

## Use of Emojis as a Means of Communication among Caleb University Students

**Okunade Joshua Kayode<sup>1</sup>, Damilola Yusuf<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, Nigeria

Email: kayode.okunade@calebuniversity.edu.ng

### **Abstract:**

*This study was conducted to examine how the Nigerian youth uses emojis as a means of communication. Emojis are now the most efficient method to convey feelings and emotions in textual conversation. The purpose of this study was to determine how emojis affected people's vocabulary, ideas, and facial expressions both online and in daily life. How have traditional forms of language affected online platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. There were more of the drums, firewood, and birds in the olden days, but we are now in the jet age where we can just sit down comfortably in our homes and offices to send a piece of information. This study also looks into how young people in Nigeria utilize emojis for communication. Emojis have significantly increased in popularity as visual symbols for emotions, moods, and thoughts in online exchanges in recent years. The theory that underpins the findings is the Uses and Gratification theory. The goal of this project is to examine how emojis function within the particular cultural setting of Nigeria and comprehend how they affect young people's communication dynamics. Emojis have added more understanding to a message. The results of this study will improve our knowledge of how emojis influence cultural expression and communication among young people in Nigeria. The results of this study improved our knowledge of how emojis influence cultural expression and communication among young people in Nigeria. The study concludes that emojis have a substantial impact on communication by enriching message interpretation, facilitating emotional expression, and enabling users to convey information quickly, effectively, and succinctly. As digital communication continues to evolve, emojis are likely to remain important tools for enhancing meaning and fostering more expressive online interactions.*

### **Keywords:**

*Emoji Usage; Digital Communication; Social Media Interaction; Nonverbal Communication; Emotional Expression.*

## **I. Introduction**

Communication refers to the use of any symbols such as sound, gestures and images which represents idea and having meaning for receiver and sender. Every aspect of existence requires communication. All living things communicate biologically. It is a phenomenon that makes it easier for living things to communicate or exchange thoughts (Udenze, 2020). Compared to lower organisms, such as animals, human communication is more complexly evolved. In layman's terms, communication refers to the sharing of ideas or information between people (Ademosu et al., 2025).

According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, communication is the process through which people convey information by using a system of signs, symbols, or behaviors. It is clear from the statement above that there are many distinct forms of communication, and signs and symbols are an essential component of all of them. Verbal communication, which involves

speaking or using spoken words, is a form of communication. Nonverbal expressions include factors like body language, breathing patterns, posture, and physical look, among others (Hinz, 2015). It is a way to communicate without using words, in other words. According to Kumari and Gangwar (2018), it typically occurs through people's actions, expressions, signs, and symbols.

In the post-modern era we are in, globalization is at its height, and technology breakthroughs have made people's lives easier and more advanced. Due to significant scientific developments and the internet, the entire world is now interconnected. Social media is evolving and becoming a very significant force in people's lives, personalities, and identities (Qureshi, 2021; Okunade, 2025).

Communication is definitely essential to human survival. Communication is the means by which humans transmit ideas, opinions, information, and thoughts. The message sender and recipient are the two most important communication components. Communication is certainly essential to human survival. Humans communicate to share ideas, opinions, information, and thoughts. The message sender and recipient are the two most important communication components (Alisha et al., 2022). Communication is very important in the lives of human being without communication we will not able to express our grievances and happiness.

Effective communication is an important component of daily living. When we consider historical communication, we are only left with written, oral, symbolic, and artistic forms. But today, communication has changed to become the most potent medium thanks to the internet. Since messages are sent in only a few seconds, distance is irrelevant. Because of how quickly time is passing, new technological advancements appear every day, and social media has fundamentally altered how people communicate. (Aondover & Ademosu, 2025). Emojis are the newest and shortest method of communication, having evolved from letters, calls, emails, and text messages in the past few years. Emojis are changing how people communicate with one another and live their lives. They portray everyday facets of life, which has led to their unexpected success. And the data demonstrate that using emojis greatly increases the degree of interaction. Emojis make you feel happier and more at ease (Suresh, 2021).

Emoji's have become an increasingly popular means of communication among Nigerian youths, especially in online and mobile messaging platforms. They are used to convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions, and can enhance the tone and meaning of a message. Nigerian youths use a wide range of emoji's, including the commonly used smileys, hand gestures, and symbols. For example, the "laughing face with tears" emoji is often used to express humour, while the "praying hands" emoji is used to express gratitude or a desire for help. In addition, Nigerian youths often create their own slang and lingo using emoji's, such as using the "100" emoji to mean "perfect" or "excellent", "confirm" and the "fire" emoji to mean "cool" or "awesome". These slang and lingo have become an integral part of youth culture and are used to communicate among themselves.

However, is significant for one to understand that the use of emoji's can also lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications, terms of an emoji can vary depending on on the context and the individuals involved in the conversation (Sanusi et al., 2014). Therefore, it is essential to use them in moderation and always consider the context and the intended audience when communicating with emoji's. A sign language for digital text communication was created as a result of the internet's rapid growth. Use of emoji's among Nigerian youths, the types of

emoji's used, and the implications of this trend on Emoji, formerly known as emoticons in communication, are now available in a variety of colours (Qureshi, 2021).

Emojis have grown to popular part of modern communication, especially among young people in Nigeria. As communication technology has advanced and become more accessible, so too has the use of emoji's. In recent years, emoji's have become increasingly popular among Nigerian youths in online and mobile messaging platforms as a means of expressing emotions, attitudes, and intentions. This research work will explore the use of emoji's among Nigerian youths, the types of emoji's used, and the implications of this trend of conversation.

