

# Youth Political Participation and Social Media Use in Hong Kong

## Survey Results

(Press Release)

January 3, 2017

The Centre for Youth Studies of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong conducted a mobile phone survey named Youth Political Participation and Social Media Use, to examine the use of social media of the youths, and its relationship with their online and offline political participation, so as to investigate the role of youth in social change.

The mobile phone survey was conducted from 24 October to 24 November, 2016. Using the method of random sampling, the Centre successfully interviewed 829 Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking residents aged 15 to 29 on their mobile phone (with a sampling error of  $\pm 3.4\%$  at 95% confidence level). The response rate was 70%. All data were weighted by the proportion of gender, age and education according to the most recent statistics of people aged 15 to 29 issued by the Census and Statistics Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government.

A summary of the findings is provided<sup>1</sup>:

### 1. The use of Internet

On average, the youth spends four to five hours online daily, and one to two hours on Facebook. (See Tables 1, 2)

Facebook is the social media most frequently used (67.7%), followed by Whatsapp (14.4%) and Instagram (12.2%). Noticeably, Instagram is far more popular among youth aged 15 to 19 (29.2%) than other age groups. It is consistent with the findings from international research that millennials tend not to use Facebook. (See Table 3)

“Browsing friends’ status” is the most common activity for the youths in the use of social media (24.1%), followed by “browsing news of public affairs” (20.9%), “instant messaging” (11.6%) and “browsing information of living and lifestyle” (10.1%). (See Table 4)

### 2. Major information source of public affair information

Social media is the respondents’ major information source of public affair information (46.4%), followed by television (21.7%), website (15.5%), newspaper/magazine (13.1%), and radio (2.8%).

### 3. Satisfaction with the performance of HKSAR Government

66.6% of the youths are “very dissatisfied” or “not quite satisfied” with the performance of HKSAR Government; 7.8% are “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied”; and 30.2% indicated “half-half”. (Respondents who answered “No answer/don’t know” or refused to answer were not included.) (See Table 5)

### 4. Trust in the HKSAR Government

63.5% of respondents are “very distrust” or “quite distrust” in the HKSAR Government; 7.8% are “very trust” or “quite trust”; and 28.7% indicated “half-half”. (Respondents who answered “No answer/don’t know” or refused to answer were not included.) (See Table 6)

### 5. Tolerance on the marginal groups

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents who answered “No answer/don’t know” or refused to answer were not included.

The respondents were asked how objectionable they would feel if the following groups of people strive for their rights publicly, the percentages of indicating “not objectionable at all” are as follows: (See Table 7)

Recovered mental patients: 88.9%    people of other ethnicities: 81.6%    homosexuals: 76.5%  
sex workers: 72.4%                      political radicals: 39.1%

**6. Online political participation**

Respondents were asked how often they participated in a variety of online political activities. In data analysis, “never” was given zero point, “once/twice” was given 1 point, “several times” was given 2 point and “often” was given 3 points. The degree of their online political participation is as follows. The percentage of “never” is shown in the blanket. (See Table 8)

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Post or share political/public affairs information or comment online	1.06 ( 40.6% )
‘Like’ or join any online group about politics or public affairs	0.80 ( 51.8% )
Take part in an online demonstration, for example, ‘Like’ the page of an online demonstration	0.64 ( 60.6% )
Sign an online petition for political/public affairs	0.51 ( 64.3% )
Call upon others online to participate in offline political activities, such as demonstration, election etc	0.45 ( 69.2% )
Buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons online	0.30 ( 77.9% )
Donate or raise money online for political/public affairs	0.11 ( 91.1% )
Contact a legislator or government official by means of the Internet	0.08 ( 95.2% )
Create an online group for politics or public affairs	0.06 ( 96.1% )

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24.8% of respondents have never participated in any political activity online.

**7. Offline political participation**

Respondents were asked how often they participated in a variety of offline political activities. In data analysis, “never” was given zero point, “once/twice” was given 1 point, “several times” was given 2 point and “often” was given 3 points. The degree of their offline political participation is as follows. The percentage of “never” is shown in the blanket. (See Table 9)

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Take part in an offline march or demonstration	0.36 ( 71.6% )
Wear or show a sign/symbol for any social movement? (e.g. democratic movement, election)	0.33 ( 75.0% )
Buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons offline	0.31 ( 77.8% )
Participate in the activities organized by any environmental or human rights organization	0.25 ( 78.4% )
Donate or raise money offline for political/public affairs	0.24 ( 82.3% )
Sign a paper petition	0.18 ( 84.9% )
Participate in the activities organized by any political party/organization	0.18 ( 85.6% )
Contact a legislator or government official for public affairs in person, by phone, or by letter	0.08 ( 93.6% )

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44.4% of respondents have never participated in any political activity offline.

