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Analyzing Government Communication Strategies: The Jordanian Ministry of Government Communication as a Model

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to examine the key characteristics of government communication in Jordan by analyzing tweets on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

Methods: Drawing on agenda-setting theory, this study used quantitative content analysis to examine 507 tweets published between November 2022 and December 2023 on the X account of the Ministry of Government Communication in Jordan.

Results: The findings indicate that the Jordanian government engaged in regular daily tweeting, mainly in Arabic, with a notable increase in activity during the initial four months following the launch of the Ministry of Government Communication's X account. The Ministry was responsible for over half of the governmental tweets, which primarily focused on local events and the Gaza conflict. Most topics were addressed in a single tweet, primarily aimed at informing the public. Multimedia elements, particularly photos, often accompanied tweets, while videos were less common.

Conclusion: A significant disparity was identified in public engagement levels with Ministry tweets compared to tweets from other sources. There was insufficient emphasis on other digital strategies, such as reposting and tagging. Additionally, a notable shift in communication priorities was observed before and after October 2023. The study also discusses its implications and limitations.

Keywords: Governmental communication, agenda setting, Twitter, Jordan, public engagement, digital communication.

تحليل استراتيجيات الاتصال الحكومي: وزارة الاتصال الحكومي الأردنيَّة نموذجًا

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ملخّص

الأهداف: تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة الخصائص الرئيسية للاتصال الحكومي في الأردن من خلال تحليل التغريدات على منصة التواصل الاجتماعي X (تويتر سابقًا) لوزارة الاتصال الحكومي.

المنهجية: استنادًا إلى نظرية ترتيب الأجندة، استخدمت هذه الدراسة تحليل المحتوى الكمي لتحليل 507 تغريدة، نُشرت من نوفمبر 2022 إلى ديسمبر 2023 على حساب تويتر الخاص بوزارة الاتصال الحكومي في الأردن.

النتائج: تشير النتائج إلى أن الحكومة الأردنية انخرطت في التغريد بشكل يومي منتظم، باللغة العربية بشكل أساسي، مع زيادة ملحوظة في النشاط خلال الأشهر الأربعة الأولى التي أعقبت إطلاق حساب X التابع لوزارة الاتصال الحكومي. كانت وزارة الاتصال الحكومي مسؤولة عن أكثر من نصف التغريدات الحكومية، وركزت التغريدات بشكل أساسي على الأحداث المحلية والصراع في غزة. تمت معالجة معظم الموضوعات بتغريدة واحدة، بهدف إعلام الجمهور في المقام الأول. غالبًا ما كانت عناصر الوسائط المتعددة، وخاصة الصور، مصحوبة بالتغريدات، بينما كانت مقاطع الفيديو أقل شيوعًا.

الخلاصة: تم تحديد تباين كبير في مستويات المشاركة العامة والفاعل مع تغريدات الوزارة مقارنة بالتغريدات من مصادر أخرى. ولم يكن هناك تركيز كافٍ على الاستراتيجيات الرقمية الأخرى المتبعة في التواصل، مثل إعادة النشر والوسم. ولوحظ تحول ملحوظ في أولويات الاتصال قبل وبعد أكتوبر 2023. كما تمت مناقشة الآثار والقيود المترتبة على الدراسة في الخاتمه.

الكلمات الدالة: الاتصال الحكومي، ترتيب الأجندة، تويتر، الأردن، المشاركة العامة، الاتصال الرقمي

Introduction

The evolution of government communication, beginning with its inception in the 1970s until the current day, reflects a transition from mere information dissemination to an approach that fosters dynamic dialogue between the public and government. Initially, government communication predominantly relied on traditional channels, such as press conferences and conventional media outlets, to inform citizens about policies and decisions. However, as societal dynamics evolved, particularly with the advent of digital technologies, the paradigm of government communication underwent a significant shift (Tahat et al., 2024; Radwan & Mousa, 2020). In the 1980s, a recognition of the importance of engaging citizens in "mutual dialogue" over governmental affairs emerged, marking a pivotal shift in the primary function of government communication from one-way communication to reciprocal interaction with the public that actively involved citizens in decision-making processes (Alhanatleh et al., 2023). This evolution has culminated in the adoption of an advanced philosophy known as "mutual dialogue," as articulated by Ayesh et al. (2020). This stage of governmental communication emphasizes the significance of negotiation and interaction facilitated by modern digital communication tools and platforms. These tools include various online platforms and social networks that enable government entities to engage directly with the public, fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance processes.

Digital communication is a cornerstone of good governance globally, as highlighted by Ayesh and Radwan (2019). Indeed, it constitutes a vital component of smart government initiatives by prioritizing the delivery of accurate, transparent, and reliable information to target audiences regarding government policies, services, activities, initiatives, and decisions. In essence, digital government communication serves as a conduit for enhancing public trust, fostering civic participation, and, ultimately, advancing the principles of democratic governance. Institutions, government agencies, employees, and officials engage in extensive communication with individuals and groups who interact with public authorities (Kjellgren, 2002). This communication landscape has undergone substantial transformations in recent years, primarily due to technological advancements and the rise of digital communication platforms (Jwaniat et al., 2023). These new digital tools have generated unprecedented opportunities for enhancing dialogue and direct engagement with the government (Roys, 2009).