Emoji was derived from smiley, which then developed into emoticons, then came stickers and emoji in more recent years. Smiley is recognized as the original expressiveness symbol because it originally debuted in the 1960s. On buttons, brooches, and t-shirts, Smiley is a yellow face with two dots for eyes and a big grin. Emojis are now the quickest way to convey emotions in text messages. Emojis are almost like a nonverbal form of communication because they allow us to communicate our feelings towards issues.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

- a. To ascertain the most commonly used emojis among Nigerian youths.
- b. To assess how Nigeria youths perceive the use of emojis to express their attitudes, emotions and intentions.
- c. To assess the effects of emojis on the effectiveness of communication among Nigerian youths.

### **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted Uses and Gratification Theory, developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumer, and Michael Gurevich presented this hypothesis in 1974. Instead than focusing on what the media does to people, this theory highlights what people do with the media. The assumption was that the audience would actively participate in the communication process by determining how the message would affect them. According to Anaeto, Onabanjo, and Osifeso (2008), the audience is an active influencer since they pick, attend to, perceive, and retain media messages based on their wants, beliefs, etc. They also specify the type of media effect they want (Michael & Kayode, 2014).

The use and gratification theory assumes that media users actively select and use the media. Users actively engage in communication and use media for certain purposes. Theoretically, a media consumer searches for a media outlet that best satisfies their needs. Users and gratifications assume that users have more options for satisfying their wants. The uses and gratification theory asserts that people choose the media they watch depending on their anticipations of the gratifications those choices will bring about.

According to Anaeto et al. (2008) and Blumer and Katz (1974), there isn't just one method that the populace uses the media; There are just as many reasons to use the media instead, as there are media users, this means that, since there are different media consumers with different needs, the audience has the choice to use any type of media messages to satisfy or fulfil their needs at a particular time and to decide how the message will affect them instead of receiving the news in the one way that it was disseminated to them. This theory can be employed in this study because the publishers of online newspaper have developed a variety of options to suit the requirements of their audience; the users are then given the choice to select whatever media messages will meet those needs (Aondover, E. M., & Obasi, 2025). However, in the case

of emoji's the youths are able to choose any of the online platforms such as face book, Instagram, twitter, snapchat, WhatsApp and telegram to communicate with their friends, family colleagues and loves ones. That is there is freedom of expression (Aondover et al., 2025).

## **II. Research Methods**

### **2.1 Usage and Functions of Trending Emoji's**

Emojis are popular right now because they provide color to text communications. It depicts one's feelings, psychology, personality, and individuality in addition to its colored pictographic portrayal. The sole purpose of emoticons in a text message is to underline the message's profound meaning (Li et al., 2019). Emojis are used in texts to convey politeness and tenderness, and they help the reader better understand the author's personality or the moment. Similar ideas were made by Gander (2017). People utilizing internet chat programs can only grasp the sentiments of those they are speaking with if they use emojis. Emojis are popular worldwide for a number of reasons, including the fact that López et al. (2019) noted that they are frequently utilized at the start and end of conversations to keep them flowing and productive. Its roots are not just in social media or technology, as Lee (2018) noted that as customers utilize digital communication more frequently than face-to-face contact, emojis are also used for branding and marketing to attract audience attention and boost sales. Even classic literature like Moby Dick and Alice in Wonderland has been transformed into emojis to make it more appealing and lovely. Conelly (2015) cited McDonald's as an example of emoji marketing, and he added that the well-known food company also used emojis for marketing purposes by embedding them in their billboards to attract consumers. They also advertised a video in which people are shown in a city with 3D emoji heads rather than their actual heads. The images below display a McDonald's advertising campaign that was run in France and included people wearing emoji heads.

### **2.2 Emoji's as Non-Verbal Communication**

Any languages spoken communication almost always includes emotional or physical signs, such as changes in voice pitch, hand or eye motions, and other visual clues. These are absent in a digital setting (Obasi & Msughter, 2023). Emojis bridge this gap in a unique and highly visual fashion, ensuring that the writer's thoughts and sentiments are communicated clearly and with humor (Mohammed & Aondover, 2025). This emphasizes the potential a generality of the emoji language because many face expressions of emotion are shared by all people (Azuma, 2012; Okunade, 2014). They serve as non-verbal substitutes for verbal communication, conveying additional social signs to aid in message comprehension and indicating to the reader what the writer's face expression would be.

Natural language is multi-modal because it frequently includes speech without emotional context or body language. Emojis fill the gap left by missing facial emotions that improve verbal communication, allowing writers to communicate thoughts and feelings digitally (Aondover et al., 2026). The renowned anthropologist Charles Darwin discovered that emotional facial expressions are taught uniformly across all cultures. He came to the conclusion that all people share a similar structure of the body and use their muscles to communicate their emotions (Mesquita et al., 1997, p. 257). Common face expressions are so frequently universal, and the emojis that reflect them can be used to convey emotion across cultures. The artistic 2 (Hamza, 2006) understanding of the world.

Emoji are growing in popularity all over the world because they make it possible for people of different backgrounds in language and culture to interact and communicate with one

another more directly. This helps to facilitate intercultural communication by erasing the symbolic barriers that were previously drawn by particular scripts and the implicit socio-political ideologies that they entailed (Joseph & Okunade, 2026). The emoticon messengers of the twenty-first century are emojis. Emojis can be used to express any emotion you may be having. More than 6 billion emojis are exchanged daily, and 90% of social networking users say they use these symbols to communicate (Aondover et al., 2025). The notion that emojis are a millennial thing and a danger to formal communication has been challenged by linguists. Emojis develop and adapt in a similar fashion to how language does. There have already been instances of people being imprisoned for using icons that were deemed threatening because graphic communication is now so widely accepted as a new form of communication. Emojis have recently been examined in terms of feminism and diversity (Monika et al., 2021; Aondover et al., 2025).