61.5% of youth aged 18 to 29 voted in the 2016 Legislative Council Election.

**8. The significant relationship between the use of social media as the primary source of public affair information, and political attitudes and participation**

The youths having social media as the major source of public affairs information are significantly more dissatisfied with the performance of HKSAR Government and significantly less trust the HKSAR Government (See Tables 10, 11)

Among the youths having social media as the major source of public affairs information, those aged 15 to 19 are significantly more satisfied with and of less trust to the HKSAR Government than the other age groups. However, no significant difference was observed among the three groups in online and offline political participation.

【All data were weighted by the proportion of gender, age and education according to the most recent statistics of people aged 15 or above issued by the Census and Statistics Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government. The total N may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors and weighting.】

**Table 1: Average time online daily**

	percentage
Not at all	0.5
1-30 minutes	1.6
31-61 minutes	1.9
1 – 2 hours	9.0
2 – 3 hours	18.4
3 – 4 hours	20.7
4 – 5 hours	14.5
5 – 6 hours	9.8
6 – 7 hours	8.7
7 – 8 hours	2.8
8 – 9 hours	4.3
9 – 10 hours	0.4
10 hours or above	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0 (829)</b>

Question: How much time do you spend on the Internet every day?

**Table 2: Average time on Facebook daily**

	percentage
Less than 30 minutes	17.2
31-60 minutes	20.7
1-2 hours	26.5
2-3 hours	17.6
3-4 hours	8.5
4 – 5 hours	3.8
5 – 6 hours	2.5
6 – 7 hours	0.7
7 – 8 hours	0.5
8 – 9 hours	0.7
9 – 10 hours	0.1
10 hours or above	1.0
No answer/refuse	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0 (794)</b>

\*Respondents who didn't use Facebook or Internet were excluded

Question: In the past week, on average, approximately how many minutes per day did you spend on Facebook?

**Table 3: Social media used most frequently**

	Age 15 to 19 %	Age 20 to 24 %	Age 25 to 29 %	Age 15 to 29 %
Facebook	54.2	74.8	72.5	67.7
Instagram	29.2	9.0	2.0	12.2
Whatsapp	10.6	12.9	17.4	14.4
Wechat	3.4	1.1	5.7	3.4
Sina Weibo	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.7
Twitter	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3
Line	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1
Others	1.7	1.1	1.0	1.2
No answer	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1
Total	100.0 ( 236 )	100.0 ( 278 )	100.0 ( 298 )	100.0 ( 817 )

\*Respondents who didn't use Facebook or Internet were excluded

Question: Which social media do you use the most often?

**Table 4: Social media activity most frequently done**

	Percentage
Browse friends' status	24.1
Browse news of public affair	20.9
Instant messaging	11.6
Browse information of living/lifestyle	10.1
Share others' post	6.6
Press 'Like' or other emotional buttons	6.6
Watch video	3.9
Browse information of entertainment	3.8
Browse comments	3.2
Update personal status	2.5
Post photos	1.3
Comment on others' post	1.1
Shopping	0.4
Listen to music	0.3
Play games	0.2
Others	0.1
No answer	2.3
Did not use social media	0.9
Total	100.0 ( 825 )

\*Respondents who didn't use Internet were excluded

Question: What do you do the most often on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Weibo, Whatsapp, WeChat, etc. (Don't read out options)

**Table 5 : Satisfaction with the performance of HKSAR Government**

	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	33.6
Not quite satisfied	32.1
Half-half	29.8
Quite satisfied	2.4
Very satisfied	0.8
No answer	1.4
Total	100.0(829)

Question: Are you satisfied with the overall performance of the HKSAR Government?

**Table 6: Trust in the HKSAR Government**

	Percentage
Very distrust	32.3
Quite distrust	30.7
Half-half	28.5
Quite trust	6.4
Very trust	1.4
No answer	0.7
Total	100.0(829)

Question: On the whole, do you trust the HKSAR Government?