There has been a conspicuous surge in governmental interest in leveraging digital communication channels to enhance engagement between governmental institutions and citizens (Ayesh and Radwan, 2019). Effective communication has become increasingly paramount in the governmental sector, serving as a cornerstone of quality service (Roys, 2009). Moreover, communication also plays a role in bolstering societal trust in state institutions, particularly in the current moment, when general trust in governments has eroded globally (Keele, 2007). Existing research suggests that people's satisfaction with the government's dissemination of information significantly influences their confidence in governmental performance (Kleinnijenhuis and van Hoof, 2006). Therefore, enhancing the effectiveness of government communication is pivotal in fostering public trust and satisfaction. Many countries have developed comprehensive policies and strategies outlining the objectives and mechanisms of government communication. Foremost among these objectives is ensuring that citizens receive accurate and transparent information regarding their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities related to access to information about governmental activities. Additionally, these policies emphasize the importance of encouraging public participation in the formulation of the policies, procedures, and services provided by the government (Roys, 2009).

Numerous government communication agencies have formulated policies intended to uphold the principles deemed essential for effective communication. The principle of "openness" entails ensuring that governmental communication is transparent, clear, accessible, and inclusive. The principle of "participation," meanwhile, underscores the importance of soliciting input from citizens and involving them in the formulation of policies and services. Likewise, the principle of "universal access" involves ensuring that pertinent information reaches all concerned individuals. Additionally, the principle of "active communication" emphasizes the timely dissemination of information regarding events, activities, rights, obligations, and opportunities. Lastly, the principle of "cohesion" advocates for comprehensive and coordinated government communication (Roys, 2009). Other policies have emphasized additional principles, such as responsibility, professionalism, innovation, and respect, as well as the provision of explanations, interpretations, and justifications regarding government decisions (Ayesh et al., 2020).

Despite the rising popularity of leveraging digital communication tools for engaging with the public, researchers have identified challenges faced by certain national governments seeking to effectively manage their electronic communication initiatives (Mergel, 2010). These challenges include insufficient financial resources allocated for government communication efforts and a failure to prioritize communication with the public within governmental agendas. Additionally, some governments have demonstrated a preference for traditional, one-way communication channels, such as newspapers, television, and radio. Such conventional approaches limit opportunities for public participation in governmental initiatives, in turn diminishing public confidence in government (Hofmann et al., 2013; Mergel, 2010). Government communication is an extended and old experience with its own characteristics, but some countries in the Middle East, including Jordan, have recently begun to institutionalize government communication by establishing a ministry specialized in government communication in late 2022, accompanied by the launch of its platforms, including Twitter, to achieve the communication policy of the new ministry. The current study therefore focuses on studying the Jordan's general characteristics of its digital government communication strategies via Twitter.

Government communication, as defined by Ayesh et al. (2020), encompasses a range of activities aimed at leveraging information dissemination to popularize government efforts and services; explain government decisions, initiatives, and activities; advocate for governmental priorities; defend national values; and strengthen national identity. Indeed, governments employ various communication channels to reach their target audiences and influence citizen's perceptions and understandings. Thus, governments intentionally use communication as a tool to set the agenda for its citizens regarding its actions, activities, services, and set the priorities, and this suggest to explain briefly the agenda setting theory.

Agenda Setting theory

This study uses agenda-setting theory to understand the characteristics and strategies of government communication in Jordan. The theory focuses on how the media influence the prioritization of issues that the public addresses (Mcombs, 2004). According to this theory, the media not only determine what the public should know, but also contribute to determining how they think about those issues, or in other words, contribute to the "prioritization" of issues and topics in people's minds. (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) They are able to direct the public's attention to certain issues, making these issues seem more important than others. By highlighting certain topics on a continuous and repeated basis, the media can "set the agenda" and bring issues to the forefront of public interest (McCombs,1992). The theory can help understanding how the Jordanian Ministry of Government Communication's Twitter account can contribute to the prioritization of national and regional issues. By repeatedly highlighting certain topics in tweets or official media content, it can also be analyzed whether the government repeats the same messages over and over to draw public attention to certain issues. For example, government tweets may focus heavily on public health issues or national crises to prioritize them.

Government communication in Jordan

The evolution of government communication in Jordan begins with the enactment of the Administrative Organization System of the Ministry of Government Communication No. 65 of 2022 on November 16, 2022, which replaced the Ministry of Information with the newly established Ministry of Government Communication (MGC). The MGC was tasked with supplying essential information pertaining to government and state institutions to various media outlets; crafting media content related to government activities and national events; countering rumors, hate speech, and violations of privacy; projecting a positive image of the kingdom internationally in collaboration with relevant authorities; organizing government media events in cooperation with pertinent entities; disseminating information to the public regarding government policies, plans, programs, directives, and legislative initiatives; and encouraging meaningful dialogue on related matters (Ministry of Government Communication, 2024).

One year following the establishment of the MGC, the Jordanian Government endorsed the General Policy for Media and Government Communication. This policy—developed through national dialogue on the national level involving various stakeholders and experts, such as government bodies, official media institutions, the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate, print

and electronic media outlets, academic institutions, and governmental bodies—is built on eight pillars: (1) communication with the public and media, (2) media legislation, (3) traditional media and social media, (4) political modernization, (5) economic modernization, (6) administrative modernization, (7) reports on media freedoms, and (8) media development (Ministry of Government Communication, 2024).

The Jordanian Government stated that the core mission of the MGC was to address the lack of tools for promoting and disseminating the achievements of the Jordanian state to its populace. The MGC aims to enhance the efficiency of the state's media messaging and better communicate governmental achievements to the public using both digital and traditional media platforms (Jfranwes, 2022). The Jordanian Government also stated that this new ministry will align its actions with the government's roadmap for modernizing the public sector. The government noted that a budget of 1 million dinars ($1.4 million) had been allocated to the MGC (Jordanian News Agency, 2022). In 2023, the MGC organized 50 media events and produced 150 pieces of media content related to government activities and national events. The satisfaction rate with the MGC's performance among employees was 70%. Notable performance indicators included an 80% training and qualification rate among media spokespeople in ministries and government departments. Additionally, the MGC hosted 15 journalists, both Arab and foreign, to acquaint them with the state's achievements (Ammonnews, 2023).

