

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

Philip Mercy Njoya & Dr. Shadrach Idi
Department of Mass Communication
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies
Taraba State University, Jalingo.

Email. mercynjoya23@gmail.com, 09064055846

ABSTRACT

This study examined emoji use and the construction of emotional meaning among Generation Z (Gen Z) students at Taraba State University (TSU). The main objective was to investigate how Gen Z students use emojis to express and construct emotional meaning in digital communication, identify the most frequently used emojis and their emotional connotations, and explore how emojis contribute to relationship building, conflict management, and peer interaction. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, and data were collected from a sample of 50 students selected from different faculties using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts in communication and education, and data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that Gen Z students frequently use emojis such as 😊, 😄, ❤️, and 👍 to express emotions and reinforce the tone of their messages. Emojis were found to help students convey emotions that words alone could not fully express, reduce misunderstanding in online communication, and foster emotional connections in digital relationships. The study also established that emojis enhance friendliness, empathy, and understanding during online interactions and help in resolving minor conflicts among peers. The study concluded that emojis play a vital role in constructing emotional meaning, strengthening digital relationships, and enhancing effective communication among Generation Z students. It was recommended that students use emojis appropriately to promote positive emotional expression, and that educators incorporate discussions on digital communication and emoji literacy into communication-related courses to foster better understanding of emotional cues in online interactions.

Keywords: *Emoji Use, Emotional Meaning, Digital Communication, Generation Z, Taraba State University*

1. INTRODUCTION

The way that individuals communicate has changed as a result of the incorporation of technology into daily life. The performance of interpersonal online interaction has improved because to this innovative idea. Emojis and stickers are used to display emotions like joy, rage, sadness, and more. In addition to the stickers, which include English and Literary Studies Department Lecturers, University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Campus, Punjab, Pakistan. English Department Assistant Professor, Government College Women University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. mostly employed to express humor, quotes, and jokes (Kato, 2018).

Nonetheless, instant messaging has been incorporated into a number of online social media programs, making it easier for users to communicate with friends and family. However, online communication and engagement were the original applications of the instant messaging concept. Another option is to utilize emoticons; at last, stickers of various kinds are now being used as well (Chen, 2018). Along with the messaging service, its popularity has grown due to the usage of stickers and emojis, which are utilized as interactive indicators and condensed versions of messages to start and continue conversations. It serves as the universal language, improving human-based communication and facilitating the execution of subsequent initiatives (Liu, 2020).

Today's society makes extensive use of digital media in the form of websites, social media,

digital photos and videos, and digital music. Of all the digital media platforms, social media is the most popular, particularly among millennials and Generation Z. It facilitates social connection between people by allowing them to share and exchange information. Social media encompasses many concepts, ideas, and viewpoints inside online communities and can offer technological communication methods distinct from those found in traditional media (Watson, 2009).

Globally, according to 2023 BPS data, in 2019 the age category included in the Z generation group was around 125,799 (men and women) and in 2020 it was 78,758 (men and women). In digital communication behaviour which of course involves social media components in it. Generation Z who are in the 14–26-year age category tend to use Emoji/emojis when communicating via social media. Emoji comes from English, namely emotion/emotional which shows facial expressions, attitudes or emotions. In other words, Emoji is an emotional language that is manifested in the form of icons or symbols, some social media have spread widely and Emoji have played an important role in communication through technology. Emoji has a function as a substitute for non-verbal communication through social media communication media. Emojis are also often used in text-based online communication to convey feelings to indicate facial expressions such as smiling, laughing, or crying. As technology develops, Emoji increasingly have many shapes and forms. It no longer only describes expressions and feelings, but also symbolizes the activities being carried out.

