

# **The Pavilion Online – Social Media Engagement During the T20 Cricket World Cup**

Asra Malik  
Hussain Khawaja  
Waqas Jan

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G5 Internet Observatory

[team@g5io.org](mailto:team@g5io.org)

Office 505, 5th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, Sir Agha Khan Road,  
F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan

[www.g5io.org](http://www.g5io.org)



## Overview:

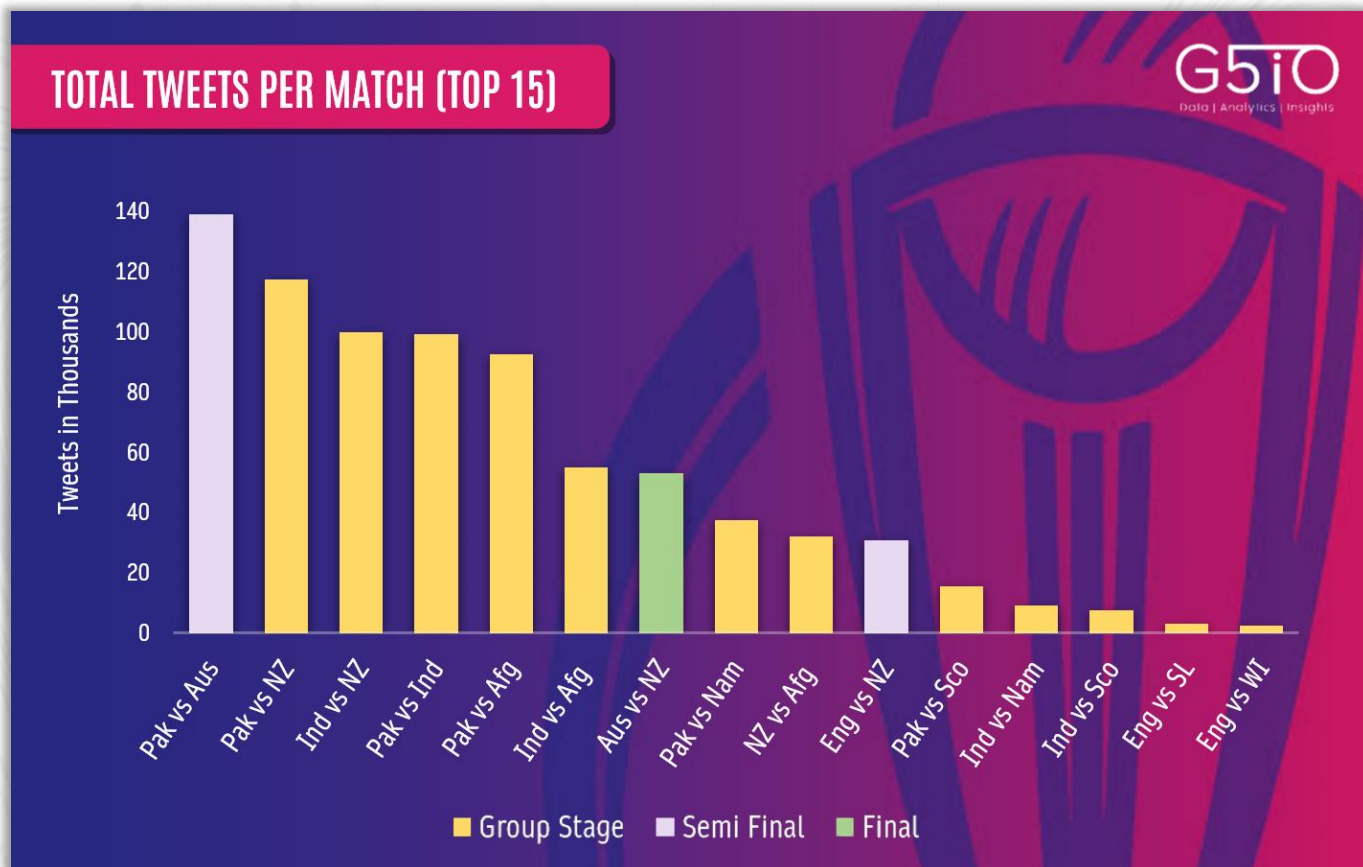
There are some 2.5 billion people who watch cricket, making it the second most watched sport in the world. So, when 16 international teams came together in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the 4-week long T20 Cricket World Cup, it was natural for fans to turn to social media to express their sentiments throughout the tournament. Accordingly, the team at G5iO thought it to be an interesting opportunity to offer a comprehensive analysis of the Twitter conversations associated with the World Cup. In the following, we offer some key insights on how people across the world were able to enjoy and celebrate together as part of a digitally connected audience.