### 2.3 Emojis as a Language Form

Emojis can fill the gap left by non-verbal indications in written language, as was already mentioned. However, there is a counterargument, according to Dresner and Herring (2010), who argue that because these images lack letters, their function does not actually reflect English linguistic characteristics. Emojis can effectively be considered as a language, but only if they have a direct convention and link to another language, like English, for example. The answer to this question is that in order to choose which emojis best suit their intended context and message, a user of an emoji needs have a certain awareness of the rules of English in terms of tone and sociocultural/pragmatic intent (Aondover, 2024). The principles of speech theory nevertheless hold true in this regard, indicating that emojis have a linguistic foundation (Kavanagh, 2016; Okunade et al., 2024).

Emojis can also be compared to logographs because one image can be used to denote many emotional responses while still representing a single morpheme or word. They are a language as a result, but one with universal notions (Brisson, 2015), making them more comprehensible across cultural boundaries (Maradun & Aondover, 2025). Emojis can play a role as non-verbal indications for the emotional context of a message, acting as a bridge between verbal and written speech acts, according to the speech act theory, which also suggests that speech acts are indicative of the state of a situation, the emotions of the speaker and listener, and the situation itself (Dresner & Herring, 2014).

Emojis are anticipated to become more popular than verbal communications and even emails in the future, which is supported by the Oxford English Dictionary's "word of the year" that is mentioned in the introduction. Emojis are definitely a sort of language in this sense, but they are more analogous to earlier, more organic modes of communication than the written word, which in fact distinguished between people who could read and write and those who couldn't. The language of emojis has once again narrowed this gap, indicating once again that they represent an ancient type of language (Lucas, 2016).

Emojis are, in fact, open up new avenues for communication. Their use as a code system that can enhance and supplement the text message's tone and visual vocabulary is going to be continuous and unrestricted. Emojis offer the chance to share a preset image that implies connection to the house, how they feel about it, and what it means in the message, with one or two pictorial representations rather than lengthy messages of explanation, unlike a standard alphabetical system, which typically starts with a signifier (for example, describing an object such as "house") to imply a signified item (a specific house). In this way, they are improving the written word rather than totally replacing it, as Lee (2016, 208) points out.

Emojis can also be grouped to add emphasis and produce more imaginative and creative responses than words alone. As a result, they are showing how they are related to previous languages, but in a more complex, technologically coded way (Brisson, 2015). However, there are certain generalizations regarding the use of emojis as language, including claims that women use them more frequently than males (Dresner & Herring, 2010); that men are more likely to employ funny emojis; and that choices of their usage as good or bad are generation-dependent. It is also evident that millennials are less rule-bound than previous generations and are more inclined to use emojis in their texts and even business emails when evaluating the future of language and whether emojis represent a new language form. Does this support the idea that emojis are a novel kind of language, or does it merely acknowledge the way language has evolved over time and the need for visual information that is inherent to the human condition?

### III. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 What are the most commonly used emojis?

CUL FGD1 INT4- Laughing, tears on the side, smiling emoji, heart

CUL FGD1 INT1- Heart break emoji

CUL FGD1 INT3-Laughing emoji, smiling emoji, blushing emoji, skull emoji, smiling, crying, dancing.

CUL FGD2 INT1- Laughing, crying, closing eyes emoji, hand on the front, the zip at the mouth, knife, love, thumps up.

CUL FGD3 INT2- Crying, laughing, smiling, heart break, skull emoji, moon emoji

CUL FGD2 INT3-Smiling face, laughing out loud with little tears, birthday cake, dancing

CUL FGD3 INT1- Laughing, crying, closing eyes emoji, hand on the front, the zip at the mouth, knife, love, thumps up

CUL FDG2 INT2-Laughing face. Crying face, cutie, emoji fire, white heart, hundred percentage

CUL FDG1 INT2 -Smiling face, love. Side eye, knife, moon face

CUL FDG3 INT3- Laughing face, heart, crying, side eye

CUL FD3 INT 5-Laughing, kiss blow emoji, birth cake emoji

CUL FDG3 INT4-Pleasing and begging emoji

CUL FDG1 INT5-Bored

CUL FGD2 INT7-Hundred percent emoji,

#### 3.2 Has emoji affected the way you communicate?

CUL FG2 INT1- Yes, emoji have affected the way I communicate in a positive way; we don't get to see each other while texting. Both through the use of emoji, we get to show our emotions, and through facial emotion. For the negative aspect, sometimes we might not exactly feel that way, but we keep smiling or being affectionate, but in reality you are actually not feeling that way. The downside is that it can lead to a poor level of communication; the receiver will actually think the person is happy when, in fact, the person isn't feeling that way.

CUL FDG3 INT2-Yes it has affected because most times if don't want to text the person you I can just use an emoji to pass information to the person instead of writing.

CUL FD3 INT1-My answer is yes and no because the use of emoji has affected communication in the sense that it helps us express what we really want or like. For example, if what the person sent is funny, you can use the laughing emoji, and if you are laughing too hard, you can use the laugh out loud emoji. also no in the sense that most of the time you can use a smiley emoji

because you are not really interested in what the person is saying, but the emoji is trying to depict, Okay, this person is smiling. Put thoroughly in person, you are not just smiling; you are just like the person should just talk. You can use the crying emoji, which is just like laughter, but you are not actually crying.

CUL FDG1 INT1-Emojis come in both directions because a lot of people use emoji to know when the person is overexcited or when you are not really interested in the conversation and just give an emoji.

