THE ROLE OF EMOJIS IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS ON WHATSAPP

Malini Mahalingam and Lakshmi Priya Daniel

Department of Fine Arts, Stella Maris College, University of Madras, Chennai, India

ABSTRACT

This research studies the significant role of emojis in digital communication, especially focusing on their impact on emotional expression, demographic variables and social dynamics among young adults using WhatsApp. Digital communication has transformed interpersonal interactions, with emojis emerging as vital tools for expressing emotions and tone in text-based platforms like WhatsApp, influencing social interactions and communication. This study employed a cross-sectional design with convenience sampling to survey 130 college students aged 18–25. A structured questionnaire assessed demographic variables, WhatsApp usage patterns, and perceptions of emojis. Majority (90%) of the participants were aged 18–22, with male users (74.6%) and urban users (80%) dominating the sample. Most participants used WhatsApp several times daily (72.3%), with high engagement in emojis (93.1%), reflecting their role in enhancing message clarity and emotional connection. Gender differences were observed in the motivations for emoji usage, while age and locality factors had limited associations with usage patterns. The analysis revealed high engagement with emojis for emotional expression and message enhancement, alongside occasional challenges in conveying nuanced emotions. Participants expressed the benefits of emojis in improving clarity and fostering emotional connections, though some inconsistencies in interpretation were reported. The study effectively addressed its aim by providing insights into the interplay between emotional expression and emoji usage, emphasizing their growing importance in shaping social interactions in digital communication environments.

KEYWORDS

Emojis, Digital communication, WhatsApp, Young adults, Emotional expression, Social dynamics, Demographics

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, communication has transcended traditional verbal exchanges, leading to the emergence of diverse modes of expression (Han, 2024). Among these, emojis have gained unprecedented popularity as a tool for conveying emotions, tone, and intent in text-based conversations, particularly on platforms like WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a messaging application that facilitates sending and receiving text messages, images, audio, videos, links, and making phone calls (Church & De Oliveira, 2013). Its ease of use has made it highly popular among young adults, sometimes leading to addictive usage levels (Kiran & Srivastava, 2018; Montag et al., 2019).

Emojis are visual symbols in computer mediated communication (CMC) developed to compensate for the lack of non-verbal cues in CMC that affect how information is conveyed (Bai

et al., 2019). They enhance the expressiveness of digital communication, helping to convey emotions (Riordan, 2017) and tonal nuances that text alone may lack. By offering a simple and convenient means to express feelings, emojis enrich conversations and provide context to messages, significantly improving user engagement in online communication (Fischer, 2020). Understanding the demographic influences, emotional expression and social dynamics shaping emoji usage is crucial to comprehending their role in modern communication.

The perception and usage of emojis are influenced by demographic factors, including age, gender, and cultural backgrounds. Research indicates that younger users tend to adopt emojis more readily, integrating them into both public and private conversations, while older users may use them less frequently. Similarly, gender differences are evident; females typically use emojis more frequently and positively, whereas males exhibit a preference for a broader variety of emoji types, impacting emotional expressions and their interpretations (Koch et al., 2022).Cultural backgrounds play a crucial role in defining emoji usage patterns. Different countries showcase varying preferences for specific emojis, often influenced by cultural norms and communication styles. Furthermore, platform diversity affects how users engage with emojis. Differences in emoji presentations across operating systems (like iOS and Android) can lead to misinterpretations of emotional and semantic meanings, thereby complicating cross-platform communications.

The relevance of emojis in today's digital communication cannot be overstated, as they serve as a critical tool for emotional communication and social interactions.(Emich, 2023; Fischer, 2020). Emojis allow users to convey tone and emotion in ways that text alone may not suffice, enabling the expression of subtle nuances that can reinforce the intended message (Chiang & Gomez-Zara, 2024). For instance, using positive emojis tends to foster a perception of warmth and approachability among senders, while congruently matching emojis with the message significantly enhances comprehension (Boutet et al., 2021). Conversely, sending contradictory emojis can lead to misunderstandings that might threaten interpersonal relationships, particularly in the fluid social dynamics characteristic of young adult interactions.

The habits and preferences surrounding emoji use reveal critical insights into the emotional landscape of young adults. Females tend to use emojis more frequently than males, showcasing a gendered aspect in the adoption of this form of communication (Herring &Dainas, 2020). Emojis are also widely used in various social contexts, including friendships and romantic relationships, where their effect can differ widely based on the relational dynamics between users. Young individuals often create unique meanings around specific emojis within their social circles, thereby fostering a shared language that enriches their communication experiences (Chiang & Gomez-Zara, 2024).