Statement of the problem

Amidst the unprecedented development of communication technologies and the increasing influence of social media platforms, non-mainstream media entities such as activists and influencers have emerged as significant players in shaping public opinion. Concurrently, due to a growing mistrust of government media in Jordan, during times of crises, the country is exposed to a deluge of rumors, impacting the role of the government and its achievements, as well as local and international initiatives. This situation has prompted dissatisfaction among decision-makers in Jordan, who have judged the government's efforts in using official media tools to safeguard Jordan's interests as inadequate. It is within this context that the MGC was established in late 2022, which was followed by the rapid approval of a general policy for media and government communication as part of a concerted effort to address these challenges. Additionally, Jordan has recently witnessed rapid digital growth and a major shift towards the use of the Internet and social media platforms, including Twitter, with the number of Internet users in Jordan reaching 10.7 million with a penetration rate of 92.5% in early 2025, Twitter is considered among the important communication platforms used in Jordan, with about one million users according to data from the Information and Communications Technology Association of Companies for 2024 (AlmamlakaTV, 3 March 2025), and is used as an important tool by officials, decision-makers, and academic, political, media and economic elites. Moreover, reviewing the literature suggest that there is no single study examine the nature of governmental communication in Jordan. The problem statement therefore centers on evaluating the MGC's effectiveness in fulfilling its government communication objectives, with a particular focus on content produced for X (formerly Twitter) over the course of a year.

Study objectives and impact

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the MGC's efficacy in executing its designated communication responsibilities as delineated in its mandate, policies, and operational guidelines. This assessment examines how effectively the MGC has fulfilled its obligations in disseminating information, engaging with stakeholders, and managing communication channels in accordance with established protocols. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide recommendations for enhancing the MGC's effectiveness in fulfilling its government communication objectives. These recommendations, which are based on the study's findings, are intended to offer actionable strategies and best practices for optimizing the MGC's communication processes. These recommendations encompass various interventions, including policy reforms, organizational restructuring, capacity-building initiatives, and strategic communication plan development. By implementing these proposed measures, the MGC can enhance its responsiveness to emerging challenges and strengthen its communication capabilities while fostering transparency, accountability, and public trust in governmental communication.

There is an urgent need for research evaluating the effectiveness of government communication in Jordan, particularly in the context of the recent establishment of the MGC and the scarcity of existing research on government communication in the Jordanian context. Such research also fills a critical gap in the scholarly literature, which currently lacks comprehensive insights into this vital aspect of governance. By generating empirical evidence and scholarly discourse on this subject, this study contributes to the academic understanding of government communication practices in Jordan. Moreover, given the strategic importance of effective communication in promoting government transparency, accountability, and public engagement, research in this area is instrumental in realizing democratic governance principles and strengthening the relationship between the government and its constituents. Through rigorous inquiry and scholarly investigation, this study contributes to advancing knowledge, informing policy discourse, and ultimately fostering more transparent, accountable, and responsive governance practices in Jordan.

Literature review

Government communication strategies play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and enhancing civic engagement, particularly during pandemics and other crises. This literature review synthesizes recent empirical research on government communication strategies across various contexts, focusing on their effectiveness in influencing public opinion, sentiment, and behavior within crisis versus non-crisis context.

In the context of non-crisis government communication, some governments have resorted to transparency strategies of information sharing, promoting dialogue, government blogging, and encouraging public participation in their communication with their citizens. For example, Guo and Wei (2019) conducted an empirical study to assess the effect of Chinese Government communication practices on the public's acceptance of a nuclear power project. Their research, which utilized survey data from three cities, examined two distinct strategies: encouraging public participation and popularizing scientific knowledge. Guo and Wei found that both strategies positively impacted public acceptance; however, encouraging public participation proved to be significantly more effective in the short term than popularizing scientific knowledge. Similarly, Kim and Krishna (2018) explored the relationship between citizens' perceptions of government communication strategies and their sentiments toward the government in the South Korean context. Through online surveys, they identified that a bridging strategy that fosters dialogue and connection was associated with positive sentiment and increased public engagement, while a buffering strategy that aimed to shield the government from criticism was correlated with reduced public engagement and increased cynicism. In The UAE, Darwish (2017) investigated the impact of social media on government communication in the UAE, highlighting the importance of transparency and awareness-raising in fostering positive interactions between government agencies and citizens. Agerdal-Hjermind and Valentini (2015) conducted a longitudinal study in Denmark, revealing that rather than facilitate dialogue or public involvement, government blogging was primarily intended to promote government interests, an approach which the study showed had limited effectiveness.

Meanwhile, in the context of crises (whether political, epidemic, or otherwise), it was found that there is a clear diversity in the strategies used by governments, including: proadcasting videos, Innovative graphics, media campaigns, addressing online rumors, providing accurate information, and daily briefing.

In the context of the Coronavirus outbreak, Yavetz and Aharony (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of the Israeli Government's social media communication strategies, particularly on Facebook. Their analysis of content published by four Israeli Government ministries revealed that primary strategies included informing citizens about policies and crisis guidelines. They also found that videos were more effective than photos and text in generating positive public sentiment.

