

## EMOJIS ROLE IN THE COMMUNICATION: INTERESTING AND AMAZING EXPRESSIONS

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### **Abstract**

*Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) is crucial in shaping the evolution of emoji usage, especially within touch-based smartphone interfaces. As technology progresses, frequent updates introduce new emojis, cementing their integral role in digital communication. Understanding these dynamics is essential for optimizing emoji use in HCI, which enhances communication effectiveness and user satisfaction. Emojis have fundamentally transformed text-based communication by enabling users to convey nuanced emotions and prevent miscommunication in the absence of vocal cues. They offer a broader spectrum of emotional expression compared to traditional text alone. This study focuses on examining the frequency and perception of emojis among traditional-aged college students (ages 16-25 above). College students, being heavy users of technology and influencers of personal tech trends, serve as an ideal demographic for this study. By applying insights from Linguistics to HCI, this interdisciplinary approach aims to advance emoji development and maintenance in technology. This research explores how college students integrate emojis into their communication practices, their perceptions of emoji effectiveness, and their influence on digital interactions. By bridging linguistics with HCI, this study contributes to enhancing technological innovations that support richer and more effective communication through emojis.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Emojis, Perceptions, HCI, Traditional-Aged, College Students*

### **Introduction**

The present study focuses on the impact of emojis on digital communication, particularly in terms, of emotion interpretation, social attributions, and information processing. Here's a summary of the findings and implications based on your description:

**Emotion Interpretation:** Emojis play a significant role in how messages are interpreted emotionally. There's a "negativity effect" observed, where negative emojis and negative sentences together intensify the perception of negativity in the sender's mood (Hasan, 2018). This suggests that emojis can strongly influence how messages are emotionally perceived (Sampietro, 2020).

**Social Attributions:** Emojis affect social perceptions such as the perceived warmth of the sender. Positive emojis tend to enhance the perceived warmth of the sender, which implies that emojis can be used strategically to convey friendliness and positivity in digital interactions. Here we see when we write a sentence we write the part "if" that comes first in the sentence and to separate the second part of the sentence a comma should be used (Rasheed et al., 2021).

**Information Processing:** The study also indicates that emojis aid in information processing. When emojis are congruent with the emotional tone of the message (e.g., positive emoji with a

positive sentence), they enhance processing speed and understanding of the message content. This suggests that emojis can facilitate clearer communication and comprehension in digital exchanges. “Pakistani context and enjoying the significant state of being an international lingua franca” (Hafiza et al,2024,p.1015).

**Overall Implications:** The findings suggest that emojis are more than just decorative elements in digital messages. They serve as nonverbal cues that influence how messages are emotionally perceived, how senders are socially evaluated, and how efficiently information is processed. Positive emojis, in particular, can be leveraged to improve communication, express emotions effectively, and create a positive impression in digital interactions.

In conclusion, the study supports the notion that emojis are valuable tools in digital communication, contributing to both emotional expression and effective message transmission. Understanding how emojis influence perceptions and information processing can help individuals and businesses optimize their use of emojis to enhance online interactions and relationships.

### **Rationale of Study/Justification**

The researchers chose this topic because of her interest in this topic and because of her curiosity to explore this topic.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to examine the role of emoji in the communication of students. Find the differences by age and perception.

### **Research Objectives**

- To analyze college students, and integrate emojis into their communication practices.
- To find the frequencies and perceptions of emojis among traditional-aged college students

### **Research Questions**

1. How do college students integrate emojis into their communication practices?
2. What are the frequencies and perceptions of emojis among traditional-aged college students?

### **Scope Of The Study**

- Generally, the range of the overall study and the research questions to answer the college students integrate the use of emojis into their communication practices and make their communication interesting and expressible.
- Specifically, the study refers to the particular aspects that the researcher covers in the present study are the perception of students and the use of emoji varies by age.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

- Conceptually boundaries of this study are limited to the emojis of WhatsApp only.
- This study refers to the specific operational procedures by interviews and open-ended questions.
- This study is limited to college students of the public sector.

