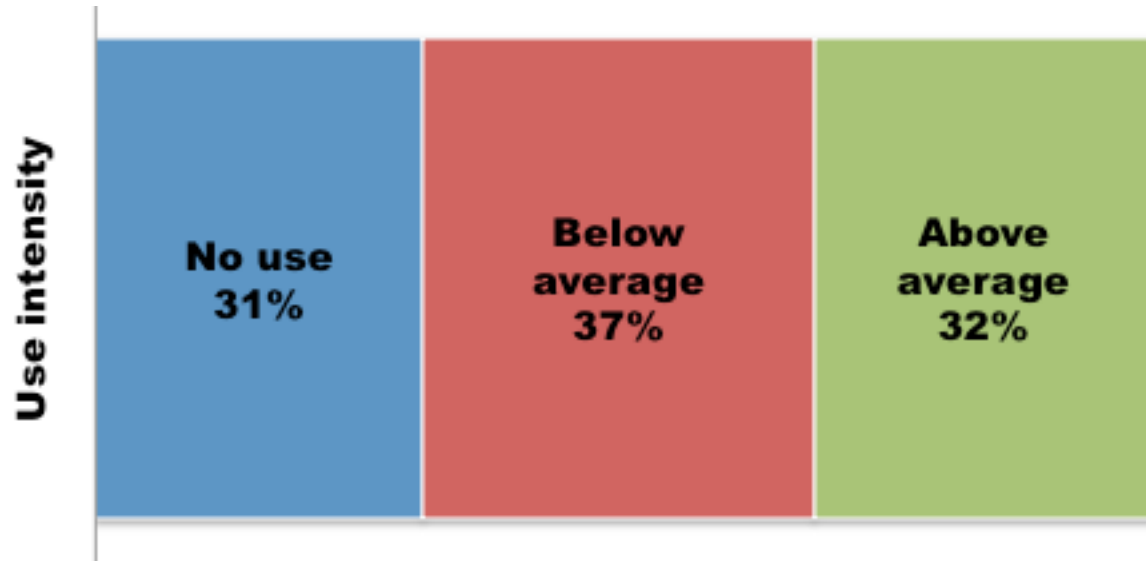
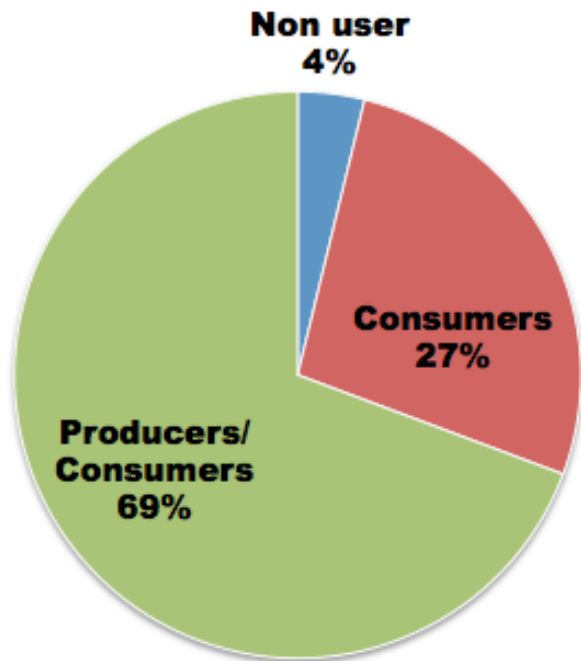
Questions on production and distribution on social media (IM, SNS, online forums, blogs or YouTube sites):

- Started a thread discussing a candidate, political party, the election, and/or issue
- Wrote a post or made a video expressing my opinions on a candidate, political
- Commented on a post or video on a candidate, political party, the election, and/or issue
- Shared relevant information and/or political commentary related to the post/video or discussion
- Liked a page or a post about a candidate, political party, the election and/or issue
- Used social network sites to connect to people related to my interests in the election
- Sought/asked for information about a candidate, political party, election news and/or issue