Shaher and Radwan (2022) investigated Saudi Government communication during the pandemic through a survey of 350 participants. Their findings highlighted the Saudi Government's effective use of social media platforms for information dissemination, awareness raising, and citizen engagement. Innovative graphics and engaging content were key factors in enhancing public interaction. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Radwan and Mousa (2020) conducted a qualitative analysis of government Instagram account posts made during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research identified strategies focused on informing, reassuring, and advising the public in order to foster awareness and behavioral change. Basu Thakur

and De (2023) examined Indian Government communication during the COVID-19 crisis, identifying press releases, press conferences, and media campaigns as key tools for raising public awareness and influencing behavior change. In Egypt, Baradei, Kadry, and Ahmed (2021) emphasized the role of governmental Facebook pages during the coronavirus pandemic in informing the public about public health measures, building trust, and addressing rumors. Lerouge et al. (2023) explored how government and media communication patterns influenced citizens' fear levels in Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that effective communication strategies, which included providing the public with accurate information and reassuring them, played a significant role in mitigating fear. Lastly, Beattie and Priestley (2021) analyzed New Zealand's government communication strategies during the pandemic, noting the effectiveness of daily briefings in establishing public trust and encouraging citizen action.

These studies were grouped based on the context of crises or without crises, which is the most appropriate in the case of studying the experience of government communication, as Jordan has been experiencing a political crisis since President Trump took office and was re-elected in the current session, as Jordan is exposed to a crisis of political pressures during the war on Gaza to displace Palestinians to Jordan and Egypt, and therefore this context in the classification of previous studies is the most appropriate to know the most appropriate tools that were employed in this political crisis through Jordanian government communication.

These studies underscore the varying approaches and degrees of effectiveness of government communication strategies across different regions and contexts (during crisis and without crisis context), providing valuable insights into how governments can enhance public engagement and trust through strategic communication. After reviewing the literature, and as Jordan suffers from ongoing political crises, there is an urgent need to study how government communication strategies affect public trust and address political challenges. Additionally, comparing Jordanian communication strategies with the experiences of other countries may help in finding more effective approaches to addressing crises.

Since the most important objectives of this research are to analyze government communication strategies in Jordan and highlight the tools, in addition to identifying the most prominent national issues or topics that are a priority for the Jordanian government to communicate with citizens, this study is expected to contribute in improving the MGC's communication effectiveness while communicating with the public. More effective interaction methods can also be developed based on the results. It is expected to contribute to formulating more effective media policies, as they can be used to guide future policies related to government communication on platforms such as Twitter, which contributes to improving transparency and community participation. In methodology, the study can contribute to providing measurable indicators to measure the effectiveness of government communication via Twitter. This includes measuring the volume of tweets and the level of interaction (number of likes, retweets and comments).

Research questions and hypotheses

The study aims to address the following research question and test its accompanying hypotheses:

RQ1: What are the predominant characteristics of government communication in Jordan, as reflected in the Ministry of Government Communication's tweets?

H1: A correlation exists between the source of the tweet (originating from the Ministry of Government Communication or from external sources) and the extent of audience engagement measured through likes, comments, and retweets.

October 7, 2023 was chosen as a cut-off date for the analysis, which is the date of the start of the conflict in Gaza between Hamas and Israel, a political crisis that changed the form and level of Jordanian diplomatic, media and political discourse. Choosing it will help examining the impact of major political crises in the region on government communication strategies before and after the crises:

H2: A statistically significant difference can be observed between the timing of a tweet (before or after October 2023) and the primary objectives pursued by Jordanian Government communication in disseminating tweets.

Methodology

This study seeks to comprehensively elucidate the fundamental characteristics of government communication in Jordan. For this purpose, the study employs content analysis to address the research questions posed above. Content analysis, as defined by Berelson (1952), is a methodological approach aimed at the impartial, systematic, and quantitative examination of the overt content of communication. For the purposes of sample selection, all posts disseminated between November 2022 and December 31, 2023, on the MGC's official X account (https://twitter.com/MoGC_JO) were surveyed. Employing a census sampling technique, the study gathered data and information from all published posts, irrespective of whether they were written in Arabic or English; the total number of posts was 507. It is noteworthy that the MGC's X account was created in November 2022 and that as of June 2024, it has gained 1006 followers. This time period begins with the establishment of the MGC near the end of 2022 and encompasses the endorsement of the principal media policy for government communication toward the end of 2023, as well as various events hosted by the Jordanian Government. Each tweet was treated as a distinct unit of analysis. In instances where a main tweet was succeeded by multiple consecutive tweets pertaining to the same subject matter, the tweets were consolidated into one tweet, with the cumulative number of likes and comments considered as attributes of that single tweet.

Measures

Following a review of the MGC's tweets on X and a survey of insights gleaned from prior studies and theories, the research identified the following analytical categories:

Topics of Tweeting: This category delineates the thematic content of tweets, encompassing subjects such as Jordan's stance on regional conflicts, particularly Gaza; Jordan–Arabic relations; Jordan's relations with the West; governmental resolutions; protocol-driven events; local and national activities; nationally celebrated occasions; Jordan's relations with non-Western nations; climate change-related issues; counterterrorism initiatives; misinformation; and others.

Style of Presentation: This category pertains to the visual and textual elements accompanying tweet content that serve to clarify and emphasize disseminated data and information. Quantitative analysis of visual and textual elements was conducted to ascertain the statistical frequency of said elements. Elements belonging to this category include photographs, videos, news links, and infographics.

Sources of Tweets: This category describes the authors responsible for tweets published on the MGC's official X account. Sources include various institutional entities, such as the MGC, the Prime Ministry, the Royal Hashemite Court, and the Foreign Ministry, as well as personal accounts affiliated with the royal family, governmental officials, local media entities, national governmental bodies, and non-Jordanian entities.