## Literature Review

“Literature review is a written overview of major writings and other sources on a selected topic. Sources covered in the review may include scholarly journal articles, books, and websites. The purpose of literature review is to gain an understanding of the existing research and debates relevant to a particular research topic” (Ahmad et al., 2024, p.302). “Review of the literature summarize and evaluate the text of writing of the definite theme, and provide frame work to think about the possible consequence of innovative study”(Ahmad et al., 2023, p.3943). “Literature reviews summarizes and assesses the text of writing of the definite theme and provides a basis to think about the possible importance of innovative study” (Sadaf et al, 2024, p.658). “A review of literature may only be a clear overview of the sources, in an organizational pattern, and its function is to estimate and summarize the previous writings linked to current topic” (Ahmad et al., 2024, p.3). From these statements we can guess the importance of literature review. Following is the literature review related to the present research work.

Hård af Segerstad (2002) investigated how Swedish speakers adapt to different modes of CMC. She explores four types of CMC: email, web chat, instant messaging and SMS. Her view is that CMC is neither spoken nor written language, but a hybrid between the two that does things that neither of the other two modes of language is able to achieve. Emojis have become integral to modern digital communication, serving as visual symbols that convey emotions, intentions, and context in text-based messages (Hamdan, 2022). Moreover, they state that 2015 was the year that people started using emoji more and that having an emoji as the word of the year reflects the changes in communication (Rasheed et al., 2024, p.1047). Because emojis are a relatively new phenomena in communication, the research is yet to uncover what their role is in online communication. However, so far, research seems to suggest that emoji can be used to enhance emotions and modify messages in the same way that emoticon does (Miller et al, 2016). Some questions raise in the mind regarding interviews about emojis:

Why do you use emojis? When do you use emojis? Can emojis be interpreted in different ways? Do adults and teenagers use emojis in different ways?

“Previous research has shown that an opening question that puts too much emphasis on the moderator leads to the risk of the informants turning to the moderator for questions, whereas a question where the moderator does not mention their role has the risk of making the informants unsure about what is expected of them” (Wibeck, 2010). The literature on emojis explores their role from various perspectives, highlighting both their benefits and complexities in enhancing communication. Emotional expression and contextual cues as Emojis fill the gap left by the absence of nonverbal cues in written communication ( Doiron, 2018 ;Mathews, 2024). They provide emotional context, helping to clarify the intended tone of a message. For example, a simple smiley face can indicate humor or friendliness, while a sad face can convey empathy or concern.

Enhancement of clarity and understanding of Research suggests that emojis can improve message comprehension and reduce ambiguity. By adding visual cues to text, they help to disambiguate the emotional intent behind statements, thereby improving overall clarity in communication. Much like research in youth language suggests young persons are perceived as using and introducing new features into the language, and as emojis are a relatively new feature in written communication, excessive emoji usage is attributed to younger generations (Kotsinas, 2007).

Cultural and contextual variations emojis are not universally interpreted in the same way across cultures and contexts. Studies have shown that cultural backgrounds and individual preferences influence how emojis are perceived and used (Al Rashdi, 2018). Therefore, effective communication with emojis requires an understanding of cultural nuances and context-specific norms. They are much like emoticons, however, emojis consist of pictures instead of typographics. Japanese designer Shigetaka Kurita invented emojis in 1999 (Lebduska, [2014](#)) while working on the i-mode mobile internet platform of NTTDoCoMo (Blagdon, [2013](#)).

Social and Psychological implications and the use of emojis can impact social interactions and relationships. Positive emojis, for instance, may enhance perceptions of warmth and friendliness, while negative emojis could potentially lead to misunderstandings or negative impressions. Understanding these implications is crucial for managing interpersonal dynamics in digital environments.

Technological and platform considerations and the design and availability of emojis vary across platforms and devices, which can affect their interpretation. Differences in emoji appearance (e.g., design variations or cultural-specific symbols) can influence how messages are perceived, emphasizing the need for consistency and awareness of platform-specific emoji usage.

Evolution and future directions emojis continue to evolve alongside digital communication technologies. New emojis are regularly introduced to reflect diverse emotions, identities, and cultural expressions. Future research may explore how these developments impact communication patterns and social behaviors over time. Previous research from Barron and Ling ([2011](#)) investigated the use of emoticons in electronically-mediated communication (EMC, which includes digital and computer-mediated communication, such as online chats) by analyzing adolescents' focus group data of text messages.