In our increasingly interconnected world, The implications of emoji usage span far beyond individual interactions. Emojis have become integral to digital communication, reflecting evolving societal norms and practices.With millions of emojis accessed and utilized daily across different platforms, they have not only become a standardized form of expression but also a notable part of marketing strategies aimed at engaging consumers (Emich, 2023). As emojis continue to evolve, understanding their relevance and exploring their role in shaping communication practices becomes essential.

This study aims to uncover how emojis facilitate connections across diverse contexts by examining the interplay between demographic factors, emotional expressions and emoji usage among WhatsApp users. By delving into users' experiences and preferences, the study seeks to shed light on the evolving dynamics of digital communication and its implications for social interaction in the digital age.

2. METHOD

A systematic approach was employed to examine the WhatsApp and emoji usage patterns among college students aged 18 to 25 within the School of Media Studies, specifically targeting those in the B.Voc. and M.Voc. Animation Department. The study involved 130 participants from a total of 250 students, achieving a response rate of 52%. The inclusion criteria focused on students aged 18 to 25, enrolled in the department. Exclusion criteria encompassed students outside this age range, those from other departments, and individuals unwilling to participate.

2.1. Data Collection

The survey conducted was carried out through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms, which provided an efficient means of gathering responses. The questionnaire was designed to comprehensively assess various aspects of WhatsApp and emoji usage. It included sections on demographic information such as age, gender, and locality, to contextualize the findings. WhatsApp usage patterns were examined by assessing the frequency of use, the types of communication (e.g., text, voice, video), and the context of usage (personal, academic, etc.). Emoji usage patterns were explored by investigating the frequency of emoji use, the meanings conveyed through emojis, their role in emotional expression, and the situations in which emojis were preferred over text.

2.2. Data Analysis

SPSS statistical software was employed to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were applied to analyse the frequency and percentage distributions for each item in the questionnaire, while inferential statistics, chi-square test, was used to examine relationships between demographic variables and WhatsApp or emoji usage patterns. Qualitative data from open-ended responses were thematically analysed to identify recurring themes related to the emotional impact of emojis and their role in communication.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

2.4. Results

The demographic profile and WhatsApp usage patterns of 130 respondents revealed significant trends in age, gender, locality, and emoji usage. A majority (90%) were aged 18–22, with males (74.6%) and urban users (80%) dominating the sample. Most participants used WhatsApp several times daily (72.3%), with high engagement in emojis (93.1%), reflecting their role in enhancing message clarity and emotional connection. While 70% believed emojis improved communication, 33.1% reported occasional misinterpretations, and 28.5% found certain emotions difficult to express. Despite overall satisfaction with emoji functionality, 31.5% expressed a need for improvements to better address nuanced emotional communication.

2.5. Tables

Table 1. Demographic profile and WhatsApp Usage Pattern of Young adults

Variables	Category	n	%	Variables	Category	n	%
Age group (in years)	18-22	117	90.0	Challenging emotions or feelings to express through emotions	No difficulty in expressing emotions through emojis	66	50.8
	22-25	13	10.0		Uncertain about difficulty	17	13.1
Gender	Male	97	74.6		Specific feelings or emotions challenging to express	37	28.5
	Female	33	25.4		No response	10	7.7
Locality	Rural	26	20.0	Emojis have bridged the gap between face-to-face and digital conversations	Strongly Disagree	1	0.8
	Urban	104	80.0		Disagree	9	6.9
Emojis usage preferences	Yes	121	93.1		Neutral	40	30.8
	No	9	6.9		Agree	53	40.8
WhatsApp usage frequency	Rarely	21	16.2		Strongly Agree	27	20.8
	Once a day	15	11.5	Emojis are an efficient enhancement to a boring and emotionless text-based message and makes the conversation	Disagree	3	2.3
	Several times a day	94	72.3		Neutral	31	23.8
Seen emoji in WhatsApp conversation	No	5	3.8		Agree	65	50.0
	Yes	125	96.2		Strongly Agree	31	23.8

The emoji usage patterns among participants as shown in Table 2, revealed that 96.6% had not observed emojis in their communications. Gender, age, and locality showed no statistically significant associations with usage patterns. A majority (66.7%) reported experiencing misinterpretations while using emojis, though no significant differences were found across age, gender, or locality ($p>0.05$). Regarding message clarity, most participants either agreed or remained neutral about emojis enhancing communication, with no significant demographic associations. Additionally, 59.0% affirmed that emojis effectively convey emotions, though 22.2% noted contextual inconsistencies. While WhatsApp and emoji usage varied slightly across demographics, no statistically significant associations were identified.

