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Analyzing everyday life content on Persian Twitter: A study of high-engagement tweets during Nowruz holidays

Fateme Kamali [1*]

[1] *M.A. Student, Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Iran*

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ABSTRACT

With the growing integration of social media into everyday life, Twitter has become a significant platform for representing users' lived experiences, particularly during cultural and religious occasions. This study aims to analyze the content of highly engaged tweets posted between March 18 and April 7, coinciding with Nowruz and the month of Ramadan. From among Persian-language tweets that received more than 1,000 likes, 225 tweets were purposefully selected and examined using both qualitative and quantitative content analysis methods. The findings reveal that three main themes—family relationships, humor, and cultural events—had the highest frequency. Among the humor styles, self-enhancing and affiliative humor were the most prevalent, and women participated more actively than men in narrating their everyday experiences. The results further indicate that Twitter serves not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a space for emotional expression, social critique, and identity representation in the presence of an imagined audience. This study highlights the role of humor as a psychological and social strategy for coping with challenging situations and contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics within the digital space.

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have profoundly transformed the structure of human interactions and the ways individuals communicate, form connections, and access information in contemporary societies. This transformation has not only impacted the public sphere and media landscapes but has also been reflected in academic literature, leading to the emergence of studies on users' experiences of social media and the rise of digital intimacies. These experiences have become an inseparable part of modern lifestyles, forging deep connections between digital and offline life (Dobson, Robards, & Carah, 2018, as cited in Miller, Partridge, & Davis, 2019, p. 1). As Özbaş Anbarlı (2021, p. 31) notes, "digital networks and new media tools have gradually become embedded in the fabric of users' everyday lives, leading to the emergence of new forms of social practices within the digital space."

* Corresponding Author
fatemekamali@ut.ac.ir
+989133494996
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4179-7055

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Although everyday life may appear trivial and repetitive at first glance, the analysis of these ordinary experiences has yielded significant insights across various fields of social science (Lefebvre, 2012, p. 136, as cited in Özbaş Anbarlı, 2021, p. 32). This field of study primarily focuses on patterns of interpersonal interaction and the influence of social environments on the regulation of daily behaviors (Kalekin, 2013, pp. 716-717). In this regard, research has shown that over 70% of social media posts are related to users' personal and momentary experiences (Naaman, Boase, & Lai, 2010, as cited in Berger, 2014, p. 597). Among these experiences, family emerges as a central theme in personal narratives, particularly among extroverted individuals (B. Hirsh & B. Peterson, 2009, p. 526).

The present study focuses on the period between March 18 and April 7, which coincides with two major events in the Iranian calendar—Nowruz and the month of Ramadan. These events, beyond their cultural and religious significance, are deeply intertwined with familial experiences, social visits, holidays, and Nowruz travels. Twitter, as a digital platform, offers a conducive space for sharing these experiences and emotions. This research centers on tweets that received more than 1,000 likes to explore which forms of everyday content garnered the highest levels of engagement and how these narratives are represented within the framework of digital everyday life.

Accordingly, the main research question is formulated as follows:

"How do highly engaged tweets posted between March 18 and April 7 represent users' everyday experiences, and what types of everyday narratives attracted the most attention within Persian Twitter during this period?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past decade, everyday life within digital social networks—particularly on Twitter—has become a central focus of media studies, cultural sociology, and digital anthropology. These platforms enable users to share moments, emotions, and events from their daily lives instantly, often in the form of brief and impactful narratives. Numerous studies, using both theoretical and empirical approaches, have sought to identify patterns of everyday life representation, self-presentation strategies, social interactions, and the mechanisms of content virality on Twitter. This includes not only user-driven content but also institutional media strategies: broader research underscores how media—particularly during crises—employs political narratives to shape public perception, using framing techniques that determine how events, actors, and institutions are understood in relation to legitimacy, competence, or threat (Kharazmi & Mohammadi, 2020).

Marwick and boyd (2010) introduced the concept of *context collapse*, demonstrating that users, when confronted with heterogeneous audiences on Twitter, adopt strategic self-presentation tactics. In addressing the *imagined audience*, they create multifaceted self-images by blending informal tones with cautious expression. Similarly, Papacharissi (2012), through a discourse analysis of tweets, argued that everyday narratives function as tools for self-storytelling and are integral to performing digital identities.