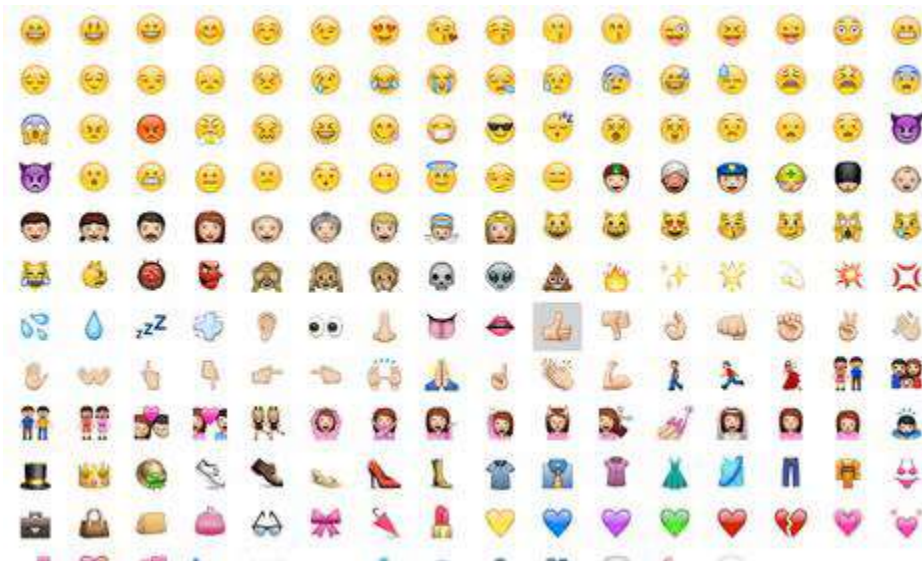


Figure 1. Types of Emojis

Social media networks use emojis as a means of expression. In a chat room, this symbol is actually used to convey a person's emotions.

Numerous social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and others, use emojis. In addition to social media, emoji may be found on the keyboards of all smartphone manufacturers, including Samsung, Apple, and Google, to name just three. These companies create their own emoji. Every emoji is a sign with an object that gives each user a mental interpretation.

Emojis are used in everyday communication in both academic and social situations at Taraba State University, where Gen Z students make up the majority of the student body. However, the way that TSU students explicitly use emojis to create emotional meaning has received little scholarly attention.

Emoji usage at TSU is examined in this study using symbolic interactionism, which sees symbols as the result of social interaction. The emphasis is on how Gen Z students utilize emojis to manage relationships, how they reassign

meanings to them, and what this tells us about their generational culture.

Research Objectives

The main aim of the study is to investigate Emoji Use and the Construction of Emotional Meaning among Generation Z (GEN Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU).

Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To investigate how Generation Z students at Taraba State University use emojis to express and construct emotional meaning in digital communication.
2. To identify the most frequently used emojis among TSU students and examine the emotional meanings attached to them.
3. To explore how emojis contribute to relationship building, conflict management, and peer interaction among TSU students.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

1. How do Generation Z students at Taraba State University use emojis to express and construct emotional meaning in digital contexts?
2. Which emojis are most commonly used by TSU students, and what emotions or meanings do they represent?
3. In what ways do emojis influence relationship building and interaction among TSU students?

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the Symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theoretical framework and perspective in sociology that addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals. The perspective emerged in the mid-twentieth century from a variety of influences, including the Scottish Moralists and American Pragmatist philosophers – its greatest influence being American philosopher George Herbert Mead (1934) and his theories about the relationship between self and society.

The emergence of symbolic interactionism was a response to the mainstream perspectives on society that dominated sociology at the time (such as Talcott Parsons's structural functionalism). These dominant, positivist approaches tended to examine society from the 'top down,' focusing on the impact of macro-level institutions and social structures and how they impose on and constrain individuals. Departing from this tradition, symbolic interactionism was developed to understand the operation of society from the 'bottom up,' shifting the focus to micro-level processes that emerge during face-to-face encounters in order to explain the operation of society. For symbolic interactionists, the prevailing structuralist

perspectives reified society as a constraining entity that ultimately defines an individual. Symbolic interactionism moved away from such perspectives that (perhaps) provided over-socialized views of the individual to conceive the individual as agentic, autonomous, and integral in creating their social world developed by Mead (1934) and elaborated by Blumer (1969), provides a framework for understanding how emojis function as symbols. Its three principles are:

1. Meaning: People act toward things based on the meanings those things have for them.
2. Interaction: Meaning arises out of social interaction.
3. Interpretation: Meanings are modified through interpretive processes.

Applied to emojis, this means that a symbol such as 💀 may literally denote death but, within Gen Z interaction at TSU, is commonly interpreted as "I'm dead with laughter." This shift illustrates how shared social contexts produce and sustain meanings. Symbolic interactionism thus helps explain both the stability and fluidity of emoji meanings in student communities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human communication has evolved through various stages, from oral traditions and cave paintings to print and digital technologies. Each stage transformed the mechanisms of interaction and expression. In the digital age, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has altered interpersonal exchanges by removing many nonverbal cues present in face-to-face contexts (Walther, 1996). Walther's hyper personal model suggests that individuals compensate for the absence of physical cues by using alternative

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

symbols and strategies to convey affect and intent in online communication.