CUL FD1 INT2-Well, I use the laughing emoji in both ways. For example, when I don't want to talk to the person, I put the laughing emoji. At the same time, if I am interested, I will use the laughing emoji, so it's like 50-50.

CUL FDG2 INT2-Emoji have a positive and negative aspect. Emoji can also serve as a hindrance in communication. For example, if I try to communicate something really important to you and then you end up sending me an emoji that has no regard for what I am sending, it kills the vibes and I will not talk about it again. Also, emoji help us put our emotions into a particular emoji, like how we can't express ourselves in words. Emoji help us do that.

CUL FDG2 INT3-Emoji can be used when you are tired of texting. You can send an emoji, and at the same time, it helps you portray what exactly you are feeling because emoji are based on emotions. For example, when someone sends something, the person can't see you, but when you send an emoji, the person understands how you feel.

CUL FDG1 INT3-Yes, I will say negatively that some people will send thumbs up, but that is a lack of Communication instead of the written word. But positively, when you put a smile emoji, it changes the message's meaning. So, I feel it is 50/50 in the positive aspect and in the negative aspect.

CUL FDG1 INT4-It helps me communicate with people so that when I write a message, it won't give another feeling, so I will just put an emoji at the back to let the receiver know I'm joking, or if I'm serious, I send an emoji to explain how I feel.

CUL FDG2 INT4 -Sometimes when I send a message, I don't use an emoji. Some people would think, Oh, this person is angry. So by the time you read this, add an emoji. If I am angry, I send the angry emoji. Oh yes, I am angry. So I put the Smiling emoji for them to know that, Okay, we are cool; there is no problem.

CUL FDG3 INT4-I feel emoji with written words adds understanding to the sentences. When I write a sentence like that and you are not really clear about it, people will think, Okay, this person is rude, but if you put an emoji, e.g., a laughing emoji, People will just say, Okay, she is just joking. Emojis aid in better understanding.

CUL FDG1 INT5-There are times when someone sends me a message, and then my face changes behind the phone, especially when someone says something offensive to me. With the use of emoji, I could express myself better.

CUL FDG2 INT5-I feel that without emojis, people misinterpret what I am saying in a conversation. They are sometimes am just joking about something and the person am charting

with send a wired emoji that doesn't go along with what am saying I tend to feel bad. When I send back an emoji, the person understands me better than if I sent a text message.

CUL FDG3 INT5-Yes, it has affected the way I communicate. Emoji help to express your emotions and feelings better. Without the emoji, the sentences are just there; it makes more sense when you add emoji to a text. Without an emoji, people will just read the message without actually understanding it.

CUL FDG1 INT6-The skull emoji has affected ways of communicating because it makes me sound less serious.

CUL FDG2 INT6-It helps me be more expressive; for example, when I'm truly laughing, I'll use an emoji to show it.

CUL FDG3 INT6-don't sound serious when I use emoji. Emoji convey my words and my interactions with others more meaning.

CUL FDG1 INT7-Emojis are a positive addition to reactions since they allow people to communicate their feelings.

CUL FDG2 INT7-It has not really affected me because, that way, I become more expressive of my feelings. because it displays more emotions, it has helped me. Emojis portray people's responses to messages or information.

CUL FDG3 INT7-It has not really affected you because, that way, you become more expressive of your feelings.

CUL FDG3 INT3-Yes, it has affected me positively because it shows more emotion, it shows my reactions. because people don't really know all the emoji and people misuse and misinterpret it when we send it back to them.

### **3.3 Do you think the traditional forms of communication are better than the digital platforms?**

CUL FDG1 INT1-Yes, I do. In reality, some of us are very comfortable texting through digital platforms Like Snapchat and WhatsApp, but when it comes to reality, it has some sort of hindrance. Especially when we cannot make eye contact or fluently speak, I will say the digital platform has hindered our communication skills.

CUL FDG1 INT2-In terms of communication, it helps people who are shy because most people don't know how to relate to people physically, so they find another way. It is easier to portray their feelings and thoughts to the public through social media.

CUL FDG1 INT3-Modern Technology Social media is really helpful. For example, if I want to pass on information to a group of people, I cannot just call them and ask them to meet me in a particular place. Instead, what I will do is create a group chat and pass on the information there. So social media has eaten up every form of communication that is traditional, such as the birds and the burning fire. Imagine that I want to talk to a group of people. I can't just go around and write something and throw kites. I will just type what I want to say.

CUL FDG2 INT1- Social media has been able to stop the traditional media of communication because Social media has made it simple. You are able to send messages to a large number of people or even someone close to you. It is very fast, it is simple, and it can be done from anywhere. We don't need you to be at a particular place at a particular point in time, so I will say yes.

CUL FDG2 INT2-I feel the modern media has overcome the traditional media in the sense that people nowadays cannot stress themselves, so modernization has made life easier for everybody, so people will lean towards what makes life easier for them. I can't be looking for birds in order to tell somebody something when I can buy data, text the person, and wait for a response.

CUL FDG2 INT3-Yes, with the digital platforms, he or she can send messages to a large number of people. Although the digital platform requires a lot of data consumption, most people write stories using emoji as an addition to their sentences. So digital has taken over traditional media.

CUL FDG3 INT1-I feel the use of digital modes of communication has allowed the traditional modes of communication to die out. Because people don't find it convenient to talk over the phone rather than meet physically, on a normal day, I would say we can do it online. It has affected me in a way.

CUL FDG3 INT2-Yes, it has actually affected the way we communicate. In the olden days, if someone wanted to send a message to the boy's hostel, there was always a struggle, like the burning of sticks. But now I can send messages using WhatsApp. In order to avoid physical communication, I can just type my message on WhatsApp

CUL FDG3 INT3-I will say it has affected communication negatively. You can easily avoid somebody and all of that, but if it was in the olden days where you saw the person physically, he or she could sort out their issues and see the person's expression.