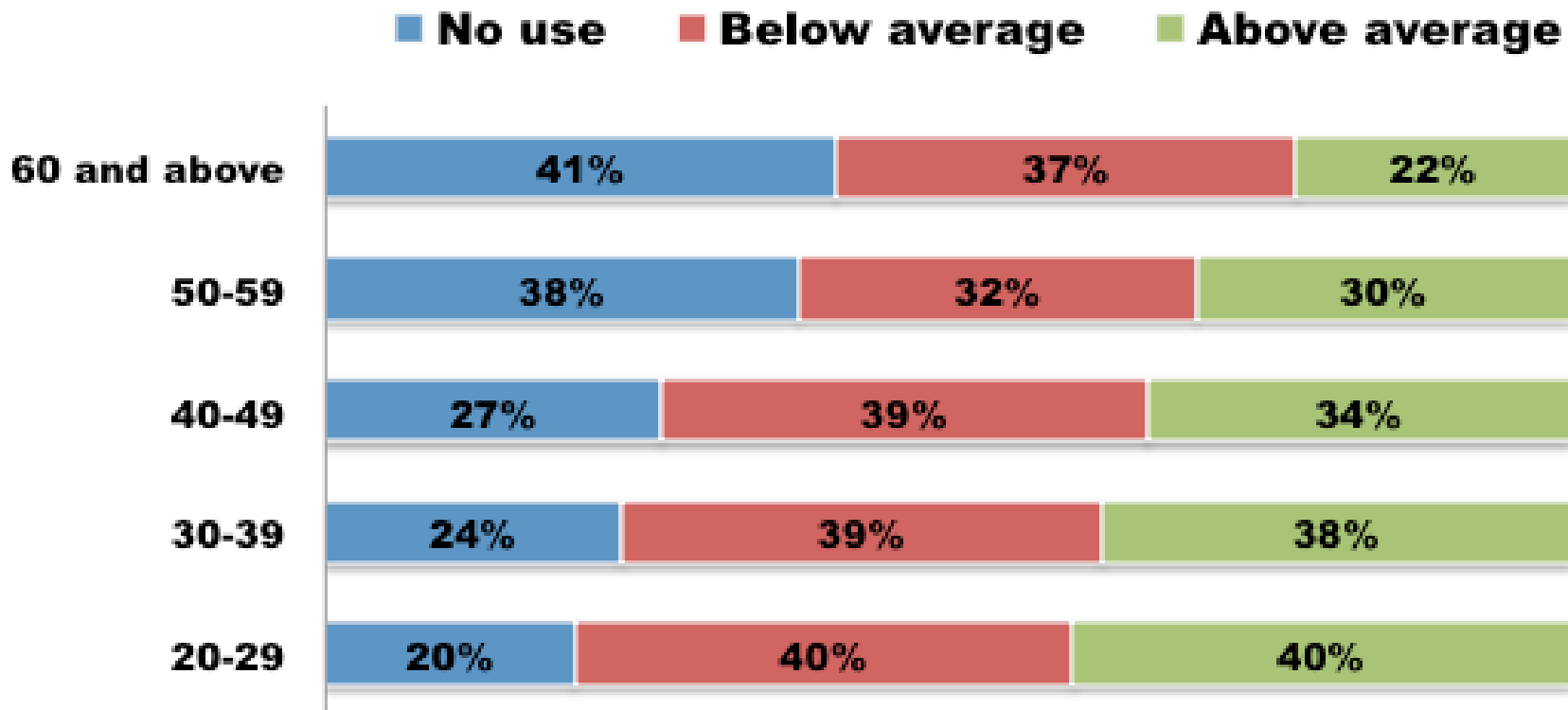
Survey Measures

- Political interest
- Internal and external political efficacy
- Political and civic engagement
- Political and campaign knowledge