2.1 Emojis as Emotional Symbols

Emojis supplement digital text with affective cues. They reduce ambiguity and convey tone, functioning as visual paralinguistic features (Chen & Siu, 2017). Research shows that emojis are processed similarly to facial expressions (Fischer & Herbert, 2021), making them effective for emotional communication.

2.2 Gen Z and Digital Communication

Generation Z (Gen Z) is widely recognized as a cohort of digital natives who have grown up immersed in a technologically networked environment where digital communication forms a central part of their social experience (Jayatissa, 2023). Members of this generation possess a high level of digital literacy and seamlessly integrate digital symbols, images, and emojis into their everyday communication. For them, emojis function not only as emotional tools but also as markers of social identity and belonging (Nisa, 2024). Through their use of emojis, Gen Z individuals express creativity, humor, and cultural membership in ways that transcend linguistic boundaries.

Empirical studies conducted in different sociocultural contexts support this view. For instance, research in Indonesia by Wulandari, Rahma, and Bakthawar (2024) revealed that Gen Z users often reinterpret emojis creatively, developing shared meanings that are specific to their peer groups. These findings underscore the idea that emoji use among Gen Z is not static or universal; rather, it reflects a dynamic and context-driven process of meaning construction. Emojis thus function as both linguistic and cultural artifacts, allowing young people to

perform identity work and emotional expression simultaneously in digital interactions.

2.3 Academic and Relational Functions of Emoji Use

Beyond casual communication, emojis perform significant academic and relational functions in digital learning and interpersonal exchanges. Kim, Knotts, Albers, and James (2022) observed that instructors' strategic use of emojis in online classrooms enhanced students' motivation, increased participation, and strengthened relational closeness between teachers and learners. Similarly, Mas'Amah et al. (2025) found that emojis serve as relational lubricants, strengthening trust, mitigating miscommunication, and reducing the perceived formality of online discourse among Gen Z students.

In the Nigerian academic context, emojis have become increasingly embedded in online group discussions, collaborative assignments, and academic forums. Andleeb and Khalid (2025) noted that students employ emojis as tools for peer bonding—to signal encouragement, express empathy, or acknowledge shared understanding during academic collaboration. This dual functionality highlights the intersection between affective expression and cognitive collaboration, illustrating how emojis shape both emotional tone and communicative efficiency in educational digital spaces.

2.4 Symbolic Interaction in Digital Spaces

The theoretical foundation for understanding emoji use can be traced to George Herbert Mead's (1934) theory of symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes that meaning is constructed through social interaction and shared interpretation of symbols. Within digital

environments, emojis function as symbolic tools through which individuals co-create emotional and social meaning.

Cross-cultural studies reinforce this symbolic variability. Bosch and Revilla (2018) identified significant cultural differences in emoji use patterns, showing that users in different regions attach distinct emotional valences to similar emojis. Likewise, Novak et al. (2015) demonstrated variability in sentiment interpretation, where the same emoji could evoke positive, neutral, or even sarcastic meanings depending on context and relational closeness.

At Taraba State University (TSU), these symbolic dynamics are observable in everyday online interactions among students. Emojis take on locally specific meanings shaped by peer discourse, social norms, and shared experiences. For example, emojis commonly used by TSU students may carry humorous, ironic, or context-dependent interpretations that differ from global digital trends, reaffirming Mead's notion that meaning emerges from shared social practice within a community.

3. EMOJI USE AT TARABA STATE UNIVERSITY (TSU)

Emotional Expression

Among TSU students, emojis are frequently used to intensify humor, express sarcasm, or soften criticism in online conversations. Emojis such as 😏, ❤️, and 😊 rank among the most commonly used, each carrying nuanced, context-specific meanings negotiated through repeated social interaction. The use of such symbols allows students to manage the emotional tone of their communication, bridge gaps in textual interpretation, and maintain expressive richness in digital dialogue.

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

Relationship Building

Emojis also play a significant role in relationship building and peer solidarity among students. Within platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram, students employ emojis to affirm camaraderie, display empathy, and maintain warmth in ongoing conversations. Such use aligns with the findings of Boutet et al. (2021), who reported that emojis strengthen relational closeness and enhance a sense of belonging in online interactions. By functioning as affective cues, emojis enable students to manage interpersonal boundaries and sustain positive emotional climates in digital communities.