Humphreys, Gill, and Krishnamurthy (2014) showed that users tend to share non-sensitive yet personal information about themselves, thereby recreating traditional social interactions in online environments. Dayter (2015) introduced the concept of *small stories*, referring to everyday tweets as a series of fragmented narratives that collectively construct a semantic network for representing digital identity. These acts of digital storytelling also point to the growing need for AI literacy—understood not just as technical competence, but as a multidimensional set of civic, ethical, and reflective capacities for navigating platform environments. Despite growing scholarly attention, the field continues to face challenges related to conceptual clarity, consistent pedagogical models, and inclusive frameworks for evaluating digital engagement (Khodabin et al., 2022).

Miller, Partridge, and Davis (2019), using a grounded theory approach, examined users' informational experiences on Twitter and proposed a model comprising 12 conceptual categories, covering the social, emotional, and

narrative dimensions of digital life. In the same line, Özbaş Anbarlı (2021), employing digital ethnography, illustrated how users creatively shape the rhythm of everyday life on Twitter, forming an *imagined community* based on shared thoughts and experiences. These dynamics reflect a deeper pedagogical challenge in algorithmic societies: digital participation increasingly demands the ability to critically interpret AI-generated content, recognize bias, and engage ethically with opaque platform systems. Recent scholarship has argued for the redefinition of media literacy frameworks to center algorithmic awareness and ethical responsibility as core components of digital citizenship (Khodabin, Sharifi Poor Bgheshmi, & Movahedzadeh, 2024).

Regarding the mechanisms of content virality, Berger and Milkman (2012) highlighted the critical role of emotionally arousing content—especially high-intensity positive emotions—in driving content sharing. Their findings indicated that content eliciting emotions such as awe, admiration, or anger is more likely to go viral than neutral or sad content.

Segev (2023) emphasized the importance of language and tone, demonstrating that a positive tone and generalizable content increase the likelihood of reposts, whereas highly personal content with negative emotional tones tends to attract more direct reactions. Similarly, Toraman, Şahinuç, Yilmaz, and Akkaya (2022), through the analysis of millions of tweets, found that textual features play a more significant role than network features in engaging users.

Mahdikhani (2022), examining tweets during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealed that tweets containing strong emotions—whether positive or negative—were more popular than purely informational content, confirming the crucial role of emotions in content visibility. Furthermore, Sangiorgio et al. (2025) found that viral content typically has short-term effects unless accompanied by gradual growth and sustained user engagement.

Overall, this body of research suggests that everyday life on Twitter results from a complex interaction between the individual, the platform, and the digital community, rather than being a purely spontaneous activity. Therefore, analyzing tweets that have received significant attention—such as those with more than 1,000 likes—can provide deeper insights into the semantic, narrative, and emotional patterns of digital life on this platform.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of *everyday life*, rooted in the critical tradition of sociology—particularly in the works of Henri Lefebvre (2010)—has recently been applied to the analysis of digital spaces as well. Within this framework, everyday life on platforms such as Twitter is understood as a space that is continually reproduced and repeated, where user actions are shaped by capital, algorithms, and power structures (Özbaş Anbarlı, 2021, pp. 40–45). Lefebvre distinguishes between two levels: *lived experience* and *living*. The first concerns individual, day-to-day experiences, while the second involves the structural framework that makes these experiences possible and meaningful (Fuchs, 2022, p. 133). Applied to platforms like Twitter, this distinction highlights how users reproduce their lived experiences within dominant structures through self-representation and storytelling. From Lefebvre's perspective, everyday communication serves as a dialectical mediator between the individual and social structures. In the digital space, users engage in social actions through language, narrative, tone, and interactive responses, which contribute to the reconstruction of their identities and positions within the digital order (Fuchs, 2022, p. 134).

Lefebvre also views language not merely as a tool for conveying meaning but as the "collective labor of society," a fundamentally social practice formed, stabilized, and reproduced through human interaction (Lefebvre, 2010, as cited in Fuchs, 2022, p. 257). From this perspective, the everyday use of language, tone, and humor on Twitter functions not only as a means of communication but also as a representational and identity-forming practice. This view reinforces the need for users to develop continuous interpretive awareness as they engage with algorithmically structured platforms. Recent studies emphasize that meaningful participation in digitally mediated environments—whether social or institutional—requires evolving literacy, ongoing education, and ethical sensitivity to platform design and data flows (Hosseini et al., 2021).

