

# **A Qualitative Approach to Investigating Antecedents of Audience Activity: A Study of Newspaper Readers in Pakistani Society**

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## **Introduction**

Social scientists, policy makers, moralists and other stakeholders have been taking great interest in the audiences' response to media contents since the inception of mass media. That is why media-using behavior of the audiences worked as a corner stone of a bulk of communication theories especially those relating to the process, functions, and effects of mass communications. Besides making various scholars to ponder over the media using habits, exploring audiences' autonomy in their media transaction, and the resultant effects this important area has also been widely discussed by those who are concerned about the purity of their indigenous culture, who are concerned about the social behaviors of the youngsters, and who takes interest in the psychological patterns of their youth and adolescents in their respective society. On the basis of response of media consumers to the media offerings, we can divide media related theories into two broader categories: (i) theories that assume mass media more powerful and project audiences passive in their media transactions, and (ii) theories that believe in audiences' autonomy, freedom and will in their media consumption. The earlier category of theories assigns greater powers to the communicator, and deems the audiences to be at the disposal of the mass media in their reaction to the media offerings. It views the media audiences as passive in their media uses. The later category believes in audience activity. It assumes media audiences as active in their media-use behavior.

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rules and ethical codes allows the believer to acquire these ethical manners to train soul and body. The choice of some food or a drink depends on the moralistic finality. The abstinence from the alcoholic drinks, reducing his sleeping, his eating and speaking that are some of the Sufi principles *speaking less, sleep less, eat less (killat-i kelam, killat-i menam, killat-i taam)*, having a respectful language without obscene words are required to obtain a holy life. The first characteristic of a believer's action, for Gülen, has to do with the notion of the greater jihad, the struggle against one's carnal desires and worldliness.

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achieved. Pursuit of this pedagogical model of morality permits Gülen's followers to transform themselves in a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection that shaped ideal human being.

He also emphasizes the importance of **adab (morality)** in reaching the perfection "The essential purpose of adab is to nurture the human morality. To reach the goal of raising the human character, Muslim's behavior is determined by the religious recommendation and obligation which gives him a map of cognition. Adab is regarded as the practical morality of Islam. Muslims internalize these practices and rituals in order to rear a perfect human being. According to a Hadith, "the best amongst you are those who have the best manners and characters, the good behavior are central to the performance of Muslim's personality."

"Morality is the essence of religion and a most fundamental portion of the Divine Message. If being virtuous and having good morals are to be heroic-and they are- the greatest heroes are, first, the Prophets and, after them, those who follow them with sincerity and devotion. A true Muslim is one who practices a truly universal, therefore Muslim, morality. <sup>[12]</sup>"

Lacking a political dimension, his sermons affect the fulfillment of Muslim's morality through the formation of personality. Gülen's movement **opposes to violence** and does not favor the protests. In his sermon, the prophetic model to which Gülen attributes a decisive role and a central place is represented as a figure to absolutely imitate. **The pious, ascetic and devoted religious practices** are expected from the Muslim generation. Stemming ultimately from two central authorities, the Quran and the life of the Prophet Mohammed (SAV), Gülen underlines the divine aspect of morality.

For Gülen, the Prophet is the example of goodness as well as the revelator of high human quality. The daily prayer, the avoidance of the prohibited food, the manner of clothing and greeting, abstention from the illicit things and respect for one's parents become principles to keep the spirit of *haya*. All of these daily practices produce the technologies of self. The implementation of his daily obligations and religious practices that contain the *adab*

A person of ideals is a **true example of responsibility** to the society in which they live. To reach their targets, the first of which is, of course, the pleasure of their Creator, they sacrifice everything that God has bestowed on them, without giving the matter a second thought; they have no fear or concern for anything worldly.

A person of ideals and high standing **feels respect for the values they are attached to** with profound self-supervision, performing their duties in the exhilaration of worship, and living as a hero of love and enthusiasm.

Ideal human being is so sincerely **devoted to the Will of God** that the storms of ambitions which hit them intensify and consolidate their sense of right, justice, and right-mindedness; floods of hatred, grudge, and malice enthuse the springs of love and compassion in their soul; they ignore and tread upon the gifts and blessings that ordinary people are caught up with, and they oppose retaliation.