Academic Contexts

In academic communication, emojis serve as subtle markers of tone and feedback. Students use a thumbs-up (👍) emoji to signal agreement or task completion in group assignments, while lecturers' use of a smile (😊) emoji often conveys support, approval, or encouragement. Kim et al. (2022) contend that such emoji use in academic digital spaces reduces social distance between instructors and students, fostering inclusivity and interpersonal rapport. This reflects a broader pedagogical shift toward emotionally responsive digital education.

Generational Identity

Finally, emojis reflect generational identity construction among Gen Z students. Like their global counterparts, TSU students engage in re-semanticization—assigning new, context-specific meanings to familiar symbols. For instance, the skull emoji (💀), traditionally associated with death, is now popularly used by Gen Z to express extreme laughter or amusement. This reinterpretation exemplifies the symbolic interactionist notion that meanings are not fixed

but are continually produced and negotiated within social contexts. Emojis thus serve as generational codes that encapsulate shared humor, cultural belonging, and emotional intelligence within the digital landscape.

Decision Rule:

- 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA)
- 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A)
- 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree (D)

4. DATA ANALYSIS USING MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Emoji Use and Emotional Expression

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	I frequently use emojis when chatting or texting online.	200	3.60	0.65	SA
2	Emojis help me express emotions that words alone cannot convey.	200	3.45	0.72	A
3	I use emojis to make my messages more friendly and engaging.	200	3.58	0.68	SA
4	Emojis help me to show when I am happy, sad, or angry in digital conversations.	200	3.52	0.75	SA
5	I use emojis to avoid misunderstanding in online communication.	200	3.41	0.80	A
6	Emojis make it easier for me to communicate my feelings without writing long messages.	200	3.55	0.71	SA
7	I choose specific emojis to match the tone or mood of my message.	200	3.47	0.73	A
8	Emojis help me to create emotional connection with others during chats.	200	3.43	0.78	A
9	I feel more comfortable expressing emotions with emojis than with plain text.	200	3.33	0.82	A
10	Using emojis helps me maintain good relationships in online communication.	200	3.49	0.74	A
Grand Mean			3.48		Agree (A)

- 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Interpretation:

The grand mean of **3.48** indicates that students **agree** that they use emojis as a major tool for expressing emotions in digital communication. This suggests that emojis play a significant role in expressing feelings and improving clarity in online interaction among Gen Z students.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Frequency and Emotional Meanings of Emojis Used

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	I use emojis such as 😊 😄 ❤️ 👍 most frequently in my digital communication.	200	3.56	0.68	SA
2	The “😂” emoji is my most commonly used emoji when chatting.	200	3.63	0.66	SA
3	I often use emojis to show affection, friendship, or care in my conversations.	200	3.51	0.71	SA
4	Some emojis I use have different meanings depending on who I am chatting with.	200	3.44	0.78	A
5	I use emojis to make my messages more emotional and expressive.	200	3.53	0.72	SA
6	I understand the emotional meaning behind the emojis I use.	200	3.40	0.80	A
7	Emojis like 😞 😔 🙄 help me communicate negative emotions effectively.	200	3.36	0.85	A
8	I use emojis differently when chatting with friends compared to lecturers or parents.	200	3.45	0.79	A
9	Some emojis are used to replace actual words in my messages.	200	3.39	0.83	A
10	The type of emoji I use depends on my mood or emotional state.	200	3.42	0.81	A
Grand Mean			3.47		Agree (A)

Interpretation:

The grand mean of **3.47** shows that respondents **agree** that certain emojis are used more frequently and carry specific emotional meanings. This implies that emojis serve as emotional symbols that Gen Z students interpret contextually to express diverse feelings and moods.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Emojis, Relationship Building, Conflict Management, and Peer Interaction

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Emojis help me build friendly relationships with my peers online.	200	3.55	0.70	SA
2	Using emojis makes my online conversations more relaxed and interactive.	200	3.50	0.74	SA

3	Emojis help to reduce tension during online misunderstandings.	200	3.43	0.79	A
4	I use emojis to apologize or make peace after an argument online.	200	3.40	0.81	A
5	Emojis make it easier to express empathy or support when chatting with friends.	200	3.57	0.73	SA
6	I use emojis to show appreciation or gratitude in digital communication.	200	3.49	0.76	A
7	Emojis help me avoid misinterpretation of my messages.	200	3.42	0.82	A
8	Using emojis strengthens my connection with friends and classmates.	200	3.46	0.78	A
9	Emojis make group chats and online discussions more engaging.	200	3.54	0.71	SA
10	Emojis contribute to maintaining harmony and understanding in my online relationships.	200	3.48	0.75	A
Grand Mean			3.48		Agree (A)

Interpretation:

With a grand mean of 3.48, respondents agree that emojis contribute positively to building and maintaining online relationships, managing conflicts, and enhancing peer interaction. Emojis function as social-emotional cues that foster empathy and mutual understanding in digital communication among Gen Z students.