Language of Tweeting: This category delineates whether tweets published by the MGC were written in Arabic, English, or a combination thereof.

Volume of Tweeting: This category quantifies the frequency with which tweets were published on specific topics, stratified into levels of interest ranging from very high to little interest.

Goals of Tweeting: This category captures the underlying media motives driving tweet dissemination, including such motivations as fostering international cooperation, combating misinformation, highlighting governmental achievements, promoting media literacy, elucidating Jordan's stance on regional issues, informing the public, and facilitating event organization.

Interactivity: This category pertains to the forms of audience engagement elicited by tweets disseminated via the MGC's official X account, with interaction gauged through metrics such as likes, retweets, and comments.

To validate the research instrument, faculty members specializing in journalism, political science, and education critically evaluated the instrument's efficacy and offered constructive feedback that informed subsequent refinements. Inter-rater reliability was ascertained utilizing Holsti's formula, revealing a high level of concordance among coders across various variables, including the source of tweeting, topics, volume, language of tweeting, and interactivity (1.00), as well as the goals of tweeting (.88). Moreover, these coefficients were considered high and sufficient for use in the analysis form to collect the data required for this study. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, correlations, and chi-squared

tests, with percentages and frequencies computed subsequent to data collection and comprehensive review**.**

Certain variables, namely the sources of tweets and months of tweeting, were dichotomously recoded into new variables. Regarding the recording of the sources of tweets, a value of 1 represents tweets generated by the MGC, while a value of 0 represents tweets originating from non-ministerial sources. This new variable was designated as "New Source," and it facilitates the examination of the correlation between the sources of tweets and interactivity (i.e., number of likes, retweets, and comments). Additionally, the month of tweeting was recoded into two levels, with the new variable "New Month" assigning a value of 1 to tweets published prior to October 2023 and 0 to tweets disseminated after, enabling analysis of significant differences in the principal objectives of tweets before and after October 2023.

Results

This study's comprehensive analysis of 507 tweets disseminated by the MGC's official X account provides robust insights for answering the research questions posed in this study. Meticulous examination of tweeting activity over the course of the study period revealed nuanced characteristics of the Jordanian Government's communication outreach efforts, including significant variations in tweet frequency across different months. Particularly pronounced was the surge in tweeting activity in February, which saw a total of 96 tweets, constituting approximately 19% of the overall volume. January also exhibited a substantial volume of activity at 80 tweets, accounting for 16% of the total. November 2023 was another month of heightened tweeting activity, registering 72 tweets, equivalent to 15% of the total volume.

Conversely, certain months exhibited notably lower tweeting activity. September recorded the lowest volume, with a mere nine tweets, representing just 1.8% of the overall volume. Similarly, April comprised just 2.2% of the total number of tweets. This trend continued with March, June, and July, each accounting for 2.8% of total volume at 14 tweets per month. The analysis reveals a discernible lack of uniformity and consistency in tweet frequency across the study months. Following the initial phase following the launch of the MGC's X account in November 2023, the MGC's tweet volume increased gradually, peaking at 90 tweets in February, following an initial tally of 28 in November. However, this surge was followed by a notable downturn in activity over the ensuing six months from March to October. A resurgence in X activity then occurred in the months of October, November, and December 2023. Multiple factors may have contributed to this trend. For example, during the nascent stages following its establishment, the MGC likely sought to bolster its online presence, prompting a surge in online engagement. Additionally, fluctuations in tweet frequency may be attributable to the dynamic nature of the events that occurred during the study period. Specifically, the renewed focus on tweeting at the close of 2023 coincided with significant regional developments, particularly in Gaza, where political and diplomatic endeavors garnered heightened attention. The Jordanian media responded to these events with great interest, precipitating a resurgence in tweeting.

Table 1: The main sources of tweets

Source	Total
X account of MGC	289 (57%)
Royal Hashemite Court	92 (18%)
Prime Ministry	40 (8%)
Local media	20 (4%)
Foreign Ministry	18 (3.5%)
Governmental officials	16 (3.1%)
National governmental bodies	15 (3%)
Royal family members	12 (2.4%)
Non-Jordanian entities	5 (1%)

Table 1 shows that 289 tweets (57%), representing a majority of all tweets, emanated from the MGC's official X

account. The Royal Court emerged as the second most prolific source of tweets, contributing 92 tweets (18%). Subsequent contributors include the Prime Minister's X account, accounting for 40 tweets (5%), and local media entities, which collectively generated 20 tweets (4%). Further examination reveals that the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also a significant contributor to tweet production, contributing 18 tweets (3.5%). Additional sources included governmental officials and institutions (16 tweets, 3.1%), national governmental entities (15 tweets, 3%), and royal family members' accounts (12 tweets, 2.4%). Non-Jordanian entities represented the least prolific source, with just five tweets (1%).

This diversity of tweet sources is a result of the MGC's strategy of leveraging content from both Jordanian and non-Jordanian governmental and media entities instead of producing all tweets for publication internally. This may be due to the fact that the MGC had only recently established a digital presence on the X platform at the time of this tweeting activity. The MGC's attempts to bolster its digital credibility are also reflected in its dissemination of tweets from prominent Jordanian figures and officials, such as King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, and tweets sourced from the Royal Court. These tweets not only convey institutional credibility but also carry significant news value. Moreover, the diversity in tweet sources may constitute part of the MGC's broader strategy to attract followers of those institutions and personalities, thereby expanding its own follower base on X. For example, the participation of royal family members' accounts in tweet production underscores the monarchy's direct involvement with the public and its concerted efforts to foster transparency and accessibility. These tweets have addressed personal endeavors, charitable initiatives, and endorsements of national causes. In summary, the variety of tweet contributors underscores the multifaceted nature of government communication in Jordan and exemplifies the collaborative approach of the government, which involves diverse stakeholders uniting to disseminate official information, engage with the public, and further national interests through digital platforms.