**Table 7: Political Tolerance**

	People of other ethnicities	Sex workers	Recovered mental patients	Homosexuals	Political radicals
Not objectionable at all	79.6	70.7	87.7	75.2	37.9
A little bit objectionable	13.4	22.4	8.9	15.2	41.8
Somewhat objectionable	2.7	2.6	1.0	5.4	12.1
Strongly objectionable	1.8	1.9	1.0	2.5	5.2
No answer/refuse	2.4	2.3	1.3	1.7	3.0
Total	100.0 ( 829 )	100.0 ( 829 )	100.0 ( 829 )	100.0 ( 829 )	100.0 ( 829 )

Question :

When people of other ethnicities strive for their rights publicly, would you feel not objectionable at all, a little bit objectionable, somewhat objectionable or strongly objectionable?

When sex workers strive for their rights publicly, would you feel not objectionable at all, a little bit objectionable, somewhat objectionable or strongly objectionable?

When recovered mental patients strive for their rights publicly, would you feel not objectionable at all, a little bit objectionable, somewhat objectionable or strongly objectionable?

When homosexuals strive for their rights publicly, would you feel not objectionable at all, a little bit objectionable, somewhat objectionable or strongly objectionable?

When political radicals profess their stance publicly, would you feel not objectionable at all, a little bit objectionable, somewhat objectionable or strongly objectionable?

**Table 8: Online political participation**

	Sign an online petition for political/public affairs %	Donate or raise money online for political/public affairs %	Contact a legislator or government official by means of the Internet %	Call upon others online to participate in offline political activities, such as demonstration, election etc %	Buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons online %	Post or share political/public affairs information or comment online %	Take part in an online demonstration, for example, 'Like' the page of an online demonstration %	Create an online group for politics or public affairs %	'Like' or join any online group about politics or public affairs %
Never	64.3	91.1	95.2	69.2	77.9	40.6	60.6	96.1	51.8
Once/twice	23.5	7.0	2.9	20.0	16.2	25.1	21.8	2.3	24.1
Several times	9.2	1.2	1.2	7.4	4.2	21.9	10.9	1.2	16.1
Often	3.0	0.6	0.7	3.4	1.8	12.3	6.7	0.4	8.0
Total	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)	100.0 (825)

**Question:**

In the past 12 months, how often did you sign an online petition for political/public affairs?

In the past 12 months, how often did you donate or raise money online for political/public affairs?

In the past 12 months, how often did you contact a legislator or government official by means of the Internet?

In the past 12 months, how often did you call upon others online to participate in offline political activities, such as demonstration, election etc?

In the past 12 months, how often did you buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons online?

In the past 12 months, how often did you post or share political/public affairs information or comment online?

In the past 12 months, how often did you take part in an online demonstration, for example, 'Like' the page of an online demonstration?

In the past 12 months, how often did you create an online group for politics or public affairs?

In the past 12 months, how often did you 'Like' or join any online group about politics or public affairs?



**Table 9: Offline political participation**

	Contact a legislator or government official for public affairs in person, by phone, or by letter %	Sign a paper petition %	Take part in an offline march or demonstration %	Donate or raise money offline for political/public affairs %	Buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons offline %	Wear or show a sign/symbol for any social movement? (e.g. democratic movement, election)%	Participate in the activities organized by any environmental or human rights organization %	Participate in the activities organized by any political party/organization %
Never	93.6	84.9	71.5	82.3	77.8	75.0	78.4	85.6
Once/twice	4.6	12.5	21.3	12.9	15.4	18.6	19.0	11.4
Several times	1.3	2.2	6.1	2.9	4.4	4.8	1.9	2.2
Often	0.5	0.4	0.9	1.9	2.4	1.6	0.7	0.8
Refuse	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)	100.0(829)

**Question:**

In the past 12 months, how often did you contact a legislator or government official for public affairs in person, by phone, or by letter?

In the past 12 months, how often did you sign a paper petition?

In the past 12 months, how often did you take part in an offline march or demonstration?

In the past 12 months, how often did you donate or raise money offline for political/public affairs?

In the past 12 months, how often did you buy products or support boycott against any product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons offline?