Most Singaporeans were engaging in personalised communication

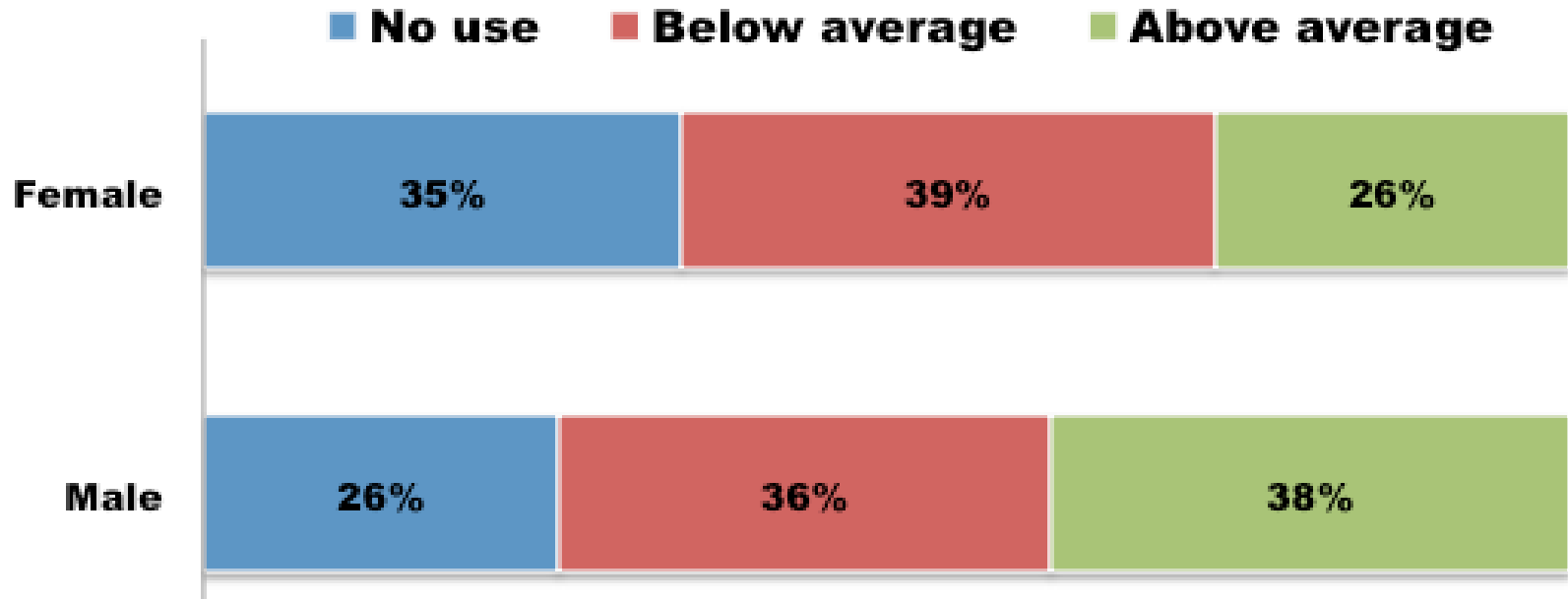


PC by Age



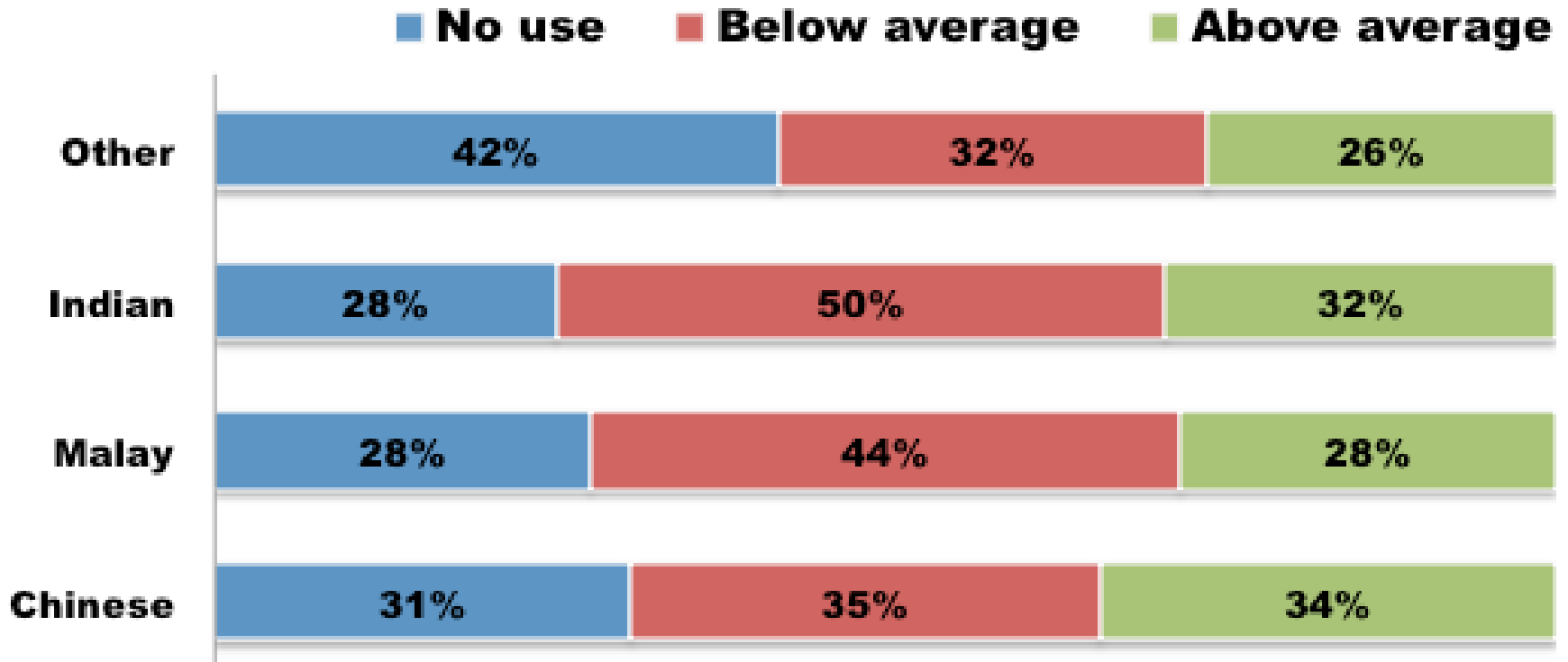
- At least 60% across age groups engage in PC
- Young voters in their 20s are most active users
- Highest percentage of non-users are in the 50 and above groups

PC by Gender



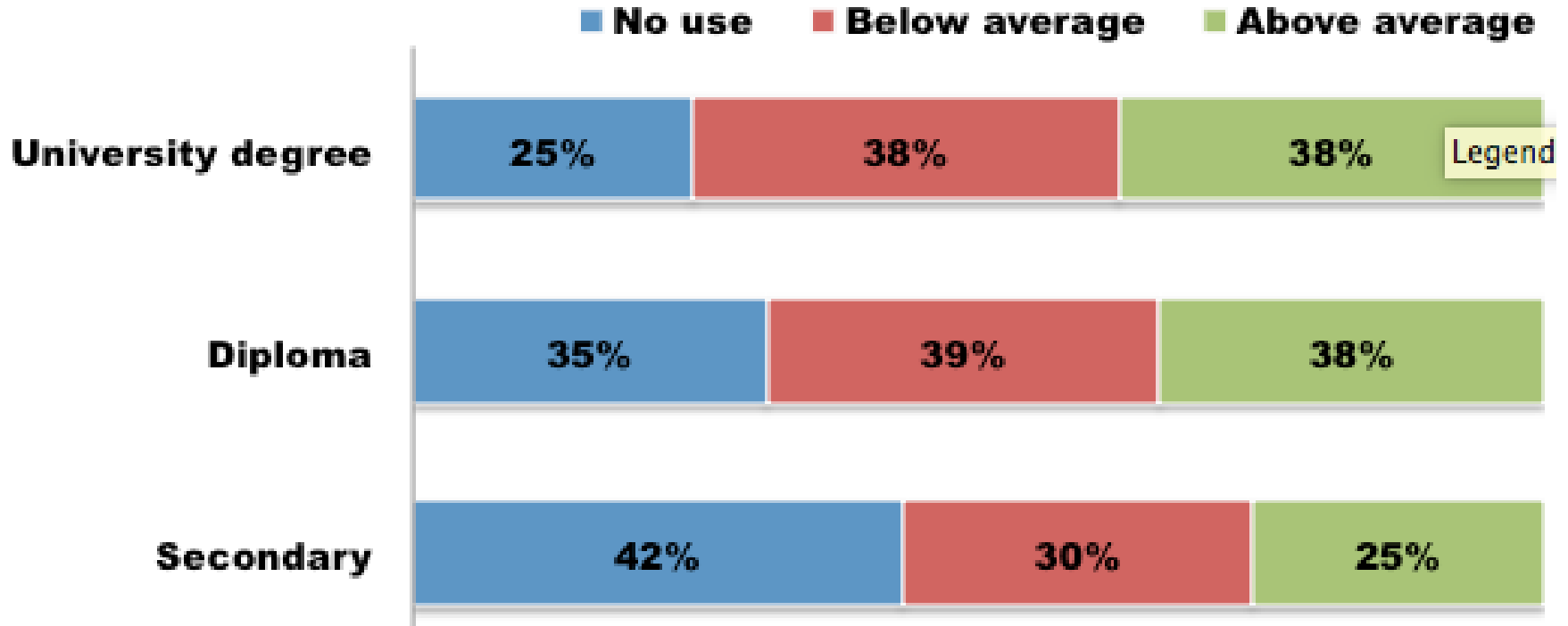
- Highest percentage of men were in the above average use group
- Highest percentage of women were in the non-user group