CUL FDG1 INT4-Yes, it has changed a lot with the way everything is turning recently. Some people don't know how to spell. It also has the good attribute of adding effective communication to a message.

CUL FDG2 INT4-It also helps in sharing messages and the quick sending of information in an emergency. In the olden days, more rumors were added to their stories, which caused misinformation. But now you see the exact stories, either video, audio, or pictures, online, without added stories like back in the olden days when other things were added.

CUL FDG3 INT4-I feel it has stopped the traditional way of communication because, especially when it comes to expressing my feelings, through the online platform, I was able to express myself better.

CUL FDG1 INT5-It has stopped the traditional platform in a way. Before, sending a message to someone could take months or a long period of time, but now we have WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat. But now you just type or send an emoji to express what you are saying better.

CUL FDG2 INT5-Yes, it has, because it is actually easier, better, and faster.

CUL FDG3 INT5-yes, the digital is better than the traditional form of communication emoji express or show more on what you are talking about probably you want to be serious or you are happy laughing

CUL FDG1 INT6-Traditional is digital because people tend to go straight to what they want not trying to change the topic or change a particular setting because they have the privilege of going of line or using an emoji to change the question

CUL FDG2 INT6- I also feel traditional is better in the sense that digital allow you to fake how you feel you can be confessing your feeling to someone and will be like awhhh mean while life she is crying

CUL FDG3 INT6-Traditional is better because you tend to express yourself you show how you truly feel digital form you can fake an emoji.

CUL FDG1 INT7-I prefer the current form of communication you can quickly spread messages or information faster; one can express their feeling with an emoji

CUL FDG2 INT7-The digital platform is easier to relate with people; it is easier to pass information

CUL FDG3 INT7-I will actually prefer the digital platform because it is way easier, better and faster

### **3.4 Has emoji caused illiteracy in communication?**

CUL FDG1 INT1-It goes both ways. If I am speaking on it, I will say it goes in a positive way because there are a lot of illiterate people that are on the negative side. I will say that from the age of 14 to 22, they really didn't know how to make use of words, nor did they know how to make use of emoji. If they have a conversation with a well-mannered and enlightened person, the use of emoji is intended to come off as an ill-mannered way to have a conversation with some elderly people.

CUL FDG1 INT2-I feel like yes, the use of emoji in our present generation has caused illiteracy in the sense that a lot of people don't know the specific amount of emoji to use when texting someone. There Should be a limit to the amount of emoji you can use because if you are having a serious conversation with someone in a higher position, you are not meant to use emoji at all, and when you use two to three emoji at once, it just comes off as unserious. So I feel like it has caused illiteracy, and some people don't know the type of emoji to use. Let's say you are talking about a business deal with someone and you send a laughing emoji that Shows you are a lackadaisical person.

CUL FDG1 INT3-I feel it hasn't in the sense that I feel the use of abbreviations fosters illiteracy in the sense that someone intentionally leaves words out of a sentence. Emoji communicate and portray emotions. I don't think it fosters illiteracy.

CUL FDG2 INT1-I don't feel emoji promotes illiteracy because if you are illiterate, I think you can still fully utilize emoji. You need to understand the emoji you are using because a lot of people don't understand the type of emoji they use, even though they are educated. That is my objective; I don't feel like it promotes illiteracy.

CUL FDG2 INT2-Emojis help a lot. I don't think it promotes illiteracy. I will give an example. I was talking to Someone and was trying to spell something. The spelling was not coming out; it was just that I couldn't spell everything at that exact moment. Later on, I canceled everything and used an emoji that said the same thing, which was similar. Emojis help us to communicate, but you have to be enlightened in the form of Communication before you can say that it promotes enlightenment. So emojis help us to Caption it in one way or another.

CUL FDG2 INT3-Yes, illiteracy is a lack of knowledge and usage of emojis; some people don't know how to use the correct emoji. There was a time my friend's mom used the wrong emoji; she was like; I don't understand the emoji my mom used in the comment section. This is commonly used of a bird with a leaf in the mouth. That thing is supposed to be used with somebody that has died or has gone to heaven, but people will just say, oh my God, she is beautiful and send it as an emoji. The person will now say, I am not dead; I am still alive. Most people don't know the meaning of some emoji; people now tend to use them in the wrong sentence, which then becomes misinformation.

CUL FDG3 INT1-Emoji has caused a lot of illiteracy in communication because most people tend to feel like Communication has to be more physical than online. People tend to have more Confidence when they are online Chatting, but when they see each other physically, they are not able to communicate with each other. So, it has caused a high level of illiteracy among youths, and people who use emojis to communicate don't know how to spell well. They mostly cover up their spelling illnesses with emojis.

CUL FDG3 INT2-Yes, a lot, especially because of the use of emojis, which most of us are unable to spell because we feel emojis help us express ourselves better. Most people are not confident physically; they have anxiety issues, but online they are able to communicate better.

CUL FDG3 INT3-It has caused a lot of illiteracy because of the emojis people use; many of them don't know how to use them, especially the older ones. There was a time I saw a post where a boy got killed. Under the post, someone said, this is so "sad." She then added a laughing emoji instead of a crying emoji.

CUL FDG1 IN4- No, I just feel that without the use of emojis, it just makes people not understand what you are writing. I don't think emojis can cause illiteracy in communicating.

CUL FDG2 INT4-I don't think it does emojis are just for expression it explains what we are just saying in details. I don't think

CUL FDG3 INT3-It affects illiteracy. It affects illiteracy when we are texting. Computer will help you to auto correct if reach exam hall you won't spell you now forget how to spell it.

CUL FDG1 INT4-Yes some people will rather not use text they can just simply use an emoji so that way you are expressing your feeling,

CUL FDG2 INT4-Yes it has caused illiteracy because some people use more of emojis nowadays they don't really use words in messages they will just simply drop one or two emojis to express themselves. Some people don't know the appropriate emoji to use for the appropriate message

CUL FDG3 INT4-It has not caused illiteracy, because illiterate can even relate more to emojis some can not read or write but if you send them a crying emoji they will know something is wrong.

CUL FD2 INT6-I don't if it has caused illiteracy in any way even an illiterate can legit explain emoji.

### 3.5 Do you think emojis are disrespectful? in a way

CUL FDG1 INT1-Yes, for some people, emoji are disrespectful in a way. Like some of us have said, when it comes to an official event, official scenario, or business scenario, you can't exactly decide if you want to use emojis when you are having some sort of serious conversation with people who don't exactly appreciate it at that point in time.

CUL FDG1 INT2-I will say yes. because most people don't know how to use emojis. For instance, there was something that happened last year during someone's burial. They were recording the burial live on Facebook, and under the Comment section, you see where people are using laughing emoji for the burial program. It may have been a mistake, but I saw a big laughing emoji under the comment section, and someone just died. That was the wrong emoji at that moment.

CUL FDG1 INT3-It goes both ways in the sense that one will be discussing a serious matter and you reply with an emoji, and an emoji expresses emotion, but only if portrayed in the right way. But if used in the wrong manner, it will also be portrayed in an ill manner.

CUL FDG2 INT1-I feel emojis are an informal form of communication. One should know when to use it. I can't be texting a lecturer and be using emoji to text, but in a formal setting, I can't be sending a laughing emoji, a tired emoji, or whatever time of emoji. I have to choose when to use it. I have to look at the tone of the situation before sending that emoji. We should know when to use it. If you have that guide, it is not disrespectful, but if you use it in certain situations, it is respectful.

CUL FDG2 INT2-Emoji can be respectful in some ways, especially when you are interacting with colleagues, classmates, or friends. You can use emojis, but when you are interacting with people like your parents, your guidance counselor, your lecturer, or any other person that is a little bit higher than you in authority, I feel like using emojis in texting such people is then disrespectful.

CUL FDG2 INT3-For me, it depends on the situation, and it also depends on the person's situation. For example, if someone is dead and you then put a laughing emoji or someone was in an accident, that is very disrespectful to the person. I will say there is a subcategory. Some parents think that when you are texting them and you use an emoji, it is very disrespectful. But for my parents, especially when I am chatting with my mom, we exchange emoji, but not too much; it is moderate. There should be a moderate amount of emoji; it depends on the person you are communicating with. I can't be talking with the HOD of my department on WhatsApp; I will now be using an emoji that is disrespectful. It should be formal; it depends on the person unless you know him outside or you guys are very close. It depends on the relationship you have with the person and how things are.

CUL FDG3 INT3-I remember when I was talking to a friend, I used one emoji, and he said why would I use this kind of emoji for me? It was a sign of disrespect. I was like, Wow, to me, it was just fun, because I love using a lot of emoji. Emojis make the chat fun and easier to communicate. Even my dad jokingly uses emoji to interact with us.

CUL FDG1 INT4-Just like when I am trying to write a letter, we have informal and formal letters. So, as human beings, we should know when to say something and when not to say something. There are some emojis I can use for friends, but that same emoji I might not be able to use for someone who is in my age group. If I am chatting with my boss online, I am not supposed to use an emoji, except if he replies to me with an emoji. I can now reply with an emoji too.

CUL FDG2 INT4-People have different perspectives on things; what I like might not be what you like. I chat with a particular group of people and realize they are really good at using emoji. Someone told me why you would use that type of emoji.

CUL FDG3 INT4- Emoji can be disrespectful to people who feel it is disrespectful. Personally, I can use emoji to express my opinion, and I can use emoji for my close friends. But some people consider it disrespectful; maybe they don't know how to use it.

CUL FDG1 INT5-To me, an emoji is not disrespectful. If you send me an emoji, make me understand the type of message you are passing to me, but to other people, it is going to be disrespectful. Sometimes when someone sends a smiling emoji, it is either the person is angry or happy, which mostly causes misinterpretation of the message. In order to get the person's intentions, you have to support them with words.

CUL FDG2 INT5-Yes, a lot, especially because of emoji, which most of us are unable to spell because we feel emoji help us express ourselves better. Most people are not confident physically; they have anxiety issues, but online, they can communicate better.

CUL FDG3 INT5-Emoji is not formal actually it can be disrespectful in some ways because you can not use emoji in an official text because they are informal ways of reaching out to somebody.

CUL FDG1 INT6- It can be disrespectful in some ways when use inappropriately and when use wrongly mostly when use in an informal serious situation emoji should not required

CUL FDG2 INT6-Some can be very disrespectful when talking about something else and another comes up you find it disrespectful.

CUL FDG3 INT6-It depends on how you use it and the circumstance in which you use it. They are emoji that are used in the world of social media with a great deal of disrespect.

CUL FDG1 INT7-Depending on how you use it. For instance, using a laughing emoji when messaging someone and trying to be formal seems to be inappropriate.

CUL FDG2 INT7-Because we engage in this type of conversation with colleagues and friends on a daily basis, it can be considered impolite to engage in it with your aunt, uncle, boss, or lecturer.