Fethullah Gülen says; "We do not need anything else but exemplary **people of high character and ideals**. These exalted souls of the highest ideals will realize the re-establishment of our nation in the coming years. These heroic people, the yeast of whose existence is faith, love, wisdom, and insight, have not yielded to or been shaken by the numerous attacks that came from within and without over almost ten centuries".

For free will and freedom he utters: "**Being free and enjoying freedom** are a significant depth of human willpower and a mysterious door through which man may set forth in to the secrets of the self. One unable to set forth into that depth and unable to pass through that door can hardly be called human.... we have to be more freethinking and free willed".

He remarks the importance of **representative role (tamsil)** in spreading out the message of Islam (tabligh) rather than speeches and argumentation . This bodily act constitutes the transformation of our perception on Islamic subjects and the meaning of the life.

Gülen's pedagogical model concerning **altruism (eethar)** associated always with devotion, self-criticism is thought as technologies of the self in which the objective of taking care body and soul is

endeavor is to emphatically stress the fact that, by virtue of drawing attention to the relationship between God and humankind, humanity's greatest virtue, ethically speaking, will be to attain the model of universal or ideal human. In fact, in his teaching, this is an opening that spells his ideal model for human beings who sacrifice their own life's pleasures—who, in a way, live for others (altruism). He argues that such a human being can take as his or her basis only positive action in social arena.

Gülen's ultimate aim is to have the consent of God. His teaching is premised on the belief that there is no aim or reward beyond the approval and love of God. The easiest way to acquire this, is obeying the rules explained by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and imitating the Prophet's way of life. Gülen's purpose is not to be or becoming a leader, he would rather be a slave and servant. He has so many followers even he does not have a desire to lead. He regards his 'reputation' as a credit from God, and uses this to motivate people. One who cannot manage his or her worldly desires cannot rehabilitate someone else. Gülen never 'contaminates' the realities, and does not 'shade' the realities with any personal interest. Therefore the messages reflects what is in his mind and heart and illuminates people. Gülen always interrogates himself and never deceives himself. He practices what he preaches. It is this sincere and honest search for reality that has won him millions of followers all over the world. His followers are disciples of sincerity, honesty and compassion.

He states: "A person of ideals is, first of all, a **hero of love**, who loves God, the Almighty Creator devotedly and feels a deep interest in the whole of creation under the wings of that love, who embraces everything and everybody with compassion.

A true person of ideals is also a **person of wisdom**. While observing everything from the comprehensive realm of reason, they also assess everything with the measures of their appreciative heart, testing them through the criteria of self-criticism and self-supervision

inspiration of a youth movement that began in the 1970s and developed into a dense web of transnational networks with millions of followers. The Gülen movement has established hundreds of schools and colleges, organized businessmen and entrepreneurs around a common platform, and set up two of the Turkey's largest daily newspapers, number of TV and radio stations, a leading publishing house and a number of periodical magazines and journals. Internationally, this movement has extended its reach of educational and media efforts to all parts of the globe.

Gülen and his volunteer movement have set out to produce, what he calls, "the golden generation": a generation that can integrate Muslim identity with modern realities. Gülen has developed a model for human life whose social aspects have been brought to the fore. For it is impossible for someone who has not acquired an independent character to make a positive contribution to the social sphere. Gülen argues that the individual and collective happiness lie in disciplining three innate faculties (reason, anger, and lust) to produce a young, "golden generation" that will learn theoretical aspects of "the middle way between modernity and tradition" and will bring it into practice. This generation is supposed to absorb and represent both modern realities and Muslim morality and identities through its mind, its behaviors and its spirituality.