Table 2: Number of tweets according to topic novelty

Volume of interest	Total
Low (only one tweet for a topic)	382 (75%)
High (three or more tweets for a topic)	75 (15%)
Medium (two tweets for a topic)	50 (10%)

As Table 2 reveals, the MGC has tended to diversify the topics of tweets, with the majority of tweets (382 tweets, 75% of the total) addressing a novel topic that no other MGC tweets discuss. This trend persisted despite individual tweets garnering a notable degree of interest. Meanwhile, the number of tweets that addressed a topic that was discussed in a total of two tweets was 50, representing 10% of the total dataset. The MGC's decision to address a range of topics with single tweets corresponds with the theoretical framework of agenda setting. Through a consistent emphasis on particular issues, the MGC's tweeting strategy attempts to shape public perceptions and prioritize certain topics over others. This "single tweet per topic" strategy suggests that the MGC may be failing to maximize the potential of social media to diversify its agenda. Consequently, this may result in a limited presentation of issues deemed significant to the public, potentially influencing the audience's perception of what is noteworthy.

Table 3: Topics of tweets

Topic of the tweet	Total
Local events	191 (38%)
Jordan's stance on Gaza events	149 (29%)
National religious occasions	53 (11%)
Jordan–Arabic relations	43 (8.5%)
Governmental decisions	14 (2.8%)
Jordan's relations with the West	13 (2.6%)
Social activities	11 (2.2%)

Topic of the tweet	Total
Dispelling rumors	9 (1.8%)
Protocol-driven events	8 (1.6%)
Counterterrorism initiatives	8 (1.6%)
Jordan's relations with non-West countries	4 (0.8)
Other	4 (0.8)
Total	507 (100%)

Tweets by the Jordanian Government primarily prioritize local topics and governmental initiatives deemed of paramount importance. As Table 3 demonstrates, 38% of all tweets surveyed (191 tweets) were dedicated to addressing local subjects related to the Jordanian Government's economic, educational, and legislative endeavors, as well as initiatives pertaining to universities, municipalities, transportation infrastructure, and other local administrative projects. Moreover, significant emphasis was placed on events in Gaza and the Jordanian Government's stance on the ongoing conflict, with approximately 29% (149 tweets) of the tweets surveyed addressing Jordan's position regarding developments in Gaza.

Nationally observed holidays, such as Independence Day; the commemoration of the founding of the Jordanian Army; religious festivities, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha; and cultural events, such as the anniversary of the Isra and Mi'raj, Teacher's Day, and Mother's Day; collectively account for approximately one-third of government tweets. Topics such as Jordan's diplomatic ties with non-Western nations, counterterrorism efforts, cabinet meeting proceedings, and misinformation refutation efforts received notably less attention among government tweets. Specifically, relations with non-Western countries were the subject of just four tweets (0.8% of total tweets), while counterterrorism and anti-smuggling themes, cabinet decisions, and the dispelling of rumors collectively comprise 1.6% (8 tweets each) and 1.8% (9 tweets), respectively, of all government tweets.

This varying emphasis on different topics in tweets by the Jordanian Government can be understood through the frame of media agenda setting, which discusses the influential role of the media in influencing the salience of certain issues within public discourse. The notable emphasis on local topics underscores the government's strategic agenda-setting endeavors aimed at prioritizing matters directly affecting citizens' daily lives. By highlighting economic, educational, and infrastructural advancements at the local level, the government strives to encourage a positive public perception of its efficacy and responsiveness to community needs. Meanwhile, the government's attention to regional events in Gaza signifies its acknowledgment of the agenda established by media coverage of Middle Eastern conflicts. By actively publicizing its stance on regional matters, the government is attempting to sway public opinion and project an image of diplomatic agency and regional leadership.

Furthermore, the government's focus on events in Gaza and its position on the matter reaffirms that the plight of Gazans constitutes a significant priority for both the Jordanian Government and its populace. This emphasizes the government's commitment to addressing regional crises alongside local and national concerns, thereby underscoring the multifaceted nature of governmental priorities and their alignment with media-driven public agendas.

The data presented in Table 4 illustrates that informing the public about government activities, projects, and initiatives is a primary objective of the Jordanian Government's communication strategy. Approximately half of the tweets analyzed (243, 48%) prioritize this objective, with subsequent emphasis being placed on elucidating Jordan's stance on events in Gaza (108, 21%) and showcasing governmental accomplishments (56, 11%). Conversely, objectives such as rumor mitigation (2.4%), event organization (3.6%), and promotion of media literacy (5%) received comparatively less attention within the framework of the Jordanian Government's communication strategy.

Table 4: Tweeting objectives

Tweeting Objectives	Total
Informing the public	243 (48%)
Clarifying Jordan's position on Gaza events	108 (21%)
Popularizing the government's achievements	56 (11%)
Enhancing international cooperation	45 (9%)
Disseminating media literacy	25 (5%)
Organizing events	18 (3.6%)
Correcting rumors	12 (2.4%)
Total	507 (100%)

This outcome can be attributed to the government's objective of promoting transparency, thereby ensuring citizens are well-informed and fostering trust between the government and its citizens. Moreover, there is a heightened demand from the public for the delivery of timely and accurate information on social media platforms. Governments have acknowledged the significance of utilizing these platforms to directly engage with citizens and offer relevant updates on governmental activities. This proactive approach not only enhances information accessibility but also enables the government to combat misinformation and rumors circulating in the public sphere. Moreover, by prioritizing the dissemination of information to the public, the Jordanian Government has showcased its commitment to encouraging civic participation and nurturing an informed citizenry. Informed citizens are better equipped to actively engage in the democratic process and participate in constructive dialogue on policy matters. In summary, the Jordanian Government's emphasis on public information reflects its acknowledgment of communication's pivotal role in upholding democratic governance, fostering public trust, and facilitating meaningful citizen involvement in decision-making processes.