Table 4: Overall Summary

Objective	Grand Mean	Decision	Interpretation
Objective 1: Emoji use and emotional expression	3.48	Agree	Emojis enhance emotional expression in online chats.
Objective 2: Frequency and emotional meanings	3.47	Agree	Emojis carry contextual meanings and are frequently used.
Objective 3: Relationship building and interaction	3.48	Agree	Emojis strengthen online relationships and communication.

Overall Grand Mean = 3.48 (Agree)

Conclusion

Findings of the study indicate that emojis play a central role in the digital communication of Generation Z students at Taraba State University.

Students rely heavily on emojis to express emotions, clarify tone, and enhance the meaning of their messages, demonstrating that these visual symbols have become essential tools in modern

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

online interaction. Emojis help compensate for the absence of nonverbal cues in text-based conversations, making communication richer, more expressive, and more engaging.

In relation to Objective One, the study established that Gen Z students frequently use emojis to express emotions and construct emotional meaning during online communication. The results revealed strong agreement that emojis help convey feelings that words alone cannot fully express and make conversations more friendly, relatable, and emotionally clear.

For Objective Two, the study found that emojis such as 😊, 😌, ❤️, and 🙌 are the most frequently used among TSU students. Respondents also indicated that many emojis carry context-specific meanings depending on the relationship and the social situation. This confirms that emojis serve as emotional symbols that users interpret and adapt based on mood, familiarity, and communication goals.

Regarding Objective Three, the findings showed that emojis contribute significantly to relationship building, conflict management, and peer interaction. Students reported that emojis help reduce anxiety during disagreements, express empathy, strengthen social bonds, and make digital conversations more interactive and harmonious.

Overall, the study concludes that emojis are not just decorative additions to online messages but meaningful communicative tools that shape emotional expression, strengthen social ties, and promote clarity in digital interaction among Gen Z students at Taraba State University.

5.3 From the foregoing findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Students should be encouraged to use emojis responsibly and appropriately, ensuring that their use enhances emotional clarity rather than causing misinterpretation. Workshops and sensitisation programmes can help students understand when emojis are suitable and when they may not be.
2. Departments such as Mass Communication, Linguistics, and ICT should integrate digital communication literacy into their curriculum. This should include discussions on emoji interpretation, digital semiotics, and online emotional expression to equip students with the skills needed to navigate modern communication environments.
3. Students should be made aware that emoji meanings can vary across contexts, cultures, and relationships. Training on context-sensitive communication will help them understand the importance of choosing emojis carefully when interacting with lecturers, peers, parents, or people from different cultural backgrounds.
4. Emojis should be promoted as tools for empathy, positivity, and emotional support in online spaces. Students, especially those involved in group projects and peer interactions, should use emojis to maintain supportive and respectful communication that strengthens digital relationships.
5. Future research should explore other dimensions of emoji use, such as gender differences, disciplinary variations, and the psychological or sociolinguistic implications of emojis among different demographic groups. This will broaden understanding and provide deeper insight

into digital emotional communication among diverse populations.