Studies suggest that just as emoticons, emojis tend to be placed either in the end of the message or between clauses (Sugiyama, 2015). Using emojis as punctuation marks was one of the functions of emojis that the participants in a series of Japanese focus groups made by Sugiyama (2015). In addition to this, in a data set consisting of 1.6 million tweets from 13 different countries, Novak et al. (2015) found that emojis are commonly placed in the end of a tweet. However, they did not proceed to analyze the placement of the emojis based on where in a clause they appeared, but only analyzed them about the beginning and the end of the tweet

In summary, “the literature underscores emojis’ multifaceted role in communication” (Rasheed et al., 2024). from enhancing emotional expression and clarity to influencing social perceptions and cultural dynamics. As digital interactions become increasingly prevalent, understanding the nuanced role of emojis can empower individuals and organizations to communicate effectively and empathetically in diverse online contexts.

### **Research Methodology**

“The research methodology is the procedure which is used by the researchers to gather data for resolving problems of investigation and design of the research comprises of the whole procedure which is conducted research”. (Ahmad et al., 2022, p.524). It's a logical, systematic plan to resolve a research problem. A methodology details a researcher's approach to the research to ensure reliable, valid results that address their aims and objectives. It encompasses what data they're going to collect and where from, as well as how it's being collected and analyzed (Abbas et al., 2024; Cheema et al., 2023; jalbani et al., 2023; Rao et al., 2023). Following is the research methodology for the present research.

## Participants

College students in lower Punjab, Pakistan, a simple cluster survey, consisting 10 Open-ended Questions were distributed to hundred students. 50 females and 50 males of different ages participated in the survey. Open ended interview was on two couples between the age 16-20 and 20-25 both couples consented to research conducted on their usage and perception of emojis (using textual-based communication methods).

## Material

The survey was specified to frequency, usage, and perception. It was an unbiased survey. Open-ended Interviews between two groups were conducted. “A design is a general strategy to conduct a research study” (Rasheed et al., 2024, p.692).

## Procedure

Through the results of a survey of 100 students and interviews conducted by 2 groups, it would understand how emojis play a role as a universal language in terms of communication how users (using textual-based communication methods) communicate more extensively and in greater detail based on context and relationship.

## Data Analysis

Through the open-ended interview it was found that the participants and each group member communicated multiple times per day. Couple one (Respondent 1 and Respondent 2) estimated that they sent roughly 200 messages per day while the other group (Respondent 3 and Respondent 4) estimated that they sent roughly 250 messages per day. Each text message consists of at least one or more than one emoji to express their feelings. They expressed emojis to make it easy to clear their feelings and emotions and make their chatting interesting. They considered them a universal language to understand quickly other’s emotions. On asking the usage both couples showed their communication (Respondents 1-4, Personal Communication, 2023 and 2024). Wijeratene (2017) studied the similarity of emoji use and determined that many people use the same emojis when they want to convey specific meanings and/or feelings. The same trend was noticeable with real-life examples. One subject would use and receive numerous expressions of happiness, such as “beaming face with smiling eyes” and “tears of joy” from their friends, which are different than what is received from older family members (Respondent 3, personal communication, 2019). Emojis are live cues that can change alongside their users who drive their recognition and use. Emojis are live cues that can change alongside their users who drive their recognition and use. Emoticons increased engagement and depth of conversations through boosting the interexchange of emotional experiences (Daud & McLellan 2016). Data is visualized through figures, tables, charts, and graphs. In the interviews, the emojis observed mostly used by the couples were:

## Emojis

### Figure: 01



### Smirking Face Emoji

Time to break out the smirking face emoji to make sure your sexy innuendo lands. Adding this emoji to a text indicates you are flirting or sending a suggestive message. On social media, it can also mean you are feeling smug and self-satisfied because you just did something baller.

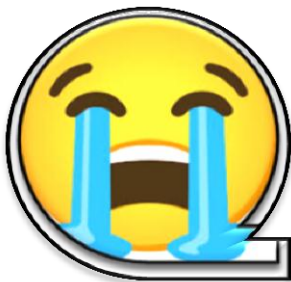
Figure: 02



**Smiling Face With Smiling Eyes Face Emoji**

The meaning of this emoji is as simple as it gets. A smiley face that you're happy, content, or in agreement with something. This emoji is great for expressing happiness, gratitude, or appreciation toward customers.

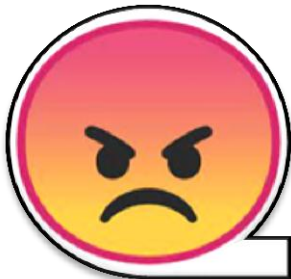
Figure: 03



**Loudly Crying Face Emoji**

A yellow face with an open mouth wailing and streams of heavy tears flowing from closed eyes. May convey inconsolable grief but also other intense feelings.