## Methodology:

In the pursuit of the said goal, we looked at the Twitter hashtag for each match that trended on the respective match day (e.g. AusvsPak or NZvsInd). We scraped the data for all 31 matches played between 17th October to 14th November. Our final dataset comprised of 820,000 tweets (excluding retweets) in total that were posted by 800,000+ user accounts from across the world over 31 days.

## Most Talked about Matches

Right off the bat, we were able to gauge which matches were the most popular in terms of the number of tweets posted during each match.



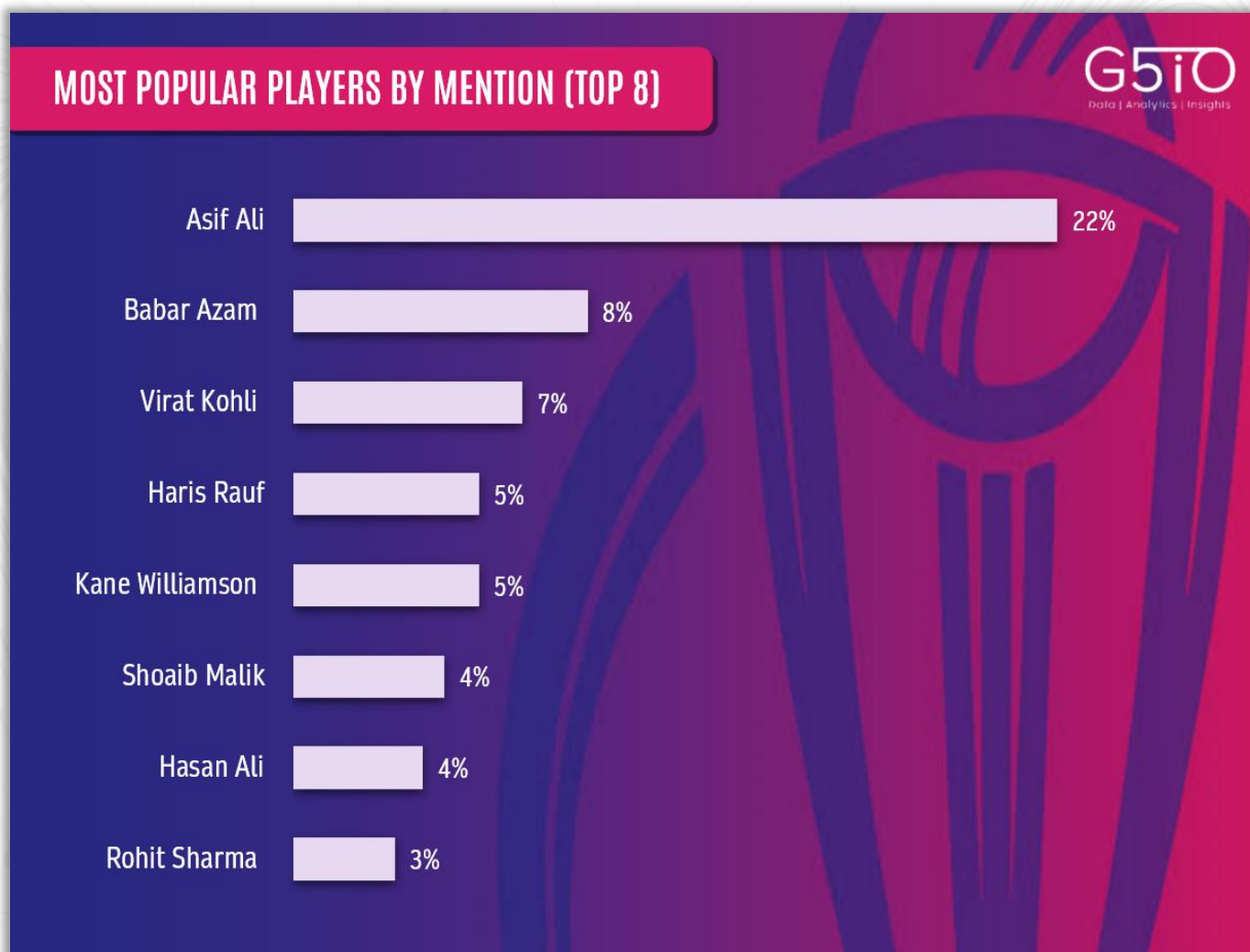
We found that out of the top 5 most popular matches across the tournament, 4 were those in which Pakistan played. These included the **Pakistan vs Australia semi-final** as well as the **Pakistan vs New Zealand** group match, both of which saw almost twice as many tweets than the tournament final.