PC by Race



- Chinese were almost equal across the three categories of use
- Malays and Indians had the largest groups of below average use
- Other races had the largest group of non-users

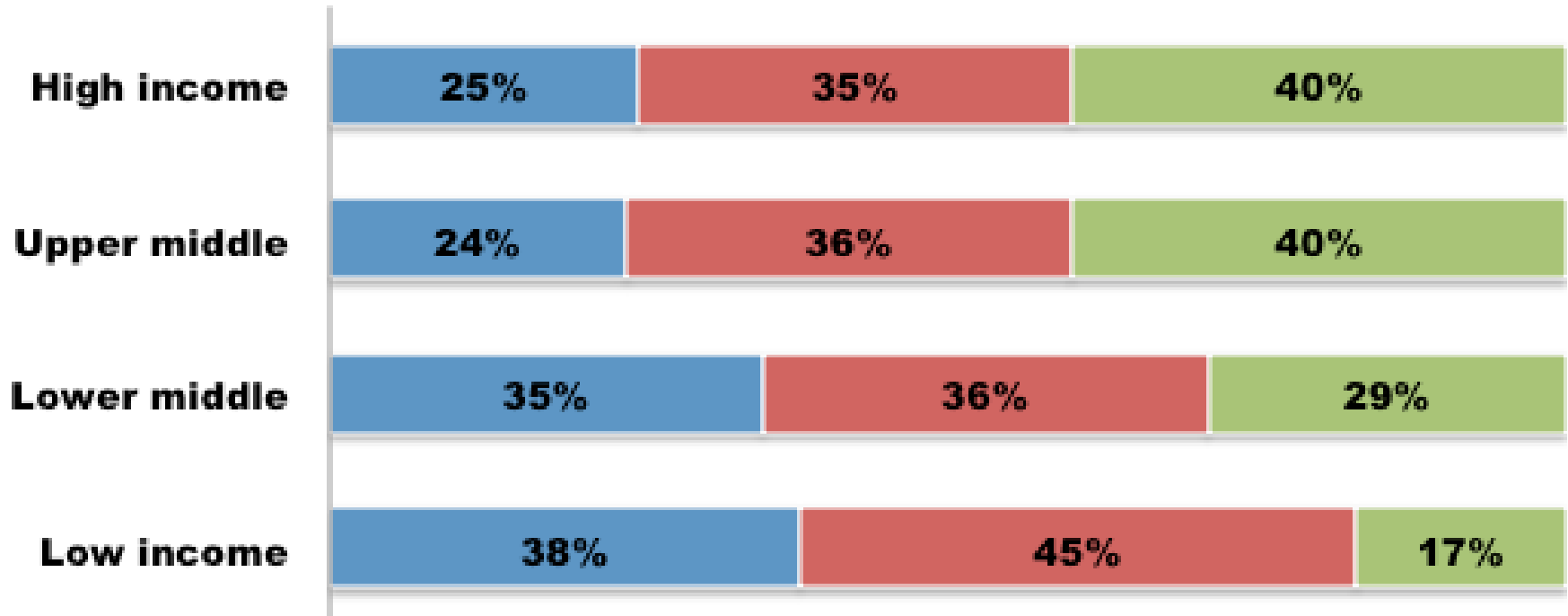
PC by Education



- Secondary and below had the largest group of non-users
- Diploma holders had almost equal users across groups
- University degree holders were equally distributed in the above and below average use group

PC by Income

■ No use ■ Below average ■ Above average



- Low and lower middle income had the largest non-user groups
- Upper middle and high income had largest groups of active users

PC and Political Knowledge

- How knowledgeable were voters?
- Strong awareness of candidates, less on issues

Questions	% correct
Identify which party the candidate is from: <u>Teo Chee Hean</u>	88
<u>Lee Li Lian</u>	84
<u>Chee Soon Juan</u>	82
<u>Kenneth Jeyaretnam</u>	72
Which of the following political parties used the election campaign slogan "Your Voice in Parliament"?	30
In the 2011 election, what percentage of the votes cast did the PAP win?	51
According to the law, what do you think "your vote is secret" means?	57

