

## An Investigation of Sentiment and Themes from Twitter for Brexit in 2016

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**Abstract :** Observing debate and discussion over social media has been found to be a promising tool to investigate different types of opinion. On 23 June 2016, Brexit voters in the UK decided to depart from the EU, with 51.9% voting to leave. On Twitter, there had been a massive debate in this context, and the hashtag Brexit was allocated as number six of the most tweeted hashtags across the globe in 2016. The study aimed to investigate the sentiment and themes expressed in a sample of tweets during a political event (Brexit) in 2016. A sentiment and thematic analysis was conducted on 1304 randomly selected tweets tagged with the hashtag Brexit in Twitter for the period from 10 June 2016 to 7 July 2016. The data were coded manually into two code frames, sentiment and thematic, and the reliability of coding was assessed for both codes. The sentiment analysis of the selected sample found that 45.63% of tweets conveyed negative emotions while there were only 10.43% conveyed positive emotions. It also surprisingly resulted that 29.37% were factual tweets, where the tweeter expressed no sentiment and the tweet conveyed a fact. For the thematic analysis, the economic theme dominated by 23.41%, and almost half of its discussion was related to business within the UK and the UK and global stock markets. The study reported that the current UK government and relation to campaign themes were the most negative themes. Both sentiment and thematic analyses found that tweets with more than one opinion or theme were rare, 8.29% and 6.13%, respectively.

**Keywords :** Brexit, political opinion mining, social media, twitter

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