Also, matches played between teams in group 2 generally saw the most interest online with only 2 matches from Group 1 (Eng vs SL and Eng vs WI) making it into our list of the top 15 most popular matches.



## Most Talked About Players

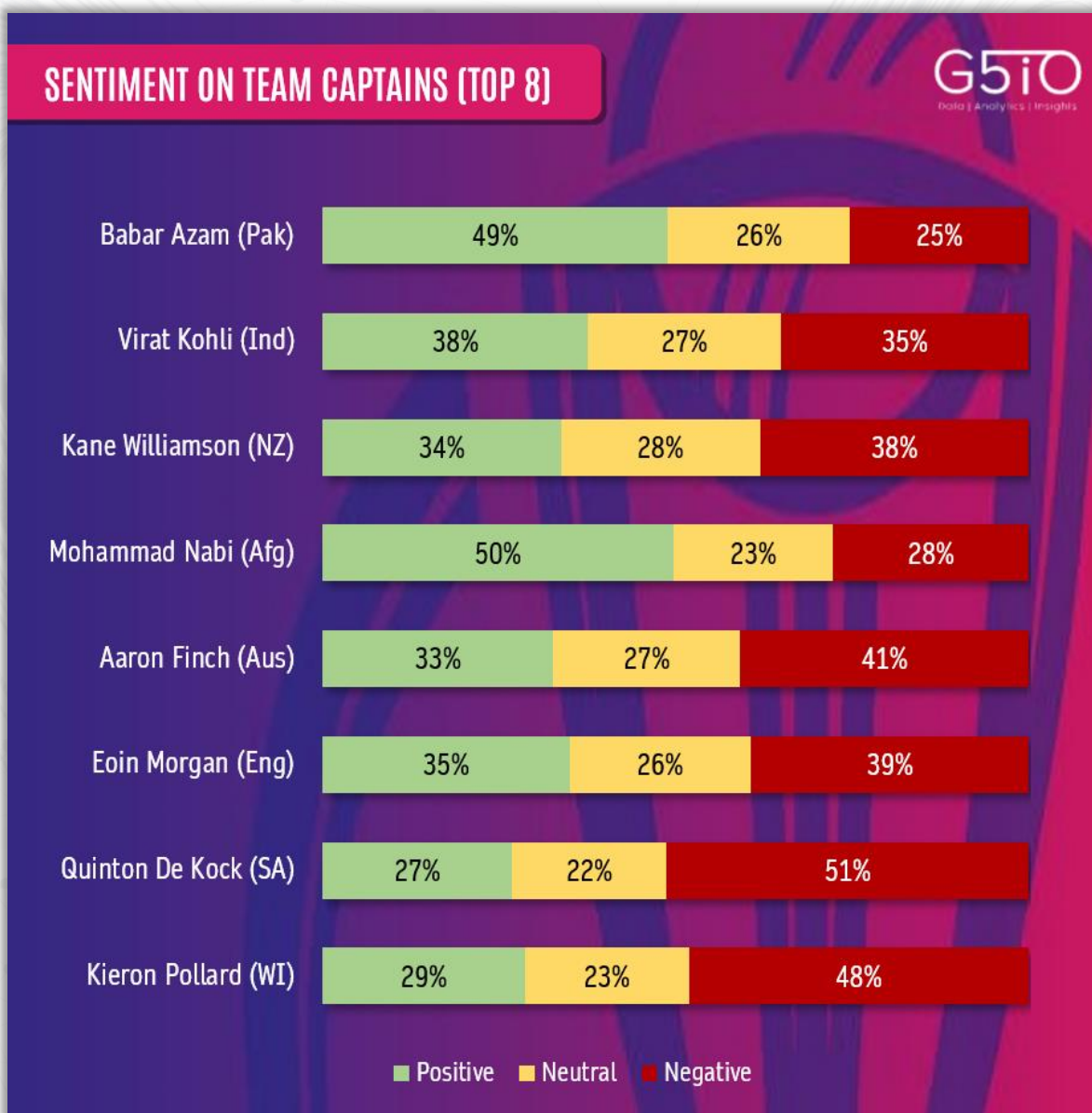
Considering how matches in which Pakistan was playing saw the most level of online activity, it was little surprise that Pakistani players had the highest number of mentions across the tournament.



