

An Investigation into How Emoji Understanding is Affected by Age in China



ABSTRACT 🤔

Emojis have become a common communication language, which helps people express emotion vividly in online communication. With the development of Internet technology, the age range of Internet users is expanding. Age may lead to different understandings of emoji, then misunderstandings appear. In this report, under China as research background, three research types were planned to explore whether age affects people to interpret the meaning conveyed by emojis and the main factors that contribute to the differences in understanding.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND 😊

Various teams have conducted extensive studies on the misunderstanding of emoji, including design, culture, language and trend part. But the age-related studies were rarely discussed in the current research. Understanding how people of different ages understand and use emojis can help break down age barriers in social interactions and make online communication more comfortable.

STUDY 1: SOCIAL MEDIA EMOJI DATA ANALYSIS 🤔

Social media is used as a platform to collect emoji usage data for analysis and try to find out the differences of emoji usage among people of different ages. Because Twitter is not available in China, Weibo is selected as the data collection platform. The data shows that as Weibo users get older, the frequency of emoji usage decreases. Among users of different age groups, the popular emoji are different.

STUDY 2: EMOJI USAGE & UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONNAIRE 😊

Questionnaires combines two-dimensional interactive space to research the aspects that affect emoji understanding will be study. Finally, 6 emoji from facial and animal series have a clear trend in the chi-square test. It can be seen that people's perception of emotion expressed by emoji not only appears in the face emojis. For the facial emoji, the positive emotions of older people is higher than young people.

STUDY 3: EMOJI SENTIMENT INTERVIEW 🤔

Based on the results of the first two quantitative studies, a qualitative research is planned by inviting different age people to participate in interviews to understand their understanding and usage habits of emoji and the reasons for the formation. All the interviewees believed that the design of emoji's eyes and mouth would affect their understanding of the emotions expressed by emoji, but their understanding of the details varies. Young people are more willing to create new emoji usages base on the culture and trends. All interviewees emphasized not to use emoji with different meanings with people they are not familiar.

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE WORK 😊

The understanding of facial emoji is more easily influenced by design, but different age people have different understanding on the details. The culture and trend will promote the emergence of new emoji usage, which is more likely to appear among young users. In future research, hoping this investigation can help research how emoji language appears and how emoji language barriers are built.



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