Table 2. Association of Demographic Profile of End-Users with WhatsApp and Emoji Usage Patterns (n=130)

Variable	Category	X2 (p-value)	Gender		X2 (p-value)	Locality		X2 (p-value)
			Male (N=97)	Female (N=33)		Rural (N=97)	Urban (N=32)	
WhatsApp Usage	Several times a day	0.233 (0.890)	66 (68.0%)	28 (84.4%)	3.478 (0.176)	19 (73.1%)	75 (72.1%)	0.610 (0.737)
	Once a day		13 (13.4%)	2 (6.1%)		2 (7.7%)	13 (12.5%)	
	Rarely		18 (18.6%)	3 (9.1%)		5 (19.2%)	16 (15.4%)	
Seen Emoji Usage	Yes	0.578 (0.447)	93 (95.9%)	32 (97.0%)	0.080 (0.778)	24 (92.3%)	101 (97.1%)	1.300 (0.254)
	No		4 (4.1%)	1 (3.0%)		2 (7.7%)	3 (2.9%)	
Experienced Misinterpretation with Emoji Usage	Yes	0.035 (0.852)	33 (34.0%)	10 (30.03%)	0.154 (0.695)	7 (26.9%)	36 (34.6%)	0.556 (0.456)
	No		64 (66.0%)	23 (69.7%)		19 (73.1%)	68 (65.4%)	
Emoji Enhances Clarity of a Message in WhatsApp	Strongly Disagree	3.653 (0.455)	2 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3.643 (0.456)	1 (3.8%)	1 (1.0%)	3.246 (0.518)
	Disagree		3 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)		1 (3.8%)	2 (1.9%)	
	Neutral		25 (25.8%)	9 (27.3%)		4 (15.4%)	30 (28.8%)	
	Agree		43 (44.3%)	19 (57.6%)		13 (50.0%)	49 (47.1%)	
	Strongly Agree		24 (24.7%)	5 (15.2%)		7 (26.9%)	22 (21.2%)	
Used Emojis in WhatsApp conversations	Yes	0.578 (0.447)	9 (9.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3.290 (0.070)	25 (96.2%)	96 (92.3%)	0.478 (0.490)
	No		88 (90.7%)	33 (100.0%)		1 (3.8%)	8 (7.7%)	
Emojis Convey Emotions	No	3.260 (0.515)	2 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4.131 (0.389)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.9%)	2.712 (0.607)
	Not sure		6 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)		1 (3.8%)	5 (4.8%)	
	Neutral		3 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)	3 (2.9%)	

	Somewhat		33 (34.0%)	12 (36.4%)		7 (26.9%)	38 (36.5%)	
	Yes		53 (54.6%)	21 (63.6%)		18 (69.2%)	56 (53.8%)	
Emojis Give Different Interpretations in Different Contexts	No	2.616 (0.455)	51 (52.6%)	20 (60.6%)	4.286 (0.232)	18 (69.2%)	53 (51.0%)	3.294 (0.348)
	Not sure		9 (9.3%)	0 (0.0%)		1 (3.8%)	8 (7.7%)	
	Somewhat		17 (17.5%)	4 (2.1%)		2 (7.7%)	19 (18.3%)	
	Yes		20 (20.6%)	9 (27.3%)		5 (19.2%)	24 (23.1%)	

The analysis in Table 3 shows no significant associations between demographic factors (age and gender) and WhatsApp conversation types or emoji usage patterns among 130 participants. Both age groups (18–22 and 22–25) showed consistent engagement in personal chats (76.9% and 92.3%, respectively) and group chats (35.9% and 30.8%), with no significant association ($p>0.05$). Gender differences were minimal, as 78.4% of males and 78.8% of females engaged in personal chats. Professional discussions were also uniformly distributed across demographics, with no significant associations observed.

Regarding emoji usage, 25.6% of younger participants (18–22) and 15.4% of older participants (22–25) reported frequent usage, but this difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.804$). Gender-based analysis similarly revealed no significant variation, with males (78.4%) and females (87.9%) reporting regular emoji usage ($p=0.183$). Most participants agreed that emojis enhance conversations and found them easy to use, with perceptions remaining consistent across demographics. While 53.0% of respondents reported no difficulty expressing emotions through emojis, 28.2% noted challenges with specific feelings, yet these difficulties were not linked to age or gender. Overall, demographic factors did not significantly influence conversation types, emoji usage frequency, or perceptions of their utility.