Out of the top 8 most mentioned players throughout the tournament, 6 were Pakistani players. While captains **Babar Azam** (Pakistan), **Virat Kohli** (India) and **Kane Williamson** (New Zealand) all boasted impressive performances as the ICC's top ranked T20 batsmen; it was relatively newer players such as **Asif Ali** and **Haris Rauf** who came out as two of the most oft mentioned players amongst these legends.

## Most Talked About Teams and Captains

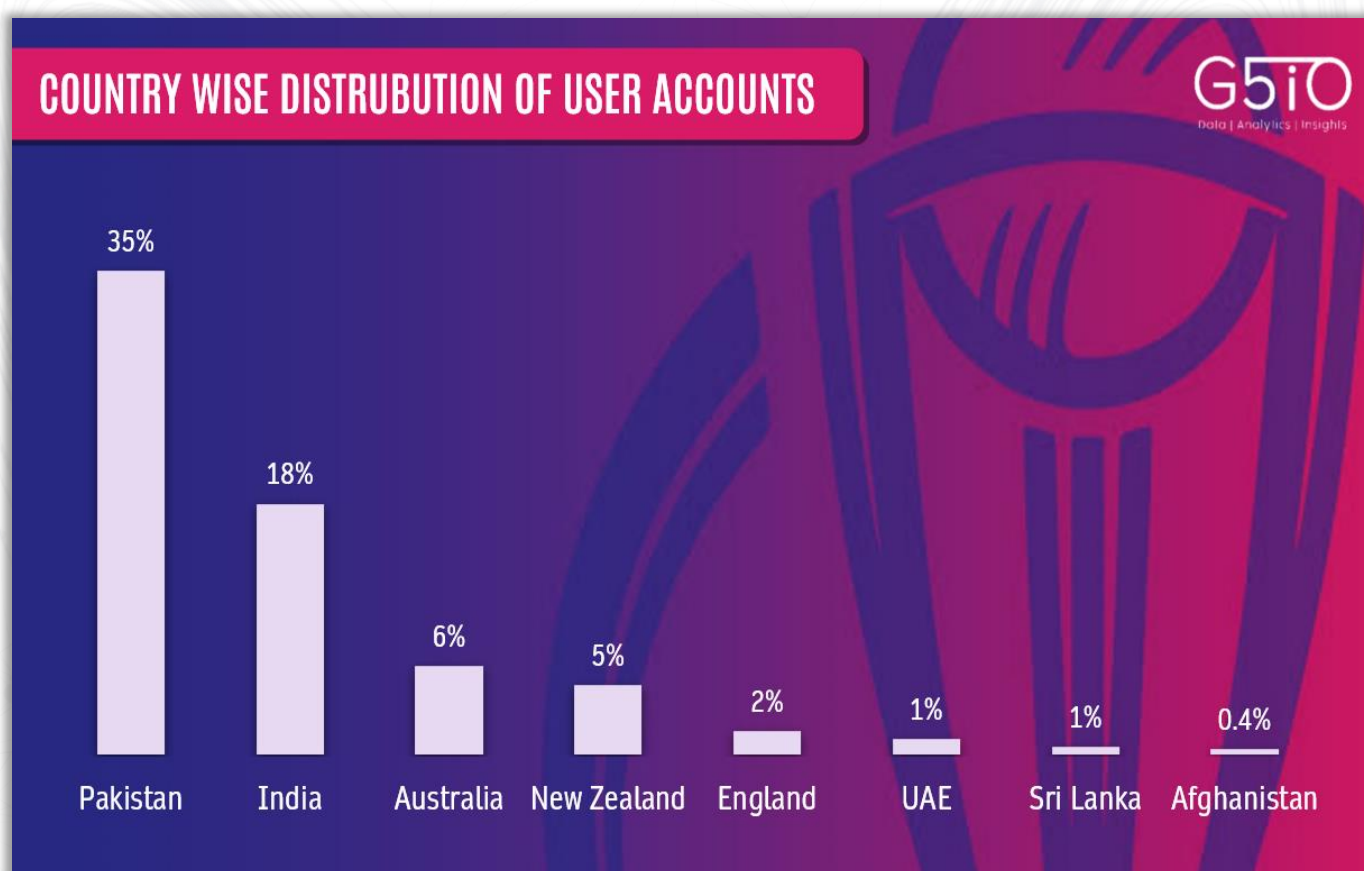
Based on the social media chatter on team captains we were also able to gauge which teams were the most popular amongst fans during the tournament. The following sentiment analysis of team captains presents a general overview of how favourably or unfavourably each captain was discussed. Taken as an extension of their team's performance, we can surmise that while the Pakistani team generally stood out as favourites across multiple categories, the Afghan, Indian and English teams were all close favourites respectively. In a way, more so than Australia and New Zealand, who eventually competed in the final.





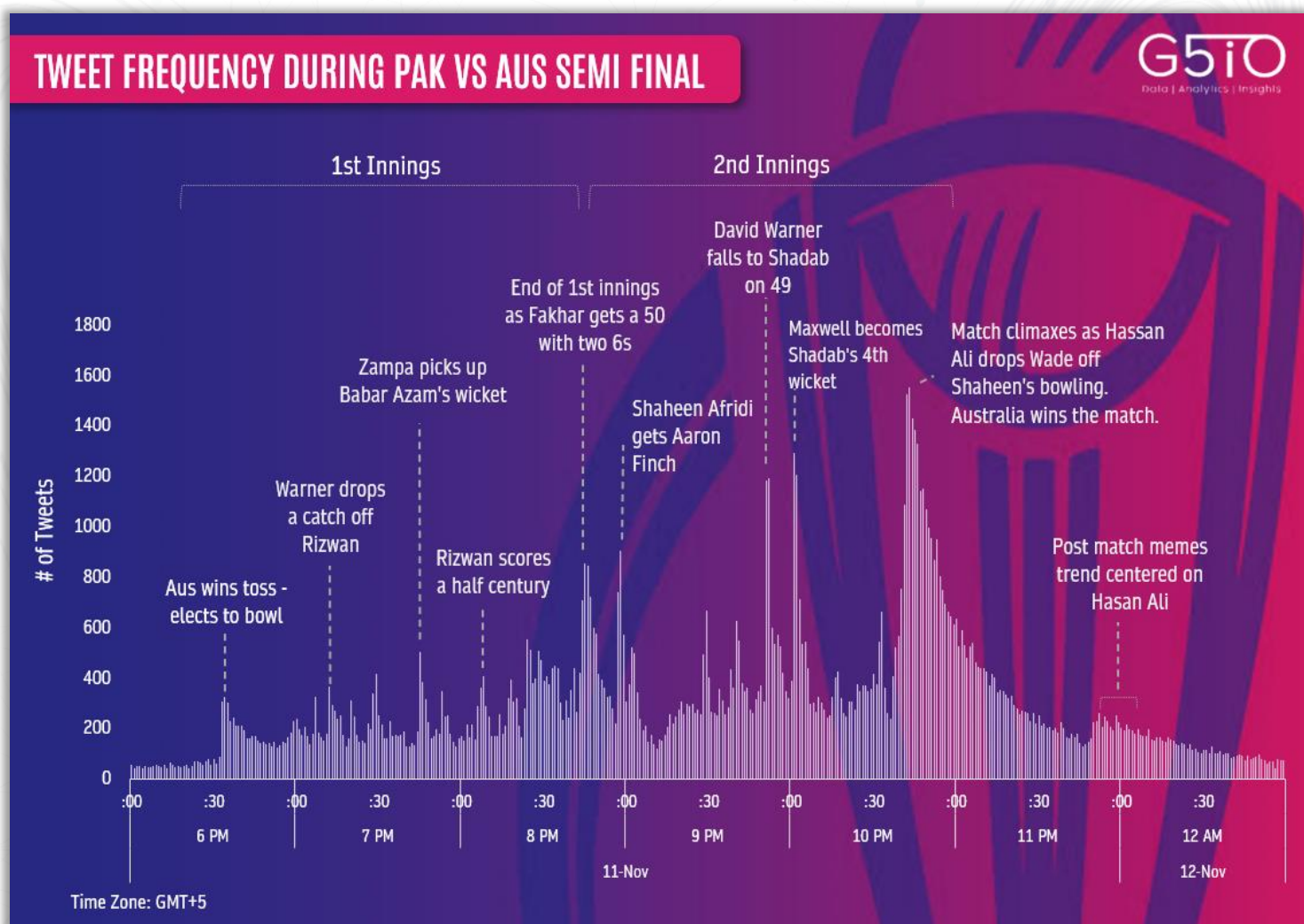
## Audience Representation by Country

Additionally, we wanted to see how those users who participated in the online trends were distributed across the globe. The following graph indicates that more than 50% users either belonged to Pakistan or India. This finding is not surprising mainly because of the sheer sizes of Pakistan's and India's respective fan bases. Also, the time difference between these two countries with the tournament's venue UAE allowed fans to take part in online discussions in huge numbers. However, Australian and New Zealand fans were not far behind in tweeting their support for their teams despite most of the matches taking place between 3am and 7am Australian time.