REFERENCES

- Andleeb, A., & Khalid, M. Z. (2025). The role of emojis in digital communication: A study of the student community. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 13(6).
- Barthes, R. (1967). *Elements of semiology*. Hill & Wang.
- Basak, K., & Dutta, S. (2023). An assessment of emoji's growth in communication process. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 11(8), 398–405.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. University of California Press.
- Bosch, O. J., & Revilla, M. (2018). The use of emojis by Millennials. *RECSM Working Paper, Universitat Pompeu Fabra*.
- Boutet, A., et al. (2021). Emojis as representations of affect. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 33(2), 94–108.
- Chen, H., & Siu, A. (2017). Emotion-icons in digital discourse. *Linguistics Online*, 55(3), 22–34.
- Davis, M., & Edberg, J. (2016). Unicode emoji standardization. Unicode Consortium Report.
- Dimock, M. (2019). Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Gen Z begins. *Pew Research Center*.
- Evans, V. (2015). *The emoji code*. Picador.
- Fischer, A., & Herbert, M. (2021). Emoji recognition and emotion perception. *Emotion Review*, 13(2), 110–121.
- Jayatissa, K. A. D. U. (2023). Generation Z – A new lifeline: A systematic literature review. *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2), 179–186.
- Kelly, R., & Watts, L. (2015). Characterizing emoji use. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 3(1), 99–117.
- Kim, M., Knotts, T. L., Albers, N. D., & James, K. E. (2022). Emoji use as a catalyst for relationship building and sustaining attention in online classes. *Education Sciences*, 12(874). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12120874>
- Mas'Amah, M., Pietriani, I. G. A. R., & Jelahun, F. E. (2025). Impact analysis of emojis on Generation Z's digital communication behavior. *International Journal of Sustainability in Research*, 3(2), 99–116.
- McCrindle, M. (2014). *The ABC of XYZ: Understanding the global generations*. UNSW Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. University of Chicago Press.
- Nisa, S. U. (2024). A linguistic analysis of emojis: Exploring the role of language in the digital age of Generation Z. *Journal of Natural Language and Linguistics*, 2(1), 204–212.

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

Novak, P. K., Smailović, J., Sluban, B., & Mozetič, I. (2015). Sentiment of emojis. *PLOS ONE*, *10*(12), e0144296. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0144296>

Wulandari, S., Rahma, A. F., & Bakthawar, P. (2024). Connotation and myth: Language expression of Gen Z through WhatsApp emoticon. *Wicara*, *3*(1), 73–84.

APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRES

EMOJI USE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMOTIONAL MEANING IN ONLINE RELATIONSHIP AMONG GENERATION Z (GEN Z) STUDENTS TSU (ECEMORGZQ).

Objective: To investigate how Generation Z students at Taraba State University use emojis to express and construct emotional meaning in digital communication.

Instruction:

Kindly tick (✓) the option that best describes your opinion on each statement.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: EMOJI USE AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I frequently use emojis when chatting or texting online.				
2	Emojis help me express emotions that words alone cannot convey.				
3	I use emojis to make my messages more friendly and engaging.				
4	Emojis help me to show when I am happy, sad, or angry in digital conversations.				
5	I use emojis to avoid misunderstanding in online communication.				
6	Emojis make it easier for me to communicate my feelings without writing long messages.				
7	I choose specific emojis to match the tone or mood of my message.				
8	Emojis help me to create emotional connection with others during chats.				
9	I feel more comfortable expressing emotions with emojis than with plain text.				
10	Using emojis helps me maintain good relationships in online communication.				

Objective 2: To identify the most frequently used emojis among TSU students and examine the emotional meanings attached to them.

SECTION C: FREQUENCY AND EMOTIONAL MEANINGS OF EMOJIS USED

Instruction:

Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I use emojis such as 😊 😄 ❤️ 👍 most frequently in my digital communication.				
2	The “😭” (face with tears of joy) emoji is my most commonly used emoji when chatting.				
3	I often use emojis to show affection, friendship, or care in my conversations.				

Emoji Use and The Construction of Emotional Meaning Among Generation Z (Gen Z) Students at Taraba State University (TSU)

4	Some emojis I use have different meanings depending on who I am chatting with.				
5	I use emojis to make my messages more emotional and expressive.				
6	I understand the emotional meaning behind the emojis I use.				
7	Emojis like 😊 😞 🙄 help me communicate negative emotions effectively.				
8	I use emojis differently when chatting with friends compared to lecturers or parents.				
9	Some emojis are used to replace actual words in my messages.				
10	The type of emoji I use depends on my mood or emotional state at the time.				

Objective 3: To explore how emojis contribute to relationship building, conflict management, and peer interaction among TSU students.

SECTION D: EMOJIS, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, AND PEER INTERACTION

Instruction:

Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Emojis help me build friendly relationships with my peers online.				
2	Using emojis makes my online conversations more relaxed and interactive.				
3	Emojis help to reduce tension during online misunderstandings.				
4	I use emojis to apologize or make peace after an argument online.				
5	Emojis make it easier to express empathy or support when chatting with friends.				
6	I use emojis to show appreciation or gratitude in digital communication.				
7	Emojis help me avoid misinterpretation of my messages.				
8	Using emojis strengthens my connection with friends and classmates.				
9	Emojis make group chats and online discussions more engaging.				
10	Emojis contribute to maintaining harmony and understanding in my online relationships.				