Table 3. Association of Demographic Profile of End-Users with Type of WhatsApp Conversations and Emoji Usage (n=130)

Variable	Category	Age group (in years)		X2 (p-value)	Gender		X2 (p-value)
		18-22 (N=117)	22-25 (N=13)		Male (N=97)	Female (N=33)	
Type of WhatsApp Conversation							
Personal chats with family and friends	Yes	90 (76.9%)	12 (92.3%)	1.639 (0.201)	76 (78.4%)	26 (78.8%)	0.003 (0.958)
	No	27 (23.1%)	1 (7.7%)		21 (21.6%)	7 (21.2%)	
Work or professional discussions	Yes	33 (28.2%)	3 (23.1%)	0.154 (0.695)	29 (29.9%)	7 (21.2%)	0.928 (0.336)
	No	84 (71.8%)	10 (76.9%)		68 (70.1%)	26 (78.8%)	

Educational or academic conversations	Yes	62 (53.0%)	6 (46.2%)	0.219 (0.640)	48 (49.5%)	20 (60.6%)	1.221(0.269)
	No	55 (47.0%)	7 (53.8%)		49 (50.5%)	13 (39.4%)	
Emoji Usage Pattern							
Frequency of Emoji Use	Very Often	30 (25.6%)	2 (15.4%)	1.627 (0.804)	23 (23.7%)	9 (27.3%)	6.232 (0.183)
	Often	39 (33.3%)	5 (38.5%)		34 (35.1%)	10 (30.0%)	
	Occasionally	31 (26.5%)	5 (38.5%)		23 (23.7%)	13 (39.4 %)	
	Rarely	16 (13.7%)	1 (7.7%)		16 (16.5%)	1 (3.0%)	
	Never	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)		1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
Emojis Enhance Conversation	Disagree	3 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2.589 (0.459)	2 (2.1%)	1 (3.0%)	0.504 (0.918)
	Neutral	27 (23.1%)	4 (30.8%)		23 (23.7%)	8 (24.2%)	
	Agree	57 (48.7%)	8 (61.5%)		50 (51.5%)	15 (45.5%)	
	Strongly Agree	30 (25.6%)	1 (7.7%)		22 (22.7%)	9 (27.3%)	
WhatsApp Provides a Wide Range of Emojis	No	23 (19.7%)	3 (23.1%)	0.085 (0.770)	23 (23.7%)	3 (9.1%)	3.290 (0.070)
	Yes	94 (80.3%)	10 (76.9%)		74 (76.3%)	30 (90.9%)	
Ease Of Using Emojis in WhatsApp	1	5 (4.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3.243 (0.518)	5 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4.307 (0.36 6)
	2	5 (4.3%)	1 (7.7%)		5 (5.2%)	1 (3.0%)	
	3	25 (21.4%)	4 (30.8%)		24 (24.7%)	5 (15.25)	
	4	40 (34.2%)	6 (46.2%)		31 (32.0%)	15 (45.5%)	
	5	42 (35.9%)	2 (15.4%)		32 (33.0%)	12 (36.4%)	
Challenging Emotions to Express	No difficulty in expressing emotions through emojis	62 (53.0%)	4 (30.8%)	3.381 (0.337)	52 (53.6%)	14 (42.4%)	4.917 (0.178)
	Uncertain about difficulty	14 (12.0%)	3 (23.1%)		13 (13.4%)	4 (12.1%)	
	Specific feelings or emotions challenging to express	33 (28.2%)	4 (30.8%)		23 (23.7%)	14 (42.4%)	
	No response	8 (6.8%)	2 (15.4%)		9 (9.3%)	1 (3.0%)	

Emojis are mostly used by Younger People	Strongly Disagree	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	5.645 (0.227)	2 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3.643 (0.456)
	Disagree	3 (2.6%)	2 (15.4%)		3 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	
	Neutral	31 (26.5%)	4 (30.8%)		25 (25.8%)	9 (27.3%)	
	Agree	48 (41.0%)	4 (30.8%)		43 (44.3%)	19 (57.6%)	
	Strongly Agree	34 (29.1%)	3 (23.1%)		24 (24.7%)	5 (15.2%)	

The results in Table 4 displays the gender-based differences in emoji usage motivations among participants. Both genders commonly used emojis to clarify messages and express emotions, with no significant differences. However, females were significantly more likely to use emojis for adding humor (66.7% vs. 45.4%, p = 0.034) and setting tone or voice (48.5% vs. 20.6%, p = 0.002), while males were more likely to use them for making messages memorable (19.6% vs. 3.0%, p = 0.023). Most participants (87.6% of males and 90.9% of females) considered the receiver's context when using emojis, showing no significant gender differences. These findings suggest that females prioritize expressive and contextual cues, while males focus more on functional aspects.