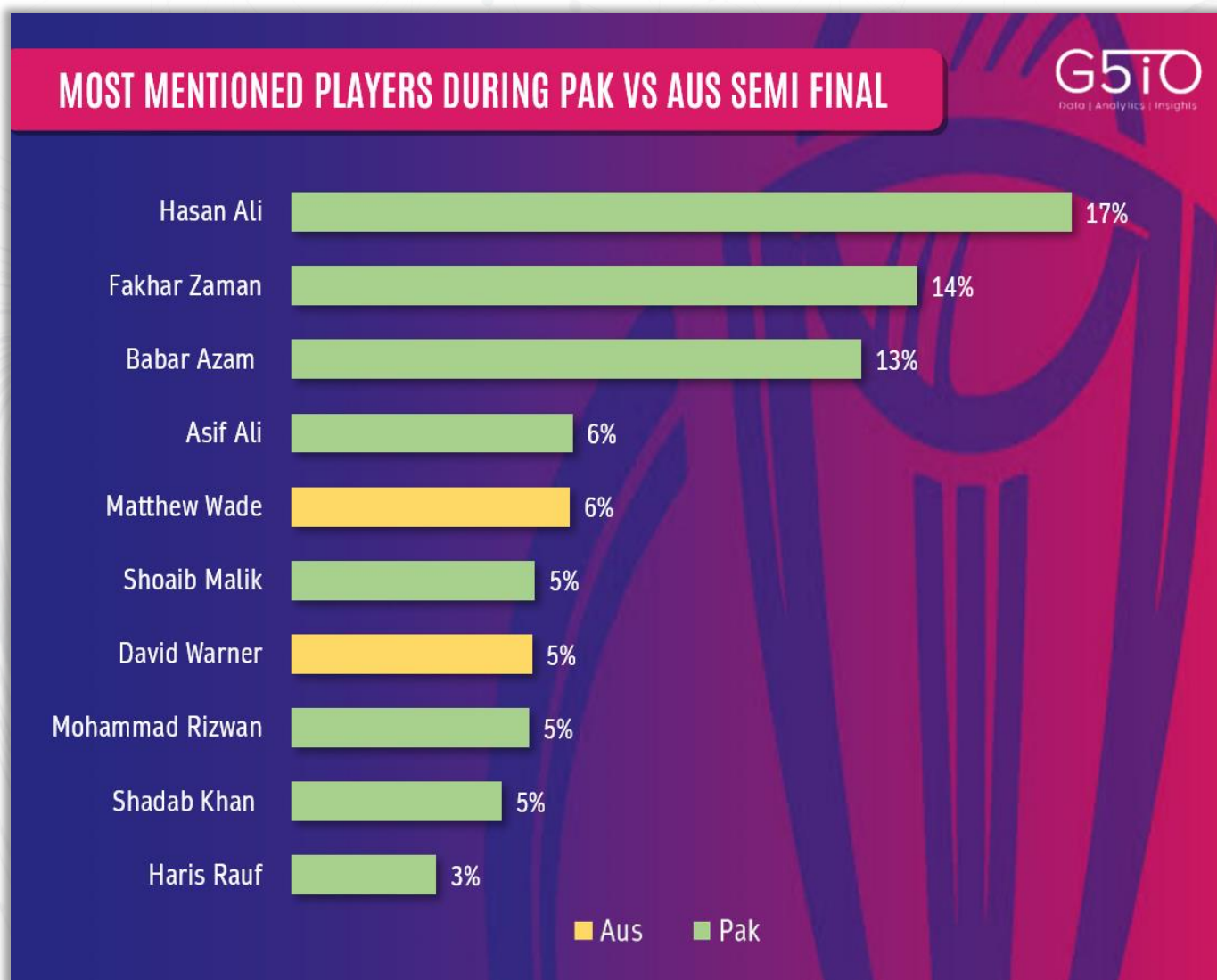


## A T20 World Cup Semi - Final in Tweets

Since the Pakistan vs Australia Semi - Final stood out as the most popular match throughout the tournament (with approximately **140k tweets**), we thought it interesting to show how the number of tweets made during the match echoed the stadium roar of the 54000 users who tweeted throughout the match.







Considering that the majority of Twitter users during this match were Pakistan fans, most of the conversations ebbed and flowed in sync with the performance of the Pakistan team. The same was the case with the most mentioned players during this match. As such, tweet numbers were directly linked to key match highlights favouring Pakistan. On the whole, representing that very familiar rollercoaster of emotions known to every Pakistani cricket fan.

## Conclusion

Looking at the tournament as a whole, perhaps two of the most interesting insights to come out of this data were:

- The growing prevalence of the South Asian region as the largest and fastest growing markets for international cricket
- In addition to this tournament recording the largest TV viewership for key matches, the immense volume of digital traffic associated with the tournament was equally if not more significant.



## Authors



**Asra Malik** is a Senior Analyst with an interest in mapping and understanding digital behavior, trends and evolving norms online.



**Hussain Khawaja** is a Senior Data Scientist with an interest in OSINT, Natural Language Processing, Social Network Analysis and Explainable AI.



**M Waqas Jan** is a Senior Analyst with an interest in discursive approaches to South Asian peace, conflict, and security studies.