CUL FDG3 INT7-Depending the kind of relationship we have with the person; it may be insulting. Emojis, for instance, can be used differently depending on who you are communicating with if they are not close friends or family members emoji should not be used.

### 3.6 Has the use of emoji affected the written form of communication?

CUL FDG1 INT1-Yes, emoji has affected the written form of language. One of my colleagues here said he wanted to write a particular word or sentence, but he couldn't exactly get it out, and he was able to use emoji to replace it if it was a word he doesn't use constantly. I think it has affected communication. I will say emoji has not affected the use of Language because it is something that is natural in our bodies to make use of Language. Emoji has no way of contributing to spelling or dictating what you say, but I will say abbreviation deals more with affecting one's language potential.

CUL FDG2 INT1-Emoji can't be compared to wording; emojis help us express ourselves better than words. I don't think it has affected the form of communication.

CUL FDG3 INT1-As much as I want to say yes, I can't expect that where you choose to write, you can use an emoji Instead of a full sentence. But It is limiting my word capacity to the extent that when I don't feel like typing, I will just use an emoji instead; it limits me. It is a hindrance; it limits capability.

CUL FDG1 INT2- I don't feel like emoji is a limited writing form of Communication because if you don't know how to spell it, it is not like emoji. Can you help me spell or not? If you' don't know how to probably structure your grammar and sentences, then you can't know how to spell. Because emoji have no role in stopping you or helping you from grammatically lining your words.

CUL FDG2 INT2-My ability to write or communicate normally is unaffected by emoji. Because if I have something to say but it is not coming out, I will explain it from my point of view. For instance, even if the message isn't expressed verbally, you can still understand it if you see an emoji. Emojis can be used to communicate; they function like a sort of symbol-based communication. In this manner, you are still exchanging messages because you have spoken what you wanted to say and done so in a written form, like ABC. He or she has spoken; it has no impact on your communication abilities.

CUL FDG3 INT3-Yes, it has affected the written form of communication. Most youths of today don't type messages; they are becoming lazy. They don't know how to spell properly as time goes on, so instead of typing again, they use emoji in replying to messages sent to them.

CUL FDG1 INT4- Yes, because I sometimes find it difficult to find the right words to convey my intentions while responding to someone.

CUL FDG2 INT4-It has improved our written language because people now expect sincere responses from us when we reply to them. You can simply respond with an emoji that expresses your feelings. Emojis can be used by someone who doesn't know how to express themselves verbally, in my opinion.

CUL FDG3 INT7-Emoji are expressions, not details: they don't explain what I'm trying to communicate, but rather convey an expression that this is how I'm feeling, just like if I'm crying or laughing. As a result, it has had an impact on written language.

CUL FDG1 INT5-Communication is supposed to improve, but due to the use of emoji, we always stick to one aspect of communication. We will basically want to use emoji every time and not try to upgrade the way we communicate with other people.

CUL FDG2 INT5-It has affected it a bit because some people are so dependent on emoji that they can never text without putting an emoji, so I think it has affected them.

CUL FDG3 INT6-Yes, it can happen when you try to have a serious conversation with someone and they simply sent you a funny emoji or an unrelated emoji. It frequently has an impact on conversation.

CUL FDG1 INT6-Emoji are good in certain aspects since they enhance the message, but I don't believe they have had any impact on written language in any manner.

CUL FDG2 INT6- Yes, because I sometimes find it difficult to find the right words to convey my intentions.

### **3.7 Discussion of Findings**

The desired result results of the proposed research have been acquired using the focus group method, a qualitative analysis that was able to derive responses from my targets regarding the topic. Multiple questions were extracted from the research questions proposed in chapter 1 and used as a guideline for the focus group. The majority of the respondents gave satisfactory answers based on their own experiences.

Emojis are typically utilized in accordance with the users' present mood, according to an examination of the data from the 21 participants. People typically utilize emojis to communicate their personal feelings and emotions. People have been shown to send emojis primarily to their friends and relatives. Emojis are frequently utilized in casual discourse, it was found. However, some people avoid using emojis in official settings because they can be misunderstood. Emojis' ability to draw users to social media is another point of emphasis in the report. Additionally, it brings enjoyment to those who utilize it for text messaging. Emojis, according to the participants, give their text messages greater depth. About 90% of the participants said that the digital platform is better than the traditional way of communicating. Messages are easier and faster to send online, while the traditional method, unlike in the olden days when we needed to use the birds, the drum, and the wooden fire, can take a long time to reach the receiver. More rumors can be added to the story. But now the online platform has made things more accurate and organized

About 70% agreed that emoji have caused illiteracy, while 30% disagree. The one who agreed said that emoji explain the information they are passing through, while the one who disagreed said most people don't really know how to spell, which is why they use emoji to cover it up. Most participants agreed that emojis are disrespectful in some way, especially to the elderly. One should know when to use an emoji. Unless the person is younger, he or she can use an emoji to convey a message or information. Most participants said yes, it has helped them express themselves better, while others said no. He said most people don't know how to spell accurately because too much emoji in a conversation has caused illiteracy because they are not able to write a sentence correctly. It is applicable to both the sender and receiver.

The analysis showed that few respondents accepted that using emojis in text conversations is changing their ability to communicate in English. However, the analysis demonstrate that most people believe applying of emojis in text-based communication has no impact on their English grammar.

Emojis are typically utilized in accordance with the users' present mood, according to an examination of the data from the 21 participants. People typically utilize emojis to communicate their personal feelings and emotions. People have been shown to send emojis primarily to their friends and relatives. Emojis are frequently utilized in casual discourse, it was found. However, some people avoid using emojis in official settings because they can be misunderstood. Emojis' ability to draw users to social media is another point of emphasis in the report. Additionally, it brings enjoyment to those who utilize it for text messaging. Emojis, according to the participants, give their text messages greater depth.