Table 4. Association of Gender of End-Users with Reasons for Using Emojis in WhatsApp Conversations (n=130)

Variable	Category	Gender		X2 (p-value)
		Male (N=97)	Female (N=33)	
Reasons to use emojis				
To clarify or emphasize a message	Yes	42 (43.3%)	13 (39.4%)	0.154 (0.695)
	No	55 (56.7%)	20 (60.6%)	
To express emotions	Yes	70 (72.2%)	26 (78.8%)	0.559 (0.455)
	No	27 (27.8%)	7 (21.2%)	
To add humor or playfulness	Yes	44 (45.4%)	22 (66.7%)	4.472 (0.034)
	No	53 (54.6%)	11 (33.3%)	
To keep the conversation lighter	Yes	26 (26.8%)	7 (21.2%)	0.407 (0.524)
	No	71 (73.2%)	26 (78.8%)	
To fit in with the conversation style	Yes	17 (17.5%)	6 (18.2%)	0.007 (0.932)
	No	80 (82.5%)	27 (81.8%)	
To help set a tone or voice of expression	Yes	20 (20.6%)	16 (48.5%)	9.594 (0.002)
	No	77 (79.4%)	17 (51.5%)	

To capture attention	Yes	14 (14.4%)	2 (6.1%)	1.599 (0.206)
	No	83 (85.6%)	31 (93.9%)	
To increase engagement	Yes	17 (17.5%)	7 (21.2%)	0.222 (0.637)
	No	80 (82.5%)	26 (78.8%)	
To make messages memorable	Yes	19 (19.6%)	1 (3.0%)	5.185 (0.023)
	No	78 (80.4%)	32 (97.0%)	
Other: Reduced typing time, Avoiding people	Yes	1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0.343 (0.558)
	No	96 (99.0%)	33 (100.0%)	
Emojis use according to the age group and understanding of the receiver	Yes	85 (87.6%)	30 (90.9%)	0.260 (0.610)
	No	12 (12.4%)	3 (9.1%)	
Emojis have bridged the gap between face-to-face and digital conversations	Strongly Disagree	1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.783 (0.776)
	Disagree	8 (8.2%)	1 (3.0%)	
	Neutral	29 (29.9%)	11 (33.3%)	
	Agree	38 (39.2%)	15 (45.4%)	
	Strongly Agree	21 (21.6%)	6 (18.2%)	

While both genders use emojis for similar basic purposes, females more frequently use them for nuanced emotional and tonal purposes. Understanding these dynamics provides critical insights into gender-based variations in interpersonal communication preferences and styles within digital environments. These findings hold potential to inform future research on emoji usage and contribute to the development of communication strategies tailored to diverse demographic profiles.

2.6. Discussion

Research shows that emojis have transcended the initial role as mere decorative graphics to become integral components of digital communication, especially among young adults aged 18 to 25 (Monnappa, 2015). This demographic frequently utilizes emojis in platforms like WhatsApp, where these visual symbols serve as non-verbal cues enhancing emotional expression and facilitating clearer communication. Consistent with earlier findings, younger users exhibit a higher propensity to adopt emojis in their interactions (Chen et al., 2024). However, the limited representation of users aged 22-25 years in this study contrasts with other research reporting a more balanced age distribution, indicating the need for broader inquiries to generalize findings.

Gender disparities in emoji usage, as observed in this study, align with prior literature indicating that males prefer a broader variety of emoji types, while females use emojis more frequently and positively (Koch et al., 2022). The findings here hint at the potential influence of gender on

communication styles and preferences in emoji usage, which has been a consistent theme in earlier research emphasizing gender-based distinctions in online interactions.