In the past 12 months, how often did you wear or show a sign/symbol for any social movement? (e.g. democratic movement, election)?

In the past 12 months, how often did you participate in the activities organized by any environmental or human rights organization?

In the past 12 months, how often did you participate in the activities organized by any political party/organization?

**Table 10: Relationship between satisfaction with the performance of HKSAR Government and major information source of public affairs**

	Social Media%	Non-Social Media%
Very dissatisfied	45.2	24.3
Not quite satisfied	36.2	29.4
Half-half	18.5	40.4
Quite satisfied	0.0	4.6
Very satisfied	0.0	1.4
Total	100.0 ( 378 )	100.0 ( 436 )

\* Chi-square test indicated that there was significant difference between youth whose major information source of public affairs was social media and those whose source was not social media in their satisfaction with the performance of HKSAR Government ( $p < 0.001$ ) .

**Table 11: Relationship between trust in the performance of HKSAR Government and major information source of public affairs**

	Social Media%	Non-Social Media%
Very distrust	43.8	22.6
Quite distrust	33.9	28.5
Half-half	21.0	35.5
Quite trust	1.3	10.9
Very trust	0.0	2.5
Total	100.0 ( 381 )	100.0 ( 439 )

\* Chi-square test indicated that there was significant difference between youth whose major information source of public affairs was social media and those whose source was not social media in their trust in the HKSAR Government ( $p < 0.001$ ) .

**Basic Demographic Data**

**Sex**

	<i>Before weighting</i>		<i>After weighting</i>	
	n	%	n	%
Male	412	49.7	419	50.5
Female	417	50.3	410	49.5
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

**Age**

	<i>Before weighting</i>		<i>After weighting</i>	
	n	%	n	%
15-19	258	31.3	236	28.5
20-24	306	36.9	285	34.3
25-29	259	31.2	300	36.2
Refuse	6	0.7	8	1.0
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

**Education**

	<u>Before weighting</u>		<u>After weighting</u>	
	n	%	n	%
No formal education/ Kindergarten	1	0.1	4	0.5
Primary School	1	0.1	4	0.5
Junior Secondary School	16	1.9	50	6.0
Senior Secondary School	264	31.8	306	36.9
Tertiary, non-degree course	112	13.5	92	11.1
Tertiary, degree course	399	48.1	337	40.7
Graduate School (Master/Doctoral degree)	30	3.6	28	3.4
No answer / Refuse	6	0.7	6	0.8
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

**Household income per month**

	<u>Before weighting</u>		<u>After weighting</u>	
	n	%	n	%
\$5,999 or below	4	0.5	5	0.5
\$ 6,000 – \$9,999	9	1.1	8	1.0
\$10,000 – \$14,999	42	5.1	47	5.7
\$15,000 – \$19,999	40	4.8	41	4.9
\$20,000 – \$24,999	82	9.9	82	9.9
\$25,000 – \$29,999	47	5.7	47	5.7
\$30,000 – \$39,999	141	17.0	138	16.6
\$40,000 – \$49,999	83	10.0	85	10.2
\$50,000 – \$59,999	95	11.5	93	11.2
\$60,000 – \$79,999	91	11.0	92	11.0
\$80,000 or above	100	12.1	96	11.5
No answer / Refuse	95	11.5	97	11.7
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

**Birth place**

	<i>Before weighting</i>		<i>After weighting</i>	
	n	%	n	%
Hong Kong	664	80.1	645	77.8
Others	160	19.3	179	21.6
No answer/refuse	5	0.6	5	0.6
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

**Vote in the Legislative Council Election in September 2016**

	<i>Before weighting</i>		<i>After weighting</i>	
	n	%	n	%
No	239	35.3	256	38.2
Yes	432	63.8	408	60.9
Don't know/refuse	6	0.8	6	0.9
Total	677	100.0	670	100.0

\*Respondents aged under 18 are excluded.

**Hong Kong Identity**

	<i>Before weighting</i>		<i>After weighting</i>	
	n	%	n	%
Hongkongese	404	48.7	394	47.6
Hongkongese but also Chinese	322	38.8	311	37.5
Chinese but also Hongkongese	71	8.6	82	9.9
Chinese	20	2.4	31	3.7
No view/no answer	12	1.4	11	1.4
Total	829	100.0	829	100.0

Question: How do you identify yourself?