Gülen symbolizes human beings as mirrors for Allah's names and attributes. Therefore, human beings are distinguished from the rest of creation because they have the honor of being responsible for making the Earth prosperous in God's name. In his teaching, Gülen lays out a broad vision for a society and world led by individuals of spiritual, moral and intellectual excellence. He calls these people "ideal human" and describes their following eight characters and attributes: faith; love; a balanced view of science with the trio of reasoning, logic and consciousness; a re-evaluated view of humans, life, and the universe; free thinking and respect for freedom of thought; a habit to consultative and collective consciousness; mathematical thinking; and appreciate for art. Gülen's entire



It is clear from Gülen's writings that he has spent much time perusing the poetry of Rumi and has reflected deeply on his spiritual insights. It is not an exaggeration to say that Gülen is a modern Muslim thinker and activist whose life work of promoting an Islamic appreciation of love, tolerance, and universal peace is in fact a renewed interpretation for our times of the central insights of Mawlana. Gülen sees himself, not as an innovator, but as a Muslim scholar firmly within the Islamic tradition represented by the "lovers" like Jalaluddin Rumi, Iqbal, Yunus Emre, and Said Nursi.

Now, let's get the ideas of Fethullah Gülen himself on the Ideal human being; Before his ideas, I would like to say a few words about him and the movement named after him .

M. Fethullah Gülen, an educator, a religious scholar and peace activist, is one of the most influential contemporary Muslim voices encouraging peaceful coexistence and the synthesis of faith and reason in Western societies through democracy, citizenship, spirituality, multiculturalism, religious diversity, educational initiatives and intercultural and interfaith dialogue activities in the context of secular modernity. He has had a significant influence on the millions of people, who became committed to the vision of global peace and progress through education and dialogue .

Gülen, known by some as 'a modern-day' Rumi, is not only an individual but, in his life as well as his teaching, is also the inspirational figure for an emerging volunteer movement that originally took shape in his native country, but is now found throughout many parts of the world. Gülen has been considered as a persuasive Muslim scholar who puts the individual and his or her spiritual, intellectual and personal development at the centre of everything. Gülen proposes that his followers harmonize intellectuality with modernity, tasawwuf, Sufi-oriented spirituality and caring, humane activism . He has geared all his energies towards the regeneration of the Muslim spirit and towards evolving a new breed of idealistic Muslim youth who are modern, spiritual and rational, with a deep sense of belief in and love for humankind. Gülen's greatest intellectual achievement is the

He reiterates his servant status to emphasize his standing before God:

Men Bende shodem, bende shodem, bende shodem...

*I have become a servant, become a servant, become a servant;  
I have bowed and doubled myself up with serving You.  
Servants or slaves rejoice when they become emancipated;  
Whereas I rejoice when I become a servant of You.*<sup>[10]</sup>

One could go on at length to multiply instances of how Fethullah Gülen employs the teaching of Jalal al-Din Rumi to teach the practical virtues needed for a rich spirituality. In his work, *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism*, Gülen refers to Rumi more often than to any other spiritual author. He cites the advice of Mawlana to illustrate his teaching on *poverty* ("Poverty is the essence and all else is form; poverty is a remedy and all else the disease," p. 171); on the need for *austerity* and periods of *retreat* ("In the early days of his initiation, Rumi underwent many forty-day periods of austerity in seclusion; however, when he found a true, perfect master, he left seclusion for the company of people," p. 17); and the value of temporary *seclusion* ("One must seclude oneself from others, not from the Beloved; fur is worn in winter, not in spring," p. 18).

Similarly, Gülen enlists the authority of Rumi to underline the importance of *self-supervision* ("Rumi regards self-supervision as a protecting screen from evil emotions, thoughts, passions, and acts, and considers it the safest way to be attentive to Divine rights," p. 58); *truthfulness* ("The truthfulness of a lover affects even the lifeless; why then should it be found strange that it affects man's heart?" p. 86), and *reliance* on God (p. 70). Rumi offers the criteria for judging the *value of work* (p. 126) and for appreciating a proper attitude toward *worldly possessions* (p. 43).

*What is the world? It is heedlessness of God'  
Not clothes, nor silver coin, nor children, nor women.  
If you have worldly possessions in the name of God,  
Then the Messenger said: How fine is the property a righteous man has!  
The water in a ship causes it to sink,  
But the water under it causes it to float.*<sup>[11]</sup>

of Rumi, are like those who keep one foot in the sphere of Divine commandments and turn the other, like a compass needle, throughout the world. They experience ascension and descent at every moment. This is the seclusion recognized and preferred by the Prophets and saints”.