Additionally, urban users' engagement with multiple digital platforms, including WhatsApp, has been documented in previous research (Ahmad Sabri et al., 2021; Cruz & Harindranath, 2020). However, previous research did not extensively examine rural-user engagement in emoji-related communications, leaving an open area of inquiry in how locality influences emoji engagement. Higher frequency of app usage is correlated with increased emoji engagement (Assad, 2022). This finding reinforces the perception that habitual use of messaging apps promotes the utilization of emojis as enhancement tools for communication.

The ubiquity of emojis in digital conversations is further substantiated by studies showing that most users regularly encounter and utilize emojis across platforms (Dixon, 2024). This reflects a societal shift towards more visual forms of communication to enhance expressive capabilities.

Seventy percent of users (47.7% agree, 22.3% strongly agree) believe that emojis improve message clarity, even though 33.1% report experiencing misinterpretations. This mirrors earlier findings that while emojis can enrich understanding, they also pose risks of miscommunication based on contextual or cultural differences (Cefaratti-Bertin, 2024). This duality indicates that while emojis serve essential communicative functions, their variability in interpretation necessitates careful application.

It is also affirmed from existing literature, that emojis help make digital conversations feel more personal and enhance emotional expression (Chiang et al., 2024). This study corroborates such findings, further affirming emojis as crucial tools for bridging the gap between text-based messages and intended emotions. However, the limitations in conveying nuanced emotions and the perception of inadequate representation among users highlight an ongoing need for diverse and contextually rich emoji designs (Dalle Nogare et al., 2023; Doliashvili et al., 2020). The user ratings in this study reflect these sentiments: while 35.4% rated emoji usability as high (4 out of 5), 31.5% expressed a desire for improvement. This advocates for more innovative emoji designs to enhance user satisfaction and communication effectiveness (Kanika, 2024).

Furthermore, research indicates that the meaning associated with emojis often depends significantly on the context, which can lead to misinterpretations and even embarrassment when users accidentally send emojis that convey opposite meanings. It emphasizes the continuous evolution in digital communication preferences, suggesting that user-led improvements could enhance emoji functionality further.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The extensive use of emojis by youth on WhatsApp is driving the evolution of a distinctive digital language, characterized by an increasing reliance on visual symbols to complement or to even replace textual elements. The evaluation of emojis on WhatsApp reveals a complex relationship between user-friendliness, demographic variables, and cultural influences that shape their usage as a form of digital expression. The research successfully highlights how these graphical symbols facilitate emotional expression and contribute to relationship maintenance among young adults in their daily interactions. As digital communication continues to evolve, understanding the mechanics and broader implications of emoji usage is crucial. This adaptability of emojis, coupled with their capacity to evolve and expand in functionality, establishes them as powerful tools for meaningful interactions in digital messaging environments.

3.1. Recommendations

Schools and educational institutions can consider incorporating digital literacy programs that teach young adults how to use emojis effectively and create awareness of the potential misinterpretation of visual symbols across different cultural contexts. Since emojis are widely used by young adults, expanding the range of emojis or integrating more customizable visual symbols could help users convey more specific emotions better in digital interactions. This research highlights the complex relationship between emojis and digital communication. To deepen understanding, more studies can be conducted, and valuable insights can be given for designers in creating better tools for digital communication. Emojis can be a powerful tool for expression, still it's important to maintain a balance between emoji use and text-based communication. Users can be encouraged to not rely heavily on visual symbols and can ensure that the core message is effectively communicated in professional and formal contexts.

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AUTHORS

Ms. Malini Mahalingam earned M.A. Fine Arts (1997) from Stella Maris College, University of Madras; UGC-NET qualified (1997), currently pursuing Ph.D. in Fine Arts. She began her career as Key Animator, before serving as Project Manager (2005-2015). She joined Loyola College in 2015, where she now serves as Assistant Professor. She also headed the Department of 3D Animation as the Director of DDU KAUSHAL Kendra, Loyola College, Chennai. Her achievements include Key animation roles on international TV shows, Designer roles in international UI/UX projects, curriculum development, and chairing academic committees. Her current research interests focus on visual arts, animation and design education.

Dr. Lakshmi Priya Daniel holds an M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. in Fine Arts and has been teaching since 1996. She serves as Associate Professor at Stella Maris College, Chennai, and is a recognized Ph.D. supervisor at the University of Madras. She has published widely on gender and Indian art and co-authored a book on modern art in Tamil Nadu. A recipient of the UBCHEA Fellowship, she has held residencies at Harvard University and the University of Melbourne. Her research interests focus on gender, identity, and contemporary South Indian women artists. She has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences.