# Analysis Of The Opinions Of Celebrities About The Gaza Disaster On Social Networks (Facebook)

Faezeh Farhoodi1

## Abstract

**Introduction:**

The objective of the research was to uncover the perspectives of influential figures regarding the Gaza catastrophe on Facebook. Following the Al-Aqsa Storm, virtual spaces worldwide reacted to this catastrophic event, and Persian-language social media similarly displayed diverse Iranian responses to the news of the Gaza war. What most captured public attention on social networks were the divergent reactions of prominent figures to the Gaza catastrophe, to the extent that its global reverberations dominated international news programs and prompted repeated global calls for a ceasefire. It also drew attention from renowned personalities. The impact of posts and messages by influential figures on individuals' personal and social lives can be examined from various angles. They can create positive effects or, through negative and destructive influences, foster an unhealthy environment in society. Given the escalating significance of the Gaza catastrophe, its international dimensions, and its reflection across all news networks and social media-which has elicited varied reactions from influential figures-the primary research question is: What are the perspectives of influential figures regarding the Gaza catastrophe on social media (Facebook) during the period from 01/08/1402 to 01/02/1403? The secondary research questions are as follows:

- What is the approach of influential figures toward crimes against Gaza?
- What are the main themes and content of influential figures' posts regarding crimes against Gaza?
- What are the primary objectives of influential figures in publishing posts about crimes against Gaza?

1 assistant professor, Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Media, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran.　　　　　　　E-mail: f f.farhudi@urd.ac.ir

**Methodology**:

This applied research employed quantitative content analysis to analyze posts by influential figures. The study population comprised Facebook pages of influential figures in sports, arts, and politics. Sampling was conducted through non-random purposive methods. The unit of analysis was individual Facebook posts. Posts from 42 influential figures were selected as the statistical sample, totaling 126 Facebook posts related to the Gaza catastrophe during the specified period (01/08/1402–01/02/1403). Selection criteria included their fame and social influence on media and social networks, measured by follower counts, engagement metrics (likes/comments), and their consistent, interactive presence across media platforms. These figures have large followings, indicating their societal influence. A key characteristic was their tendency to act as the "voice of society" during crises (e.g., natural disasters, wars, and especially the Gaza catastrophe), sharing their views. These traits made their posts suitable sources for analyzing their attitudes toward critical social issues like the Gaza                                                                                    catastrophe.
Three-stage coding was conducted for content analysis. After reviewing posts, core concepts were extracted. Similar concepts were grouped, and organized categories (representing research questions) were assigned. To enhance clarity, these categories were further classified into broader themes (sub-questions). The categories related to approaches, objectives, and content themes were quantitatively analyzed for frequency during the study period.

**Results and discussion:**

The most prevalent approach among influential figures regarding Israeli crimes in Gaza was "support and defense of oppressed Palestinians during the Gaza catastrophe" (80%)**,** followed by "belief in Palestinian victory and the necessity of ending genocide" (59%)**.** This indicates that these figures-across political, sports, and artistic domains-unanimously defended Palestinians and vehemently opposed Israel's "savage genocide" in the region. Consequently, they actively encouraged their Facebook followers to support                                                                                                Palestinians.
The most frequent content themes were **"**condemnation of the massacre in Gaza, particularly the attack on Al-Ahli Hospital and its children" (88%) and "support and defense of oppressed Palestinians" (81%)**.** This suggests that during the study period, the dominant focus of posts was condemning Israeli crimes, especially child killings, followed by advocacy for Palestinians. The primary objectives of these posts were **"**supporting Palestinian children

amid the Gaza atrocities" (84%) and "denouncing war and oppression" (75%).

**Conclusion:**

This study aimed to analyze the perspectives of influential figures regarding the Gaza catastrophe on Facebook from 01/08/1402 to 01/02/1403. Governments, world leaders, and regional/international institutions unanimously condemned Israel's unprecedented assault on Gaza. Additionally, artists, athletes, actors, and other global figures expressed diverse reactions supporting Gaza's oppressed population and condemning Israeli crimes. 42 influential figures from arts, sports, and politics were purposively selected, and their posts were analyzed. Their views were categorized into approaches, themes, and objectives. Overall, the findings indicate that support for Palestinians was not limited to Iran but extended globally, countering Israeli media tactics to distort narratives and manipulate public opinion. Public sentiment, celebrities, governments, news agencies, and virtual social networks overwhelmingly supported Palestine and condemned Israeli crimes.

The results align with studies by Sadeghinia, Sabbar, and Shahghasemi (2023); Mardaneh, Mirmehdi, and Yarahmadi (2023); Ismaili, Heydarabadi, and Pahlavan (2022); Abbasi and Jafari (2020)-all affirming the undeniable influence of celebrities on followers' lifestyles and behaviors. This study further highlights the global resonance of influential figures' perspectives on Gaza, steering public opinion toward supporting Palestinians. The findings also correspond with Farrokhi and Samanon's (2022) research, which exposed Israeli media's use of censorship, fake news, and misrepresentation to vilify Qasem Soleimani internationally. Similarly, this study underscores Israel's analogous media strategies during the Gaza war. Monfared and Tabatabai (2020) emphasized Israel's hostile, militarized, and illegal actions in Gaza, violating international law and human rights-a conclusion mirrored here. Fayyazi, Taghavipour, and Salavatian's (2015) findings on Israel's misleading media policies to justify attacks on Palestine also align with this study's results.

**Keywords:** War in the Middle East, views, Celebrities, Gaza, Facebook

# References

Abbasi, A., & Jafari, A. (2020). The impact of Instagram activities of celebrities on the lifestyle of Iranian users. *Communication Research Quarterly, 27*(1), 33–54. (In Persian)

Asre Iran. (2023, May 20). Reactions of Iranian artists and figures to the Gaza hospital crime. *Asr Iran Newspaper*. Retrieved from https://www.asriran.com/fa/news (20 May 2024) (In Persian)

Asseburg, Muriel, & Wildangel, René. (2023). Five scenarios for Gaza and the role of the international community. *Center for Futures Studies of the Islamic World*. (In Persian). https://iiwfs.com    (14 Aug 2024)

Bashir, H. (2016). *Discursive Diplomacy: The Interaction of Politics, Culture, and Communication*. Tehran: Imam Sadiq University. (In Persian)

Blumer, H., Katz, E., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). *The Use of Mass Communication by the Individual*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Cashmore, A. (2016). *Celebrity culture.* Translated by E. Shahghassemi. Tehran: Cultural, Artistic, and Communication Research Institute. (In Persian)

Deller, R. (2016). Star Image, Celebrity Reality Television and the Fame Cycle. Selebrity Studies, 7(3), 373-389.

Esmaeili, M. J., Heidarabadi, A., & Pahlevan, M. (2022). The acceptability of celebrities in political participation from the perspective of social media audiences. *Iranian Political Sociology Monthly*, 5(10), 1196–1209. (In Persian)

Farrokhi, M., & Semnon, M. M. (2022). The Israeli regime's media diplomacy toward Iran regarding the martyrdom of Haj Qassem Soleimani. *Basij Strategic Studies Quarterly, 25*(96), 5–40. (In Persian)

Feyazi, M. R., Taghavipour, M. R., & Salavatian, S. (2015). Analysis of BBC Persian's objective journalism in the realm of narratives: A case study of the 50-day Gaza War. *Global Media Journal, 10*(1), 89–106. (In Persian)

Hajilou, M. H., & Rezaei Panah, A. (2013). An analysis of the role of Israeli media in the reproduction of Zionist racist ideology. *Strategic Policy Research Quarterly, 2*(5), 163–196. (In Persian)

Heidari Someh, A., & Ghanbari, A. (2023, May 21). The influential role of celebrities in guiding public opinion in virtual media. Paper presented at the 6th International Conference on Management, Humanities, and Behavioral Sciences in Iran and the Islamic World, Tehran, Iran. Center for Creativity Development and Innovation in Modern Sciences (Municipalities Cooperation Organization, Applied Science University). (In Persian)

Kanagarajoo, M. (2018). A framework for Social Media use in Project Management, This Thesis is Posted at Research Online, https: //ro.ecu.edu.au/theses

Maharati, Y., & Entezarian, N. (2022). Introduction and evaluation of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory. *Innovation Ecosystem, 3*(3), 13–34. (In Persian)

Mardaneh, S., Mirmahdi, M., & Yarahmadi, F. (2023). Examining the impact of social media celebrities and parasocial relationships with them on followers' purchase intention. *Media Management Studies, 2*(1), 86–109. (In Persian)

Mehdizadeh, M. (2017). *Media theories: Common perspectives and critical approaches* (6th ed.). Hamshahri. (In Persian)

Moghavemi, A., & Koushki, M. (2022). Political-security opportunities and challenges of the Zionist regime in the Yemen crisis (2011-2022). *Holy Defense and Contemporary Battles Studies, 4*(6), 201–232. (In Persian)

Monfared, M., & Tabatabaei, S. A. (2020). The legal regime applicable to Israel's targeted killing policy in the Palestinian territory. *Public Law Studies Quarterly, 50*(2), 617–636. (In Persian)

Pakzad, A., Razavinejad, N., & Kolahi, M. R. (2023). *Perception of Tehran residents about celebrities in the era of virtual media*. New Media Studies, *9*(35), 77–123. (In Persian)

Rashidi, S., & Sabournejad, Z. (2016). Cinema stars and online identity: A semiotic study of the reconstruction of stardom after the internet. *New Media Studies, 1*(3). (In Persian)

Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of Innovations (5th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Rubin, A., (1993). "Audience Activity and Media Use", Communication Monographs, 60( 1): 98- 105.

Sadeghinia, A., Sabbar, S., & Shahghassemi, E. (2023). The role of media in celebrities' societal influence in Iran: An expert perspective with a proposed model for media management of cultural and social impacts of celebrities. *Country Studies, 1*(1), 161–183. (In Persian)

Soleimani, Z., & Salehi, A. M. (2021). The role of the Zionist regime in the Yemen crisis and media imperatives. *International Media Research Journal, 6*(2), 33–55. (In Persian)

Taha, Amira Mohamed; Mahmoud, Hussam; Nada, Sarah A. and Abuzerr, Samer (2024). "Controlling the Alarming Rise in Infectious Diseases among Children Younger than 5 Years in Gaza during the War." The Lancet Infectious Diseases 24 (4): 211 https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(24)00067-7

Windahl, S., et al. (1997). *Using communication theory* (A. Dehghan, Trans.). Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publications Company. (In Persian)