# The Evaluation of Political Party Leaders' Persuasion and Confidence Levels by their Followers on Twitter: The Case of Düzce

**Aytekin İŞMAN**
*Professor Dr. at Sakarya University Faculty of Communication*

**Engin DAĞDEVİREN**
*Student of Communication Studies PhD. Programme, Institute of Social Sciences, Sakarya University*

## ABSTRACT

Twitter is one of the most popular social media channels and, due to its structure, it is more suitable for information sharing, persuasion, and the use of public relations methods than the other frequently used social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok). Twitter is one of the most used channels by political parties and party leaders in Turkey and in the world. In this study, the confidence and persuasion levels of the Twitter accounts of the leaders of the political parties in the Turkish Grand National Assembly were evaluated in line with the views of the Twitter followers living in Düzce. Within the scope of the research, the 'Confidence and Persuasion Scale in Interpersonal Communication' developed by Karadoğan (2003), was applied to 400 Twitter users over the age of 18 living in Düzce. To check the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha test was applied, and the alpha value was obtained as 0.9086 (Karadoğan, 2003, p. 240). The data obtained were analyzed with the SPSS package program and the findings and detailed explanations were given. As a result of the collected opinions, it was revealed to what extent the leaders of the political parties were perceived as reliable and persuasive, and the reasons were examined. In addition, the differences between being reliable and persuasive in social media and being reliable and persuasive in interpersonal communication were evaluated. As a result of the research, recommendations were made for social media influencers to create reliable and persuasive profiles. It is thought that these recommendations will be beneficial to individuals and institutions who actively use social media in public relations, such as companies, advertisers and artists, especially political parties, and their leaders.
**Keywords:** social media; Twitter; persuasion; confidence; political party leaders

## INTRODUCTION

Communication, by nature, is a process that people use to give meaning to their environment, to exchange information and to influence others since their birth. This process, which was carried out interpersonally in the past, could be carried out through different channels with the existence of technology and thus various communication channels. With the development of the Internet and Web 2.0 technology, social media channels, which have found a place in society, are communication tools that are frequently used by billions of people today. These channels, which have most of the interpersonal communication dynamics, provide an advantage in terms of reaching more people with less time and energy. Today, every person and institution of the society, from artists to politicians, from athletes to health professionals, from news channels to religious institutions, have social media accounts in order to benefit from this advantage. Communication has traditionally been defined as the field of research on how people influence others or are influenced by them. When evaluated in this context, communication is a social phenomenon and should be included in the scope of social sciences. However, today, communication has become a multidisciplinary concept due to different interpretations of various disciplines, and its definition varies within the scope of the discipline, purpose and method used (Krauss & Fussell, 1996). In addition to this, relatively newly emerging communication channels, depending on the developing technology, have also revealed new communication forms and methods. The Internet's entry into our lives and becoming interactive is not a long time ago, but reaching so many people in such a short time has undoubtedly made it in a different position among all communication channels.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Among the forms of communication offered by internet technology, the most effective and common channels are social media channels. The main reasons for the prevalence and effectiveness of these channels are that they are easy to use, constantly updated, allow versatile use and versatile sharing, and are accessible to anyone with an internet connection. They allow people to get their ideas, photos, videos, status, and updates to a large number of people with little effMean Social media are web-based communication tools that allow users to communicate without time and place restrictions. Social media is difficult to define because it is difficult to determine what should be considered social media. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 60,61), to define the term social media, it is necessary to know the difference between social media and two similar concepts called 'Web 2.0' and

'User Generated Content'. It is necessary to consider Web 2.0 as a platform for the development of social media and User Generated Content as the sum of all the activities that users do on social media. Web 2.0, unlike Web 1.0, allows internet users to contribute to and modify content on the web.

Bozarth (2010, p. 11) considers social media as fruits of the Web 2.0 platform, unlike Web 1.0 platforms where content is produced by journalists, writers, or mass media executives, and defines them as platforms where content is created and modified by users. According to the author, social media platforms can have different goals such as communication, collaboration, communities, reviews/opinions, and multimedia. 'Social media' is the phenomenon that encompasses activities, practices and behaviors among groups of people who gather online to share information and opinions using Web-based applications that enable the creation and transmission of content in the form of words, images, videos and sounds. (Safko and Brake, 2009, p. 6). Social media, unlike traditional media, give users the opportunity to actively engage in a communication process through information sharing, dissemination, and exchange of ideas. (Chan-Olmsted, Cho and Lee, 2013, p. 152).

## MICRO-BLOGS AND TWITTER
Microblogs, as the name suggests, are 'micro' versions of blogs. Users can share their ideas, interests or express themselves (Jansen, Sobel, Zhang & Chowdury, 2009, p. 3860), usually no more than 200 characters (Java, Finin, Song & Tseng, 2007, p. 56). These are the channels that people can see and interact with and share on their personal pages. In another definition, "microblog refers to the activity in which users post short text updates about minor details such as what they read, think and experience in their daily life and work activities" (Zhao and Rosson, 2009, p. 243).

Blogs and microblogs may sound like the same thing; however, there are two important differences between them. First, blogs are social media channels used to post articles or ideas in a relatively long and detailed form; however, microblogs are channels used to send ideas and/or notifications in a short and fast manner (Ebner & Schiefner, 2008, p. 156). Therefore, microblogs are faster ways to spread messages, thereby reducing the time it takes for followers to read posts. The second difference is between update speeds. An active blogger updates his blog every few days, while a micro blogger can post too many updates in a day (Java et al., 2007, p. 57).

The most famous micro-blogging site is Twitter (www.twitter.com). Twitter is "a micro-blogging platform that allows its users to send and receive information from people on their 'followers' and 'followed' lists." (İşman & Dağdeviren, 2018, p.1). The logic of Twitter is to connect people from all over the world and to allow them to share updates with people on their followers list. Updates are usually in text forms and have a 140 character limit. However, they are not limited to text only, users can share links, videos, photos and GIFs. Other people in their network can view posts and interact by commenting, liking and retweeting (sharing the posts on their own Twitter accounts). Twitter is the largest micro-blogging platform with 326 million active users worldwide (Hootsuite & We are Social, 2019, p. 81). When people follow a friend on most online social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, they are automatically followed by them. However, in the case of Twitter, a follower does not need to be followed by a follower in return. There is a 140-character limit for their posts, so the information in the posts should be written neatly and more carefully, keeping it short and not exceeding the limit. Users can not only share text, but also send images, videos, and external links (İşman & Dağdeviren, 2018). The important features that distinguish Twitter from other social media channels are that it does not take much time to share and follow the shares because short texts or updates are shared, and the update speed is higher than other channels (Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007). Considering these features and advantages of Twitter, it can be understood why it is such a widely used social media channel. Twitter has become the focus of attention of political parties, artists, companies and news organizations, in short, all individuals and institutions that want to establish relations with the public, especially in Turkey.

## CONFIDENCE AND PERSUASION IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION
Although political communication traces its roots to the earliest classical works of Aristotle and Plato, modern political communication studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that draws from communication, political science, journalism, sociology, psychology, history, rhetoric and other fields (Kaid, 2004). Many definitions of political communication have been developed, but none have gained universal acceptance. Perhaps the simplest and most valid definition is Chaffee's (1975, p. 15): "Political communication is the role of communication in the political process.". Based on this definition, we can name all kinds of communication activities of those who deal with politics to reach the public as political communication. This style of communication, which was done interpersonally in the earliest times, has been made through newspapers, radio, television, and recently, the internet, respectively. With the decline in the demand of traditional media and the increase in internet use, social media channels have become popular for political communication. Citizens have had new opportunities for political participation and communication by participating in interest groups, interacting with political institutions and

candidates, and exchanging and discussing political information with other citizens (Himelboim, Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2012). Since the most popular communication medium among people today is social media, these channels have also been the focal point of political communication. After all, the purpose of political communication is to reach as many people as possible at a time and to persuade society by instilling a sense of trust.