#### IV. Conclusion

This study examined the use of emojis as a means of communication among youths and revealed that emojis have become an integral component of contemporary digital interactions. The findings identified the most commonly used emojis and demonstrated that emojis play a significant role in expressing emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and intentions that may otherwise be difficult to convey through text alone. The study further established that online communication platforms provide greater opportunities for the use of emojis compared to traditional communication channels, thereby enhancing interpersonal interaction and engagement. The study concludes that emojis have a substantial impact on communication by enriching message interpretation, facilitating emotional expression, and enabling users to convey information quickly, effectively, and succinctly. As digital communication continues to evolve, emojis are likely to remain important tools for enhancing meaning and fostering more expressive online interactions.

#### References

- Ademilokun, A., & Ademilokun, O. (2018). The use of emojis in social media: A study of Nigerian students. *Journal of Language and Communication Studies*, 3(2), 114-128.
- Ademosu, I., Aondover, E. M., Osadolor, B., & Abraham, B. (2025). Divisive politics: analysis of ethnic rhetoric and hate speech in the 2023 Lagos Governorship elections. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 7, 1663797.
- Aondover, E. M. (2024). Media Outlook of Hate Speech in the 2015 and 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. *Rotura—Revista de Comunicação, Cultura e Artes*, 4(1), 50-63.
- Aondover, E. M., & Ademosu, I. (2025). E-learning practices of journalism education in Nigerian higher education institutions: Conceptual context and challenges. In *Media and communication systems for sustainability in Nigeria* (pp. 451-464). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Aondover, E. M., & Obasi, M. (2025). Identity and the Narratives of Conflict in Nigerian Media. In *Media, Conflicts and the National Security Question: Communicating (In) security in Nigeria, West Africa and the Sahel* (pp. 315-334). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Aondover, E. M., Ademosu, I., & Acheme, R. (2026). Perception of Hate Speech in the 2023 Presidential Political Campaigns on Voter Behaviour in Nigeria. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 8, 1750183.
- Aondover, E. M., Daushe, A. U., Ogunbola, O., & Aondover, P. O. (2025). Media coverage of internally displaced persons in two selected newspapers in Nigeria. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 11, 100301.
- Aondover, E. M., Ogri, E., Obukoadata, P., & Ogri, O. (2025). Nigerian Media Practitioners, Editorial Freedom and Owners' Influence: The Continued Triad and Navigation of

- Conflicting Interests. Editorial Freedom and Owners' Influence: The Continued Triad and Navigation of Conflicting Interests.
- Aondover, E. M., Yusuf, N. T., & Muhammad, M. (2025). Psychological and Physical Safety of Foreign Journalists Covering Boko Haram Conflict in Borno State, Nigeria. In *Navigating Trauma in African Journalism, Volume 1: Scholarly Foundations and Secondary Trauma* (pp. 209-228). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Hayden, M. (2019, October 30). <https://eternitymarketing.com/blog/the-importance-of-emojis> Author Meghan Hayden Previous Content & SEO Specialist Oct 30,2019
- Joseph, O. O., & Okunade, J. K. (2026). Role of Sit-Tight Syndrome in Undermining Democratic Institutions in Nigeria: A Governance Perspective. *Matondang Journal*, 5(2), 132-147.
- Maradun, L. U., & Aondover, E. M. (2025). Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice Towards COVID-19 Prevention Messages on Media in North-West, Nigeria. *African Journalism Studies*, 1-19.
- Michael, E. J., & Kayode, O. J. (2014). Nigeria's communication policy and news determination. *Journal of Law, Policy, and Globalization*, 23, 8-17.
- Mohammed, I., & Aondover, E. M. (2025). News coverage of humanitarian crisis: a study of banditry in Northwest Nigeria. In *Handbook on Humanitarian Crises* (pp. 209-217). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Obasi, M. C., & Msughter, A. E. (2023). Assessment of media coverage of environmental hazards in mining communities in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. *Environmental Challenges*, 13, 100758.
- Okechukwu, C., Iweka, C. E., & Amadi, C. N. (2019). The use of emojis in text messaging among Nigerian university students. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 11(7), 111-119.
- Okunade, J. K. (2025). Exploring the impact of effective internal communication strategies on employee morale, productivity, and organizational culture. *Lakhomi Journal Scientific Journal of Culture*, 6(1), 1-11.
- Okunade, J. K. (2025). Media Coverage of Covid-19 and Readers' Perception of Credibility of Fake News. *Britain International of Humanities and Social Sciences (BIOHS) Journal*, 7(2), 93-112.
- Okunade, J. K., Onyejelem, T. E., Ukpe, E., & Ridwan, M. (2024). Assessment on the Role of the Nigerian Media in Educating the Children and Adolescent on the Value of Sex Education. *Konfrontasi: Jurnal Kultural, Ekonomi dan Perubahan Sosial*, 11(2), 93-105.
- Qureshi, F. (2021). An Analysis of the Emoji's Impact on the Language and Expressions of Youth on Social Media.
- Sanusi, B. O., Omowale, A., & Kayode, O. J. (2014). Adapting social media for formal learning in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, 3(9), 22.
- Suresh, S. (2021) Final year student of B.Sc. Visual Media, Amrita School of Arts and Science, Mysuru Campus, Amrita VishwaVidhyaPeetham, Amrita University Emojis, Stickers, visuals/ images on social media.
- Udenze, S. (2020). Emoji and Nonverbal Communication: An Examination of Social Networking Sites . *Etkileşim* , (6) , 36-49 . DOI: 10.32739/etkilesim.2020.6.74