Figure: 04



**Enraged Emoji Face**

A red face with an angry expression: frowning mouth with eyes and eyebrows scrunched downward. Bears the same expression as ☹️ Angry Face on most platforms.

Figure: 05



**Face With Tears With Joy Emoji Face**

Face with Tears of Joy is an emoji that represents a crying with laughter facial expression. While it is broadly referred to as an emoji, since it is used to demonstrate emotion, it is also referred to as an emoticon.

Figure: 06



### Unamused Face Emoji Face

The side eye emoji is represented by the Unamused Face emoji ☹️. It is a yellow face with slightly raised eyebrows, a frown, and eyes looking to the side. The Unamused Face emoji can convey various negative emotions, including irritation, displeasure, grumpiness and skepticism, as if giving the side-eye.

Figure: 07



### Two Hearts Emoji

Two pink love hearts, one larger than the other. Can be used to display that "love is in the air." This emoji tends to spike in popularity on Valentine's Day. Revolving hearts emoji is used to reflect overwhelming, dizzying feelings of love, joy, or affection.

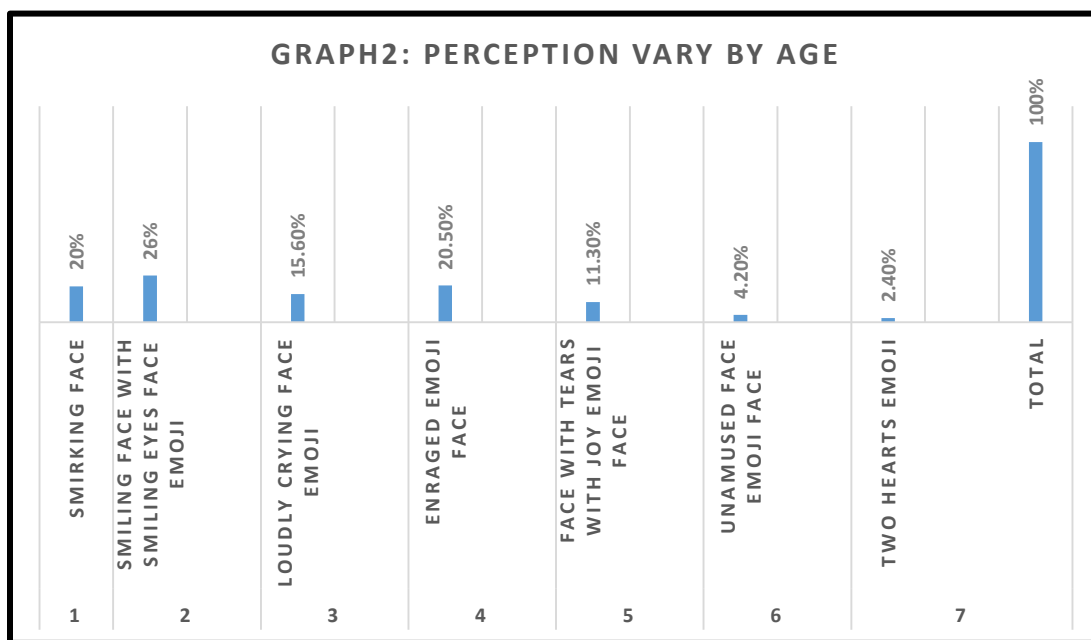
Source: (wikipedia.com).

Table 1: Types of Emotions and Usage Percentages

No	Types of Emotion Ratio	Percentage
1.	Smirking face	20%
2.	Smiling face with smiling eyes face emoji	26%
3.	Loudly crying face emoji	15.6%
4.	Enraged emoji face	20.5%
5.	Face with tears with joy emoji face	11.3%
6.	Unamused face emoji face	4.2%
7.	Two hearts emoji	2.4%
	Total	100%

Table 1 shows types of emotions emojis mostly used by the students it was observed during the interviews and chats of the students that Smirking Face 20%, Smiling Face 26%, loudly Face 15.6%, Enraged Face 20.5% is the greatest percentage, Face With Tears 11.30%, Unamused Face 4.20%, Two Hearts Emoji 2.40%.

Brown and Levison (1987) point out that "Emotion is frequently used in positive messages such as thankful, compliment, and regards, etc. Emotions can strengthen and enhance the positive messages. negative emotions can also be seen as enraged emoji, and unamused face emoji face.



