

Mapping Youth Radicalism and Socio-Religious Intolerance in Social Media

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Abstract. This study is part of a two-years research on youth radicalism and socio-religious intolerance in social media. It is aimed to map the aspects of radicalism and intolerance; and to assess the degree of radicalism and intolerance in the use of social media by young generation. The current result shows that there is strong correlation between youth attitudes in real and virtual worlds. In general young generation is relatively tolerant towards various social groups in both real life and cyberspace, with an exception to LGBT people. The study also reveals that discrimination against Chinese remain significant though not in majority among young Indonesians.

Keywords: Youth Radicalism, Socio-Religious Intolerance, Social Media.

1 Introduction

Socio-religious intolerance and radicalism are arguably a real threat to the Indonesian people. This threat does not only exist in the real world but also in cyberspace. At present, social media is suspected to have become a means for the spread of radical and intolerant notions that make the younger generation as both actors and targets in the same time [1]. Meanwhile, youth which is the main segment of active social media users can be described as a generation that is vulnerable to be the subject and target of the spread of radicalism [2]. The condition of young people vulnerability to intolerance is supported by the research of Setara Institute in 2017 that detects the increasing potential of radicalism in high school students. This study found that 50 percent of students agreed on radicalism-based actions. Still in the same study, the potential for radicalism was detected as 25 percent of students and 21 percent of teachers stated that Pancasila was no longer relevant in Indonesia.

The vulnerability of young people is caused by the fact that the young generation at the age of 10 to 25 years is an age group of identity seeking and formation [3]. As part of the digital native generation, this age group makes cyberspace as a medium for expression of personal identity formation and community building [4]. Subsequently, this results in being vulnerable to ideological proliferation including those categorized as radical and intolerant thoughts. Based

on these problems, it is very important to know the potential of radicalism and intolerance of the younger generation in the use of social media.

For its two-years term, this study is aimed to: (1) map aspects of radicalism and socio-religious intolerance on the use of social media by young generation; (2) assess the degree of radicalism and intolerance in the use of social media by young generation; (3) knowing the factors that influence the radicalism and intolerance of the younger generation on social media; (4) formulating a model of intervention strategies minimizing radical and intolerant youth on social media. However, this paper only focuses on the first two research questions since the current results of the first year of the term obtained based on these questions.

2 Research Method

This study of mapping youth radicalism and socio-religious intolerance in social media is currently an on-going research of a two-year term (2019-2020). In order to answer the research questions above, the research uses a sequential mixed method. In the first year, a quantitative approach using online and offline surveys is employed upon respondents with ages of 17-25 years old to map the potential for online radicalism and the factors that influence it. In the second year, the research uses in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to explore survey results and then to construct effective models and policies to prevent the youth from being exposed to online radicalism. Since the research is still on-going, this section of the paper will only focus on the research method employed in the first year.

The use of quantitative methods in the first year aims to identify the online activities of young people in ten districts/cities which according to Setara Institute's research (2017) as tolerant and intolerant cities. In addition, research in the first year also aims to identify factors that influence the degree of tolerance or intolerance of young Indonesians in the online world. The selection of target respondents is carried out by using purposive sampling as described below. The online survey is conducted using a questionnaire provided by the Google form application with 145 research questions that can be done through internet access with a smartphone platform (Android, iOS), and computer operating systems (Windows, Linux, MacOS). This data collection is carried out in a flexible manner and takes the conditions of the location and the institution where the data is collected as major considerations. For example, a number of schools apply the rule of not allowing students to bring smartphones to school in order to prevent students misuse the devices during school hours. In this case, the data collection is conducted using desktop computers provided in the computer laboratory with the help and permission of the respective schools. In one case, data retrieval had to be carried out offline at schools using paper-based questionnaire because students were not permitted to use smartphones, and meanwhile there was a problem in the school computer networks. In other few occasions, filling out the online questionnaire was conducted by students out of school hours, in coordination with the research team and the teachers.

The research questions are formulated from a number of variables that explore information about the social preferences of the young generation both in the real world and in the virtual world, more especially in their use of social media. In addition to the information of the youth activities in cyberspace, the information about the social preferences of young people in everyday life is very important in order to obtain a view of the correlation of young people's preferences in cyberspace and in the real world. Before engaging with the youth social preferences, the questionnaire begins with questions that explore information about the social

background of the younger generation, including family, ethnicity, education, and occupied social activities. Basically, questions in the questionnaire are arranged based on four main variables:

1. Respondent's social background.
The questions in this section focus on the following information:
 - Parental status (married or divorced).
 - Parental employment status.
 - Educational background of parents.
 - Hobbies.
 - Religion and ethnicity.
2. School activities:
This part of the questionnaire lists the activities of the respondents in the school/campus, with the following information:
 - Academic achievement.
 - Extracurricular activities.
 - Organizations outside of school.
3. Use of media.
This section identifies the types of media in relation of the youth activities, and consists of the following information:
 - Media owned and used.
 - Duration of watching TV.
 - Duration of online activities.
 - Frequently visited websites.
 - Type of social media used.
 - Online video watched.
 - Frequently played games (offline/online).
4. Social preferences.
 - Response toward different religions and religious groups.
 - Response toward different ethnicity.
 - Response toward different political choices.
 - Response toward different socioeconomic status.
 - Response toward different sexual orientation.

These information will be used as interrelated factors in data processing using the SPSS program, so that trends obtained will show the map of radicalism and social-religious intolerance of young people in social media.

Before the real data collection is performed, questionnaire is firstly tested at students in one middle high school (SMA). The purpose of this test is to determine the level of students' understanding of the questions in the questionnaire, especially on special problems and the use of certain terms in the questionnaire. This instrument test is also carried out to measure the time needed by the youth to fill in the questionnaire. In addition, it is aimed to find out technical problems that might occur in the real data collection. From the results of the instrument test conducted on 35 students in SMA Negeri 21 Makassar in July 2019, some improvements and adjustments are then taken. First, there are some specific terms that are seemingly difficult for young people to comprehend, so they must be replaced with more general terms that are easily understood by the young generation, especially that of middle high school ages. Second, it is found out that the time needed by respondents to fill out the questionnaires varied between 20 and 30 minutes. There is also understanding obtained that young people have a tendency to get bored with similar questions so that the question are then modified to be shorter and more varied.

Third, it is found out that a wifi provider modem is needed to facilitate students who do not have internet data package on their smartphones.

The data collection is planned to be carried out between July 2019 and April 2020. However, it could only be started in August 2019 due to the questionnaire improvements as the result of the research instrument test which indicated the need for a number of correction and adjustments. In addition, the reason for the delay is to await the beginning of the university academic year since half of the respondent targets are university students who are generally out of reach during the holiday in July.

In order to support the research team, 5 university students and 2 alumni, as well as a number of local enumerators are employed during the data collection. Students and alumni are chosen not only for the reason of having reliable assistants, but also as part of regeneration and learning process for young researchers. Whereas the local enumerators chosen from local NGO networks are employed on the reasons that they know conditions of the location and the respondents better.

The data collection locations in the first year of the research are conducted in 10 cities in Indonesia, namely: Banda Aceh, Binjai, Tebing Tinggi, Pematang Siantar, Padang, Makassar, Yogyakarta, Solo, Salatiga, and Mataram. The selection of these cities is taken based on geographical consideration and with a reference that of those 10 cities 5 are considered tolerant while other 5 are intolerant based on the previous research conducted by the Setara Institute (2017). The current development of data collection in these cities can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. The Current Development of First Year Data Collection

No.	Locations	Data Collection Status
1.	Banda Aceh	complete
2.	Binjai	complete
3.	Tebing Tinggi	complete
4.	Pematang Siantar	complete
5.	Padang	complete
6.	Makassar	complete
7.	Yogyakarta	on-going
8.	Solo	on-going
9.	Salatiga	on-going
10.	Mataram	on-going

Data collection in 10 cities of the first year of the research activities has been completed in six cities as shown in the table above, or about 60% of the total planned representative locations. Meanwhile data collection in three cities on the island of Java plus the city of Mataram is planned to be completed by the end of 2019. In order to be more efficient, field visits are carried out sequentially on the same island. Data collection for cities in Sumatra island is carried out in August in one trip. In addition, this field study is also carried out by splitting the team into 2 groups to collect data in cities in parallel at the same time.

In large cities such as Makassar and Padang with more heterogeneous populations, the margin of the number of respondents is enlarged in order to obtain data with maximum representation from young people with different backgrounds. For this purpose, the data obtained is endeavored to represent the entire group of young people. For example, in Makassar, data collection is not only conducted at public schools, but also taking students from private schools and religious-based schools such as Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN). Apart from

Islamic-based schools, data collection is also carried out in Christian-based schools such as SMA Kristen Elim Makassar.

3 Result And Discussion

3.2 Youth Online Activities

In general, all respondents have indicated that they are active users of social media. This confirms their identity as millennial generation or what is so-called “digital natives“ [3]. The information they state in the questionnaire shows that the majority of respondents perform online activities on daily basis for more than 2 hours. The duration of online activities of the younger generation can be seen in the following graph.

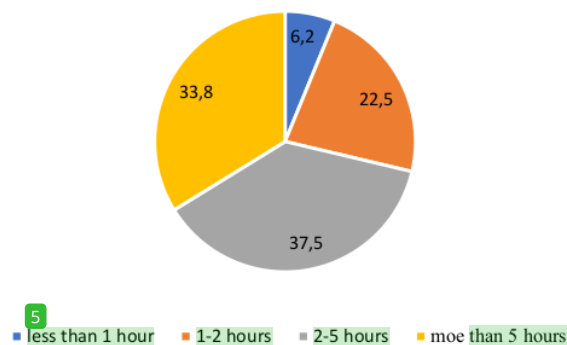


Figure 1. Duration of Youth Online Activities

It can be seen from the graph that the largest group that is 37.5% of respondents suggest that in general they use online media between 2-5 hours a day, while a significant number of them (33.8%) spend their time online for more than 5 hours a day. A very few which is only 6% of the respondents suggest that they use online media for less than 1 hour.

The use of social media among the young generation is enormous. Their online activities are mostly spent in the use of social media, or 80.6% of respondents claim to use social media in their leisure time. WhatsApp and Instagram are the most popular applications among young people, that are 85.2% and 77.3% respectively based on the survey. This is supported by data that 97.2% of the respondents prefer using WhatsApp application in sending messages. The preference of the younger generation on these two social media was then followed by YouTube users, which is 69.3% of respondents, in line with the data that 62% of respondents like watching online videos in their leisure time. An interesting data obtained on the popularity of the social media used by the young generation that suggests Facebook popularity is relatively low at only around 35.5% of the respondent use the social media. This is different from the older generation who are still actively using this online social media. Preference for the use of social media by the younger generation can be seen in the following graph.

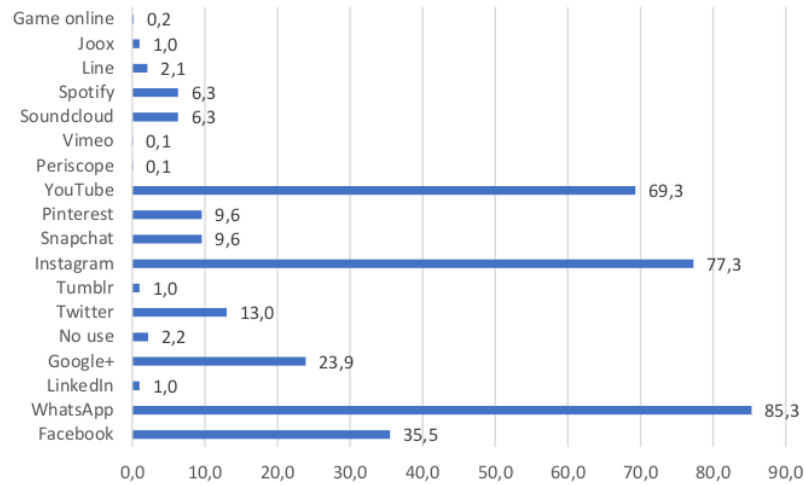


Figure 2. Youth Preference on Social Media Use

There are a number of electronic devices that are used by young people in their online activities, including smartphones, laptop computers, desktop computers, tablets, and so on. Data from the survey shows that smartphones are the most favorite device used by young people, which is about 97% of respondents said so (see the following figure). This is because this device is more practical and simple to use, easier to carry and faster to turn on and off.

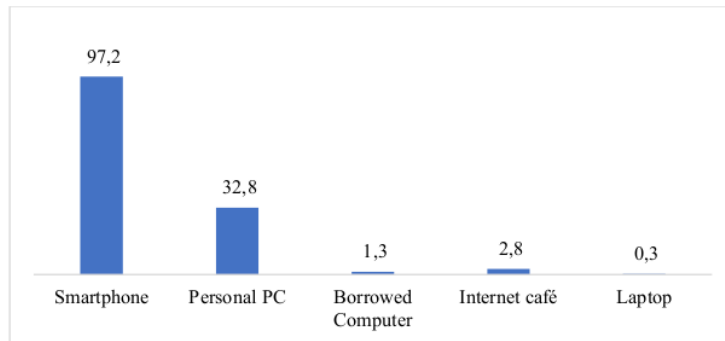


Figure 3. Youth Preference on Gadget Use (percentage)

3.2 Youth Potential Intolerance in Daily Life

An analysis of the data shows the potential of radicalism and intolerance of the younger generation can be grouped into 2 parts, namely the social preferences of the younger generation in their daily life and in cyberspace, especially on social media. The young generation's activities in the real world and the virtual world are important to be explored simultaneously in greater depth in order to obtain a view of the interrelationship between their attitudes and behavior in the two worlds. Similarly, it is also important to know the possibility of differences in the youth attitudes in their activities in the two spaces.

For the youth real world on everyday basis, the research tries to measure the degree of potential intolerance by giving attitude preferences towards certain situations, including:

- Living in neighborhood with certain social groups.
- Befriend with certain social groups.
- Voting for certain social groups in the election for president of student council/organization.
- Family members get married to certain social groups.

While certain social groups referred in the given situations are groups of people who are generally vulnerable to attitudes of discrimination and intolerance. These social groups generally have different social identities from the respondents. These different social groups in the questionnaire include:

- Different religions
- Different races/ethnicities
- Chinese
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)
- Poor people/beggars
- Different presidential choices
- Different choice of regional heads (regents/mayors/governors)
- Different choice of political parties, etc.

The data from the survey shows that the younger generation in general is relatively tolerant toward differences in religion, culture, economy, and political affiliation. This is indicated by their willingness to share living space side by side with people from the social groups mentioned above. The majority of the respondents express strong disagreement to a number of statements indicating the tendency of socio-religious intolerance. The following table is an example of the tendency of young generation tolerance based on the survey data:

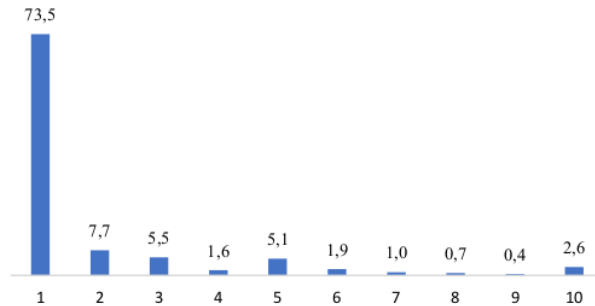


Figure 4. Uncomfortability of Having Neighbors from Different Ethnicities

The horizontal indicator (x axis) on the figure shows the degree of agreement where number 1 shows "strongly disagree" to number 10 which means "strongly agree" with the statement given. In the figure above it can be seen that the younger generation tends to have NO problems to live in harmony in a culturally plural neighboring society. Similar result is also shown in the context of friendship with different religions as shown in the following figure.

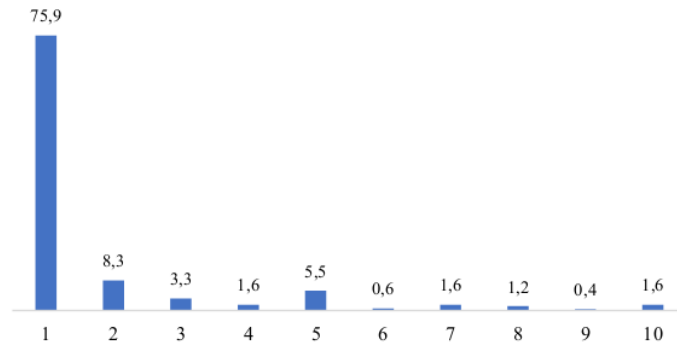


Figure 5. Reluctancy to Befriend with Different Religion

The survey result that indicates youth intolerance only shown on statements related to LGBT groups. The majority of respondents suggest that they do not agree to share space with LGBT people, either in the context of neighborhood, friendship, organization, and other kind of social relations. An example of the youth resistance to LGBT groups can be seen in the following figure.

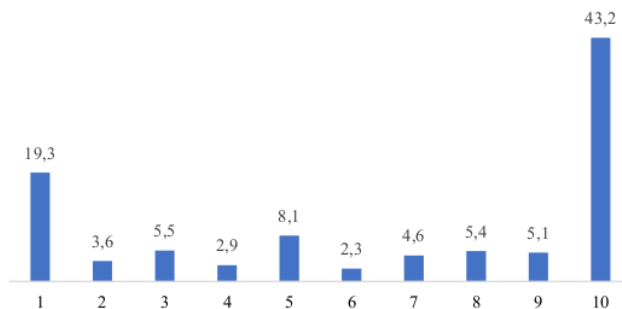


Figure 6. Reluctancy to Befriend with Chinese

Another interesting data from the survey is that there are still discriminatory attitudes towards certain race groups namely Chinese in Indonesia. Although the majority of the younger generation are relatively tolerant toward this social group, intolerant attitudes towards the Chinese are still significant. This happens in a variety of social contexts such as neighbors,

friendships, to the acceptance of marriages of family members with Chinese. An example of such attitude of generation discrimination against Chinese can be seen in the following figure.

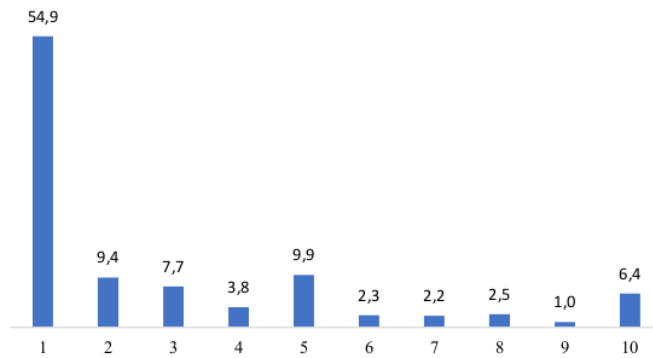


Figure 7. Uncomfortability of Having Neighbor from Chinese Group

In the graph above it can be seen that although the majority of respondents do not mind having Chinese neighbors, there are still 44 respondents (6.4%) feel unhappy of having Chinese neighbors. This figure is significant enough to show that stereotyping of Chinese still prevails in the community and has an impact on the young generation despite they had received character education at schools. This trend of intolerance increase when respondents are brought into the context of family relations. The rate of refusal to accept family members from Chinese group is quite large, with 153 respondents or 22.3% expressing rejection to family relations with Chinese people (see the following figure).

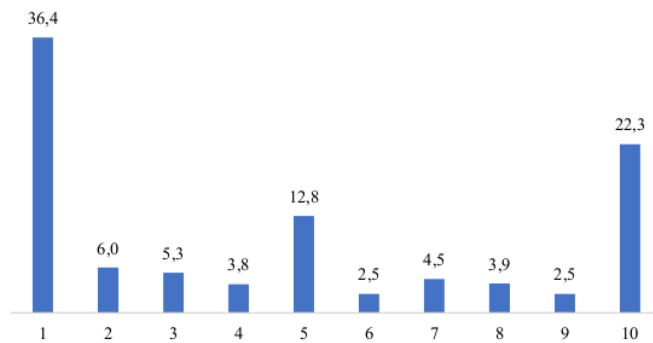


Figure 8. Youth Dislikeness of Having Chinese in Family

3.3 Youth Potential Intolerance in Using Social Media

Data analysis on young people intolerance in cyberspace, especially in their activities on social media shows confirmation of their attitudes and preferences in the real world. The

tendency of their attitude in certain contexts and situations on social media shows a clear correlation with what they do in their daily lives[5].

In this part of the research, the young generation are still confronted with situations relating to their relationships with certain social groups in society as in the previous section. In this section, however, clarification of social groups is then deepened to particular religious groups in Islam and Christianity. This is aimed to see how the attitudes of intolerance are not always directed towards adherents of other religions but also against different practices/sects within the same religion. Situations that are given to explore young people preferences and attitudes on social media include:

- Making friends on social media.
- Joining in particular social media groups.
- Uploading/making status on certain issues on social media.
- Canceling friendship/relationships on social media because of certain issues.

The result of the data analysis shows that like in the real world, the young generation is relatively tolerant towards certain social groups on social media. In the given situations, respondents show tolerance towards difference based on religion, culture, and political affiliation on social media. An example of this tolerance can be seen in the following graph:

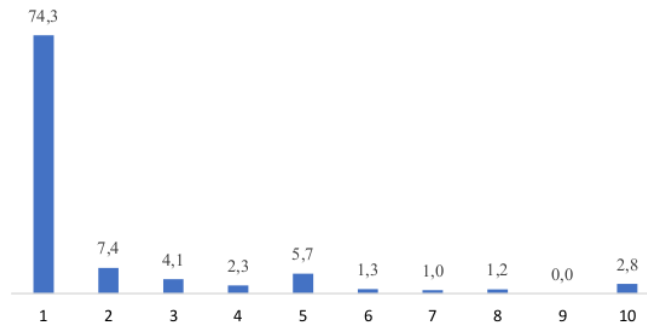


Figure 9. Youth Reluctancy to Befriend with Different Religions in Social Media

It can be seen in the figure above that the majority of respondents do not mind having friends in social media with people from different religions. More than 95% are in the range of disagreement to the statement of rejecting friends from different religious beliefs. A similar trend is shown in the respondents attitude towards certain groups on social media as in the graph below. The majority of respondents stated that they do not have problems to share a social media group with other ethnicities.

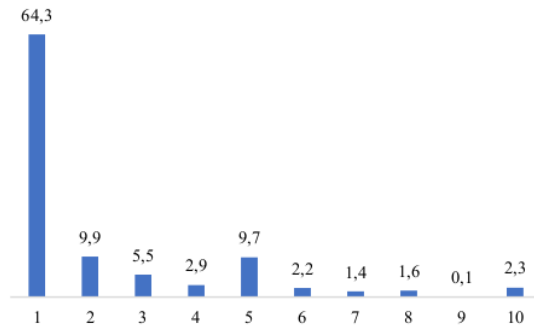


Figure 10. Youth Reluctancy to Join in a Socmed Group with Different Ethnicities

Like in the previous section, interesting result is found in the attitudes of the young generation towards LGBT people. The majority of respondents expressed their refusal towards LGBT people in all of their activities in social media, either in the context of making friends, joining groups, as well as uploading/posting certain issues related to LGBT. Examples of respondents intolerant attitudes towards LGBT can be seen in the following figure:

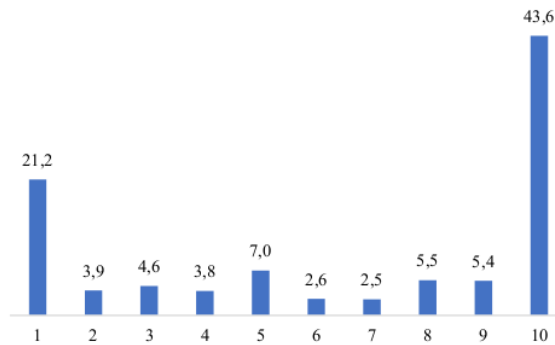


Figure 11. Youth Refusal to Make Friends with LGBT People in Socmed

In the figure above it can be seen that over half of the respondents expressed objection to being friends with LGBT groups in social media. Such attitude of the resistance of the younger generation towards LGBT increases in the situations of reading or seeing posts related to LGBT as shown in the graph below. From the data below it can be seen that the majority of respondents (60.3%) expressed strict rejection of uploads or status regarding LGBT.

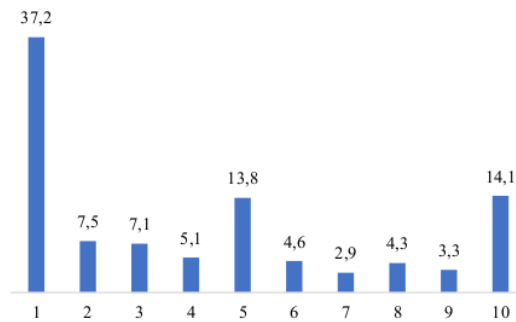


Figure 12. Youth Refusal to LGBT Content in Socmed

Regarding the attitude of the young generation towards the Chinese people in social media, the survey result shows a similar attitude to their attitude in real life. Although the majority shows no objection to people or content from certain groups in social media, the fact that the attitude of discrimination against the Chinese minority still exists and also occurs in the activities of young generation on social media.

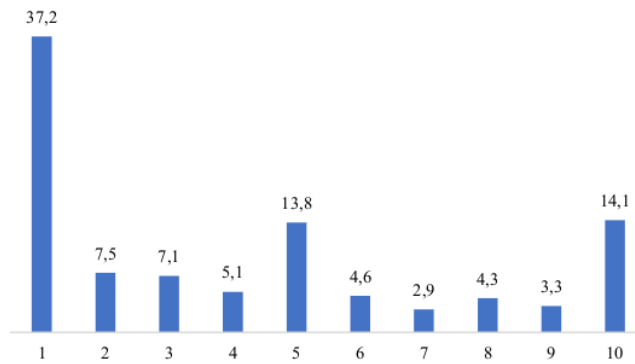


Figure 13. Youth Refusal to Chinese Related Content in Socmed

The data in the figure above shows the varying attitudes of the younger generation towards material that supports Chinese in social media. The majority state that they have no problem with the status or uploading, but a significant figure of around 20% was in the range of objections to pro-Chinese content.

4 Conclusion

To sum up, the results of the research of mapping the potential of radicalism and social-religious intolerance of young people on social media show that there is strong correlation

between youth attitudes in real world and virtual world. In general, young people today tend to be tolerant towards social groups of different religions, ethnicities, and political affiliations both in their daily lives and in their activities in social media. However, they show a clear intolerance towards LGBT people in various forms both in real life and in cyberspace. Further studies in this research are needed to obtain an understanding of the causes of this attitude variation. In addition, this research also found that discriminatory attitudes towards the Chinese minority still exist on a certain scale in our society. This is manifested in the attitudes and preferences of our young generation in various aspects of their lives in real life and in cyberspace.

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