Multimedia

Table 5: Employing multimedia elements in tweets

Element	Using multimedia	Not using multimedia
Multimedia elements	447 (88%)	60 (12%)
Visual	298 (59%)	
Textual	27 (5%)	
Both visual & textual	123 (24%)	
Videos	68 (13%)	439 (87%)
News links	155 (31%)	352 (69%)
Infographics	159 (31%)	348 (69%)
Photos	264 (52%)	243 (48%)

Table 5 reveals that a majority of tweets (447, 88%) incorporate multimedia elements, while a minority of tweets do not (60, 12%). Notably, visual elements featured prominently, constituting 59% (298 tweets) of all tweets. Meanwhile, 22% (123 tweets) of tweets integrated both textual and visual components. Finally, only 5% (27 tweets) of tweets relied solely on textual content. An examination of the use of multimedia elements across various platforms reveals that the MGC's X account tends to post tweets with images. Specifically, over half of their tweets (264, 52%) incorporated images depicting events and activities, followed by approximately one-third (31%) of tweets that utilized infographics and news links with equal frequency. Conversely, videos attached to tweets represented the least prevalent multimedia element, with a significant majority of tweets (439, 87%) not using video.

These findings underscore the significance of multimedia elements, particularly visual content, in enhancing the efficacy of government social media communication efforts. This finding is consistent with empirical investigations showing that images are more memorable than textual information, even when conveying analogous content (Huang & Fahmy, 2013). Additionally, it has been documented that images exert enduring impacts on viewers, as they evoke immediate emotional responses and facilitate rapid cognitive processing (Sacco & Gorin, 2017). This assertion is supported by Schwalbe and Dougherty (2015), who confirmed that images are processed more quickly than text and elicit instantaneous emotional reactions. Moreover, Parry (2010) underscores the heightened memorability of visual elements compared to verbal content, suggesting that visual stimuli leave more lasting impressions on individuals. By leveraging images and infographics, government entities can effectively convey information, engage audiences, and facilitate the dissemination of key messages. However, the relatively limited use of videos suggests potential avenues for exploration in diversifying multimedia content to further enrich the communicative outreach of governmental entities.

Interactivity and visibility

Various trends were revealed via the analysis of audience interactions with tweets from the MGC. The data indicates a substantial level of engagement, with the MGC's tweets amassing a total of 192,038 likes, resulting in an average of 488 likes per tweet. Furthermore, 50,717 comments were recorded, with each tweet averaging approximately 100 comments. Additionally, the MGC's tweets received 52,200 retweets, with an average of 103 retweets per tweet. These metrics collectively underscore the significant level of interaction of the target audience with the MGC's outreach efforts on X.

However, the primary aim of this study is to investigate disparities in tweet sources and their interactivity. This study posited that interactivity levels—measured via likes, comments, and retweets—would differ depending on the source of the tweet, with particular attention paid to the difference between the MGC's tweets and those made by non-ministerial sources. An independent samples t-test was employed to assess this hypothesis. As illustrated in Table 6, the mean number of likes accrued by tweets made by sources other than the MGC (*M*= 1079, *SD*= 4337) markedly exceeded those generated by the MGC ([*M* = 41.5, SD = 461], *t* (505) = 4.038, *P* < 0.001), with a Cohen's d effect size of 0.362. This observation suggests that users exhibit heightened engagement with tweets originating from accounts unaffiliated with the MGC.

Table 6: T-test of the relations between sources of tweets and interactivity

Variable	Source of tweeting	*M*	*SD*	t	df	*p*	Chehn's d
Likes	Ministry of Communication	41.5	461	4.038	505	0.001	0.362
	Other sources	1079	4337				
Comments	Ministry of Communication	10	112	3.816	505	0.001	0.239
	Other sources	220	929				
Retweet	Ministry of Communication	11	88	4.527	505	0.001	0.405
	Other sources	225	800				

Significant disparities are also evident in terms of tweet sources and tweet interactivity, particularly when measured by comments and retweets. To assess comment interactivity, an independent samples t-test was conducted. As delineated in Table 6, the mean number of comments received by tweets published by sources besides the MGC (*M*= 220, *SD*= 4929) markedly exceeded those originating from the MGC ([*M*= 10, *SD*= 112], t (505) = 3.816, *P* < 0.001), with a Cohen's d effect size of 0.239.

Similar findings emerged concerning readers' retweeting behavior and the sources of tweets. An independent samples t-test found significant differences in the level of retweeting and the sources of tweets. The mean number of retweets generated by sources other than the MGC (M = 2225, *SD* = 800) significantly surpassed those generated by the MGC ([*M* = 11, *SD*= 88], t (505) = 4.527, *P* < 0.001), with a Cohen's d effect size of 0.405. This observation suggests that users exhibit heightened engagement with tweets originating from accounts other than those affiliated with the MGC.