Personalised communication decreased knowledge

Regression analysis, $R^2=.22$, $p<.001$

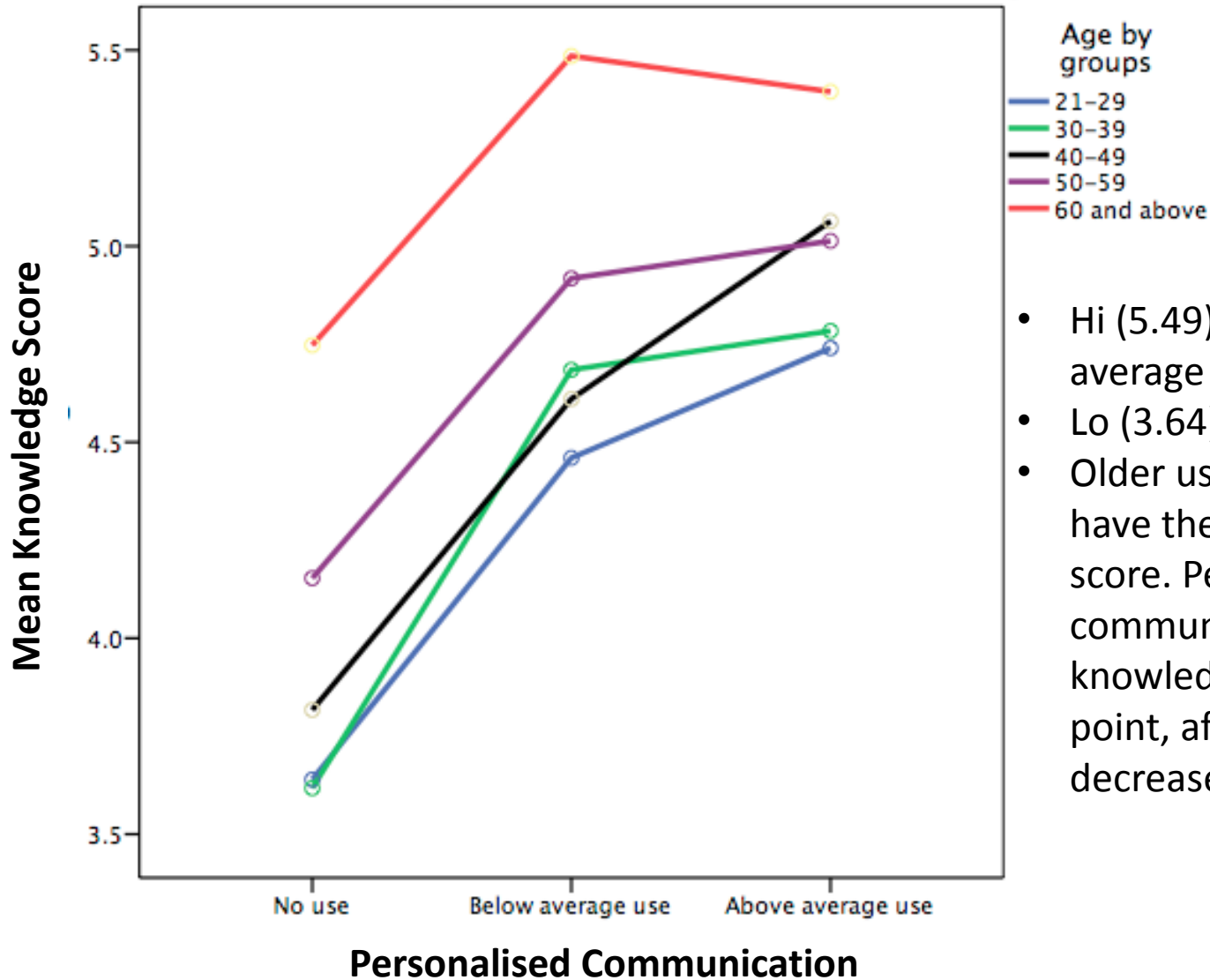
Significant predictors

- Political interest .314**
- Age 162**
- Media consumption .153**
- Personalised communication **-.107***
- Education .098**
- Gender **-.057***
- Income .051*