Graph 2 shows that Perception varies by age as Smirking Face 20%, Smiling Face 26%, loudly Face 15.6%, Enraged Face 20.5% is the greatest percentage, Face with Tears 11.30%, Unamused Face 4.20%, and Two Hearts Emoji 2.40%.

**Table 2: Emojis in Textual-Based Communication among College Students: A Study in Frequency**

Age Group	Female	Male	NA	Total
16-19	10	9	0	19
19-22	15	13	0	28
22-25	13	16	1	30
25 or older	12	10	1	23
Total	50	48	2	100

Age group genders cross tabulation

From the gender cross tabulation results, it analyzed the perception of emojis based on age. Approximately 10% of users between the ages of 16–19 felt that the interpretation and usage of emojis vary slightly from person to person, whereas 9% of users 19–22 felt that it is easier to express feelings with emojis. Comparatively, users ages 22–25 had similar results with 15% of respondents believing that interpretation and usage of emojis varying slightly from person to person. However, perhaps the most surprising results came from respondents ages 21-25. Approximately 13% of respondents ages 24–27 believe that it is easier to express feelings with emojis with 16% believing that interpretation and usage of emojis varies slightly from person to person. Perception, a key concept in the utilization of emojis was arguably the most important component of the survey distributed. As noted in, respondents ages 16-19 and 19-22 were the majority in the belief that emojis help alter the perception of the intended meaning. Difference of the use of emojis between ages 16-19 and 19-22 is 9% Difference of the use of emojis between ages 19-22 and 22-25 is 1% only. More interestingly, 29% of users between the ages of 22-25 believed that emojis do not alter the intended perception of a message. It is important to note that



users aged 25 or older that were surveyed only had an 7% difference in beliefs that emojis alter perception.

Graph2 shows perceptions of the students between age 16-19 use 19% of emojis in their communication while students between 19-22 use 28%, the students age between 22-25 use emojis more than the other 29%. 25 and older students use emojis 22%. Difference of the use of emojis between ages 16-19 and 19-22 is 9% Difference of the use of emojis between ages 19-22 and 22-25 is 1% only.

## Results and Findings

College students utilize emojis by their gender norms and cultural practices, illustrating how society facilitates communication. Emojis serve to amplify emotionality in digital text, compensating for the absence of nonverbal cues. This underscores their significance in modern communication among college students. Cultural values shape gender-specific communication beliefs, influencing how emojis are employed. In cultures valuing collective and emotion-laden communication, women often use emoticons more frequently. Surprisingly, 85% of respondents rated emojis as an 8 or higher on a scale of 1–10 as a universal language, fundamentally altering perceptions of their communicative role. This perception extends beyond mere communication to influence user interface design and development. Improved communication through emojis enhances relationship satisfaction and individual happiness. Emojis enable clear message intent interpretation, reducing ambiguity in digital conversations and fostering politeness while avoiding conflict.

Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) plays a pivotal role in the evolution of emoji usage, particularly in touch-based smartphone interfaces. As technology advances, frequent updates introduce new emojis, solidifying their permanent place in digital communication. Understanding these dynamics ensures the effective use of emojis in HCI, promoting better communication and user satisfaction. The study held in the LUND university conducted the results 'The results show that emojis are used as a divider between clauses, that they compensate for the lack of non-verbal cues in written communication, and that they are efficient emotional enhancers. In addition to this, the results also show that emojis can help manage the conversation climate. Furthermore, emojis are primarily used in settings that are hybrids of spoken and written language, and younger people use more emojis than older people. In conclusion, it can be said that emojis have an important part in the everyday written communication among contemporary people. The emojis are needed to convey additional information in messages and help prevent misunderstandings. Similarly, the theoretical background consists of previous studies in CMC, particularly that of Hård af Segerstad (2002) and Sugiyama (2015) in combination with studies of the relation between speech and writing (Chafe & Tannen, 1987).

## Recommendations

The study recommended that:

- Future researchers should research on other emoji because there are too many emojis.
- Researcher suggests that future researchers can work on GIF that are also used in the WhatsApp.
- Cuppy, Game On, Capybara Crew, Touch, Some Grass, Baby Olympics, Tropical Trio, and many other emojis are used in WhatsApp future researchers can work on them.
- Future researchers can work on other emoji-type images like avatars of Snap chat etc.

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