## POLITICAL PARTIES
Political parties are indispensable institutions in democratic societies. Political parties are democratic institutions that allow people to express themselves politically and participate in politics (Gökçe, 2013, p. 66). Many different approaches have been proposed to define political parties, and these definitions have changed in terms of organizational structures, functions and methods of coming to power (Tan, Çiçek, & Koçar, 2015, p. 352). According to Özbudun (1974, p. 4), political parties are "political communities with a permanent and stable organization that try to seize or maintain the state administration by gaining the support of the people". Political parties, and indirectly the leaders and spokespeople of political parties should stay in constant contact with the society, not just during election times. The fact that they do this through social media channels is due to the 'interactivity' advantage of social media and the opportunity to make it to a large audience with less expense and effort (Özkan & Türkmen, 2020, p. 8).

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH
Where there is a majority of the society, it is expected that there will be individuals and institutions whose goal is to reach the society. Social media platforms, which are actively used by billions of people today - 3.8 billion people in the world use social media - are among the most suitable places to carry out political communication activities. In Turkey, 64% of the population uses social media actively and people aged 16-64 spend an average of 2 hours and 51 minutes a day on social media (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2020). In a medium with such a large audience, it is inevitable that there will be people and institutions that carry out public relations work, from companies to public institutions, from artists to politicians.

One of the most preferred social media channels for carrying out activities on political communication is Twitter. Twitter is a micro-blogging site (up to 140 characters can be used in posts) that allows people to exchange information with people on their 'followers' and 'followed' lists (İşman & Dağdeviren, 2018, p. 1). On Twitter, users can share posts, photos, videos, locations and updates, like and comment on posts. Twitter has 339,600,000 users in the world and 11,800,000 users in Turkey (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2020). Although the number of Twitter users in Turkey is not as high as other social media channels such as Facebook (37,000,000 users) and Instagram (38,000,000 users), the reason why this research is conducted on this platform is that it is thought that people follow the agenda, news and political parties in Turkey on this social media platform.

In this research, it is expected that the confidence and persuasion levels of politicians will play a key role in both interpersonal political communication and social media communication. In this context, the 'Confidence and Persuasion Scale in Interpersonal Communication' developed by Karadoğan (2003) was applied to 400 Twitter users over the age of 18 living in Düzce in order to measure the 'confidence' and 'persuasion' factors in interpersonal communication. Within the scope of the research, it is aimed to reveal to what extent the people, who make up the sample of the research, find the political party leaders they follow on Twitter confident and persuasive.

Another aim of the research is to compare the expectations of people from confidence and persuasion in interpersonal communication, which was revealed in another research (Karadoğan, 2003), and their expectations from confidence and persuasion in the social media that will be reached within the scope of this study. In this context, the findings obtained within the scope of the research will be compared with the findings obtained from the above-mentioned research and the expectations of people from confidence and persuasion in 'interpersonal communication' and from confidence and persuasion in 'online communication' will be compared. The reasons for the differences, if any, will be examined and the dynamics of two different types of communication will be explained.

Finally, in the light of the findings obtained in the research, it is aimed to reveal people's expectations of 'confidence' and 'persuasion' in social media. The findings of the study, which will be carried out on the example of Twitter and political party leaders, will be generalized and recommendations will be made to people and institutions that carry out public relations work in social media.

## IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH
Social media channels are communication platforms used by billions of people all over the world daily, and they are used by people for multiple purposes. The penetration of internet technology and social media channels into

social life and the rapid spread of their use among people has triggered intense research in this area. For this reason, the effects of social media use and the purposes of people's use of social media have been the subjects of much research in recent years. There is a rich literature on social media in Turkey and in the world containing studies which aim to reveal the usage reasons, habits and preferences of students (Başoğlu & Yanar, 2017; DeGroot, Young, & VanSlette, 2015; Erdemci, 2017; Kurt, Aktaş, & Turan, 2019; A. Şahin, Welder and Aytop, 2016; Yavuz, 2020), of teachers and academics (Küçükali and Serçemeli, 2019; Nochumson, 2020; Willet, 2019), of people from all circles nationally (Agrifoglio, Black, Metallo and Ferrara, 2012; Kijek, Angowski, & Skrzypek, 2020; Pentina, Basmanova, & Zhang, 2016).

There are also studies conducted around the world in the context of the use of social media as political communication tools (Abid, Harrigan, & Roy, 2020; Bakardjieva, 2015; Baldwin-Philippi, 2014; Bode, 2016; Bowman, 2017; Ekman & Widholm, 2014; Enli & Simonsen, 2017; Gil de Zúñiga, Barnidge, & Diehl, 2018; Harris & Harrigan, 2015; Hendriks, Duus & Ercan, 2016; Himelboim et al., 2012; Kruse, Norris & Flinchum, 2017; Loader & Mercea, 2011; Macková, 2016; Ohme, 2019; Park, 2019; Scaramuzzino and Scaramuzzino, 2017; Stewart, 2017; Valenzuela, Halpern, Katz, and Miranda, 2019). However, studies examining the use of social media as a political communication tool in our country (Andı, Aytaç, & Çarkoğlu, 2019; Aydın & Gülsoy, 2017; Bostancı, 2014; Dilber, 2018; Doğan & Alptekin, 2018; Doğan, 2020; Metin, 2016; Şahin , 2017) is less in number compared to the world. It is hoped that this study will fill this gap in the literature of our country and inspire new studies.

The research is designed to reveal how confident and persuasive the political party leaders are on their Twitter accounts, in the light of their followers' opinions. In this context, the criteria of 'confidence' and 'persuasion', which are interpersonal communication qualities, will be examined for the first time on social media platforms, which are online communication platforms, through the context of Twitter. The expectations of people of confidence and persuasion in interpersonal communication and their expectations of confidence and persuasion in communication on social media platforms will be compared on this occasion. In this context, the research is unique in that it compares two different types of communication, interpersonal communication, and online communication within the scope of field research. In the light of the findings obtained from the research, suggestions will be presented to individuals and institutions engaged in political communication activities through social media. These suggestions are expected to be beneficial to people and institutions using social media in public relations as well.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**
People try to exert social influence in a variety of ways. What other people think of us is important to all of us. People observe the behavior of others and imitate them. In addition, people deliberately instruct each other on what to believe and how to behave individually, through formal teaching mechanisms, and within social groups such as family and friends. Moreover, people influence each other informally through chat. This influencing process can be called 'social communication' and is referred to as 'opinion leadership', 'word-of-mouth' or 'buzz' in different situations (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011).

Researchers in a wide variety of fields, including computer science, information science, sociology, and communication sciences, are currently studying social communication on the Internet. New studies emerge every day and show that people on the Internet have a powerful influence on the attitudes and behaviors of others. Especially in social media, politicians have been actively communicating with the society for a long time and trying to gain the trust of the public and persuade them in their posts.