Non-significant predictors

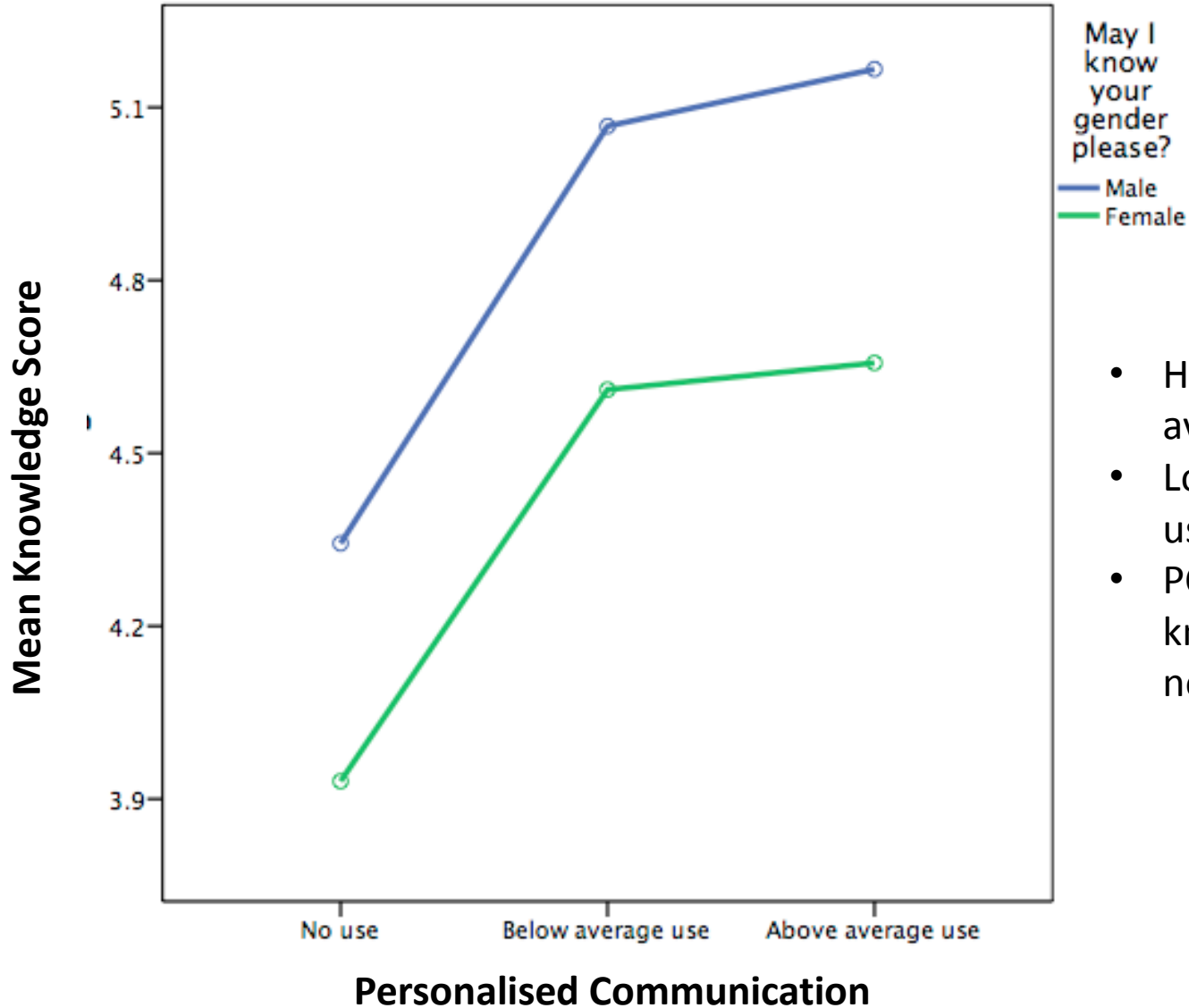
- Political efficacy
- Political engagement
- Personalise communication x Education

PC, Age & Knowledge



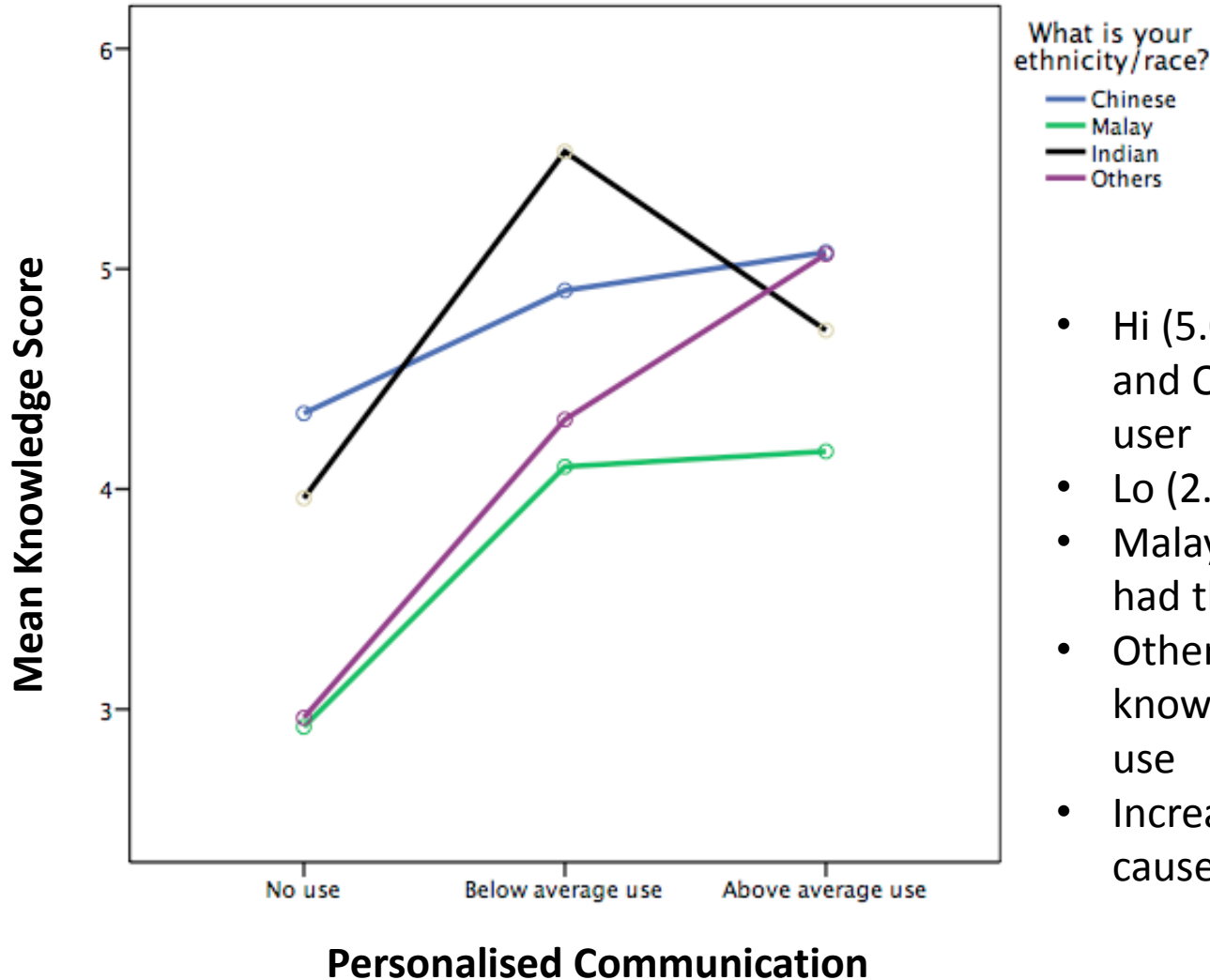
- Hi (5.49): 60 and above below average user
- Lo (3.64): 20 year-old non-user
- Older users (50 and above) have the highest knowledge score. Personalized communication increased knowledge only up to a certain point, after which knowledge decreased