Moreover, Lefebvre criticizes what he calls the *ideology of information* and introduces the concept of the *myth of freedom*, arguing that in digital capitalism, users' freedom of participation is largely illusory. Participation is constrained within pre-defined, restrictive frameworks (Fuchs, 2022, pp. 147–148). He contends that just as traditional capitalism colonized physical territories, digital capitalism now colonizes everyday life through algorithms and mechanisms of cultural consumption (Fuchs, 2022, p. 126). These algorithmic mechanisms increasingly rely on AI-driven personalization, which mines mundane interactions for data while obscuring their commodification under the guise of user convenience (Toosi et al., 2024).

In summary, everyday life on Twitter can be seen as a repetitive series of seemingly insignificant actions that continually reproduce broader structures of power and platform governance. As Lefebvre famously wrote: *"Everyday life consists of repetitions without signs and is similarly repeated"* (Özbaş Anbarlı, 2021, p. 40).

According to Michel de Certeau's *Theory of Everyday Life*, tactics stand in opposition to strategies: strategies are the language of power, while tactics represent the ingenuity of ordinary people. In this view, micro-level daily actions—such as language use, humor, and modes of engagement on platforms like Twitter—serve as tactical practices that challenge dominant power structures (de Certeau, 1984, as cited in Özbaş Anbarlı, 2021, p. 42).

Erving Goffman's theory of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) offers a dramaturgical framework for analyzing social actions, in which human interactions are likened to stage performances. Goffman argues that, just as actors perform roles to influence their audiences, social media users also attempt to present specific and purposeful images of themselves to their audiences (White, 2016, p. 6). This performance operates on two levels: the *front stage*, where formal, planned, and audience-oriented actions occur, and the *backstage*, characterized by more casual, private, and less controlled behaviors (White, 2016, p. 2). Twitter users similarly navigate between these two realms, switching between formal and informal tones, public and private narratives, and strategic and spontaneous performances to present complex self-representations.

Goffman also introduced the concept of the *performance team*—a group of individuals who collectively work to present a shared social role (Goffman, 1959, as cited in White, 2016, p. 10). This is particularly evident on Twitter in collective or organizational accounts, where multiple users collaborate to maintain a unified identity.

The digital environment further facilitates the management of users' projected images. Users can edit, schedule, or delete content and consciously perform before the *imagined audience*—an audience that does not physically exist but is ever-present in the user's mind. Marwick and boyd (2010), drawing on Goffman, emphasized that Twitter users, when faced with uncertain and heterogeneous audiences, strategically adjust their self-representation based on assumptions about their audience's composition. They aim to strike a balance between personal authenticity and social acceptance by employing strategies such as content curation, tone moderation, and narrative control (Marwick & boyd, 2010, pp. 118–124).

In conclusion, classical theories—such as those of Lefebvre, de Certeau, and Goffman—along with contemporary analyses by scholars like White and Marwick & boyd, provide a multilayered conceptual foundation for analyzing representations of everyday life on Twitter. From Lefebvre's view, everyday life on Twitter consists of repetitive actions that, while seemingly insignificant, are shaped by digital capitalism and algorithmic governance. This duality mirrors systemic governance failures—where fragmented oversight and ambiguous norms simultaneously enable platform control and create spaces for user subversion (Taheri et al., 2022). In contrast, de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics reveals how users, through creative uses of language, humor, and narrative, engage in tactical and sometimes resistant acts within the very structures that constrain them. Finally, Goffman's dramaturgical model helps us understand user performances on Twitter as staged acts, where individuals manage their self-image by navigating between *front stage* and *backstage* behaviors, all

while responding to the imagined audience. Within this framework, Twitter emerges not merely as a medium for information sharing or entertainment, but as a multifaceted space for storytelling, social control, and digital identity representation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed content analysis approach, combining qualitative content analysis and descriptive quantitative content analysis to investigate how everyday life is represented in Persian-language Twitter. Such an approach enables the researcher to both identify semantic patterns within the texts and examine the frequency of key concepts.

Qualitative content analysis, as a systematic yet flexible method, facilitates the extraction of concepts, patterns, and semantic structures from textual data. This method is particularly suitable when understanding content requires the interpretation of social or cultural contexts—an approach commonly applied in social media studies (Schreier, 2012, pp. 8, 29). In this research, the inductive qualitative content analysis framework proposed by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) was adopted, comprising the stages of preparation, organization, and abstraction.

During the preparation phase, tweets that received more than 1,000 likes between March 18 and April 7 were selected as units of analysis. The texts of the tweets were read multiple times to develop a holistic and intuitive understanding of their semantic landscape (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109).

In parallel with qualitative analysis, quantitative content analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of recurring themes within the selected tweets.

1- Population and Sample

The statistical population of this study consists of Persian-speaking Twitter users who posted content related to everyday life experiences. The sampling method was purposive and criterion-based. The criteria for selecting tweets were as follows:

- Tweets that fall under the category of everyday narratives (including lived experiences, personal memories, and reflections of daily emotions).
- Tweets that received more than 1,000 likes.
- Tweets published within the specified time frame (March 18, 2024, to April 7, 2024).

Data were collected using Twitter's advanced search features, and eligible tweets were manually extracted and stored in an Excel file. The final sample size consisted of 225 tweets.

For each tweet, the following information was recorded: tweet text, publication date, number of likes, retweets, comments, and the username of the account. Additionally, where identifiable, the user's gender was also recorded.

2- Data Analysis Method

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis through open, axial, and selective coding techniques. The analysis process included the following steps:

1. Repeated reading of the data to gain detailed familiarity with the content and to make preliminary notes.

2. Open Coding: Assigning initial thematic labels at the level of sentences or key phrases.

3. Axial Coding: Grouping similar codes into larger conceptual categories.

4. Selective Coding and Final Review: Refining and finalizing categories in relation to the theoretical framework.

The initial coding process was performed manually using Excel tables. Analytical validity was ensured through iterative data review after categorization and by matching the codes with real textual examples from the dataset.

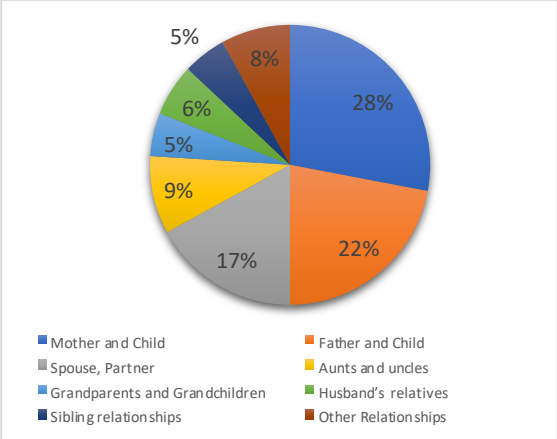
FINDINGS

Analysis of Main Content Themes

Family Relationships

Out of 225 tweets, 101 tweets (44%) were related to themes involving family, familial relationships, or kinship ties. An analysis of the tweets

concerning family relationships revealed that the majority of these tweets (67%) referred to immediate family members (such as parent-child relationships and couples). However, in some cases, references to extended family members (such as maternal uncle's husband, male cousin, etc.) were also observed. More than one tweet related to family relationships was posted by the following accounts: Kargadan Khanom, Nima Naderpanah, Nargileh, Marshmallow, Zhuli Poli, Fatima, Queen Bee, Peshe Khasteh, Dokhtarak, and Madar Pesarha. Among the 88 different accounts responsible for these 101 tweets, 24 accounts belonged to men (27%), 63 accounts to women (72%), and the gender of one account was unspecified. This indicates that women played the most prominent role in narrating family relationships.



Type of Family Relationship

Table 1: Main Contents with Frequency[1]

Main Content	Frequency (Number of Tweets)
Family relationships	101
Humor	86
Occasions	69

Family Relationships: A Central Theme in Nowruz Tweets

Family relationships emerged as one of the most frequently recurring and central themes in the most-viewed Nowruz tweets. In these tweets, users share lived experiences encompassing a wide spectrum—from humorous moments and emotional encounters to generational tensions, familial suffering, and memories of loss. These tweets can be understood as representations of everyday family life in digital spaces.

Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's conception of "everyday life" as a site for the reproduction of power and structures of domination, many of these tweets reflect scenes of intra-family inequalities, gender-based injustices, emotional neglect, and the persistence of unresolved generational conflicts.

Example Tweet (from a thread):

> "Yesterday, I realized from my parents' conversation that deep down they're not really in favor of divorce! I don't know what more my husband can do to me for them to approve it. Still, I felt terrible. Even though I'm not listening to them this time... My dad said, 'Well, I didn't force you,' and now here I am, stuck with a divorce... Maybe if I hadn't separated like that the first time, I wouldn't have ended up with the second one either."

This tweet reflects the lived experience of a woman caught between family tradition and her personal decision to escape a harmful relationship—a symbolic manifestation of the structural suffering Lefebvre refers to as the contradictions of everyday life. In such cases, daily life becomes not a source of comfort, but a stage for deep emotional distress.

From Erving Goffman's perspective, Twitter users are actively managing how others perceive them. These tweets serve as performances in which users present themselves as the "suffering child," the "caring parent," or the "family victim." The use of emotional language, dark humor, and theatrical details contributes to the emotional impact on the audience. These forms of digital self-presentation are shaped not only by platform logics but also by broader cultural ideals surrounding recognition, success, and visibility. Just as appearance-based ideals can fuel anxiety and emotional strain in offline contexts, users in digital spaces often grapple with the psychological toll of meeting implicit social expectations—whether related to beauty, behavior, or belonging (Nosraty, Tomraee, & Zamani, 2020).

Example Tweet:

[1] Some of the tweets included multiple main content themes.

> "I've had an IELTS certificate for 4 years and have taught English for 3 years. I've studied French for 3 years and have taught it for 1. I've been learning German for 1.5 years... and my dad has never been proud of me. Tonight, his friend from Germany called, and he said, 'My daughter's planning to immigrate and speaks three languages.' His friend said, 'Your daughter's a genius!' That's when he finally felt proud."

Here, the user highlights personal achievements juxtaposed against paternal indifference, performing the role of the "unacknowledged successful child" to evoke sympathy, affirmation, or admiration from the Twitter audience.

Michel de Certeau argues that individuals resist structures of power through everyday "tactics." Similarly, in these tweets, users resist inequality, humiliation, or domination through humor, sarcasm, bluntness, and occasionally profanity.

> Example Tweet:
>
> "Uncle-in-law: Why don't you get married, Fatima dear?
> Me: Because the economy is terrible!
>
> Uncle-in-law: I married your aunt when I didn't even have a cart!
>
> Me: That was your time, not now.
>
> Uncle-in-law: That's just an excuse, say you don't want to.
> Me: I don't want to.
>
> Uncle-in-law: 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 😐 "

This tweet is a clear example of de Certeau-style everyday resistance. The narrator finds herself in a traditional, patriarchal dialogue with an older male relative who embodies conventional marital norms. Rather than confronting him aggressively, she subverts his authority through simple, honest, and humorous language.

In contrast, some tweets depict parent-child tensions in a light and fleeting manner, suggesting that not all generational conflicts are tragic. Many intergenerational disagreements in Iranian families manifest as everyday squabbles that are often accompanied by humor.

Example Tweet:

> "Never, ever, EVER drive with your dad. I now need seven therapy sessions."

A portion of the family-related tweets captures joyful, humorous, or ironic moments. Users share these short, funny stories to highlight the amusing and entertaining aspects of family life—from parental jokes to funny mishaps and shared comic situations.

Example Tweet:

> "When you go to your mom or grandma's place, wash those abandoned dishes before you leave. Your single uncle didn't deserve this 😞 Someday when I steal your inheritance, you'll understand, you traitors :)))"

Narratives of loss—whether mourning parents or memories of ill children—represent some of the deepest emotional expressions on Twitter. These tweets are often presented sincerely and poetically, without the use of humor.

Example Tweet:

> "Sadly, cancer defeated my mom and we buried her today... I watched her grow weaker every day for two years and there was nothing I could do... We gave her hope till the last moment, and she fought till the very end... From today on, her absence will always be felt at home, in the family."

In summary, the theme of family relationships in Persian Twitter serves as a platform for expressing generational tensions, inner suffering, and acts of resistance within daily life. Through humorous, direct, or emotional language, users turn Twitter into a stage for performance, expression, and revelation—interpretable through the lenses of Lefebvre, Goffman, and de Certeau.

Humor

Out of the 225 tweets collected during the study period, 86 tweets (38%) were categorized as humorous content. These tweets were published by 79 different Twitter accounts, of which 29 (37%) belonged to men and 50 (63%) to women. The gender of two accounts was indeterminate. Notably, accounts such as *Fatima*, *Queen Bee*, *That place where the sweetheart lives*, *Dokhtarak*, *Shimbeleh*, *Marshmallow*, and *Nima Naderpanah* each posted two humorous tweets.

According to the humor style framework proposed by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003), and further refined by Heintz and Ruch (2015), humor can be classified into four main styles: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. In the present study, the self-enhancing style was the most frequent, accounting for 71 tweets (83%). This was followed by the affiliative style with 12 tweets (14%). The aggressive style appeared in only 3 tweets (3%), and there were no instances of the self-defeating style observed in the dataset (Heintz & Ruch, 2015; Martin et al., 2003).

Table 2: Humor Styles with Frequency

Humor Style	Tweet Example	Frequency
Self-defeating	-	0
Affiliative	We went visiting for Nowruz, and now they're driving us back home in our own car! Even Mourinho couldn't pull off a counterattack like this…	14%
Self-enhancing	Yesterday someone messaged me 'I like you.' I said, 'Where are you?' He said, 'In Tehran but going back to Italy tomorrow.' So he sent voice notes and I texted—just so the sound of our backyard chickens wouldn't be heard in his voice messages.	83%
Aggressive	God bless Tap30! Last night my freeloader cousin who never leaves with his wife had to bail early thanks to Tap30's discount. I propose this be a permanent feature during the holidays—say till 10 PM? Perfect!	3%

Humor in Psychological Literature and Twitter Context

In psychological literature, humor is defined as a multidimensional construct that encompasses behavioral habits, cognitive-perceptual processes, emotional responses, and verbal expressions of laughter (Martin, 2007, as cited in Menéndez-Aller, Postigo, Montes-Álvarez, González-Primo, & García-Cueto, 2019, p. 40). Given the complexity of this concept, Martin et al. (2003) suggest that humor should be classified based on *how it is used*, rather than merely on the nature of its content. Similarly, Heintz and Ruch (2015) proposed a two-dimensional model in which two humor styles—affiliative and self-enhancing—are associated with positive outcomes, while aggressive and self-defeating styles are linked to negative consequences.

From a qualitative perspective, each humor style on Twitter reflects a distinct form of social action. Self-enhancing humor enables users to endure difficult situations by adopting a humorous outlook on themselves—an analysis aligned with de Certeau's (1984) theory of micro-resistances in everyday life (as cited in Özbaş Anbarlı, 2021, p. 42). Affiliative humor fosters relationship-building and a sense of intimacy in digital storytelling, positioning the user as a communal narrator. Aggressive humor, in contrast, serves as a subtle means for criticism and sarcasm, often targeting individuals or social norms. Although self-defeating humor was absent from the sample in this study, it is widely recognized in psychological literature as a tactic for masking vulnerability and seeking social support (Heintz & Ruch, 2015, p. 612).

According to Martin and Ford (2018), humor is a form of incongruent communication that elicits laughter through techniques such as irony, metaphor, exaggeration, and body language (as cited in Koivukoski, Laaksonen, Zareff, & Knuutila, 2025, p. 76). On Twitter, these humor styles serve not only as entertainment, but also play a vital role in emotional expression, empathy-building, portraying contradictions in daily life, and facilitating social critique. This highlights that digital expression—even in its humorous forms—can carry real psychological and social weight. In such contexts, media literacy becomes essential not only for critical reflection but also for personal safety, helping individuals navigate algorithmic pressures and resist normalizations of risk or harm (Soroori Sarabi, Arsalani, & Toosi, 2020).

Occasions

The period analyzed in this study coincided with the overlap of two major events in Iranian-Islamic culture: Nowruz and the holy month of Ramadan. This convergence created a unique set of everyday conditions for users, which were reflected in their tweets.

In total, 69 tweets addressed these cultural occasions, comprising 31% of the dataset. Over 90% of these tweets were related to Nowruz, while only about 9% referred to the month of Ramadan.

These tweets were posted by 61 different accounts: 37 (61%) belonged to women, 22 (36%) to men, and 2 accounts had unidentified gender.

Table 3: Types of Occasions with Frequency

Occasion Type	Tweet Example	Frequency	Total Frequency
Nowruz	Visiting relatives and Nowruz gatherings	25	63 (91%)
	Travel and outings	13	
	Nowruz customs (gifts, Haft-Sin table, New Year's moment)	20	
	Chaharshanbe Suri and Sizdah Bedar	5	
Ramadan	Laylat al-Qadr	3	6 (9%)
	Fasting and Iftar	1	
	Eid al-Fitr	2	

Social Critique and Everyday Resistance on Twitter

One of the most recurring themes in the tweets was criticism of various social issues, including family problems, economic hardship, inappropriate social behaviors, and cultural or religious matters. These critical expressions are not merely reactive; they demonstrate the users' ability to interpret, reframe, and push back against dominant cultural narratives. This interpretive agency reflects what media literacy scholars describe as essential to empowered digital participation—especially among socially or technologically marginalized groups, who benefit from inclusive, adaptive learning models that foster engagement and autonomy in algorithmically structured environments (Sakhaei, Soroori Sarabi, & Alinouri, 2024). Many of these tweets approach critique through humor or straightforward language, while others convey more intense anger and dissatisfaction. These tweets reflect users' concerns, tensions, and everyday experiences within the socio-cultural fabric of Iran, particularly during national holidays and festive occasions. These critiques echo a broader concern that inefficient laws—lacking clear legislative grounding—undermine compliance and require principled reform to regain their preventive power (Aghigh, Salehi, & Barkhordari, 2022). Examples include generational and value conflicts, Nowruz customs, verbal and sexual harassment, child abuse, offensive jokes, and critiques of superstition or religious judgment.

Sample Tweet:

> "One of my pregnant patients went on a trip despite having spotting. Now she messaged me that she's bleeding heavily. I asked why she went, and she said: 'Well, I did an estekhareh (a religious divination) and it came out good.'"

This tweet, using a humorous and critical tone, highlights the conflict between traditional beliefs such as *estekhareh* and scientific medical advice. The user, presenting herself as a professional, not only conveys a rational self-image but also critiques common societal behaviors. From Goffman's perspective, this tweet serves as a form of *social performance* aimed at eliciting empathy from the audience.

Sample Tweet:

> "A grown man, a friend of my dad's who we're not even that close with, called last night and said he, his wife, and kids are coming over for Sizdah Bedar. The poor folks in my house went shopping and cleaned until 2 a.m. This morning, he calls to say it was an April Fools' joke. How lame can you be, man? 😔 "

This tweet humorously criticizes an inappropriate joke on *Sizdah Bedar*, showing how such jokes can be hurtful. The user portrays herself as the victim of this prank, inviting the audience to evaluate the appropriateness of the behavior. The narrative functions both as a presentation of the self and a reflection on the cultural function of April Fools' Day, aligning with theories of performance and social critique.

Theoretical Interpretation of Findings: Everyday Life Framework

The findings of this study suggest that Persian Twitter users during Nowruz and Ramadan engaged in digital everyday practices through storytelling about family life, humor, and festive events—practices that align closely with the study's theoretical framework.

From Henri Lefebvre's perspective, *everyday life* is not merely a domain of trivial events but a site of reproducing social order and domination. This view echoes broader concerns in technologically evolving systems, where new forms of power and governance emerge alongside promises of innovation. Studies have shown that even in highly professionalized fields, such as

healthcare, practitioners remain cautious about the ethical and structural risks posed by AI—pointing to persistent gaps in infrastructure, transparency, and institutional preparedness (Tomraee, Hosseini, & Toosi, 2022). Tweets about family relationships—ranging from minor grievances to expressions of unequal power structures (such as opposition to divorce)—demonstrate how domination is reproduced in often-invisible, intimate settings. Critical narratives about parental behavior or imposed familial restrictions exemplify this Lefebvrian analysis.

In Michel de Certeau's framework, users employ humor as an everyday *tactic* to resist both micro and macro-level structures. Tweets in the self-enhancing or affiliative humor styles illustrate users' creative "reappropriation" of social space—moving beyond constraints of daily life by retelling personal experiences in their own voice.