This research is related to the 'Social Impact Theory (SIC)'. According to SIC, individual behavior is influenced by three social processes: adjustment, identification, and internalization. Adjustment indicates that an individual acts to conform to the ideas of others who are important to him. For example, users may consider following the ideas of the opinion leaders mentioned above. Identification reflects individual identification with a community, feelings of belonging and attachment are included in identification. For example, users can develop feelings of membership, influence, and value in an online community through increased user experiences. Internalization reflects that the individual accepts the influence because his values are compatible with the values of the group members (Zhou, 2011, p. 69).

According to Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2011, p. 119), there are 4 strategies to create/change behavior in social relations and/or human management: punishment method, reward method, persuasion method and the most effective one is social influence method. The punishment method is applied to erase the undesirable behavior and thus a shift to the desired behavior can be achieved. The reward method is used to reinforce the desired behavior. The purpose of the persuasion method is to create voluntary behavior change with the message given. However, the effectiveness of the method depends on several factors, including the sources of information, the channel

through which it is transmitted, the characteristics of the recipient of the information, and the nature of the persuasive message. Behavior-changing strategies combine features of all three of these approaches to maximize effectiveness. Even then, what is overlooked is perhaps the most important influence researchers can identify: the influence of other people. Social influence is a very powerful shaper of human behavior. It can affect almost any type of behavior and its effects are often unnoticed or unconscious. In this context, the extent to which political party leaders in Turkey create social impact on Twitter must be directly proportional to the sense of trust and persuasion ability they create on their followers. Thus, their impact on society will increase in direct proportion to the size of the social impact they create.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Doğan and Alptekin (2018) examined the social media usage practices of members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. First, it was revealed which MPs use Twitter and which do not. Later, they analyzed the Twitter posts of 514 MPs with personal Twitter accounts. The extent to which MPs use Twitter, the content of their posts, and their distribution by geographical regions, gender and political party were revealed. The Twitter accounts of 514 MPs were monitored for 30 days and their posts were analyzed using 'content analysis'.

A total of 50,855 tweets were sent from the accounts followed within the scope of the research and the number of tweets on Twitter is as follows: Marmara Region MPs (16,436 tweets), Aegean Region MPs (7,465 tweets), Central Anatolia Region MPs (6,358 tweets), Black Sea Region MPs (6,030 tweets), Mediterranean Region MPs (5,967), Southeastern Anatolia Region MPs (4,453 tweets) and Eastern Anatolia Region MPs (4,146 tweets). The ratio of the number of MPs and the number of tweets reveals that Aegean Region MPs are the most active users of Twitter (4.01 tweets per person per day), while Central Anatolia Region MPs are the least active users (2.61 tweets per person per day). It was also observed that male MPs used Twitter more intensively than female MPs. In addition, when the intensity of Twitter usage is analyzed, it is explained that the tweets of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) MPs constitute 54.9% of the total number of tweets, but this is since they have 59% of the total number of MPs. When analyzed on a party basis, the number of tweets per MP is as follows: Republican People's Party (CHP): 4.27 tweet, Good Party (İYİ): 3.82, Nationalist Movement Party (MHP): 3.44 tweets, Justice and Development Party (AKP): 3.06 tweets, independent MP: 2.83 tweet and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP): 1.99 tweets. One of the findings of the research is that MPs who do not hold senior positions within the party or who are not ministers use Twitter more actively. Finally, the topics and rates of the posts made during the 30-day period are as follows: 20,200 tweets (around 40%) were about party activities, 12,009 tweets (24%) about parliamentary activities, 11,084 tweets (around 21%) about other issues and 7,562 tweets about celebrations (around 15%).

The research is important in terms of showing that Twitter is a social media platform that is popular among politicians in Turkish politics. However, the question arises as to how politicians' posts are perceived by users. This study will attempt to answer this question by analyzing users' evaluation of the credibility and persuasiveness profile of political party leaders on Twitter.

Aydın and Gülsoy (2017) conducted a field study on the impact of political party leaders' use of social media on young voters. The sample of their study consisted of students from a state university in Turkey and they used an online survey tool to collect data. In the study, which had a sample size of 786, people were asked about their social media using habits and questions about social media and democratic participation, and their opinions were collected with a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire.

According to the findings, the respondents in the sample stated that they use Skype (28.6%) the most among social media sites, followed by WhatsApp (28.1%), Instagram (22.9%), Google+ (20.7%), Twitter (20%) and Facebook (17.9%). In terms of the purposes of social media use, the responses of the respondents were as follows: sharing (25.2%), commenting on political issues (24.2%), following political party leaders (21.7%), following the agenda (20.7%), chatting (19.5%) and following friends (17.9%).

The most important findings of the research are the views of young voters on political communication and social media. Accordingly, 73.4% of young voters agreed with the view that 'social media has the power to organize and mobilize young voters' and 64.3% agreed with the view that 'political party leaders should promote and evaluate the projects of the party they represent through social media'. In this context, it can be concluded that the effective use of social media platforms by party leaders for political communication may affect voter behavior. Based on this, it can be concluded that credible and persuasive social media accounts are important for political party leaders to establish positive communication with the public.

In another study, Dilber (2018) examined the social media use of political parties and party leaders in Turkey. It comparatively revealed which social media channels political parties and party leaders use. Categorical content

analysis technique was used to analyze the data. Accordingly, the content of the messages on the social media channels of the parties and leaders included in the sample were categorized according to their meanings.
The findings reveal that AKP has the highest number of followers in almost all channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+), followed by MHP and then CHP. It was observed that these parties and their leaders used their social media accounts to reach, inform, promote and persuade their voters.

In the research, it was stated that the fact that social media channels are not one-way like traditional media, but rather allow interaction, makes the use of these channels compulsory for political parties. In this respect, it was underlined that political communication activities to be carried out in these channels should be skillfully conducted. Since being reassuring and persuasive are among the key elements of successful political communication, it is important for the literature and politicians to reveal to what extent political party leaders are perceived as reassuring and persuasive.

Gökçe et al. (2014) aimed to reveal the opinion leaders operating in social media in Turkey. They analyzed more than 10 million active Twitter users in Turkey and created social network graphs of these users. Using a program designed to analyze complex information flows, they analyzed the paths and reach of Twitter posts and tried to identify the opinion leaders and intermediaries. Within a 3-month period, posts and interactions on Twitter following an important political event were included in the sample.

According to the findings of the research, it was revealed that the people who carry out political communication activities are opinion leaders. However, contrary to popular belief, opinion leaders were found to be mostly columnists, journalists and television programmers, rather than political parties and party leaders.

In this context, political party leaders need to use social media channels more effectively and expertly in order to become opinion leaders. Since this study will reveal the extent to which political party leaders are perceived as reassuring and persuasive on a social media channel, it is thought that the findings and recommendations to be given will be valuable for everyone who conducts political communication activities.

In another study, Ekmekci (2010) introduced the lack of social trust in Turkey and evaluated its political effects. He conducted the research with the literature review method and gave the results under separate headings.

In his research, he emphasized that Turkey ranked 55th out of 57 countries in the social trust index and stated based on research that Turkish people do not trust political party leaders in particular. He also stated that the search for a 'strong leader' will increase in countries with a high lack of social trust. In this context, he cited the 'World Values Survey' as an example and mentioned that while the average of 'would be very good' and 'would not be bad' responses to the question on 'strong leader' was 38.1% for 55 countries, this rate was 58.9% in Turkey.

As Ekmekci's (2010) research reveals, there is a problem of trust in politicians and political parties in Turkey. This problem needs to be solved by politicians and political parties who want to establish more effective political communication. This research will provide findings and recommendations to help people and organizations in need.

Another study on the role of social media in political communication is Householder and LeMarre (2014). In this study, the researchers conducted an experimental study to measure the extent to which a politician is perceived as trustworthy on Facebook. In the design phase of the experiment, Facebook accounts were created for one fictitious Democratic and one fictitious Republican senatorial candidate. In fact, these fictionalized Facebook pages are exactly the same from their posts to their photos, the only difference being whether they are 'Democrat' or 'Republican'. In this context, they sat 126 university students in front of a computer and asked them to analyze the Facebook profile of this non-existent senatorial candidate. Then a specially designed questionnaire with sub-dimensions of 'personal closeness', 'trustworthiness', 'information reliability', 'political party predisposition' and 'political interest/knowledge' was administered to the respondents.

As a result of the study, it was found that trustworthiness is related to personal closeness (having similar tastes, social environment, background, etc.). Knowledge, merit and strength of claims also have an impact on credibility. Finally, it has also been found that trustworthiness increases political participation, in other words, people are more likely to participate politically when there are political parties and/or leaders they trust.

As the above research reveals, effective use of social media accounts is key to building a credible and persuasive profile. In this respect, it is necessary to reveal the extent to which people and institutions engaged in political

communication activities are perceived as reliable and persuasive. This situation is important in terms of eliminating deficiencies in order to display a better profile.

Another study was conducted by Harris and Harrigan (2015) during the 2010 UK election campaign. The researchers analyzed the election campaigns of two liberal democratic candidates (one candidate in the city of Winchester and the other candidate in the city of Romsey) on social media (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube). In the research, they aimed to find out to what extent election campaigns conducted on social media can be effective and to reveal their benefits and harms.

As a result of the research, both candidates stated that Twitter is the best social media channel for political communication. They listed the following reasons why Twitter is so effective: it allows for instant information and interaction, it is very useful for calling voters to action at local events, and the use of hashtags (#) is very useful for agenda setting.

The results of the study confirm that Twitter is the most appropriate medium to carry out political communication activities. It is known that billions of people around the world actively use different social media channels. At the same time, it is also known that each social media channel stands out with one dimension. Some are designed for sharing photos, while others are designed for sharing short videos. Twitter, on the other hand, is preferred more than other social media channels for political communication, as mentioned earlier and as this study proves. The reason for conducting this research on Twitter is that Twitter is considered to be more useful and more preferred than other social media channels for political communication in Turkey.

## METHOD
This research is designed as a descriptive research type. Descriptive studies attempt to describe, understand, compare, compare, classify, analyze, and interpret certain types of phenomena on individuals, groups, or institutions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005, pp. 169). This type of research is concerned with how the current situation is related to some events that influence it (Best and Kahn, 1998, pp. 113).

## RESEARCH DESIGN
Relational survey model was used in the study. The correlational survey model allows researchers to investigate the variation between two or more variables and their severity (Karasar, 2005, pp. 78). In this direction, this study will try to establish and explain the link between variables such as age, gender, education level, following political party leaders on Twitter, and the extent to which political party leaders on Twitter are trustworthy and persuasive.

## DATA COLLECTION TOOL
In this study, survey technique was used to collect data. The survey technique is the best alternative among scientific methods for collecting data over a period of time to describe the nature of the phenomenon at hand and to reveal the relationship between specific events (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005, pp. 170).

## POPULATION
The population of the study consists of people over the age of 18 living in Düzce province. Participation in the research is entirely voluntary.

## SAMPLE
Within the scope of the research, 'Trust and Persuasion Scale in Interpersonal Communication' developed by Karadoğan (2003) was applied to 112 Twitter users over the age of 18 living in Düzce province. Cronbach Alpha test was applied to check the reliability of the scale and the alpha value was obtained as 0.9086 (Karadoğan, 2003, p. 240).

## DATA ANALYSIS
The data obtained were analyzed with Microsoft Excel program and the findings and detailed explanations are given. Research findings are presented systematically, mostly through percentage tables and descriptive tables.

## LIMITATIONS
This research is limited to people over the age of 18 living in Düzce province in December 2020.

## ASSUMPTIONS
It was assumed that the participants gave sincere answers to the survey questions. In addition, it was assumed that the selected sample has the power to represent the population.

**FINDINGS**
A total of 112 people participated in the survey and the findings are presented in tables in this section. Explanations of the given tables are given below the tables.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by gender

| Gender | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 52 | 46,4 |
| Male | 60 | 53,6 |

Of the 112 participants, 52 (46.4%) were female and 60 (53.6%) were male. In this context, the gender of the participants was almost equally distributed.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by age

| Age | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 36 | 32,1 |
| 26-35 | 33 | 29,5 |
| 36-45 | 29 | 25,9 |
| 46-55 | 9 | 8 |
| 56-65 | 5 | 4,5 |
| 66 and above | 0 | 0 |

As can be seen from the table above, the majority of the respondents are young people. Participants aged 18-25 years (n: 36) constituted 32.1% of the sample, and participants aged between 26-35 years (n: 33) constituted 29.5% of the sample, and participants aged 36-45 years (n: 29) constituted 25.9% of the sample, and participants aged 46-55 years (n: 9) constitute 8% of the sample and participants aged 56-65 (n:5) constitute 4.5% of the sample. Within the scope of the research, there are no participants aged 66 and over. The middle-aged and elderly groups were reluctant to participate in the research, which is why their numbers are so small. During the research, it was observed that young people were more willing to participate in the survey.

Table 3: Distribution of Participants by Level of Educational

| Level of Educational | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Primary education | 3 | 2,7 |
| High School | 8 | 7,1 |
| Associate Degree | 10 | 8,9 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 66 | 58,9 |
| Master's Degree | 9 | 8 |
| PhD Degree | 16 | 14,3 |

It was observed that most of the people who volunteered to participate in the study (58.9%) were undergraduates. Primary school graduates (2.7%) showed the least participation. Bachelor's degree graduates were followed by PhD graduates (14.3%), associate's degree graduates (8.9%), master's degree graduates (8%) and high school graduates (7.1%).

Table 4: Distribution of Participants by Occupation

| Occupation | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Student | 38 | 34,5 |
| Housewife | 6 | 5,5 |
| Worker | 6 | 5,5 |
| Officer | 40 | 36,4 |
| Administrator | 6 | 5,5 |
| Tradespeople | 3 | 2,7 |
| Private Sector Employee | 3 | 2,7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Self-employment (Lawyer, Medical Doctor, Pharm., Engineer, etc.) | 8 | 7,3 |
| Did not specify occupation | 2 | 1,7 |
| Total | 112 | 100 |

The majority of the participants were civil servants (36.4%) and students (34.5%). These groups were followed by self-employed workers (7.3%), housewives (5.5%), workers (5.5%), managers (5.5%), tradespeople (2.7%) and private sector employees (2.7%).

Table 5: Twitter Use of the Participants

| Twitter Use | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Uses Twitter | 66 | 58,9 |
| Does Not Use Twitter | 46 | 41,1 |
| Total | 112 | 100 |

Participants were asked the question 'Do you use Twitter?' at the beginning of the survey and according to the answers given, 41.1% (46 people) of the participants do not use Twitter, while 58.9% (66 people) use Twitter.

Table 6: Following Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter Account

| Question: "Do you follow Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter account?" | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 22 | 33,3 |
| No. | 44 | 66,7 |

In this context, the survey continued with 66 respondents. The next question asked to Twitter users was "Do you follow Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter account?". 22 (33.3%) participants answered 'Yes' and 44 participants (66.4%) answered 'No'.

Table 7: Scale Items and Frequency and Percentages of Responses (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan)

| Item 1: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter feed is reliable. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,4545 |

| Item 2: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is confident on his Twitter posts. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 3 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 4 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 45,5 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,9545 |

| Item 3: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is respectful on Twitter. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 2 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 3 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 4 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 9 | 40,9 | |

| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,7272 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item 4: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is outspoken on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 2 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,4090 |
| **Item 5: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is calm on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 3 | 7 | 31,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,3636 |
| **Item 6: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is courteous on his Twitter posts.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 3 | 7 | 31,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,50 |
| **Item 7: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is consistent in his Twitter posts.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 7 | 31,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,4545 |
| **Item 8: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not lie on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,0909 |
| **Item 9: What Recep Tayyip Erdoğan says on Twitter does not contradict each other.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 2 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 3 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,1363 |

| Item 10: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stands by what he says on Twitter. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 3 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 4 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,00 |

| Item 11: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan chooses the right words on his Twitter posts. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 45,5 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,8636 |

| Item 12: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not use exaggerated expressions on his Twitter posts. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 2 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,1363 |

| Item 13: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter posts and his behavior are consistent with each other. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 2 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 9 | 40,9 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,2727 |

| Item 14: There is a unity in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter posts. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 2 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 3 | 9 | 40,9 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,4090 |

| Item 15: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not give evasive answers to questions asked on Twitter. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 9 | 40,9 | |
| 4 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,2727 |

| Item 16: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been able to adapt to Twitter. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 4 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 45,5 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,3181 |

**Item 17: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is sincere on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,0909 |

**Item 18: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has a proper stance on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 4 | 7 | 31,8 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,7727 |

**Item 19: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan pays attention to the way he dresses on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 14 | 63,6 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 4,3181 |

**Item 20: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is sympathetic on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,3181 |

**Item 21: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech on Twitter is smooth.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 12 | 54,5 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 4,1818 |

**Item 22: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is charismatic on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|

| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 9 | 40,9 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | 3,6818 |

As can be seen from the table above, Twitter followers are most likely to agree on item 19 (mean: 4.3181) and item 21 (mean: 4,1818). In this context, followers think that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan pays attention to his clothing and his speech is smooth on Twitter. On the other hand, the followers showed the least agreement with item 10 ('Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stands by what he says on his Twitter posts.' mean:3.00),  item 17 ('Recep Tayyip Erdogan is sincere on Twitter.' mean: 3,0909),  item 8 ('Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not lie on his Twitter posts.' mean: 3,0909) and  item 12 ('Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  does not use exaggerated expressions in his Twitter posts.' mean: 3,1363).

Table 8: Following Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter Account

| Question: "Do you follow Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter account?" | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Yes** | 22 | 33,3 |
| **No.** | 44 | 66,7 |

Another question asked to Twitter users who participated in the survey was "Do you follow Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter account?". 22 (33.3%) participants answered 'Yes' and 44 participants (66.4%) answered 'No'.

Table 9: Scale Items and Frequency and Percentages of Responses (Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu)

| Item 1: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter posts are reliable. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 10 | 45,5 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,1818** |
| **Item 2: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is confident on his Twitter posts.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **2** | 1 | 4,5 | |
| **3** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **4** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,3636** |
| **Item 3: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is respectful on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 9 | 40,9 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,7272** |
| **Item 4: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is outspoken on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |

| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 4 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,6363** |

**Item 5: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is calm on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 3 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 36,4 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,5909** |

**Item 6: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is courteous on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 2 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 3 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 45,5 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,7727** |

**Item 7: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is consistent on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 31,8 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,4090** |

**Item 8: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu does not lie on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 2 | 2 | 9,1 | |
| 3 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 4 | 5 | 22,7 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 5 | 22,7 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,1363** |

**Item 9: What Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu says on Twitter does not contradict each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 1 | 4,5 | |
| 3 | 8 | 36,4 | |
| 4 | 3 | 13,6 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 6 | 27,3 | |
| Total | 22 | 100 | **3,2727** |

**Item 10: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stands by what he says on his Twitter**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 18,2 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |

| 3 | 6 | 27,3 | |
| 4 | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 8 | 36,4 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,5454** |

**Item 11: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu chooses the right words on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,4545** |

**Item 12: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu does not use exaggerated expressions on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **2** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **3** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **4** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **2,8181** |

**Item 13: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter posts and his behavior are consistent with each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 1 | 4,5 | |
| **3** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **4** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,2727** |

**Item 14: There is a unity in Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,1818** |

**Item 15: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu does not give evasive answers to questions on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **4** | 8 | 36,4 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,4545** |

**Item 16: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has been able to adapt to Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **2** | 1 | 4,5 | |
| **3** | 7 | 31,8 | |

| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 8 | 36,4 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,6818** |
| **Item 17: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is sincere on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 1 | 4,5 | |
| **3** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 31,8 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,3181** |
| **Item 18: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has a proper stance on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **4** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,2727** |
| **Item 19: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu pays attention to the way he dresses on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **2** | 1 | 4,5 | |
| **3** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **4** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 11 | 50 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,9545** |
| **Item 20: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is sympathetic on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **4** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 6 | 27,3 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,3636** |
| **Article 21: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's speech on Twitter is smooth.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **2** | 2 | 9,1 | |
| **3** | 4 | 18,2 | |
| **4** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 9 | 40,9 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **3,7727** |
| **Item 22: Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is charismatic on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **2** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **3** | 5 | 22,7 | |
| **4** | 6 | 27,3 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 3 | 13,6 | |
| **Total** | 22 | 100 | **2,9545** |

According to the findings, the participants mostly agreed with item 19 ('Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu pays attention to his dressing on his Twitter posts.' mean: 3,9545), item 6 ('Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is courteous on his Twitter posts.' mean: 3,7727), and item 21 ('Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's speech on his Twitter posts is smooth.' mean: 3,7727) among the items about Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. In this context, his followers highly agree with the views that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu pays attention to his dressing on Twitter, that he is level in his posts and that his speech is smooth. However, item 12 ('Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu does not use exaggerated expressions on his Twitter posts.' mean: 2,8181) and item 22 ('Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is charismatic on Twitter.' mean: 2,9545), were the views that the followers agreed with the least among the other items. In this context, his followers agree relatively less with the views that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu does not use exaggerated expressions on Twitter and that he is charismatic.

Table 10: Following Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter Account

| Question: "Do you follow Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter account?" | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Yes** | 16 | 24,2 |
| **No.** | 50 | 75,8 |

Another question asked to the Twitter users who participated in the survey was "Do you follow Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter account?". To this question, 16 (24.2%) participants answered 'Yes' and 50 (75.8%) participants answered 'No'.