PC, Gender & Knowledge



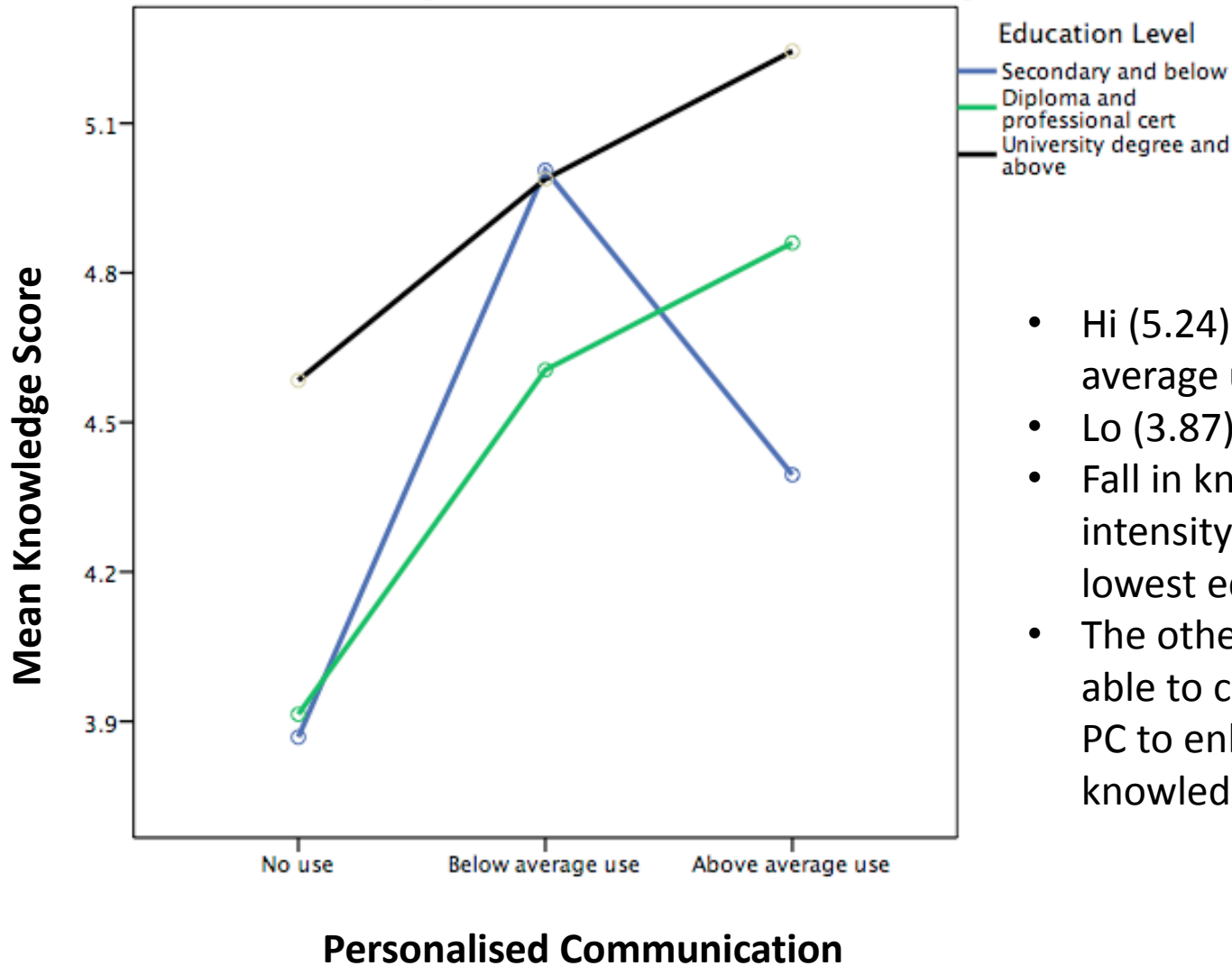
- Hi (5.17): Male, above average user
- Lo (3.93): Female, non-user
- PC increased knowledge only for non-users