From the perspective of Erving Goffman and his notion of *role performance*, it is evident that Twitter users perform specific roles for an imagined audience. These performances are increasingly shaped by AI-driven adaptive systems that curate visibility based on predictive engagement patterns (Rahmatian & Sharajsharifi, 2022). Whether through formal, tragic tweets or casual, humorous ones, users manage their narratives to evoke empathy or recognition. This aligns with Goffman's concept of *impression management*. Similar tensions have been observed in other algorithmically mediated environments, where individuals must balance the efficiencies promised by AI with concerns about autonomy, ethical judgment, and systemic opacity. These dynamics highlight the growing importance of critical literacy and preparedness for navigating digital platforms that shape both personal expression and decision-making authority (Tomraee, Toosi, & Arsalani, 2024).

Additionally, Marwick and boyd's (2011) concept of the *imagined audience* is highly relevant here. Aware of their diverse followers, users curate their language, tone, and content to be intelligible and emotionally resonant to a wide audience. These curated performances mirror broader challenges seen in algorithmic environments, where the promise of intelligent systems must be weighed against concerns about ethical governance, interoperability, and public trust—especially in domains where algorithmic decisions can have real-world consequences (Sakhaei et al., 2024).

In sum, Twitter is not merely a neutral platform for sharing everyday content. It is a dynamic social arena of power relations, role enactments, and tactical expressions—used for communication, resistance, and emotional connection. This interplay between empowerment and constraint reflects a broader pattern in digital systems, where technologies offer new forms of participation while introducing structural risks—underscoring the importance of contextual awareness and institutional adaptation (Soroori Sarabi, Zamani, & Ranjbar, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze how everyday life is represented on Persian Twitter during Nowruz and Ramadan. It revealed that during this period, users primarily focused on narrating family experiences, engaging with Nowruz-related traditions, and producing humorous content. The data show that these everyday narratives are not merely reflections of personal experience but also serve as vital tools for identity expression, emotional relief, and social critique in digital spaces.

From a gender perspective, female users were significantly more active than male users in constructing narratives on Twitter. This may reflect a greater tendency among women to express emotions, relationships, and lived experiences in public or semi-public digital environments. Such patterns of expressive engagement may also reflect deeper educational and cultural dynamics, as recent research suggests that investment in individual learning contributes to greater media literacy, emotional intelligence, and socially responsible behavior—factors that shape how users navigate complex digital spaces (Zamani, Hosseini, & Rahmatian, 2024).

Humor also played a prominent role as a key tool in the representation of everyday life. Among the various humor styles, affiliative and self-enhancing were the most frequently observed. These styles, especially in emotionally complex or stressful situations, served both psychological and

social functions. The findings suggest that on Persian Twitter, humor is not merely a means of entertainment, but also a tactical mechanism for coping with structural and personal pressures—a notion closely aligned with Michel de Certeau's theory of everyday resistance.

Theoretically, the analysis demonstrates that Twitter serves as a space for representing everyday life within the broader framework of digital capitalism and power structures. This tendency aligns with broader dynamics in Iranian digital culture, where users generally embrace technological change but remain alert to ethical dilemmas and institutional shortcomings in digital infrastructures (Rahmatian & Sharajsharifi, 2021). Recent research also emphasizes that meaningful digital transformation in Iran is shaped by both institutional capacity and individual AI literacy, with younger users and digital-native spaces showing greater adaptability—yet all still navigating infrastructural limits, regulatory opacity, and uneven access to innovation (Khodabin, Zibaei, & Piriyaei, 2023). Through the use of language, tone, and narrative techniques, users actively reconstruct their identities and interact with their imagined audiences. In this process, the conceptual frameworks of Henri Lefebvre (on repetitive everyday practices and the ideology of information), Erving Goffman (on self-presentation), and Michel de Certeau (on micro-tactics of resistance) provide valuable interpretive tools for understanding these dynamics.

Social critique also emerged as a prominent part of users' lived experiences during Nowruz. Whether through humor, sarcasm, or direct narratives, tweets reflected users' efforts to confront and reassess the cultural and social realities around them. These findings reveal that cultural and religious occasions are not only times of joy and celebration, but also serve as platforms for reflection and critique.

Ultimately, this study highlights the potential of analyzing high-engagement content on social media to better understand the cultural, gendered, and psychological dynamics of society. Future research is encouraged to compare different types of occasions—national, religious, celebratory, or mournful—and examine their impact on users' narrative styles, emotional expressions, and social interactions in digital environments.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of Interest declared by the author.

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