Table 11: Scale Items and Frequency and Percentages of Responses (Devlet Bahçeli)

| **Item 1: Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter posts are reliable.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **4** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,6250** |
| **Item 2: Devlet Bahçeli is confident on his Twitter posts.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **4** | 8 | 50 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,25** |
| **Item 3: Devlet Bahçeli is respectful on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **3** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **4** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,3125** |
| **Item 4: Devlet Bahçeli is outspoken on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 1 | 6,3 | |

| 4 | 8 | 50 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 4 | 25 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,6250** |

**Item 5: Devlet Bahçeli is calm on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 25 | |
| 2 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 3 | 5 | 31,3 | |
| 4 | 4 | 25 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **2,75** |

**Item 6: Devlet Bahçeli is courteous in his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 5 | 31,3 | |
| 4 | 4 | 25 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,1875** |

**Item 7: Devlet Bahçeli is consistent in his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 4 | 8 | 50 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,50** |

**Item 8: Devlet Bahçeli does not lie in his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4 | 4 | 25 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 4 | 25 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,3125** |

**Item 9: What Devlet Bahçeli says on Twitter does not contradict each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 4 | 25 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 5 | 31,3 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 4 | 25 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,0625** |

**Item 10: Devlet Bahçeli stands by what he says on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 4 | 6 | 37,5 | |

| 5 (Completely agree) | 4 | 25 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,4375** |

**Item 11: Devlet Bahçeli chooses the right words on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,3750** |

**Item 12: Devlet Bahçeli does not use exaggerated expressions on his Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **2** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,00** |

**Item 13: Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter posts and his behavior are consistent with each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,1875** |

**Item 14: There is a unity in Devlet Bahçeli's Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **4** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,25** |

**Item 15: Devlet Bahçeli does not give evasive answers to questions on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 6 | 37,5 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,3750** |

**Item 16: Devlet Bahçeli has been able to adapt to Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **4** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 6 | 37,5 | |

| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,6875** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Item 17: Devlet Bahçeli is sincere on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,4375** |
| **Item 18: Devlet Bahçeli has a proper stance on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **4** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,8125** |
| **Item 19: Devlet Bahçeli pays attention to the way he dresses on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **4** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 11 | 68,7 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **4,1875** |
| **Item 20: Devlet Bahçeli is sympathetic on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,25** |
| **Article 21: Devlet Bahçeli's speech on Twitter is smooth.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **4** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,9375** |
| **Item 22: Devlet Bahçeli is charismatic on Twitter.** | | | |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Mean** |
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 4 | 25 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,4375** |

As can be seen from the table above, his followers stated that they mostly agreed with item 19 ('Devlet Bahçeli pays attention to the way he dersses on his Twitter posts.' mean: 4,1875) and item 21 ('Devlet Bahçeli's speech on Twitter posts is smooth.' mean: 3,9375) from their views on Devlet Bahçeli. On the other hand, the items that the followers least agree with were item 5 ('Devlet Bahçeli is calm on his Twitter posts.' mean: 2.75) and item 12 ('Devlet Bahçeli does not use exaggerated expressions on his Twitter posts.' mean: 3.00).

Table 12: Following Meral Akşener's Twitter Account

| Question: "Do you follow Meral Akşener's Twitter account?" | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 16 | 24,2 |
| No. | 50 | 75,8 |

The next question asked to the Twitter users participating in the survey was "Do you follow Meral Akşener's Twitter account?". To this question, 16 (24.2%) participants answered 'Yes' and 50 (75.8%) participants answered 'No'.

Table 13: Scale Items and Frequency and Percentages of Responses (Meral Akşener)

| Item 1: Meral Akşener's Twitter posts are reliable. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 9 | 56,3 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,1875 |
| Item 2: Meral Akşener is confident in her Twitter posts. | | | |
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 9 | 56,3 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,1875 |
| Item 3: Meral Akşener is respectful on Twitter. | | | |
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 0 | 0 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 11 | 68,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,50 |
| Item 4: Meral Akşener is outspoken on Twitter. | | | |
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 0 | 0 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 11 | 68,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,50 |
| Item 5: Meral Akşener is calm on Twitter. | | | |
| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |

| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 7 | 43,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 6 | 37,5 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,75** |

**Item 6: Meral Akşener is courteous on her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 0 | 0 | |
| 2 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 50 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **4,0625** |

**Item 7: Meral Akşener is consistent on her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 5 | 31,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 43,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **4,0625** |

**Item 8: Meral Akşener does not lie on her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 7 | 43,8 | |
| 4 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 6 | 37,5 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,5625** |

**Item 9: What Meral Akşener says on Twitter does not contradict each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 8 | 50 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,75** |

**Item 10: Meral Akşener stands behind what she says on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 3 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 7 | 43,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | **3,8750** |

**Item 11: Meral Akşener chooses the right words on her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 0 | 0 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2** | 2 | 12,5 | |
| **3** | 2 | 12,2 | |
| **4** | 0 | 0 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 12 | 75 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **4,3750** |

**Item 12: Meral Akşener does not use exaggerated expressions on her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **4** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 6 | 37,5 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,6250** |

**Item 13: Meral Akşener's Twitter posts and behavior are consistent with each other.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **4** | 4 | 25 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,9375** |

**Item 14: There is a unity in Meral Akşener's Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 4 | 25 | |
| **4** | 4 | 25 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,50** |

**Item 15: Meral Akşener does not give evasive answers to questions asked on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **3** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **4** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 8 | 50 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **3,8750** |

**Item 16: Meral Akşener has been able to adapt to Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |
| **3** | 3 | 18,8 | |
| **4** | 5 | 31,3 | |
| **5 (Completely agree)** | 7 | 43,8 | |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 | **4,0625** |

**Item 17: Meral Akşener is sincere on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 (Completely disagree)** | 1 | 6,3 | |
| **2** | 0 | 0 | |

| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 62,5 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,25 |

**Item 18: Meral Akşener has a proper stance on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 10 | 62,5 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,25 |

**Item 19: Meral Akşener pays attention to the way she dresses on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 4 | 2 | 12,5 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 11 | 68,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,3750 |

**Item 20: Meral Akşener is sympathetic in her Twitter posts.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 18,8 | |
| 4 | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 11 | 68,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,1250 |

**Article 21: Meral Akşener's speech on Twitter is smooth.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 0 | 0 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 12 | 75 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,50 |

**Item 22: Meral Akşener is charismatic on Twitter.**

| Opinion | Frequency | % | Mean |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (Completely disagree) | 1 | 6,3 | |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| 3 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| 5 (Completely agree) | 11 | 68,8 | |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 4,25 |

According to the findings, the opinions about Meral Akşener received more participation by the participants than the leaders of other political parties. Her followers showed high agreement with most of the statements about Meral Akşener. The opinions with the highest participation are item 4 ('Meral Akşener is outspoken on Twitter.' mean: 4.50) and item 5 ('Meral Akşener is calm in her Twitter posts.' mean: 4.50). The items with the lowest rate of participation by the followers are item 8 ('Meral Akşener does not lie on her Twitter posts.' mean: 3,5625)

and item 12 ('Meral Akşener does not use exaggerated expressions in her Twitter posts.' mean: 3,6250). However, the point to be noted here is that although these rates are low in Meral Akşener's case, they are higher than the scores of other political party leaders.

Table 14: Comparative table of political leaders according to item mean scores

| Items | Mean Score | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Recep Tayyip Erdoğan | Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu | Devlet Bahçeli | Meral Akşener |
| 1) Twitter posts are reliable. | 3,4545 | 3,1818 | 3,6250 | 4,1875 |
| 2) He/She is confident in their Twitter posts. | 3,9545 | 3,3636 | 3,25 | 4,1875 |
| 3) He/She is respectful on Twitter. | 3,7272 | 3,7272 | 3,3125 | 4,50 |
| 4) He/She is outspoken on Twitter. | 3,4090 | 3,6363 | 3,6250 | 4,50 |
| 5) He/She is calm in his Twitter posts. | 3,3636 | 3,5909 | 2,75 | 3,75 |
| 6) He/She is courteous in their Twitter posts. | 3,50 | 3,7727 | 3,1875 | 4,0625 |
| 7) He/She is consistent in their Twitter posts. | 3,4545 | 3,4090 | 3,50 | 4,0625 |
| 8) He/She does not lie on Twitter. | 3,0909 | 3,1363 | 3,3125 | 3,5625 |
| 9) What he/she says on Twitter does not contradict each other. | 3,1363 | 3,2727 | 3,0625 | 3,75 |
| 10) He/She stands by what he/she says on Twitter. | 3,00 | 3,5454 | 3,4375 | 3,8750 |
| 11) He/She chooses the right words in Twitter posts. | 3,8636 | 3,4545 | 3,3750 | 4,3750 |
| 12) He/she does not use exaggerated expressions in his/her Twitter posts. | 3,1363 | 2,8181 | 3,00 | 3,6250 |
| 13) Twitter posts and behavior are consistent with each other. | 3,2727 | 3,2727 | 3,1875 | 3,9375 |
| 14) There is a unity in Twitter posts. | 3,4090 | 3,1818 | 3,25 | 3,50 |
| 15) He/She does not give evasive answers to questions asked on Twitter. | 3,2727 | 3,4545 | 3,3750 | 3,8750 |
| 16) He/She has been able to adapt to Twitter. | 3,3181 | 3,6818 | 3,6875 | 4,0625 |
| 17) He/She is sincere on Twitter. | 3,0909 | 3,3181 | 3,4375 | 4,25 |
| 18) He/She has a proper stance on Twitter. | 3,7727 | 3,2272 | 3,8125 | 4,25 |
| 19) He/She pays attention to the way he/she dresses on Twitter. | 4,3181 | 3,9545 | 4,1875 | 4,3750 |
| 20) He/She is sympathetic on Twitter. | 3,3181 | 3,3636 | 3,25 | 4,1250 |
| 21) His/Her speech is smooth in his/her Twitter posts. | 4,1818 | 3,7727 | 3,9375 | 4,50 |
| 22) He/She is charismatic on Twitter. | 3,6818 | 2,9545 | 3,4375 | 4,25 |
| Overall Mean Score | 3,5103 | 3,4132 | 3,4090 | 4,0710 |

When the total scores of the survey items are compared, it is seen that the leader of the political party with the highest level of reassuring and persuasiveness is Meral Akşener (mean: 4,0710). Meral Akşener is followed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (mean: 3,5103). Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is in the third place with a mean score of 3,4132, while Devlet Bahçeli is in the last place with a mean score of 3,4090.

Political leaders scored the most points on item 19. According to this item, Twitter followers think that political party leaders pay attention to their clothing and appearance in their Twitter posts. On the other hand, as can be seen from the table, political party leaders received the lowest scores from their followers on item 12. Accordingly, Twitter followers do not agree with the view that political party leaders 'do not use exaggerated expressions' in their Twitter posts. Another prominent point is seen in item 5. In this context, Twitter users think that Devlet Bahçeli was less calm in his Twitter posts compared to other political party leaders (mean: 2,75). Another point worth noting is charisma on Twitter. According to item 22, Meral Akşener is the most charismatic leader (mean: 4,25). She is followed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (mean: 3.6818), Devlet Bahçeli (mean: 3.4375) and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (mean: 2.9545). However, Twitter followers perceive a unity and consistency in the posts of all leaders. In terms of adapting to the Twitter platform, Meral Akşener scored the highest mean ( 4,0625). Devlet

Bahceli (mean: 3.6875) and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (mean: 3,6818) scored very close to each other in this context. The political party leader with the lowest score for adapting to Twitter is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (mean: 3,3181). One more political leader was included in the survey. This political leader is HDP co-chair Pervin Buldan. When respondents were asked the question 'Do you follow Pervin Buldan's Twitter account?', only 2 respondents (3%) answered 'Yes'. 97% of the participants (64 people) stated that they do not follow Pervin Buldan on Twitter. Since the sample was very small and the answers given by the following two people contained the lowest scores for all items, the data obtained for Pervin Buldan were not tabulated and were excluded from the study.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The appropriate items of the 'Trust and Persuasion Scale' prepared by Karadoğan (2003) were used for the Twitter platform in this study. A total of 112 people aged 18 and over living in Düzce province participated in the study. The research continued with 66 participants using Twitter. The opinions of the participants on the accounts of the political party leaders they follow on Twitter are given in tables above. Finally, the views of the participants on the Twitter accounts of all political leaders (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Devlet Bahçeli and Meral Akşener) are given comparatively in a summary table.

According to the findings, Meral Akşener is the political party leader that respondents trust the most and has the ability to persuade (mean. 4,0710). Meral Akşener is followed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (mean. 3,5103). They are followed by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (mean. 3.4132) and Devlet Bahçeli (mean. 3,4090).

During the research, it was observed that the number of followers of political leaders Devlet Bahçeli and Meral Akşener on Twitter was lower than the other two leaders. Since having a large number of followers on social media platforms means reaching more people and communicating more effectively, it is recommended that these two leaders work to reach more followers. In particular, Pervin Buldan, who was removed from the scope after the research, is followed by only 3% of the participants (2 people). This could mean that Pervin Buldan does not use Twitter very effectively. This leader is also advised to use Twitter more effectively to increase her followers.

**REFERENCES**

Abid, A., Harrigan, P., and Roy, S. (2020). *A relationship marketing orientation in politics: Young voters' perceptions of political brands' use of social media*. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 1-16.

Agrifoglio, R., Black, S., Metallo, C., and Ferrara, M. (2012*). Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motivation in Continued Twitter Usage*. Journal of Computer Information Systems, 53(1), 33-41.

Andı, S., Aytaç, S. E., and Çarkoğlu, A. (2019). *Internet and social media use and political knowledge: Evidence from Turkey*. Mediterranean Politics, 25(5), 579-599.

Aydın, S. Z., and Gülsoy, S. (2017). *The Importance of Young Choice of Using Social Media in Political Party Leaders: An Application on Suleyman Demirel University Students*. Suleyman Demirel University The Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 22(4), 965-979.

Bakardjieva, M. (2015*). Do clouds have politics? Collective actors in social media land*. Information, Communication & Society, 18(8), 983-990.

Baldwin-Philippi, J. (2014). *The social media president: Barack Obama and the politics of digital engagement*. Information, Communication & Society, 17(10), 1298-1300.

Başoğlu, U. D., and Yanar, Ş. (2017). *University Students 'Determination of the Social Media Usage And Habits*. Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi, 1(2), 6-13.

Best, J. W., and Kahn, J. V. (1998). *Research in Education (8th Edition)*. Allyn and Bacon Press.

Bode, L. (2016). *Political News in the News Feed: Learning Politics from Social Media*. Mass Communication and Society, 19(1), 24-48.

Bostancı, M. (2014). *Political Communication 2.0*. Journal of Erciyes Communication, 3(3), 84-96.

Bowman, B. (2017). *Social media and everyday politics*. Information, Communication & Society, 20(12), 1782-1782.

Chaffee, S. E. (1975). *Political Communication (Ed: Chaffee S. E.)*. Sage Publication Beverly Hills, California.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2005). *Research Methods in Education (5. Edition)*. Routledge.

DeGroot, J. M., Young, V. J., and VanSlette, S. H. (2015). *Twitter Use and its Effects on Student Perception of Instructor Credibility*. Communication Education, 64(4), 419-437.

Dilber, F. (2018). *The Role of Social Media in Politics: Comparing AKP, CHP, and MHP in terms of Social Media Used Levels*. Middle Black Sea Journal of Communication Studies, 3(2), 54-66.

Doğan, A., and Alptekin, G. (2018). *Social Media As A Political Communication Tool: Investigation On Twitter Practical Use Of Turkey Grand National Assembly Members*. Journal of Bitlis Eren University Institute of SocialSciences, 7(2), 737-756.