PC, Race & Knowledge



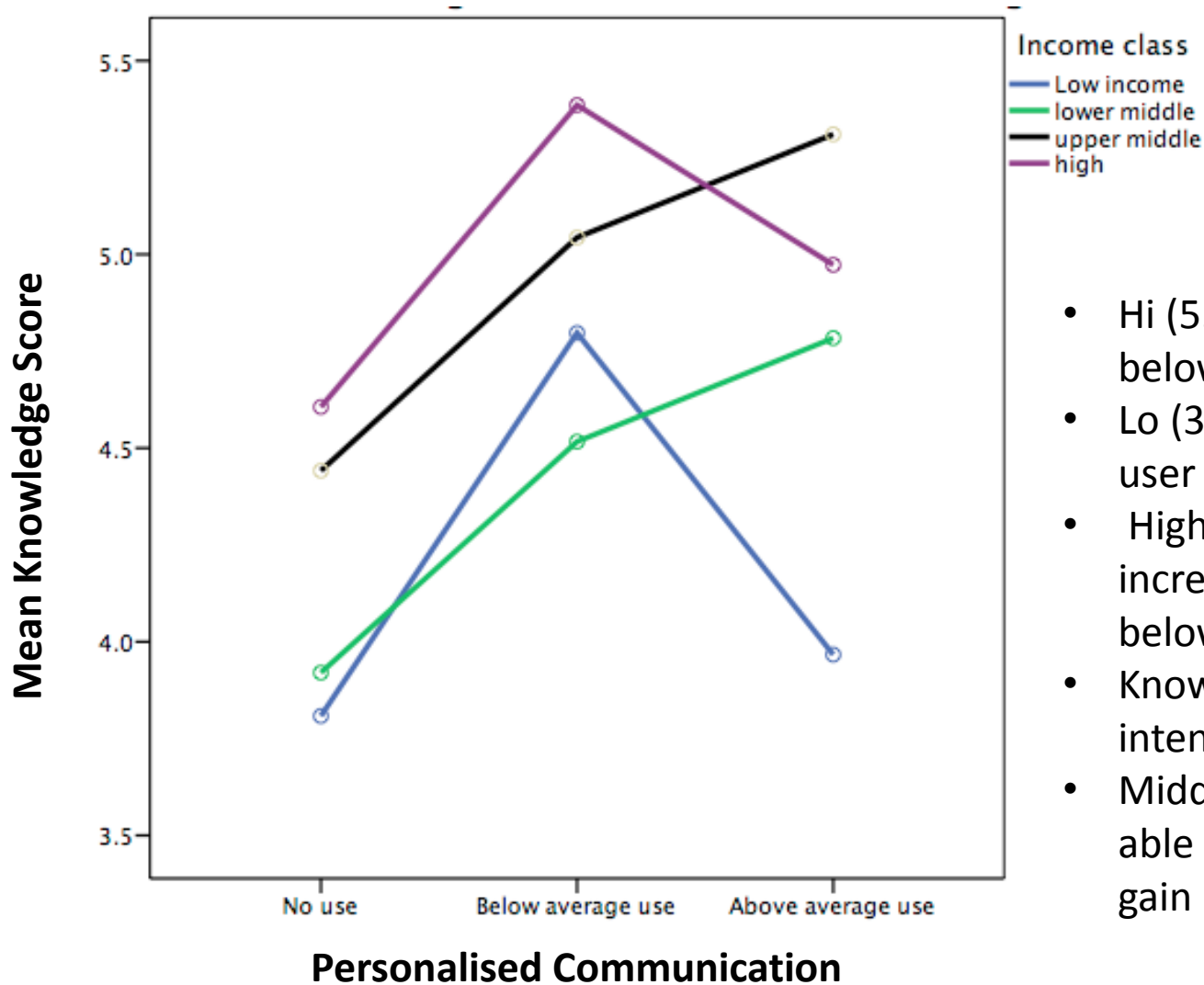
- Hi (5.08): Tie between Chinese and Others above average user
- Lo (2.92): Malay non-user
- Malay and Others non-users had the lowest score
- Others narrowed the knowledge gap with increased use
- Increased use by Indian voters caused their knowledge to fall

PC, Education & Knowledge



- Hi (5.24): University above average user
- Lo (3.87): Secondary non-user
- Fall in knowledge with high intensity use among the lowest educated group.
- The other two groups were able to control this and used PC to enhance their knowledge

PC, Income & Knowledge



- Hi (5.39): High income, below average user
- Lo (3.81): Low income, non user
- High and low income groups increased knowledge with below average use
- Knowledge plunged as use intensity increased
- Middle income groups were able to use PC for knowledge gain

Summary

- Hi: 60 and above, below average user, 5.49
- Hi: High income, below average user, 5.39
- Hi: University degree, above average user, 5.24
- Hi: Male, above average user, 5.17
- Hi: Chinese and Others, above average user, 5.08
- Lo: Female, non user, 3.93
- Lo: Secondary, non user 3.87
- Lo: Low income, non user, 3.81
- Lo: 20 year-olds, non user, 3.64
- Lo: Malay, non user, 2.92

Conclusion

- PC is popular and may carry election information of greater relevance
- It helped enhance knowledge for only certain groups
- Traditional internet digital inequalities persist
- Excessive use by some groups had negative influence on knowledge

**Symposium
on
Media and Internet Use
During General Election 2015**

Wednesday, 27 January 2016

Conference Room, Level 1, Oei Tiong Ham Building