

## A Globalization Issue: The Spread of Intolerance Messages on Social Media from the Society's Perspective

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### Abstract

This research aims to present a paper that discusses how people's perspectives on globalization issues related to the spread of intolerance messages through social media. The method in this research uses a qualitative method, while the data collection technique uses interviews. Interviews were conducted with 8 respondents who represented the community from among students and education practitioners. The selection of students and education practitioners aims to see the point of view of students as agents of change and education practitioners as part of the community concerned with the world of education, so it is necessary to know the views of both in seeing the phenomenon in this study. The results of this study show that the community, especially from students and educational practitioners, expects social media users to be smarter and wiser in using it, so that it can reduce the number of spread of intolerance messages through social media in Indonesia. The role of the Indonesian government is also very important in providing socialization and education to the community in terms of eradicating messages of intolerance, especially in social media.

**Keywords:** Globalization Issues, Intolerance Messages, Social Media, Society's Perspective

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, the development of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought significant changes in the way humans communicate and interact. Social media, as one of the results of the progress of information and communication technology, has become the main platform for exchanging information and expressing oneself. However, behind its great benefits, social media has also become a tool for spreading intolerant messages that can damage social harmony. Social media also functions as a measure of the level of public acceptance of a person or the information conveyed. This shows that the role of social media is very influential in the social life of society, especially in Indonesia. (Prasetiya, Widiastuti, and Safitri 2019) .

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has changed the way people interact and share information around the world. Social media has become an important tool for communicating, disseminating information, and shaping public opinion thanks to advances in information technology. Indonesian internet users will reach 185.3 million in 2024, with 139 million active social media users (Data Digital Indonesia, 2024), reported by Hootsuite and We Are Social. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, X, and Instagram allow people to share their views and thoughts quickly and easily.

The issue of globalization does not only involve economic and political aspects, but also includes social and cultural dynamics influenced by the flow of information that crosses national borders. Social media facilitates the rapid and widespread spread of ideas and opinions, but also allows the spread of messages that are intolerant of differences in race, religion, and culture. This phenomenon is a serious concern because it can threaten the peace and stability of global society. This is evidenced by the increasing spread of intolerant messages on social media. With the rapid growth of intolerance, efforts to combat it are also increasingly challenging (Latipah and Nawawi 2023) . Data Which collected from Ministry

Communication and Informatics (Kemkominfo), also recorded the handling of 3,640 hate speech content based on Tribe, Religion, Race, and Inter-Group (SARA) since 2018. Until now, the government is still trying to eradicate the spread of intolerant messages in Indonesia.

In his statement, Mark Poster stated that currently is a new era where interactive technology and communication networks, especially the internet, will change society (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009, 291). This can be a reference that changes in society in terms of communication can be greatly influenced by the media, especially in this context, social media. The spread of intolerant messages is also easier to find with the increasing development of information and communication technology. From Mark Poster's statement, now we can see the reality that is happening today, especially in Indonesia and is associated with the increasingly visible change in the direction of community communication to become more *internet centered*. The behavior of disseminating information has profound implications for society, so it needs serious attention in order to maintain democracy and maintain social harmony (Arum and Ibay 2024).

In previous studies, it was explained that the increasing spread of content containing religious fanaticism and intolerance on social media is in fact a form of self-defense in order to maintain followers. In addition, they also try to justify things that are considered wrong or different from the teachings they believe in (Lesmana and Syafiq, 2022). Meanwhile, other studies see that the impact of the development of information and communication technology in Indonesia is the emergence of intolerant and antisocial behavior that causes unrest in society (Kusuma 2019).

From the several studies above, researchers are interested in further researching how society views the spread of intolerant messages through social media. This is to see how the phenomenon is responded to from the perspective of a particular society. Because this society is also a small part of active social media users, it will certainly be interesting to see how they respond to the situation and reality that occurs.

## METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method. The qualitative research process includes questions and procedures based on data found from observations in the community and analyzed inductively (Fauzi, et al., 2022, 14). The data collection technique used was interviews. Researchers conducted interviews with eight selected respondents, consisting of students and education practitioners. The selection of students and education practitioners aims to see the perspective of students as *agents of change* and education practitioners as part of society who are *concerned* about the world of education, so it is necessary to know the views of both in viewing the phenomena in this study. The form of the interview conducted was a guided interview, where the researcher had prepared several complete and detailed questions. As well as interview guidelines containing important points of focus and aspects of focus that will be asked in the interview). In this study, the analysis used was a phenomenological approach. This approach describes the experience of human life about a particular phenomenon explained by participants (John W. Creswell 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Spread of Intolerant Messages on Social Media

The influence of globalization in the world has an impact on the spread of information to all corners of the world, even access to information is now easier with the development of information and communication technology. However, with the increasing development of

information and communication technology, it is also possible that the spread of information will be increasingly unstoppable, even negative information will also be easier to find. Such as messages of intolerance or *hate speech* that often circulate, especially on social media.

Intolerance in the social realm can have quite serious impacts and threats in community life. With the increasing spread of intolerant messages, it can cause division and disharmony in small scopes to countries in large scopes. Intolerance, especially in the religious realm, often arises from the way a person is too fanatical about the religion they adhere to (Lesmana and Syafiq 2022) . This excessive attitude in religion can cause unrest for other people, because they will assume that the teachings of their group are the most correct.

One of the easiest media for spreading intolerant messages today is through the internet, especially social media platforms. Social media can make people the main actors and targets at the same time. (Burhanuddin et al. 2020) . This happens because social media users as people who are the main actors in spreading information, make the people themselves the targets or victims of the impact of its spread. Therefore, making social media a form of progress in terms of the development of information and communication technology, seems to have another side that has a regressive impact in terms of how people communicate more directly and easily judge others. This is proven by the data submitted by the Head National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) Commissioner General Boy Rafli Amar, that 50% of content on social media contains intolerant speech and plans crime (Darmawan, 2022). In fact, Indonesia has an image as a country that upholds Eastern values, tolerance, manners, and politeness, so that the data shows us that values have begun to erode in society.

The increasingly widespread availability of news and information in digital form can benefit society from various levels. There are efforts made to reach a wide audience by conveying certain messages (Latipah and Nawawi 2023) . The dissemination of information via social media also has social implications. The most common and easily mentioned intolerance is about religion. Irresponsible people use social media to spread bigotry in the form of hate speech, thus triggering intolerance with religious motives (Facal 2020) .

### **Public Response to the Phenomenon of Spreading Intolerant Messages on Social Media**

Students as one of the active users of social media in Indonesia, are important in providing their own perspective in responding to global issues about the spread of intolerant messages through social media. This is because students are *agents of change* , where students' thoughts are expected to enrich existing perspectives by offering new and more objective understandings in society. From the results of the interviews conducted, all respondents have at least three social media accounts. As conveyed by one of the respondents:

*" I am an active user of social media accounts Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and Whatsapp. Every day I definitely open these social media accounts for at least four hours a day. So I can see how information develops on social media every day ."* (EM, Psychology student)

This shows that students are very familiar with social media. Some of them even have a *second account* to limit their friendships to only those closest to them. This shows that people's enthusiasm for social media is very high. In another interview, respondents said:

*"Indeed, now is the digital era, so the spread of information is also increasingly easy to spread. I have also found several posts or comments that lead to intolerance, especially religious intolerance on social media. This is quite worrying, because the comments made by netizens are quite harsh. Because usually the realm of religion is a fairly sensitive issue to discuss. In fact, not a few have been imprisoned for the problem of spreading hoaxes or sensitive information about intolerance. However, many people are not afraid, as evidenced by the many negative comments that appear using fake accounts to cover their real identities*

*in conveying negative messages.*" (H, Law Student)

From H's statement, it shows that in reality, social media is currently a medium for spreading intolerant messages by the public and is easy to access, so that the information is also easier to spread and go viral. Added to this is the *trending feature* from several social media platforms, which makes it easier for users to access the latest news *updates* that are currently being discussed and viral. This was also confirmed by other student respondents:

*"If we look at it, social media is currently increasingly developing if we review it from the perspective of information and communication technology. I can also communicate more easily with friends who live abroad with the help of various features available from each social media that I use. However, the drawback is that I cannot filter the information that I get and see on my social media homepage. I have to check whether the information is a fact or a hoax. What is dangerous is when people do not want to find out the correct information, and become victims of hoaxes which result in increasing hate speech"* (TR, Communication student)

Based on TR's statement, it can be seen that one of the weaknesses of the dissemination of information on social media is that users have difficulty filtering information correctly. In this condition, social media users must have the ability to sort information and find the right information. Digital literacy plays a very important role in this. Because the lack of digital literacy in society is one of the factors in the increasing development of intolerant messages through social media (Guess et al., 2020) .

Another response was delivered by an education practitioner. In an interview, he said:

*"Indonesian society needs to improve its digital literacy skills. Because based on my experience, I often find people who immediately accept information without first confirming its truth. Likewise, more and more people seem to follow suit in commenting on viral information, and not infrequently their comments corner other parties. The government as a policy maker in this country has actually shown its role through the ratification of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), which is a bridge to resolve problems related to the spread of fake news or intolerant messages on the internet. However, the government should also improve its performance in terms of socializing the public to be wiser in using social media, especially young people who are new to social media. And there also needs to be extra supervision for minors in using social media, so that the young generation of Indonesia has good critical thinking skills, not just content enthusiasts. "* (E, Lecturer).

Responses from other education practitioners:

*"There needs to be socialization and education from the government to schools, starting from elementary school to college level regarding this issue of intolerance. Because in reality, many elementary school students already use social media and are not even supervised by their parents. This is a serious matter for the world of education, if the issue of intolerance cannot be overcome in educational institutions themselves. Because in schools, students usually learn about tolerance which is the practice of Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian state. It would be very sad if students were taught to be tolerant of each other, but in reality in the future they become intolerant individuals towards others"* (AHN, Lecturer and teacher).

In essence, instilling this attitude of tolerance can be fostered from an early age in children. So it is not only parents who have a role in fostering good character in children, but also schools as their second home can facilitate this. Likewise with the Indonesian government itself. It is undeniable that the government has a very important role in dealing with phenomena like this, especially if the spread of this information can be accessed very quickly, even in a matter of minutes we can find out what is happening in the world easily. If the spread of intolerant messages on social media does not decrease in Indonesia, it will be very dangerous because it can cause divisions between religious communities, tribes, or certain groups. This can give rise to a sense of discomfort and a reduced sense of security as a citizen of a country that adheres to the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* . In fact, Indonesia is a country that is being

highlighted by other countries about a very harmonious life in coexistence between religious communities, and is seen as successful in creating religious harmony when compared to other countries. It is very unfortunate if this view changes because of the lack of wisdom of society in using social media by spreading messages of intolerance.

Other respondents also expressed similar opinions in their interviews:

*"Indonesia is well known abroad as a country that can maintain religious harmony. Our country is quite harmonious in carrying out the daily lives of its citizens who consist of six religions recognized by the state, many tribes and various languages. How great it would be for Indonesia if it could maintain this title in the eyes of the world. And how proud our heroes would be if their next generation could be admired by other countries because they have a high spirit of tolerance and compassion"* (KM, Religious Studies Student)

As for the responses from other respondents, namely:

*"Intolerance must be eradicated, eradicated immediately. Especially the spread of intolerance on social media. Because information is so quickly accessed. I can't imagine what will happen to our younger siblings in the future, if they don't have a tolerant attitude towards others who have differences with them. However, if this issue of intolerance can decrease, I am optimistic that Indonesia will truly be able to reach its golden age in 2045. My message, hopefully the Indonesian people will be smarter in using social media, and wiser in expressing their opinions and can have a positive influence on others in using social media."* (AL, Teacher).

Wise use of social media is one way that our society can do to reduce the spread of intolerant messages in Indonesia. Even now, several countries have implemented rules to prohibit the use of social media for children. This is because it can have a negative effect on the character and mentality of children. However, of course this raises pros and cons among Indonesian society if it is implemented in this country. Regarding this, one respondent said that:

*"If Indonesia also implements a rule prohibiting the use of social media for children under 16 years old, there will definitely be those who support and reject the decision. If we look at the good side, children can form social communities based on their interests through social media. However, if we look at the negative impacts, children with critical thinking that is still not well honed, will have difficulty sorting information properly, which will lead them to information confusion. But in my opinion, Indonesia can implement this policy so that Indonesian children do not fall too far into the bad use of social media for them."* (K, Teacher).

## CONCLUSION

The increasing spread of intolerant messages in society through social media has become a concern among the general public, especially among students and education practitioners in Indonesia. The phenomenon of spreading intolerant messages through social media is actually not only felt by the Indonesian people, but it has become a global issue in various countries. So that each country has made its own rules regarding this matter. This is where the role of the state government is very important in making decisions that have an impact on the future of the country itself. The importance of clear and targeted regulations related to internet use for all groups can be a barrier for internet activists, especially social media.

The importance of acting smart in using social media is also one way to reduce the increasing spread of intolerant messages through social media. As a good social media user, being wise in conveying opinions and messages on social media will certainly also contribute to reducing the spread of intolerant messages. Digital literacy skills and being active in seeking the truth of the information obtained can help us filter information and distinguish between information that is in accordance with the facts or just false information.

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