This lack of public engagement with tweets originating from the MGC can be attributed to several key factors. First, the content of these tweets may have failed to resonate with the concerns, interests, and priorities of the public. If the topics addressed in a tweet do not align with the issues deemed significant or relevant by the target demographic, then they will be less inclined to engage with the content. Moreover, the communication style and tone employed by the MGC may have contributed to audience disengagement. For example, the absence of multimedia elements and the use of a formal, bureaucratic tone may have influenced citizens to perceive the tweets as disconnected from their everyday experiences and, therefore, unengaging. Additionally, these tweets also offered limited opportunities for meaningful dialogue and interaction. If a communication style is primarily characterized by the one-way dissemination of information and official announcements while providing few avenues for feedback and discussion, then individuals may feel excluded from the conversation and, consequently, less motivated to engage with the content. These factors underscore the importance of aligning governmental communication efforts with the preferences, expectations, and needs of the target audience. Strategies aimed at enhancing relevance, accessibility, and interactivity can foster greater engagement and dialogue between the government and the public, thereby promoting transparency, trust, and accountability in governance.

The MGC also failed to devote sufficient efforts to enhancing the discoverability and searchability of its shared content. Consequently, this lack of proactive engagement impeded the visibility and accessibility of its content, thereby limiting its potential outreach. Particularly noteworthy is the MGC's attempt to bolster its digital presence through hashtag diversification, employing such hashtags as "#Jordan," "#Palestine," "#Gaza," "#government communication," and more, with 68% of MGC tweets including hashtags. Additionally, the MGC also shared tweets from outside sources; indeed, outside tweets accounted for 43% of reposted content. These sources include the Royal Court, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accounts affiliated with members of the royal family, personal accounts of government officials, Jordanian media outlets, and governmental institutions. Remarkably, tagging was shown to be the least utilized method by MGC, constituting only 25% of its engagement strategies.

Shifts in the timing and thematic content of tweets

The characterization of events and their temporal alignment emerged as pivotal determinants shaping the communication agenda of the Jordanian Government. The considerable influence of these factors is reflected in the redirection of focus within the tweets disseminated via the X account of the MGC. This was particularly evident during the events unfolding in Gaza in October 2023. This period, which was marked by rapidly changing current events and heightened public interest, represented a notable departure from themes that had been emphasized in earlier tweets by the MGC.

To empirically assess the impact of tweet timing on thematic content and tweet prioritization, chi-square tests were conducted. These tests aimed to identify statistically significant differences between tweet timing (before and after October 2023) and the thematic content of tweets. The tests revealed statistically significant disparities in the thematic content of tweets published on the MGC before and after October 2023. The chi-square tests indicated that there are significant differences between the tweet timing (before and after October 2023) and the topics of tweets published by the MGC ($\chi^2[11] = 537.349$, $P < 0.001$).

The data analysis revealed a significant shift in the focus of the MGC and the themes of its tweets before and after October 2023. Notably, highlighted topics before October 2023 experienced a rapid decline after October. Before October, local issues commanded the highest degree of attention, comprising 78% of tweets. However, this ratio dwindled to 25% after October 2023. Similarly, engagement with matters concerning Jordanian–Arab relations decreased from 65% to 35%, as did attention to Jordan's relations with the West, plummeting from 77% to 23% following October. However, it is noteworthy that certain topics, namely Jordan's stance on regional affairs and the broader Palestinian situation—including specific events in Gaza—maintained their levels of interest. Indeed, the discourse surrounding Gaza and Jordan's position on the crisis surged to the forefront of the MGC's discourse on X following October. This shift underscores the paramount importance of Gaza-related developments in the Jordanian agenda, both in media narratives and in political and diplomatic spheres. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of these events to Jordanian policymakers, highlighting the imperative

of ongoing engagement and communication efforts to address the crisis and underscoring Jordan's international and regional efforts to achieve a resolution.

Conclusion, recommendations, and limitations

This study analyzed the characteristics of tweets from the Jordanian Government on the X platform, identifying the MGC as the primary source, followed by the Royal Court and the Prime Minister's Office. The MGC focused on specific topics, such as local events and developments related to Gaza, mainly using single tweets to inform the public about government activities, clarify Jordan's position on the Gaza conflict, and highlight government achievements. Most tweets were in Arabic and featured multimedia elements, primarily images and infographics.

The study aimed to compare engagement levels between tweets from the MGC and non-ministerial sources, hypothesizing significant differences in interactivity. Findings indicated a notable disparity in public engagement, with the MGC lacking proactive strategies to enhance content discoverability. Additionally, there was insufficient diversification in digital outreach, particularly in reposting and tagging.

A thematic shift was observed in the MGC's communications before and after October 2023, aligning with agenda-setting theory as events in Gaza redirected focus from local and diplomatic issues. This highlights the impact of external events on political communication.

Key implications include the necessity for the MGC to refine its communication strategies in order to enhance audience engagement and diversify its outreach methods. Expanding content in foreign languages and incorporating a greater volume of video content could significantly improve visibility and user interaction. Additionally, these objectives may be further realized through the exploration of interactive content, influencer collaborations, and targeted advertising campaigns, all of which are likely to amplify audience engagement and increase the discoverability of content.

The study has limitations, including its focus solely on tweets and reliance on quantitative analysis, which may overlook qualitative factors. However, qualitative methods, such as sentiment analysis or audience feedback, could complement and enrich the findings. These qualitative approaches would provide deeper insights into the emotional tone and public perception surrounding the content, offering a more nuanced understanding of audience reactions and engagement.

Furthermore, while the focus on tweets is a valid approach, the study could benefit from considering a broader range of social media platforms or communication channels. Analyzing other platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, could provide a more comprehensive perspective on government communication strategies. Different platforms have unique user bases and interaction patterns, which might yield valuable comparative insights into how governmental messages resonate across various digital spaces

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