

EMOJI USAGE FOR FACILITATING EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN WHATSAPP COMMUNICATION AMONG ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS

Nurlaila Hussain

Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
nurlailahusain@ung.ac.id

Abstract

In today's digital era, there has been a significant shift from traditional to digital communication, particularly among students and academics. This study explores how emojis facilitate emotional expression within academic WhatsApp groups among students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP). Given the increasing reliance on digital platforms, the need for effective communication tools, such as emojis, has become essential. This research uses a qualitative approach based on Creswell's (2017) framework, gathering data from two academic WhatsApp groups through documented screenshots. Content analysis was applied to examine how emojis convey emotions and enhance communication dynamics. The findings indicate that emojis, such as the Heart (❤️) and Crying Face (😭), allow students to express emotions, clarify intentions, and build empathy. These results suggest that emojis play a crucial role in fostering supportive peer communication and overcoming the limitations of text-based interactions. This study highlights the importance of emojis in academic communication, creating a more inclusive and emotionally connected learning environment.

Keywords: Academic groups WhatsApp, Digital Platforms, Emoji, Emotional expression.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, there is a significant shift from traditional communication to digital communication, particularly among academics and students. Technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals interact, with instant messaging applications like WhatsApp emerging as one of the primary tools facilitating communication between lecturers and students, as well as among students themselves. WhatsApp provides a platform that enables fast and efficient communication, making it easier to exchange information, engage in group discussions, and collaborate academically. The convenience of access and usability has made this application an integral part of students' daily lives, becoming a ubiquitous presence in their academic routines.

As students navigate the complexities of academic life, their reliance on digital communication has significantly increased. This shift not only reflects how students interact but also highlights the need for effective ways to express emotions and intentions, especially in educational settings. In this context, emojis have become an essential part of digital communication. These visual symbols help convey emotions and ideas, capturing nuances that can be difficult to express through text alone. This is particularly important on platforms like WhatsApp, where text limitations can often lead to misunderstandings. By incorporating emojis into their messages, students can enhance their interactions and bridge the communication gaps that exist without the verbal and nonverbal cues typically present in face-to-face conversations.