Doğan, İ. (2020). *Political Propaganda and Social Media*. Ahi Evran Academy Journal, 1(2), 1-13.

Ekman, M., and Widholm, A. (2014). *Politicians as Media Producers*. Journalism Practice, 9(1), 78-91.

Ekmekci, F. (2010). *Turkish "politics of intentions" as a pathological case: Low social trust in Turkey and its political consequences.* International Journal of Human Sciences, 7(2), 234-246.

Enli, G., and Simonsen, C.-A. (2017). *'Social media logic' meets professional norms: Twitter hashtags usage by journalists and politicians*. Information, Communication & Society, 21(8), 1081-1096.

Erdemci, H. (2017 *The Investigation of Social Network Usage Analysis of Vocational School Students.* Academia Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2(1), 10-19.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Barnidge, M., & Diehl, T. (2018). *Political persuasion on social media: A moderated moderation model of political discussion disagreement and civil reasoning*. The Information Society, 34(5), 302-315.

Goldsmith, E. B., and Goldsmith, R. E. (2011). *Social influence and sustainability in households*. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 35(2), 117-121.

Gökçe, A. F. (2013). *The Perception of in-Party Democracy and Discipline in Political Parties: Turkey*. Journal of Academic Researches and Studies, 5(9), 65-79.

Gökçe, O. Z., Hatipoğlu, E., Göktürk, G., Luetgert, B., & Saygin, Y. (2014). *Twitter and Politics: Identifying Turkish Opinion Leaders in New Social Media*. Turkish Studies, 15(4), 671-688.

Harris, L., and Harrigan, P. (2015). *Social Media in Politics: The Ultimate Voter Engagement Tool or Simply an Echo Chamber?*. Journal of Political Marketing, 14(3), 251-283.

Hendriks, C. M., Duus, S., and Ercan, S. A. (2016). *Performing politics on social media: The dramaturgy of an environmental controversy on Facebook*. Environmental Politics, 25(6), 1102-1125.

Himelboim, I., Lariscy, R. W., Tinkham, S. F., ve Sweetser, K. D. (2012). *Social Media and Online Political Communication: The Role of Interpersonal Informational Trust and Openness*. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 56(1), 92-115.

Housholder, E. E., and LaMarre, H. L. (2014). *Facebook Politics: Toward a Process Model for Achieving Political Source Credibility Through Social Media*. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 11(4), 368-382.

İşman, A. and Dağdeviren, E. (2018). *Diffusion of Twitter in Turkey*. Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET, 17(4), 1-7.

Java, A., Song, X., Finin, T., ve Tseng, B. (2007). *Why We Twitter: Understanding Microblogging Usage and Communities.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis.

Kaid, L. L. (2004). *Handbook Of Political Communication Research*. Routledge.

Kaplan, A. M., and Haenlein, M. J. B. h. (2010). *Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media*. Businness Horizons, 53(1), 59-68.

Karadoğan, E. S. (2003). *The Consept of Trust in ihe Process of Interpersonal Communication: An Example of Trust and Persuasion Scale. (PhD. Thesis)*, Istanbul University. Istanbul.

Karasar, N. (2005). *Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi*. Ankara. Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.

Kijek, T., Angowski, M., and Skrzypek, A. (2020). *Millennials Use of Social Media in Product Innovation Purchasing Processes.* Journal of Computer Information Systems, 60(1), 9-17.

Krauss, R. M., and Fussell, S. R. (1996). *Social Psychological Models of Interpersonal Communication*. In H. E. T. & K. A. (Eds.), *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles (s. 655-701).* New York: Gulliford Press.

Kruse, L. M., Norris, D. R., and Flinchum, J. R. (2017). *Social Media as a Public Sphere? Politics on Social Media.* The Sociological Quarterly, 59(1), 62-84.

Kurt, K., Aktaş, B., and Turan, A. H. (2019). *Investigation of Social Media Usage Preferences of University Students.* Journal of Management Information Systems, 5(1), 1-15.

Küçükali, A., and Serçemeli, C. (2019). *Social Media Usage of Academicians: The Case of Ataturk University*. Eurasian Journal of Social and Economic Research, 6(10), 202-219.

Loader, B. D., and Mercea, D. (2011). *Networking Democracy?*. Information, Communication & Society, 14(6), 757-769.

Macková, A. (2016). *Interpreting Hashtag Politics: Policy Ideas in an Era of Social Media, by Stephen Jeffares.* Critical Policy Studies, 10(1), 129-130.

Metin, O. (2016). *The Impacts of Social Media on Political Socialization: A Field Study*. Afyon Kocatepe University Journal of Social Sciences, 18(2), 221-267.

Nochumson, T. C. (2020). *Elementary Schoolteachers' Use of Twitter: Exploring the Implications of Learning Through Online Social Media.* Professional Development in Education, 46(2), 306-323.

Ohme, J. (2019). *When Digital Natives Enter the Electorate: Political Social Media use Among First-time Voters and Its Effects on Campaign Participation*. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 16(2), 119-136.

Özbudun, E. (1974). *Siyasal Partiler (Vol. 4).* Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası.

Özkan, M. F., and Türkmen, D. (2020). *The Use of Social Media as a Means of Political Communication: Twitter Samples of Ankara Deputies.* Journal of Science Harmony, 3(1), 5-15.

Park, C. S. (2019). *Learning Politics From Social Media: Interconnection of Social Media Use for Political News and Political Issue and Process Knowledge.* Communication Studies, 70(3), 253-276.

Pentina, I., Basmanova, O., & Zhang, L. (2016). *A cross-national study of Twitter users' motivations and continuance intentions.* Journal of Marketing Communications, 22(1), 36-55.

Scaramuzzino, G. and Scaramuzzino, R. (2017). *The weapon of a new generation?-Swedish Civil Society Organizations' use of social media to influence politics*. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 14(1), 46-61.

Stewart, K. (2017). *Social Media and the Politics of Forgetting*. Journal of Media Ethics, 32(2), 137-138.

Şahin, A., Kaynakçı, C. and Aytop, Y. (2016). *Determination of Social Media Usage Habits of Students in The Agriculture Faculty.* Journal of Tekirdağ Agricultural Faculty, 13(2), 34-45.

Şahin, Y. (2017 *The Evaluation of Social Media Tools in the Context of Civil Disobedience*. Journal of Social and Cultural Studies, 3(5), 171-187.

Tan, M., Çiçek, Y., and Koçar, H. (2015*). Political Parties and Solution Proposals about the Inner Party Democracy Problem in Turkey.* Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Journal, 5(2), 347-366.

Valenzuela, S., Halpern, D., Katz, J. E., and Miranda, J. P. (2019). *The Paradox of Participation Versus Misinformation: Social Media, Political Engagement, and the Spread of Misinformation.* Digital Journalism, 7(6), 802-823.

We Are Social, and Hootsuite. (2020). *Digital 2020 Global Digital Overview: Essential Insight into How People Around the World Use the Internet, Mobile Devices, Social Media, and Ecommerce*. Retrieved from https://wearesocial.com/digital-2020

Willet, K. B. S. (2019). *Revisiting How and Why Educators Use Twitter: Tweet Types and Purposes in #Edchat.* Journal of Research on Technology in Education, 51(3), 273-289.

Yavuz, S. (2020). *A Research on Purposes of Social Media Usage: Theology Faculty Students Example*. Bozok University Journal of Faculty of Theology [BOZIFDER], 17, 99-132.

Zhou, T. (2011). *Understanding Online Community User Participation: A Social Influence Perspective*. Internet Research, 21(1), 67-81.