Gülen also sees Mawlana as one who teaches and exemplifies the virtues needed to progress on the path toward a union of love and will with God. He enlists Rumi's advice at the very beginning of the spiritual path and cites Mawlana's words on the need for *repentance*. If one does not feel remorse and disgust for errors committed and if one is not apprehensive of falling back into one's old ways of living, in short, if one has not made a serious act of repentance, one's persistence in following the spiritual path will be shallow and unstable. Gülen cites Rumi as follows on the need for a deep commitment to repent :

*I have repented and turned to God so sincerely  
that I will not break [the vow of repentance] until my soul leaves my  
body.*

*In fact, who other than an ass steps toward perdition  
after having suffered so much trouble [on account of his sins]? [8]*

A second virtue essential for progress in spiritual life is that of *sincerity*. It is so easy to fool oneself and even easier to deceive others that if one is not sincere, one may find oneself performing religious duties to be seen by others. As Rumi puts it:

*You should be sincere in all your deeds,  
So that the Majestic Lord may accept them.  
Sincerity is the wing of the bird of the acts of obedience.*

*Without a wing, how can you fly to the abode of prosperity? [9]*

Gülen elaborates on this by adding two *hadiths* from the Prophet in which he states: "Be sincere in your religion; a little work (with sincerity) is enough for you," and "Be sincere in your deeds, for God only accepts what is done with sincerity."

A third virtue stressed by Rumi is *humility*. Rumi does not present himself as a great saint or someone who has achieved a deep spiritual level, but sees himself rather as a simple servant of God.

to understand Islam as a message of love. He cites Rumi's famous invitation:

*"Come, come and join us, as we are the people of love devoted to God!  
Come, come through the door of love and join us and sit with us.  
Come; let us speak one to another through our hearts.  
Let us speak secretly, without ears and eyes.  
Let us laugh together without lips or sound, let us laugh like the roses.  
Since we are all the same, let us call each other from our hearts,  
We won't use our lips or tongue."* [6]

Sorrow which arises from separation from the Beloved and which gives rise to a longing to return to God is the source of greater love and happiness in one's life. The pain of separation from God must not be rejected or denied, but rather accepted as expressive of the human state and a strong motivation for a fuller absorption in the Divine. Rumi puts it as follows:

*"I've broken through to longing now,  
filled with a grief I have felt before, but never like this.  
The center leads to love . . .*

*Hold on to your particular pain. That too can take you to God."*

One must not think that Rumi, in his day, and Gülen, in modern times, are proposing a life-denying spirituality in which a person turns one's back on the exigencies of reality and practical living in this world. Gülen quotes Mawlana to say:

*One wise and sensible prefers the bottom of the well,  
For the soul finds delight in privacy (to be with God).  
The darkness of the well is preferable to the darkness people cause...  
One must seclude oneself from others, not from the Beloved. [7]*

In his commentary on these verses, Gülen explains that the purpose of seclusion is to purify the heart of all love which is not for God so that one might live united with the Beloved in the midst of daily activities. This is a restatement of what is affirmed in the compass image, portraying the true lover as one whose union with God frees him to embrace humanity wholeheartedly. As Gülen explains:

*"Those who always feel themselves in the presence of God do not need to seclude themselves from people. Such people, in the words*

one's existence, while the other foot moves in a "broad circle that embraces all believers." [3]

For Gülen, Rumi represents the "true face of Islam," what the Islamic revelation and tradition is actually about. Gülen elaborates his point as follows: If one were to seek the true face of Islam in its own sources, history, and true representatives, then one would discover that it contains no harshness, cruelty, or fanaticism. It is a religion of forgiveness, pardon, and tolerance as such saints and princes of love and tolerance as Rumi, Iqbal, Bediüzzaman and many others have so beautifully expressed. [4]

Gülen notes that not every aspect of religion is of equal weight; there are some aspects which are essential and fundamental, while other aspects are occasional and peripheral. For Gülen, the essence of Islam, what the religion is really about, are values like peace, love, forgiveness and tolerance. Rumi's preeminence in the Islamic tradition derives from his eloquent espousal of the primacy of love, God's love for the believer, and the believer's love for God. A similar emphasis is found in Gülen's thought:

"I can and do say that peace, love, forgiveness and tolerance are fundamental to Islam; other things are accidental. Yet, it is necessary to give priority to basic Muslim issues according to their degree of importance. For example, if God gives importance to love, if He has informed us that He loves those who love Him, and if He has given to the person He loves most the name "Habibullah," i.e., one who loves God and is loved by Him, then we have to take this as a fundamental principle. Rules like jihad against hypocrites and unbelievers are secondary matters that are necessitated by circumstances". [5]

In Gülen's thinking, Rumi, Yunus Emre, and those like them represent the mainstream of Islamic thought and practice down through the centuries. There is no denying that some Muslims have at times exposed violence and coercion, but Gülen invites his followers to look to "the lovers - the people of love," as Rumi calls them, to discover and follow the example of those who have come

I should confess that I am lonely." Gülen seems to echo Rumi's plaintive cry of separation from the Source, of being a stranger in a strange land in his poem.

The writings of Jalaluddin Rumi, the thirteenth-century mystical poet and founder of the Mawlawi Sufi confraternity, have influenced the thinking and behavior of many Muslims down to our own times. Two of the modern Muslims who have appropriated Rumi's attitudes and integrated them into their own understandings of Islamic faith and practice, are Iqbal and Gülen.

Why does Gülen consider Rumi a worthy exemplar for the modern Muslim? The answer to this question can be found in four areas. Firstly, for Gülen, Rumi is one of the great figures of tolerance and dialogue in Islamic history; modern Muslims can learn from Rumi's 'compass openness'. Secondly, Rumi is a model of holiness, one of the great saints produced by Islam. Thirdly, Mawlana's longing for God makes him an instructive example for all those who thirst for a relationship of greater intimacy with God. Finally, Rumi is the teacher of the many virtues need by conscientious Muslims at all times.

Among the medieval mystical poets, the one who speaks most clearly and directly to the modern world is Jalaluddin Rumi, known simply in the Muslim world as "Mawlana," Our Master. The depth of his spiritual experience, his original and arresting poetic images, his obvious sincerity and openheartedness, and his ability to transcend cultures, time periods, and religions, all go together to make Mawlana one of the most accessible and influential of Muslim thinkers who speak to us from the past.

Let's learn much about Mawlana Rumi's thoughts about Ideal Human from Fethullah Gülen, which are at the same time, Mr. Gülen's thoughts;

Gülen states that Rumi who described himself as a compass, with one foot fixed firmly in the center while the other turns in a broad arc to complete a full circle. The foot planted resolutely in the center which never changes position is the faith conviction by which one is united to God as the unmoving heart and center of

# **Ideal Human in the Thoughts of Rumi, Iqbal and Gülen**

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First of all I would like to thank to Rumi Forum and the Chairman Mr. Harun Koken for inviting me to Pakistan for such an august occasion. My thanks go to as well Allama Iqbal Open university for collaborating with the Rumi Forum on the colloquium.

Today I would like to express my opinions about what the characteristics of Ideal Human (Insan-i kamil) in the thoughts of Mawlana and Fethullah Gülen are. Actually being the student of Fethullah Gülen since my childhood, I will emphasize on the thoughts of Fethullah Gülen, touch a little bit upon Mawlana's thoughts and learn much about Iqbal from Pakistani colleagues.

Mawlana Rumi is one of the many scholars and spiritual leaders, where both Iqbal and Gülen got inspired from.

About 700 years ago in Anatolia, present day Konya, Turkey, spiritual master and poet Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi uttered this lament, "Sine hahem sherha sherha as firaq, tabegoyem sherh-i derd-i ishtiyak". "I want a heart that is split, chamber by chamber by the pain of separation from God, so that I might explain my longings and desires to it. [1]" Rumi spent his entire life searching for those who shared similar longings, whose love of God was as unquenchable as his, a mirror to his soul.

In an interview with Turkish journalist Nuriye Akman, Turkish spiritual leader and poet, Fethullah Gülen said, "I am looking for a person who is troubled on the inside; one with whom I could talk about the Islamic world, the situation in Turkey, and share my troubles. I am searching for a troubled heart. [2]" He goes on to say that he has many close friends yet none with whom he can share everything. "A friend in thought needs to be like you; needs to burn inside like a fireplace; have a strong bond with, yet remain humble.

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